

LECTURE LXVI.

SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM.—Concluded.

SYLLABUS.

6. What weight is to be attached to the prevalence of Proselyte Baptism among the Jews, as evidence for infant baptism?
See Dr. L. Woods' Lect. 112. Knapp's Christian Theol. § 138. Wall's Hist. Infant Bap. Jahn's Archæology, § 325.
7. State the argument for infant baptism from the baptism of houses.
Armstrong, pt. iii, ch. 8. Dr. Woods' Lect. 114. Taylor's Apostol, Bap. pp. 28 to 68.
8. Argue infant baptism from the titles and treatment addressed to Christian children in the New Testament.
See Armstrong, pt. iii, ch. 7. Woods' Lect. 115, pt. i. Taylor, Apost. Bap. pp. 100-112.
9. What historical evidence can be given for the prevalence of infant baptism from the Apostles' days downward?
Woods' Lect. 116. Coleman, Ancient Christianity Exemplified, ch. 19, § 6. Bingham's Origines Sacræ. Wall's Hist. Inf. Bap.
10. Refute the objection that infant baptism corrupts the spirituality of the Church by introducing unsanctified members.
Woods Lect. 117. Mason on the Church, Essays 6 and 7.
11. What the relations of baptized children to the Church, and what the practical benefits thereof?
Drs. Woods' and Mason, as above. So. Presbn. Rev. April 1859.

IT has been fashionable of late years for learned Pædobaptists (e. g., Dr. J. A. Alexander) to doubt whether the Jews practiced proselyte family baptism as early as the

6. Argument from Proselyte Baptism of Jews.
Christian era; because, they say, it was first asserted in the Talmud (of 6th century) and these writers are unscrupulous. I see not why we may not in this case believe, because they are supported thus: (see Dr. Woods). They uniformly assert the antiquity of the usage. The usage is naturally deducible from Levitical purifications. It accounts for John's baptism being received with such facility, while neither in the New Testament, nor in Josephus, is any surprise expressed at his baptizing as a novelty. Jews certainly did practise proselyte baptism at a later day, and it can hardly be supposed that they borrowed it from the hated Christians. If they even did, it proves a prevalence of usage before they borrowed. Last: it does not seem very likely that such a pretence, if first invented in the Talmud, would have escaped denial by some earlier Christian or Jewish Christian.

Now, if apostles were accustomed to see families baptized into Judaism, it was very likely that they would understand the command to go and proselyte all peoples to Christianity and baptize them, as including whole families.

Had the English version been accurate in the employment of the words house *οἶκος* household *οἰκία*, our argument on this point would appear in it more just. According to the definition of

7. Argument From Baptism of Houses.

Aristotle, and well-defined classic and Hebraistic usage, the word *οἶκος* means literally, the apartments inhabited by the parents and children, and *οἶκία*, literally, the curtilage. Figuratively, the former, the family; the latter, the household. And the idea which constitutes the former a house is lineage. It is by birth of infants the house is built up; so that the word may more naturally mean young children distinguished from parents than *vice versa*. A house is a cluster of one lineage, receiving accretion by birth and growth of children. So that when it is said in the New Testament that the *οἶκος* was baptized (never the *οἶκία*), the presence of children is forcibly implied. This distinction in usage is always carefully observed in the New Testament as to the figurative sense of the two words, often as to the literal. E. g., Acts xvi: 31-34 (Greek); 1 Cor. i: 16, with xvi: 15; Phil. iv: 22. The argument is miserably obscured in the English version. Now, while some eight Christian houses are spoken of in the New Testament (who presumably were baptized houses), four such are explicitly mentioned as baptized. Cornelius', Acts x: 2, 44, 48; Lydia's, xvi: 15; the Philippian jailor's, xvi: 33; Stephanas', 1 Cor. i: 16. Now, on the fact that, among the very few separate individual baptisms mentioned in the New Testament, four were of families, is ground of two-fold probability: that there were young children in some of them, who were baptized on their parents' faith, and that this sacramental recognition of the parental and family relation, looks like Pedobaptism amazingly. Immersionists do not use such language, so that even if it could be proved there probably were no young unconverted children, the argument remains.

