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the language of inspiration. The modern "medium" answers to the ancient wizard or witch that had a "familiar spirit." That there are various modifications in the machinery of the system of spiritualism, as compared with ancient necromancy, is freely conceded. But for substance, both are the same; and both are to be rejected with abhorrence, on the same ground, by all who acknowledge God's word as an infallible and sufficient rule of faith and practice. The preacher may believe that spiritualism is all jugglery and legerdemain. But when he condemns it on this ground alone, he relinquishes the high vantage ground on which it is both his privilege and his duty to stand. Let him, as far as he is able, expose the cheats of spiritualist manipulators. But let him also demonstrate to his people that whatsoever reality any one may claim for the system is only claiming reality for witchcraft. If it be impossible to reclaim those who have gone through the gateway of spiritualism into practical infidelity — the rejection of God's word, if not wholly, yet as an *infallible* and *sufficient* rule of faith and practice, — he may at least hope to save some from entering that gateway.

ARTICLE V.

INFANT BAPTISM AND A REGENERATED CHURCH-MEMBERSHIP IRRECONCILABLE.

BY REV. W. H. H. MARSH, WILMINGTON, DEL.

Two remarkable Articles on the subject of Infant Church-membership appeared during the past year — the first, in the "Methodist Quarterly Review" for January, from the pen of the late Rev. B. H. Nadal, D.D., Professor in the Drew Theological Seminary, New Jersey, entitled, "The Logic of Infant Church-membership"; and the second in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* for April, written by the Rev. Lewis Grout, formerly missionary of the A. B. C. F. M., entitled, "The Church-membership of Baptized Children." The appearance of these two Articles on the same topic, in two prominent and widely circulated quarterlies, written by men (members of large, influential, and growing denominations) who, in all probability, knew nothing of each other's views on the subject, and who reached their conclusions by indepen-

dent investigation, is, we say, remarkable. The coincidence in time, in argument, and in the main conclusion, is striking.

We are aware that Dr. Nadal and Mr. Grout do not speak for the denomination they respectively represent. We do not believe the majority, nor even a large minority, of the Methodists would accept Dr. Nadal's conclusion. In fact, the editor of the *Methodist Quarterly Review*, in a foot-note at the close of his Article, says: "We insert the above Article in cordial respect for the eminent character of the lamented writer, and not from any coincidence with his views." As for our Congregational brethren, neither do we think a large proportion of them are prepared to accept the position stated and defended by Mr. Grout. Yet we cannot but regard the nearly simultaneous appearance of these two Articles, — one in January, and the other in April of the same year, — as a most significant fact. They appear as the views of individuals, it is true, and their authors alone are responsible for the presentation and advocacy of those views before the religious public; still, we regard their authors as representative of a class, more or less numerous, among our Paedobaptist brethren, who are *thinking* deeply on the question relative to the *status* of baptized children, and who are not satisfied with the present indefiniteness. The significance, therefore, we attribute to the Articles we have referred to is, that they indicate most decidedly a state of uncertainty, and hence of unrest and dissatisfaction, in the minds of many Paedobaptists on the relation of baptized children to the church. That there exists this feeling of indefiniteness on the subject, Mr. Grout concedes at the outset, and evidently he designs his Article to be a contribution toward the solution of this pressing and perplexing problem.¹ He finds the opinions of many of the "clergy and laity vague and diversified" respecting it. He says:

¹ Mr. Douglass, an English Paedobaptist Non-conformist, in his racy, and eminently suggestive volume, entitled, "The Pastor and his People," in the chapter on "Uses of Infant Baptism," corroborates what Mr. Grout asserts. Mr. Douglass, it should be noticed, speaks for England, and Mr. Grout for America. They state the same fact: "Not one in a hundred can tell you any-

“Some will admit that they belong to the church, yet seem to doubt or deny that the church belongs at all to them; that is, the church has a claim upon the children and an interest in them, but the children have as yet no interest or place in the church. Some hold that they are in the church, yet not of it; as though to be in it in any sense worthy of the name is not to be of it. Not a few seem to regard them as neither in it nor out of it, but as occupying some sort of middle ground; as though this were either scriptural or tenable.” He continues: “On this point [the relation of baptized children to the church] our Congregational churches, many of them,—at least many members in most of them,—have departed from the teachings of the divine word, from the faith and practice of the primitive church, from the faith and practice of the Puritan fathers, and from the faith, at least, of other branches of the catholic church of the present age; the Baptists alone excepted.”

To what extent this vagueness of conception of which Mr. Grout complains exists among Congregationalists, and others as well, we have no means of determining; but evidently among Congregationalists it must be considerable; for he says: “Inquiring of one and another as to their thoughts on this subject, what they believe to be the proper ecclesiastical standing of baptized children,—whether they belong to the church, are in it and of it, or out of it, or where they are,—the writer has been somewhat surprised at the variety of views that prevail, even among those who are supposed to be of the same general faith in respect to the duty and import of infant baptism.” Evidently, he regards it as somewhat wide-spread, and that his opinion might not be conjectural, he made inquiry, in order that he might form an intelligent judgment. We most naturally infer that Mr. Grout did not make inquiry of the masses, but rather thing about the matter. They comply with the custom; may consider it decorous, respectable and religious, but that is all” (p. 164). Again, in the same chapter, he says: “Generally speaking, the members of our churches cannot see that infant baptism is of any use whatever. They comply with it from custom, but not one in a thousand can tell you the *cui bono* of the matter.”

of pastors of churches, of the more prominent and intelligent laymen, and of professors in colleges and theological seminaries, with whom, as a "returned missionary," he would be most frequently brought in contact. If, then, as we suppose, in such circles be found a variety of views prevailing, — signs of hesitancy and want of definiteness, — it is highly probable those of the masses are not more definite. As for ourselves, we have long been satisfied that what Mr. Grout affirms of Congregationalists is more or less true of our evangelical Paedobaptist brethren generally. We have encountered the same thing when conversing with ministers and laymen among them on this subject. The question of the relationship of baptized children to the church, and the suggestion of difficulties that must arise in any attempt to reconcile the retention of infant baptism with the doctrine of a regenerated church-membership, has always been perplexing. This, as is well known, is persistently pressed by Baptists, and we believe our Paedobaptist brethren must feel its force more and more. It has been repeatedly said, infant baptism is declining. Mr. Grout makes a reference to this opinion, in the early portion of his Article, and attributes it to the "doubts, errors, and haziness of sentiment" prevailing as to the relation which infants sustain to the church. How far infant baptism may have declined, we do not know; but statistics,¹ and the passage occasionally of a resolution by an ecclesiastical body, censuring its neglect, and urging its observance, indicate its decline. As a Baptist, however, I have never regarded this decline as arising so much from the spread of the conviction among our Paedobaptist brethren that infant baptism is unscriptural (though there is something of this, and it is increasing), as from a want of clearness of definition of its significancy, and the relation the baptized child sustains to the church. *The neglect, so far as it exists, arises, we believe, more from difficulties felt within, than from the pressure of Baptists from without.* The reasons urged in defence of the retention of infant baptism are not

¹ See foot-note in *Madison Avenue Lectures*, p. 181.

uniform; one author denying what another affirms; and the two Articles we now have before us afford sufficient proof of the existence of conflicting views respecting the relation of baptized children to the visible church. Such being the fact, it is not strange that Mr. Grout found, as the result of his inquiries, a "variety of views" that surprised him, or that Baptists should discover in statistics evidence of the decline of infant baptism. If such "haziness of sentiment" as Mr. Grout asserts exist, the neglect of infant baptism must follow as a necessity.

Believing, therefore, that among evangelical Paedobaptists the baptism of infants is being neglected in consequence of "haziness of vision" as to its reasons and significance, we have thought the time nearing when they must re-examine the whole question, and make either more or less of it—state its utility, and define the relation of the baptized child to the church, or else reject the baptism of children altogether, and accept the Baptists' position as to the proper subject of the ordinance as the exponent of the theory and fact of the New Testament. Mr. Grout has reached the same conclusion, and is glad that the crisis is approaching. He says: "Nor, again, do we think it among the least hopeful signs of the times pertaining to this point that so many are coming to be dissatisfied with the present state of the question. If we mistake not, the opinion is beginning to prevail that we as Congregationalists must take up this subject anew; that both the clergy and the laity must think it through from end to end, and come to some conclusion less crude, more positive, definite, and consistent; that we must go either backward or forward, if we would ever hope to set our feet on solid ground." This conclusion is as correct as it is emphatic. Infant baptism means something or nothing. If something, let it be decided by its advocates *what*; if nothing, they should abandon it. The baptized child sustains such a relation to the church as the unbaptized child does not, and is in virtue of its baptism entitled to such privileges as an unbaptized child is not. If so, let that relation be decided, let

those privileges be defined. If the baptized child enters not into a relation to the church, and is not entitled to certain privileges denied the unbaptized child, does not its baptism degenerate into a *religious farce*? Mr. Grout is right in his conclusion, when he says: "We must go either backward or forward, if we would ever hope to set our feet on solid ground." The definition of this relation, and of its consequent privileges, is the object at which both Mr. Grout and Dr. Nadal aim.

As already stated, both lay down the same proposition. They both affirm that baptized children are members of the church. Dr. Nadal says: "We claim that infant church-membership is a principle common to all three of the Bible dispensations of religion"—the patriarchal, the Mosaic, and the Christian. Mr. Grout says: "Baptized children are truly members of the church." This, however, was not always his opinion; for he continues: "Indeed, few are likely to be further from it than he was when first led, not long since, to take up the subject and give it more than ordinary attention. But every step in the investigation served only to lead him to the conviction here avowed, that the children of whom we speak are really and truly in the church and members of it." The current phrase, "children of the church," is not strong enough to express his conception of the relation. He objects to it as both defective and dangerous. This he sees in the fact that it gives but a partial representation of their relation. It does not give prominence to the idea of "*membership in the church.*" He says: "We may call them infant members, minor members, or members in minority, if we will; only say not that a membership of this kind is imaginary, absurd, or worthless; but rather *bona fide*, most real, and of blessed import." What he means by the church-membership of baptized children he thus fully states: "The membership we claim for those of whom we speak is more than hereditary, nominal, or honorary. The baptized child is brought *into* the church, and sealed and made a member of it, in a higher sense, for other

purposes, and in an other mode than can find a parallel or perfect illustration in any natural birth, civil code, or ceremonial law — brought in, made and sealed a member through divine direction, by divine authority, by virtue of having the initiatory ordinance, the rite of baptism, administered to him, on the ground of the parents' faith and covenant, and to the end that he may be guarded from evil, nurtured in holiness, be trained for service, and be prepared for the kingdom of heaven. The children of God's believing people may be so matriculated, so enrolled and incorporated into his church as to be 'no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God,' even before they are able and qualified in all respects to have part in those higher duties and privileges of which adult believers are prepared to partake." These statements have the merit of clearness and distinctness.

