

LECTURE LXV.

SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM.

SYLLABUS.

1. Who are proper subjects of Christian Baptism, and on what terms ?
Jo. Edwards. Qualific. for Communion. Mason on the Church, Essay i and v. Neander. Ch. Hist. on the Novatian and Donatist Schisms.
2. Meet the objection, that the nature of Baptism renders it necessarily inappropriate to infants, because they cannot believe. Review of Th. Ernest.
Dr. L. Woods' Lect. 111, 117, or Woods on Infant Baptism. Fairchild on Baptism. Armstrong on Baptism, pt. iii, ch. 3, Ridgley, Qu. 165. Note. Calv. bk. iv, ch. 16.
3. Argue infant-baptism from infant church-membership.
Mason on the Church, Essays ii, iv. Woods' Lect. 111, 112. Armstrong, pt. iii, ch. 4, 5. Calvin, bk. iv, ch. 16. Turretin, Loc. xix, Qu. 20. Ridgley, Qu. 166.
4. What would have been the natural objections raised by the Jews, to Christianity had it excluded infants ?
Mason on the Church, Essay v.
5. State the argument for infant-baptism from the Great Commission. Matt. xxviii : 19, 20 ; Mark xvi : 15, 16 ; Luke xxiv : 47, &c.
Armstrong, pt. iii, chs. 2, 6. Woods' Lect. 113, &c. See on whole, Rev. of Theo. Ernest, chs. 4-6.

ALL adults who make an intelligent and credible profession of faith on Jesus Christ are to be baptized on their own application ; and no other adults. The evidence of the last assertion is in Acts ii : 41, 47 ; x : 47, with xi : 15, 16, and viii : 12, 37. The genuineness of the last text is indeed grievously questioned by the critical editors, except Knapp ; but even if spurious, its early and general introduction gives us an information of the clear conviction of the Church on this subject. Last: the truths signified by baptism, are such that it is obviously inappropriate to all adults but those who are true believers, in the judgment of charity.

We add that baptism is also to be administered to "the infants of one or both believing parents." (Conf. 28, § 4). The great question here raised will be the main subject of this and a

What Children May
be Baptized ?

subsequent lecture. But a related question is still agitated among Pædobaptists themselves, whether one or both of the parents must be believers, or only decent baptized members of the Church. Papists baptize the children of all baptized persons, and Episcopalians, Methodists, and not a few of the Presbyterian family of Churches, baptize those of all decent baptized persons. They plead the Church-membership of the parents, the example of the Jewish Church as to circumcision, and a kindly, liberal policy as to parents and infants. We object: first the express language of our Standards, Conf. of Faith xxviii : 4; Larger Cat. Qu. 166. "Infants of one or both believing parents," "professing faith in Christ, and obedience to Him." Second: The language of 1 Cor. vii : 14, where it is not the baptized, but the "believing" parent, who sanctifies the unbelieving. Third: Those baptized, but unbelieving parents are Church members, subject to its guardianship and discipline; but they are not full members. They are ecclesiastical minors, cut off by their own guilty lack of spiritual qualification from all the spiritual privileges, and sealing ordinances. Fourth: Chiefly because it is preposterous that those who make no consecration of their own souls to Christ, and do not pretend to govern themselves by His laws, should profess to consecrate the souls of their children, and rear them to God. If then, it be urged that the children ought not to be deprived of their ecclesiastical privilege, because of the impenitence of the parents; I reply. Perfectly true: There is a great and cruel wrong committed on the little ones. But it is their own parents who commit it; not the Church authorities. They cannot repair that wrong, by giving them the shell of a sacrament which their parents' unbelief makes perfectly empty. This is no remedy; and it only violates Scripture, and introduces disorder. This will be greatly strengthened, when we show that Infant Baptism is a sacrament to the parents also.

Under the old Covenant the children of all circumcised persons were circumcised? True. But St. Paul has changed it; because, as we surmise, ours is a more spiritual dispensation, no State-Church separation exists from the world: and all unbelievers are spiritually "aliens."