They say they can prove in each case there were none:

These Houses Included Children. Cornelius' by verses 2, 44. But see Gen. xviii: 19; 2 Chron. xx: 13; Ezra viii: 21; Matt. xxi: 15, 16. That Lydia's house were all believing adult children, or servants, or apprentices, they argue from Acts xvi: 40, "brethren." But see verses 14, 15, nobody's faith is mentioned but Lydia's; and doubtless Paul had many other converts out of Lydia's house. The proof is, that the whole context shows the meeting in verse 40 was a public one, not a family one; and the Philippian church, a flourishing body was now planted.

That the jailor's family all believed is argued from verse 34. But the original places the *πανοικί* with rejoiced. That Stephanas' family were all baptized and believers, is argued from 1 Cor. xvi: 15. Answer: It was his *οἶκία* not his *οἶκος* which engaged in ministrations of Christian hospitality.

An argument of equal, or perhaps greater importance is to be derived from the addressing of the titles of Church-members to little children in the New Testament. That the words *ἄγιοι*,

8. Infants are Addressed as Church-members.

πιστός, or πιστεύων and *Ἀδελφός* are the current words employed to denote professed Christians, will not be denied. "Christians" is only used two or three times. The address of epistles to these titles is equivalent to their address to professed Church-members. Now in these cases we find children addressed in the epistles. Eph. vi: 1-4; Col. iii: 20; 1 John ii: 12, 13, *τεκνία, παιδία*. First, these were not adult children, Further, in Titus i: 5, they are expressly called *τέκνα πιστά*.

The Bishop's Children Must be Members. Compare for illustration, in 1 Tim. vi: 2, *Πιστὸς δεσπότης*, and 1 Tim. iii: 4, parallel passage where the Bishop's children being *πιστά* and *ἐν ὑποταγῇ*, is equivalent to being well ruled, and in subjection. If the alternative be taken that Titus' *τέκνα πιστά* mean adult children who are professors, on their own behalf, of godliness, we are led into absurdities; for what must be decided of the man whose children are yet small; and who being therefore in the prime of manhood, is fit to serve the Church? Shall he wait, though otherwise fit, till it be seen whether his children will be converted? Or if the children be already come to ages of intelligence, and not converted, in spite of the Father's good rearing, must he be refused ordination? This would have excluded Legh Richmond, and many ministers blessed of God. The obvious sense is, the bishop's children must be consecrated and reared accordingly.

As the historical evidence for the early and constant prevalence of infant baptism is so well unfolded in Coleman, Woods, Bingham and Wall, and as your Church History enters fully into it, I shall not again detail the witnesses; but add some remarks to sum up. And first, Bingham and Wall, between them, mention nine fathers, of the first and second centuries, who seem pretty clearly to allude to infant baptism; some briefly and singly, others clearly and more than once. Now Mosheim's list of the genuine Fathers who wrote before A. D. 200, is only about 12 (Clement, Ignatius, Polycarp, Pseudo Barnabas, Pastor of Hermas, Ep. to Diognetus, (probably Justin's), Justin Martyr, Irenæus, Athenagoras, Theophilus of Antioch, Clem. Alexandrinus, Tertullian), if we omit 12 or 15 more, whose names and works are only made known to us by other Fathers who speak of them. And his list is nearly exhaustive. Now seeing that few of these works are voluminous, and that some are mere fragments; and seeing that if our theory of Pedobaptism is correct, it was a subject which did not need much agitation, as being undisputed and of ancient establishment; here is fully as much notice of it as was reasonably to be expected. After A. D. 200, the notices are abundant.

The enumerations of heresies, and refutations of them

2d. Denial of it Not Mentioned of Any Heretics. drawn up by Irenæus, Epiphanius, Philastrius, Augustine, Theodoret, (Epiphanius, for instance; against 80 heresies), contain no reference to any heretics who denied infant baptism, except those (as some Gnostic sects) who denied all baptism. And Peter de Bruys is said to be the first sectary who ever denied it.

In the controversy between Augustine and Pelagians, the latter were much pressed with the argument: "If infants have neither depravity nor guilt, why baptize them?" Their answer was, to gain for them heaven, instead of eternal life. They would have gladly given the more satisfactory answer, if it had been true, that infant baptism was an innovation. But they do not. Celestius, it is stated, repudiated the insinuation that his doctrine would lead to the denial of infant baptism, saying, he had never known any sect wicked enough for this. He and Pelagius were learned and traveled.