The arguments on which both writers rely are substantially the same. Mr. Grout, however, presents them more fully than Dr. Nadal, pressing into service inferential arguments based on passages in the Epistles, to which Dr. Nadal does not refer, but which he no doubt would have accepted as furnishing additional support for their common position. It is no part of our object to state the arguments on which they rely for the purpose of refuting them; for a Baptist cares nothing for the merit of the argument in favor of the church-membership of baptized children, inasmuch as he objects to the baptism of children as itself unscriptural. Suffice, therefore, for us to say that the chief reliance of both is on the assumed identity of the patriarchal, Mosaic, and Christian dispensations; and hence, being identical, as children were by circumcision made members of what they term the patriarchal and Mosaic churches, so, baptism having taken the place of circumoision, infants receiving baptism become thereby members of the Christian church. Dr. Nadal thus sums up the argument drawn from this source: "If the covenant of God with his church is one in all ages, and if infants were admitted into the church under the patriarchal

and Mosaic dispensations of that covenant, then, unless it is clearly forbidden under the Christian dispensation of the same covenant, the inference is irresistible that they must be admitted under the Christian dispensation. Why not? The covenant is the same, and the dispensation freer and more extended. Shall we establish a narrower policy under a broader dispensation, and in the very act of conferring privileges upon all nations take them away from a class that always enjoyed them?" Dr. Nadal urges other reasons. He at once illustrates and argues that, as the allegiance of the parents to the state binds their children and all their temporal interests to the state, so does the professed allegiance of the parents bind their children to the church in a like relation for the same reason. "And, as in the one case the child is brought in a real and vital political union with the state, through the civil and political life of the parents, and thus becomes an incipient citizen, so, in the other case, he is brought into a genuine union with the spiritual commonwealth through their life in the church." Mr. Grout, in summing up the argument drawn from the assumed identity of the three dispensations, says: "If, then, baptism is of the same use and import in the church under the new dispensation as circumcision was under the old, — the one being instituted in the church directly upon the removal of the other, — how can we avoid the conclusion that one is a substitute for the other. And if the child of a believing parent, being circumcised, was thus and thereby admitted into the visible church of God and made a member, under the old dispensation, as we believe none will deny, then who can deny that the child of a believing parent, being baptized under the new dispensation, is thus and thereby admitted into the same, and made a member thereof." As already said, Mr. Grout's argument is much more extended than Dr. Nadal's. He adduces Matt. xxviii. 19, Mark x. 14, and 1 Cor. vii. 14. He gives the opinion of Justin Martyr, and of St. Austin, of John Calvin, and of the Westminster divines; and, after quoting from these and other authorities,

concludes: "So that, so far as their standards go, it is plain that Presbyterians look upon those who have been baptized in infancy as made thus and thereby members of the church of Christ." Such is the defence. We leave to our Paedobaptist brethren who deny that baptized children are members of the church the task of refuting Mr. Grout and Dr. Nadal and others who may endorse their position. If we believed in infant baptism, we see not how we could avoid the conclusion to which they come, with only this difference — we should supplement their theory with that of "baptismal regeneration," which they both repudiate, but which to us has always seemed essential to anything like a consistent defence of infant baptism.

At this point we desire our reader to note carefully an important fact respecting the arguments brought forward by the advocates of the church-membership of baptized children. The fact is this: *They are precisely the same by which the advocates of infant baptism refute Baptists.* This is true of the arguments adduced by Dr. Nadal and Mr. Grout. A change in a few words and phrases, and their line of argument is precisely that to be found in any treatise in defence of infant baptism. But we must remember they are not engaged in a controversy with Baptists. The question does not relate to the *authority* for baptizing infants. This they assume. The question is, What relation do infants sustain to the church? The answer they give is, that they are members of the church. The defence is, that whatever justifies the administration of baptism to them entitles them to recognition as members of the visible church. They are urging their Paedobaptist brethren to adopt a consistent theory and practice on the subject of infant baptism. The present *status*, they insist, is unsatisfactory. They propose to remove all difficulty by deciding them to be within the pale of the church. This is their demand, and is that of those for whom they may be regarded as speaking. And, if infant baptism be retained by our evangelical Paedobaptist brethren, we venture the prophecy that the demand will be heeded, or

else the practice of infant baptism will decline more and more. There is a strong pressure forcing this issue. The position, growth, and influence of Baptists, strengthened as they are in their views and practices on the mode, as well as subjects, of baptism by the concessions of many of the ablest theologians and ripe scholars of their opponents, is one source of this pressure. The fundamental position of Baptists is that the membership of the visible church must be composed of regenerated persons, and that the ordinances are only for such as have been "born again." Hence they have no perplexity with the question, "What relation do baptized children bear to the church?" for they are freed from all such embarrassment by denying that infants are scriptural subjects of baptism. Baptists, therefore, can defend the doctrine of a regenerated church-membership with perfect consistency. But, as our evangelical Paedobaptist brethren believe also in regeneration as essential to certain privileges in the church, they, just so far as they insist on regeneration, nullify and shroud in the mystery of indefiniteness their practice of infant baptism. And this difficulty they feel. Its presence is pressing the question as to the *status* of baptized children on them, and is one of the strong reasons why they must "think it through from end to end," and "go either forward or backward," before they can "ever hope to set their feet on solid ground." Another cause of this pressure is the ritualistic development, so marked a feature in the religious movements of the day. At first, this was scouted, sneered at, and ridiculed. It was regarded — and is still by many — as simply a question of clerical millinery, of form and of ceremony, of pulpit genuflexions, and of vain display in external worship. It is, indeed, all this; but it is very much more. If it were nothing more, it would be a very innocent thing, and we could laugh it out of the world. It is far deeper, however. It rests on a principle, and that principle is deep and strong in the hold it takes on all the votaries of ritualism, and sure to captivate all who suffer themselves to be drawn within

the circle of its seductive influence. The essential principle of ritualism is found in its conception of the visible church. This is regarded as "a mediating church," dispensing salvation by means of the ordinances. Hence, the ritualistic theory of "sacramental grace." This being the conception of the visible church, and of the province and efficacy of the ordinances, the significance the Ritualist attaches to the baptism of infants is obvious. His theory of "baptismal regeneration" rests on a firm foundation, if his theory of the visible church and the ordinances be correct. For this reason ritualists "treat baptized children as in grace, and believing, look for their full preparation for heaven by the sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit, through the Christian nurture of the church."¹ We do not know that the Ritualist attempts the defence of infant baptism, apart from his theory of "baptismal regeneration"; nor do we know of a defence of infant baptism by any Paedobaptist, however strongly he may repudiate the Ritualist's theory of its efficacy, who does not find difficulty in so defending it as not to give sanction to that dogma concerning its efficacy against which he protests. Dr. Nadal, in defending the church-membership of baptized children, is careful to state that he does not base it on any saving efficacy imparted by baptism. Of baptismal regeneration, he says: "This theory we of course reject, both as unscriptural and as ascribing a magical effect to priestly functions, which must promote superstition in the ignorant, and breed contempt among the enlightened." This protest against baptismal regeneration from evangelical Paedobaptists is now called for. The facts in the case, as they present themselves to a Baptist, are two: (a) The Ritualist, granting the soundness of his premises, is correct in his conclusion as to the efficacy of baptism; (b) The evangelical Paedobaptist retains infant baptism, but repudiates the ritualistic conception both of the visible church and the efficacy of the ordinances. The problem, therefore, the evangelical Paedobaptist has to find a solution for, is: "I do not believe in baptismal regenera-

¹ See the Tercentennial of the Heidelberg Catechism, pp. 272, 290.

tion; yet I defend the administration of baptism to infants. What relation do the infants I baptize have to the church? to what privileges are they entitled? If not regenerated, which I deny, what benefits have been conferred on them and secured to them by means of their baptism?" The Ritualist has no difficulty of this sort; for, according to his theory, they are "members of Christ, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven." His advantage is immense. He will force his evangelical Paedobaptist neighbor either to abandon infant baptism, or defend it on ritualistic grounds. The Baptist doctrine of a regenerated church-membership, on the one hand, and the ritualistic doctrine of baptismal regeneration, on the other, are forcing the issue, and compelling—slowly, it may be, but surely—our evangelical Paedobaptist brethren to "come to some conclusion less crude, more positive, definite, and consistent."

These Articles, therefore, we regard as the heralds of a coming controversy, not between Baptists and Paedobaptists on the *authority* for baptizing infants, but among Paedobaptists themselves on the relation to the visible church into which baptism introduces the child. This question is making an imperative demand for adjustment, and we see not how it can be much longer delayed. And further, we see not how they can avoid one of two conclusions—either renouncing the baptism of infants as "unscriptural and untenable," or else accepting the conclusion of Mr. Grout and Dr. Nadal, that, in virtue of their baptism, they are members of the visible church—a conclusion which, in our judgment, cannot be long entertained without compelling the acceptance of baptismal regeneration. Not only Congregationalists, but all others, "must take up this subject anew"; for it, more than anything else, is the cause of that separation and antagonism existing between Baptists and Paedobaptists; and, if we may infer from "the signs of the times," promises soon to be the occasion of conflicting theories among its advocates as to its design and efficacy. The fact is, there is a growing demand, — and the indications are that the time

for heeding it is near, — for a general readjustment of those things by which evangelical Christians are separated. Dr. Pressense¹ has thoughtfully said: "There is not a single religious party which does not feel the need either of confirmation or of transformation. All churches born of the time of the Reformation are passing through a crisis. They are all asking themselves, though from various standpoints, whether the Reformation does not need to be continued and developed. Aspiration toward the church of the future is becoming more general, more ardent. But for all who admit the divine origin of Christianity, the church has its type and ideal in that of the great past, which goes back, not three, but eighteen, centuries. To cultivate a growing knowledge of this, in order to attain a growing conformity to it, is the task of the church of to-day. In the same direction," he adds, "it must move, in order to make that advance in its theology which prudence and necessity alike dictate, and which will consist in an ever deepening appropriation of apostolic doctrine." This general conclusion we indorse; and its force in relation to the point before us is increased when we recollect that Dr. Pressense holds infant baptism to be without scriptural authority, and its practice antagonistic to the fundamental idea of the new dispensation.²

¹ History of Apostolic Era, p. 7.

