An essay on the remission of sins / by A. Campbell.

AN ESSAY

ON THE

REMISSION OF SINS.

BY A. CAMPBELL.

THIRD EDITION.

"Reform, and be each of you immersed in the name of Jesus Christ in order to the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."—*Peter.*

"We (Apostles) are of God: he who is of God, hearkens to us: he who is not of God, hearkens not to us. By this we know the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error."—*John. New Version.*

LONDON:

SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & CO., AND GROOMBRIDGE;
W. BUNNY, AND T. KIRK, NOTTINGHAM.

1846.

The Second Edition of the *Essay on the Remission of Sins* having been out of print some time, and much inquired for, we have now published a Third Edition. We earnestly recommend to the serious and candid of all classes a perusal of this unanswered and *unanswerable* Essay.

AN ESSAY.

"Thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day; and that *repentance* and *remission* of sins should be preached in his name, *beginning at Jerusalem*."—LUKE xxiv. 46, 47.

"Then they [*in Jerusalem*] that gladly received the words of the Apostles were baptized, and the same day there were added to the church about three thousand souls."—ACTS ii. 41.

THE doctrine of remission, is the doctrine of salvation: for to talk of salvation without the knowledge of the remission of sins, is to talk without meaning. To give to the Jews "a knowledge of salvation by the remission of their sins," was the mission of John the immerser, as said the Holy Spirit. In this way he prepared a people for the Lord. This doctrine of forgiveness was gradually opened to the people during the ministry of John and Jesus, but was not fully developed until Pentecost, when the secrets of the reign of heaven were fully opened to men.

From Abel to the resurrection of Jesus, transgressors obtained remission at the altar, through priests and sin-offerings; but it was an *imperfect* remission as respected the conscience. "For the law," says Paul, (more perfect in this respect than the preceding economy,) "containing a shadow only of the good things to come; and not even the very image of these things, never can, with the same sacrifices which they offer yearly, make those who come to them perfect. Since, being offered, would they not have ceased? because, the worshippers being once purified, should have no longer conscience of sins."

The *good things* to come were future, during the reign of Moses and his institution. They have come; and a clear, and full, and perfect remission of sins is the great result of the new economy in the consciences of all the citizens of the kingdom of Jesus. The perfection of the conscience

of the worshippers of God, under Christ, is the grand distinguishing peculiarity in them, compared with those under Moses. They have not only clearer views of God; of his love; of his character; and of immortality; but they have consciences which the Jews and Patriarchal ages could not produce.

If faith only were the means of this superior perfection and enjoyment; and, if striking symbols or types were all that were necessary to afford this assurance and experience of pardon, the Jewish people might have been as happy as the Christian people. They had as true testimony,—as strong faith,—and as striking emblems as we have. Many of them, through faith, obtained a high reputation,—were approved by God,—and admired by men for their wonderful achievements.

The difference is in the constitution. They lived under a constitution of *law*,—we under a constitution of *favour*. Before the law, their privileges were still more circumscribed. Under the government of the Lord Jesus, there is an institution for the forgiveness of sins, like which, there was no institution since the world began. It was owing to this institution that Christians were so much distinguished at first from the subjects of every former institution.

Our political happiness in these United States is not owing to any other cause than to our political institutions. If we are politically the happiest people in the world, it is because we have the happiest political institutions in the world. So it is in the Christian institution. If Christians were, and may be the happiest people that ever lived, it is because they live under the most gracious institution ever bestowed on men. The meaning of this institution has been buried under the rubbish of human traditions for hundreds of years. It was lost in the dark ages, and has never been, till recently, disinterred. Various efforts have been made, and considerable progress attended them; but since the grand apostacy was completed—till the present generation, the gospel of Jesus Christ has not been laid open to mankind in its original plainness, simplicity, and majesty. A vail in reading the new institution has been on the hearts of Christians, as Paul declares it was upon the hearts of the Jews in reading the old institution towards the close of that economy.

The object of this Essay is to open to the consideration of the reader, the Christian institution for the remission of

sins;—to show by what means a person may enjoy the assurance of a personal and plenary remission of all his sins. This we shall attempt to do by stating, illustrating, and proving the following *twelve* propositions.

PROP. I.—*The apostles taught their disciples, or converts, that their sins were forgiven, and uniformly addressed them as pardoned or justified persons.*

John testifies that the youngest disciples were pardoned, "I write unto you, little children, because your sins *are forgiven you* on account of his name."* The young men strong in the Lord, and the old men stedfast in the Lord, he commends for their attainments; but the *little children*, the youngest converts, he addresses as possessing this blessing as one common to all disciples, "Your sins are forgiven you *on account of His name.*"

Paul, in his letter to the Hebrews, asserts that one of the provisions of the new institution is *the remission of the sins of all under it.* "*Their sins* and iniquities I will remember no more."† From this he argues, as a first principle in the Christian economy. "Now where remission of these is, no more offering for sin is needed.‡ The reason assigned by the Apostle why *Christians* have no *sinoffering* is, because they have obtained the remission of sins as a standing provision in the new institution.

The same Apostle testifies that the Ephesian disciples had obtained remission. "Be to one another kind, tenderhearted, forgiving each other, even as God, for Christ's sake, *has forgiven you.*"‖ Here, also, in the enumeration of Christian privileges and immunities under Christ, he asserts forgiveness of sins as the common lot of all disciples. "In whom we have redemption, through his blood, even *the forgiveness of sins,* according to the riches of his favour."§ In his letter to the Colossians, he uses the same words,—"By whom we have the *forgiveness of sins.*"¶

Figurative expressions are used by the same Apostle, expressive of the same forgiveness common to all Christians. "And such (guilty characters) were some of you; but *you are washed;* but *you are sanctified;* but *you are justified* by

* 1 John ii. 12. † Heb. viii. 12—x. 17. ‡ Heb. x. 18.
‖ Eph. iv. 32. § Eph. i. 7. ¶ Col. i. 14.

the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."* Peter, also, is a witness here. "Seeing *you have purified your souls* by obeying the truth through the Spirit."†

But there is no need of foreign, or remote, or figurative expressions, when so literally and repeatedly the Apostles assert it as one of the adjuncts of being a disciple of Jesus. Had we no other testimony than that found in a single letter to the Colossians, it would be sufficient to sustain this position. The command given in chapter iii. 13, assumes it as a principle. "*As Christ forgave you, so also do you.*" But in the second chapter, he makes this an inseparable adjunct of being in Christ. "You are *complete* in him—circumcised—buried with him—raised with him—made alive with him—HAVING FORGIVEN YOU ALL TRESPASSES."

These explicit testimonies from the most illustrious witnesses sustain my first proposition. On these evidences I rely, and I shall henceforth speak of it as a truth not to be questioned, viz., that all the disciples of Christ converted in the apostolic age, were taught by the Apostles to consider themselves as pardoned persons.

PROP. II.—*The apostolic converts were addressed by their teachers as justified persons.*

We know that none but innocent person can be legally justified; but it is not in the forensic sense this term is used by the Apostles. Among the Jews, it imported no more than *pardoned:* and when applied to Christians, it denoted that they were acquitted from guilt;—discharged from condemnation, and accounted as righteous persons in the sight of God.

Paul in Antioch, in Pisidia, assured the Jews that *in* or *by* Jesus, all that believed were justified from all things, (certainly here it is equivalent to pardoned from all sins) from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses. The disciples are said to be justified by faith.‡ By favour or grace.‖ *In* or *by* the blood of Christ.§ By the name of the Lord Jesus.¶ By works,§§ It is God who justifies††

Christians are said to be justified by God, by Christ, by favour, by faith, by the blood of Jesus, by the *name* of the

* 1 Cor. vi. 11. † 1 Peter i. 22. ‡ Rom. v. 1. ‖ Rom. iii. 24. § Rom. v. 9. ¶ 1 Cor. vi. 11. §§ James ii. 24. †† Rom. viii. 33.

Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of God, also by works. Pardon and acquittal are the prominent ideas in every application of the term. God is the justifier. Jesus also, as his Messiah, justifies, and the Spirit declares it. As an act of favour it is done, by *the blood of Jesus* as the rightful and efficient cause,—*by faith*, as the instrumental cause,—by *the name* of Jesus the Lord, as the immediate and connecting cause, and by *works* as the demonstrative and conclusive cause. Nothing is more plain from the above testimonies, than that all Christians are declared to be justified under the reign of Jesus Christ.

PROP. III.—*The ancient Christians were addressed by the Apostles as sanctified persons.*

Paul addresses all the disciples in Rome as saints, or sanctified persons. In his first letter to the Corinthians, he addresses them all as *the sanctified* under Christ Jesus. "To the congregation of God which is at Corinth,—to *the sanctified* under Christ Jesus." Paul argues with the Hebrews that "by the will of God we are sanctified by the offering of Jesus Christ once only." "For, by this one offering, he has for ever *perfected* [the conscience of] the *sanctified*." So usual was it for the Apostles to address their disciples as sanctified persons, that occasionally they are thus designated in the inscription upon their epistles. Thus Jude, addressing indiscriminately the whole Christian community, inscribed his catholic epistle "To *the sanctified* by God our Father, and to the preserved (or saved) by Jesus Christ, to the called." "The sanctifier, and the sanctified, are all of one family," says the Apostle to the gentiles. And therefore the sanctifier addressed the sanctified as his brethren, and the brethren, the disciples as sanctified. But once more we must hear Paul, and hear him connecting his sanctification with the *name* of the Lord Jesus. He says, "But now you are sanctified by the *name* of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."‡

PROP. IV.—*The ancient Christians, the apostolic converts, were addressed as "reconciled to God."*

Paul repeatedly declares that the disciples were reconciled to God. "When enemies, we were reconciled to God by

‡ 1 Cor. vi. 2.

the death of his Son."§ To the Corinthians, he says, "God has reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ;"† and to the Colossians, he asserts, "It pleased the Father by him to *reconcile* all things to him, having made peace by the blood of his cross; I say, whether they be things on the earth or things in the heavens. Even you (gentiles) who were formerly alienated in mind and enemies by works which are wicked, *he has now indeed reconciled* in the body of his flesh through death."‡ To the Ephesians he declares, that though "once they were without God, and without hope in the world—far off, they are now, through the blood of Christ, *made nigh*." He has made the believing Jews and gentiles one, that he might, under Christ, *reconcile both in one body to God*, through the cross, having slain the enmity between both thereby. Indeed, he represents God as in Christ, *reconciling a world unto himself;* and so all under Christ are frequently said to be reconciled to God through him; which was the point to be proved.

PROP. V.—*The first disciples were considered and addressed by the Apostles, as "adopted into the family of God."*

This adoption is presented by the Apostles as the great reason which called forth the Son of God. "God," says he, "sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might buy off those under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." "And because you *are sons*, he has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, *Abba*, Father."§ "You are, therefore, now sons of God."

Indeed, the same writer, in his letter to the Ephesians, goes still farther, and represents this adoption of Jews and gentiles into the rank and dignity of sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty, as the great object contemplated in God's predestination. "Having," says he, "predestinated, or before hand determinately pointed us out, for an *adoption* into the number of children by Jesus Christ, *for himself*, according to the good pleasure of his will."§ Another testimony must suffice on this point. "Beloved," says the Apostle John, "*now* are we *the sons of God;* and what manner of love God has bestowed upon us, that we should be called *sons of God!* If sons, then we are heirs of God —joint heirs with Christ."

§ Rom. v. 10. † 2 Cor. v. 18 ‡ Col. i. 20, 21.
|| Gal. iv. 6. § Eph. i. 5.

PROP VI.—*My sixth proposition is, that the first christians were taught by the inspired teachers to consider themselves as saved persons.*

Because of some ambiguity in the popular import of the term *saved,* when applied to the disciples of Christ, we shall define it as used in this proposition. I need not here descant upon the temporal saviours, and temporal salvations, which are so conspicuous in sacred history. I need not state that Noah and his family were saved from the judgment inflicted upon the Old World; the Israelites from the Egyptians, and from all their enemies; that Paul's companions were saved from the deep, and God's people, in all ages, in common with all mankind, from ten thousand perils to which their persons, their families, and their property have been exposed. It is not the present salvation of our bodies from the ills of this life; but it is *the salvation of the soul* from the guilt, pollution, and dominion of sin, "Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins." It is the salvation of the soul in this present life of which we speak. And here it ought to be clearly and distinctly stated, that there is a *present* and a *future* salvation, of which all Christians are to be partakers. The former is properly the *salvation of the soul,* and the latter is the *salvation of the body,* at the resurrection of the just. There are few professing Christianity, perhaps none, who do not expect a future salvation—the glory or salvation to be revealed in us at the last time. Peter, who uses this expression in the beginning of his first epistle, and who invites the saints to look forward to the salvation yet future, in the same connexion reminds them that they have *now* received the salvation of the soul. Indeed, the salvation of the soul is but the *first fruit* of the Spirit, and but an earnest until the adoption, "the redemption of the body" from the bondage of corruption. It is in this sense of the word that salvation was announced to all who submitted to the Lord Jesus, and hence it is in this connexion equivalent to a deliverance of the soul from the guilt, pollution, and dominion of sin. Having thus defined the present salvation of the soul, I proceed to the proof of my sixth proposition, viz. that the first Christians were taught by their inspired teachers to consider themselves as *saved persons.*

Peter, on Pentecost, exhorted the Jews to *save themselves* from that untoward generation, by reforming and being

"immersed for the remission of their sins in the name of the Lord Jesus." Luke, in recording the success attendant on Peter's labours, expresses himself thus: "And the Lord added, daily, *the saved* to the congregation."§ Those who obeyed the gospel were recorded by Luke as "*the saved.*" The king's translators supplied out of their own system the words "*should be.*" They are not in any copy of the Greek scriptures. Such is the first application of the words "*the saved*" in the Christian scriptures.

Paul uses the same words in the first letter to the Corinthians, and applies them to all the disciples of Jesus. "To the destroyed, the doctrine of the cross is foolishness; but to us, *the saved*, it is the power of God."† In the same letter he says of the gospel, "By which *you are saved* if you retain in your memory the word which I announce to you."‡ In his second letter he uses the same style, and distinguishes the disciples by the same designation: "We are through God a fragrant odour of Christ among *the saved*, and among the destroyed." The Ephesians, he declares, *are saved* through favour; and to Titus he says, "God has *saved* us, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his own mercy,"—by what means we shall soon hear Paul affirm. Promises of salvation to the obedient are to be found in almost every public address pronounced by the Apostles and first preachers. For the Saviour commanded them to assure mankind that every one that believed the gospel, and was immersed, should be saved. And, connecting faith with immersion, Peter averred that immersion *saved* us, purifying the conscience through the resurrection of Jesus.‖

While Christians are taught to expect and hope for a *future* salvation—a salvation from the power of death and the grave—a salvation to be revealed in the last time—they receive the first fruit of the Spirit, the salvation of the soul from guilt, pollution, and the dominion of sin, and come under the dominion of righteousness, peace, and joy. This is what Peter affirms of all the Christians in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia Minor, and Bithynia, to whom he thus speaks: "Jesus, whom having not seen, you love; on whom, not now looking, but believing, you rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory, receiving the reward of your faith, *the salvation of your souls.*"¶

These six propositions being each, and every one of them,

§ Acts ii. 47. + 1 Cor. i. 18. ‡ 1 Cor. xv. 2.
‖ Peter iii. 21. ¶ 1 Peter i. 8.

clearly sustained by the unequivocal testimony of God, now adduced, and as is well known to the intelligent disciple, by many more passages, equally plain and forcible, not adduced; we shall now engross them into one leading proposition, which we shall in this essay consider as not to be questioned—as irrefragably proved.

The converts made to Jesus Christ by the Apostles were taught to consider themselves pardoned, justified, sanctified reconciled, adopted, and saved; and were addressed as pardoned, justified, sanctified, reconciled, adopted, and saved persons, by all who first preached the gospel of Christ.

While this proposition is before us, it may be expedient to remark, that all these terms are expressive, not of any quality of mind—not of any personal attribute of body, soul, or spirit; but each of them represents, and all of them together represent, *a state or condition.* But though these terms represent state, and not character, there is a relation between state and character, or an influence which state has upon character, which makes the state of immense importance in a moral and religious point of view.

Indeed, the strongest arguments which the Apostles use with the Christians to urge them forward in the cultivation and display of all the moral and religious excellencies of character, are drawn from the meaning and value of the *state* in which they are placed. Because forgiven, they should forgive; because justified, they should live righteously; because sanctified, they should live holy and unblameably; because reconciled to God, they should cultivate peace with all men, and act benevolently towards all; because adopted they should walk in the dignity and purity of sons of God; because saved, they should abound in thanksgivings, praises and rejoicings, living soberly, righteously, and godly, looking forward to the blessed hope.

As this essay is designed for readers of the most common capacity, and most superficial education, I trust I may be permitted to speak still more plainly upon the difference between *state* and *character.* Childhood is a state; so is manhood. Now a person in a state of childhood may act sometimes like a person in a state of manhood, and those arrived at a state of manhood may, in character or behaviour, resemble those in a state of childhood. A person in the state of a son, may have the character of a servant; and a person in the state of a servant, may have the character of a son. This is not generally to be expected, though it sometimes happens. Parents and children, masters and

servants, husbands and wives, are terms denoting relations of states. To act in accordance with these states or relations is quite a different thing from being in any one of these states. Many persons enter into the state of matrimony, and yet act unworthily of it. This is true of many other states. Enough, we presume, is said to contradistinguish state and character, relations and moral qualities.