In the Roman Catacombs, among the many interesting remains, are inscriptions over the graves of infants and young children, who are said to be baptized, and called "faithful," "believers," "brothers," while they are said to be of ages varying from 18 months to 12 years.

Infant communion, which Immersionists love to class as an equal and similar superstition to infant baptism, is a clear proof of the earlier prevalence of the latter. For the primitive Church never gave the Lord's Supper before baptism.

But we do not rely on the patristic testimony as our decisive argument, but on Scripture. The Church early became superstitious; and many of their superstitions, as baptismal regeneration and infant communion, they profess to base on Scripture. But where they do so, we can usually trace and expose their misunderstanding of it. This current and early testimony is relied on, not as proving by itself that we are warranted to baptize infants, but as raising a strong probability that it was an apostolic usage, and thus supporting our scriptural argument.

Immersionists object vehemently to infant baptism and membership, that it floods the spirituality of Christ's Church with a multitude of worldly, nominal Christians. One of them has written a book on "the evils of infant baptism." They point to the lamentable state of religion in Europe, in the Papacy, and in the Oriental Churches, as the legitimate result. They urge: If our Confession and Government are correct in saying, 'all baptized persons are members of the Church,' &c., (Bk. Disc. Ch. I, § 6), consistency would lead us, of course, to admit

3d. Not Refused even by Pelagians, Under the Strongest Inducement.

4th. Evidence in the Catacombs.

5th. Infant Communion.

But Tradition no Authority to us.

10. Does Infant Baptism Corrupt the Church.

them, without saving change, to suffrage, to office, and to sealing ordinances; we should baptize their children in turn (as Methodists, Episcopalians, Papists do), and thus the whole world would be brought unsanctified into the Church, obliterating its spirituality. But Christ intended it to be composed only of His converted followers. The only reason why Presbyterian and other Churches in America, do not exhibit these abominable results is, that they do not act out their creeds, and practically regard the unconverted baptized as no members. I reply:

The notion that Christ would organize His religious kingdom on earth in contrast to human society, 1st. Mixture in the Church Foreseen by Christ. admitting none but pure members, is plausible and pretty. Yea, the unthinking may reason, that as He is autocrat, heart-searching, almighty, His voluntary embracing of any impure material would look like a voluntary connivance at sin, and indifference to that sanctity which the Church was formed to promote. But it is a utopian and unscriptural dream. See Matt. xiii : 24 and 47. Christ has not even formed the hearts of His own people thus; but permits evil to mix with them. A Church to be administered by human hands must be mixed; anything else is but a dishonest pretense, even among Immersionists. Christ permits a mixed body, not because He likes it, but because His wisdom sees it best under the circumstances.

It is not fair to argue from the abuse, but from proper use of an institution. Note: God's arrangement under the old dispensation was liable to the same evils, for infant Church-membership 2nd. Mediæval Churches Corrupted Otherwise. abused certainly led there to horrid corruptions. The wide corruptions of Popish and other European Churches are not traceable to proper use of infant baptism, but to other manifest causes: neglect of youthful training, State establishments, Paganism infused, hierarchical institutions, &c. If infant membership were the great corrupter, and its absence the great safeguard, immersed Churches ought to be uniformly pure. How is this? It is an invidious task to make the inquiry; but it is their own test. Look, then, at Ironsides, Dunkers, Mormons, African Churches in America. We shall not be so uncharitable as to charge all this on immersion.

Enough for us to answer for our own principles, not those of Papists, Episcopalians, Methodists. We 3rd. Safeguards. stated our limitations on infant baptism. Where they are observed, and the duties pledged in the sacrament are tolerably performed, it results in high benefit. When we teach that all baptized persons "should perform all the duties of Church-members," it is not meant with unconverted hearts. The Church states the great Bible doctrine that in baptism renewing graces are promised and sealed; and if the

adult does not get them, it is his fault. Our doctrine does not break down the distinction made between spiritual and carnal by sealing ordinances one whit, or give to the baptized member one particle of power to corrupt the suffrage or government of the Church.

II. The remaining cavils are best answered by stating the Scriptural view of the relation of unregenerate baptized children to the Church, and the benefits thence inuring.