² On baptism Dr. Pressense thus clearly states the conclusions to which his study of the constitution of the church in the "Apostolic Era" led him. "Regarded from the apostolic point of view, baptism cannot be connected either with circumcision or with the baptism administered to proselytes to Judaism. Between it and circumcision there is all the difference which exists between the Theocracy, to which admission was by birth, and the church, which is entered only by conversion. It is in direct connection with faith, that is, with the most free and most individual action of the human soul. As to the baptism administered to the Jewish proselytes, it accompanied circumcision, and was of like import. It purified the neophyte and his family from the defilements of Paganism, and sealed his incorporation and that of his children to the Jewish theocracy; its character was essentially national and theocratic. Christian baptism is not to be received any more than faith by right of inheritance. This is the great reason why we cannot believe that it was administered in the Apostolic age to little children. No positive fact sanctioning the practice can be adduced from the New Testament." — *Apostolic Era*, pp. 375-376. He indeed refers to the instances of household baptism as furnishing to some a presumptive evidence in favor of

Whatever other questions, therefore, may come up for readjustment, infant baptism, both as to authority and significance, will be, we are persuaded, one of the first—perhaps the first. It is, among evangelical Christians, the vital question of the day. Baptists protest against it, and demand of those who retain it a scriptural reason. Ritualists press their theory of baptismal regeneration; while among evangelical Paedobaptists their belief in a regenerated church-membership, on the one hand, and their denial of baptismal regeneration, on the other, leave them in the singular position of defenders of a practice the significance of which they are unable to define, either as regards its immediate effects on the subject, or the privileges to which he is entitled in the visible church.

The final adjustment of this question will involve the settlement of most of the other questions on which evangelical Christians are now divided; for they are intimately connected with, and essentially dependent upon it. Its retention must materially modify the conception those who practise it form of the ordinances; and, as the relation between ordinances and doctrine is most intimate,—as they mutually modify our conception of each,—so it must affect doctrinal views and the whole theory of the nature and functions of the visible church.

It is obvious that, in any theory of the church-membership of baptized children, the vital subject of personal regeneration by the Holy Spirit must be considered in its relation to it. This cannot be ignored. It is a most prominent, most essential doctrine of the word of God: "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircum-

the Apostolic origin of infant baptism; but in the foot-note in his work at this point the reader will find that he gives reasons for regarding such "presumptive evidence" as insufficient and unsatisfactory. Other quotations which we make farther on show conclusively that Dr. Pressense's conception of the visible church is that of the Baptists.

cision, but a new creature.”¹ The Roman Catholic teaches that regeneration is imparted to the child by baptism; affirming “that the law of baptism, as established by our Lord, extends to all, insomuch that, unless they are regenerated by the grace of baptism, be their parents Christians or infidels, they are born to eternal misery and everlasting destruction.”² The theory of the Ritualist is the same, except that we do not understand him to assert the horrible doctrine of “the eternal misery and everlasting destruction” of those infants dying without the saving grace supposed to accompany the administration of baptism. But the evangelical Paedobaptist does *not* believe, with the Roman Catholic, that all unbaptized infants are lost, nor with the Roman Catholic *and* Ritualist, that the application of a few drops of water to the forehead of the unconscious infant, has the magical power to make it a “new creature in Christ Jesus.” On the contrary, he believes in the salvation of all dying in infancy, whether baptized or unbaptized, whether born of infidel, heathen, or Christian parents; and, whatever notion he may have concerning the efficacy of infant baptism, or of the relation to the church and consequent privileges to which it entitles the baptized child, he does not accept the dogma of baptismal regeneration. This he discards, holding that baptism “is not the putting away of the filth of the flesh,” and, therefore, that we are “born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” On the subject of regeneration, the evangelical Paedobaptist holds the same views held by Baptists, though he can never be their consistent advocate as the Baptist can; for, while he continues to regard unconscious infants as proper subjects for the ordinances, and while he believes they can be baptized on the faith of proxies, be they parents or sponsors, he must encounter insurmountable difficulties in reconciling his practice of infant baptism with his doctrine of a regenerated church-membership. And if he insist, that in virtue

¹ John iii. 3; 2 Cor. v. 17; Gal. vi. 15.

² Catechism of the Council of Trent (Balt. ed.), 123.

of their baptism children are members of the visible church, the difficulties increase in number, and grow yet more insurmountable in character.

Mr. Grout and Dr. Nadal, having stated their views, and given their "strong reasons" for believing baptized children to be members of the church, come at length to this vital question of a regenerated church-membership, and proceed to dispose of it in such a way as to harmonize with their theory. Though it is not our object, in this Article, to criticise these writers, but only to use their position and arguments for the purpose of showing that infant baptism and the doctrine of a regenerated church-membership are utterly irreconcilable, yet we must at this point refer to the manner in which they treat their topic when they come to discuss it in relation to regeneration. Mr. Grout will not surrender one iota of his faith in the indispensableness of regeneration to the full privileges of church-membership. He claims that baptized children are members, ("bona fide, most real, of blessed import"); but he insists that they shall be denied certain privileges, which, if they are members, *bona fide*, most real," and not "imaginary, absurd, or worthless,") they ought to be allowed to enjoy. He denies them the privilege of coming to the Lord's table until "they give evidence of a suitable preparation." He concedes that in the past there were "men so lost to the proprieties of the Christian religion, and to the common sense of the gospel of Christ, as to bring even infants to the Lord's supper." This, however, he thinks is "hardly likely to obtain in the Protestant church of the present day." But if baptized children are members of the visible church, why not allow them to partake of the loaf and the cup? Why allow them the benefits of one ordinance, and not of the other? He denies them "the same voice which members of adult years in full communion may have in managing the spiritual affairs of the church. Affairs of this kind are too precious and sacred to be intrusted to juvenile years, or to the direction of those who are not ready for an avowal of personal devotion to all

the higher ends for which the church is established." But if by baptism they are constituted *bona fide* members of the visible church, why, when they emerge from infancy to childhood and youth, must they be debarred from all participation in the spiritual affairs of the church? Not only must they be denied participation in the spiritual affairs of the church; "but until they take upon themselves the obligations of the covenant which their parents made with God for them, by a regular profession of personal faith in Christ, is the privilege of bringing their own offspring to the baptismal font" denied. If they were by their own baptism made *bona fide* members in infancy, why deny this same blessing to their offspring; and if they then became members in any intelligible and appreciable sense, why demand of them a "regular profession of personal faith in Christ?" Was the first irregular? With the question, Are they amenable to church discipline? Mr. Grout, evidently, has serious trouble; and it has, he states, occasioned "some difficulty and diversity of opinion." If they are members, they are subject to church discipline. If they do wrong, they should be rebuked by the church; if they repent, forgiven; and if incorrigible, expelled. Mr. Grout is evidently much confused with this branch of his subject, and deals largely in the opinions of others. The only important, definite statement of his own is, that "suspension or excommunication" is not possible, because "they have not yet come to such an advanced standing, by voluntarily assuming the obligations of the covenant made with God by their parents for them, as to make this method of procedure possible; even if it were proper." The only discipline he conceives possible, or proper, is "careful and prayerful instruction, advice, remonstrance, a kind parental teaching and training 'in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.'" But is that worthy of being called church-membership in which *all that is implied in the relation is denied*? As it seems to us, Mr. Grout in what he denies the baptized child nullifies all he claims it entitled to in virtue of its baptism. But the cause of his evident

self-contradiction and embarrassment is obvious. The phrases "give evidence of suitable preparation," "an avowal of personal devotion," "a regular profession of personal faith in Christ," reveal the secret. They point unmistakably to the doctrine of regeneration. They imply, beyond a doubt, that Mr. Grout believes most ardently in a regenerated church-membership; and as he denies baptismal regeneration, he is forced to deny to those children whom he thinks to be members of the church every privilege to which church-membership entitles us.

Dr. Nadal disposes of this subject of a regenerated church-membership after an entirely different manner. With the merciless blade of his "Logic of Infant Church-membership," at a single blow, he cuts the Gordian knot. He denies baptismal regeneration," on one hand, and, on the other, asserts "that regeneration is not a condition of admission into the church of Christ." He holds, therefore, the Ritualist and the Baptist to be guilty of the same error, and hence, by implication, also, those Paedobaptists—like Mr. Grout, for instance—who deny the baptized child those privileges, the peculiar heritage of the spiritually minded. "The back-lying error is the same in both, namely, the assumption that only regenerate persons can be admitted into the church. The Baptist holds the same error. He too believes that only regenerate persons can unite with the church; and, as he knows of no method of regenerating infants, he makes short work of it, and excludes them from church-membership. The Baptist has no right to exclude the infant on the ground that it cannot in its unconscious state be regenerated; and the high churchman and those who hold congenital regeneration have no need to resort to ecclesiastical magic, or to doubtful theories, in order to have the infant regenerated. Both the infant and its parents may come in without regeneration. One chief reason for all the difficulty on this question (the relation of baptized children to the church) is the fact that most of the churches, coming to hold that adults must be regenerated before entering the church, and wishing