It is scarcely necessary to remark here, that as the disciples of Christ are declared to be in a pardoned, justified, sanctified, reconciled, adopted, and saved state, they are the only persons in such a state; and all others are in an unpardoned, unjustified, unsanctified, unreconciled, unadopted, and lost state.

When, then, is a change of state effected, and by what means? This is the great question soon to be discussed.

We are constrained to admit that a change in any one of these states necessarily implies, because it involves, a change in all the others. Every one who is *pardoned*, is justified, sanctified, reconciled, adopted, and saved; and so every one that is *saved*, is adopted, reconciled, sanctified, justified, and pardoned.

To illustrate what has already been proved, let us turn to some of the changes which take place in society as at present constituted. A female changes her state. She enters into the state of matrimony. So soon as she has surrendered herself to the affectionate government and control of him who has become her husband, she has not only become a wife, but a daughter, a sister, an aunt, a niece, &c.; and may stand in many other relations in which she before stood not. All these are connected with her becoming the wife of a person who stands in many relations. So when a person becomes Christ's, he is a son of Abraham, an heir, a brother; or is pardoned, justified, sanctified, reconciled, adopted, and saved.

To be *in* Christ, or *under* Christ, then, is to stand in these new relations to God, angels, and men; and to be out of him, or not under his mediatorship or government, is to be in, or under Adam only. It is to be in what is called "the state of nature," unpardoned, unjustified, unsanctified, unreconciled, and an alien from the family of God, lost in trespasses and sins.

These things premised, the question presents itself, *When are persons in Christ?* I choose this phrase in accommodation to the familiar style of this day. No person is *in* a house, *in* a ship, *in* a state, *in* a kingdom, but he that has

gone or is introduced *into* a house, *into* a ship, *into* a state, *into* a kingdom; so no person is *in* Christ but he who has been introduced *into* Christ. The Scripture style is most religiously accurate. We have the words "*in Christ*" and the words "*into Christ*" often repeated in the Christian Scriptures; but in no one place can the one phrase be substituted for the other. Hence, in all places when any person is said to be *in Christ,* it refers not to his conversion, regeneration, or putting on Christ, but to a state of rest or privilege subsequent to conversion, regeneration, or putting on Christ. But the phrase "*into Christ*" is always connected with conversion, regeneration, immersion, or putting on Christ. Before we are justified in Christ, live in Christ, or fall asleep in Christ, we must come, be introduced, or immersed into Christ. *Into* belongs only to verbs implying motion towards; and *in* to verbs implying rest, or motion in. He eats, sleeps, sits in the house. He walks into the field; he rides into the city. "Into Christ" is a phrase only applicable to conversion, immersion, or regeneration; or what is called putting on Christ, translation into his kingdom, or submission to his government.*

Presuming on the intelligence of our readers, so far as to suppose them assured that this is no mere verbal criticism,

* I am not desirous of diminishing the difference of meaning between immersing a person *in the name* of the Father, and *into the name* of the Father. They are quite different ideas. But it will be asked, is this a correct translation? To which I answer, most undoubtedly it is. For the preposition *eis* is that used in this place, and not *en*. By what *inadvertency* the King's translators gave it *in* instead of *into* in this passage, and elsewhere gave it *into* when speaking of the same ordinance, I presume not to say. But they have been followed by most modern translators, and with them they translate it *into* in other places where it occurs, in relation to *this institution:* For example—1 Cor. xii. 13: For by one spirit we are all immersed *into* one body. Rom. vi. 3: Dont you know that so many of you as were immersed *into* Christ, were immersed *into* his death? Gal. iii. 27: As many of you as have been immersed *into* Christ, have put on Christ. Now, for the same reason, they ought to have rendered the following passages the same way. Acts viii. 16: Only they were immersed *into* the name of the Lord Jesus. xix. 3. *Into* what name were you then immersed? When they heard this, they were immersed *into* the name of the Lord Jesus. 1 Cor. i. 13: Were you immersed *into* the name of Paul? Lest any should say, I had immersed *into* my own name. 1 Cor. x. 1. Our fathers were all immersed *into* Moses in the cloud and in the sea. Now, in all these places it is *eis*, and *en* is clearly marked in the last quotation. They were immersed *into* Moses—not *into* the cloud, and *into* the sea, but *in* the cloud, and *in* the sea. To be immersed *into* Moses is one thing, and *in* the sea is another. To be immersed *into* the name of the Father, and *in* the name of the Father are just as distinct. "*In the name*" is equivalent to, *by the authority of.* In the name of the King or commonwealth, is by the authority of the King or commonwealth. Now the question is, Did the Saviour mean that the disciples were to be immersed by the authority of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? If by the authority of the Father, for what purpose were they immersed? The authority by which any action is done is one thing, and the object for which it is done is another. None who can discriminate can think that it is one and the same thing to be immersed *in* the name of the Lord, and to be immersed *into* the name of the Lord Jesus. The former denotes the authority by which the action is performed—the latter the object for which it is performed. Persons are said to enter *into* matrimony, to enter *into* an alliance, to go *into* debt, to

but a discrimination that detects one of the pillars of an apostate church, I proceed to another preliminary proposition, which I choose to submit in the following words: *to wit*—

PROP. VII.—*A change of views, though it necessarily precedes, is in no case equivalent to, and never to be identified with, a change of state.*

In all the relations of this life, in all states or conditions of men, we feel the truth of this; and I would to heaven that our readers could see as plainly what is of infinitely more importance to them, that no change of heart is equivalent to, or can be substituted for, a change of state! A change of heart is the result of a change of views; and whatever can accomplish a change of views, may accomplish a change of heart or feeling, but a change of state always calls for something more ‡

Lavinia was the servant of Palemon, and once thought him a hard master. She changed her views of him, and her feeling were also changed towards him; still, however, she continued in the state of a handmaid. Palemon offered her first his heart, and then his hand, and she accepted them. He vowed, and she vowed, before witnesses, and she became his wife. Then, and not till then, was her state changed.

run *into* danger. Now to be immersed *into* the name of our Lord Jesus was a form of speech in ancient usage, as familiar and significant as any of the preceding. And when we analize these expressions, we find they all import that the persons are either under the obligations or influence of those things into which they are said to enter, or into which they are introduced. Hence those immersed into one body, were under the influences and obligations of that body. Those immersed into Moses, assumed Moses as their lawgiver, guide, and protector, and risked every thing upon his authority, wisdom, power, and goodness. Those who were immersed into Christ, put him on, or acknowledged his authority and laws, and were governed by his will; and those who were immersed into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, regarded the Father as the fountain of all authority—the Son as the only Saviour—and the Holy Spirit as the only advocate of the truth, and teacher of Christianity. Hence such persons as were immersed into the name of the Father, acknowledged him as the only living and true God—Jesus Christ, as his only begotten Son, the Saviour of the world—and the Holy Spirit, as the only successful advocate of the truth of Christianity upon earth.

‡ *State* here has respect to the whole person. It may be argued that state is as pertinently applied to the mind or heart as to the whole person; and that when the state of the mind is changed by a belief of God's testimony, the subject of that change is brought into as near a relation to God as he can be in this life; and as the kingdom of Jesus is a spiritual kingdom, he is as fit for admission into it, and for the enjoyment of its blessings, whenever his heart is changed from enmity to love as he ever can be: nay, in truth, is actually initiated into the kingdom of Jesus the moment his mind is changed,—and that to insist upon any personal act as necessary to admission, because such acts are necessary to admission into all the social and political relations in society, is an overstraining the analogies between things earthly and things heavenly. Not one of our opponents, so far as we remember, has thus argued. We have sometimes thought that they might have thus argued with incomparably more speciosity than appears in any of their objections.

She is no longer a *servant*—she is now a *wife*. A change of views and feelings led to this change in state; but let it be noted that this might not have issued in a change of state; for Maria, who was another handmaid of Palemon, and changed her views of him and her feelings towards him as much—nay more than did Lavinia; yet Maria lived and died the servant-maid of Palemon and Lavinia.

William Agricola and his brother Thomas, both Canadians, were once much opposed to the constitutional government of New England. They both changed their views, and, as a matter of course, their feelings were changed. William became a citizen of Rhode Island; but Thomas, notwithstanding his change of heart, lived and died a colonial subject of a British King.

John and James Superbus became great enemies to each other. They continued irreconciled for many years. At length a change of views brought about a change of heart; but this change for more than a year was concealed in the heart, and by no overt act appeared. They were not reconciled until mutual concessions were made, and pledges of a change of feeling were tendered and reciprocated. From enemies they became friends.

A thousand analogies might be adduced to show, that though a change of state often—nay, generally results from a change of feeling, and this from a change of views, yet a change of state does not necessarily follow, and is something quite different from, and cannot be identified with a change of heart. So in religion, a man may change his views of Jesus, and his heart may also be changed towards him; but unless a change of state ensues, he is still unpardoned, unjustified, unsanctified, unreconciled, unadopted, and lost to all christian life and enjoyment. For it has been proved that these terms represent states, and not feelings; condition, and not character; and that a change of views, or of heart, is not a change of state. To change a state, is to pass into a new relation; and relation is not sentiment nor feeling. Some *act*, then, constitutional, by stipulation proposed, sensible and manifest, must be performed by one or both the parties, before such a change can be accomplished. Hence, always in ancient times, the proclamation of the gospel was accompanied by some instituted act proposed to those who changed their views, by which their state was to be changed, and by which they were to stand in a new relation to Jesus Christ.

This brings us to "*the obedience of faith.*" From the time the proclamation of God's philanthropy was first made, there was an act of obedience proposed in it, by which the believers of the proclamation were put in actual possession of its blessings, and by conformity to which act, a change of state ensued.

To perceive what this act of faith is, it must be remarked, that where there is no *command*, there can be no *obedience*. These are correlate terms. A message, or proclamation, which has not a command in it, cannot be obeyed. But the gospel can be obeyed or disobeyed, and therefore, in it is a command. Lest any person should hesitate in a matter of such importance, we will prove.

PROP. VIII.—*That the gospel has in it a command, and as such must be obeyed.*

And here I need only ask, Who are they who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord? Paul replies, "They who know not God, and *obey not the gospel of his Son.*"* To "obey the gospel," and "to become obedient to the faith," were common phrases in the apostolic discourses and writings. "By whom we have received apostleship, in order to the *obedience of faith* in all nations, on account of his name."† "By the commandment of the everlasting God, the gospel is made known to all nations for the *obedience of faith.*"‡ "A great company of the priests became obedient to the faith."|| "But they have not all obeyed the gospel;"§ and "What shall be the end of them who *obey not the gospel*?"¶ From these sayings, it is unquestionably plain, that either the gospel itself, taken as a whole, is a command; or that in it there is a command through the obedience of which salvation is enjoyed.

The obedience of the gospel is called the obedience of faith, compared with the obedience of law. Faith in God's promise, through Jesus Christ, being the principle from which the obedience flows. To present the gospel in the form of a command is an act of favour, because it engages the will and the affections of men, and puts it in their power to have an assurance of their salvation, from which they would be necessarily excluded, if no such act of obedience was enjoined.

* Thess. i. 8. † Rom. i. 5. ‡ Rom. xvi. 26. || Acts vi. 7.
§ Rom x. 16. ¶ 1 Pet. iv. 17.

Whatever the act of faith may be, it necessarily becomes the line of discrimination between the two states before described. On this side, and on that, mankind are in quite different states. On the one side they are pardoned, justified, sanctified, reconciled, adopted, and saved:—on the other, they are in a state of condemnation. This act is sometimes called immersion, regeneration, conversion; and that this may appear obvious to all, we shall be at some pains to confirm and illustrate it.

That a relation, or a state, can be changed by an act, I need scarcely at this time attempt to prove; especially to those who know that the act of marriage, of naturalization, adoption, and of being born, changes the state of the subjects of such acts. But rather than attempt to prove that a state is, or may be, changed by an act, I should rather ask if any person has heard, known, or can conceive of a state being changed without some act? This point being conceded to us by all the rational, we presume not to prove. But a question may arise, whether *faith* itself, or an act of obedience to some command or institution, is that act by which our state is changed.

PROP. IX.—*That it is not faith, but an act resulting from faith, which changes our state, we shall now attempt to prove.*

No relation in which we stand to the material world; no political relation, or relation to society, can be changed by believing, apart from the acts to which that belief, or faith, induces us. Faith never made an American citizen, though it may have been the cause of many thousands migrating to this continent, and ultimately becoming citizens of these United States. Faith never made a man a husband, a father, a son, a brother, a master, a servant, though it may have been essentially necessary to all these relations, as a cause or principle, preparatory or tending thereunto. Thus, when, in scripture, men are said to be justified by faith, or to receive any blessing through faith, it is because faith is the principle of action, and as such, the cause of those acts by which such blessings are enjoyed. But the principle without those acts is nothing, and it is only by the acts which it induces to perform, that it becomes the instrument of any blessings to men.

Many blessings are metonymically ascribed to faith in the sacred writings. We are said to be justified, sanctified,

and purified by faith; to walk by faith; and to live by faith, &c., &c. But these sayings, as qualified by the Apostles, mean no more than by believing the truth of God, *we have access* into all these blessings. So that, as Paul explains, "by faith *we have access* into the favour in which we stand." These words he uses on two occasions,§ when speaking of the value of this principle, contrasted with the principle of law; and in his letter to the Hebrews, when he brings up his cloud of witnesses to the excellency of this principle, he shows that *by it* the ancients obtained a high reputation; that is, as he explains; by their acts of faith, in obedience to God's commands.

That faith by itself neither justifies, sanctifies, nor purifies is admitted by those who oppose immersion for the forgiveness of sins. They all include the idea of the *blood of Christ.* And yet they seem not to perceive, that in objecting to immersion as necessary to forgiveness in connexion with faith, their own arguments preclude them from connecting the blood of Christ with faith. If they admit that faith, apart from the blood of Christ, cannot obtain pardon, they admit all that is necessary to prove them inconsistent with themselves in opposing immersion for the remission of sins; or immersion as that act by which our state is changed.

The apostle Peter, when first publishing the gospel to the Jews, taught them, that they were not forgiven their sins by faith; but by an act of faith, by a believing immersion into the Lord Jesus. That this may appear evident to all, we shall examine his Pentecostian address, and his Pentecostian hearers.

Peter, now holding the keys of the kingdom of Jesus, and speaking under the commission for converting the world, and by the authority of the Lord Jesus, guided, inspired, and accompanied by the Spirit, may be expected to speak the truth, the whole truth, plainly and intelligibly, to his brethren the Jews. He had that day declared the gospel facts, and proved the resurrection and ascension of Jesus to the conviction of thousands. They believed and repented; —believed that Jesus was the Messiah—had died as a sin-offering, was risen from the dead, and crowned Lord of all. Being full of this faith, they inquired of Peter, and the other apostles, *what they ought to do* to obtain remission.

They were informed, that though they now believed, and repented, they were not pardoned; and must "*reform and be immersed for the remission of sins.*" Immersion for the

§ Rom. v. 2.—Eph. iii. 12

forgiveness of sins was *the command* addressed to these believers,—to these penitents, in answer to the most earnest question; and by one of the most sincere, candid, and honest speakers ever heard. This act of faith was presented as that act by which a change in their state could be effected; or, in other words, by which alone they could be pardoned. They who "gladly received this word were that day immersed;" or, in other words, that same day were converted, or regenerated, or obeyed the gospel. These expressions in the Apostle's style, when applied to persons coming into the kingdom, denote the same act, as will be perceived from the various passages in the writings of Luke and Paul. This testimony, when the speaker, the occasion, and the congregation are all taken into view, is itself alone sufficient to establish the point in support of which we have adduced it.

But the second discourse, recorded by Luke from the lips of the same Peter, pronounced in Solomon's portico, is equally pointed, clear, and full in support of this position. After he had explained the miracle which he had wrought in the name of the Lord Jesus, and stated the same gospel facts, he proclaims the same command:—"Reform, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out; or, "Reform, and turn to God, that so your sins may be blotted out; that seasons of refreshment from the presence of the Lord may come, and that he may send Jesus, whom the heavens must receive till the accomplishment of all the things which God has foretold," &c. Peter, in substituting other terms in this proclamation, for those used on Pentecost, does not preach a *new* gospel, but the *same* gospel in terms equally strong. He uses the same word in the first part of the command, which he used on Pentecost. Instead of "*be immersed,*" he has here "*be converted*" or "*turn to God;*" instead of "*for the remission of your sins,*" here it is, "*that your sins may be blotted out,*" and instead of "*you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit,*" here it is, "*that seasons of refreshment from the presence of the Lord may come,*"* On Pentecost it was 1, "Reform," 2. "Be immersed." 3. "For the

* There is no propriety in the common version of this member of the sentence—*when*, instead of *that*, "seasons of refreshment." Some make modern *revivals* "seasons of refreshment," such as these here alluded to. Then it would read, "That your sins may be blotted out in the times of revivals"—when revivals shall come! The term is *opos*, which, in this construction, as various critics have contended, is equivalent to "*that*" in our language. To promise a future remission, is no part of the gospel, nor of the apostolic proclamation. All christians experience seasons of refreshment in cordially obeying the gospel.

remission of sins." And 4. "You shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." In Solomon's portico, it was, 1. "Reform" 2. "Be converted." 3. "That your sins may be blotted out." And 4. "That seasons of refreshment from the presence of the Lord may come;" that "you may have righteousness,, peace, and joy, in a Holy Spirit. So read the different clauses in those two discourses to the Jews expressive of the same acts.