Under the Jewish Church the children of mixed marriages were out of the Church, until they came in through the gate of proselytism. Neh. xiii : 23-28. But under the New Testament, if one parent is a credible believer, the child is within the Covenant. Our grounds are 1 Cor. vii : 14, and the circumcision and baptism of Timothy. Acts xvi : 3.

Before we proceed to the main point of debate, it will be well to remove out of the way the objection on which Immersionists place the main reliance. They urge that since infants cannot exercise the graces signified and sealed in baptism, (See Cate-

2, Immersionists
Object; Infants Can-
not Believe.

chism, Qu. 94), it is useless and preposterous to administer it to babies. Take, say they, Mark xvi : 15, 16, as a specimen of the many passages in which it is categorically said, or clearly implied, that one must believe, before it is proper to baptize him. Hence the administration of the rite to infants is a practical falsehood, and if unauthorized by God, even profane. What, they ask, can all your inferential arguments for infant Church-membership be worth, when the express words of Scripture prove that infants cannot have the necessary qualifications for baptism ?

We reply, this plausible statement proceeds on the usual fallacy of taking the speaker's words in a sense in which he did not mean them to be applied. In Mark xvi : 16, for instance, Christ was not speaking either of the terms of infant salvation, or of the terms on which they could become Church-members. Let the reader remember that the temporary commission to the apostles and seventy (Matt. x : 5) had already made them familiar with the fact that Christ's dispensation was to be preached to Jews. But now, in Mark xvi : 15, it is extended "to all the world," and to "every creature." These were the features of the new commission prominent to our Saviour's mind, and the disciples' attention. The terms on which Jewish families should be admitted were already familiar. The question was, how shall those be admitted who are now aliens? Why; on their faith. The evidence that infants were not here intended to be excluded from baptism by our Saviour's scope is absolutely demonstrative: for the Immersionist interpretation would equally make the passage prove that infants can neither be baptized, nor be saved, because they are incapable of faith; and it would equally make it prove that the salvation of infants is dependent on their baptism! We may find many other illustrations of the absurdity of such interpretations; as, for instance, in 2 Thess. iii : 10: "If any one (*εἰ τις*) will not work, neither shall he eat." A similar reasoning would prove that infants should be starved.

Further: it does not follow that because infants cannot exercise intelligent graces, therefore there is no sense nor reason in administering to them sacraments significant thereof. Infants are capable of redemption. Glorious truth! Why, then, should it appear a thing incredible that they should partake of the sacraments of redemption? Baptism signifies God's covenant with souls, as well as their covenant with Him. Can there be no meaning in a pledge of God's covenant-favour applied to an infant, because the infant does not yet apprehend it? No sense at all; because it has no sense to him? Strange reasoning! But human suppositions are a bad test of what God may or may not think reasonable. To the Word and the Testimony! There we find two cases in which religious ordinances were

Infants Can be in
the Covenant, so May
Have its Seals.

applied to "unconscious babies." In Matt. xix : 14, Mark x : 14 ; Luke xviii : 16, our Saviour took up little children (*βρέφη*) into His arms, and blessed them, because they were Church members. Did they comprehend the blessing? The other case is that of circumcision, and it is peculiarly strong, because it was emblematic of the same spiritual exercises and graces, now signified by baptism. See Rom. ii : 28, 29 ; iv : 11 ; Col. ii : 11 ; Deut. xxx : 6 ; ix : 16 ; Phil, iii : 3. Yet circumcision was, by God's command, applied to all the infant males of God's people ! Let the Immersionist, therefore, go and turn all the confident denunciation of "baby-sprinkling," against this parallel ordinance of God. We entrench ourselves behind it.