to have consistency, required the same thing of infants. All must come in on the same terms, or substantially in the same moral and spiritual state. The prime error was in making regeneration essential to adult church-membership. That once required, then came the puzzle of the regeneration of children." Dr. Nadal has, in this passage, fairly stated the difficulty, and explained its cause. If regeneration be made essential to adult baptism and church-membership, the relation of baptized children to the church, and the effect and privileges of their baptism, become indeed most puzzling questions. He does not attempt to reconcile infant baptism with a regenerated church-membership; and by denying that regeneration is a term of admission into the visible church—holding this view to be erroneous—he endeavors to avoid Scylla on the one side, and Charybdis on the other, by denying the ritualistic doctrine of baptismal regeneration, in the one case, and the Baptist doctrine of a regenerated church-membership in the other. Thus his logic cleaves the way for a clear passage. He demolishes, at one blow, that before which Mr. Grout bows in reverence. Mr. Grout requires "a regular profession of personal faith in Christ" as a condition of admission into full participation of the privileges of church-membership. Dr. Nadal, on the contrary, insists that all that can be required of an adult, in order to his admission into the church, is, that he be an honest *seeker*—in the language of the (M. E.) church, that 'he desire to flee the wrath to come, and be saved from his sins.' The ground on which Dr. Nadal argues that both infants and adults who are *seeking* are to be admitted into the church "is their common *receptivity*. Both are in the best possible condition to receive the lessons and the life of Christianity. The 'seeker' of religion, laboring to renounce sin, and waiting for the inward, liberating word, has reduced sinful resistance to the minimum. He is eagerly, consciously, prayerfully receptive. And the infant, though all unconscious, is thoroughly and only receptive. The two differ in the *mode* of their receptivity, but not as to its substance. Both are as thoroughly receptive

as is possible in their respective states." How very differently these two writers dispose of the subject of a regenerated church-membership, when, in the progress of their discussion, they reach it. We leave our Paedobaptist brethren to sit in judgment on their disposition of it — to pronounce in favor of one or the other, or against both. Their conclusion respecting it is no business of ours. It is a domestic affair, threatening, as we think, the harmony of the family; but we do not feel ourselves called upon to intermeddle with it, further than we have done in the progress of this Article, to show their position and arguments as illustrative of the difficulties that present themselves in attempting to harmonize infant baptism with the doctrine of a regenerated church-membership.

Others have thought deeply on this question, and have grappled with the difficulties presented in attempting to reconcile it. We will here refer to but one — the late Rev. William Cunningham, D.D., Principal and Professor of Church History, New College, Edinburgh — a man whose high standing in his own church, profound learning in historical theology, deep piety, reverential spirit toward the word of God, and exemplary candor in all his statements and arguments, give importance to all his utterances, and entitle them to the respectful attention of all thoughtful men. We refer to him to show that he felt, and conceded, the difficulty, though he continued to defend the baptism of children. Of adult baptism, he says: "In the case of the baptism of adults, we can speak clearly and decidedly as to the general objects and ordinary effects of the administration of the ordinance."¹ Further on, he adds: "It is admitted, also, that the ordinary tenor of scriptural language concerning baptism has respect, primarily and principally, to persons in this condition, — that is, to adults, — and that thus a profession of faith is *ordinarily* associated with the scripture notices of the administration of baptism, so that, as has been explained, we are to regard baptism upon a full profession of faith as exhibiting the proper type and full development of the ordi-

¹ Historical Theology, p. 158.

nance.”¹ He then finds the true signification of baptism, not in its administration to the unconscious infant, but to the conscious, regenerated adult, who submits to it intelligently, and to whom it symbolizes a new “life of faith in the Son of God.” Hence it is no cause of surprise, having made these concessions, that he says, speaking of the objections of Baptists to infant baptism: “It cannot be reasonably denied that they have much that is plausible to allege in opposition to infant baptism.”² The difficulty Dr. Cunningham encounters, concedes, and attempts to remove, is that of reconciling what the New Testament teaches respecting the baptism of professed believers, and the administration of the ordinance to unconscious infants. The subjects are very different. The former submits to it intelligently and freely; the other is brought to it, and is unconscious of its significance. It is obvious, therefore, that we cannot associate *precisely the same* idea with the ordinance when we see it administered to infants as we can when we see adults submitting to it. It is at this point he grapples, and labors to remove the difficulty, and explain the difference in the significance of the ordinance as administered to these two essentially distinct classes of subjects. Of the method by which he proposes to reconcile the conceded contradiction we are not called on here to speak; but the remarks he makes concerning infant baptism are pertinent to our topic, and therefore we quote them. He says: “As there are, undoubtedly, some difficulties in the way of applying fully to the baptism of infants the definition usually given of the sacrament, and the general accounts commonly set forth of the objects and ends of baptism, we are very apt to be led to form, insensibly, very erroneous and defective views of the nature and effects of baptism as an ordinance instituted by Christ in his church, or, rather, to rest contented with scarcely any distinct or definite conception on the subject.”³ The consequences of this state of things he thus describes: “The discomfort of this state of uncertainty, the difficulty of laying down any

¹ Historical Theology, p. 151.

² Ibid. p. 146.

³ Ibid. p. 145.

definite doctrine upon this subject, has often led men to adopt one or other of two opposite extremes, which have the appearance of greater simplicity and definiteness, that is, either to deny the lawfulness of infant baptism altogether, or to embrace the doctrine of baptismal justification and regeneration, and to represent all baptized infants, or at least all the baptized infants of believing parents, as receiving these great blessings in and with the external ordinances, or as certainly and infallibly to receive them at some future time."¹ That is, some have been led by the inconsistent position of those who baptize infants, but deny them the privileges of church-membership — for Dr. Cunningham and his Presbyterian brethren, as well as others, deny this — to find a consistent support for infant baptism by accepting the theory of baptismal regeneration, i.e. becoming Ritualists; or else have accepted the only other consistent alternative — becoming Baptists, and thus holding the doctrine of a converted church-membership. And these are the only two possible solutions of the question. As long, therefore, as the "haziness of vision" of which Mr. Grout complains continues, and as long as men "form insensibly very erroneous and defective views of the objects and ends of baptism" as administered to infants, we must expect this. If they cling to infant baptism, and yet hold to the doctrine of regeneration, they must become Ritualists; if they give up infant baptism, they must, in theory at least, become Baptists. Dr. Anderson, of Glasgow, has recently said of this tendency toward baptismal regeneration in Scotland: "There is yet detectable among our Presbyterian population an impure leaven of the superstition of water-baptism sanctification,"² which, just before, he humorously defines as "spiritual *hydro-dynamics*, or, still more specifically, spiritual *hydraulics* — a first principle of the popish science of salvation." Thus, it matters not what efficacy is attributed to the baptism of infants, what privileges are regarded as insured to them by means of it,

¹ Historical Theology, p. 151.

² Dr. Anderson on Regeneration, p. 25. Compare p. 116.

or what relation they are regarded as holding to the visible church in virtue of it, the question of a regenerated church-membership comes up, and must be disposed of; and the various efforts made to harmonize the two give evidence of their essential antagonism, and hence demonstrate the solution of the problem impossible. Dr. Nadal's is the only possible one; but that is not a solution, for it denies that regeneration is a condition of membership in the visible church.

Now, the fact is, that the reconciliation of the doctrine of a regenerated church-membership and the retention of infant baptism — to say nothing of the church-membership of baptized children — is impossible, because the two things are essentially antagonistic; and therefore these and all other efforts to harmonize them, and that "haziness of vision" and "indistinctness of conception" of which we have just noticed complaint, are simply the indisputable evidences of their diametrical opposition to each other. If what the New Testament plainly teaches concerning the significance of baptism is always to be learned from those instances of, and references to, adult baptism it contains — from which source Dr. Cunningham, as we have just seen, says it must, — then infant baptism must be explained in some way harmonizing with that fact. But we can conceive of no possible way of so explaining it, except the theory of baptismal regeneration. Mr. Grout writes his Article to prove that infants are members of the church, but denies the theory of the Ritualist, that they are made new creatures in Christ Jesus. Hence, when he comes to deal with the subject of a regenerated church-membership, he denies to them every privilege to which as members one would suppose them entitled. All he claims for them in the former portion of his essay, he denies to them in the latter. Evidently, the cause of his self-contradiction is that in heart he is loyal to the evangelical doctrine of personal moral renovation by the Holy Spirit as an indispensable prerequisite to participation in spiritual privileges, but yet clings to infant baptism. He cannot, and

he does not, make the two things harmonize. The same is true of Dr. Nadal. He, too, repudiates everything savoring of baptismal regeneration. Unlike Mr. Grout, he makes no attempt to reconcile infant baptism and a regenerate membership. He meets the case, and undoubtedly presents a theory logically consistent, by denying that regeneration is a condition of admission into the church of Christ, and thus relieves the question of all difficulty; for he holds that all the difficulty, haziness, and obscurity that has enveloped this question, or may now shroud it, arises from the fundamental misconception "that adults must be regenerated before entering the visible church." If this conflict of conclusions, among those who concede the existence of difficulties and attempt to remove them and present a consistent theory, be not strong presumptive evidence of essential antagonism between the two things themselves, we confess our judgment at fault. And if the advocates of infant baptism find themselves thus embarrassed respecting its meaning and design, and are forced to dispose, by methods so essentially different, of personal regeneration as necessary to participation in some of the privileges of church association, as we have just seen Mr. Grout and Dr. Nadal do, we need not be surprised that so eminent a man as Dr. Cunningham should have made such strong concessions to the plausibility — if we may not use a stronger term — of the position of Baptists; for they, to say the least, have the appearance of consistency in their view of the proper subjects of baptism, and certainly are troubled by no such doubts and self-conscious contradictions between their theory and practice as their Paedobaptist brethren. We say "self-conscious contradictions"; for, as these two Articles and the remarks of Dr. Cunningham and of others we might quote show, they feel that between the practice of infant baptism and the advocacy of a regenerated church-membership there is a strong appearance, at least, of inconsistency, which is ever calling for explanation. The truth, as it seems to a Baptist in contemplating this dilemma in which his Paedobaptist brethren concede themselves to be, is

this: They hold and preach and demand regeneration as indispensable to participation in spiritual privileges; and hence, whenever they defend the doctrine of regeneration, or attempt the explanation of infant baptism, as Dr. Cunningham does, so as to make it harmonize with that conception of baptism we form on seeing it administered to adults, or read in the New Testament of its being administered to that class, they take Baptist ground, and make infant baptism a practical nullity; their statement of its utility and design being shrouded in a mystical indefiniteness. And when they attempt the defence of infant baptism, they (though protesting against it, and endeavoring to steer clear of it) are constantly verging toward the theory of baptismal regeneration — excepting, of course, any who may accept of Dr. Nadal's conclusion, that the whole difficulty arises from making regeneration essential to adult participation in the ordinances and in the spiritual privileges of church-membership. Thus are they forced to oscillate perpetually between the Baptist and the ritualistic theories, because they hold both substantially. Infant baptism can have no consistent defence not ritualistic, if it is to be harmonized with the doctrine of a regenerated church-membership; and no development or defence of what they hold respecting a converted church-membership is possible that does not favor, and by the concessions it necessitates prove, the correctness of the position of Baptists. And, as these two principles exist among evangelical Paedobaptists, so, we believe, the more earnestly men among them, — like Mr. Grout, for instance, — pressed by the unsatisfactory and indefinite status of baptized children, attempt the solution of the question, that they may set their "feet on solid ground," the clearer will the baptistic and the ritualistic principles be brought out; and then they who have been "born of the Spirit" will (theoretically, at least) subscribe to the Baptist position, and they who have the "form of godliness without the power" will revert to the ritualistic. The two principles are oppo-

sites. "The son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman."

