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BIOGRAPHY.

LIFE OF THE REV. WILLIAM TENNENT.

CONTINUED FROM VOL. II. PAGE 320.

THE writer of these memoirs was greatly interested by these uncommon events ; and, on a favorable occasion, earnestly pressed Mr. Tennent for a minute account of what his views and apprehensions were, while he lay in this extraordinary state of suspended animation. He discovered great reluctance to enter into any explanation of his perceptions and feelings at this time ; but, being importunately urged to do it, he at length consented, and proceeded with a solemnity not to be described.

“ While I was conversing with my brother,” said he, “ on the state of my soul, and the fears I had entertained for my future welfare, I found myself, in an instant, in another state of existence, under the direction of another being, who ordered me to follow him. I was accordingly waited along, I know not how, till I beheld at a distance an ineffable glory, the impression of which on my mind it is impossible to communicate to mortal man. I immediately reflected on my happy change, and thought, Well, blessed be God ! I am safe at last, notwithstanding all my fears. I saw an innumerable host of happy beings, surrounding the inexpressible glory, in acts of adoration and joyous worship ; but I did not see any bodily shape or representation in the glorious appearance. I heard things unutterable. I heard their songs and hallelujahs, of thanksgiving and praise, with unspeakable rapture. I felt joy unutterable and full of glory.

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I then applied to my conductor, and requested leave to join the happy throng. On which he tapped me on the shoulder, and said, ' You must return to the earth.' This seemed like a sword through my heart. In an instant I recollect to have seen my brother standing before me, disputing with the doctor. The three days, during which I had appeared lifeless, seemed to me not more than ten or twenty minutes. The idea of returning to this world of sorrow and trouble, gave me such a shock, that I fainted repeatedly." He added, " Such was the effect on my mind of what I had seen and heard, that if it be possible for a human being to live entirely above the world and the things of it, for some time afterwards I was that person. The ravishing sounds of the songs and hallelujahs that I heard, and the very words that were uttered, were not out of my ears, when awake, for at least three years. All the kingdoms of the earth were in my sight as nothing and vanity; and so great were my ideas of heavenly glory, that nothing, which did not, in some measure, relate to it, could command my serious attention."

It is not surprising, that after so affecting an account, strong solicitude should have been felt for further information as to the words, or at least the subjects of praise and adoration, which Mr. Tennent had heard. But when he was requested to communicate these, he gave a decided negative, adding, " You will know them, with many other particulars hereafter, as you will find the whole among my papers;" alluding to his intention of leaving the writer hereof his executor, which precluded any further solicitation.*

** It was so ordered in the course of Divine Providence, that the writer was sorely disappointed in his expectation of obtaining the papers here alluded to. Such, however, was the will of Heaven! Mr. Tennent's death happened during the revolutionary war, when the enemy separated the writer from him, so as to render it impracticable to attend him on a dying bed; and before it was possible for the writer to get to his house after his death, (the writer being with the American army at the Valley Forge) his son came from Charleston, and took his mother, and his father's papers and property, and returned to Carolina. About 50 miles from Charleston, the son was suddenly taken sick, and died among entire strangers; and never since, though the writer was also left executor to the son, could any trace of the father's papers be discovered by him.*

The pious and candid reader is left to his own reflections on this very extraordinary occurrence. The facts have been stated, and they are unquestionable. The writer will only ask, whether it be contrary to revealed truth, or to reason, to believe, that in every age of the world instances like that which is here recorded, have occurred, to furnish *living testimony* of the reality of the invisible world, and of the infinite importance of eternal concerns?

As soon as circumstances would permit, Mr. Tennent was licensed, and began to preach the everlasting gospel with great zeal and success. The death of his brother John, who had been some time settled as minister of the Presbyterian church at Freehold, in the county of Monmouth, New-Jersey, left that congregation in a destitute state.— They had experienced so much spiritual benefit from the indefatigable labours, and pious zeal of this able minister of Jesus Christ, that they soon turned their attention to his brother, who was received on trial, and after one year, was found to be no unworthy successor to so excellent a predecessor. In October, 1733, Mr. Tennent was regularly ordained their pastor, and continued so through the whole of a pretty long life; one of the best proofs of ministerial fidelity.

Although his salary was but small, (it is thought under 100*l*.) yet the glebe belonging to the church was an excellent plantation, on which he lived, and which, with care and good farming, was capable of maintaining a family with comfort. But his inattention to the things of this world was so great, that he left the management of his temporal concerns wholly to a faithful servant, in whom he placed great confidence. After a short time he found his worldly affairs were becoming embarrassed. His steward reported to him that he was in debt to the merchant between 20*l*. and 30*l*. and he knew of no means of payment, as the crops had fallen short. Mr. Tennent mentioned this to an intimate friend, a merchant of New-York, who was on a visit at his house. His friend told him, that this mode of life would not do, that he must get a wife, to attend to his temporal affairs, and to comfort his leisure hours by conjugal endearments. He smiled at the idea, and assured him, it never could be the case, unless some friend would provide one for him, for he knew not how to go about it. His friend told him he was ready to undertake the business; that he had a sister-in law, an excellent woman, of great piety, a widow, of his own age, and one peculiarly suited in all respects to

his character and circumstances. In short, that she was every thing he ought to look for; and if he would go with him to New-York the next day, he would settle the negotiation for him. To this he soon assented. The next evening found him in that city, and before noon, the day after, he was introduced to Mrs. Noble. He was much pleased with her appearance; and, when left alone with her, abruptly told her, that he supposed her brother had informed her of his errand; that neither his time nor inclination would suffer him to use much ceremony; but that if she approved the measure he would attend his charge on the next Sabbath, and return on Monday, be married and immediately take her home. The lady, with some hesitation and difficulty, at last consented, being convinced that his situation and circumstances rendered it proper. Thus, in one week, she found herself mistress of his house. She proved a most invaluable treasure to him, more than answering every thing said of her by an affectionate brother. She took the care of his temporal concerns upon her, extricated him from debt, and, by a happy union of prudence and economy, so managed all his worldly business, that in a few years his circumstances became easy and comfortable. In a word, in her was literally fulfilled the declaration of Solomon, that 'a virtuous woman is a crown to her husband, and that her price is far above rubies.' Besides several children who died in infancy, he had by her three sons, who attained the age of manhood; John, who studied physic, and died in the West-Indies when about thirty years of age; William, a man of superior character, and minister of the Independent church in Charleston, South-Carolina, who died the latter end of September or beginning of October, A. D. 1777, about thirty-seven years old; and Gilbert, who also practised physic, and died at Freehold before his father, aged 28 years. Few parents could boast three sons of a more manly or handsome appearance; and the father gave them the most liberal education that the country could afford.

Mr. Tennent's inattention to earthly things continued till his eldest son was about three years old, when he led him out into the fields on a Lord's day after public worship.—The design of the walk was for religious meditation. As he went along, accidentally casting his eye on the child, a thought suddenly struck him, and he asked himself this question: "Should God in his providence take me hence, what would become of this child and its mother, for whom I have never taken any personal care to make provision? How can

"I answer this negligence to God and to them?" The impropriety of his inattention to the relative duties of life, which God had called him to; and the consideration of the sacred declaration, 'that he who does not provide for his own household, has denied the faith and is worse than an infidel,' had such an impressive effect on his mind, that it almost deprived him of his senses. He saw his conduct, which before he thought arose entirely from a deep sense of divine things, in a point of light in which he never before had viewed it. He immediately attempted to return home, but so great was his distress, that it was with difficulty he could get along; till, all at once, he was relieved by suddenly recurring to that text of Scripture, which came into his mind with extraordinary force, 'But unto the tribe of Levi Moses gave not any inheritance, the Lord God of Israel was their inheritance.' Such, however, was the effect of this unexpected scene on Mr. Tennent's mind and judgment, that ever afterwards he prudently attended to the temporal business of life, still, however, in perfect subordination to the great things of eternity, and became fully convinced that God was to be faithfully served, as well by discharging relative duties in his love and fear, as by the more immediate acts of devotion. He clearly perceived, that every duty had its proper time and place, as well as motive; that we had a right, and were called of God, to eat and drink, and to be properly clothed; and of course that care should be taken to procure those things, provided that all be done to the glory of God. In the duties of a gospel minister, however, especially as they related to his pastoral charge, he still engaged with the utmost zeal and faithfulness; and was esteemed by all ranks and degrees, as far as his labours extended, as a fervent, useful, and successful preacher of the gospel.

His judgment of mankind was such, as to give him a marked superiority, in this respect, over his contemporaries, and greatly aided him in his ministerial functions. He was scarcely ever mistaken in the character of a man with whom he conversed, though it was but for a few hours. He had an independent mind, which was seldom satisfied on important subjects without the best evidence that was to be had. His manner was remarkably impressive; and his sermons, although seldom polished, were generally delivered with such indescribable power, that he was truly an able and successful minister of the New Testament. He could say things from the pulpit, which, if said by almost any other

man, would have been thought a violation of propriety.— But by him they were delivered in a manner so peculiar to himself, and so extremely impressive, that they seldom failed to please and to instruct. As an instance of this, the following anecdote is given, of the truth of which the writer was a witness.

Mr. Tennent was passing through a town in the state of New Jersey, in which he was a stranger, and had never preached, and stopping at a friend's house to dine, was informed, that it was a day of fasting and prayer in the congregation, on account of a very remarkable and severe drought, which threatened the most dangerous consequences to the fruits of the earth. His friend had just returned from church, and the intermission was but half an hour.— Mr. Tennent was requested to preach, and with great difficulty consented, as he wished to proceed on his journey.— At church the people were surprised to see a preacher, wholly unknown to them, and entirely unexpected, ascend the pulpit. His whole appearance, being in a travelling dress, covered with dust, wearing an old-fashioned large wig, discoloured like his clothes, and a long meagre visage, engaged their attention, and excited their curiosity. On his rising up, instead of beginning to pray, as was the usual practice, he looked around the congregation, with a piercing eye and earnest attention, and after a minute's profound silence, he addressed them with great solemnity in the following words: "My beloved brethren! I am told you have come here to-day to fast and pray; a very good work indeed, provided you have come with a sincere desire to glorify God thereby. But if your design is merely to comply with a customary practice, or with the wish of your church officers, you are guilty of the greatest folly imaginable, as you had much better have staid at home, and earned your three shillings and sixpence.* But if your minds are indeed impressed with the solemnity of the occasion, and you are really desirous of humbling yourselves before Almighty God, your heavenly Father, come, join with me and let us pray." This had an effect so uncommon and extraordinary on the congregation, that the utmost seriousness was universally manifested. The prayer and the sermon added greatly to the impressions already made, and tended to rouse the attention, influence the mind, command the affections, and increase the temper, which had been so happily produ-

* At that time the stated price for a day's labor.

sed. Many had reason to bless God for this unexpected visit, and to reckon this day one of the happiest of their lives.

While on this subject, we may introduce another anecdote of this wonderful man, to show the dealings of God with him, and the deep contemplations of his mind. He was attending the duties of the Lord's day in his own congregation as usual, where the custom was to have morning and evening service with only a half hour's intermission to relieve the attention. He had preached in the morning, and in the intermission had walked into the woods for meditation, the weather being warm. He was reflecting on the infinite wisdom of God, as manifested in all his works, and particularly in the wonderful method of salvation, through the death and sufferings of his beloved Son. This subject suddenly opened on his mind with such a flood of light, that his views of the glory, and the infinite majesty of Jehovah, were so inexpressibly great, as entirely to overwhelm him, and he fell almost lifeless, to the ground. When he had revived a little, all he could do was to raise a fervent prayer, that God would withdraw himself from him, or that he might perish under a view of his ineffable glory. When able to reflect on his situation, he could not but abhor himself as a weak and despicable worm, and seemed to be overcome with astonishment, that a creature so unworthy and insufficient, had ever dared to attempt the instruction of his fellow men in the nature and attributes of so glorious a Being. Overstaying his usual time, some of his elders went in search of him, and found him prostrate on the ground, unable to rise, and incapable of informing them of the cause. They raised him up, and after some time brought him to the church, and supported him to the pulpit, which he ascended on his hands and knees, to the no small astonishment of the congregation. He remained silent a considerable time, earnestly supplicating Almighty God (as he told the writer) to hide himself from him, that he might be enabled to address his people, who were by this time lost in wonder to know what had produced this uncommon event. His prayers were heard, and he became able to stand up, by holding to the desk. He now began the most affecting and pathetic address, that the congregation had ever received from him. He gave a surprising account of the views he had, of the infinite wisdom of God, and greatly deplored his own incapacity to speak to them concerning a Being so infinitely glorious beyond all his powers of description. He attempted to show something of what had been discovered to him

of the astonishing wisdom of Jehovah, of which it was impossible for human nature to form adequate conceptions. He then broke out into so fervent and expressive a prayer, as greatly to surprise the congregation, and draw tears from every eye. A sermon followed, that continued the solemn scene, and made very lasting impressions on all the hearers.

The great increase of communicants in his church was a good evidence of his pastoral care and powerful preaching, as it exceeded that of most churches in the synod. But his labours were not confined to the pulpit. He was indefatigable in his endeavours to communicate in private families a favour of the knowledge of spiritual and divine things. In his parochial visits he used regularly to go through his congregation in order so as to carry the unsearchable riches of Christ to every house. He earnestly pressed it on the conscience of parents to instruct their children at home by plain and easy questions, so as gradually to expand their young minds, and prepare them for the reception of the more practical doctrines of the gospel. In this, Mr. Tennent has presented an excellent example to his brethren in the ministry; for certain it is, that more good may be done in a congregation, by this domestic mode of instruction, than any one can imagine, who has not made the trial. Children and servants are in this way prepared for the teachings of the sanctuary, and to reap the full benefit of the word publicly preached. He made it a practice in all these visits to enforce practical religion on all, high and low, rich and poor, young and old, master and servant. To this he was particularly attentive, it being a favourite observation with him, "that he loved a religion that a man could live by."