Once more : So far as the child himself is concerned, there is no absurdity in giving him the seal in advance of his fulfillment of the conditions. Are not seals often appended to promissory covenants? Yea, every covenant is in its nature promissory, including something to be done, as a condition of the bestowment. This is so of adult baptism. But, they say, the adult can be a party ; infants not. I answer : parents are, and the efficacy of the parental relation, properly sanctified, is regular enough to justify this arrangement. Where, then, is the practical objection, so far as the infant's own subsequent edification is concerned, of his receiving the seal beforehand, so that he may ever after have the knowledge of that fact, with all its solemn meaning, and see it re-enacted in every infant baptism he afterward witnesses? But, above all, remember that the infant is not the only party, on man's side, to the sacrament. Infant baptism is a sacrament to the parent, as well as the child. It consecrates the relation of filiation, or parentage, and thus touches both the parties to the relation equally. The parent has momentous duties to perform, for God's glory ; and momentous religious responsibilities, as to the soul of the child, which duties are also represented and pledged in this sacrament, as well as God's promised aid and blessing in their performance. Infant baptism is a sacrament to the parent as much as to the child. Now, whatever of warning, instruction, comfort, edification, the sacrament was intended to convey to the parent, to fit him better for his charge as the educator of the child for eternity : when should the parent receive that equipment? When does the moral education of the infant's soul begin? It begins just so soon as the formation of habit begins ; so soon as petulance, anger, selfishness, can be exhibited by an infant ; so soon as it can apprehend the light of a mother's smile beaming upon it as it hangs upon her breast ; as soon as it can know to tremble at her frown. Here, then, is the great practical reason, which makes God's wisdom clear even to man's reason, in instituting the seal of Church membership at the dawn of life.

The Sacrament Embraces the Parents.

We proceed now to advance the positive evidences for infant baptism. Of these, the most solid and comprehensive is that from infant Church-membership in the New Testament Church. The major premise of our argument is, that baptism is, in all cases, the proper rite by which to recognize membership in the visible Church. The minor premise is, the infants of believing parents are members of the visible Church of Christ. Hence, the conclusion: such infants are proper subjects of baptism.

On the major premise there will probably be little dispute between us and Immersionists. In the great commission, we are taught that discipleship is formally constituted by baptism (Matt. xxviii : 19). In Acts ii : 41, language is used which plainly shows that the baptism of the three thousand was equivalent to their being added to the Church. In 1 Cor. xii : 13, the spiritual engrafting of true believers by the Holy Ghost into the spiritual body of Christ, the invisible Church, is called a baptism; in evident allusion to the effect of that rite in introducing to the visible Church.

The minor premise leads us to consider the origin and constitution of the Church. Having found in the Old Testament a visible Church-State, called *קְהָל* and *עֵדָה*, and characterized by every mark of a Church, we trace that society up the stream of sacred history, until we find its institution (or re-institution) in the family of Abraham, and in that gospel and ecclesiastical covenant ratified with him in Genesis, ch. xvii. The patriarchal form was most naturally superinduced on this Church then; because it was the only organized form, with which man had hitherto been familiar, and the one best suited to that state of the world. The society there organized was set apart to the service and worship of God. It was organized under ecclesiastical rulers. It had the Word and gospel of God. It had its sacrament and other sacred rites. No one will dispute the continuity of this society under Moses and his successors; for the covenant of Horeb manifestly developed, it did not destroy, the body.

But can the same thing be said of the visible Church catholic which has existed since Christ, under the organization given it by the Apostles? The Reformed Churches answer, Yes. This is substantially the same with the Church of the Old Testament. The change of dispensation is the change of outward form, not of its substance or nature. This is proved. (a) By the fact that the repeal of God's Church-covenant with Abraham and his family is nowhere stated. The abrogation of the Mosaic economy does not destroy the old body, because that economy

3. Argument from
Infant Membership in
Old Testament and
New. Major Premise.

Minor Premise.
Church Formed Under
Abraham.

The Same Under
New Testament.

did not introduce it. The law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, could not disannul the covenant made with Abraham. Gal. iii : 17.