As we have intimated, it is our *evangelical* Paedobaptist brethren who encounter those difficulties in attempting to frame a consistent defence of infant baptism. The Roman Catholic and the Ritualist have no difficulty; for they find in the regenerating power of the ordinance of baptism a solution which, granting their theory of the visible church, is satisfactory. The evangelical Paedobaptist, however, has no such theory to come to his assistance, and his evangelical principles lay their interdict upon his adopting it. His trouble comes up afresh every time he defends his doctrine of a regenerated church-membership. And the more zealous he becomes in the advocacy of this, the greater become the contradictions between his belief in it and his practice of baptizing unconscious infants. To us, therefore, the following points seem clear respecting any method by which the evangelical Paedobaptist may attempt the reconciliation of these two things.

(a) *He must reject the theory of baptismal regeneration.* This, it is evident, he cannot accept. It belongs to the Ritualist. The evangelical Paedobaptist is an enemy of ritualism. We have an instance of this, at the present time, in the controversy between the high-church and the low-church Episcopalians. That controversy turns on this very point: "Does the administration of baptism effect the regeneration of the infant, or not?" We know there are other points of dissent in the interpretation of the Prayer-book; but this is the pivotal one. The low churchman is evangelical. Though baptizing infants, he nevertheless denies that they are thereby and therein "born again," and consequently insists that men must be renewed by the Holy Spirit, or they cannot enter into "the kingdom of heaven." Like the low churchman, all evangelical Paedobaptists must deny baptismal regeneration. In defining the *status* of baptized children, therefore, it is evident the evangelical Paedobaptist must leave this theory altogether out of the question.

(b) *He must reject the theory that infants are to be baptized because under the atonement they are born regenerate.* Dr. Nadal refers to this theory, and repudiates it, as being "certainly in the very teeth of the teachings of the Orthodox church in all ages." We have heard this view advocated in conversation, and have noticed language employed in defending and explaining infant baptism which, while not asserting this theory, and perhaps not intended to imply it even, yet to us seemed to have been called forth by some such conception of the reason for regarding unconscious infants as subjects of the ordinance. Dr. Nadal, however, refers to two productions in which it is formally propounded. He says: "This is the view taken in a little book written by the Rev. Mr. Mercein, and printed after his death, and recently more elaborately defended by the Rev. Dr. Hibbard." We were not aware that any one had proposed formally, or defended elaborately, this theory of infant baptism; but, according to Dr. Nadal, it has been so defended. The fact supplies additional evidence of the perplexing dilemma in which evangelical Paedobaptists are placed in attempting to reconcile infant baptism and the doctrine of a regenerated church-membership. But this theory must be rejected. It is advanced, "certainly, in the very teeth" of the sentiments held by evangelical Christians — be they Arminians or Calvinists. We have noticed it only because it has its advocates. We say it cannot be, and will not be, accepted by any considerable number; and we confess our surprise on learning that Rev. Dr. Hibbard is one of its champions.

(c) *He must reject the theory of Dr. Nadal that "regeneration is not a condition of admission into the church of Christ."* To the mind of the believer in a regenerated church-membership, this theory refutes itself; for it more than puts in jeopardy, it annuls, the fundamental law of the visible church, that we "must be born again." And, whatever may at first be required of a man in order that he may be admitted as a "seeker," or be judged to have "reduced his sinful resistance to the minimum," so as to possess the

proper "receptivity," it must, if adopted, eventually open wide the door, and admit "the uncircumcised and the unclean"; because there is no man who, if he be allowed and invited to enter the fold of the visible church, will not confess himself a seeker, though he may not part with his sins. Hence, whatever care may be taken at first, every barrier between the church and the world will be broken down, and we shall have the church filled with what Dr. Alexander has termed "baptized infidelity";¹ we shall see its members drawing near with their lips, while their hearts are far from God—saying, indeed, "Lord, Lord," but not doing his will. In defending his theory, however, Dr. Nadal says: "I am not conscious of having been drawn to these conclusions by my relations to the Methodist Episcopal church; and yet, the conclusions being reached, I see that they are only a theory upon which Methodism has practised from the beginning. . . . The theory we have propounded is, therefore, the theory of Methodism." Doubtless Dr. Nadal is correct in this assertion; for, as he adds, "Methodism for the last hundred years has been announcing to the world: 'The only condition required of those who join us is a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins.'" He charges the "General Conference before the last" with having "attempted an innovation upon this original practice of the church," because "it puts the question to the candidate for admission into full membership, 'Have you *saving faith* in our Lord Jesus Christ?' as though it meant to make an affirmative answer a condition of reception." We are glad the General Conference did this, and we hope it will in the future go still further. The Methodist Episcopal church is a powerful and aggressive body; and when a professor in one of her theological schools takes the position Dr. Nadal does, and when he finds a place for his Article—though accompanied by editorial protest—in their *Quarterly Review*, we feel some alarm lest they should become less zealous for the regeneration of men and the

¹ *Sacramental Discourses*, p. 150.

cultivation of personal spirituality of character, and more formal, churchly, and ritualistic. But we are sincerely glad that the evangelical sentiment of the body in favor of a regenerated church-membership expressed itself in that action of the General Conference which Dr. Nadal terms an "innovation" on long established usage and law among them. It is proof of what we have asserted, that Dr. Nadal's theory must be rejected in explaining and defending infant baptism. And if the Methodist Episcopal church, whose former theory and practice, as Dr. Nadal claims, accorded with his view, be, according to his concession, drifting away from it, much more is it improbable, nay, impossible, that other evangelical Paedobaptist bodies should ever accept of his theory. They must repudiate it. They do so.

(d) *Whatever relation he may regard infants as holding to the visible church because baptized, he must protest against their reception into membership until they become subjects of saving grace.* Even Mr. Grout substantially concedes this. He says: "We may speak of the church-membership of baptized children as incipient, inchoate, prospective, or potential, if we will — having reference to *that perfected connection or completeness of standing and fulness of communion which come from a public profession of their own personal faith in Christ*, and a consequent voluntary assumption of all the obligations of the covenant under which they were placed by their parents." The sentence we have italicised bears strongly on the point now before us. Mr. Grout, though writing his Article to prove them members of the church, thus enters his protest against their being admitted to the spiritual privileges of membership until "subjects of saving grace." They must be "advanced from this real, though primary and incipient, membership to that which is full and complete." So President Edwards says, that, though baptized infants are "in some sort members of the Christian church, yet none suppose them to be members in such standing as to be the proper immediate subjects of all ecclesiastical ordinances and privileges. But some further quali-

fications are requisite in order to this, to be obtained either in a course of nature, or by education, or by divine grace.”¹ Hence he held it as “both evident by the word of God, and also granted on all hands, that none ought to be admitted as members of the visible church but visible saints and professing saints, or visible and professing Christians.”² Again, he says: “When those persons who were baptized in infancy do properly own their baptismal covenant, the meaning of it is, that they now, being become *capable of acting for themselves*, do professedly and explicitly make their parents’ act in giving them up to God their own, by *giving themselves up to God*. . . . A child of Christian parents never does that for himself which his parents did for him in infancy, *until he gives himself wholly to God*. But surely he does not do it who not only keeps back a part, but the chief part—his heart and soul.”³ In fact, it was in defence of what we have asserted that President Edwards wrote his celebrated treatise, from which we have quoted, on “Qualifications for Full Communion.” And it was the prevalence of a practice similar to the theory of infant church-membership advocated by Dr. Nadal, in some of its aspects at least, that called it forth. He, indeed, admitted the validity of infant baptism, and regarded infants as in “some sort members of the Christian church”; but in this treatise he takes Baptist ground; and since he wrote it a slow, but gradual and now greatly prevailing, change of opinion and practice has taken place; so that few are found among evangelical Paedobaptists to defend the views and practice against which Edwards so nobly and triumphantly contended. Here, then, we say, the evangelical Paedobaptist must remain. He must defend this position. If he yields here, he proves traitor to the essential thing in his creed and practice as an evangelical Christian. He may retain the practice of baptizing infants, and regard them, with Edwards, as in “some sort members,” or, with Grout, as holding an “incipient membership,” but consent

¹ Terms of Communion, Works (Leavitt and Allen’s ed., N.Y.), Vol. i. p. 89.

² Ibid. p. 94.

³ Ibid. p. 111.

to their admission to the full privileges of membership until made new creatures in Christ, — never!