Mr. Tennent carefully avoided the discussion of controversial subjects, unless specially called to it by particular circumstances, and then he was ever ready to assign the reason of his faith. The following occurrence will show the general state of his mind and feelings in regard to such subjects. A couple of young clergymen, visiting at his house, entered into a dispute on the question, at that time much controverted in New-England, whether faith or repentance were first in order, in the conversion of a sinner. Not being able to determine the point, they agreed to make Mr. Tennent their umpire, and to dispute the subject at length before him. He accepted the proposal, and after a solemn debate for some time, his opinion being asked, he very gravely took his pipe from his mouth, looked out of his window,

pointed to a man ploughing on a hill at some distance, and asked the young clergymen if they knew that man: on their answering in the negative, he told them it was one of his elders, who to his full conviction, had been a sincere Christian for more than thirty years. "Now," said Mr. Tennent, "ask him, whether faith or repentance came first, what do you think he would say?" They said they could not tell. "Then," says he, "I will tell you: he would say that he cared not, which came first, but that he had got them both. Now, my friends," he added, "be careful that you have both a true faith, and a sincere repentance, and do not be greatly troubled, which comes first." It is not however, to be supposed by this, that Mr. Tennent was unfriendly to a deep and accurate examination of all important theological doctrines. There were few men more earnest than he to have young clergymen well instructed and thoroughly furnished for their work. This indeed was an object on which his heart was much set, and which he exerted himself greatly to promote.

Mr. Tennent was remarkably distinguished for a pointed attention to the particular circumstances and situation of the afflicted, either in body or mind, and would visit them with as much care and attention as a physician, and frequently indeed proved an able one, to both soul and body. But his greatest talent was that of a peace-maker, which he possessed in so eminent a degree, that probably none have exceeded, and very few have equalled him in it. He was sent for, far and near, to settle disputes, and heal difficulties, which arose in congregations; and happily for those concerned, he was generally successful. Indeed, he seldom would relinquish his object till he had accomplished it.

But while this man of God was thus successful in promoting the best interests of his fellow-creatures, and in advancing the glory of his Lord and Master, the great enemy of mankind was not likely to observe the destruction of his kingdom without making an effort to prevent it. As he assailed our blessed Saviour in the days of his flesh with all his art and all his power, so has he always made the faithful followers of the Redeemer the objects of his inveterate malice. If the good man, of whom we write, was greatly honoured by peculiar communications from on high, he was also very often the subject of the severe buffetings of that malignant and fallen spirit.

The time of which we are now speaking was remarkable for a great revival of religion, in which Mr. Tennent was

considerably instrumental, and in which a Mr. David Rowland, brought up with Mr. Tennent at the Log-College, was also very remarkable for his successful preaching among all ranks of people.* Possessing a commanding eloquence, as well as other estimable qualities, he became very popular, and was much celebrated throughout the country. His celebrity and success were subjects of very serious regret to many careless worldings, who placed all their happiness in the enjoyment of temporal objects, and considered, and represented Mr. Rowland and his brethren as fanatics and hypocrites. This was specially applicable to many of the great men of the then province of New-Jersey, and particularly to the chief justice who was well known for his disbelief of Revelation. There was at this time, prowling through the country, a noted man of the name of Tom Bell, whose knowledge and understanding were very considerable, and who greatly excelled in low art and cunning. His mind was totally debased, and his whole conduct betrayed a soul capable of descending to every species of iniquity. In all the arts of theft, robbery, fraud, deception, and defamation, he was so deeply skilled, and so thoroughly practised, that it is believed, he never had his equal in this country. He had been indicted in almost every one of the middle colonies; but his ingenuity and cunning always enabled him to escape punishment. This man unhappily resembled Mr. Rowland in his external appearance, so as hardly to be known from him, without the most careful examination.

It so happened, that Tom Bell arrived one evening, at a tavern, in Piscataway, dressed in a dark, parson's gray frock. On his entering the tavern about dusk, the late John Stockton, Esq. of that town, a pious and respectable man to whom Mr. Rowland was well known, went up to Bell, and addressed him as Mr. Rowland, and was inviting him to go home with him. Bell assured him of his mistake. It was with some difficulty that Mr. Stockton acknowledged his error, and then informed Bell, that it had arisen from his great resemblance to Mr. Rowland. This hint was sufficient for the prolific genius of that notorious impostor. The next day, Bell went into the county of Hunterdon, and stopped in a congregation where Mr. Rowland had formerly preached once or twice, but where he was not intimately known. Here he met with a member of the congregation, to whom he introduced himself as the Rev. Mr. Rowland,

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\* It was not far from A. D. 1744.

who had preached to them some time before. This gentleman immediately invited him to his house, to spend the week; and begged him, as the people were without a minister, to preach for them on the next Sabbath, to which Bell agreed, and notice was accordingly given to the neighbourhood. The impostor was treated with every mark of attention and respect; and a private room was assigned to him, as a study, to prepare for the Sabbath. The sacred day arrived, and he was invited to ride to church with the ladies in the family waggon, and the master of the house accompanied them on an elegant horse. When they had arrived near the church, Bell on a sudden discovered, that he had left his notes in his study, and proposed to ride back for them on the fine horse, by which means he should be able to return in time for the service. This proposal was instantly agreed to, and Bell mounted the horse, returned to the house, rifled the desk of his host, and made off with the horse. Wherever he stopped, he called himself the Rev. David Rowland.

At the time this event took place, Messrs. Tennent and Rowland had gone into Pennsylvania or Maryland, with Mr. Joshua Anderson and Mr. Benjamin Stevens, (both members of a church contiguous to that where Bell had practised his fraud) on business of a religious nature. Soon after their return Mr. Rowland was charged with the above robbery; he gave bonds to appear at the court at Trenton, and the affair made a great noise throughout the colony. At the court of oyer and terminer, the judge charged the grand jury on the subject with great severity. After long consideration, the jury returned into court without finding a bill. The judge reproved them, in an angry manner, and ordered them out again. They again returned without finding a bill, and were again sent out with threatenings of severe punishment if they persisted in their refusal. At last they agreed, and brought in a bill for the alledged crime. On the trial, Messrs. Tennent, Anderson, and Stevens appeared as witnesses, and fully proved an *alibi* in favour of Mr. Rowland, by swearing that on the very day on which the robbery was committed, they were with Mr. Rowland, and heard him preach, in Pennsylvania or Maryland. The jury, accordingly, acquitted him without hesitation, to the great disappointment and mortification of his prosecutors, and of many other enemies to the great revival of religion that had recently taken place; but to the great joy of the serious and well disposed. The spirits hostile to the spread

of the gospel were not, however, so easily overcome. In their view, an opportunity was now presented, favourable to inflict a deep wound on the cause of Christianity; and, as if urged on by the malice of man's great enemy, they resolved that no means should be left untried, no arts unemployed, for the destruction of these distinguished servants of God. Many and various were the circumstances which still contributed to inspire them with hopes of success. The testimony of the person who had been robbed was positive that Mr. Rowland was the robber; and this testimony was corroborated by that of a number of individuals, who had seen Tom Bell personating Mr. Rowland, using his name, and in possession of the horse. These sons of Belial had been able, after great industry used for the purpose, to collect a mass of evidence of this kind, which they considered as establishing the fact; but Mr. Rowland, was now out of their power by the verdict of *not guilty*. Their vengeance, therefore, was directed against the witnesses, by whose testimony he had been cleared; and they were accordingly arraigned for perjury before a court of quarter sessions in the county; and the grand jury received a strict charge, the plain import of which was, that these men ought to be indicted. After an examination of the testimony on one side only, as is the custom in such cases, the grand jury did accordingly find bills of indictment against Messrs. Tennent, Anderson and Stevens, for wilful and corrupt perjury. Their enemies, and the enemies of the gospel, now began to triumph. They gloried in the belief, that an indelible stain would be fixed upon the professors of religion; and that this *new light*, by which they denominated all appearance of piety, would soon be extinguished forever.

These indictments were removed to the supreme court; and poor Mr. Anderson, living in the county, and conscious of his entire innocence, could not brook the idea of lying under the odium of the hateful crime of perjury, and demanded a trial at the first court of oyer and terminer. This proved most seriously injurious to him, for he was pronounced guilty, and most cruelly and unjustly condemned to stand one hour on the court house steps, with a paper on his breast, whereon was written, in large letters, "This is for wilful and corrupt perjury;" which sentence was executed upon him.

Messrs. Tennent and Stevens were summoned to appear at the next court; and attended accordingly, depending on the aid of Mr. John Coxe, an eminent lawyer, who had been previously employed to conduct their defence. As Mr.



Tennent was wholly unacquainted with the nature of forensic litigation, and did not know of any person living who could prove his innocence, (all the persons who were with him being indicted) his only resource and consolation was to commit himself to the Divine will, and if he must suffer, to take it as from the hand of God, who, he well knew, could make even the wrath of man to praise him; and considering it as probable that he might suffer, he had prepared a sermon to be preached from the pillory, if that should be his fate. On his arrival at Trenton, he found the famous Mr. Smith of New York, father of the late chief justice of Canada, one of the ablest lawyers in America, and of a religious character, who had voluntarily attended to aid in his defence; also his brother Gilbert, who was now settled in the pastoral charge of the second Presbyterian church in Philadelphia, and who had brought Mr. John Kinsey, one of the first counsellors of that city, for the same purpose.— Messrs. Tennent and Stevens met these gentlemen, at Mr. Coxe's the morning before the trial was to come on. Mr. Coxe requested that they would bring in their witnesses, that they might examine them previously to their going into court. Mr. Tennent answered, that he did not know of any witnesses but God and his own conscience. Mr. Coxe replied, "If you have no witnesses, Sir, the trial must be put off, otherwise you most certainly will be convicted. You well know the strong testimony that will be brought against you, and the exertions that are making to accomplish your ruin." Mr. Tennent replied, "I am sensible of all this, yet it never shall be said that I have delayed the trial, or been afraid to meet the justice of my country. I know my own innocence, and that God, whose I am, and whom I serve, will never suffer me to fall by these snares of the devil, or by the wicked machinations of his agents or servants. Therefore, gentlemen, go on to the trial." Messrs. Smith and Kinsey, who were both religious men, told him that his confidence and trust in God as a Christian minister of the gospel, was well founded, and before a heavenly tribunal would be all important to him; but assured him it would not avail in an earthly court, and urged his consent to put off the trial. Mr. Tennent continued inflexible in his refusal; on which Mr. Coxe told him that, since he was determined to go to trial, he had the satisfaction of informing him, that they had discovered a flaw in the indictment, which might prove favourable to him on a demurrer. He asked for an explanation, and on finding that it was to admit the fact in a

legal point of view, and rest on the law arising from it, Mr. Tennent broke out with great vehemence, saying, that this was another snare of the devil, and before he would consent to it he would suffer death. He assured his counsel that his confidence in God was so strong, and his assurance that he would bring about his deliverance in some way or other, was so great, that he did not wish them to delay the trial for a moment.

Mr. Stevens, whose faith was not of this description, and who was bowed down to the ground under the most gloomy apprehensions of suffering, as his neighbour Mr. Anderson had done, eagerly seized the opportunity of escape that was offered, and was afterwards discharged on the exception.

Mr. Coxé still urged putting off the trial, charging Mr. Tennent with acting the part rather of a wild enthusiast, than of a meek and prudent Christian; but he insisted that they should proceed, and left them in astonishment, not knowing how to act, when the bell summoned them to court.

Mr. Tennent had not walked far in the street, before he met a man and his wife, who stopped him, and asked if his name was not Tennent. He answered in the affirmative, and begged to know if they had any business with him.— The man replied, "You best know." He told his name, and said that he was from a certain place (which he mentioned) in Pennsylvania or Maryland; that Messrs. Rowland, Tennent, Anderson, and Stevens had lodged either at his house, or in a house wherein he and his wife had been servants, (it is not now certain which) at a particular time, which he named; that on the following day they had heard Messrs. Tennent and Rowland preach; that some nights before they left home, he and his wife waked out of a sound sleep, and each told the other a dream, which had just occurred, and which proved to be the same in substance, to wit, that he, Mr. Tennent was at Trenton, in the greatest possible distress, and that it was in their power, and theirs only, to relieve him. Considering it as a remarkable dream only, they again went to sleep, and it was twice repeated precisely in the same manner to both of them. This made so deep an impression on their minds, that they set off, and here they were, and would know of him what they were to do. Mr. Tennent immediately went with them to the court house, and his counsel on examining the man and his wife, and finding their testimony to be full to the purpose, were, as they well might be, in perfect astonishment. Be-

fore the trial began, another person, of a low character, called on Mr. Tennent, and told him that he was so harassed in conscience, for the part he had been acting in this prosecution, that he could get no rest till he had determined to come and make a full confession. He sent this man to his counsel also. Soon after, Mr. Stockton from Princeton appeared, and added his testimony. In short, they went to trial, and notwithstanding the utmost exertions of the ablest counsel, who had been employed to aid the Attorney-General against Mr. Tennent, the advocates on his side so traced every movement of the defendant on the Saturday, Sunday, and Monday in question, and satisfied the jury so perfectly on the subject, that they did not hesitate honourably to acquit Mr. Tennent, by their unanimous verdict of *not guilty*, to the great confusion and mortification of his numerous opposers. Mr. Tennent assured the writer of this, that during the whole of this business, his spirits never failed him, and that he contemplated the possibility of his suffering so infamous a punishment, as standing in the pillory, without dismay, and had made preparation, and was fully determined, to deliver a sermon to the people in that situation, if he should be placed in it.

He went from Trenton to Philadelphia with his brother, and on his return, as he was rising the hill at the entrance of Trenton, without reflecting on what had happened, he accidentally cast his eyes on the pillory, which suddenly so filled him with horror, as completely to unman him, and it was with great difficulty that he kept himself from falling from his horse. He reached the tavern door in considerable danger, was obliged to be assisted to dismount, and it was some time before he could so get the better of his fears and confusion, as to proceed on his journey. Such is the constitution of the human mind! It will often resist, with unshaken firmness the severest external pressure and violence; and sometimes it yields without reason, when it has nothing to fear. Or, should we not rather say, such is the support which God sometimes affords to his people in the time of their necessity, and such the manner in which he leaves them to feel their own weakness when that necessity is past, that all the praise may be given where alone it is due.

The writer sincerely rejoices, that though a number of the extraordinary incidents in the life of Mr. Tennent cannot be vouched by public testimony and authentic documents, yet the singular manner in which a gracious God did appear for this his faithful servant in the time of that

distress, which has just been noticed, is a matter of public notoriety, and capable of being verified by the most unquestionable testimony and records.