(a) The Apostles and Christ, by their acts and sayings, recognize the existence of a visible Church, which they do not abolish, but reform, and increase. Observe in how many instances particular churches were but synagogues Christianized. Consider also, how those traits of order and ritual which are distinctive of the new dispensation, were made to overlap those which marked the old. The substitution of the former for the latter was gradual. St. Paul observed the passover after he began to keep the Lord's Supper; he circumcised Timothy after he began to baptize Gentiles. There is no sudden cutting off of the old, but a gradual "splicing" of the new on it.

(b) The Apostle expressly teaches that Gentile converts, coming to Christ by faith, are under the terms of the Abrahamic covenant. Therefore that covenant is not abolished. They are "the seed;" they are the "children of Abraham." They are "the true Israel." Rom. iv : 12-17; Matt. iii : 9; Gal. iii : 7. Indeed, the "seed," to whom the promises were made, never was, at any time, strictly coincident with the lineal descendants of Abraham. Ishmael, Keturah's children, Esau, though circumcised, were no part of it. Every heathen proselyte was. See Gen. xvii : 12, 13; Exod. xii : 48; Deut. xxiii : 8. Gentiles were always, as truly (not as numerous) as now, a part of this seed.

(c) The correlative promises that "all nations should be blessed in Abraham," and that he should be "Father of many nations," were only fulfilled as the Gentiles were made members of the Abrahamic body. See Rom. iv : 16, 17. It cannot be said that Abraham's paternity of the twelve tribes exhausted that promise, for Israel was but one nation. If, then, the Abrahamic Church expired before the Gentiles were brought in, this promise was never fulfilled. It will not help the cause to say that Abraham was father of these believers, in the sense of being their first exemplar. He was not. Noah, Enoch, Abel, probably Adam, were before him. The relationship is that of the head and founder of an organization, to the subsequent members of it. Nor will it be said, that the Gentiles becoming "Abraham's seed" only means their admission into the invisible Church, into which Abraham's faith admitted him. This is, indeed, a higher sequel to the privilege, as to all true believers, but not the whole of it. We have proved that the covenant was not purely spiritual, but also an ecclesiastical, visible Church covenant. Therefore the seed, or children of the covenant (see Acts iii : 25) are also thereby brought into the visible Church relationship.

(d) The number of Old Testament promises to the visible Church, some of which were unfulfilled at the end of the old dispensation, must imply that the community is still in existence to receive their fulfillment. Otherwise God has failed. See, then, Isa. ii : 2, 3; liv : 1-5, xlix : 14-23; Ps. ii : 6, 8. It cannot be said that the invisible Church is the sole object of these promises.

(e) Last. The figure of Rom. xi : 17 to 24, plainly implies that the Old Testament visible Church is continued under the new dispensation. The good olive tree was not uprooted, but pruned, and new branches grafted in. And at last, the excised branches are to be regrafted "into their own olive tree." The argument is too clear and strong to need many words.

Thus, our minor premise is established. The ecclesiastical covenant made with Abraham still subsists unrepealed, and all Christians are brought under it. As children were members of that covenant, the inference is irresistible that they are members still, unless their positive exclusion can be pointed out in the New Testament. This inference is also greatly fortified, by showing that all God's general dispensations toward the human family have embraced the children along with the parents. In the Covenant of Works with Adam: in the curse for its breach: in the covenant with Noah: in the curse on Sodom: in the doom of the Canaanites and Amelekites: in the constitution of society and course of Providence in all ages: in the political commonwealths ordained by Him: in all these, the infant children go with the parents. Were the visible Church different, it would be a strange anomaly.