There is yet, in this discourse in the Portico, a very strong expression, declarative of the same gracious connexion between immersion and remission. It is the last period in the discourse. "Unto you, first, brethren of the Jews, God has raised up his son Jesus, sent him to *bless you*, every one of you, in the act of turning from your iniquities;" or, as we would say, in the act of conversion. Why the apostle Peter should have used "converted," or "turning to God," instead of "be immersed," is to the candid and unprejudiced reader of this narrative, very plain. After Pentecost, the disciples immersed on that day, *having turned to God* through Jesus, were spoken of by their brethren as *discipled* or *converted* to Jesus. The unbelieving Jews, soon after Pentecost, knew that the disciples called the immersed "*converted;*" and immersion being the act of faith which drew the line of demarcation between christians and Jews, nothing could be more natural than to call the act of immersion the converting of a Jew. The time intervening between these discourses was long enough to introduce and familiarize this style in the metropolis; so that when a Christian said, "*Be converted,*" or, "*Turn to God,*" every Jew knew the act of putting on the Messiah to be that intended. After the immersion of some gentiles into the faith, in the house and neighbourhood of Cornelius, it was reported that the gentiles were converted to God. Thus, the Apostles, in passing through the country, gave great joy to the disciples from among the Jews, "telling them of the conversion" or immersion of the gentiles.§ Indeed, in a short time it was a summary way of representing the faith, reformation, and immersion of disciples, by using one word for all. Thus "all the inhabitants of Sharon and Lydda turned," or, were converted to the Lord."†

While on the subject of conversion, we shall adduce, as a fourth testimony, the words of the Lord Jesus to Paul, when he called him. Paul is introduced by Luke in the Acts, telling what the Lord said to him when he received his

§ Acts xv. 3. † Acts xi.

apostleship. "I send you, Paul, by the faith that respects me, to open their eyes; to *turn* or *convert* them from darkness to light; and from the power of Satan to God; that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among the saved."† Every thing to be accomplished among the gentiles was to be effected by the faith or truth in Christ. The Saviour connected that with opening their eyes; their conversion from the ignorance and tyranny of sin and Satan; their forgiveness of sins; and, finally, an inheritance among the saved or sanctified. First, faith or illumination; then, conversion; then, remission of sins; then, the inheritance. All these testimonies concur with each other in presenting the act of faith—Christian immersion, frequently called *conversion*, as that act, inseparably connected with the remission of sin; or that change of state, of which we have already spoken.

One reason why we would arrest the attention of the reader to the substitution of the terms *convert* and *conversion*, for *immerse* and *immersion*, in the apostolic discourses and in the sacred writings, is not so much for the purpose of proving that the forgiveness of sins, or a change of state, is necessarily connected with that act of faith called "Christian immersion," as it is to fix the minds of the biblical students upon a very important fact, viz.: that no person is altogether discipled to Christ until he is immersed. It is true, that this view of the matter bears strongly upon the question; but it bears upon other great matters pertaining to the present and ancient order of things.

Discovering that much depends upon having correct views on this point, we have carefully examined all those passages were "conversion," either in the common version, or in the new version, or in the original, occurs; and have found an uniformity in the use of this term, and its compounds and derivatives, which warrant the conclusion that no person was said to be converted until he was immersed; and that all persons who were immersed, were said to be converted. If any apostatized, and were again converted, it was in that sense in which our Lord applied the word to Peter, "When you are *converted*, strengthen your brethren;" or, as James used in his letter, when he said, "If any of you err from the truth, and one convert him, let him know that he who converts a transgressor from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and hide a multitude of sins."

The commission for converting the world, teaches that

† Acts xxvi. 17, 18.

immersion was necessary to discipleship: for Jesus said, "Convert the nations, immersing them into the name," &c. and "teaching them to observe," &c. The construction of the sentence fairly indicates that no person can be a disciple, according to the commission, who has not been immersed: *for the active participle, in connexion with an imperative, either declares the manner in which the imperative shall be obeyed, or explains the meaning of the command.* To this I have not found an exception:—for example,—"Cleanse the house, sweeping it." "Cleanse the garment, washing it," shows the manner in which the command is to be obeyed, or explains the meaning of it. Thus, "Convert (or disciple) the nations, immersing them, and teaching them to observe," &c., expresses the manner in which the command is to be obeyed.

If the Apostles had only preached, and not immersed, they would not have converted the hearers according to the commission; and if they had immersed, and not taught them to observe the commands of the Saviour, they would have been transgressors. A disciple, then, according to the commission, is one that has heard the gospel, believed it, and been immersed. A disciple, indeed, is one that continues in keeping the commandments of Jesus.*

* The following examples of the above general rule illustrate its value and certainty:—"Let us offer up the sacrifice of praise to God, *confessing* to his name."—Heb. xiii. 15. "Let us go forth to him out of the camp, *bearing* his reproach."—Heb. xiii. 13. "Be an approved workman, *rightly dividing* the word of truth."—2 Tim. ii. 15. "Guard the precious deposit, *avoiding* profane babblings."—1 Tim. vi. 20. "Observe these things without prejudice, *doing* nothing by partiality." 1 Tim. v. 21. Pray every where, *lifting* up holy hands."—1 Tim. ii. 8. "Walk in wisdom to them that are without, *gaining* time."—Col. iv 5. "Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, *giving thanks* to God."—Col. iii. 17. "Speak the truth, *putting* away lying."—Eph. iv. 25. "Be not vain glorious, *provoking* one another."—Gal. v. 26. "Convert the nations, *baptizing* them," &c. &c. Now, do not all these participles define their respective imperatives, or show the way or manner in which the command should be obeyed? Many similar examples may be found in all the sacred writings.

This rule has passed through a fiery trial. I have only been more fully convinced of its generality and value. There is no rule in the English syntax more general in its application. I would only add, that the participle does not always express every thing in the command; but it always points out something emphatically in the intention of the imperative, and without which the injunction cannot be suitably and fully performed.

We have, however, no need of this rule, nor of any thing not generally conceded to establish the point before us; for the New Testament and

PROP. X.—*I now proceed to show that immersion and washing of regeneration are two Bible names for the same act, contemplated in two different points of view.*

The term *regeneration* occurs but twice in the common version of the New Testament, and not once in the Old Testament. The first is Matt. xix. 28, "You that have followed me in the regeneration, when the Son of man shall sit on the throne of his glory, you also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel." Dr. George Campbell, following the punctuation adopted by Griesbach, and substituting the word *renovation* instead of *regeneration* renders it, "That, at the *renovation*, when the Son of man shall be seated on his glorious throne, you, my followers, sitting also upon twelve thrones," &c. *Genesis* being the term used for *creation, palingenesia*, denotes the new creation—either literally at the resurrection of the dead, or figuratively, at the commencement of the Christian era, or at the commencement of the millennium. Josephus, the Jew, called the return of Israel to their own land and institution, "The Regeneration," or "Palingenesia."

No writer of any note, critic, or expositor, supposes that *regeneration* in Matt. xix. applies to what is, in theology, called the *new birth, or regeneration of the soul*—not even the Presbyterian Matthew Henry, nor Dr. Whitby, Campbell, Macknight, Thompson; nor, indeed, any writer we recollect ever to have read. Regeneration in this passage denotes a state, a new state of things. In the same sense we often use the term. The American revolution was the regeneration of the country, or the government, The commencement of the Christian era, was a regeneration—so will be the creation of the new heavens and new earth. As this is so plain a matter, and so generally admitted, we proceed to the second occurrence of this term.

"God has saved us by *the washing of regeneration*, and renewing of the Holy Spirit."† God has saved us through the *bath of regeneration*, and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. This is the second time the word *regeneration* is found in the New Testament; and here it is conceded by the most learned Pædobaptists and Baptists, that it refers to immersion. Though I have been led to this conclusion from

all antiquity teach, that, so long as the Apostles lived, no one was regarded as a disciple of Christ who had not confessed his faith, and was immersed.

† Titus iii. 5.

my views on the Christian religion, yet I neither hold it myself, nor justify it to others on this account. I choose rather to establish it by other testimonies, than by those who agree with me in the import of this institution. Amongst these I shall place Dr. James Macknight, formerly prolocutor or moderator of the Presbyterian church of Scotland, and translator of the apostolic epistles. One of his notes upon Titus iii. 5. is in the following words:—"Through the bath of regeneration." "Through *baptism;* called the bath of regeneration, not because any change in the nature" (but I would say in the *state*) "of the baptized person is produced by baptism; but because it is an emblem of the purification of his soul from sin." He then quotes in proof (Acts xxii. 16) "Arise, and be immersed, and wash thee from thy sins."—*Paul.* He supports this view also from Ephesians v. 26, and John iii. 5. "The bath of regeneration" is, then, according to this learned Pædobaptist, Christian immersion.

Parkhurst, in his Lexicon upon the word *loutrom,* connects this same *phrase,* the washing or bath of regeneration, with Ephesians v. 26, and John iii. 5, as alluding to immersion. So say all the critics, one by one, as far as I know. Even Matthew Henry, the good and venerable Presbyterian commentator, concedes this point also, and quotes Ephesians v. 26, Acts xxii. 16, and Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, in support of the conclusion, that the *washing of regeneration* refers to baptism.

Our opponents themselves being judges, we have gained this point, viz. that the only time the phrase *washing of regeneration* occurs in the New Testament, with a reference to a personal change, it means, or is equivalent to, immersion. *Washing of regeneration and immersion are, therefore, two names for the same thing.* Although I might be justified in proceeding to another topic, and in supposing this point to be fully established, I choose rather, for the sake of *the slow to apprehend,* to fortify this conclusion by some other testimonies and arguments.

As regeneration is taught to be equivalent to *"being born again,"* and understood to be of the same import with a new birth, we shall examine it under this metaphor. For, if immersion be equivalent to regeneration, and regeneration be of the same import with being born again, then being born again, and being immersed, is the same thing; for this plain reason, that things which are equal to the same thing, are equal to one another. *All must admit, that no*

person can be born again of that which he receives. For, as no person is born naturally—so no person can be born again, or born metaphorically—of that which he receives. It destroys the idea, the figure, the allusion, and every thing else which authorizes the application of those words to any change which takes place in man, to suppose that the subject of the new birth, or regeneration, is born again of something which he has received. This single remark shows the impropriety and inaccuracy of thought; or perhaps, the want of thought, which the popular notions of regeneration sanction and sanctify.

In being born naturally, there is the begetter, and that which is begotten. These are not the same. The act of being born is different from that which is born. Now the Scriptures carry this figure through every prominent point of coincidence. There is the begetter. "Of his own will he has begotten or impregnated us," says James the Apostle. "*By the word of truth,*" as the incorruptible seed; or as Peter says, "We are born again, not from corruptible, but from incorruptible seed, the word of God, which endureth for ever." But when the act of being born is spoken of, then the water is introduced. Hence, before we come into the kingdom, we are born of water.

The Spirit of God is the begetter, the gospel is the seed; and being thus begotten, and quickened, we are born of the water. A child is alive before it is born, and the act of being born only changes its state, not its life. Just so in the metaphorical birth. Persons are begotten by the Spirit of God, impregnated by the Word, and born of the water.

In one sense a person is born of his father; but not until he is first born of his mother. So in every place where water and the Spirit, or water and the Word, are spoken of, *the water stands first.* Every child is born of its father when it is born of its mother. Hence the Saviour puts the mother first, and the Apostles followed him. No other reason can be assigned for placing the water first. How uniform this style! Jesus says to Nicodemus, "You must be born again, or you cannot discern the reign of God." *Born again!* What means this? "Nicodemus, unless you are born of the water, and of the Spirit, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God." So Paul speaks to the Ephesians, verse 26. "He cleansed the church," or the disciples, "by *a bath of water, and the Word.*" And to Titus he says, "He saved the disciples *by the bath* of regeneration and

the renewing of the Holy Spirit." Now, as soon as, and not before, a disciple, who has been begotten of God, is born of water, he is born of God or of the Spirit. *Regeneration is, therefore, the act of being born.* Hence its connexion always with water. Reader, reflect—what a jargon, what a confusion, have the mystic doctors made of this metaphorical expression, and of this topic of regeneration. To call the receiving of any spirit, or any influence, or energy, or any operation upon the heart of man, regeneration, is an abuse of all speech, as well as a departure from the diction of the Holy Spirit, *who calls nothing personal regeneration except the act of immersion.**

Some curious criticisms have been offered, to escape the force of the plain declaration of Jesus and his Apostles upon this subject. Some say, that the words, "Except a man be born of water and Spirit," are not to be understood literally. Surely, then, if to be born of water does not mean to be born of water, to be born of the Spirit must mean something else than to be born of the Spirit. This

* That John iii. 5. and Titus iii. 5. refer to immersion, is the judgment of all the learned Catholics and Protestants of every name under heaven.

The authors and finishers of the Westminster creed,—one hundred and twenty-one divines, ten Lords, and twenty Commissioners of the Parliament of England, under the question 165, "*What is Baptism?*" quote John iii: 5. and Titus iii. 5. to prove that baptism is a washing with water, and a "*sign of remission of sins.*"

Michaelis, Horne, Lightfoot, Beveridge, Taylor, Jones of Nayland, Bishop Mant, Whitby, Burkit, Bishop Hall, Dr. Wells, Hooker, Dr. G. Ridley, Bishop Ryder:—but why attempt a list of great names. There are a thousand more assert it.

Bishop White says, that "regeneration, as detached from baptism, never entered into any creed before the 17th century.

Whitby, on John iii 5. says, "That our Lord here speaks of baptismal regeneration, *the whole Christian church* from its *earliest period* has *invariably taught.*'

Our modern "great divines" even in America have taught the same. Timothy Dwight, the greatest Rabbi of Presbyterianism the New World has produced, says vol. iv. pp 300, 301. "*to be born again*, is precisely the same thing as to be born of water and the Spirit."—"To be born of water is to be baptized." And how uncharitable!—He adds, "He who, understanding the nature and authority of this institution, refuses to be baptized, WILL NEVER ENTER INTO THE VISIBLE NOR INVISIBLE KINGDOM OF GOD." vol. iv. p. 302. So preached the president of Yale.

George Whitfield, writing on John iii. 5 says, "Does not this verse urge the *absolute necessity of water baptism? Yes*, when it may be had. But how God will deal with persons unbaptized, *we cannot tell.*" vol. iv. p. 355. I say with him, *we cannot tell with certainty.* But I am of opinion, that when a neglect proceeds from a simple mistake or sheer ignorance, and when there is no aversion, but a will to do every thing the Lord commands, the Lord will admit into the everlasting kingdom those who by reason of this mistake, never had the testimony of God assuring them of pardon or justification here, and consequently, never did fully enjoy the salvation of God on earth. But I will say with the renowned president of Yale, that "he who, understanding the nature and authority of this institution refuses to be baptized, will never enter the visible nor invisible kingdom of God." By the "visible and invisible kingdom," he means the kingdom of grace and glory. He adds on the same page, "he who persists in this act of rebellion against the authority of Christ will never belong to his kingdom." vol. iv. p. 302.

John Wesley asserts that "by baptism we enter into *covenant with God*, an everlasting covenant, are admitted into the church, made members of Christ, made the children of God. *By water* as the *means*, the water of baptism, we are regenerated or born again."—[Preservative, pp. 146—159.]

is so fanatical and extravagant as to need no other exposure. He who cannot see the propriety of calling immersion a being born again, can see no propriety in any metaphor in common use. A resurrection is a new birth. Jesus is said to be the *first born* from the dead: because the first who rose from the dead to die no more. And, surely, there is no abuse in speech, but the greatest propriety in saying, that he who has died to sin, and been buried in water, when raised up again out of that element, is born again, or regenerated. If Jesus was born again when he came out of a sepulchre, surely he is born again who is raised up out of the grave of waters.

Those who are thus begotten, and born of God, are children of God. It would be a monstrous supposition, that such persons are not freed from their sins. *To be born of God, and born in sin, is inconceivable.* Remission of sins is as certainly granted to *"the born of God,"* as life eternal, and deliverance from corruption, will be granted to the *children of the resurrection,* when born from the grave.

To illustrate what has, we presume to say, been now proved, we shall consider *political regeneration.* Though the term *regeneration* is laxly employed in this association, yet by such a license of speech we may illustrate this subject to the apprehension of all. Yes: the whole subject of faith, change of heart, regeneration, and character.

All civilized nations and kingdoms have constitutions; and in their constitutions, they have declared who are members of the social compact. Besides those who constitute the community at the time a constitution is adopted, they say who shall compose the community in all time future; that is, who shall be admitted into it, and by what means they shall become members of it. They have always decreed, that their own posterity shall inherit their political rights and immunities. But they have also ordained that foreigners; that is, members of other communities, may become, by adoption, or naturalization, citizens, or fellow members of the same community. But they have, in their wisdom and benevolence, instituted a rite, or form of adoption, which form has much meaning; and which, when submitted to, changes the state of the subject of it. Now, as the Saviour consented to be called a *king,* and to call the community over which he presides, a *kingdom,* it was because of the analogy between these human institutions, and his institution; and for that purpose, not of confounding, but

of aiding the human mind in apprehending and comprehending the great object of his mission to the world. And it is worthy of the most emphatic attention, that it was WHEN SPEAKING OF A KINGDOM, HE SPOKE OF BEING BORN AGAIN. Yes: on that occasion, and on that occasion only, when he spoke of *entering into his kingdom,* did he speak of the necessity of BEING BORN AGAIN. And had he not chosen that figure, he would not have chosen the figure of *a new birth.* With these facts and circumstances before us, let us examine political regeneration as the best conceivable illustration of religious regeneration.