This special instance of the interference of the righteous Judge of all the earth ought to yield consolation to pious people in seasons of great difficulty and distress, where there is none that seems able to deliver them. Yet it ought to afford no encouragement to the enthusiast, who refuses to use the means of preservation and deliverance, which God puts in his power. True confidence in God is always accompanied with the use of all lawful means, and with the rejection of all that are unlawful. It consists in an unshaken belief, that while right means are used, God will give that issue, which shall be most for his glory and his people's good. The extraordinary occurrence here recorded, may also serve as a solemn warning to the enemies of God's people, and to the advocates of infidelity, not to strive by wicked and deep laid machinations to oppose the success of the gospel, nor to attempt to injure the persons and characters of those faithful servants of the Most High, whom sooner or later he will vindicate to the unspeakable confusion of all, who have persecuted and traduced them.

*To be concluded in the next number.*



## THE LIFE OF MARTIN LUTHER.

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CONTINUED FROM VOL. II. PAGE 262.

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A CONCLAVE of the cardinals having examined Luther's writings, condemned forty-one propositions taken out of them; and the pope published a severe bull in June, 1520, declaring those propositions false, scandalous, and heretical. While Eckius, the mortal enemy of Luther, was commissioned to put the bull in execution in Germany. Luther's books were publicly burnt in consequence of it; and in return, he also publicly burnt the pope's bull at Wittenberg, which he called the execrable bull of Antichrist. But they were not content with burning Luther's writings; they made use of all their interest with Charles the fifth, who was crowned Emperor in 1520, to proceed against Luther. And accordingly a diet was appointed to be held at Worms, in January, 1521. The diet resolved, that Luther should be summoned to appear, under the sanction of a safe conduct, which was granted him by the Emperor, who sent



proper persons to attend him; with a private letter directed, "To the honourable, beloved, devout, " Dr. Martin Luther, of the order of St. Augustine." Luther's friends were uneasy for him; The mournful end of John Huss in 1415, at Constance recurred to them; They dissuaded him from going, when he made that ever memorable reply, "I am determined to enter the city in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, though as many devils should oppose me, as there are tiles upon the houses at Worms." He was accompanied from Wittenberg, by some divines, and one hundred horse; but he took only eight horsemen into Worms, where he arrived on the sixteenth of April: And when he stepped out of the coach he said, "God shall be on my side," in the presence of a great multitude, whom curiosity had summoned to see so remarkable a person.

Luther was treated with great respect, and visited, in the apartments appointed for him, by many princes, nobles, and divines. The next day he appeared before the very august diet: Eckius, as *prolocutor*, was ordered to ask "Whether he owned those books, that bore his name; and "Whether he would retract or maintain what was contained in them." Luther replied, with great respect, that, as "the point in debate was of the highest consequence, he desired time to give in a proper reply, without prejudice to the word of God, or of his own soul. The emperor granted him a day to consider the matter: While as he returned from the diet his friends on all hands advised and exhorted him, "not to fear those who could only kill the body—" And when thou art before Kings, think not what thou shalt speak, for it shall be given to thee in that hour.

But Luther had too much sense and knowledge of the Scripture to arrogate to himself an apostolical promise: He prepared therefore with all precaution and prudence for the ensuing day. When the questions being proposed as before; he replied, with a becoming modesty, and deference, that "the books which bore his name, were written by him, saving what might be interpolated or added, by evil and designing men: He acknowledged his genuine writings. He protested, that all he had written, was with a view to the glory of God, and the instruction of the faithful. But desired the assembly to consider, that his books were of three kinds: That in some he treated only of piety and morality, in such a plain and evangelical manner, that his adversaries acknowledged, they were innocent, profitable, and worthy to be read by all Christians. That in others he had written

against popery, which he could by no means retract, since, by so doing, he should give force to those horrid errors and abuses, which already had too much defiled the Christian world. In a third sort, he had written against those private persons, who had opposed the truths which he taught. "In these, I confess, said he, I have sometimes been more severe than I ought. For I do not profess myself a saint, nor do I dispute concerning my own life, but concerning the doctrine of Christ. As I am a man I may err, and therefore most humbly declare, that if any man, high or low, will convince me of my error, by plain scripture, I am ready to revoke it, and burn my writings." Eckius passionately said that he had not answered the question; and insisted that he should give a plain and direct answer, 'Whether he would retract or not.' Luther replied, that "He was not obliged to believe the pope or his councils, because they erred in many things, and contradicted themselves, that his belief was so far settled by the texts of scripture, and his conscience engaged by the word of God, that he neither could nor would retract any thing; because it was neither safe nor innocent for a man to act against his conscience." Another attempt being made to urge him to retract, he besought the Emperor, not to urge him to any such matter, that he could say no more than he had before said.—After this he was dismissed from the assembly, and as he passed along, was treated with no small contempt and mockery.

The emperor, at another meeting of the diet, proposed proscribing Luther, and all his adherents. This was very long and warmly debated, but came to nothing. The Romish clergy began to insinuate that "Faith was not to be kept with heretics," and to advise the emperor to revoke the safe conduct he had granted to Luther.—But he made this generous reply, that if no faith was to be found in the rest of the world, it ought at least to be seen in a Roman emperor." Many great personages conferred privately with Luther; while he constantly declared that he was resolved to die rather than recede from the word of God.

At length on the 26th of April, the emperor ordered Luther to depart immediately from Worms, under a safe conduct for twenty one days. The elector of Saxony, imagining that a very severe edict would be published against Luther, and being determined to protect him, ordered a troop of horsemen masked, to seize Luther in his return from Worms; which accordingly was done, and he was conveyed as if by violence, to the castle of Wartburgh, near Eisenach,

where the elector concealed him fourteen months. Luther called this retreat his Patmos: His enemies were solicitous, and employed reputed wizards to find him out; while many of his friends, who were not in the secret, had very uneasy apprehensions.

As the elector imagined, so it happened. A severe edict was published by the emperor on the 29th of May; wherein he declared, that it was his duty to extinguish heresies; "that Luther was a schismatic, and heretic; that the sentence of the pope should be put in execution against him; and that no person should defend or protect him, under the penalty of high treason, and being put to the bar of the empire."—This edict was penned by another rancorous enemy of Luther's, Alexander; and so replete with criminations was it, that nothing has even urged against him, which may not be found in this edict—Luther gained high applause, by his behaviour at Worms, and was treated there with much respect. His presence of mind and intrepidity were noble in the opinion of every one but himself; for he afterwards lamented, that he had not been bolder in the cause of God. Though he is said to have had as much courage as Alexander and Julius Cæsar put together.

While he was in the castle at Wartburg, he wrote several excellent pieces; and in many letters to his friends, declared his strong assiance in God, his distaste of controversy, his inward trials, and his earnest wish to conclude his days in peace. But alas, so far was he from obtaining this peace, that he afterwards was engaged deeper in controversy than ever; and in the worst controversy, amongst the reformed themselves, respecting the sacrament, and other doctrinal points, wherein Luther shewed more acrimony than usual, and dipt his pen deeper in gall, than on any former occasion.

Weary of his confinement, in March 1522, Luther returned to Wittenberg; his doctrine now spread far and wide: Henry the Eighth of England wrote against him; and Luther replied, though not in a very courtier-like strain. The pope honoured Henry with the title of Defender of the Faith, for his good endeavours. Pope Adrian who was a man of severe life, succeeded Leo the Tenth. He sent his nuncio to another diet, summoned at Nuremberg, in 1522; and ordered him to declare, that "if the pestiferous canker (Luther's doctrine) could not be cured with gentle medicines, sharper salves must be proved, and fiery searings: The putrified members must be cut off from the body, lest the

found parts should be infected." At the same time, the nuncio was commissioned to add; that "God suffered this persecution to be inflicted on his church, for the sins of men, especially of priests and prelates, of the clergy." Reflections which the cardinals in the assembly strongly resented, and which it is imagined shortened the life of Adrian.

Luther employed himself amidst the storms, in publishing many other pieces, but principally in translating the sacred scriptures; in which he had good success, and performed a very acceptable service to truth and religion.—He used all his efforts for suppressing monastic orders; he composed a new form for celebrating the communion, and gave it in both kinds. Zuinglius dissented from him in some points; and a bitter controversy ensued between them. In consequence of the diet at Nuremberg, an edict was again published; but both Papists and Lutherians interpreted it in their own favour. Unhappy confusions arose in Germany by means of the peasants, who became rebellious: These evils were attributed to Lutherianism, though evidently of a civil nature: More than a hundred thousand of them were killed, before they could be reduced to duty.—The Anabaptists too sprung up, and committed many gross absurdities. Luther acted with great prudence and constancy, amidst all these perplexities, and wrote several excellent treatises, suitable to the occasions, which gave a noble idea of his probity, plain dealing and good sense.

Erasmus had long been solicited by the papists to employ his fine pen against Luther. The caution of Erasmus would not suffer him to speak out, otherwise he seems to have had no better opinion of the church of Rome than Luther. He wished however for more moderate measures; not considering that the times would by no means admit of such measures. At length he entered into the controversy, but chose a topic, (concerning *free will*) wherein what he offered concluded as strongly against many of the first Catholic writers as against Luther. He shewed herein great address and sagacity. Luther was no stranger to the character and merits of Erasmus. He answered his book, and the controversy was kept up for some time.

In 1524 Luther laid aside the friars habit, and married Catharine Bore, a lady of noble descent; who with eight other ladies had been taken out of a nunnery in 1523.—She was twenty-six years old; handsome and modest: And though Luther confessed not without faults, yet less faulty, he believed, than most other women; and when she bore



him a son, he said he would not change his condition for the kingdom of Cræsus. He declared, that he took a wife, to put the notorious and scandalous celibacy of the Papists to shame. He was a strong advocate for matrimony, and the stronger doubtless, from his knowledge of the shocking crimes practised in monasteries and nunneries. He used to say, if he were upon his death-bed, he would take a wife to shame those infamous proceedings. Marriage soon after became a recommendation amongst the reformed; and if a converted minister did not marry, he caused a suspicion, that he had not renounced the doctrine of celibacy.

Luther was persuaded to write a letter of apology to Henry the Eighth, for the rough answer, he had published to his book. But Henry replied to him in a very haughty manner, which caused Luther, who had a spirit equal to Henry, to declare publicly that he was sorry he had demeaned himself so far.

The disturbances in Germany daily increased: Another diet was held at Spire, in 1526. But nothing was determined. The Emperor was engaged about this time in a war with the pope, whom he took prisoner, and plundered Rome. However, in 1529 another assembly was summoned at Spire. The papists insisted, that the ban should be executed against the Lutherians; which was opposed by the electors of Saxony and Brandenburg, the duke of Lüneburg, the land grave of Hesse, and the prince of Anhalt, who declared for a council either general or national. But the Romanists prevailed; Upon which the Lutheran princes and fourteen cities joined in a formal *protest*, whereby they appealed from all that should be done, to the emperor, a future council, or unsuspected judges: And accordingly they sent proper deputies to the emperor. This was the remarkable protestation, which gave the name of *protestants* to the Lutherians in Germany. The Protestants acted with so much steadiness and resolution, that the emperor was much startled at it, and determined to use moderation for the present. He appointed another diet to be held at Augsburg, (after he had driven Solyman the *magnificent* from Germany) and accordingly it was opened there in June 1530. It was given out that the emperor would tread the Gospellers under his feet, which made the Protestant princes inclined to meet him in arms: But Luther earnestly dissuaded them, and by all his eloquence and endeavours, prevailed upon them to pursue pacific measures. The princes appointed Luther, Philip Melancthon, and other divines

to draw up their form of doctrine to lay before the diet: Luther was never suffered to appear, on account of the certain danger, but was kept in the castle of Coburg near at hand, to be consulted occasionally. The Protestant princes requested that this form of doctrine or confession of their faith afterwards called "The Augsburg Confession," might be read in a full diet: This was refused: But the emperor allowed them to read it in his presence before a special assembly of princes and others. He shed tears when he heard it, owing doubtless to the truth of the doctrines contained in it, and to the moderation which Melancthon had shewn in revising the whole. The Romanists agreed to draw up a confutation of it: They examined it step by step—Rejoinders were made; but to no effect. The diet broke up, and the princes returned home without any probability of accommodation. The Emperor procured a decree in the diet, allowing the protestant princes, till the 15th of April following to consult about their submission &c. But they remained steadfast to their principles: And the Emperor, in November, published the decree of the diet, which ordered that no alterations or innovations should be made in the faith or religious worship of the church, and that none should be admitted to the imperial chamber, who disobeyed this decree. Luther during this period, was not idle, he wrote many useful works; shewed his pastoral zeal by attending his people at Wittenberg, when the plague raged severely amongst them: Held a visitation of the churches; and opposed with all his power the offensive errors of the Antinomians, whose proceedings gave him infinite concern. His letters to the elector, and to Philip Melancthon, written about this time, are strong evidences of the greatness of his mind; his detestation of war, on a religious account; and of his strong reliance upon God, for a want of which he upbraids his less hardy, but most valuable friend, Melancthon.

The Protestant princes determined to support their cause, in 1530 and 1535 made and renewed their solemn league at Smalcald. The pope, the emperor, and the Romanists were desirous of summoning a general council, many efforts were made; much disputing passed on both sides, but no accommodation took place; and before Luther's death every thing wore the face of war, which was unhappily proclaimed in 1546. During this period Luther employed himself in the business of his function: In 1534 the German Bible was put to press and completely finished the next year.—

Erasmus died in 1536 at Basil, as well as Luther's great friend Martin Bucer. Luther himself too began to feel the decays of nature and was much afflicted with the stone, insomuch that he was led to think of death with great seriousness, and accordingly wrote several pieces on the subject: And in 1542, made his will. In 1543 he was engaged in controversy with the Jews; who endeavoured to spread their opinions, and to make converts in Germany, but his nervous and able writings put a stop to their attempts. His heart was bent upon peace, and his pen was continually employed in entreating the princes to abstain from war: And he used frequently to say, that he hoped God would hear his prayers, and never suffer him to live to see a war in Germany. His prayers were heard; but immediately after his death, the unhappy confusion began.