Again: Malachi tells us (ii : 15) that God's object in constituting the marriage relation and family as it is, was "to seek a godly seed;" i. e., to provide for the Christian rearing of the offspring. Now, this is the Church's object. Would it not be strange if the visible Church failed to embrace and consecrate the family institution as a subdivision of itself? Third: The affection, authority, and influence of parents are so unique, that when we properly consider them, it seems incredible God would have omitted them as parts of His Church instrumentalities, subject to the sanctifying rules of His house. Parental love is the strongest of the instinctive affections, and the most god-like in its permanence, forbearance, and disinterestedness. Parental authority is the most remarkable and absolute one delegated by God to man over his fellow man. Consider: it authorizes the parent to govern the child for a fourth of his life as a slave; to decide virtually his intelligence, culture, and social destiny, and even to elect for him a character and religious creed; thus seeming almost to infringe the inalienable responsibilities and liberties of the immortal soul! And last: the

parental influence is so efficacious, especially in things moral and religious, that it does more than all others to decide the child's everlasting fate. Can it be that God would omit such a lever as this, in constructing His Church, as the organism for man's moral and religious welfare? Fourth: The Church-membership of children seems to be implied in that duty which all right-minded Christians instinctively exercise, of caring for the welfare and salvation of the children of the brotherhood. Fifth: It follows from the declared identity of circumcision and baptism, and from many express Scriptures. See Col. ii: 11, 12, 13; Matt. xix: 13-15; Acts ii: 38, 39; 1 Cor. vii: 14. The Church membership of infants having been thus established, the propriety of their baptism follows. Indeed, immersionists virtually admit that if the second premise is true, the conclusion must follow, by denying the Church-membership of infants under the New Testament.

Many evasions of this argument are attempted. Immersionists deny that there was any visible Church in Old Testament Times. Answer. Church-State appointed for saints in the Old Testament! This is a striking, and at once a mournful, proof of the stringency of my argument, that a body of evangelical Christians claiming especial scripturalness and orthodoxy, should be forced, in resisting it, to adopt one of the most monstrous assertions of those flagrant heretics and fanatics, the Anabaptists and Socinians. You have only to notice how expressly it contradicts the Scriptures, Acts vii: 38; Rom. xi: 24; Heb. iii: 5, 6: How it defies the plainest facts of the Old Testament history, which shows us God giving His people every possible feature of a visible Church-State; gospel, ministry, sacraments, other ordinances, Sabbath, discipline, sanctuaries, &c.: How utterly it confounds all relations between the old and new dispensations: And how preposterously it represents Christ's own personal life, observances, and obedience, including especially His baptism by John, an Old Testament prophet, administering his rite in this Old Testament No-Church; which rite is, according to immersionists, still the Christian sacrament!

Some of them assert that the argument, if good for anything, would equally make all adult unbelieving children of believing parents, and all unbelieving domestic slaves, Church members. Answer. Is no force to be allowed to the passing away of the patriarchal state, with the almost absolute authority of the father? None to the growing spirituality of the New Covenant? None to the express change in these features by apostolic authority, as is manifested in their precedents? Still, all that could be made of this argument would be to prove, not that the reasoning of Pedobaptists is unsound, but that their conduct may be inconsistent.

Sometimes it is objected that if infants were really made members of the visible Church, then, as they grow up, they must be admitted, without question, to all the privileges of membership, to suffrage, to office, to the Lord's supper. I reply that there is no commonwealth on earth, where mere citizenship entitles to all the higher franchises. In the State, all citizens are entitled to protection, and subject to jurisdiction. But all cannot vote and bear office. Christ's ecclesiastical commonwealth is a school, a place for teaching and training. To be a member of the school does not at once imply that one must share all its powers and privileges. The scholars are promoted according to their qualifications.

It is objected by some: If Peter and his brethren were in the visible Church, how comes it that Christ says to them: "I have chosen you out of the world?" Jno. xv: 19. I answer: Cannot that which is worldly, in the true sense, be in the visible Church? The objection begs the question. The very point in debate is, whether the Anabaptist definition of the visible Church, as a body containing only regenerate persons, is true. The Bible says that it is not: that Peter was yet worldly, while regularly in the visible Church, and was, out of that state chosen by Christ to the apostleship, and to effectual calling.