A. B. was born in the island of Great Britain, a native subject of George III., king of Great Britain. He was much attached to his native island,--to the people,--the manners and customs of his ancestors and kinsmen. With all these attachments still increasing, he grew up to manhood. Then he heard the report of this good land; of this large, fertile, and most desirable country. The country, the people, and the government were represented to him in the most favourable light. Sometimes these representations were exaggerated; but still he could separate the truth from the fable; and was fully persuaded, not only of the existence of these United States, but also of the eligibility of being a citizen thereof. He believed the testimony which he heard, resolved to expatriate himself from the land of his nativity, to imperil life and property, putting himself aboard of a ship, and bidding adieu to all the companions of his youth, his kinsmen, and dear friends. So full was his conviction, and so strong his faith, that old Neptune, and king Eolus, with all their terrors, could not appal him. He sailed from his native shores, and landed on this continent. He was, however, ignorant of many things pertaining to this new country and government; and on his arrival, asked for the rights and immunities of a citizen. He was told, that the civil rights of hospitality to a *stranger* could be extended to him as a *friendly alien;* but not one of the rights or immunities of a *citizen* could be his, unless he were born again. *"Born again!"* said he, in a disappointed tone, to Columbus, with whom he had his first conversation on the subject, "What do you mean by being born again?"

Columbus. You must be *naturalized,* or adopted as a citizen; or, what we call *born again.*

A. B. I do not understand you. How can a man be born when he is grown?

Col. That which is born of Great Britain is British, and that which is born of America is American. If, then, you would be an American citizen, you must be born of America.

A. B. "Born of America!" You astonish me! I have come to America, well-disposed towards the people and the country. I was once attached to England, but I became attached to the United States; and because of my faith, and attachments, I have come hither; and will you not receive me into your kingdom, because I could not help being born in England?

Col. Well-disposed as I am, and we are, to receive you, most assuredly I say to you, unless you are regenerated in a court-house, and be enfranchised by and before the judges, you can never become a citizen of these United States.

A. B. Yours is an arbitrary and despotic government. What airs of sovereignty you have assumed!

Col. By no means. Right reason, wisdom, policy, and benevolence for you; as well as the safety, dignity, and happiness of the whole community, require that every alien shall be naturalized, or made a citizen, before he exercise, or enjoy the rights of a citizen.

A. B. You are certainly arbitrary—if not in the thing itself, of regeneration—in the place, and manner in which it shall be done. Why, for instance, say, that it must be done in a *court-house?*

Col. I will tell you: because there are the *judges,* the *records,* and the *seal* of the government.

A. B. I understand you. Well, tell me, how is a man born again? Tell me plainly, and without a figure.

Col. With pleasure. You were born of your mother and of your father, when you were born in England; and you were born *legitimately,* according to the institutions of England. Well, then, you were born *of* England, as well as born *in* it, and were, therefore, wholly English. This was your first birth. But you have expatriated yourself, as your application here proves; I say, *sentimentally* you have expatriated yourself; but we must have a formal, *solemn pledge* of your renunciation; and we will give you a formal, solemn pledge of your adoption. You must *ex animo,* in the presence of the judges, and the recorders, renounce all allegiance to every foreign prince and potentate, and especially to His Majesty the King of Great Britain.

A. B. Is that the thing? I can, with all my heart, renounce all *political* allegiance to every foreign prince and government. Is that all? I have, then, no objection to that.

Col. There is this also: You are not only to renounce all political allegiance; but you must also, from the soul, solemnly vow, in the presence of the same judges and recorders, that you will adopt, and submit to, the constitution and government of these United States.

A. B. I can do that also. I can renounce, and I can adopt. Nor do I object to the place where it shall be done. But, pray, what solemn pledge will *you give me?*

Col. So soon as you have vowed renunciation, and adopting, in the presence of the judges and recorders, we will give you a certificate, with a *red seal*, the *seal of state*, attached to it, stating that you, having now been naturalized, or born according to our institutions, are born *of* America, and are now a son, an adopted son, of America. And that *red* seal indicates that the blood, the best blood of this government will be shed for you, to protect you and defend you; and that your life will, when called for, be cheerfully given up for your mother, *of* whom you have been politically born, as it would have been for your own natural, political mother, of whom your were first born.

A. B. To this I must subscribe. In my mother tongue it all means, that I give myself up politically to this government, and it gives itself up to me, before witness too. How soon, pray, after this new birth, may I exercise and enjoy all the rights of a citizen?

Col. They are yours the first breath you breathe under your new mother. It is true we have not, in these United States, any *symbol* through which a person is politically regenerated. We only ask a solemn pledge, and give one. Other nations have symbols. But we understand that the moment the vow is taken, the person is politically born again. And as every other child has all the rights of a child which it can exercise so soon as it inhales the air; so have all our political children all political rights so soon as the form of naturalization is consummated. But, remember, *not till then.*

A. B. You say other nations had their symbols. What do you mean by these?

Col. I mean that the naturalized had to submit to some emblematic rite, by which they were symbolically detached from every other people, and introduced among those who adopted them, and whom they adopted. The Indian nations wash all whom they adopt in a running stream, and impose this task upon their females. The Jews circumcised and washed all whom they admitted to the rights of their

institutions. Other customs and forms have obtained in other nations; but we regard simply the meaning of the thing, and have no symbol.

A. B. In this I feel but little interested. I wish to become a citizen of these United States; especially as I am informed I can have *no* inheritance among you, nor a *voice* in the nation, nor any immunity, unless I am born again.

Col. You must, then, submit to the institution; and I know, that so soon as you are politically born again, you will feel more of the importance and utility of this institution than you now can; and you will be just as anxious as I am, to see others submit to this wise, wholesome, and benevolent institution.

A. B. As my faith brought me to your shores; and as I approve your constitution and government, I will not (now that I understand your institutions) suffer an opportunity to pass. I will direct my course to the place where I can be born again.

I ought here to offer an apology for a phrase occurring frequently in this Essay, and in this dialogue. When we represent the subject of immersion as active, either in so many words, or impliedly, we so far depart from that style which comports with the figure of "*being born.*" For all persons are passive in being born. So, in immersion, the subject buries not himself, raises not himself; but is buried and raised by another. So that, in the act, the subject is always passive. And it is of the act alone of which we thus speak.

From all that has been said on *regeneration* and from the illustration just now adduced, the following conclusions must, we think, be apparent to all:—

First. Begetting and quickening necessarily precede being born.

Second. Being born, imparts no new life; but is simply *a change of state,* and introduces into *a new mode of living.*

Third. Regeneration or immersion—the former referring to the import of the act; and the latter term to the act itself—denote only the act of being born.

Fourth. God, or the Spirit of God, being the author of the whole institution, imparting to it its life and efficiency, is the *begetter,* in the fullest sense of that term. Yet, in a subordinate sense, every one skilful in the word of God who converts another, may be said to have begotten him whom he enlightens. So Paul says. "I have begotten

Onesimus in my bonds;" and, "I have begotten you, Corinthians, through the gospel."

Fifth. The gospel is declared to be *the seed;* the power and strength of the Holy Spirit to impart life.

Sixth. And the great argument pertinent to our object in this long examination of conversion and regeneration, is that which we conceive to be the most apparent of all other conclusions, viz.: that remission of sins, or coming into a state of acceptance, being one of the present immunities of the kingdom of heaven, cannot be enjoyed by any person before immersion. As soon can a person be a citizen before he is born, or have the immunities of an American citizen while an alien, as one enjoy the privileges of a son of God before he is born again. For Jesus expressly declares that he has not given the privilege of sons to any but to those born of God.* If, then, the present forgiveness of sins be a privilege and a right of those under the new constitution in the kingdom of Jesus; and, if being born again, or being born of *water* and of the Spirit, is necessary to admission; and, if being born of *water* means *immersion,* as clearly proved by all witnesses; then, remission of sins cannot in this life be received or enjoyed previous to immersion. If there be any proposition regarding any item of the Christian institution which admits of clearer proof or fuller illustration than this one, I have yet to learn where it may be found.

But before we dismiss the sixth evidence, which embraces so many items, I beg leave to make a remark or two on the propriety of considering the term "immersion," as equivalent to the term "conversion."

"Conversion" is, on all sides, understood to be a turning to God. Not a thinking favourably of God, nor a repenting for former misdeeds; but an actual turning to God, in word and in deed. It is true that no person can be said to turn to God, whose mind is not enlightened, and whose heart is not well disposed towards God. All human actions, not resulting from previous thought or determination, are rather the actions of a machine, than the actions of a rational being. "He that comes to God," or turns to him, "must believe that God exists, and that he is a rewarder of every one who diligently seeks him." Then he will seek and find the Lord. An "external conversion" is no conversion at all. A turning to God with the lips, while the heart is far

* John i. 12.

from him, is mere pretence and mockery. But though I never thought any thing else since I thought upon religion, I understand "turning to God," taught in the new institution, to be a coming to the Lord Jesus—not a *thinking* about doing it, nor *repenting* that we have not done it;—but an *actual coming* to him. The question then is, Where shall we find him? Where shall we meet him? Nowhere on earth but in his institutions. "Where he records his name," there only can he be found; for there only has he promised to be found. I affirm, then, that the first institution in which we can meet with God, is the institution for remission. And here it is worthy of notice, that the Apostles, in all their speeches, and replies to interrogatories, never commanded an enquirer to pray, read, or sing, *as preliminary to coming; but always commanded and proclaimed immersion as the first duty, or the first thing to be done, after the belief of the testimony.* Hence, neither praying, singing, reading, repenting, sorrowing, resolving, nor waiting to be better, was the converting act. Immersion *alone* was that act of turning to God. Hence, in the commission to convert the nations, the only institution mentioned after proclaiming the gospel, was the immersion of the believers, as the divinely authorized way of carrying out and completing the work. And from the day of Pentecost to the final *Amen* in the revelation of Jesus Christ, no person was said to be converted, or to turn to God, until he was buried in, and raised up out of the water.

If it were not to treat this subject as one of doubtful disputation, I would say, that, had there not been some act, such as immersion, agreed on all hands to be the medium of remission, and the act of conversion and regeneration, the Apostles could not, with any regard to truth or consistency, have addressed the disciples as pardoned, justified, sanctified, reconciled, adopted, and saved persons. If all this had depended on some mental change, as faith, they could never have addressed their congregations in any other way than as the moderns do; and that is always in the language of doubt and uncertainty—hoping a little, and fearing much. This mode of address, and the modern, compared, is proof positive that they viewed the immersed through one medium, and we through another. They taught all the disciples to consider not only themselves as saved persons; but all whom they saw or knew to be immersed into the Lord Jesus. They saluted every one, on his coming out of

the water, as *saved*, and recorded him as such. Luke writes, "The Lord added *the saved* daily to the congregation.*

Whenever a child is born into a family, it is a brother or a sister to all the other children of the family; and its being born of the same parents, is the act causative and declarative of its fraternity. All is mental and invisible before coming out of the water; and as immersion is the first act commanded, and the first constitutional act; so it was in the commission, *the act* by which the Apostles were commanded to turn or convert those to God, who believed their testimony. In *this* sense, then, it is the converting act. No man can scripturally be said to be converted to God until he is immersed. How ecclesiastics interpret their own language is no concern of ours. We contend for the pure speech, and for the apostolic ideas attached to it.

To resume the direct testimonies declarative of the remission of sins by immersion, we turn to the gentiles. Peter was sent to the house of Cornelius to tell him and his family "words by which they might be saved." He tells those words. He was interrupted by the miraculous descent of the Holy Spirit. But it is to be noticed, that the testimony to which the Holy Spirit there affixed its seal, was the following words;—To *him* gave all the prophets witness, that every one who believes on him *shall receive remission of sins by his name.*" While speaking these words concerning remission of sins, by, or through, his name, the Holy Spirit in its marvellous gifts of tongues fell upon them.

Many seeing so much stress laid upon faith or belief, suppose that all blessings flow from it *immediately*. This is a great mistake. Faith, indeed, is the principle, and the distinguished principle, of this economy; but it is only the principle of action. Hence we find the name or person of Christ, always interposed between faith and the cure, mental or corporeal. The woman, who touched the tuft of the mantle of Jesus, had as much faith before as after; but though her faith was the cause of her putting forth her hand, and accompanied it, *she was not cured until the touch.* That great type of Christ, the brazen serpent, cured no Israelite simply by faith. The Israelites, as soon as they were bitten, believed it would cure them. But yet they were not cured as soon as bitten; nor until *they looked* to the serpent. It was one thing to believe that looking at the serpent would cure them; and another to look at it. It

* Acts ii.

was *the faith* remotely; but *immediately, the look*, which cured them. It was not faith in the waters of Jordan that healed the leprosy of Naaman the Syrian; it was immersing himself in it, according to the commandment. It was not faith in the pool of Siloam that cured the blind man, whose eyes Jesus anointed with clay; it was his washing his eyes in Siloam's water. Hence, the imposition of hands, or a word, or a touch, or a shadow, or something from the persons of those anointed with the Holy Spirit, was the *immediate* cause of all the cures recorded in the New Testament. It is true, also, that without faith it is impossible to be healed; for in some places Jesus could not work many miracles because of their unbelief. It is so in all the moral remedies and cures. It is impossible to receive the remission of sins without faith. In this world of means, (however it may be in a world where there are no means) it is impossible to receive any blessing through faith without the appointed means. *Both are indispensable.* Hence, *the name* of the Lord Jesus is interposed between faith and forgiveness, justification and sanctification, even where immersion into that name is not detailed. It would have been unprecedented in the annals of the world for the historian always to have recorded all the circumstances of the same institution on every allusion to it; and it would have been equally so for the Apostles to have mentioned it always in the same words. Thus, in the passage before us, the *name* of the Lord is only mentioned. So, in the first letter to the Corinthians, the disciples are represented as saved, as washed, as justified, sanctified *by the name* of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. The frequent interposition of the name of the Lord between faith and forgiveness, justification, sanctification, &c., is explained in a remark in James' speech in Jerusalem.* It is the application of an ancient prophecy concerning the conversion of the gentiles. The gentiles are spoken of as turning to or seeking the Lord. But who of them are thus converted? "Even all the gentiles *upon whom* my name is called." It is, then, to those *upon whom* the name of the Lord is called, that the name of the Lord communicates remission, justification, &c.

Some captious spirits need to be reminded, that as they sometimes find forgiveness, justification, sanctification, &c. ascribed to grace, the blood of Christ, and to the name of the Lord, without an allusion to faith; so we sometimes find

* Acts xv. 17.

faith, and grace, and the blood of Christ, without an allusion to water. Now, if they have any reason and right to say that faith is understood in the one case; we have the same reason and right to say that water or immersion is understood in the other. For their argument is, that in sundry places this matter is made plain enough. This is, also, our argument—in sundry places this matter is made plain enough. This single remark cuts off all their objections drawn from the fact, that immersion is not always found in every place where *the name* of the Lord, or *faith*, is found connected with forgiveness. Neither is grace, the blood of Christ, nor faith, always mentioned with forgiveness. When they find a passage where remission of sins is mentioned without immersion, it is weak or unfair in the extreme to argue from that, that forgiveness can be enjoyed without immersion. IF THEIR LOGIC BE WORTH ANYTHING, IT WILL PROVE THAT A MAN MAY BE FORGIVEN WITHOUT GRACE, THE BLOOD OF JESUS, AND WITHOUT FAITH; FOR WE CAN FIND PASSAGES, MANY PASSAGES, WHERE REMISSION, OR JUSTIFICATION, SANCTIFICATION, OR SOME SIMILAR TERM OCCURS, AND NO MENTION OF EITHER GRACE, FAITH, OR THE BLOOD OF JESUS.

As this is the pith, the marrow, and fatness of all the logic of our most ingenious opponents on this subject, I wish I could make it more emphatic, than by printing it in capitals. I know some editors, some of our Doctors of Divinity, some of our most learned declaimers, who make this argument, which we unhesitatingly call a genuine sophism, the alpha and the omega of their speeches against the meaning and indispensable importance of immersion, or regeneration.

The New Testament would have been a curious book, if every time *remission of sins* was mentioned, or alluded to, it had been preceded by *grace, faith, the blood of Jesus, immersion, &c. &c.* But now the question comes, which, to the rational, is the emphatic question—WHETHER DO THEY THINK, BELIEVE, TEACH AND PRACTISE MORE WISELY AND MORE SAFELY, WHO THINK, BELIEVE AND TEACH, THAT GRACE, FAITH, THE BLOOD OF JESUS, THE NAME OF THE LORD, AND IMMERSION, ARE ALL ESSENTIAL TO IMMEDIATE PARDON AND ACCEPTANCE; OR THEY WHO SAY THAT FAITH ONLY, GRACE ONLY, THE BLOOD OF CHRIST ONLY, THE NAME OF THE LORD ONLY,—AND IMMERSION NOT AT ALL? To all men, women, and children of common sense, this question is submitted.

It is, however, to me, admirable, that the remission of sins should be, not merely unequivocally, but so repeatedly declared to be through *immersion*, as it is in the apostolic writings. And here I would ask the whole thinking community, one by one, whether, if the whole race of men had been assembled on Pentecost, or in Solomon's portico, and had asked Peter the same question which the convicted proposed, would he, or would he not, have given them the same answer? Would he not have told the whole race to reform, and be immersed for the remission of their sins? or, to reform and *be converted*, that their sins might be blotted out?—to arise, and be immersed, and wash away their sins? If he would not, let them give a reason; and if they say he would, let them assign a reason why they do not go and do likewise.