When our standards say, "All baptized persons are members of the Church," this by no means implies their title to all sealing ordinances, suffrage, and office. They are minor citizens in the ecclesiastical commonwealth, under tutelage, training, and instruction, and government; heirs, if they will exercise the graces obligatory on them, of all the ultimate franchises of the Church, but not allowed to enjoy them until qualified. Yet they are, justly, under ecclesiastical government. The reasonableness of this position is well illustrated by that of minors under the civil commonwealth. These owe allegiance and obedience, and are under the government; they are made to pay taxes, to testify in court, and, after a time, even to do military service and labour on the highway. They can be tried for crimes, and even capitally punished. But they may neither sit as judges in a jury, bear office, nor vote for officers, until a full age is supposed to confer the necessary qualification. Such must be the regulations of any organized society which embraces (on any theory) families within it. And if the family is conceived as the integer of which the society is constituted, this status of minor members of families is yet more proper, yea, unavoidable. But such is precisely the conception of the Scriptures, concerning the integers of which both the State and Church are constituted. Now, the visible Church is an organized human society, constituted of Christian families as integers, for spiritual ends—religious instruction, sanctification, holy living and glorification of its members. Hence, it seems most reasonable that unregenerate members of its families shall be, on the one hand, included under its government; and, on the other, not endowed with its higher franchises. The State, whose purposes are secular, fixed the young citizen's majority when, by full age, he is presumed to have that bodily and mental growth of the adult, which fits him for his duties. The Church recognizes the majority of its minor citizens when they show that spiritual qualification—a new heart—necessary for handling its spiritual concerns. The Church visible is also a school of Christ. Schools, notoriously, must include untaught children. That is what they exist for. But they do not allow these children to teach and govern; they are there to be taught and restrained. The analogy is most instructive.

Baptized Persons in
What Sense? Illustrated
by Minors in
Commonwealth.

The Immersionist says that our communion is only saved from utter corruption by our own inconsistency; that while our constitution calls our children Church members, we fortunately treat them, as they do, as not Church members. Whereas the Immersionist charges us with a wicked inconsistency, I will retort upon him the charge of a pious one: Those of them who are truly good people, while they say their children are not Church members, fortunately treat them as though they were. They diligently bring them under the instructions, restraints, and prayers of the Church and pastor. Happily, the instincts and influences of the Christian family are so deeply founded and so powerful, that a perverse and unscriptural theory cannot arrest them. These Christians discard the Bible conception of the visible Church, as an organized body whose integers are Christian "houses," and adopt the unscriptural and impracticable theory of a visible Church organized of regenerate individuals. But, blessed be God! the light and love of a sanctified parent's heart are too strong to be wholly perverted by this theory; they still bring the family, as a whole, virtually within the Church. And this is the reason that true religion is perpetuated among them.

But a more definite answer may be desired to the inquiry: What are the precise shape and extent of this instruction and government, which constitute the Church's "discipline" over its unregenerate members? To give a clear answer, let us distinguish the instruction from the restraint; the two together make up the idea of discipline. As to the former, the teaching of church-presbyters and catechists is by no means to supersede that of the parents, but only to assist and re-enforce it. Into the sacred relation of parent and child no other human authority, not even that which Christ Himself has appointed in His Church, may intrude. None can sufficiently replace it. But all these baptized members are the "charge" of the pastor and session; and it is the duty of these "overseers" to provide for them, and to see that they enjoy the public and social instructions of the gospel. And pastors and elders should, moreover, extend to them that advice in temptation, and those efforts to comfort them in affliction, and to secure the sanctification of their trials, which they extend to communing members.

As to the ecclesiastical control or restraint over these unregenerate members, I remark, first, that the rule of morals should be the same as that imposed on communicating members, save that the former are not to be forced, nor even permitted, without spiritual qualification, to take part in sealing ordinances, and church-powers. [But as to their neglect of these, they should be constantly taught that their dis-

This Relation Natural.

Discipline Consists in Instruction and Restraint.