One more objection may be noted: If the visible Church of the Old and New Testaments is one, then circumcision and baptism are alike the initiatory rites. How came it then, that Jews, already regularly in it, were re-admitted by baptism? I reply first. It is not so certain that they were. Note, that we do not believe John's baptism to have been the Christian sacrament. But who can prove that the Twelve, and the Seventy were ever baptized again? As for the Jews after Pentecost, who certainly did receive Christian baptism, they were now, (after Christ's definite rejection, crucifixion, and ascension) "broken off for their unbelief;" and needed re-admittance on their repentance. But second, where is the anomaly of re-administering the initiatory rite to members already in the Society, at the season of the marked change of outward form, when it was receiving a large class of new members? I see nothing strange in the fact, that the old citizens took their oath of allegiance over again, along with the new.

Immersionists delight to urge, that as baptism is a positive institution, no Protestant should administer it to infants, because the New Testament contains no explicit warrant for doing so. I shall show that the tables can be turned on this point.

When a society undergoes important modifications, its sub-

Peter, &c., "Chosen out of the World."

Why were Jews Baptized if in the Church?

4. No New Testament Warrant Required.

Burden of Disproof on the Immersionists. substantial identity yet remaining, the fair presumption is, that all those things are intended to remain unchanged, about the change of which nothing is said. We may illustrate from citizenship in a Commonwealth, changing its constitution. So, if there were not one word in all the New Testament, indicating the continuance of infant Church-membership, the silence of Scripture constitutes no disproof; and the burden of proof would rest on the Immersionist. And this burden he would have to assume against every antecedent probability. True, the cessation of the Mosaic dispensation was accompanied with great changes; but infant membership and circumcision never were merely Mosaic. We may say of them, as of the Covenant to which they belonged, as St. Paul says in Gal. iii : 17. All that was typical, passed away, because of the coming of the Antitype: circumcision and infant membership never were types. Again, infant membership was esteemed by Jews a privilege. We understand that the new dispensation is an extension of the old one, more liberal in its provisions, and its grace: and embracing the whole human family. It would be a strange thing indeed, if this era of new liberality and breadth were the occasion for a new and vast restriction, excluding a large class of the human family, in whom the pious heart is most tenderly interested. Consider this in the light of the Apostle's language: e. g., in Rom. xi : 20; Acts iii : 23. In these and similar passages, the Jews are warned that unbelief of Christ, the great closing Prophet of the line, (like resistance of previous Theocratic Messengers,) will be accompanied with loss of their church membership. According to Immersionists, the meaning of this warning would be: "Oh, Jew; if you believe not on Jesus Christ, you (and your children) forfeit your much valued visible Church membership. But if you believe on Him, then your innocent children shall be punished for your obedience, by losing their privileges!"

Further, no Immersionist is consistent, in demanding an express New Testament warrant in words, for all his ordinances. There is not an intelligent Protestant in the world, who does not hold that what follows from the express Word, "by good and necessary consequence," is binding, as well as the Word itself. What other warrant have Immersionists for observing the Lord's day as a Christian Sabbath, and neglecting the seventh day? What warrant for admitting females to the Lord's table? What warrant for their favourite usage of strict communion? This, pre-eminently, is only a deduction.

The presumption against the Immersionist is greatly strengthened again, in my view, by the extreme improbability, that the sweeping revolution against infant Church membership

No Clamour, such as Must have Arisen at Exclusion of Infants.

could have been established by the Apostles, without some such clamour as would have been mentioned in the New Testament. We must remember that all Hebrews greatly prized their ecclesiastical birth. See Matt. iii : 9 ; Jno. viii : 33. To be cut off from among his people, was to the Jew, a shameful and dreaded degradation. The uncircumcised was a dog to him, unclean and despised. We have evidence enough that the believing Hebrews shared these feelings. Hence, when we saw that even believers among them were so suspicious, and the unbelievers full of rampant jealousy, and eager to object and revile the Nazarenes, how is it possible that this great abrogation of privilege could be established, while we hear none of that clamour which, the New Testament tells us, was provoked by the cessation of sacrifice, purifications, and circumcision ?