(e) *He cannot affirm that those children dying without the supposed benefits of baptism are therefore lost.* This none will defend. All shudder at the thought of such a thing. Infant damnation now has certainly no advocates among evangelical Protestants; and we doubt whether it ever had, who held it as anything more than a speculation. No evangelical Paedobaptist minister, as he looks on the face of an infant corpse that in life did not receive baptism, raises a doubt respecting the certainty of its salvation. He doubts not but that it is in the arms of him who said: "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." He cannot say that he believes the child baptized is more certain of entering heaven than the child unbaptized; for it was of all children Jesus said, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." The theory of baptismal regeneration makes infant damnation a consequent; or, if its advocates say this is an unwarrantable inference (which we do not concede), yet, granting it, they do say that the unbaptized child is left to "the uncovenanted mercies of God." But the evangelical Paedobaptist will admit no such thing. We think we state his feeling in this matter correctly, when we affirm his belief in the salvation of all dying in infancy. And yet, while in fairness we make this statement, the question still recurs, when we remember the anxiety of many parents to have their children baptized, the solicitude of many ministers lest their parishioners should neglect it, and the regrets expressed in case the infant dies before receiving the ordinances, — Is there not an underlying persuasion (it may be nothing more than the result of education) that somehow the salvation of the infant is rendered more certain, or there is a greater probability of its becoming a true child of God when it reaches the years of self-conscious personal responsibility? The latter reason is, doubtless, the principal one. But its futility is shown by asking two questions: Do all, do a majority, of these baptized children

become Christians? And do not Baptists dedicate their children just as truly to God as Paedobaptists, do they not train them just as carefully "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," and are not as large a proportion of them truly converted to Christ, and at as early an age? The answer to the first question must be, No; to the second, Yes. The doctrine of the evangelical Paedobaptist, as well as of the Baptist, is, that his child must be converted before he can be admitted to church privileges. Yet, like the Baptist, he believes that if his child had died unbaptized it would have been saved. What was the utility of the child's baptism? What did it contribute toward his salvation, had he died in infancy? What did it contribute toward his regeneration and consequent participation in spiritual privileges when he grew up? If it does not insure salvation in case children die in infancy, and if it does not render their regeneration more probable if they live and reach the years of understanding, what conceivable benefits does it impart? Into what relation to "the general assembly and church of the first-born, whose names are written in heaven," does it introduce the child? or how does it determine his status in relation to the visible church on earth? We do not know. The advocates of infant baptism do not tell us. They do not agree, as we have seen in the course of this essay; and, if for no other reason, then, for the very fact of this conceded perplexity of Paedobaptists in determining the status of baptized children — whether they are in the church, or out of it, — Baptists are justified in their opposition to it; for, as Edwards has said of it, "it is a matter liable to great disputes and many controversies."¹ We wait, therefore, until they reach some conclusion satisfactory to themselves, and, in the meantime, shall continue to believe, with Edwards, that "the revelation of God's word is much plainer and more express concerning adults that act for themselves in religious matters, than concerning infants. The scriptures were written for the sake of adult persons, or those that are capable of knowing

¹ Works, Vol. i. p. 90.

what is written. It is to such the apostles speak in their epistles, and to such only does God speak throughout his word. And the scriptures especially speak for the sake of those and about those to whom they speak.”¹

Here, then, we have the “conclusion of the whole matter” at issue between Baptists and evangelical Paedobaptists. It is not the mode of baptism. That is a point of difference; but it is subsidiary and secondary. *The difference lies in the practical realization of the New Testament idea of a visible church composed of regenerate persons.* This conception evangelical Paedobaptists have, and to a very great extent, they act practically upon it; but infant baptism is perpetually coming in conflict with it. The irrepressible child, who has been baptized in infancy, is demanding his place, and the great difficulty is to define the place he is to occupy. He is entitled to certain privileges because baptized; but he knows not what they are. Loyalty to the doctrine of regeneration denies him all privileges in the visible church, and granting him any endangers that doctrine. Paedobaptists are confessedly embarrassed, and must “go forward or backward.” They must find “solid ground” for it, or abandon it altogether. So says Mr. Grout; so say many others substantially. Baptists have no such difficulty, and the reason is because their conception of the visible church is essentially different. It is not composed of believers and their children, but of believers only. In the view of Baptists, the dispensation of the grace of God, inaugurated by the coming of Christ himself, and to continue in force until the last elect soul shall be regenerated and saved, is a “new thing in the earth.” They see in it no perpetuation of the Jewish theocracy, or of the Judaic ritualistic principles, or of the Abrahamic covenant. To them the present is an elective dispensation, not of parents and their children, or of entire communities, or of nations, but of individuals, “even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” Dr. Pressense, though not a Baptist, has so accurately de-

¹ Works, Vol. i. 90.

fined the Baptist conception of the church, that we here quote from him: "Placed beyond the external conditions of Judaism, the church is primarily a moral and a spiritual fact. Born of a miracle, by a miracle it lives. Founded upon the great miracle of redemption, it grows and is perpetuated by the ever-repeated miracle of conversion. It is entered not by the natural way of birth, but by the supernatural way of the new birth. The church, resting on no national or theocratic basis, must gather its adherents simply by individual conviction."¹ This is precisely where Baptists stand, and have ever stood. This is the New Testament ideal, and they have struggled to realize it. It is the practical realization of a regenerated church-membership, and infant baptism can never be made to harmonize with it.

ARTICLE VI.

THE INFLUENCE OF THE PULPIT.

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THE figures that chiefly occupy the historic field, that move across it with pomp and power, drawing after them great masses of their fellow-men, are kings and warriors. There is one character, however, more quiet and stealthy in movement, more sombre in aspect, in the rear of armies and thrones, deriving its force from the constant fears and hopes of men, that has possessed a stronger influence over the character and destiny of society than these—the stately, long-robed, solemn priest. He has rarely done the bidding of kings; kings have often done his bidding. He has seldom feared kings; kings have frequently feared him. By rarest accident has the spiritual power slipped from his hand; more than once has he found it easy to grasp a temporal sceptre. Dominion has been divided and subdivided, ad-

¹ Apostolic Era, p. 24.

justed and readjusted by kings; but great revolutions of races and religions, the epochs of ideas, have been characterized by his presence.

The priest, who has been casting a shadow, always portentous, often dark and distressful, on human affairs, was displaced in the Christian economy by the preacher. His ghostly functions, his solemn ceremonial, his representative capacity gave way to instruction, guidance, stimulus—a simple participation with others in God's truth. This was the dethronement of the priest, and the birth of power for the preacher. A new power, a new eloquence thenceforward found place in society and in the schools; and sacred oratory stood the peer, and more than the peer, of deliberative oratory in theme and influence. Both arose with liberty, and an influential pulpit seals the largest liberty—that of the mind and heart. But kings do not easily forget their crowns, nor the people their servitude. The horn that was broken began to grow again, and the priestly function came forward in Catholicism with more tyrannical claims and outstretched power than ever before. It bent its new, spiritual force to a secular end, and set up a more pronounced and permanent regency of heaven on earth. In Protestantism there came a second establishment of religious liberty, and a planting of the pulpit once more as the point of contact and diffusion in the spiritual world, the seminal centre of religious truth and influence. So stands the question to-day in the free and progressive portions of the earth. Christianity has its advocates, those who imbue themselves with its truths and its spirit, who administer its simple ritual and strengthen its organizations; who stand ready to do, as they are able, the religious work of the world, whether of evangelization or instruction, of rebuke, stimulus, or consolation. Their commission is the simple one of preaching the gospel. The influence of this class of laborers on the world's well-being is our subject.

The pulpit has been disparaged in various quarters; this partly, perhaps, in revenge for the wrongs of the past. Thus

many, slipping the yoke of kings, have not been content even to take that of republics. In each case alike, the past could not part with what it had, nor can the present live otherwise than in and by its own institutions. Every form of control becomes a tyranny when it lingers too long; yet, in most cases, it must abide till the new bud is strong enough to burst its cerements and grow beyond them. When it was proposed, as a clause in the Constitution of New York, that no minister should be allowed to hold office within her borders, proof was given of an irrational fear and dread, such as make one cautious of eating who has been poisoned in his food. Aside from this resentfulness, which belongs to minds but half emancipated from the past, and still unable to see the service rendered by religion along the road actually travelled by the race, there are other grounds on which the influence of the pulpit is depreciated.

All who under-estimate elementary work and elementary ideas, who fail to appreciate the vast expenditures of force in keeping the world where it is, and thus giving it, as the times favor, the opportunity of further progress, are sure to decry the pulpit. They fail to see that ethical ideas are the foundation of the common weal, and, still more, to see that these do not, cannot hold their own without endless reiteration. It is easy to aggregate the labors of the Sabbath — to say: ‘Here are so many thousands of educated workmen, and so many millions of sermons in these United States as their combined annual product. What, we pray, is the result?’ No wealth, no new industry or invention being forthcoming in answer, the inquirer holds the field himself, and responds: ‘Air; a receiving and giving of common-places, a gathering into words of what their auditors believe, and restoring it to them once more as if it were new truth.’ We bid those capable of understanding the answer look at teachers, fourfold more numerous, and able, as the joint fruit of their labors, to show only communities that can read, write, wield in an awkward way the elements of knowledge. So much does it cost to work anew under each generation the merest founda-

tions of intellectual life. If one minister out of a thousand give fresh, onward impulse, his nine hundred and ninety-nine brethren are abundantly and satisfactorily employed in keeping the world up to that common honesty which prepares it to hear and receive these living words.

Even Judaism was a gain to Christianity, and Catholicism to Protestantism. The most zealous and headstrong reformer of our own time would have found nothing to put his foot against, no bracing-point, as he struggled with his adversaries, had it not been for the Christian church, which he may have denounced unceasingly. All the firm ethical ideas, incorporate and immovable, which belong to society are those which religion has inculcated from generation to generation, till they have entered, as it were, the blood, and can be made starting-points for new effort. The breeder will not accept as firm any new phase of life, till it has passed unaltered through repeated descents, and can be relied on as an organic tendency. The organic force of morality in a race is due to its daily religious inculcations; and without this force reform is a vagrant ripple on the surface of society. Every reformer, hostile or friendly, who has wrought a good work, bears willing or unwilling testimony to the soundness of those foundations on which he has built.

Great forces have seized the world, and, though still vacillating in its orbit under manifold attractions, it shows a plain, onward movement. Those powers in which this motion is grounded are the commonplace moralities of life, its hourly attractions of duty, which the ministry methodically perceive and implant. If now and then there comes an apostle to scatter more seed than is the wont of his order, it takes root only because of the many open furrows which patient, plodding labor has turned up to the heavens. Those who can see nothing but the last result, and this only in part, will put a low estimate on that weary effort which keeps the spiritual world movable, flexible, ready for any new force that may reach it.