Some have objected against the "seasons of refreshment," or the comforts of the Holy Spirit being placed subsequent to "conversion," or "regeneration," or "immersion," (for, when we speak scripturally, we must use these terms as all descriptive of the same thing,) because the gifts of the Holy Spirit were poured out upon the gentiles before immersion. They see not the design of thus welcoming the gentiles into the kingdom. They forget the comparison of the gentiles to a returning prodigal, and his father going to meet him, even when he was yet a great way off. God had welcomed the first fruits of the Jews into his kingdom, by a stupendous display of spiritual gifts, called *the baptism of the Holy Spirit*, before any one of the Jews had been immersed into the Lord Jesus. And, as Peter explains this matter in Cornelius' case, it appears that God determined to make no difference between the Jews and the gentiles in receiving them into his kingdom. Hence says Peter, "he gave them *the same gift* which he gave to us Jews *at the beginning* (never since Pentecost). Thus Peter was authorized to command those gentiles to be immersed by the authority of the Lord, no man daring to forbid it. But these gifts of the Holy Spirit differed exceedingly from the seasons of refreshment, or righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit, the common enjoyment of all who were immersed into the name of the Lord Jesus for the remission of sins.

Let it be noted here, as pertinent to our present purpose, that as the apostle Peter was interrupted by the baptism of the Holy Spirit when he began to speak of the forgiveness of sins by *the name* of the Lord Jesus, so soon as he saw the Lord had received them, he commanded them to be im-

mersed by the authority of the Lord. And here I must propose another question to the learned, and the unlearned, How comes it to pass, that though once, and only once, it is commanded that the nations that believed should be immersed into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; and though we read of no person being immersed into his name in this way; I say, how comes it to pass, that all sects use these words without a scruple, and baptize or sprinkle in this name; when more than once, persons are commanded to be immersed *for the remission of sins*, and but a few of the proclaimers can be induced to immerse for the remission of sins, though so repeatedly taught and proclaimed by the Apostles? Is one command unsupported by a single precedent, sufficient to justify this practice of Christians; and sundry commands and precedents from the same authority insufficient to authorize or justify us in immersing for the remission of sins? Answer this who can: I cannot upon any other principle than, that the tyrant, *custom*, who gives no account of his doings, has so decreed.

I come now to another of the direct and positive testimonies of the Apostles, showing that immersion for the remission of sins is an institution of Jesus Christ. It is the address of Ananias to Saul: "Arise, and be immersed, and wash away your sins, calling upon the name of the Lord." On this testimony we have not as yet descanted in this Essay. It has been mentioned, but not examined.

Paul, like the Pentecostian hearers, when convinced of the truth of the pretensions of the Messiah, asked what *he* should do. He was commanded to go into Damascus, and it should be told him there what to do. It was told him in the words now before us. But, say some, this cannot be understood literally.

For experiment, then, take it figuratively. Of what was it figurative? Of something already received? Of pardon formerly bestowed? A figure of the past? This is anomalous. I read one writer, and but one, who converted this into a *commemorative* baptism, like Israel's commemorating the escape from Egypt, or Christians commemorating the Lord's death. And, if I do not mistake, some preacher said it was a figurative expression similar to "*This is my body*"! One whom I pressed out of all these refuges, was candid enough to say, he really did not know what it meant; but it could not mean that Paul was to "be baptized for the remission of his sins!"

"To wash away sins" is a figurative expression. Like other metaphoric expressions, it puts the resemblance in place of the proper word. It necessarily means something analogous to what is said. But we are said to be washed from our sins, in or by the blood of Christ. But even "*washed in blood*" is a figurative expression, and means something analogous to washing in water. Perhaps we may find, in another expression, a means of reconciling these strong metaphors. Rev. vii. 14. "They have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Here are two things equally incomprehensible—to wash garments *white* in blood, and to *wash away* sins in water! An efficacy is ascribed to water which it does not possess; and, as certainly, an efficacy is ascribed to blood which it does not possess. If blood can *whiten* or cleanse garments, certainly water can *wash away* sins. There is, then, a transferring of the efficacy of blood to water; and a transferring of the efficacy of water to blood. This is a plain solution of the whole matter. God has transferred, in some way, the whitening efficacy, or cleansing power, of water to blood; and the absolving, or pardoning power, of blood to water. This is done upon the same principle as that of accounting faith for righteousness. What a gracious institution! God has opened a fountain for sin,—for moral pollution. He has given it an extension far and wide as sin has spread: far and wide as water flows. Wherever water, faith, and the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are, there will be found the efficacy of the blood of Jesus. Yes: as God first gave the efficacy of water to blood, he has now given the efficacy of blood to water. This, as was said, is figurative; but it is not a figure which misleads, for the meaning is given without a figure, viz.: immersion for the remission of sins. And to him that made the washing of clay from the eyes the washing away of blindness, it is competent to make the immersion of the body in water efficacious to the washing away of sin *from the conscience.*

From the conscience, I say, for there its malignity is felt, and it is only in releasing the conscience from guilt, and its consequences—fear and shame, that we are released from the dominion of sin, or washed from its pollution in this world. Thus immersion, says Peter, *saves* us: not by cleansing the body from its filth, but the conscience from its guilt; yes, immersion saves us by burying us with Christ, raising us with him, and so our consciences are purified from dead works to serve the living God. Hence our Lord gave

so much importance to immersion in giving the commission to convert the world—"*He that believes, and is immersed, shall be saved.*"

But, while viewing the water and the blood as made to unite their powers, as certainly as Jesus came by water and blood, we ought to consider another testimony given to this gracious combination of powers, by Paul the Apostle: "Being sprinkled in heart from an evil conscience, and being washed in body with clean water."* The application of water, the cleansing element, to the body, is made in this gracious institution to reach the conscience, as did the blood of sprinkling under the law.

Some ask, How can water, which penetrates not the skin, reach the conscience? They boast of such an objection as exhibiting great intellect and good sense; but little do they think, that in so talking, they laugh at, and mock the whole divine economy under the old and new institutions: for, I ask, did not the sacrifices and Jewish purifications some way reach the conscience of that people!! If they did not, it was all mere frivolity throughout. And can eating bread, and drinking wine, not influence, nor affect, the soul! And cannot *the breath* of one man pierce the heart of another, and so move his blood as to make his head a fountain of tears! He who thus objects to water, and the import of immersion, objects to the whole remedial institution as taught by Moses and by Christ, and insults the wisdom and goodness of God in the whole scheme of salvation. And he who objects to water because it can only take away the filth of the flesh, ought rather to object to blood because it rather besmears and pollutes than cleanses the body, and cannot touch the soul. But all such reasoners are foolish talkers. To submit to God's institution is our wisdom and our happiness. The experience of the myriads who were immersed for the remission of their sins, detailed in the Christian Scriptures, to say nothing of those immersed in our times, is worth more than volumes of arguments from the lips and pens of those who can only regard and venerate the traditions of their fathers; because it is presumed their fathers were wiser, and more able to judge correctly than their sons.

But as it is not our object to quote, and expatiate upon all the sacred testimonies, direct and allusive to immersion for the remission of sins, we shall close the proof and illustration of this proposition with an incidental allusion to the

* Hebrews x. 22.

cleansing efficacy of this institution, found in the 2d Epistle of Peter.† After enumerating the addition to faith necessary to secure our calling and election, of which *courage* is the first; and charity, or universal love, the last; the Apostle says, that "he who has not these things is blind, shutting his eyes, and forgetting that he was *purified from his old sins.*" I need not here say that this is, perhaps (and certainly as far as I know), universally understood to refer to Christian immersion. The "*old sins,*" or "*former sins,*" can, we presume, mean no other sins than those washed away in immersion. No person has yet attempted to shew that these words can import any thing else. It is one of the most unequivocal, and, because incidental, one of the most decisive proofs that in Peter's judgment, all former sins were remitted in immersion. With Peter we began our proof of this position, and with Peter we shall end our proof of it. He first proclaimed reformation for the remission of sins; and in his last and farewell letter to the Christian communities, he reminds them of that purification from sin, received in and through immersion; and in the strongest terms cautions them against forgetting that they were so purified.

Were any person to reason upon the simple import of the action commanded by Jesus, I think it might be made apparent from the action itself, in its two parts, *the burial and the resurrection,* that it must import every thing which we have heard the Apostles ascribe to it. Corruption goes down into the grave literally; but does corruption come forth out it? Is there no change of state in the grave? Who is it that expects to come forth from the grave in the same state in which he descends into it? The first-born from the dead did not; nor shall any of them who fall asleep in him. How, then, can it be, that any person buried with Christ in immersion, can rise with Christ, and not rise in a new state! Surely the Apostle exhorts to a new life from the change of state effected in immersion. "Since, indeed, you have *risen* with Christ, set your affections on things above. Walk in a new life."

Again, and in the last place here:—Is a child in the same state after, as before its birth? Is not its state changed? And does it not live a new life, compared with its former mode of living? As new-born babes desire the milk of the breast, so let the newly regenerate desire the unadulterated milk of the word, that they may grow thereby. Call im-

† 2 Peter i. 9.

mersion, then, a new birth, a regeneration, a burial and resurrection, and its meaning is the same. And when so denominated, it must import that change of state which is imported in putting on Christ,—in being pardoned, justified, sanctified, adopted, reconciled, saved; which was the great proposition to be proved and illustrated, and which, we think has been proved and illustrated by the preceding testimonies and reflections.

Though no article of Christian faith, nor item of Christian practice can legitimately rest upon any testimony, reasoning, or authority out of the sacred writings of the Apostles, were it only one day after their decease, yet the views and practices of those who were the contemporaries, or the pupils of the Apostles and their immediate successors, may be adduced as corroborating evidence of the truths taught, and the practices enjoined, by the Apostles; and, as such, may be cited: still bearing in mind, that where the testimony of this Apostle ends, Christian faith necessarily terminates. After this preliminary remark, I proceed to sustain the following proposition:—

PROP. XI.—*All the Apostolic Fathers, as they are called; all the pupils of the Apostles; and all the ecclesiastical writers of note, of the first four Christian centuries, whose writings have come down to us, allude to and speak of Christian immersion as the "regeneration" and "remission of sins" spoken of in the New Testament.*

This proposition I shall sustain by the testimony of those who have examined all Christian antiquity, and by citing the words of those usually called the Apostolic Fathers, and other distinguished writers of the first four hundred years. We shall first summon one whose name is familiar throughout christendom. Whether the writing be genuine or spurious, it is on all hands admitted to be a fragment of the highest antiquity:—

BARNABAS,

In his catholic epistle, chapter xi. says, "Let us now inquire whether the Lord took care to manifest any thing beforehand concerning water and the cross. Now, for the former of these, it is written to the people of Israel, how they will not receive that baptism which brings to them forgiveness of sins; but shall institute another to themselves that cannot. For thus saith the prophet, "Be astonished, O heavens! and let the earth tremble at it; because this people have done two great and wicked things: they have left me, the fountain of living waters, and have digged for themselves broken cisterns that can hold

no water. Is my holy mountain, Zion, a desolate wilderness? For she shall be as a young bird when its nest is taken away." 'Consider how he hath joined both the *cross* and the *water* together.' For this he saith, '*Blessed are they who, putting their trust in the cross, descend into the water;* for they shall have their reward in due time: then, saith he, 'will I give it them.' But as concerning the present time, he saith, 'Their leaves shall not fail.' Meaning thereby, that every word that shall go out of your mouth shall, through faith and charity, be to the conversion and hope of many. In like manner does another prophet speak: 'And the land of Jacob was the praise of all the earth;' magnifying thereby the vessels of his Spirit. And what follows? 'And there was a river running on the right hand, and beautiful trees grew up by it; and he that shall eat of them shall live for ever.' The signification of which is this:—*That we go down into the water full of sins and pollutions; but come up again bringing forth fruit; having in our hearts the fear and hope which are in Jesus by the Spirit:* 'And whosoever shall eat of them shall live for ever.' That is, whosoever shall hearken to those that call them, and shall believe, shall live for ever."

CLEMENT AND HERMAS.

The former gives no testimony on the subject. The latter deposes as follows:†

In speaking of a tower built upon the water, by which he signified the building of Christ's church, he thus speaks:—"Hear therefore, why the tower is built on the waters:—Because your life is saved, and shall be saved by water." In answer to the question, Why did the stones come up into this tower out of the deep? He says, "It was necessary for them to come up by (or *through*) water, that they might be at rest; for they could not otherwise enter into the kingdom of God: for, before any one *receives the name of the Son of God*, he is liable to death, but when he receives that *seal*, he is delivered from death, and assigned to life. Now that seal is *water*, into which persons go down liable to death, but come out of it assigned to life; for which reason to these also was this seal preached, and they made use of it, that they might enter into the kingdom of God."

Both Clement and Hermas wrote about the end of the first or beginning of the second century.

Hermas, moreover, deposes as follows in another work of his, called "The Commands of Hermas."‡

"And I said to him, I have even now heard from certain teachers that there is no other repentance besides that of *baptism*, when we go down into the water, and *receive the forgiveness of sins:* and after that we should sin no more, but live in purity. And he said to me, *Thou hast been rightly informed.*"

Having closely and repeatedly examined the Epistles of Clement; of Polycarp to the Philippians; of Ignatius, to the Ephesians; that to the Magnesians; that to the Trallians, the Romans, the Philadelphians, the Smyrnians, and his Epistle to Polycarp; together with the Catholic Epistle

† Book of Similitudes, chap. xvi. ‡ Com. 4. chap. iii.

of Barnabas, and the genuine works of Hermas, I can affirm that the preceding extracts are the only passages in all these writings that speak of immersion.

Having heard the Apostolic Fathers, as they are called, depose to the views of the pupils of the Apostles, down to A.D. 140, I will summon a very learned Pædobaptist antiquarian who can bring forward every writer and father down to the fifth century, and before we hear any of his witnesses, we shall interrogate him concerning his own convictions after he had spent years in rummaging all Christian antiquity:—

TESTIMONY OF DR. WALL, AUTHOR OF THE HISTORY OF INFANT BAPTISM.

Pray, Doctor, have you examined all the primitive writers, from the death of John down to the fifth century.

W. Wall. "I have."

And will you explicitly avow what was the established and universal view of all christians, public and private, for four hundred years from the nativity of the Messiah on the import of the saying (John iii. 5.). "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God?"

W. Wall. "There is not any one christian writer of any antiquity, in any language, but who understands it of *baptism;* and if it be not so understood, it is difficult to give an account how a person is born of *water*, any more than born of *wood*."†

Did all christians, public and private, and all the Christian writers from Barnabas to the times of Pelagius, (419,) as far as you know, continue to use the term *regenerate* as *only* applicable to immersion?

W. Wall. "The christians did in all ancient times, continue the use of this name '*regeneration*,' for *baptism*; so that they *never* use the word "*regenerate*,' or '*born again*,' but they mean, or denote by it, *baptism*. And almost all the quotations which I shall bring in this book shall be instances of it."‡

Did they not also substitute for "*baptism*" and "*baptize*," the words *renewed, sanctified, sealed, enlightened, initiated*, as well as *regenerated?*

W. Wall. "For to *baptize*, they use the following words:—Most commonly, *anagennao*, to regenerate; sometimes *kainopoieo* or *anakainizo*, to renew; frequently *agiazo*, to sanctify. Sometimes they call it *the seal*; and frequently, *illumination*, as it is also called, Heb. vi 4, and sometimes *teliosis*, initiation."§ "St. Austin, not less than a hundred times expresses *baptized* by the word *sanctified*."‖

We shall now hear some of W. Wall's witnesses; and I choose rather to introduce them from his own pen, as he cannot be supposed partial to the views I have presented in this Essay:—

JUSTIN MARTYR.

Justin Martyr wrote about forty years after John the

† 4th London edition, p. 116, vol. 1. A.D. 1819. ‡ Vol. 1. p. 21.
§ Vol 1. p. 8. ‖ p. 194.

Apostle died, and stands most conspicuous among the primitive Fathers. He addressed an apology to the Emperor Antoninus Pius. In this apology he narrates the *practices* of the christians, and the reasons of them. Concerning those who are persuaded and believe the things which are taught, and who promise to live according to them, he writes—

"Then we bring them to some place where there is water, and they are *regenerated* by the same way of *regeneration* by which we are *regenerated:* for they are washed in water *(en to udati)* in the name of God the Father and Lord of all things, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit: for Christ says, 'Unless you be regenerated you cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven; and every body knows it is impossible for those who are once generated (or born) to enter again into their mother's womb.'

"It was foretold by Isaiah, as I said, by what means they who should repent of their sins might escape them; and was written in these words, 'Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil,' &c.

"And we have been taught by the Apostles this reason for this thing. Because we being ignorant of our first birth, were generated by necessity (or course of nature) and have been brought up in ill customs and conversation; that we should not continue children of that necessity and ignorance, but of will (or choice) and knowledge, and should obtain *forgiveness of the sins* in which we have lived, by water (or in water). Then it is invoked over him that has a mind to be *regenerated*, the name of God the Father, &c. And this washing is called the *enlightening*."

As you trace the history of infant baptism, Mr. Wall, as nigh the apostolic times as possible, pray why do you quote Justin Martyr, who never mentions it?

W. Wall. "Because his is the most ancient account of *the way of baptizing* next the scripture, and shews the plain and simple manner of administering it. Because it shews that the christians of those times (many of whom lived in the days of the apostles) used the word '*regeneration*' (or, '*being born again*') for *baptism;* and that they were taught to do so by the Apostles. And because we see by it that they understood John iii. 5. of water baptism; and so did all the writers of these 400 years, NOT ONE MAN EXCEPTED."—p. 54.