In the year 1545, afflicted in body, and tormented with violent pains, which perhaps added to the disquietude of his mind; he left Wittenberg, offended at the disputes with the Zuinglians, and displeased with Melancthon's moderation, as Leckendorf suggests: (For Luther would not yield at all—nor give up any of those sentiments which he had strongly imbibed) the remissness of discipline, and the too great luxury prevailing among the people there much offended him—and he declared in a letter to his wife, that as this would be the last year of his life, he was determined never to return to Wittenberg. John Matthæus gives us the following account of the affair: There came to Wittenberg, some vile and loose women who perverted and defiled many youth of the university. This gave prodigious uneasiness to the good old man (Luther), so that his spirit like that of Lot's in Sodom, was night and day tormented with the sight and report of their base proceedings. He fought against them with voice and pen, and in short was so much affected, when he could prevail nothing, that he left Wittenberg, and went to the prince of Anhalt at Marburg. But our university recalled him, with a most honourable embassy, and he returned."—There was a good deal of difficulty to persuade him to return. The elector of Saxony was obliged to interfere, and to condescend so much as to treat him, and to promise that every reformation he desired at Wittenberg should certainly be made. This year he finished his commentary upon Genesis, and concludes it thus, "I have finished my commentary upon Genesis. May God, my God grant, that others after me may interpret it much better. I can do no more, infirm and weak,

Pray to God for me, that he would grant me a good and happy hour of departure. Amen."

It happened extremely remarkable, that in the last year of his life, he should be called into his own country, to die there, where he had been born above sixty years before.— But so it was. There were some disputes between the courts of Mansfield, and Luther was sent for, to come and compose the difference. He preached his last sermon at Wittenburgh, on the 17th. of January, 1546; and on the 23d. set out for Illeben, his native place, where he was honorably entertained by the court, who escorted him to his apartments with an hundred horse. He was very ill during the journey, three of his sons, Melancthon, Justus, and Jonas, with several of his friends accompanied him. He attended to the business, upon which he came from the 29th of January, to the 17th of February, and preached four times. But in the evening of the 17th. he sickened a little before supper of his usual illness—being grievously tortured in his bowels with great faintness and weakness. His pains encreased, and he went to bed where he slept till midnight, when he awoke in such anguish, that he found his life near at an end. He joined his friends in earnest prayer; and for himself said, "Oh my Heavenly Father, the God and Father of my Lord Jesus Christ, the God of all comfort, I give thee thanks, that thou hast revealed thy Son. Jesus Christ to me, in whom I have believed, whom I have confessed, whom I have loved, whom I have honored, whom the pope of Rome and all his impious multitude persecute and reproach. Thee thee, my Lord Jesus, I earnestly entreat to receive my poor soul! My heavenly Father, though I am torn from this life, though this body of mine must be laid down in the grave, yet I know certainly, that I shall abide with thee eternally, nor can I ever be plucked out of thy hands." After which he added, "So God loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." He then took some medicine provided for him—upon which he said, *I go now and will yield up my spirit*—and thrice repeated the words *Into thy hands I commend my spirit, for thou hast redeemed me, O God of truth.* After this he lay silent, and spoke not, save that when some of his particular friends said, Most reverend Father, do you die in that constant confession of Christ and his truth, which you have preached?" He replied, with a clear voice—*Ita*—yes verily. Afterwards turning himself on his left side, he dozed about a quarter of an hour; when



he fetched a deep but gentle sigh, and gave up the ghost, so that nobody discerned the least pain or emotion of his body; but he literally fell asleep in the Lord, on the 18th of February, 1546 in the 63d year of his age. He left behind him a widow, three sons, and two daughters.

He was honorably interred at Wittenberg; where the troops of Charles the emperor, in the year 1547, were very desirous to pull down his monoment, and dig up his bones: But the emperor had more generosity and prudence, than to consent to a procedure so base and infamous. "*Let them alone*, said he: *suffer his bones to be at rest.*" So in life and death, amidst enemies continually desiring his life, and blackening his reputation with the most odious and senseless calumnies, he was preserved by the good providence of his God.

He was of a large stature, and had such a sharp sight that few could endure stedfastly to look at him. He had a gentle, clear and persuasive voice; was passionate, but soon appeased. He had an uncommon genius, a lively imagination, a pious and devout disposition, a strong tincture of melancholy and enthusiasm, and a great warmth and impetuosity, which impelled him, in his controversial writings especially, to ridicule and insult his adversaries, and to use an acrimony of style, which can by no means be excused. He was fond of music, and was both a composer and performer; which was very good for his mind and body. It expelled melancholy, he used to say, and put the devil to flight, who mortally hated music; he entertained a mean opinion of the capacity and disposition of those, who had no taste for this excellent art. He also sacrificed to the graces, and composed some poems, Latin and German. There is great merit in many of his hymns. He was remarkable for his contented disposition, a little satisfied his wishes, for he had a great contempt for money. We are much obliged to him for opening the gate of reformation, which should make us the more ready to excuse his faults: and perhaps a man of a less impetuous and magnanimous disposition would not have been able to have perfected so extraordinary a work, for extraordinary we must needs call it, that a poor *Friar* should be able to oppose the Pope, then the king of the kings of the earth; it was more extraordinary that he should prevail; but most extraordinary that he should die in peace, amidst so many enemies. His followers have been called *Lutherans*, after him; though much against his approbation, "*Hear, says he*" in a book he published against

*Tumults*, &c. this I ask first, let my name be remembered no more : let no man call himself a *Lutheran* but a *Christian*. What is *Luther* ? The doctrine is not mine : I have not been crucified for any one. Paul forbids any to be called after him, Peter does the same ; why should I, a most contemptible worm, desire that my most worthless name should be given to the children of Christ. God forbid ! Let us extinguish these factious appellations, and let us be called *Christians*, as holding the doctrine of Christ. The *Papists* justly have the name of a sect, because not content with the doctrines of Christ, they urge the dogmas of the *Pope*, and will be *Papists*. So then let them be, and so let them have the *Pope* for their master. I am not, I will not be the *master* of any one. I hold the common doctrine of Christ, with the church, he only is our master," &c. How happy would it be, if such sentiments were verified more by men's practice !

Melancthon used to say of *Luther*, "*Pomeranius* is a grammarian, I am a logician, and *Justus Jonas* is an Orator, but *Luther* is good at every thing : the wonder of mankind ; for whatever he says or writes, it penetrates the heart, and makes a lasting impression." He always recommended strongly the study of the Sacred Scriptures, and Germany is particularly indebted to him for his translation of the Bible. Three things, he used to say, make a divine ; meditation, prayer, and temptation : and that three things were to be done by a minister ; to read the Bible diligently, to pray earnestly, and always to be a learner. We will conclude this sketch of his life, with the words of the author,\* whom we have principally followed : " God grant that all who call themselves by his name, or profess that doctrine which he defended, may diligently imitate that constant endeavor after good, which was conspicuous in him, and principally his fervency in prayer, his magnanimity and resolution, his freedom from all human fears, his perfect content, and his many other singular virtues ; while they are careful not to excuse or cover their own faults, and vices, under those imperfections and blemishes, in his character, which from human frailty unhappily cleave to him."

We will just add, that the *will* he made had these expressions in it, " O Lord God, I thank thee, that thou wouldst have me live a poor and indigent person upon earth : I have neither house, nor land, nor possessions, nor money to leave,

\* *L. Dan. Herrnschmidtus.*

thou Lord hast given me a wife and children : them, Lord, I give back to thee ; nourish, instruct, and keep them, (O thou Father of the orphans, and judge of the widow) as thou hast done to me, so do thou unto them." His wife during the subsequent years endured great hardships and difficulties, and at length died by an accident in going from Wittenberg in the year 1522. When Seckendorf wrote his history, at the close of the last century, some of Luther's family were remaining.

*London Christian Magazine.*

*To the Editors of the Virginia Religious Magazine,*

GENTLEMEN,

HEREWITH I send you a tract in defence of household baptism. So many works have already been written on this subject, and the pieces published in your first and second volumes, have given so much satisfaction, that it may seem unnecessary and improper to continue the discussion in the Magazine. But the error, I suppose, is zealously and unremittingly inculcated by our Baptist brethren. Being a turning point of party distinction, it is most tenaciously retained. And it has always been found to carry with it a train of melancholy consequences. For these reasons, it appears to me needful, that the truth be exhibited repeatedly, and in every point of view calculated to insure its due impression on the mind.. These ideas, however, are submitted to your better judgment, as well as the tract itself. You will either give it a place in some successive numbers of the Magazine, or suppress it, as may appear to you advisable.— Whether the arguments here advanced in defence of what we believe to be an ordinance of Christ, have a decisive force or not, I trust they will appear to have been written in the spirit of Christian meekness and charity.

EUPHRON.

THE SCRIPTURAL DOCTRINE OF HOUSEHOLD BAPTISM  
STATED AND DEFENDED.

—:0:—

*Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

THESE words are a part of the commission given by our Lord Jesus Christ to his Apostles, shortly before his ascension into heaven. He had finished the great work for which he came into the world, had made atonement by his death for the sins of men, had conquered the powers of darkness, and risen in triumph from the grave. Possessing, as Mediator, all authority in heaven and in earth, he sends forth his chosen messengers, with a commission, which extends also to their successors in the ministry to the end of time, to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation, and gather his church out of all the nations of the earth; promising to attend, preserve and support them in the execution of the arduous office to which they are appointed.

The part of the Apostolick commission contained in the text, has long been and still is a subject of great difference of opinion and much controversy between our brethren the Baptists on one side, and the far greater part of the Christian world on the other. It is much to be regretted that in a case where, by mutual acknowledgment, either opinion is entirely consistent with a state of holiness and salvation, such difference should disturb that love and harmony by which the children of God ought certainly to be united. We wish for peace: but we dare not sacrifice to it the higher regard which we owe to truth. In this as well as every other article of divine revelation it is surely the duty of all to search with patient diligence and unprejudiced candor for the truth; and to receive it, when found, in the love of it. Which may God enable us to do with the simplicity of heart which becomes Christians.

It is necessary to observe at the outset, what is well known to all who understand the original language of the New Testament, that the word in the text rendered, *teach*, (1) is not accurately translated. It is a different word from that rendered in the same way in the following verse, (2) and properly signifies *to make disciples*. The true version, therefore,

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(1) *Matheteuete.*

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(2) *Didaskentes.*



*Go make all nations disciples baptizing them, &c.* (3) This correction of our version is now universally admitted.

In order to proceed with clearness, I shall state first how far our brethren agree with us in the explication of the text, and then, wherein we differ. It is agreed that the gospel is to be preached to all, that those who are influenced by this or other means of religious instruction as to profess their faith in Jesus Christ, and subjection to him as their Lord and Master, are to be denominated his disciples; and that all his disciples are to be baptized with water, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. But whether the household of every such disciple are, on his profession of faith, to be denominated disciples also, and accordingly baptized? And whether baptism be rightly administered by the application of water in any mode, not confined to one mode, suppose that of immersion, only? On these questions we divide: and to establish and defend the affirmative of both, is the design of this discourse.

For our assistance in these inquiries, I shall offer some preliminary observations.

That society called the church of Christ is composed of all who are his disciples throughout the world. But here a distinction must be made between the visible and the invisible church. The invisible church consists of such only as are the children of God in heart, the subjects of his sanctifying grace. The visible church consists of all such every where as are denominated and received by his ministers as disciples, according to the rules which Christ himself, the head of the church, has laid down for this purpose in his word.

As the ministers of Christ do not possess the discernment necessary to ascertain perfectly who are members of the invisible church, it is evident that such discernment cannot be the standard of procedure in the admission of members into the visible church. Who are the subjects of a real work of grace in their hearts, He only who searcheth the heart and knoweth all things can infallibly judge. And therefore in this matter as we are unable to determine so we have no concern. It is certain that ever since there was a visible church on earth, it has comprehended some who were not

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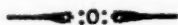
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THE SCRIPTURAL DOCTRINE OF HOUSEHOLD BAPTISM  
STATED AND DEFENDED.



*Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

THESE words are a part of the commission given by our Lord Jesus Christ to his Apostles, shortly before his ascension into heaven. He had finished the great work for which he came into the world, had made atonement by his death for the sins of men, had conquered the powers of darkness, and risen in triumph from the grave. Possessing, as Mediator, all authority in heaven and in earth, he sends forth his chosen messengers, with a commission, which extends also to their successors in the ministry to the end of time, to proclaim the glad tidings of salvation, and gather his church out of all the nations of the earth; promising to attend, preserve and support them in the execution of the arduous office to which they are appointed.

The part of the Apostolick commission contained in the text, has long been and still is a subject of great difference of opinion and much controversy between our brethren the Baptists on one side, and the far greater part of the Christian world on the other. It is much to be regretted that in a case where, by mutual acknowledgment, either opinion is entirely consistent with a state of holiness and salvation, such difference should disturb that love and harmony by which the children of God ought certainly to be united. We wish for peace: but we dare not sacrifice to it the higher regard which we owe to truth. In this as well as every other article of divine revelation it is surely the duty of all to search with patient diligence and unprejudiced candor for the truth; and to receive it, when found, in the love of it. Which may God enable us to do with the simplicity of heart which becomes Christians.

It is necessary to observe at the outset, what is well known to all who understand the original language of the New Testament, that the word in the text rendered, *teach*, (1) is not accurately translated. It is a different word from that rendered in the same way in the following verse, (2) and properly signifies *to make disciples*. The true version, therefore,

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(1) *Matheteuete.*

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(2) *Didaskontes.*



*Go make all nations disciples baptizing them, &c.* (3) This correction of our version is now universally admitted.

In order to proceed with clearness, I shall state first how far our brethren agree with us in the explication of the text, and then, wherein we differ. It is agreed that the gospel is to be preached to all, that those who are influenced by this or other means of religious instruction as to profess their faith in Jesus Christ, and subjection to him as their Lord and Master, are to be denominated his disciples; and that all his disciples are to be baptized with water, in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. But whether the household of every such disciple are, on his profession of faith, to be denominated disciples also, and accordingly baptized? And whether baptism be rightly administered by the application of water in any mode, not confined to one mode, suppose that of immersion, only? On these questions we divide: and to establish and defend the affirmative of both, is the design of this discourse.

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been so often and so confidently asserted, that it is altogether absurd to apply a significant religious rite to subjects who cannot at present understand its nature and design, falls at once to the ground.

With regard then to adults who act for themselves in this matter, the ground and rule of admission into the church appears to be a personal profession of subjection to Christ. As to the households of such professors, what has hitherto been said is not supposed to prove, but only to open the way to the subsequent proof, that they are to be admitted also.

I shall next premise a few observations on the nature of positive institutions in religion, of which Christian baptism is one.