Another sentiment, with something of the same superficial cast, which leads to a depreciation of the pulpit, is the aesthetical one. Sermons are pronounced dull, proverbially dull; while the exercises of the Sabbath are said to have a sing-song character, fitted only to put the stupid to sleep. Those who are not stupid, who attach no sanctity to sleep because it takes place in the house of God, feel at liberty, therefore, to seek enjoyment elsewhere. This sentiment generally belongs to those who assume very little responsibility as regards religion, whose ethical convictions are all on the surface, and who are thus inclined to hold the minister, like the latest lecturer, to the task of amusing and interesting them. A certain amount of the froth of being is always beat up by the motion of society, and to prevent the increase of this is a portion of the office of that most serious and stern agency, the ministry, which, with no mock solemnities, addresses itself to thoughtful and sober living. Without scorning amusements, it does not conceive its duties to fall in that department; and, though its words may be dull as compared with the achievements of a parti-colored clown, it does not therefore distrust their real value. Though to be needlessly dull is a sin, and a great sin, in the pulpit, what is open to the accusation can only be decided by a consideration of the state of mind in the listener which the theme and place should guarantee. Profound belief and earnest enforcement belong to the pulpit, and if these are dull, then it is the minds and hearts that think them so that are to be assailed. If this indolent, indifferent sentiment were yielded to, the stream of life would at once break into shallow, bubbling, foaming ripples.

When Thoreau says that he would as soon be the post with seared foot, fitted to stand a quarter-century, as to be the farmer who sets it; or the farmer, as he who instructs him week by week in divine things, we are only struck with the pagan pride of the man, his slight estimate of life, and with the blindness of the conceit which leads him to put these first feeble differences between man and man starting

on an endless race above the very being which belongs to them all. The early blossom is thought more highly of than the stem and root, which, though rough and unsightly, have in them an eternal entail of richer bloom than this first burst of life. An aesthetic sentiment, which, snuffing its own fragrance, forgets the soil whence its flowers spring, forgets the hard, patient cultivation which has produced them, is a mere wind-puff, which we may well enough suffer to pass by.

Another ground of disparagement of this established and time-worn agent, the pulpit, is found in a comparison of it with the press. So astonishing has been the outburst here, that all vagrant eyes and thoughts are captivated and swept away. Such busy pens, such a clatter of machinery, such eager agents of distribution — steam-cars scattering the coveted paper as rapidly through the wide country as racing news-boys through the narrow city — give to our mechanical minds a strange sense of power, fill the imagination with a variety of imagery, and lead us to accept this demonstrative, monetary, sensuous force as quite ultimate in the intellectual world. Yet is there here more motion than matter, circulation rather than life-blood. The press does not so much determine social character, as it intensifies it, and bears it rapidly on to its issues. The ease with which we shall spread, press, and iron our paper-pulp into paper will depend on the machinery at our disposal; but the quality of the paper will turn on the material used, and the sorting, rending, and cleansing processes to which it has been subjected. The teacher and the preacher make ready society for the press, and determine whether its activities shall circulate a high-toned morality, or the narrow precepts and low cunning of a life based on pleasures and utilities; whether society shall be in the end mere coarse wrapping for a dinner, or bear a delicate water-mark on a pure page that waits the inspiration of art, religion, or philosophy. There is a personal, elementary, and organic force in the instructions of the pulpit which must always put them earlier in

time, deeper in sympathy, more formative in character than those of the press. Men climb into manhood under the influences of the pulpit; they use their manhood by the aid of the press. As the nurture of the household is closer to the life of the child than that of the community, so the religious instruction of the pulpit, with its intimate social aspects, is nearer the thoughts of man than the paper, coming from remote and impersonal centres. The pulpit to the full retains the ground that has been given it; and we turn to the sources of its influence and to the methods of increase.

The pulpit keeps its hold upon men, because it represents in the world the supernatural element; because the Christian pulpit, resting on the Bible, gives the only constant and distinct utterances concerning the invisible world. Its connection with the spiritual world has always been the power of every priesthood, whether false or legitimate in its claims. The unseen forces in which man so necessarily, so profoundly, so constantly believes have found their contact with society in a priesthood, and have clothed that priesthood with abiding power. This impression religion has striven, hitherto, to enhance to the senses, has withdrawn its immediate servants from the ranks of men; has assigned them solemn places, solemn services, a peculiar form of life, distinct garments, and ever-present badges of office and character. She has sought to make, through her servants, an impression of estrangement and separation, — that these, her chosen ones, come forth from and return to an inner, invisible presence, and are acted upon by spiritual forces with unusual efficiency. Thus Hildebrand, striving to enhance the authority of the church, insisted on the celibacy of the clergy, that they might be distinguished from all others in this most fundamental relation of life, might be wholly committed to each other and to the common cause, and might approach the people from a higher and dis severed position — from a life controlled in its ordinary circumstances by new and strange and exacting conditions. This hold on the invisible has

been the sufficient, the constant, the constitutional basis of a religious order, and will remain so as long as the world is but partially permeated with the divine life, and demands aid and guidance for its weak faith. Men cannot escape this mediation and ministration in spiritual things otherwise than by growth in them. Unbelief can only be a spasm, a sudden and wilful denial, sure to be followed by a correspondingly ardent return even to the superstitions of belief, when the desolation and dreariness of the new position have come to be felt. The soul of man, his hidden fears and hopes, drive him back to bondage, when he has nothing to put in place of it but the blank liberty of unbelief — the liberty not to be nor to aspire — spiritual desire stripped away by the root in his hurried passage into nonentity.

The Christian pulpit has this same time-honored foundation, cleaned off once more for a new structure. It has become, in turn, its office to minister to the faith of men, gathering to its aid the sacred records of all previous time. No amount of previous error, no depth of credulity disheartens the soul of man. It still insists on travelling this invisible road up to God, and believes that all these years of darkness have wrought to make it for him a highway of holiness, a safe path to heaven. Often as men have miscarried, the soul is so far true to itself as to find more hope in these defeats than in victory elsewhere; more light evoked by these failures than by all other successes. Thus Protestantism, gathering from the repeated wrecks of the past the truths that have shattered and survived all systems, works on, under Divine guidance, for the salvation of men; striving to put them in permanent connection with the light and life of a supernatural world. History and the soul of man, and God over both, work with it, bringing in his kingdom.

In the force which underlies the pulpit there has been no change; it is still the same supernatural element. In the manner of dealing with that force there has been the greatest change. Says Taine: "The priest descends from the lofty

position in which the right of forgiving sins and of regulating faith had raised him over the heads of the laity; he returns to social society, marries like the rest, begins to be an equal, is merely a more learned and pious man than others—their elect and their adviser.” There is loss in this, doubtless, to the vulgar eye, not, we apprehend, to the penetrating and elevated mind. The priest wielded a power outside of himself; the preacher reaches after his sceptre with an intellectual hand, and wields it with a spiritual force. The truth works in and through him, as an illuminated and inspired source, not blindly by him, as a servant. The preacher, on the one hand, is taken more closely into the counsels and communion of heaven, and on the other, into the affection and trust of men. All distinctions fall away from him—fortunately fall away from him—in garments, life, duties; since it is now his office not to keep in check the rude manners and coarse thoughts of men, to overawe them, to sway and subdue them by fear, but to mingle gently into his own life, and their life as well, spiritual purposes and the sanctity of spiritual sentiments. The nearer, therefore, he comes in the form and substance of his own life to the common life of men, yet holding fast by the life of God, the more certainly does he unite the two, the natural and the supernatural—the spiritual and that which is to be cleansed, lifted, illuminated by it. As windows to the homes of men, so is the pure heart and enlightened mind to those who look through it up to God.

The minister owes his chief influence to his ability to combine in an actual experience, a beautiful life, the truth and the actions that truth was designed to control, the supersensual reward and sensible conduct, this life and the life that is to follow it; so that the one shall be seen to be rooted in the other, and to be growing easily, beautifully out of it. It is this casting about our daily, commonplace experiences a new, a subtler, more brilliant and blessed atmosphere of spiritual incentives and pleasures that makes the minister to us a messenger of God, and puts us by means

of him, far more than were men of old, into affinity and fellowship with the unseen. The priest was never so clothed upon as the minister; for it is the mantle of his own grace that Christ has dropped upon this latest of his servants. He does not so much come out of an invisible world, as stand in it, when he breaks to us the bread of life. With this inner hold of the heart on Christ, he has the same tranquil and sufficient control that belonged to the ministry of our Saviour.

The pulpit finds a further basis in the sympathetic and progressive character of the religious feelings. Fellowship, organization, propagation are a necessity to them, and the unity and force of the church is largely in its ministry. These are the instruments of its organization, a necessary condition of ever-renewed sympathies and constant evangelization. If religion cannot hold its own in the individual heart without a perpetual proclamation of the supernatural, either springing up in the depths of its own being or coming to it from a revered authority, no more can it control and fashion society without an enunciation of its truths and enforcement of its precepts. As the organic force of a pure society are the ethical sentiments, and the life of these is dependent on the religious truths which are made to underlie them, the church, in organizing itself, gives the most complete and firm nucleus to the community to which it belongs. Nations and societies have been dissolved hitherto, because, lacking justice, sympathy, ethical cohesion, they have not been able to meet any sudden and severe strain put on them. Any state without a coherence of religious ideas, and a ministry through whom that union is made practical and efficient, is necessarily weak, bereft of the most interior and strong of cohesive affinities. This is truer of modern than of ancient society, since conquest and race distinctions are feebler grounds of union now than then, having less weight with the advancing force of civil institutions. There is no nation more compactly, indissolubly one than the English nation, and none in which there is a

more general harmony of ethical convictions. The rebellion which came so near dissolving our government sprang from a fatal divergence on ethical, and thus civil, questions.

A nation pays but a moderate price for its greater unity and coherence in the support of a ministry that knit the people together in churches, and bind churches to implanting general conceptions of the rights of society and the wants of the world.