Did any of the ancients use the word *matheuio* (to disciple) as it is used in the commission; or did they call the baptized *discipled?*

W. Wall. "Justin Martyr, in his second apology to Antoninus, uses it. His words are:—'Several persons among us, of sixty or seventy years old, of both sexes, *who were discipled* (*matheteuio*) to Christ, in or from their childhood, do continue uncorrupted.'"—p. 54.

So soon as they began to mysticise, they began to teach that immersion *without faith* would obtain remission of sins, and that immersion *without faith* was regeneration. Then came the debates about *original sin;* and so soon as original sin was proved, then came the necessity of infant immersion for the remission of original sin. And so undisputed was the import of baptism for remission, that when the Pelagians denied original sin, pressed with the difficulty,

"why immerse those who have no sins?" they were pushed to invent *actual sins* for infants; such as their crying, peevishness, restlessness, &c., on account of which sins they supposed that infants might, with propriety, be immersed, though they had no original sin.

TERTULLIAN.

Tertullian, the first who mentions infant baptism, flourished about A. D. 216. He writes against the practice; and among his most conclusive arguments against infant immersion, (for then there was no sprinkling,) he assumes, as a fundamental principle not to be questioned, that immersion was for the remission of sins; and this being universally conceded, he argues as follows:—

"Our Lord says, indeed, "Do not forbid them to come to me;' therefore let them come when they are grown up—let them come when they understand—when they are instructed whither it is that they come. Let them be made Christians when they can know Christ. What need their *guiltless* age make such haste to *the forgiveness of sins?* Men will proceed more warily in worldly goods; and he that should not have earthly goods committed to him, yet shall have heavenly! Let them know how to desire this salvation, that you may appear to have given to one that asketh."—p. 74.

ORIGEN.

Origen, though so great a visionary, is, nevertheless, a competent witness in any question of fact. And here I would again remind the reader, that it is as witnesses in a question of *fact*, and not of *opinion*, we summon these ancients. It is not to tell their own opinion, not the reasons of them; but to depose what were the views of Christians on this institution in their times. There was no controversy on this subject for more than four hundred years, and therefore we expect only to find incidental allusions to it; but these are numerous, and of the same unquestionable character. Origen, in his homily upon Luke, says:—

"Infants are baptized for the forgiveness of their sins. Of what sins? Or when have they sinned? Or how can any reason of the law, in their case, hold good, but according to that sense that we mentioned even now? that is, none is free from pollution, though his life be but the length of one day upon the earth."

And in another place he says, that—

"The baptism of the church is given for the forgiveness of sins."

And again—

"If there were nothing in infants that wanted forgiveness and mercy, the grace of baptism would be needless to them."

In another place he says—

"But in the *regeneration*, (or new birth,) by the *laver*, (or baptism,) every one that is born again of water and the Spirit, is clear from pollution; clear, (as I may venture to say) as a glass darkly."—p. 82.

But now let me ask Dr. Wall—Do Gregory Nazainzen, Bazil, Ambrose, Chrysostom, and St. Austin, concur with all their predecessors in these views of regeneration and remission?

W. Wall. "Yes; exactly. I have observed among the several names which the ancients give to *baptism*, they often by this phrase, '*the forgiveness of sins*,' do mean the sacrament of baptism."—p. 179. And as for Chrysostom, he expressly says, "In baptism, or the spiritual circumcision, there is no trouble to be undergone but to throw off the load of sins, and receive pardon for all foregoing offences." p. 182. And again: "There is no receiving or having the bequeathed inheritance before one is baptized; and none can be called *a son* till he is baptised.'—p, 183.

The controversy about infant baptism and original sin were contemporaneous; and just as soon as they decided the nature and extent of original sin, baptism for the remission of sins was given to infants because of this pollution, and defended because of the necessity of regeneration and forgiveness to salvation; and because immersion was universally admitted to be the scriptural regeneration and remission. In this way, there is no reasonable doubt but infant baptism began; and for convenience' sake, as Dr. Wall contends, it was substituted by infant sprinkling.

Unless we were to transcribe all the testimonies of antiquity, one by one, no greater assurance can be given, that, for more than four hundred years after Christ, all writers, orthodox and heterodox, Pelagius and Austin not excepted, concurred in the preceding views. Were I to summon others—Eusebius, Dupin, Lightfoot, and Hammond, *cum multis aliis*—will depose the same.

This proposition we will dismiss with the testimony of the most renowned of the Bishops of Africa I extract it from a work now generally read, called the "History of the Martyrs." It is from the account Cyprian gives of his conversion,—p. 317.

CYPRIAN.

"While," says he, "I lay in darkness and uncertainty, I thought on what I had heard of a second birth proposed by the divine goodness; but I could not comprehend how a man could receive a new life from his being immersed in water;—cease to be what he was before; and still remain in the same body. How, said I, can such a change be possible? How can he, who is grown old in a worldly way of living, strip himself of his former inclinations and inveterate habits? Can he who has spent his whole time in plenty, and indulged his appetite without restraint, ever be transformed into an example of frugality and sobriety? Or he who has always appeared in splendid apparel, stoop to the plain, simple, and unornamented dress of the common people? It is impossible for a man, who has borne the most honourable posts, ever to submit to lead a private and an obscure life: or that he who was never seen in public without a crowd of at-

tendants, and persons who endeavour to make their fortunes by attending him, should ever bear to be alone. "This" continues he, "was my way of arguing; I thought it was impossible for me to leave my former course of life, and the habits I was then engaged in and accustomed to; but no sooner did the life giving water wash the spot off my soul, than my heart received the heavenly light of the Holy Spirit, which transformed me into a new creature; all my difficulties were cleared, my doubts dissolved, and my darkness dispelled. I was then able to do what before seemed impossible;—could discern that my former life was earthly and sinful, according to the impurity of my birth; but that my spiritual birth gave me new ideas and inclinations, and directed all my views to God."

Cyprian flourished A.D. 250.

PROB. XII.—*But even the reformed creeds, Episcopalian, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist, substantially avow the same views of immersion, though apparently afraid to carry them out in faith and practice.*

This proposition will be sustained by an extract from the creed of each of these sects.

EPISCOPALIAN.

The clergy are ordered, before proceeding to baptize, to make the following prayer:†

"Almighty and everlasting God, who, of thy great mercy didst save Noah and his family in the ark from perishing by water; and also didst safely lead the children of Israel, thy people, through the Red Sea; figuring thereby thy holy baptism, and by the baptism of thy well beloved Son, Jesus Christ, in the river Jordan, didst sanctify the element of water, to the mystical washing away of sin; we beseech thee, for thine infinite mercies, that thou wilt mercifully look upon *these* thy *servants*; wash *them* and *sanctify them* with the Holy Ghost; that *they* being delivered from thy wrath, may be received into the Ark of Christ's Church; and being steadfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity, may so pass the waves of this troublesome world, that finally *they* may come to the land of everlasting life; there to reign with thee, world without end, through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*"

After reading a part of the discourse with Nicodemus, they are ordered to make the following exhortation:§

"Beloved, ye hear in this gospel the express words of our Saviour Christ, that except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Whereby ye may perceive the great necessity of this sacrament where it may be had. Likewise, immediately before his ascension into heaven, (as we read in the last chapter of St. Mark's Gospel,) he gave command to his disciples, saying, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." Which also sheweth unto us

†Common Prayer, p. 165. §Page 165.

the great benefit we reap thereby. For which cause, St. Peter the apostle, when, upon his first preaching the gospel, many were pricked at the heart, and said to him and the rest of the Apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" replied, and said unto them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost; for the promise is to you and your children, and to all that are afar off; even as many as the Lord our God shall call." And with many other words exhorted he them, saying, "Save yourselves from this untoward generation." For, as the same Apostle testifieth in another place, even baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Doubt ye not, therefore, but earnestly believe that he will favourably receive *these* present *persons*, truly repenting, and coming unto him by faith; that he will grant *them* remission of *their* sins, and bestow upon *them* the Holy Ghost; that he will give *them* the blessing of eternal life, and make *them partakers* of his everlasting kingdom."

This, I need not add, is in accordance with the sentiments advanced in this Essay. What a pity that the Episcopal church does not believe and practice her own creed!

PRESBYTERIAN.

The Presbyterian confession on Baptism, chap. xxviii, sect. 1., declares that—

"Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ, not only for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the visible church, but also to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, of his engrafting into Christ, of regeneration, of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ, to walk in newness of life; which sacrament is, by Christ's own appointment, to be continued in his church until the end of the world."

"*A sign and seal of remission of sins!!*" This is much nearer the truth than this church seems to be apprized of. However, she cannot believe her own creed; for she does not believe that baptism is a sign and a seal of remission of sins, nor of regeneration, in her own sense of it, to her baptized or sprinkled infants. But, in paying any regard to the Scriptures, she could not say less than she has said. It is no wonder that many sectaries cannot be persuaded to think that the Scriptures mean what they say; for they are so much accustomed to say what they do not mean, that they cannot think God does mean what he says.

METHODIST.

The Methodist creed says—

"Dearly beloved, forasmuch as all men are conceived and born in sin, (and that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and they that are in

the flesh cannot please God, but live in sin, committing many actual transgressions,) and that our Saviour Christ saith, 'None shall enter into the kingdom of God, except he be regenerate, and born anew of water and of the Holy Ghost; I beseech you to call upon God the Father, through our Lord Jesus Christ, that of his bounteous goodness he will grant to *these persons* that which by nature *they* cannot have; that they may be baptized with water and the Holy Ghost, and received into Christ's holy church, and be made lively *members* of the same."

Then it is ordained that the minister say or repeat the following prayer:

"Almighty and immortal God, the aid of all that need; the helper of all that flee to thee for succour; the life of them that believe; and the resurrection of the dead; we call upon thee for *these persons*, that *they*, coming to thy holy baptism, may receive remission of *their sins*, by spiritual regeneration. Receive *them*, O Lord, as thou hast promised by thy well-beloved Son, saying, "Ask, and ye shall receive; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: so give unto us that ask; let us that seek, find; open the gate unto us that knock; that *these persons* may enjoy the everlasting benediction of the heavenly washing, and may come to the eternal kingdom which thou hast promised by Christ our Lord. *Amen.*"—*Lit.* p. 105.

Thus the Methodist creed and Church are nearly as scriptural as the church from which they sprang. She prays for those to be baptized, that in baptism they may receive remission of sins! Does she believe what she says?

BAPTIST.

Chapter xxx. *Section* 1. "Baptism is an ordinance of the New Testament, ordained by Jesus Christ to be unto the party baptized a sign of his fellowship with him in his death and resurrection; of his being engrafted into him; and of remission of sins, and of his giving up unto God, through Jesus Christ to live and walk in newness of life."

The Baptist follows the Presbyterian church as servilely as the Methodist church follows the English hierarchy. But she avows her faith that immersion is a *sign* of remission. A sign of the past, the present, or the future! A sign accompanying!

The Confession of Bohemia. "We believe that whatsoever by baptism—is in the outward ceremony signified and witnessed; all *that*, doth the Lord God perform inwardly. That is, he washeth away sin, begetteth a man again, and bestoweth salvation upon him; for the bestowing of these excellent fruits was holy baptism given and granted to the church."

The Confession of Augsburg. "Concerning baptism, they teach that it is necessary to salvation, as a ceremony ordained of Christ: also, by baptism the grace of God is offered."

The Confession of Saxony." "I baptize thee: that is, I do witness by this dipping thy sins are washed away, and that thou art now received of the true God."

The Confession of Whittenburg. "We believe and confess that baptism is that sea, into the bottom whereof, as the prophet saith, God doth cast all our sins."

The Confession of Helvetia" "To be baptized in the name of Christ, is to be enrolled, entered, and received into the covenant and family, and so into the inheritance of the sons of God; that is to say, to be called the sons of God, to be purged also from the filthiness of sins, and to be endued with the manifold grace of God, for to lead a new and innocent life."

The Confession of Sueveland. "As touching baptism, we confess that is the font of regeneration,—washeth away sins, and saveth us. But all these things we do understand as St. Peter doth interpret them.—1 Peter iii. 21.

Westminster Assembly.—"Before baptism the minister is to use some words of instruction, shewing that it is instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ; that it is a seal of the covenant of grace,—of our engrafting into Christ,—and of our union with him,—of remission of sins,—regeneration,—and life eternal."

The Roman Catholic and the Greek church say, "We believe in one baptism for the remission of sins."

Calvin makes remission the principal thing in baptism.*

"Baptism," says he, "resembles a legal instrument properly attested, by which he assures us that all our sins are cancelled, effaced, and obliterated, so that they will never appear in his sight, or come into his remembrance, or be imputed to us. For he commands all who believe, to be baptized for the remission of their sins. Therefore, those who have imagined that baptism is nothing more than a mark or sign by which we profess our religion before men, as soldiers wear the insignia of their sovereign as a mark of their profession, have not considered that which was the *principal* thing in baptism; which is, that we ought to receive it with this promise,—'He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.'"

"The ancient Christian church, from the highest antiquity, after the apostolic times, appears generally to have thought that baptism is absolutely necessary for all that would be saved by the grace of Jesus Christ."+

"Most of the ancients concluded that baptism was no less necessary unto salvation than faith or repentance itself."‡

John Wesley, in his comment on the New Testament, (p. 350.) speaks plainer than either the Methodist discipline, or the Regular Baptist Confession. His words are;

—"Baptism, administered to real penitents, is both a *means*, and a *seal*, of pardon. Nor did God ordinarily in the primitive church bestow this [pardon] on any, unless through this means."

This is almost, if not altogether, as much as we have said on the forgiveness of sins through immersion.

May we not say that we have sustained this last proposition to the full extent of the terms thereof?

* Inst. l. 4, c. xv. p. 327. + Vitringa, Tom. 1. 50. ii. c. 6. 9.
‡ Owen on Justification, c. ii. p. 183.

With the testimony of John Wesley, the last of the reformers, I close my list of human vouchers for the import of Christian immersion. This list I could swell greatly; for, indeed, I have been quite disappointed in looking back into creeds, councils, commentators, and reformers, ancient and modern. I begin to fear that I shall be suspected to have come to the conclusions which I have exhibited, from consulting human writings, creeds, and reformers. My fears are not that we, who plead for reformation, may appear to have nothing *original* to offer in this reformation; that we are mere gleaners in the fields which other minds have cultivated. It is not on this account our fears are excited; for the reformation we plead is not characterized by new and original ideas or human inventions; but by a return to the original ideas and institutions developed in the new institution. But we fear lest any should suspect the views offered, to be a human invention or tradition; because we have found so much countenance for them in the works of the most ancient and renowned christian writers, and the creeds of ancient and modern reformers. We can assure our readers, however, that we have been led to these conclusions from the simple perusal,—the unprejudiced and impartial examination of the New Testament alone. And we may add, that we are as much astonished as any reader of this Essay can be, to find such a cloud of witnesses to the truth and importance of the views offered.

The proposition now proved, and illustrated, must convince all, that there is *some connexion* between immersion and the forgiveness of sins. What that connexion is, may be disputed by some: but that such a connexion exists, none can dispute, who acknowledge the New Testament to contain a divine communication to man. With John Wesley we say it is "to the believing, the *means*, and *seal*, of pardon for all previous offences;" and we not only say we *think* so, but we preach it as such, and practise it as such. Those who think of any other connexion, would do well to attempt to form clear ideas of what they mean: for we are assured there is no meaning in any other connexion. To make it a commemorative sign of past remission, is an outrage upon all rules of interpretation, and a perfect anomaly in all the revelation of God. To make it, prospectively, the sign of a future remission, is liable to the same exceptions. Nothing remains, but that it be conceived, what it is, in truth, the accompanying sign of an accompanying remission! the sign

and the seal, or the means and the seal, of remission then granted through the water, connected with the blood of Jesus, by the divine appointment, and through our faith in it.

We have heard some objections, and we can conceive of others, which may be presented to *immersion for the remissions of sins.* There can be objections made to any person, doctrine, sentiment, or practice; natural, moral, political or religious, that ever existed. But, notwithstanding all the objections made to every thing, there are thousands of matters and things we hold to be facts and truths indubitable. Amongst those certain and sure things, not to be shaken, is this Christian institution.

We will state and examine some objections partially noticed already; but, because they are the most common, or may become common, we will bestow upon them a formal statement, and a formal refutation.

Objection 1. "To make the attainment and the enjoyment of *present salvation,* pardon, justification, sanctification, reconciliation, adoption, dependent upon the contingency of water being present, or accessible, is beneath the dignity and character of a salvation from God."

And to make the attainment, and the enjoyment of present salvation, pardon, &c., dependent upon the contingency of faith being present or accessible,—upon the blood of Jesus Christ being heard of, or known, is equally objectionable; for what is faith but the belief of testimony? Or what is it in the most popular sense but something wrought in the heart, a compound of knowledge and feeling, of assent and consent? And are not both blood and faith less accessible to mankind than the element of water? How much more water than faith, or than candidates for immersion? And is there not as much power, wisdom, and goodness of God in creating water, as in creating air, words, letters, faith, &c.? Is not water more universal than language, words, books, preachers, faith, &c.? This objection lies as much against any one means of salvation as another; nay, against all means of salvation. Whenever a case shall occur of much faith and little water, or of a little faith and no water, we will repel it by other arguments than these.