Positive duties are so called to distinguish them from moral duties, because in some respects they differ from each other. Moral precepts are precepts the reason of which we see. In positive precepts, though we may see the utility of such institutions in general to the promotion of piety, yet we do not see the reason why a particular one is preferred.—Moral duties arise out of the relations which we sustain to God and our neighbour. Positive duties do not arise from such relations, but from external command given by God himself; nor would they without such command be duties at all. Thus, that we should love God with supreme affection, that we should render to every man his due; these are moral duties. They arise evidently out of our acknowledged relations to God and our fellow-men, would be binding on us, though never enforced by an external command. But that we should be baptized with water, as a part of religion, could never be seen to arise out of those relations; and therefore must derive its binding force from a revealed precept. But though moral and positive duties thus differ, there are other respects in which they agree and coincide. When the command for the observance of a positive duty is actually given, it falls immediately within that universal obedience which we owe to the supreme Sovereign. Being a part of his will, it is ultimately referred to the same source as moral duties, and partakes of their nature. Thus, when the divine precept for baptism is made known, we can no more doubt or evade our duty to be baptized according to that precept, than we can doubt or evade our obligations to love God and do justice to our neighbour.

On account of the necessity of external command as the foundation of positive institutions, our Baptist brethren seem universally to suppose that, from the very nature of such



institutions, there is no room for reasoning in the way of analogy, or indeed for any kind of reasoning at all, concerning them. They expect the circumstances of positive institutions, of baptism, for instance, to be expressly stated in a precept, or at least unequivocally exhibited in the practice of inspired men. Hence they incessantly call on us for express precept or example to warrant our practice in regard both to the subjects and the mode of baptism. And whatever we advance, not precisely of this kind, is rejected, often almost without a hearing.

Now could these principles of our brethren be established, we should acknowledge them to have great weight in the present controversy. It is evident, however, that in proportion to their importance we should be careful to examine whether they be true or not.

We may observe then, in the first place, that there does not appear to be any thing in the general nature of positive institutions on which such principles can rest. When a positive duty is to be instituted, who shall limit the supreme Lawgiver in the mode of expressing his command? Why may not some, nay many of the circumstances of performing the ordinance be left to be deduced by analogical reasoning from other ordinances before established, or even be left to the pious discretion of God's ministers and people? It is easy to answer such questions by invective, but they ought to be answered soberly. It is in the way I have mentioned that we have to discover moral duty in innumerable instances. And though our brethren seem to think that positive institutions have some peculiar sacredness above moral duties, this has never yet been proved. Were it necessary to our purpose, I think it would be easy to prove the contrary. One thing we know certainly that we cannot be accepted with God in the performance of any duty, whether moral or positive, without one and the same only disposition and purpose of the heart.

But farther; there are insurmountable objections to the Baptist principles above mentioned.

On a careful attention to the positive institutions both of the former church and the present, or rather of the same church of God under different dispensations, (10) we shall

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(10) The substantial identity of the Hebrew and Christian churches is well established by the Rev. Mr. Cowles, in his *Hebrew or Jewish, and Christian church the same*; and the doctrine judiciously applied in proof of infant baptism.

find reason to conclude that many important circumstances of those institutions are left to be discovered by inference, and others quite undefined and discretionary.

In the case of circumcision some things were expressly enjoined. The rite itself was clearly pointed out. (11) The time of performing it was also fixed with equal precision. (12) But can our brethren show us where the administrator of circumcision is marked out? It was not limited to the priests. It seems that even women were permitted to perform it; for we find the wife of Moses circumcising her son. (13) Now without an administrator the ordinance could not possibly be executed; and yet, for ought we are able to learn, this was left as a matter of indifference and discretion.

Again; there is no express precept nor example in the New Testament for women's participation of the Lord's supper. And yet our brethren doubt as little as we that it is the duty and privilege of all Christians equally, of the one sex as well as the other. This can only be proved by inference from the nature of the ordinance; and it is agreed to be proved with certainty in this way. But how is this consistent with the principle which demands express precept or example as the only sufficient evidence? (14) We may observe farther, that in the institution of the supper we see no limitation in regard to the administrator, nor in regard to the time when, or how often, it is to be administered. All these are either to be learned by inference or are left to discretion.

But let us come to baptism itself. Is every thing fixed here? Far from it. In the first place, the very existence of water-baptism as a standing ordinance in the church to the end of time is no where expressly declared in the New

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(11) Gen. xvii. 11. *And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a token, &c.*

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(13) Exod. iv. 25. *Then Zipporah took a sharp stone, and cut off the foreskin of her son, &c.*

14. This point of female communion is urged with invincible force of argument by Mr. Peter Edwards, in his *Canada Reasons for renouncing the principles of Antipedobaptism*. Indeed he has managed the whole controversy in a masterly manner: and I earnestly recommend his book as one of the very best on this subject that I have ever seen.

Testament. Let not the reader be startled at this position; but consider it carefully. We think the perpetuity of baptism is with certainty inferred from the Apostolick commission, as well as from other sources. But it certainly is not a matter of express precept. Nor can our brethren consistently contend that the practice of baptism by the Apostles is of itself sufficient to support its perpetuity; unless they also assert, as I believe they will not, that every individual thing which was done by the Apostles is binding upon all Christians in every age. Again; how do our brethren know that the administration of baptism is confined to the ministers of the gospel? Is it any where expressly so limited? Can it be made out otherwise than by inference? Nor is any precise time of baptism fixed in the institution. Our brethren themselves do not suppose that there is. For though it is agreed that baptism ought to take place soon after a profession of faith, yet their universal practice proves that they do not consider themselves bound indispensably to an hour or a day; and they frequently delay it, from motives of convenience, several days, sometimes even several weeks. By the way, this circumstance of time, which is left so indefinite in regard to baptism, is one of the few which were absolutely fixed in regard to circumcision.

These observations serve to show, what is of much importance in the controversy concerning baptism, that express precept or apostolick example cannot rightly be considered as the only means of ascertaining our duty in regard to this institution. Whatever evidence and just reasoning may throw light on the subject ought, in this, as well as in all other cases, to be admitted and applied. And after all, it will be found that some things are left to exercise Christian prudence and discretion.

Let us now proceed to the direct discussion of our subject. And for the sake of ease and clearness, let us inquire first, whether the household of the professing believer are according to Christ's institution to be baptized? And then, whether baptism may lawfully be administered in various modes, or is limited to one mode only? This is the common division. The questions are really distinct, and were so stated at the beginning of this discourse.

Go, says our Lord, *make all nations disciples, baptizing them.* How are we to understand this command? How did they understand it to whom it was addressed? In order to make this discovery, we should not only study the import of the words themselves, but also the education, the opin-

tions and even the prejudices of the Apostles ; for prejudices they certainly had at that time, and strong ones too. In a word, we should labour to place ourselves, as it were, in their very position, surrounded with all the circumstances in which they stood when they received this injunction. In proportion as we succeed in this attempt, we shall be likely to ascertain how they understood the commission of their Lord ; and their understanding of it will exhibit its infallible meaning, unless subsequent evidence shall arise to prove that they were mistaken. I lay this down as a general rule for the explication of all those parts of ancient records which consist of addresses from one person to another. If the reader have any doubt of its correctness, I invite him to pause and examine it carefully before he proceed farther. Such an examination, I am confident, will convince him that the rule is a just one, and of great importance in the interpretation of the scriptures.

The Apostles, then, could not be ignorant that in all the important affairs of life it was common for parents to act and engage in behalf of their children ; heads of families in behalf of their households. They knew that it was common for children to be comprehended with their parents in those covenants which God had at various times made with men. But farther ; they were Jews, members of the Jewish church ; the admission of families into which church was a fundamental principle and an invariable practice. From the founding of that church in the house of Abraham, The children and servants of Hebrew believers were uniformly received and included within it. And whereas a law had been given, for the admission into that church of profelytes from other nations, they knew that by the law the households of professing profelytes were admitted with them, and were equally subjects of the initiating ordinance. Nor had they, so far as we can discover, ever heard from their master any intimation that he intended any change in this matter.

I have farther to observe that it is a fact well established by ancient testimony that it was an universal custom amongst the Jews to baptize at the same time that they circumcised their profelytes, both parents and children. (15) That this

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(15) " No one is a profelyte until he be circumcised and baptized." This was a standing rule amongst the Jews.— " It says Maimonides, an Israelite find a heathen infant, and baptize him in the name of a profelyte, behold, he is a profelyte."



practice existed before the coming of our Lord appears certain; as, besides the testimonies which prove it, it is utterly incredible that the Jews should have assumed the rite in imitation of the Christians whom they rancorously hated and despised. This fact accounts in the best manner for the reception which John's baptism met with from the Jews. It is remarkable that they express no surprise, nor ask any questions, about his baptizing with water as a religious rite. They only inquire for the authority of his commission. (16) This is inconsistent with baptism's being a novelty among them as a sign of entering into a new religious relation; and concurs with the other evidence to prove that it was a constant practice.

It may be objected that this Jewish baptism, not being founded or at least clearly ascertained by their law, should not be supposed to have any influence on the minds of the Apostles in the understanding of their commission. But this conclusion I cannot admit. It was a matter of fact with which they must have been well acquainted; and we do not find that our Lord ever condemned it. It would, therefore, have its influence on the minds of the Apostles. It is not true that every Jewish institution of which we do not find the divine authority in their law was implicitly condemned by our Lord. When and by what authority were the Jewish synagogues instituted? On this subject the Old Testament is altogether silent. Yet our Lord gave them his unequivocal approbation by constantly officiating in them.—Nay, the government and modes of worship of the Christian church were in a great measure conformed to the model of the synagogue.

Another remark, of no little weight, presents itself here. It was a custom amongst the Jews to conclude the celebration of the passover by eating bread and drinking wine.—Of this we need no other evidence than the account given of the last passover celebrated by our Lord with his Apostles. (17) Now this very Jewish custom our Lord solemnly appointed to be a standing ordinance in his church. Have our Baptist brethren such an antipathy to every thing Jewish, that they have never observed this fact? When, therefore,

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16. John i. 25. *And they asked him, and said unto him, why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias neither that prophet?*

17. Luke xxii. 19. 20. *And he took bread, and gave thanks, &c. Likewise also the cup after supper, &c.*

the command was given to make disciples and baptize, would not the Apostles naturally understand it as an adoption of the Jewish baptism? Are not the two cases strongly analogous?

Considering then the circumstances of the Apostles, and the views of things which they must have had, let us suppose them to have been divinely commissioned to go forth to all the nations, and make them disciples to Moses, initiating them into that state by circumcision. Would they not have thought themselves bound to receive and circumcise the children with their parents, the households with their believing heads? I think it perfectly evident that they would. Now only substitute the name of Christ for that of Moses, and baptism for circumcision, and it becomes the very commission contained in the text. Considering this, together with what we have seen concerning Jewish baptism, must we not conclude that the commission contemplated the baptism of the households of believers as well as of themselves, and that the Apostles so understood it?

Should it be objected, that so far as any conclusion can be formed from circumcision to baptism, it will only warrant the baptism of males, as none but males were circumcised: I answer that the efficacy of circumcision was considered as extending to females also; (18) that females are as capable of being baptized as males; that they are disciples, and all disciples are by the text commanded to be baptized; and finally, that care has been taken to inform us expressly that baptism belongs equally to both sexes. (19)

Supposing the Apostles to have understood their commission rightly, there still remains to be answered an objection against our conclusion. This is founded on the meaning of the word disciple. It has often been asserted by our brethren, and that with much confidence, that little children being incapable of being taught cannot be made disciples; nay, that discipleship necessarily implies not only a capacity of instruction, but actual previous instruction. But is this assertion true? I acknowledge that the term disciple has a relation to instruction. But it by no means implies univer-

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18. Exod. xii. 4. *And if the household be too little for the lamb, let him and his neighbour next unto his house take it, according to the number of the souls; &c.* Compared with v. 48.—*for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof.*

(19) Acts viii. 12.—*They were baptized, both men and women.*

fally that he who is called a disciple must have been previously instructed. A disciple is one who puts himself or who is put by others under the authority of a teacher. The word applies equally to both cases. We agree that of adults no longer under the controul of parents, no person can be called a disciple of Christ without a profession of faith in him as the Messiah, and of subjection to his authority. But what has this to do with the reception of children as his disciples? How does it oppose their admission into his school, that they may be taught in future? Is it fair reasoning, that because adults are not to be received without a profession of voluntary subjection to Christ, therefore, children, incapable of making such profession, are to be excluded? I think not. But I go farther, and observe that there is a text in the New Testament where little children are manifestly called disciples. There were a set of men in the days of the Apostles who went about persuading the Christian converts that they must needs be circumcised and keep the law. It is evident that they wished to burden them with the whole law of Moses; and insisted particularly on circumcision as the groundwork, and that which could give a binding force to the rest. Now this matter being proposed to the Apostles and brethren, it was asserted by Peter, and afterwards determined by them all, that it was not necessary to *impose this yoke upon the neck of the disciples.* (20) Had the false teachers gained their object, it is certain that the heavy yoke of circumcision would have fallen principally on the infantile age. So it had been in the Jewish church; and so it would have been in the Christian church. Little children, therefore, are here called disciples. We may remark moreover, that this text affords an obvious and strong proof of our main point, that the children of professing believers were received with them into the church.

Should our brethren still hesitate about infant discipleship, I will propose to their consideration this question; is there any thing more strange in the denominating of little children disciples, than in their entering and being taken into covenant with God, of whatever nature the covenant may be? Yet this latter cannot be denied to have taken place. Besides the great covenant made with Abraham, (21) Moses has left on record a most striking instance of it which

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20. Acts xv. 10.

[21] On this point the reader is requested to read Gen. xvii. carefully throughout.



took place under his administration. (22) On the whole, therefore, I conclude that the Apostles must have understood their commission to enjoin the reception as disciples, and consequently the baptism, of the household of the believer, as well as of the believer himself.