Restraint Applied, First, Through Parents. The Rule of Living.

qualification is their fault, and not their misfortune merely; a sinful exercise of their free-agency, a subject for personal and present repentance; a voluntary neglect and rejection of saving graces, the sincere offer whereof was sealed to them in their baptism. And for this, their sin of heart, the Church utters a continuous, a sad and affectionate, yet a righteous censure, in keeping them in the state of minor members.] The propriety of exacting the same rule of living, in other respects, appears thus: Christ has but one law for man; these baptized members are consecrated and separated to Christ's service in the Church as truly as the communicating members; they owe the same debt of devotion for the mercies of redemption; which are their offered heritage. Hence, it should be constantly taught them that questionable worldly amusements, for instance, are as inconsistent in them as in other Church members. In a word, the end of this Church authority, under which Providence has placed them, is to constrain them to live Christian lives, in order that thereby they may come unto the Christian graces in the heart.

Second, as to the means of enforcement of that rule, I would answer; that in the case of all baptized members of immature age, and especially of such as are still in the houses, and under the government, of parents, the Church-Session ought mainly to restrain them through their parents. That is, the authority of these rulers should be applied to the parents, to cause them, by their domestic authority, to lead outward Christian lives, and attend upon the means of grace. And the refusal or neglect of parents to do this duty, may doubtless subject them to just Church censure. Perhaps we may safely say, that the Session should reach this class of baptized members only through their parents, except in the case where the parents themselves refer the child's contumacy to the eldership. In this case the eldership may undoubtedly proceed to censure the recalcitrant child. See an analogous case in the theocracy, Deut. xxi: 18, &c.

If these baptized, unregenerate members are fully adult, and passed from parental control, then the Church-Session must apply their restraint directly to them. The mere continuance of their unregeneracy, unfitting them for communion, will of course be no suitable ground for judicial prosecution. For the Church is already uttering her standing censure against this, in their exclusion from the Lord's table. If they become wayward in outward conduct, then the Session, in addition to their constant and affectionate admonitions against their impenitence, should administer paternal cautions, advice, and entreaty, looking towards a reformation. But if they persist in flagrant and indecent sins, such as the persistent neglect of all ordinances, sensuality, blasphemy, or dishonesty,

If Adult, the Restraint is Direct. It May Proceed to Ex-communicate.

(such sins as would bring on a communing member excommunication), then nothing remains but that the Session shall proceed, by judicial prosecution, to cut the reprobate member off from the Church.

Not only the Scriptures, but common sense, justify this view. Are they "members of the Church?" (in the minor sense). Then natural justice teaches that they cannot be stripped of the privileges of that membership, be they what they may, without a fair opportunity for defence, and confronting the accusing witnesses. To judge a man without formal hearing is iniquity. On the other hand, are they, in any sense, "members of the Church?" Then, to that degree, the Church is responsible for their discredit, and subject to the scandal of their irregularities. Common sense says, then, that there must be a fair way for the Church to obtain a formal severance of the membership, and publicly cleanse herself of the scandal of this contumacious member. That way can be none other than judicial prosecution. Finally, when a member is so thoroughly reprobate that, to human apprehension, there is no chance of his receiving any of the ends of a Church' connection, there ought to be a way to terminate it; it has become objectless. Three objections are urged against the judicial prosecution of such members. 1. That its extremest sentence could only place them where they already are; self-excluded from full communion. I answer, this is clearly an oversight. This form of discipline will, of course, only be applied in cases of flagrant immorality; and then, it will do an entirely different thing from this self-exclusion: it will sever the minor membership, and rid the Church, until the culprit repents, of the scandal of his connection. It is argued, second, that judicial discipline is utterly inappropriate, where there is not even the profession of spiritual life. "It is like tying a corpse to a whipping-post." That this is erroneous, is proved by every case of excommunication; for this extreme measure is always justified by the plea, that the man discloses himself to be unregenerate. Third: It is argued that judicial discipline is irrelevant to baptized members; because they are not the essential, but the accidental constituents of a visible Church. The fact is admitted; but it is irrelevant. There could be a commonwealth without minor citizens, but if there are minor citizens they must be judged as to their right to their lesser franchise, as other citizens are. No youth of sixteen years in Virginia would think it just to be hung or banished without trial, because he was not "of age;" nor would the commonwealth deem that a sufficient reason to let him rob and murder with impunity. In fine, the practice of at least some of the Reformed Churches once illustrated the benefits of this position.