Objection 2. "It makes void the value, excellency, and importance of both faith and grace." By no means. If a man say, with Paul, we are justified by faith, does it follow that grace is made void? Or, if one say we are justified by grace, does it make the blood of Christ of non-effect? Or, if with Paul, a man say we are justified by his blood, does

it make faith, repentance, and grace of no effect? Nay, indeed, this gives to faith its proper place, and its due value. It makes it the principle of action. It brings us to the water, to Christ, and to heaven. *But it is as a principle of action only.* It was not Abel's faith in his head or heart, but Abel's faith at *the altar* which obtained such reputation. It was not Enoch's faith in principle, but Enoch's faith in his *walk* with God, which translated him to heaven. It was not Noah's faith in God's promise and threatening, but his faith exhibited in *building an ark*, which saved himself and family from the deluge, and made him an heir of a new world,—an heir of righteousness. It was not Abram's faith in God's call, but his *going out* in obedience to that call, that first distinguished him as a pilgrim, and began his reputation. It was not faith in God's promise that Jericho should fall, but that faith carried out in the *blowing of ram's horns*, which laid its walls in ruins, &c. It is not our faith in God's promise of remission, but our *going down* into the water that obtains the remission of sins. But any one may see why faith has so much praise, and is of so much value. Because, without it, Abel would not have offered more acceptable sacrifices than Cain; Enoch would not have walked with God; Noah would not have built an ark; Abraham would not have left Ur, of the Chaldees, nor offered up his son upon the altar. Without it, Israel would not have passed through the wilderness, nor crossed the Jordan; and without it none receive the remission of their sins in immersion. And again, we would remind the reader, that when he talks of being saved by faith, he should bear in mind, that grace is not lost sight of; nor blood, nor water, nor reformation discarded.

We enter the kingdom of nature by being born of the flesh. We enter the kingdom of heaven, or come under the reign of Jesus Christ, in this life, by being born of water and the Spirit. We enter the kingdom of eternal glory by being born again from the earth, and neither by faith nor the first regeneration; neither by faith nor baptism; but by being counted worthy of the resurrection of the just. "I was hungry, and you fed me." Not because you believed, or were born of water; but, because "I was hungry, and you fed me," &c.

There are three births, three kingdoms, and three salvations. One from the womb of our first mother, one from the water, and one from the grave. We enter a new world on, and not before, each birth. The present animal life, at the first birth; the spiritual or the life of God in our souls,

at the second birth; and the life eternal in the presence of God, at the third birth. And he who dreams of entering the second kingdom, or coming under the dominion of Jesus, without the second birth, may, to complete his error, dream of entering the kingdom of glory without a resurrection from the dead.

Grace precedes all these births;—shines in all the kingdoms, but will be glorified in the third. Sense is the principle of action in the first kingdom; faith in the second; and sight spiritual, in the third. The first salvation is that of the body from the dangers and ills of life, and God is thus "the Saviour of all men." The second salvation is that of the soul from sin. The third is that of both soul and body united, delivered from moral and natural corruption, and introduced into the presence of God, when God shall be all in all.

Objection 3. "It is so uncharitable to the Pædobaptists!" And how uncharitable are the Pædobaptists to Jews, Turks, and Pagans! Will they promise present salvation from the guilt, pollution, and the dominion of sin, with the well-grounded hope of heaven, to Jews, Turks, Pagans, or even Roman Catholics? Or will the Roman Catholics to them? How uncharitable are they who cry "*uncharitable*" to us! Infants, idiots, deaf and dumb persons, innocent Pagans, wherever they can be found, with all the pious Pædobaptists, we commend to the mercy of God. But such of them as wilfully *despise* this salvation, and who, having the opportunity to be immersed for the remission of their sins, wilfully *despise* or refuse, we have as little hope for them, as they have for all who refuse salvation *on their own terms of the Gospel.* While they inveigh against us for laying a scriptural and rational stress upon immersion, do we not see that they lay as great, though an unscriptural and irrational stress, upon their baptism or sprinkling; so much so, as to give it, *without faith,* even to infants so soon as they are born of the flesh?

Objection 4. "But do not many of them enjoy the present salvation of God?" How far they may be happy in the peace of God, and the hope of heaven, I presume not to say. And we know so much of human nature as to say, that he that *imagines* himself pardoned, will feel as happy as he that is really so. But one thing we do know, that none can *rationally,* and with *certainty,* enjoy the peace of God, and the hope of heaven, but they who intelligently and in full faith are born of water, or immersed for the remission of their sins. And as the testimony of God and not conceit,

imagination nor our reasoning upon what passes in our minds, is the ground of our certainty, we see and feel that we have an assurance which they cannot have. And we have this advantage over them, we once stood upon their ground, had their hopes, felt their assurance; but they have not stood upon our ground, nor felt our assurance. Moreover, the experience of the first converts shews the difference between their immersion, and the immersions, or sprinklings, of modern gospels.

Objection 5. "This has been so long concealed from the people, and so lately brought to our view, that we cannot acquiesce in it."

This objection would have made unavailing every attempt at reformation, or illumination of the mind, or change in the condition and enjoyments of society, ever attempted. Besides, do not the experience of all the religious—the observation of the intelligent—the practical result of all creeds, reformations, and improvements—and the expectations and longings of society warrant the conclusion that either some new revelation, or some new development of the revelation of God, must be made, before the hopes and expectation of all true Christians can be realized, or Christianity save and reform the nations of this world. We want the old gospel back, and sustained by the ancient order of things; and this alone, by the blessing of the Divine Spirit, is all that we do want, or can expect, to reform and save the world. And if this gospel, as proclaimed and enforced on Pentecost, cannot do this, vain are the hopes, and disappointed must be the expectations, of the (so called) Christian world.

RECAPITULATION.

As Christian faith rests upon, and Christian practice proceeds from, *the testimony of God*, and not from the reasonings of men, I will, in this recapitulation, only call up the evidences on one single proposition, assumed, sustained, and illustrated in the preceding pages; and that is the *ninth proposition*, as sustained by the apostolic testimony. We wish to leave before the mind of the diligent reader, the great importance attached to Christian immersion, as presented in the Evangelists, the Acts, and the Epistles.

1. *In the Evangelists*—It is called *the forgiveness of sins.* Matthew and Mark introduce the Messiah in his own person in giving the commission. Luke does not. Matthew presents Jesus, saying, "Go, convert the nations, immersing them into the name of the Father, the Son, and the

Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things which I have commanded you." This, of course, in order to salvation. Mark presents him, saying, "Go into all the world, proclaim the glad tidings to the whole creation: he who believes, and is immersed, shall be saved; and he who believes not, shall be condemned." Luke, however, does not introduce the Lord in his own person as giving the charge; but records it in his own conception of it, in the following words:—That "reformation and forgiveness of sins should be announced in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." No person, we presume, will question, but that Luke thus accords the commission;—and if so, then it is indisputable that, as Luke neither mentions faith nor immersion, he substitutes for them the received import of both, when and where he wrote. Metonymically he places repentance, or rather *reformation*, for faith; and *remission of sins*, for immersion. In Luke's acceptation and time, forgiveness of sins stood for immersion, and reformation for faith—the effect for the means or cause. The only reference to the commission found in John, occurs xx. 21. "As the Father hath sent me, so send I you:—whose sins soever you remit, are remitted to them; and whose sins soever you retain, are retained." Here is neither faith, repentance, nor baptism; but the object, *remission of sins*, is literally proposed. In the commission, salvation is attached by the Lord Jesus to faith and immersion in his name. He that believes, and is immersed, shall be saved. Thus immersion is taught in the testimonies of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

2. *In the Acts of the Apostles*—Sermon 1, Peter says, "Reform, and be immersed every one of you, into the name of the Lord Jesus, for the remission of your sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Sermon 2, he says, "Reform, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out; that seasons of refreshment from the presence of the Lord may come, and that he may send Jesus," &c. In the same discourse, he says, "God, having raised up his Son Jesus, has sent him to bless you, every one of you turning from his iniquities." In his third sermon, recorded Acts x. he says, "To him all the prophets bear witness, that every one who believes in him shall receive remission of sins *by his name*." Paul at Antioch, in Pisidia, declares, that through Jesus was proclaimed the remission of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things. Ananias commanded Paul to arise and be immersed, and to

wash away his sins, calling upon the name of the Lord. This is spoken of in the Acts of the Apostles.

3. *In the Epistles*—The Romans are said to have been immersed into Christ Jesus—into his death; to have been buried with him, and consequently to have risen with him, and to walk in a new life. The Corinthians are said to have been washed, justified, and sanctified by the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. The Galatians "were immersed into Christ, and had put him on." The Ephesians were married to Christ by immersion, as brides were wont to be washed in order to their nuptials. The assembly of the disciples, called *the congregation of the Lord*, making the bride of Christ, were said to be *cleansed* by *the bath of water* and *the word*. The Colossians were *buried with Christ, raised with him*, and are said to have been *forgiven all trespasses*, when they were raised with him, where their resurrection with Jesus and their having all sins forgiven are connected.* All the saints are said to be saved by immersion, or, "the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Spirit." † The believing Jews had their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and their bodies washed with clean water, or water which made clean. Peter taught all the saints in Pontius, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia; that the water of baptism saved them, as the water of the deluge saved Noah in the Ark; and that, in immersion, a person was purged from all his former sins. And John the Apostle represents the saved as having "washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," and all the baptized little children have "their sins forgiven." Such are the evidences found in the Epistles. How numerous! how clear! and how unequivocal! Are not we, then, warranted to say, Except a man be regenerated of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God? and that all who, believing, are immersed for the remission of their sins, have the remission of their sins in and through immersion?

CONCLUSION.

A word to the regenerated. You have experienced the truth of the promise; and being introduced by that promise, you have become, like Isaac, children of promise. You heard the testimony of God concerning Jesus of Nazareth,

* Colosians ii. 11, 13, 14. † Titus iii. 5.

and you believed it. You were, in consequence of your faith, so disposed towards the person of Jesus as to be willing to put yourselves under his guidance. This faith, and this will, brought you to the water. You were not ashamed, nor afraid to confess him before men. You solemnly declared you regarded him as God's only Son, and the Saviour of men. You vowed allegiance to him. Down into the water you were led. Then the name of the Holy One upon your faith, and upon your person, was pronounced. You were then buried in the water under that name. It closed itself upon you. In its womb you were concealed. Into the Lord, as in the water, you were immersed. But in the water you continued not. Of it you were born, and from it you came forth, raised with Jesus, and rising in his strength. There your consciences were released; for there your old sins were washed away. And, although you received not the gifts of the Holy Spirit, which confirmed the testimony to the first disciples, you felt the powers of the world to come,—were enlightened, and tasted the bounty of God; for seasons of refreshment from the presence of God came upon you. Your hearts were sprinkled from evil consciences, when your bodies were washed in the cleansing water. Then into the kingdom of Jesus you entered. The King of righteousness, of peace, and joy, extending his sceptre over you, and sanctified in state, and in your whole person, you rejoiced in the Lord, with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Being washed, you are sanctified, as well as acquitted. And now you find yourselves under the great Advocate, so that sin cannot lord it over you; for you always look to the great Advocate to intercede for you, and thus, if sin should overtake you, you confess and forsake it, and always find mercy. Adopted thus into the family of God, you have not only received the name, the rank, and the dignity, but also the spirit of a son of God, and find as such, that you are kings, priests, and heirs of God. You now feel that all things are yours, because you are Christ's, and Christ's is God's. The hope of the coming regeneration of the heavens and the earth, at the resurrection of the just animates you. You look for the redemption, the adoption of your bodies and their transfiguration. For this reason you purify yourselves even as he is pure. Be zealous then, children of God; publish the excellencies of Him who has called you into this marvellous light and bliss. Be diligent, that you may receive the crown that never fades, and that you may eat of the tree of life which grows in the

midst of the paradise of God. If you suffer with Jesus, you will reign with him. If you should deny him, he will deny you. Add, then, to your faith courage, knowledge, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, and universal benevolence; for if you continue in these things, and abound, you shall not be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. But should you be deficient in these things, your light will be obscured, and a forgetfulness that you have been purified from your old sins will come upon you. Do, then, brethren, labour to make your calling and election sure; for thus practising you shall never fall; but shall have an easy and abundant entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

A word to the unregenerate. Amongst you are sundry classes of character. Some of you who believe the gospel, and are changed in heart, quickened by the Spirit, are not generally ranked among the unregenerate. In the popular sense of this term, you are regenerate. But we use it in its scriptural acceptation. Like Nicodemus, and like Joseph of Arimathea, you believe in Jesus, and are willing to take lessons from him in the chambers. You have confidence in his mission; respect and venerate, and even love his person, and would desire to be under his government. Marvel not that I say unto you, *You must be born again.* Pious as you are supposed to be, and as you may think yourselves to be, unless you are born again, you cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Cornelius and his family were as devout and as pious as any of you. "He feared God, gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God continually." Yet (mark it well, I beseech you,) it was necessary *"to tell him words* by which himself and his house *might be saved."* These words were told him; he believed them, and received the Holy Spirit; yet still he must be born again. For a person cannot be said to be born again *of any thing which he receives*; and still less of miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit. He was immersed, and into the kingdom of God he came. He was then saved. You need not ask how, or why, these things are so. Do as Cornelius did, and then you will think of it in another light—then you would not for a world be unregenerate. To have the pledge, the promise and seal of God, of the remission of all your sins, to be adopted into his family, and to receive the spirit of a son of God, be assured, my pious friends are matters of no every day occurrence; and when you feel yourselves consti-

tutionally invested with all these blessings, in God's own way, you will say "that his ways are not as our ways, nor his thoughts as our thoughts; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are his ways higher than our ways, and his thoughts than our thoughts." It is hard to make a slave feel and act as a freeman. As difficult, we often find it, to make the unregenerate feel and know the value and importance of regeneration. But the regenerate would not be unregenerated for the universe.

God has one way of bestowing every thing. We cannot gather grapes off thorns, nor figs off thistles. The reason is, there they do not grow. We can tell no other reason why they cannot grow there, but that they do not grow there. We cannot have any blessing but in God's own way of giving it. We cannot find wool save on the back of the sheep, nor silk save from the worm which spins it from itself. Corn and wheat cannot be obtained, but from those plants which yield them. Without the plant, we cannot have the fruit. This is the economy of the whole material system. And in the world of spirits, and spiritual influences, is it not the same? Moral law is as unchangeable as the laws of nature. Moral means and ends are as inseparable as natural means and ends. God cannot bestow grace upon the proud, and cannot withhold it from the humble. He does not do it, and that is enough. He could shower down wheat and corn, and give us rivers of milk and wine, were it a question of mere power. But taking all together, his wisdom, power, and goodness, he cannot do it. So neither can he give us faith without testimony, hope without a promise, love without an amiable object, peace without purity, nor heaven without holiness. He cannot give to the unborn infant the light of the sun, the vivacity which the air imparts, nor the agility and activity which liberty bestows. He does not do it, and, therefore, we say, he cannot do it. Neither can he bestow the blessings of the reign of heaven upon those who are children of disobedience.

I know how reluctant men are to submit to God's government; and yet they must all bow to it at last. "To Jesus every knee shall bow, and to him every tongue confess." But they will object to bowing *now*, and torture invention for excuses. They will tell me, all that I have said is true of natural and moral means and ends; but immersion is not a moral means, because God forgave sins, and saved men, before immersion was appointed. "It is a positive and not

a moral institution." And is there no moral influence connected with positive institutions? A *written* law is a positive institution; for moral law existed before written law. But because it has become a positive institution, has its moral power ceased? *The moral influence of all positive institutions is God's* WILL *expressed in them.* And it matters not, whether it be the *eating* or *not eating* of an apple, the building of an altar, or the building it with or without the aid of iron tools; the offering of a kid, a lamb, a bullock, or a pigeon, it is just as morally binding, and has the same moral influence, as, "You shall honour your father and mother;" or, "You shall not kill." IT IS THE WILL OF GOD in any institution, which gives it all its moral and physical power. No man could now be pardoned as Abel was—as Enoch was—as David was—as the thief upon the cross was. These all lived before the *second* will of God was declared. He took away *"the first will,"* says Paul, "that he might establish the *second will,"* by which we are sanctified. We are not pardoned as were the Jews or the Patriarchs. It was not till Jesus was buried and rose again, that an acceptable offering for sin was presented in the heavens. By one offering up of himself, he has perfected the conscience of the immersed or sanctified. Since his oblation, a new institution for remission has been appointed. You need not flatter yourselves that God will save or pardon you, except for Christ's sake; and if his name is not assumed by you, if you have not put him on, if you have not come under his advocacy, you have not the name of Christ to plead, nor his intercession on your behalf—and, therefore, for Christ's sake you cannot be forgiven. Could Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Aaron, think you, if living now—could they, I ask, find forgiveness at the altar? And will you imagine, that he who honoured every institution by Moses, by connecting rewards and punishments with the obedience or disobedience of his commands, be less jealous for the honour of the institution of his Son? And will that Son who, for no other purpose than to honour his Father's institution, was immersed in the Jordan, bestow pardon or salvation upon any who refuse to honour him, and him that sent him? He has been graciously pleased to adapt means to ends. He has commanded immersion for the remission of sins; and, think you, that he will change his institution, because of your stubborn or intractible disposition? As well, and as reasonably too, might you pray

for loaves from heaven, or manna, because Israel ate it in the desert, as to pray for pardon, while you refuse the remission of your sins by immersion.