But there still remains an objection, which though it has never, so far as I know, been made, might be made with as much plausibility as many others which we have to encounter; and therefore I shall give it some attention. It may be said that though the Apostles did understand their commission in this manner, yet it is possible they were mistaken. It is abundantly evident that they were much prejudiced all along in favour of Jewish notions and customs. They even appear to have misunderstood an important part of their commission, supposing that it limited the exercise of their ministry to their own countrymen. And this being the case, how do we know that they were not mistaken at that time in regard to the proper subjects of baptism? In answer to this, I grant they did mistake as to the extensive exercise of their ministry. But this error was amply corrected. A new revelation was given to explain to them the true extent of their commission. (23) And could a like correction be shown in the other case, the objection would be conclusive. But no such thing can be produced. Let no man then presume a mistake in them, which is no where found to be rectified by the spirit of God, under whose special guidance they were. Nor is this all. A strong argument arises from the matter here considered, in support of our doctrine. As the Apostles were so slowly and with such difficulty divested of their Jewish prejudices: as they did through those prejudices actually err in regard to the extent of their commission, so that a new revelation was necessary to set them right; This shows clearly, I think, that they would understand their orders respecting baptism as I have represented; and that it was necessary to guard them,

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22. Deut. xxix. 10, 11, 12. *Ye stand this day all of you before the Lord your God; your captains of your tribes, your elders, and your officers, with all the men of Israel; your little ones, your wives, and the stranger that is in thy camp, from the hewer of thy wood unto the drawer of thy water; that thou shouldst enter into covenant with the Lord thy God, and into the oath which the Lord thy God maketh with thee this day.*

23. Acts x. Particularly v. 23.—*God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.*



or instruct them better afterwards, if it were a mistake. If our divine Lawgiver intended so material a change in the constitution of the church, as that a large description of persons who had always been members of it should be so no longer, is it credible that he would express his will in terms which would so naturally be understood to lead to a contrary conclusion? In such terms we see that he did express his will. There is no where any intimation that his ministers misunderstood it. Therefore they understood it rightly, and in the sense which I have been endeavouring to establish.

I have still farther to observe that the commission can never, on the interpretation which our Baptist brethren give it, be fully accomplished. We have seen the gospel of Christ carried into most of the nations of the earth; but we have never seen all nations, nor even all the individuals of any one nation, made disciples. The glorious scheme is gradual in its progress; but it will finally be accomplished in its fullest extent. All the nations will be made disciples. Now as little children compose a great part of every nation, they must also be made disciples and baptized in those happy days of the church, which all christians with joy anticipate. For it is impossible that all nations should be taken into the church, while, as the doctrine of our brethren would have it, a large portion of every one would be excluded from it. Hence then we derive an additional argument to prove that doctrine unscriptural, and that the commission enjoins the baptism of little children as well as of their parents.

I do not forget, all this while, those texts which our Baptist brethren so constantly and so confidently urge as conclusive against us; such as these: *Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins.* (24) *When they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women;* (25) and above all, *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.* (26) These texts prove clearly enough the baptism of professing believers, not having been before baptized. But they are so manifestly to be confined to adults, capable of hearing, understanding and obeying the gospel, that it is really astonishing they should ever be thought applicable to the question concerning pedobaptism; a question which they

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24. Acts ii. 38. | 25. Acts viii. 12. | 26. Mark xvi. 15. 16.

leave perfectly open to investigation on its own proper evidence. Let us, for instance, consider for a moment the last-mentioned of these texts; *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.* If this be not confined to adults, but understood universally, it will inevitably involve the eternal damnation of every human being that dies in infancy; for they are absolutely incapable of hearing or believing the gospel. Will our Baptist brethren avow this consequence? Or can they, consistently with their interpretation, overthrow it? For my part, I do not expect at their hands either the avowal or the refutation.

Let us now enquire whether there be any scriptural evidence beyond the commission itself, to assist in the explanation of it.

The practice of the Apostles in this matter, if it can be ascertained will furnish the best comment on the commission. The administration of baptism is mentioned again and again in the course of their history. I acknowledge that in many of the instances we have no notice of the baptism of any but professing believers. But it is strange that this should ever have been urged by our brethren as an argument for the exclusion of little children. Such a rule of reasoning would make strange work indeed with the scriptures, as well as all other historical writings. Silence neither affirms nor denies any thing; from mere silence, therefore, no conclusion can be safely formed in any case. How few instances, perhaps not more than one, have we left on record of infant circumcision after the days of Abraham. (27) And yet from that time downward through a long period of ages it was, no doubt, with the exception of the forty years spent in the wilderness, (28) a constant practice.

But we have on record several instances of household baptism, which strongly support our doctrine. These are the households of Stephanas, (29) Lydia, (30) and the Jail.

(27) Namely, the circumcision of the son of Moses; Exod. iv. 25.

(28) Josh. v. 7. *And their children, whom He raised up in their stead, them Joshua circumcised: for they were uncircumcised, because they had not circumcised them by the way.*

(29) 1 Cor. i. 16. *And I baptised also the household of Stephanas.*

(30) Acts xvi. 14. 15. *And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, &c. heard us: whose heart the Lord*

or. (31) Except the heads of these families, we hear of no believers in them ; yet all were baptized. The facts are related in the manner of events common and well known ; and naturally impress the belief that each household was baptized in consequence of the professed faith of its head. Of the two latter cases mentioned we have such circumstantial accounts as deserve particular attention. As to Lydia, we are expressly informed that *her heart was opened to attend to the word preached* ; that is, she became a believer : and then she was baptized with her household. Of the Jailor we are particularly told that he was greatly alarmed ; that he asked *what he should do to be saved* : and on professing himself a believer, he was baptized, and all his straightway. And in the general joy of the house after all were baptized, we are told that *he believed in God* ; without any intimation that any other of his household believed. (32)

But it is objected that we do not know certainly whether any of those households contained infants or not. I might reply, that it is highly improbable there should be three families taken indiscriminately, without any infants in them. But waving this, let it be remembered, that we by no means plead for the baptism of infants merely because they are infants. We maintain that when a head of a family becomes by faith a disciple of Christ, his children and servants, whether they be infants or not, are to be reckoned disciples and baptized, if they can properly be said to belong to his household. We all agree that those who are adults, and masters of their own actions, are to be received or rejected personally on their own account. As to the rest, who they are that compose the household of the believer, the administrator of

opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptised, and her household, she besought us, if ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

31. Acts xvi. 33. *And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he and all his straightway.*

32. Acts xvi. 34. The original is, *egalliasato panoiki pepisteukos to Theo* ; of which our version, *he rejoiced, believing in God with all his house*, is not accurate. The exact translation is, *he rejoiced with all his house, he himself having believed in God* : or, which is the same thing, *he having believed in God, rejoiced with all his house.*

the ordinance must judge in the exercise of his ministerial discretion. It may perhaps be said, that a man's wife forms a part of his household; and therefore ought, on the system I maintain, to be baptized in consequence of his profession of faith. To this I answer, common sense teaches us, that the wife is not under the authority and pupilage of her husband in the same way that his children and domesticks are. She is in fact a joint, though in some degree a subordinate head with him over the family. But did I think otherwise, I should feel myself obliged to admit the consequence, and act upon it; and by no means to relinquish, on this account, the scriptural doctrine of household baptism.

Let any man carefully and candidly review these instances of household baptism, as related in the new Testament; and then say whether, supposing the practice of the Apostles not to have been as I have stated it, their account of the matter be not calculated to mislead the reader? This, I think, must be acknowledged. But no Christian will say there was a design to mislead. Consequently, the Apostles did practise that baptism for which I contend; and their practice coincides perfectly with the commission under which they acted.

The limits of this discourse forbid my expatiating on several passages of the New Testament, which combine, either directly or indirectly, to establish our doctrine. I cannot omit, however, to bring into view that remarkable text where the Apostle expressly denominates the children of a believer holy. *For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean, but now are they holy.* (33) The import of this word, *holy*, has been already observed. It signifies, *dedicated to God*; and when applied in the scriptures to persons, is uniformly limited to those who are visibly the people of God, and received into his church.— Thus the Jews, with their children, were called a holy nation, (34) not because they all truly loved and served God; for this they did not: but because they were his professing, visible people, separated to be such from the other nations of the earth. Thus visible Christians are denominated holy, or saints; (35) and amongst them the Apostle includes the

33. 1 Cor. vii. 14. 34. Exod. xix. 6. *And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation.*

35. 1 Pet. ii. 9. *Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.* See the New Testament generally.

children of the believer. I conclude, therefore, that they are the proper subjects of that ordinance which is the sign of their dedication to God, and the regular door of admission into the visible church.

Our brethren acknowledge that the common meaning of the word *holy*, which is here applied to the children of the believer, is as I have stated. But they object, that the same thing is applied to the unbelieving parent, who is also said to be sanctified or made holy by the believer. If, therefore, this holiness prove the baptism of the children, they urge that it will prove that of the unbelieving parent also. And to avoid both these, they assert that the holiness here mentioned must mean something quite different from what it does in all other places. Of this singular meaning I shall speak at large presently.

In answer to the objection, I must observe that there is some inaccuracy in the translation of this text. The Apostle, speaking of the parents, uses the past, not the present time. (36) The true version is, *the unbeliever hath been sanctified by the believer*. The Apostle is answering the question, whether a believer might lawfully continue in the marriage state with the unbeliever? His decision is that they should not separate: and he appears to reason thus upon the point. 'Let them continue together; for there have been instances heretofore of unbelievers brought to the faith and profession of the true religion, and into the church of Christ, by means of their believing partners: and there is reason to hope for the same thing in future. And were it not for this consoling prospect, your children would be considered unclean, would not be admitted into the church: for there would not be sufficient ground to hope that they would be trained up as becometh Christians, which is the great rea-

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36. The original is, *Egiastai gar o aner o apistos, &c.* I make no apology for recurring so frequently to critical emendations of our version of the scriptures. It is, in the general, an excellent one. But, whether people choose to know it or not, the fact is, that our English translation of the Bible is the work of men uninspired and fallible, however learned and upright. The original scriptures alone are our infallible standard; and they are as open to investigation now as ever they were. Of our criticisms let those judge whom learning has qualified for the office. I think I foresee a torrent of invective to be poured out upon this harmless note; but I foresee, without the smallest dread of it.

son why any are received into the visible church. But now are they holy, received into the church by baptism, just as they would be if both parents were believers.' This interpretation appears to set the whole matter in a natural and intelligible light. It completely removes the objection, by assigning to the holiness here attributed to the parents and the children an uniform meaning, namely that of dedication to God; which, at the same time, is the uniform scriptural use of the word.

According to our brethren, the Apostle's meaning is, that the children were legitimate, not bastards. Is not this sufficiently refuted by the fact, that though this word, holy, with its derivatives, be used about six hundred times in the scriptures, it never has, nor is any where else pretended to have any such meaning? But besides; if this be indeed the Apostle's meaning, about what, I pray, is he arguing? For he evidently does form an argument about something. Does he infer that the parents had been lawfully married to each other, because their children were legitimate? Nothing could be more absurd; for the legitimacy of children must ever take for granted the validity of their parents' marriage, instead of proving it. Does the Apostle mean to inform them, that if they had not been lawfully married, their children would have been bastards? Wonderful instruction this indeed! In fine, the question was not, whether the marriage had been rightly formed according to the laws of their country, nor whether their children were legitimate or not; for these things they must have known quite as well as the Apostle: but whether Christianity did not so influence and modify the marriage relation, that when one of the parties became a believer, he or she should separate from the unbeliever; a point on which the early converts might naturally enough start a scruple. To this question our brethren's interpretation of the text exhibits no shadow of an answer. Ours, on the other hand, applies directly to the question. The parents are commanded not to separate, because there is reason, from past experience, to hope that the believer may convert the unbeliever. And the lawfulness of their continuing together is farther illustrated by an allusion to the well known practice of baptizing their children. Whether this exposition be not every way more worthy of acceptance than that of our brethren, I leave to every impartial inquirer after truth to determine.

I shall close this train of reasoning respecting the subjects of Christian baptism, by bringing into view, as briefly as

possible, the principal testimonies of the ancient fathers of the church relative to this matter.

But before I produce any thing of this kind, it seems necessary to answer an objection which has often been urged to preclude the force of all such testimonies in determining the cause. It is objected that in proportion as we pay deference to the fathers, we detract from the sufficiency of the scriptures as the rule of faith. The charge is a serious one. In answer to it, let it be observed, that we make a distinction between the doctrinal opinions of the fathers, and their testimony relative to matters of fact. In regard to the former, as they were uninspired fallible, and sometimes fanciful men, they were liable to mistakes as well as we. We know that they did make many and great mistakes. And therefore, as we have the same sources of information in matters of doctrine which they had, we allow them in these no decisive authority. But in respect to matters of fact as they were men of veracity, and had full opportunity of knowing those facts, their testimony must be admitted and have its proper weight. It is only their testimony of this kind that I intend to use. The holy scriptures certainly contain every thing necessary to be believed in order to salvation. But it behoves us to use every means in our power to assist us in the interpretation of scripture. To this end, I venture to assert, few kinds of study are so useful as the study of ecclesiastical antiquity. And a proper attention to the distinction above mentioned, with a careful regard to the character of witnesses to matters of fact, will in general be sufficient to secure us from error.

The consequences of rejecting altogether the testimony of the fathers extend farther, probably, than the objector apprehends. How do we know that the several books of the New Testament were written by those whose names they bear? Is it not by the testimony of the ancient fathers? And if we are obliged to rely on their testimony in a matter of so great importance, why should it not be received in a case of less importance? Indeed the objection tends directly to the subjection of all history; for testimony is the very soul of history.

The testimony of the fathers establishes two points respecting the baptism of children. The first is the early and universal practice of it. The second is its derivation from the Apostles. I shall consider each of these distinctly.

Of those fathers whose works have come down to our times, Tertullian is the first who unequivocally mentions the

baptism of children. He flourished about the close of the second century, that is, an hundred years after the age of the Apostles. He evidently speaks of the baptism of children as a prevailing practice at that time. (37) It is true he dissuades from it. But, besides that he does not venture to condemn the practice as an unauthorized novelty, which omission greatly diminishes the weight of his opposition, it will not be difficult to prove that it has no weight at all. An opinion appears to have arisen very early in the church, that sins committed after baptism could hardly be pardoned. Tertullian himself avows this opinion. (38) He says that there is but one repentance after baptism. On this ground it is that he recommends, very erroneously, as all agree, to delay the baptism even of adult disciples in certain circumstances, because they are liable to strong temptations to sin. (39) Holding such a principle, it is by no means strange that he should dislike the baptizing of little children; and it is evident that such opposition to it has no just claim to our regard.

Origen flourished in the former part of the third century. His fame for extensive knowledge has filled the world. His testimony that the baptism of children was the common practice of the church is express and repeated. (40)

About the year of our Lord, 257, Cyprian sat in coun-

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37. Amongst other things he says, "What is there that should compel this innocent age to receive baptism? And since they are not yet allowed the disposal of temporal goods, is it reasonable that they should be entrusted with the concerns of heaven?"