On this statement of the matter, it is obvious that the

Our Usage Delin- usage in our churches has fallen exceedingly
quent. far from the Bible rule, and that the taunts
of the Immersionists are to a great degree
well founded: that we are not consistent in our pædobaptism.
And it may be, that the leavening of men's minds, in this
country, with the unscriptural ideas of the Immersionists may
have produced a license of feeling among youths, which greatly
increases the difficulty of Church Sessions' doing their whole
duty. It may, indeed, be almost impossible for any single Ses-
sion to do it among us, in the face of this unfortunate corrup-
tion of society. and of the obstinate neglect of all sister
Church Sessions around them. But the question for the honest
mind is: Should a corrupt practice continue to preclude a right
principle? Or should the correct principle amend the vicious
practice? And the happy example of many of the Reformed
Churches teaches us that this discipline of baptized members is
feasible, reasonable, and most profitable. The Presbyterian
Church of Holland, for instance, in its better days; and the
Evangelical Church of Holland now, uniformly governs their
children on the Scriptural principles above described.

The benefits of infant baptism, and of this form of mem-
bership for the children of God's believing
Plan—Children of the people, are great. Some of them are very
Church its Hope. forcibly set forth by Dr. John M. Mason, in
his invaluable treatise on the Church. Borrowing in part from
him, I would remark, that this relation to the Church, and this
discipline, are, first, in exact harmony with the great fact of ex-
perience, that the children of God's people are the great hope
of the Church's increase. This being a fact, it is obviously wis-
dom to organize the Church with reference to it, so as to pro-
vide every proper means of training for working up this the
most hopeful material for Zion's increase. To neglect this ob-
vious policy seems, indeed, little short of madness. As we
have seen, Immersionists' communions only enjoy true pros-
perity, in virtue of their virtual employment of the principle of
infant Church-membership; grace and love being in them
fortunately, stronger than a bad theory.

Second: This Bible plan is in strict conformity with those
doctrines of grace, and principles of human
The Bible Plan Agrees with Nature and Grace. nature, which God employs for the sanctifi-
Prov. xxii: 6. cation of His people. Our theory assumes
that God's covenant is with His people and their seed. (Acts
ii: 39). That their seed are heirs of the promises made to the
fathers (Acts iii: 25): that the cause which excludes any such
from saving interest in redemption is voluntary and criminal,
viz., unbelief and impenitence—a cause which they are all
bound to correct at once, if they are arrived at the years of
discretion; that the continuance of this cause, however just a
reason for the eldership's excluding them from certain privi-

leges and functions, is no justification whatever for their neglecting them. And, above all, does our plan found itself on the great rule of experience, common sense, and Scripture, that if you would form a soul to the hearty embracing of right principles, you must make him observe the conduct which those principles dictate. Every faithful parent in the world acts on this rule in rearing his children. If the child is untruthful, unsympathizing, unforgiving, indolent, he compels him, while young, to observe a course of truth, charity, forgiveness and industry. Why? Because the parent considers that the outward observance of these virtues will be either permanent or praiseworthy if, when the child becomes a man, he only observes them from fear or hypocrisy?. Not at all; but because the parent knows, that human nature is moulded by habits; that the practice of a principle always strengthens it; that this use of his parental authority is the most natural and hopeful means to teach the child heartily to prefer and adopt the right principle, when he becomes his own man; that it would be the merest folly to pretend didactically to teach the child the right, and leave all-powerful HABIT to teach him the wrong, and to let the child spend his youth in riveting the bonds of bad habit, which, if he is ever to adopt and love the right principle, he must break. Will not our heavenly Father act on the same rule of good sense toward His children? Is not the professed principle of the Immersionist just the folly we have described? Happily, Scripture agrees with all experience and practical wisdom, in saying that if you wish a child to adopt and love the principles of a Church-member when he is grown, you must make him behave as a Church-member while he is growing.

Third: Many collateral advantages are gained by this minor citizenship of the baptized in the Church. They are retained under wholesome restraints. Their carnal opposition to the truth is greatly disarmed by early association. The numerical and pecuniary basis of the Church's operations is widened. And where the sealing ordinances are properly guarded, these advantages are gained without any compromise of the Church's spirituality. Pædobaptist communities which are scripturally conducted present as high a grade of purity, even including their baptized members, as any others. For, on this corrupt earth, the best communion is far from being what it ought to be. Where the duties represented in the sacrament of baptism are properly followed up, the actual regeneration of children is the ordinary result.