Demur not because of the simplicity of the thing. Remember how simple was the eating of the fruit of that tree, "whose mortal taste brought death into the world, and all our woe." How simple was the rod in the hand of Moses, when stretched over Egypt and the Red Sea? How simple was looking at the brazen serpent? And how simple are all God's institutions? How simple the aliments of nature;—the poisons too, and their remedies? Where the will of God is, there is omnipotence. It was simple to speak the universe into existence. But God's will gives efficacy to every thing. And obedience ever was, and ever will be, the happiness of man. It is the happiness of heaven. It is God's philanthropy which has given us something to obey. To the angels who sinned he has given no command. It was gracious to give us a command to live—a command to reform—a command to be born again—to live for ever. Remember, light and life first came by obedience. If God's voice had not been obeyed, the water would not have brought forth the earth, nor would the sun have blessed it by his rays. The obedience of law was goodness and mercy; but the obedience of faith is favour and life, and glory everlasting. None to whom this gospel is announced will perish, except those who know not God, and obey not the gospel of his Son. Kiss, then, the Son, lest he be angry, and you perish for ever.

To the unregenerated of all classes, whose education and prejudices compel them to assent to the testimony of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, Peter, James, and Jude.—You own the mission of Jesus from the bosom of the Eternal—and that is *all* you do! Each of you is living without God and without hope in the world—aliens from the family of God—of various ranks and grades among men; but all involved in one condemnation, because light has come into the world, and you love darkness, and the works of darkness, rather than light. To live without hope is bad enough; but to live in constant dread of the vengeance of heaven, is still worse. But do you not tremble at the word of God!

If you can be saved here or hereafter, then there is no meaning in language, no pain in the universe, no truth in God; death, the grave, and destruction have no meaning. The frowns of heaven are all smiles, if you perish not in your ways.

But you purpose to bow to Jesus, and to throw yourselves

upon his mercy at last. Impious thought! When you have given the strength of your intellect,—the vigour of your constitution,—the warmth of your affections,—the best energies of your life to the world, the flesh, and the devil, you will stretch out your palsied hands, and turn your dim eyes to the Lord, and say, "Lord, have mercy upon me!" The first fruits and fatlings for the devil; the lame and the blind for God, is the purpose of your heart, and the best resolution you can form!

The thief upon the cross, had he done so, could not have found mercy. It is one thing to have known the way of salvation, assented to it, and to have in deliberate resolution rejected it for the present, with a promise of obeying it at some future period, and to have never known it, nor assented to it, to the end of life. Promise not, then, to yourselves what has never happened to others. The devil has always said, "You may give *to-morrow* to the Lord, only give to me *to-day*." This has been all that he has asked, and this is what you are disposed to give. Promise not *to-morrow* to the Lord, for you will be still less disposed to give it when it comes; and the Lord has not asked you for *to-morrow*. He says, TO-DAY, when you shall hear his voice, harden not your hearts. But you say, you are willing to come to the Lord *to-day* if you knew the way, or if you were *prepared*. Well, what does the Lord require of you as *preparation?* He once said, "Let the wicked man forsake his ways, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him turn to the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." He says also, "Draw nigh to me, and I will draw nigh to you." "Cleanse your hands, you sinners: and purify your hearts, you men of two souls;" "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings;" "Reform and be converted;" "Turn to the Lord;" "Be immersed for the remission of your sins;" and "Submit to the government of Jesus." "What! just as I am!" Pray, how are you? Have you such a persuasion in your heart of the mission of Jesus, as God's own Son, and the only Saviour; and have you so much confidence in his personal character, as to be willing to surrender yourselves to him for the present and future—for time and eternity? "I have;" you say. As one that has heard his voice, I say then, "Come and be regenerated, and seasons of refreshment from the Lord will come to you."

"But I thought I ought to feel like a Christian first, and to have the experience of a Christian before I came to the

Lord." Indeed! Did the Lord tell you so? "His ministers taught me so." It is hard knowing who are his ministers now-a-days. His *commissioned* ministers taught you not so. They were not taught to say so. The Master knew that to wait for health before we went to the physician —to seek for warmth before we approach the fire—to wait till we ceased to be hungry before we approach the table—was not reasonable. And therefore he never asked, as he never expected, any one to feel like a Christian before he is immersed, and begin to live like a Christian. None but the citizens of any country can experience the good or evil of the government which presides over it. None but the married can experience the conjugal relation and feelings. None but sons and daughters can have the experience of sons and daughters; and none but those who obey the gospel can experience the sweets of obedience. I need not add, that none but the disobedient can experience the pains, the fears, and the terrors of the Lord—the shame and remorse, which are the first fruits of the anguish and misery, which await them in another world. As the disobedient, who stumble at the word, have the first fruits of the awful destruction from the presence of the Lord, which awaits them; so the obedient have the first fruits of the Spirit—the salvation of their souls, as an earnest of the salvation to be revealed at the coming of the Lord.

And now let me ask all the unregenerate. What do you propose to yourselves by either delaying or refusing to come to the Lord? Will delaying have any tendency to fit you or prepare you for his salvation? Will your lusts have less power, or sin have less dominion over you, by continuing under their control? Has the intoxicating cup, by indulgence, diminished a taste for it? Has the avarice of the miser been weakened, or cured, by yielding to it? Has any propensity been destroyed by gratifying it, in any other way than as it destroyed the animal system? Can you, then, promise yourselves that by continuing in disobedience you will love obedience, and be more inclined to submit when you have longer resisted the Spirit of God! Presume not on the mercy of God, but in the way that mercy flows. Grace has its channels, as the waters have their courses; and its path, as the lightning of the clouds. Each has its law, as fixed as the throne of God; and think not that God will work a miracle for your salvation.

Think you that the family of Noah could have been saved, if they had refused to enter into the Ark? Could the first

born of Israel have escaped the destroying angel, but in houses sprinkled with blood? or could Israel have escaped the wrath of Pharaoh, but by being immersed into Moses in the cloud and in the sea? These things are written for our admonition, upon whom the consummation of past ages has come. Arise, then, and be immersed, and wash away your sins, calling upon the name of the Lord. The *many who refuse grace* will neither prove you wise nor safe in disobedience.

"Multitudes are no mark
That you will right be found;
A few were saved in the Ark,
For many millions drown'd.
Obey the gospel call,
And enter while you may:
Christ's flock have long been small,
Yet none are safe but they."

DEFECTS OF MODERN CHRISTIANITY.

Our greatest objection to the systems which we oppose, is their impotency on the heart. Alas! what multitudes of prayerless, saintless, Christless, joyless hearts, have crowded christianity out of the congregations by their experiences before baptism! They seem to have had all their religion before they professed it. They can relate no experience since baptism, comparable to that professed before the "mutual pledge" was tendered and received.

It was the indubitable proofs of the superabundance of this fruit which caused me first to suspect the far-famed tree of evangelical orthodoxy. That cold-heartedness—that stiff and mercenary formality—that tithing of mint, anise, and dill—that negligence of mercy, justice, truth, and the love of God, which stalked through the communions of sectarian altars—that apathy and indifference about "*thus saith the Lord*,"—that zeal for human prescriptions—and, above all, that willing ignorance of the sayings and doings of Jesus Christ and his Apostles, which so generally appeared, first of all created, fostered, and matured by distrust in the reformed systems of evangelical sectaries. Communion with me was communion with kindred souls, immersed into one spirit—congenial spirits, hearts, touched with the love of God, that celestial magnet which turns our aspirations and adorations to him who washed us from our sins in his own blood, and made us kings and priests to God.

To sit in the same pew; to gather round the same pulpit; to put our names to the same covenant, or subscription list;

to contribute for a weekly sermon; to lisp the same opinions extracted from the same creed, always appeared to me unworthy bonds of union or communion, and therefore my soul abhorred them as substitutes for the love of God shed abroad in the heart,—for the communion of the Holy Spirit. "If a man would give all the substance of his house as a substitute for love, it should be utterly contemned."

The Divine Philosopher preached reformation by addressing himself to the *heart*. We begin with the heart. "Make the tree good," and then good fruit may be expected. But this appears to be the error of all sects, in a greater or less degree; they set about *mending* the heart, as preliminary to that which alone can *create a new heart*. Jesus gives us the philosophy of this scheme in an address to sinners of that time—"Your sins," says he "are forgiven you; go, and sin no more." He first changes the sinner's state, not external but internal, and then says, "*Go, and sin no more.*" He frankly forgave the debt. The sinner loved him.

There was much of this philosophy in this question, "*Who loves most:*—he that was forgiven five hundred pence, or he that was forgiven fifty? How much does he love who is not forgiven at all!" Aye, that question brings us onward a little to the reason, why the first act of obedience to Jesus Christ should be baptism into his name, and that for the remission of sins.

But now we speak of the exercises of the heart. While any man believes the words of Jesus, "Out of the heart proceed the actions which defile the man," he can never loose sight of the heart, as the object on which all evangelical arguments are to terminate, and as the *fons et principium* the fountain and origin of all piety and humanity.

Once for all, let it be distinctly noted, that we appreciate nothing in religion which tends not directly and immediately, proximately and remotely, to the purification and perfection of the heart. Paul acted the philosopher fully once, and, if we recollect right, but once in all his writings upon this subject. It has been for many years a favourite topic with me. It is in his first epistle to Timothy—"Now the end of the commandment [or gospel] is love out of a pure heart—out of a good conscience—out of faith unfeigned." Faith unfeigned brings a person to remission, or to a good conscience; a good conscience precedes, in the order of nature, a pure heart: and that is the only soil in which love, that plant of celestial origin, can grow. This is our philosophy of chris-

tianity—of the gospel. And thus it is the wisdom and power of God to salvation. We proceed upon these as our axiomata in all our reasonings, preachings, writings—1st, unfeigned faith; 2d. a good conscience; 3d, a pure heart; 4th, love. The testimony of God apprehended produces unfeigned or genuine faith: faith obeyed, produces a good conscience. This Peter defines to be the use of baptism, the answer of a good conscience. This produces a pure heart, and then the consummation is love—love to God and man.

Paul's order or arrangement is adopted by us as infallible; Testimony—faith unfeigned—remission or a good conscience—a pure heart—love. Preaching, praying, singing, commemorating, meditating, all issue here, "Happy the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

IMMERSION NOT A MERE BODILY ACT.

Views of baptism, as a mere external and bodily act, exert a very injurious influence on the understanding and practice of men. Hence, many ascribe to it so little importance in the Christian economy. "Bodily exercise," says Paul, "profits little." We have been taught to regard immersion in water, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as an act of the whole man;—body, soul, and spirit. The soul of the intelligent subject is as fully immersed *into the Lord Jesus*, as his body is immersed *in the water*. His soul rises with the Lord Jesus, as his body rises out of the water; and into one spirit with all the family of God is he immersed. It is not like circumcising a Hebrew infant, or proselyting to Moses a gentile adult. The candidate believing in the person, mission, and character of the Son of God, and willing to submit to him immediately, upon recognizing him, hastens to be buried with the Lord, and to rise with him, not corporally, but spiritually, with his own soul.

Reader, be admonished how you speak of bodily acts in obedience to divine institutions. Remember Eve, Adam, and all transgressors on the one hand. Remember Abel, Noah, Enoch, Moses, Abraham, down to the harlot Rahab, on the other; and be cautious how you speak of bodily acts! Rather remember the sacrifice of a body on Mount Calvary, and talk not lightly of bodily acts. There is no such thing as outward bodily acts in the christian institution; and less than in all others, in the act of immersion. Then it is that the spirit, soul and body of man become one with the Lord.

Then it is that the power of the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit came upon us. Then it is that we are enrolled among the children of God, and enter the ark, which will, if we abide in it, transport us to the Mount of God.

JUSTIFICATION ASCRIBED TO SEVEN CAUSES.

In examining the New Testament, we find that a man is said to be "*justified by faith*," Rom. v. 1; Gal. ii. 16, iii. 24; "*justified freely by his grace.*" Rom. iii. 24; Titus iii. 7. "*Justified by his blood*," Rom. v. 9. "*Justified by works*," James ii. 21, 24, 25. "*Justified in or by the name of the Lord Jesus*," 1 Cor. vi. 11. "*Justified by Christ*," Gal. ii. 16. "*Justified by knowledge*," Is. liii. 11. "It is God that justifies," Rom. iii. 33, viz. by these *seven* means—by Christ, his name, his blood, by knowledge, grace, faith, and by works. Are these all literal? Is there no room for interpretation here? He that selects *faith* out of *seven*, must either act arbitrarily, or shew his reason; but the reason does not appear in the text. He must reason it out; he must infer it. Why, then, assume that faith *alone* is the reason of our justification? Why not assume that the *name* of the Lord alone is the great matter, seeing his name "is the only name under heaven, by which any man can be saved;" and men "who believe, receive *the remission of sins by his name*;"† and especially, because the name of Jesus, or of the Lord, is more frequently mentioned in the New Testament, in reference to all spiritual blessings, than any thing else! Call all these *causes* or *means* of justification, and what then? We have the grace of God for the *moving* cause, Jesus Christ for the *efficient* cause, his blood the *procuring* cause, knowledge the *disposing* cause, the name of the Lord the *immediate* cause, faith the *formal* cause, and works for the *concurring* cause. For example: a gentleman on the sea shore descries the wreck of a vessel at some distance from land, driving out into the ocean, and covered with a miserable and perishing sea-drenched crew. Moved by pure philanthropy, he sends his son with a boat to save them. When the boat arrives at the wreck, he invites them in, upon this condition,—that they submit to his guidance. A number of the crew stretch out their arms, and seizing the boat with their hands, spring into it, take hold of the oars, and row to land; while some from cowardice, and others because of some difficulty in coming at the boat; wait in expectation of a second trip, but before it returned, the wreck went to pieces,

† Acts x. 43.

and they all perished. The *moving* cause of their salvation who escaped, was the good-will of the gentleman on the shore; his son who took the boat, was the *efficient* cause; the boat itself, the *procuring* cause; the knowledge of their perishing condition and his invitation, the *disposing* cause; the seizing the boat with their hands, and springing into it, the *immediate* cause; their consenting to his condition, the *formal* cause; and their rowing to shore, under the guidance of his son, was the *concurring* cause of their salvation. Thus men are justified or saved by grace, by Christ, by his blood, by faith, by knowledge, by the name of the Lord, and by works. But of the *seven* causes, *three* of which are purely instrumental, why choose one of the instrumentals, and emphasize upon it as the justifying or saving cause, to the exclusion of, or in preference to the others? Every one in its own place is essentially necessary.

If we examine the word *saved* in the New Testament, we shall find that we are said to be saved by as many causes, though some of them differently denominated, as those by which we are said to be justified. Let us see: we are said to be "saved by grace," Eph. ii. 5; "saved through this life." Rom. v. 9. 10; "saved through faith," Eph. ii. 8. Acts xvi. 31; "saved by baptism," 1 Peter iii. 21; or "by faith and baptism." Mark xvi. 16; or "by the washing of regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Spirit," Titus iii. 5; or "by the gospel, 1 Cor. xv, 2; or "by calling upon the Lord," and by "enduring to the end," Acts ii. 21; Rom. x. 13; Matt. x. 22. Here we have salvation ascribed to grace, to Jesus Christ, to his death and resurrection—*three* times to baptism, either by itself or in conjunction, once with faith, and once with the Holy Spirit; to works, or to calling upon the Lord, and to endure to the end. To these we might add other phrases nearly similar, but these include all the causes to which we have just now alluded. Saved by grace, the *moving* cause; by Jesus the *efficient* cause; by his death, and resurrection, and life, the *procuring* cause; by the gospel, the *disposing* cause; by faith, the *formal* cause; by baptism, the *immediate* cause; and by enduring to the end, or persevering in the Lord, the *concurring* cause.

PETER IN JERUSALEM, AND PAUL IN PHILIPPI, RECONCILED.

Thousands ask Peter, *What shall we do?* The Jailor asks Paul, *What shall I do?* TO BE SAVED, if the reader pleases. Peter says, Reform and be baptized, every one of

you, &c. Paul answers, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved with thy family." How is this Paul, and Peter? Why do you not preach the same gospel, and answer the same question in the same or similar terms? Paul, do you preach another gospel to the gentiles, than that Peter preached to the Jews? What sayest thou, Paul? Paul replies—"Strike, but hear me. Had I been in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, I would have spoken as Peter did. Peter spoke to believing and penitent Jews; I spoke to an ignorant Roman jailor. I arrested his attention after the earthquake by simply announcing that there was salvation to him and all his family, through belief in Jesus." But why did you not mention repentance, baptism, the Holy Spirit? "Who told you I did not?" Luke says nothing about it; and I concluded you said nothing about them. Luke was a faithful historian, was he not? "Yes, very faithful; and why do you not faithfully hearken to his account? Does he not immediately subjoin, that as soon as I got the jailor's ears, *I spoke the word of the Lord to him, and to all that were in his house?* Why, you reason like a Pædobaptist. You think, do you, that the jailor's children were saved by his faith! I spoke the whole gospel, or the word of the Lord, to the jailor and to *his family.* In speaking *the word of the Lord,* I mentioned repentance, baptism, remission, the Holy Spirit, the resurrection, judgment and eternal life; else why should I have baptized him and all his house; and why should he have rejoiced afterwards with all his family!" Paul, I beg your pardon. I will not now interrogate Peter, for I know how he would answer me: he would say—Had I been in Philippi, I would have spoken to an ignorant Pagan as Paul did, to shew that salvation flowed through faith in Jesus; and when he believed this and repented, I would then have said, be baptized for the remission of your sins."

THE END.

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W. Bunny, Printer, Nottingham.