38. "God was willing that, though the gate of remission was shut, and the grace of baptism refused forever to those who had forfeited their baptismal innocence, they should yet have one remedy left, which is a second repentance; but that is granted to them but once."

39. "It is proper to make those who are not married wait for some time, [before they be baptized,] by reason of the temptations which they have to undergo till they are married, or have attained to the gift of constancy."

40. "Let it be considered, says he, what the cause is, since the baptism of the church is given for the remission of sins, that baptism should, according to the observance [or custom] of the church, be given to little ones also." Again; "The church hath received tradition from the Apostles to give baptism to little ones also."

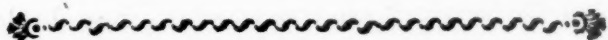
cil with sixty-six other bishops. To this council had been referred the question, whether it were lawful to baptize children before the eighth day ? Which question was unanimously answered in the affirmative. Here we see clearly that the baptism of children was the practice of the church at that day ; since in a solemn assembly of sixty-seven bishops and on a scrupulous question relative to the time of baptizing children, not a doubt was started against their right in general to the ordinance.

But it is needless to multiply testimonies on this point. Our Baptist brethren acknowledge the fact, that the practice for which I contend was very early and extensive, or rather universal, throughout the Christian church. Nor can they produce one testimony to show that it was an innovation. Now is it credible that it should have been such, and yet have gained, in so short a time as an hundred years, so universal an establishment, and all this without opposition ? For as to Tertullian, is it conceivable that he should weakly attempt to prove the inexpediency of baptizing children, if he could have asserted it to be a mere novelty of human invention ? Had it been such, must he not have known it ? And would not this have been an argument infinitely more proper for the purpose of destroying its credit than the flimsy ones he has used ? Yes, most certainly. It follows, therefore, that no such thing could with truth be urged against the practice ; in other words, that it was founded on the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, and handed down to the church by his Apostles.

This leads me to the other and most important point to be proved by the testimony of the Fathers.

Origin asserts expressly, that the church had received tradition from the Apostles to baptize little ones, as well as adults. [41]

Augustin, who flourished about the close of the fourth century, asserts substantially the same thing again and again. He says that the baptism of infants is a tradition of the universal church ; [42] that it is founded on the highest autho-



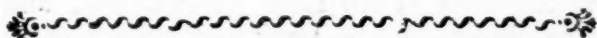
41. See his testimony before cited, note 40.

42. " This, says he, is held as tradition by the universal church, when little children are baptized, who surely are not yet able to believe with the heart," &c.

rity; (43) that it cannot be doubted of. (44) And it is remarkable that one of the arguments which he urges most confidently against the Pelagians is derived from this practice. He proves that infants are subject to original sin from their being baptized; for in those days the principal end of baptism was supposed to be the removal of original sin.— His adversaries, though much pressed and perplexed by the argument, could not deny the practice on which Augustin founded it, (45) which they doubtless could and would have done, had it been an innovation made after the days of the Apostles.

Augustin was present at the Milevitan council, held about the year of our Lord 440. This council declares, "that the doctrine of baptizing little children is such as the catholic church, every where diffused, always understood and asserted."

Now these testimonies are made by men who had the best opportunities of knowing the truth of what they testify; and of whose veracity there is no reason to doubt. They prove the facts for which they are adduced, just as all other ancient facts are proved. We cannot, therefore, consistently withhold our assent, without denying to testimony and history in general that credit which they have always justly possessed. And whereas it is sometimes objected that many superstitious ceremonies crept into the Christian church, even at a very early period, and therefore stand on the



43. "The doctrine itself [of baptizing infants] gives us no trouble, being long since founded in the catholic church by the highest authority." Speaking of Cyprian, and the decree before mentioned, Augustine says, "Blessed Cyprian, not making any new decree, but keeping the faith of the church most firm, decreed with a set number of his fellow bishops, that a child new-born might be baptized."

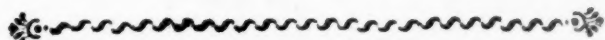
44. "The question between them [the Pelagians] and us, is not whether infants are to be baptized. Let no man make doubt of this; seeing neither do they doubt of this who contradict us in the other question;" [that is, concerning the benefit of baptism.]

45. "They are repressed, says Augustine, by the authority of the church. For if they say that Christ profits not infants baptized, they plainly affirm that infants are superfluously baptized. But this they dare not say."

same ground of ancient practice with infant-baptism; it is of importance to observe that the fathers do not assert of any of those ceremonies that they were handed down from the Apostles. But of the baptism of children they do assert it; which remarkable distinction gives to the latter a decided superiority. On the whole, these venerable testimonies of antiquity, so completely in our favour, add no little confirmation to the doctrine I have been labouring to establish. And with them I close this part of the controversy.

I proceed now to the question respecting the mode of Christian baptism; which will require much less of our time than the former. I shall briefly offer the reasons which induce me to believe that the law of the ordinance enjoins only the religious application of water, leaving the mode of applying it indifferent and discretionary.

By examining the New Testament we find that the great significant design of baptism is to represent, by the use of water, the purification of the soul from sin. This is often inculcated in the writings both of the Evangelists and the Apostles. I shall give two or three instances. *Arise, said Ananias to Saul, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins.* (46) The Apostle Peter, making a comparison between the ancient flood and Christian baptism, declares that *baptism doth also now save us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God.* (47) Again; *He saved us*, says the Apostle Paul, *by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.* (48) This being the significant meaning of baptism, we find the ordinance commonly alluded to under the general term of *washing*. Sometimes perhaps it is alluded to under the notion of immersion. (49) It is remarkable also that the spiritual cleansing represented by baptism is said to be effected by *the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*; (50)



46. Acts xxii. 16. | 47. 1 Pet. iii. 21. | 48. Tit. iii. 5.

49. *Buried with Christ by or in baptism.*—Rom. vi 4 Col. ii. 12. I say *perhaps* immersion is here alluded to; for it really is by no means certain.

50. 1 Peter i. 2. *Elect according to the fore knowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.*

and Christians are said to have their hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience. (51) From all which it seems reasonable to conclude that it is simply the application of water, and not the quantity, nor any particular mode of applying it, which was intended to represent the purifying of the soul from sin; and consequently that no particular mode is exclusively enjoined as essential to the ordinance.

But we must attend to the word baptism itself. *Baptize* and *baptism* are merely Greek words with English terminations; the latter of which is formed from the former. We may observe, that the verb, *to baptize*, and its derivatives, are uniformly used in the New Testament to express some application of water with a religious view, except where they are figuratively applied to things of a spiritual nature. They never express there any common use of water; as will be evident to any one who makes the investigation.— The word being thus evidently limited in its scriptural application, our business is simply to ascertain what it means when used in the New Testament, without regard to its application in profane authors. Indeed this last is an ultimate resort in the explication of scriptural language, and is only to be adopted when all other methods fail.

Now we shall find, by a careful examination of this point, that the word has a general signification, comprehending various modes of applying water. We are informed by the Evangelist Matthew, that *the Scribes and Pharisees came to Jesus, saying, Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they wash not their hands when they eat bread.* (52) But when Luke tells us that *the Pharisee marvelled that Jesus had not first washed before dinner*, he uses a different word. Had uniformity been preserved in our version, if in this instance it can be called a version, we should have heard this Evangelist say, the Pharisee marvelled that our Lord *had not been baptized* before dinner. [53] It is evident that the two passages refer to the same custom; and consequently that the words *wash* and *baptize* are used synonymously. The certainty of this appears to have led



51. Heb. x. 22. *Let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.*

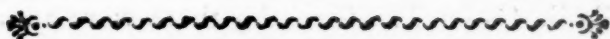
52. Mat. xv. 1 2.

53. Luke xi. 38. *Oti ou proton ebaptisthe.* See also Mark vii. 3 4, in the original.

our translators to render the two original words by the same word in our language. [54]

But there is one text to this purpose which deserves particular attention; and appears to me perfectly decisive of the point. The Apostle speaking of the Jewish ritual says that *it consisted in meats and drinks and divers washings.*—According to the original, it is, *divers baptisms*; or rather, *different, various baptisms.* [55] Under this expression are evidently included all the ceremonial purifications prescribed by the Mosaic law, whether by water, or blood, or mixed fluids. Now by attending to those purifications, we find that some of them were performed by sprinkling, others by washing in the usual way, and others by immersing or bathing the body. [56] Nay, the Apostle himself, in the context, shews that sprinkling is included in his *various baptisms.* For *if, says he, the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer, sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: how much more shall the blood of Christ &c.* And again; *he, Moses, took the blood of calves, &c. and sprinkled both the book and all the people.* Moreover, *he sprinkled likewise with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry.* Hence then I derive, a complete proof that any application of water, together with the other requisites enjoined, constitutes a true baptism, according to the language of the New Testament. And what right have our Baptist brethren to set up a new and different vocabulary of their own upon this subject; It appears, therefore, both from the scriptural meaning of the ordinance and from the scriptural use of the word, that the mode of applying water in baptism is a matter of indifference. And as our Lord has thus left us at liberty, we will not, nay we dare not, subject ourselves to bondage in this matter.

I must also ask our brethren what they think of the baptism of tables, or as it ought to be rendered, *of beds*, which



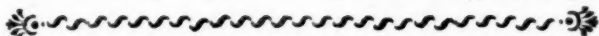
54. Dr. Campbell, who concedes to the Baptists more, I think, in regard to immersion, than truth will warrant, translates Luke's original quoted in the last note, *The Pharisee was surprised to observe that he used no washing before dinner.*

55. Heb. ix. 10. *Diaphorais baptismois.*

56. See the Mosaic ceremonial law generally.

we are informed the Jews held and practised? (57) Did they immerse these in water? It is in the highest degree improbable that they did. And this confirms my position that the word BAPTISM is used in the New-Testament with a great extent of signification.

But it is said that the Apostles baptized by immersion, and that we are bound by their example. It may be that they did in some instances; but I do not know how it can be infallibly proved. There are instances in which their having used immersion is highly improbable. How could the Apostles immerse three thousand in one day, or rather part of a day, whom the history implies to have been baptized? (58) Can it be supposed that the jailor and his household went at midnight to a place convenient for immersion? Especially when we find that Paul and Silas positively refused to leave the prison next morning until they were publicly dismissed by the magistrates. (59) These things our brethren find great difficulties in explaining; difficulties which our doctrine at once removes, and which cannot be removed, so far as I can see, in any other way. Again; while the Apostle Peter was preaching to Cornelius and his friends, *the Holy Ghost fell on all them who heard the word. Then said Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord.* [60] Does not this form of speaking clearly imply that water was to be brought for the baptism of these converts? Must not the Apostle have used a different phraseology, had he intended that they should leave the house, and go to a place convenient for immersion? Let the candid reader judge. It is moreover well worthy of remark, that



57. Mark vii. 4—*Baptismus — klinon: Baptisms of beds.*
Campbell.

58. Acts ii. 41—"The same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."

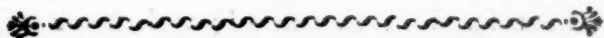
59. Acts xvi 37.—"But Paul said unto them, they have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison, and now do they thrust us out privily? Nay, verily, but let them come themselves and fetch us out." verse 39. "And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city."

60. Acts x. 44, 47.

there is not an instance in the New Testament of any person removing from the place where he made his profession of faith, in order to be baptized.

It does appear from ecclesiastical history that baptism was commonly administered by immersion in the early ages of the church. And this renders it likely that it was sometimes so administered by the Apostles. But if they did use immersion, I cannot admit the conclusion which our Baptist brethren draw from it. The Apostles had good reasons, doubtless, for immersing their disciples, if they did immerse them : but this does not prove that they considered it essential to the ordinance, or designed to abridge the liberty of Christians in this matter. Their own writings, already cited, respecting the spiritual signification of baptism, and their use of the word, prove that the ordinance is rightly administered by the application of water in any way. And their practice renders it next to absolutely certain that they did not always use immersion. They may have baptized by immersion sometimes, merely in condescension to the prejudices of the early converts ; as most Pedobaptists, I suppose, would do now, if occasion required. Thus we find the Apostle Paul circumcising Timothy because of the Jews (61) though no man supposes this example to be binding on Christians. This Apostle himself warmly opposed those who taught that circumcision was necessary to salvation (62).

While our brethren plead Apostolic example so strenuously in regard to the circumstantialia of positive institutions, why do they not confine themselves to unleavened bread in the Lord's supper ; as it is certain our Lord and his Apostles did at the time of its institution ? [63] Why do they not also partake of the Lord's supper reclining upon couches ? For this was certainly the posture originally used ; and was



61. Acts xvi. 3.—“ Him would Paul have to go forth with him ; and took and circumcised him, because of the Jews who were in those quarters : for they knew all that his Father was a Greek.”

62. Gal. v. 6—“ For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision ; but faith which worketh by love.”

63. Such was the law of the passover, Exod. xii. 8. “ They shall eat the flesh in that night roast with fire, and unleavened bread.”

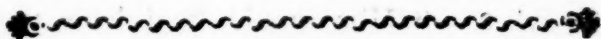
the common posture of the ancients at all their meals. If our baptism be an imitation of that of Christ, why do not our brethren take care to administer it only to such subjects as are about thirty years of age, as our Lord was at the time when John baptized him ? (64) These circumstances appear, for ought that I can learn, to be of as much importance as the particular mode of baptism. In other words, neither is at all essential to be observed.

As we hear so much from our brethren about the necessity of following our Lord into the water, I cannot help observing, by the way, that his baptism was quite a singular case, except merely as to the external action. He could not be baptized *unto repentance*; for his innocence made repentance impossible to him. It was not the baptism of the Christian church, *that* not being instituted until after our Lord's resurrection, and by the commission cited at the head of this discourse. Many circumstances evince that John's was not the Christian baptism; particularly this, that the Apostle Paul, having found some disciples who had received only John's baptism, required them to be baptized again, with the Christian baptism; and accordingly, *they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.* [65.]

Finally, the question between our Baptist brethren and us is not whether immersion be a lawful mode of baptism, for this we readily allow; but whether it be absolutely necessary, so that there can be no valid baptism without it? The latter is their opinion. But I presume it has been sufficiently proved that the mode of applying water in baptism is left free, as one of those discretionary circumstances which are found, more or less, to attend all positive institutions.

It is time now that we hasten to a conclusion.