But the Immersionist may rejoin : such a clamour may have existed, and it may be omitted in the sacred history, because the history is brief, and the purposes of inspiration may not have required its notice. One is not entitled to argue from the absence of proof. *De omni ignoto quasi de non existentibus.*

I reply : we are not arguing herein from the mere absence of proof ; for we give high probable evidence to show that if the fact had ever occurred, the traces of it must have been preserved. First : Not only is there a dead silence in the brief narrative of Scripture concerning any objection of Jews, such as must have been made had infant membership been abrogated ; but there seems to be an equal silence in the Rabbinical literature against Christianity, and in the voluminous polemical works, from the days of Justin Martyr—*adversus Tryphonem*, down. Second : The objections, restiveness, and attacks growing out of the revolutionizing of other things, less important than infant membership, required and received full notice in the New Testament. Look for instance, at the Epistle to the Hebrews, written practically with this main object ; to obviate the restiveness and tendency to revolt produced among Jewish Christians, by the abrogation of cherished customs. The main line of argument is to show that these innovations are justifiable, and scriptural ; yet there is not one word to excuse this momentous innovation against infant membership ! Third : The sacred narrative in Acts xvth approaches so near the topic of this innovation, that it is simply incredible an allusion to it should have been avoided, had the revolution been attempted. The question which agitated the whole Christian community to its core was : shall Gentile converts, entering the Church under the new dispensation, be required to be circumcised, and keep the ceremonial law ? The very arguments by which this question was debated are given. Now, how inevitable would it have been, had the change in membership been made, which the Immersionist supposes, to say : “ Whether you circumcise

adult Gentile converts, or not; you cannot circumcise their children; because Jewish children and Gentile, are no longer admitted with their parents." But there is no whisper of this point raised. I cannot believe the innovation had been attempted. But if it had not been made at that stage, it was never made at all by divine authority; for the Immersionist professes to find it in Christ's commission at His ascension.

Pædobaptist writers are accustomed to attach importance to that great Commission. See Matt. xxviii: 19, 20; Mark xvi: 15, 16; Luke xxiv: 47-49. As we have already considered the supposed evidence for exclusive believer's baptism in Mark xvi: 16, we may take the language of Matthew as most explicit and full, of the three places. We consider that the Apostles would naturally have understood such a commission to include infants, for the following reasons:

The first thing told them is to go, and "teach" more properly, "disciple" (*μαθητεύσατε*) all nations. Here, says the Immersionist, is strong evidence that only believer's baptism is enjoined, because they are to be taught first, and then baptized; whereas infants cannot be taught. The argument is unfortunately founded only on a failure to examine the original. For this turns it against the Immersionist. The term "disciple," is eminently appropriate to the conception of a school of Christ, which is one of the Bible conceptions of the Church. See Gen. xviii: 19; Deut. vi: 7; Is. ii: 3, &c. The young child is entered or enrolled at this school, before his religious education begins, in order that he may learn afterwards. Matt. xxviii: 20.

Second: what would a mind free from immersionist preconceptions naturally understand by the command to "disciple all nations?" Does not this include the infant children, as a part thereof? But we must remember, that the minds of the disciples were not only free from these prejudices, but accustomed to the Church-membership of infants. They had known nothing else but a Church-State in which the children went along with their parents. It seems then, that they would almost inevitably understand such a command, as including the authority to baptize infants, unless instructed to the contrary. Nor is this all: these disciples were accustomed to see cases of discipleship to Judaism occurring from time to time. Proselytes were not unusual. See Matt. xxiii: 15; Acts vi: 5; ii: 10; xiii: 43, and the uniform custom was to circumcise the children and receive them into the Jewish community, on the profession of the father. So that, if we set aside for the present, the question whether proselyte baptism was as yet practiced, it is clear the Apostles must be led by all they had been accustomed to witness, to suppose that their converts were to bring in their children along with them; unless the notion were contradicted by Christ. Where is the contradiction of it?