I am sensible how difficult it is to remove opinions which have long been fixed in the mind; and more especially,



64. Luke iii. 23.—Immediately after our Lord's baptism, the Evangelist informs us, "that Jesus began to be about thirty years of age."

65. Acts xix. 1 — 5—As to the design of our Lord's being baptized by John, I believe the best light may be obtained by studying Exod. xxix 4. Num. iv. 3, 47. Compared with Matt. iii. 15; and Luke iii. 21, 22, 23. Which I leave the intelligent reader to consult for himself.

when those opinions are made a term of religious distinction. Many are the volumes which have been written on this controversy. The powers of genius and learning have been exhausted in it; but few have been brought over from that side to which they had at first attached themselves.— The demand for express precept or example in favour of household baptism, as we hold it, is still obstinately urged by those who oppose us. Our principal arguments are not strictly of this kind; and therefore make but little impression on the minds of our brethren. To them I can only farther say, that we sincerely love them as fellow-disciples of our common Redeemer; that in regard to this controversy, we desire only a fair hearing; that we trust they as well as we are conscientiously seeking for the truth; and truth, we doubt not, will finally prevail.

If any are brought to doubt the validity of their baptism in infancy, it is surely a reasonable advice and request that they be not precipitate in forming a conclusion against it. They ought carefully to distinguish for themselves between such doubts, and the being satisfied on the other side. Independently of the arguments advanced in the cause, modesty certainly becomes us in our inquiries; since this doctrine has, through so many ages, been believed and acted upon by so many eminently wise and godly men. To such persons as I am now addressing, I have only to recommend a patient examination of the scriptures upon the subject, with earnest prayer to God for light and instruction.

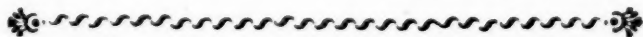
To those who believe the doctrine I have been maintaining, I shall offer a few reflections, by way of improvement.

We have already seen that baptism, in its most comprehensive view, represents the purification of the soul from sin. It is suited, therefore, to promote piety in the soul, by calling to our remembrance the most important doctrines of our holy religion. It suggests strongly the depravity, the moral pollution of our nature; the unspeakable love of God in providing the means of deliverance; the almighty efficacy of the blood of Christ, shed for our redemption, and applied by the renewing and sanctifying agency of the Holy Spirit. Such are the objects sensibly represented in Christian baptism, and which ought to fill our minds when we contemplate the ordinance: an exercise fitted to excite in us the deepest humility, the most fervent love and gratitude to God, the liveliest joy in believing; in short, every holy affection and temper which enters into the composition of the Christian character. 8

In subordination to this general view, we also find that baptism is made the standing mode of admission into the visible church. The Apostolick commission itself suggests this ; and it is elsewhere still more expressly inculcated.— *We are all baptized*, says the Apostle, *into one body* ; (66) that is, into the church of Christ. Again ; *As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ* ; (67) that is, have put on the Christian name and profession.— Ordinarily, therefore, no person is to be considered a member of Christ's visible church, until he be introduced and dedicated to God by baptism, according to his appointment.

Now the church may properly be considered as a school of religious instruction. Our Lord Jesus Christ is by his Spirit the supreme Teacher ; and all the members are his disciples or scholars. Earthly teachers also are appointed to administer the word, for the instruction of the disciples in the knowledge of divine truth. The disciples make various proficiency in this heavenly study. Some have learned but little ; others are farther advanced. But it is enjoined on all to attend to the means appointed, that they may continually *grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*. (68) Into this sacred school believers are, by a gracious constitution, permitted and required to have their children entered, to the end that they also may partake of the means of grace, and learn the things which belong to their everlasting peace.

When, therefore, you present your children to baptism, you publicly dedicate them to the teaching and authority of the Redeemer ; solemnly recognising your obligations on their behalf. And it becomes you most seriously to consider the duties incumbent upon you in regard to them.— You are naturally appointed the first guardians and instructors of your children ; and you are indispensibly bound to guide them, as far as in you lies, in obedience to the commandments of God. This was again and again enjoined on the ancient people of God : and you are equally commanded at this day to *bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*. (69)



66. 1 Cor. xii. 13.

67. Gal. iii. 17.

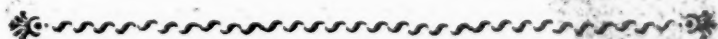
68. 2 Pet. iii. 18.

69. Eph. vi. 4.

As your task is an arduous one, and calls for your utmost exertions, so you have high encouragements to animate you in the performance of it. *Train up a child, says the wise man, in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it. (70)* Common experience still confirms the general truth of this maxim. We all know how great is the strength and efficacy of early religious impressions.— God often blesses them, so as to cause the good seed thus early sown to bring forth, sooner or later, the ripe fruits of holiness and salvation. In proportion as the religious education of children is attended to, we commonly see true piety flourish and abound; as, on the other hand, the neglect of such education is one of the most fruitful sources of vice and irreligion. Let christian parents, therefore, be vigilant and persevering in this good work. Restrain your children from sin. Teach them diligently the way of life. Pray to God for a blessing on your labours; and enjoy the pleasing hope set before you that they shall not be in vain.

To the children who have been thus brought into the school of Christ by baptism I must observe, that you are highly privileged indeed. The church generally, and your parents in particular, are solemnly engaged in watching over you, and teaching you the way of salvation. Be persuaded then to listen to instruction, and to *remember your Creator in the days of your youth. (71)* Consider the obligations you are under, and the awful account you have to render to God for the improvement you make of your distinguished privileges. By the order of Christ you have been received as his visible disciples. But this will be of no advantage to you; the prayers, the labours of your pious parents and of the church will increase your guilt and condemnation at the judgment-seat of Christ; if you neglect to become his disciples in heart as well as in name. Let religion then be the object of your first concern, your most ardent pursuit. Seek the favour of God above all things; and never forget that *the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. (72)*

When shall those happy days arrive, that we shall see parents steadily employed in promoting family piety; like faithful Abraham, strictly *commanding their children and*



70 Prov. xxii. 6.

71 Eccl. xii. 1.

72 Ps. cxi. 10.

their households after them to keep the way of the Lord? (73) When shall we see children universally and eagerly inquiring for the road to Zion, humble and docile in learning their duty, and growing in piety and devotion to God as they grow in years? How different will the face of things then be from what it is at present! It will be heaven begun upon earth! Such events we hope for; and are comforted, in all our troubles, by looking forward to that blessed period when the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea; (74) and when all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. (75)

✎ The preceding piece is so long that the Editors would have divided it, could that have been done without breaking the connection, so as to lessen the force of the reasoning. But as a division could not take place without injury to the piece itself, we trust our readers will be best pleased to see it entire. Our own opinion of the merits of the essay is such, that we would have been extremely unwilling to do any thing which might diminish its value.

THE EDITORS.

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*For the Virginia Religious Magazine.*

### MIDNIGHT THOUGHTS.

THE darkness and silence of night surround me. The world is buried in the insensibility of sleep; except the votaries of dissipation who turn night into day by their revels, and the children of affliction whom sorrow deprives of rest.— Except also a few others who love to spend this midnight hour in pensive meditation, calling to remembrance days that are past, musing on absent objects of affection, or building airy schemes of happiness which may perhaps never be realized.

Let me also take an excursion of serious thought. Let me bring my past life into review; and ask, what degree of happiness has the world hitherto afforded me?

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73 Gen. xviii. 19.

74 Isa. xi. 9

75 Isa. lii. 10.

As to the period of childhood, I am very prone to consider it a period of entire enjoyment, a continued course of pleasures unmingled with the anxieties of riper years. But sober reason and observation, yea memory itself, when I carefully exercise it, convinces me that this is nothing but a bright illusion of the imagination. At that age we are comparatively very incapable either of pleasure or pain.— Neither extends far beyond mere sensation; since the understanding is almost a stranger to the light of truth, and the heart to the sweetness of affection. Yet, such as they are, childhood has its pains as well as its pleasures; and they are mingled and proportioned to each other very nearly as in the other stages of life. But did the imagination paint those days justly; were they as free from sorrow and as full of delight as it represents them; they are now fled forever: and there is as much pain as pleasure in the remembrance of them.

And what better have I found in the progress of youth? Alas, youth as well as childhood is vanity. My desires and wishes have increased much more than my gratifications. I would not undervalue the gifts of an indulgent Providence; but those very gifts have frequently proved occasions of uneasiness. Most of the years of my youth were devoted to study. Such a life is by no means without its satisfactions; but they are scanty indeed when regarded as an ultimate resource. For as a consciousness of ignorance is exceedingly disquieting to him who thirsts for knowledge, it is no less true on the other hand that he who increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow. Let me turn to pleasures of the heart. God has given me affectionate and useful friends: precious blessings indeed! But where are they now? The grave contains some; I have been from time to time separated from the rest: and the more we loved each other, the more keenly has separation afflicted us. I retain all my affection for them; but I enjoy not their society, and can seldom even hear how they prosper. As to mankind at large, I have accustomed myself to expect but little kindness from them, and have found still less. With the exception of a few gentle and generous spirits, I have found that every man liveth to himself. Each is too busy with his own concerns to attend much to the happiness of others.

Does the world afford me happiness at the present time? Ah no! My heart too sensibly feels its wants to be at ease. I see comforts which I think would be great indeed, but I cannot reach them: and desire ungratified is pain. How

perversely do I often overlook and forget the gifts of a bountiful Providence which I possess, in the eager pursuit after something more ! In fine, the past, whatever it was, is fled. The present is far from satisfactory. I must betake myself therefore to the future, the common refuge of the uneasy heart of man

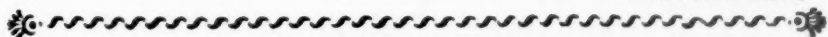
Sweet hope ! Thou soother of the anxious soul ! I observe thy sparkling eye, and the sprightly spread of thy wings.— But let caution attend thy flight. Many considerations are ready to check thy soaring confidence. How liable are we to mistake in our judgment of the things which would conduce to our happiness ! How often does our short sight deceive us with vain appearances ! Very often does the heart run before the understanding in grasping its favourite objects. Too late we find our error, and lament that we have embraced misery instead of bliss. But I dismiss this fear. Suppose my judgment to be completely correct concerning the objects of pursuit ; yet how precarious and uncertain is the attainment. How often does fond and sanguine expectation come back pale with disappointment, and blast the gay visions of years in a moment ! But suppose I dismiss this fear also : still how unstable, how fleeting is the possession of earthly good ! Every thing below the skies is liable to change. The highest triumph of joy may be quickly turned into tears, and treasures of bliss destroyed by one afflictive stroke. Finally the soul of man is naturally formed for the knowledge and enjoyment of boundless perfection. This earth, with all her furniture, is too little to satisfy its desires : and poor are her richest pleasures, unless they be connected with and subordinated to the hope of an infinite and everlasting inheritance.

The world then cannot make me happy. Do I take pleasure in giving myself gloomy views of human life ? I think not. These seem to be the dictates of experience, and the conclusions of sober reason. If I pronounce myself to be in the midst of a scene of sorrow, it is that I may be prompted to seek true felicity where it may assuredly be found. And where shall I find it ? I look around with earnest enquiry. O that I could lay this weary head upon the bosom of unfailing love ! And why may I not ? I behold that blessed retreat where the mourner finds repose. Contemplate it O my soul, with reverence, wonder, and gratitude. It is *the bosom of God !* The Son of God who dwells ever in the bosom of the Father reveals that dear refuge, and bids me come. In tears and in blood our Immanuel hath toiled and

suffered to make it accessible to me a sinner. Thither will I resort; there will I cast my cares, and there shall I find my happiness.

‘ Father of mercies! Inexhaustible Source of all good! Giver of all consolation! I come unto thee guilty for pardon through Jesus thy Son, in whom thou art ever well pleased. I come to thee sinful for sanctification by thy Holy Spirit. Spurn me not from thee, O Lord, though I have transgressed against thee. I come to thee needy and helpless, weary and heavy-laden, for peace and rest. O take me to thyself, though most unworthy, as a child to the bosom of a tender parent. The precious promises of thy gospel are abundantly sufficient for my wants; I embrace them, and cast my soul and my body on thy care. Shed abroad thy love in my heart, and sustain me by thy grace. Redeem me by thy mighty power from the vanities of this poor world.— Give me the victory over its ensnaring temptations. Support my soul from sinking under its troubles, by the exercise of that faith which layeth hold on invisible eternal objects; by that hope which, as an anchor of the soul both sure and stedfast, entereth into the things within the vail. O train me up in the way of holiness, and bring me at length to thy kingdom of glory, thy everlasting rest Amen.’

PHILANDER.



For the Virginia Religious Magazine.

THE ROSE.

JULIA, this blushing flow'r receive,
The sweetest May herself can give,
Adorn'd with all her nicest care,
A lively emblem of the fair.

The rose will fade, it hastes to die,
And soon must cease to please the eye;
So, Julia, must thy youthful bloom
Submit to time's ungentle doom:
The charms of that enchanting face,
Thy mein, and ev'ry nameless grace,
Resistless age will soon assail,
And all the light of beauty fail.

The rose must fade, but still can boast
Its grateful fragrance is not lost;
So, Julia, though the hand of time

Destroy thy lovely youthful prime,
The brighter beauties of thy mind
Shall not be lost, but more refin'd :
Thy sprightly sense, thy feeling heart,
Thy manners free from tinsel art,
Thy love to virtue's sacred cause,
Thy strict regard to all her laws,
Thy cheerful air and smile serene
In which the peace of heav'n is seen ;
These charms shall still, as now, controul
Thy own Philander's faithful soul.

For the Virginia Religious Magazine.

THE HAPPINESS OF EARLY RELIGION.

1. HAPPY the youth whose heart prefers
Religion's heav'nly road ;
Who gives his best, his earliest years
To wisdom and to God.
2. Supported by Almighty Love
His soul no terror knows :
Onward his steady footsteps move
Through hosts of envious foes.
3. In vain the world with countless wiles
Exerts her treach'rous art ;
Firm faith from all her threats and smiles
Securely guards his heart.
4. Of light and strength from day to day
He gains a fresh supply ;
Unwearied runs in virtue's way
To win the prize on high.
5. No guilty fear nor blushing shame
Disturbs his sacred rest :
Honour and praise attend his name,
And gladness fills his breast.
6. Thus blest he lives, and when he dies
Death is his richest gain :
Well pleas'd he yields his breath, and flies
With Christ his Lord to reign.

PHILANDER.

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