It is easy to speak against the bigotry that has thus been elicited, and the tyranny of religious opinion which has been incident to this union of churches. First, admit under favor the grand force which society and states have secured, as in the case of the Puritans, by this strength of the moral nature, and we will confess to the incident evils of a headstrong and overshadowing purpose. We shall console ourselves with the thought, however, that the blindness of men does not admit of progress divested of evil, that the choice always lies with us between a forced march and no march at all, between an excess on this side and a deficiency on that. If any choose, *now*, to attack bigotry, we are with them, and trust that they will soften, if not wholly remove, this evil feature of faith; but if they are ready to condemn the religious renovation of the last three centuries, because it has contained so much of this element, then we think they fatally misunderstand the conditions, the necessary liabilities of reform. We are patient under the bigotry of our own day even, because we know it to be in a measure inevitable in securing coherence and strength in religious belief and action among ignorant and wilful men, and that this unity is worth all, and more than all, it costs. There are grit and coarseness in our steel, fibre and flaw; but we cannot as yet get steel without them. When we can, we will; and our present path we believe to be the way to that improvement. Nothing would so dissolve men into the chaos of restless, discordant, half-held ideas as the loss of a religious ministry. The currents and tendencies of society must, for a long time to come, be established and maintained by instruction.

Freedom is only valuable as it ministers to belief, not unbelief; only as it gives opportunity to powerful and earnest minds to pursue their own conclusions, to embrace and maintain their own convictions. This liberty we have in good measure, and shall gain it as we have need of it. We may well urge all men to think, and give them the conditions of free thought; but as long as they insist on cohering by the instincts of a half-developed intellectual and religious life, we may rejoice in these partial attractions which compact them into safe and serviceable bodies. The semi-organization of society is at this moment in all its hopefulness, ethical, religious, involving daily ministrations of truth.

One more ground of the influence of the pulpit we mention, and that is, its identification with progress, with the moral, and thus with the substantial, social victories of the world. It is not necessary to the truth of this inference to show that reforms have always commenced with the ministry, or even been at once heartily sustained by it; it is enough that such reforms have finally been accepted, and found a place in Christian instruction. Christianity is to be distinguished from those who, at any time, and in any place, espouse it. Christianity is in affinity with all morality and all truth; not so the convictions of its disciples at any one period. These often very partially understand the scope and bearing of the truths with which they are dealing; need to be taught, and are taught, much by the criticism of enemies. They win back to themselves, with much conflict, with struggle and resistance on either side, some single principle, some eminent grace, which an adversary or partial friend has uncovered and proclaimed, making its oversight a matter of reproach to the church. They thus often come to know their own, and value their own, only after they have seen it in the hands of another. Scepticism, unbelief in a Christian country assume a Christian form, and base their denials on the partial precepts, unequal truths, and limited dogmas of the church. They thus force the current faith to be more true to itself, more true to Christianity; and thereby Chris-

tianity really gathers in and harvests all the ethical gains of every party. The growing belief, the new enforcement, the enlarged principle are often found with the clergy; but whether, in the first instance, attributable to them or not, the truth at length returns to them, declares its affinities, and is taken into this storehouse of treasured results.

We might wish a more ready and constant response of the avowed defenders of Christianity to its spirit; but these have not always the sharpest intellects, the warmest hearts; nor are they always subject, in the highest degree, to those external circumstances which cast a new light upon truth. It must needs happen, therefore, that there will be valuable developments of opinion and of practice outside of this established circle of a religious ministry, and that these sporadic offshoots of Christianity will meet with a hesitating and reluctant acceptance by those who should have originated them. It still remains true, however, that the final knitting together of truth is at this point, and that Christianity by its own progressive affinities and force compels its servants to drop entirely off, or ultimately to accept, defend, and enforce every true reform. Progress, proportionate and permanent, is rooted in those moral principles which are the outgrowth of the constitution of man and the facts of the Christian revelation; and those, therefore, who really minister in these conjoint truths of nature and revelation, must either first hit upon, or finally recognize, the steps of growth that are incident to them. The solid discipline, the permanent coherence of the race as they march onward rest with those who declare the purpose of the movement, and enforce its conditions and its motives; and these are they who deal wisely with Christian principles. Some bodies of Christians may, indeed, be a loitering rearguard of civilization, whom a truth fails to reach till it has gone round the world and overtaken them in the rear; and yet, if finally received by them, it is nevertheless received as a fruit of their own system. Not till Christianity is compelled in self-consistency to reject what the world, what society are compelled in self-

protection to accept and enforce, will the glory depart from it as the one coherent, complete, and sufficiently-enforced system of moral truth. That it accepts as its own what all wise thinking, all generous sentiment bring to it from all quarters, whatever light any exigency of public or of private experience may have struck out, proclaims not its poverty, but its pervasive wealth. It alone of religions can see the human organizations that support it crumble to pieces, and out of the ruin create a new service, and secure a clearer proclamation. That Christianity is as independent of its followers as of its enemies, and gathers strength and enlargement from both, is its highest testimony to a divine origin, to the possession of a power that is rooted in the laws of mind, in the natural and providential government of God. Those who minister this truth, or who stand nearest to it, will hold in deposit the spiritual treasures of the world, and have most immediate concern with every reform. Reform must enrich or impoverish them. They as a class are bound to its fortunes, and their social and religious equilibrium cannot be restored till the new truth is compacted and harmonized with the old, till all is in their minds, in their preaching and practice, one system again.

The ministry is thus identified with the supernatural element, the organic element, the progressive element in society. We turn from these grounds of influence to the means of its enlargement. The first we mention is increased cultivation, yet a cultivation that is permeated by faith, by spiritual insight. Unless knowledge has this double aspect, unless it looks heavenward even more than it looks earthward, unless it comes, like sunlight, from the heavens to disclose broadly what there is on the earth, it cannot subserve the purpose of a truly influential ministry. It is matter of religious inspiration that men are to seek from the ministry; and though this material is to be taken from the word of God, it cannot be derived thence, unfolded, and applied, without kindred inspiration. To be mighty in the scriptures is to have a deep insight into religious truth,—is

to share that quickening, spiritual influence from which these truths in the outset sprang, and by which alone they can be profoundly interpreted. A vigorous, ethical nature, enlarged and strengthened by much inquiry, by many supplementary branches of knowledge, is the condition of spiritual power. This working of the soul upward toward God, toward the sources of light; this unfolding of it under divine truth, under that agency of the Spirit in the world by which an upward-tending life is begotten and nourished — these are the deep and central sources of a religious ministry. If one is no prophet, no seer, no apostle, and can catch the spirit and inspiration of none of these, he can do but little in this form of labor; since there are no servants, no Levites to do the drudgery of the courts in this calling. Each minister must take under his spiritual tuition minds and hearts; and these can be quickened and renewed only by that which has life in it. As animal life can feed only on organic products, so the soul of man seeks food already made instinct by a spiritualizing thought.

The more this is rightly understood and felt, the less will there be of mere authority, either in rebuke or instruction, on the part of the ministry. Authority, in the vigor, sternness, and brevity of its assertion, is closely allied to force, and is fitted only for more rude, ignorant, and dependent natures. As men increase in cultivation, they must be both invited to think, and left to think, for themselves; and the ministry must keep aloof from that authority which claims anything for itself or its position or its representative power, beyond the force which attaches to the very truth presented. The ministry is lost in this truth, and, having presented it, leaves it to do its own work. The dogmatic spirit is dead, or dying, and the minister must propagate life, — free, bold, intellectual, spiritual life, — or he cannot meet the claims of the times upon him. He cannot transfer the authority of scriptures to his own presentation of them, otherwise than by a spiritual infusion of his words by their force. One cannot even read the word of God without

putting himself in sympathy with it, and tinging it in his emphasis by his own feeling; much less can he expound, apply it without leaving behind him a line of light which is the sole force of his conclusions. A "Thus saith the Lord" is useless, till we have manifestly united our speech to the divine thought, and then it is superfluous. Truth grasps and holds its power by its own vigor, and what it receives from the mind that launches it is a new starting-point and new momentum in its personal belief. The disciples could not have safely, successfully given formal repetition to the words of Christ, till, by lengthened experience, they had learned to measurably comprehend them, and then this instruction gave light in each one of them according to the vigor of the combination taking place in the mind between its own thoughts, affections, and these new elements. Heat and light are evoked by an active, intense affinity, and this measures their force. The conditions of spiritual influence are equally inexorable. Solemn words are not the inexhaustible fountain of solemn impressions; they are only the channels through which deep sentiments can flow, when, by means of them, a living heart has been opened outward. The ultimate source, indeed, of the heavenly impulse is the heart of God, the love of God; but when this finds sluggish transfer, travelling far from the lips of Christ, the relay-battery which can alone quicken and beget anew the current is a Christian heart—a Christlike heart—one that keeps rhythm with the motion by which that truth sprang into being. This is so pre-eminently true of religious thought, because that thought is so thoroughly emotional, owes as much to color as to form, is interpreted on the side of the heart as much as on that of the intellect. Fine art, beauty, is not a thing of criticism merely, of cold, intellectual insight; it is what it is because of the emotion it arouses, and those destitute of the appropriate pleasure look in vain for the grounds of excellence. Experiencing no effects, they can find no causes. Moral truth is always of this double

character, this bipolar aspect; and not to feel is not to know, and not to know is not to feel.

The first preparation for service in the ministry is to work upward into the spiritual force of truth; and this will necessitate the leaving behind of all cant and all authority, and using for one's self, and claiming for others, the boldness and freedom of these higher regions of insight and thought. No soul is so truly pliant as that which seeks for itself, with infinite relish and desire, spiritual truths; and none will have such skill in leading others, or be so patient of their mistakes.

A second ground for increased influence in the pulpit we would find in a broader defence and application of Christian principles. If the minister needs to have a superior hold on the supernatural, he requires none the less to be able to unite it closely and everywhere to the natural, so that the two shall be in perfect union and interplay, as parts of one system. The natural cannot, will not be surrendered, and the supernatural must be able to fuse with it, or it will fail. This union is one of principles and of practice. Science is pressing home on every thoughtful mind that pervasive plan, those close-knit and universal laws which to it represent the natural world, and, oftentimes, the entire world of matter and of mind. If religion cannot meet these conceptions otherwise than by denial and overthrow, it cannot be doubtful where the victory will rest. Natural religion is, in order of time and of thought, prior to revealed religion, and the supernatural elements of the latter must find place with the settled activities of the former, and work with them to the formation of the universe of matter and of mind. That ministry will best retain and extend its influence which can most perfectly unite the new and the old, losing nothing of value from either, that can defend the spontaneity and freedom of mind, while yielding matter to those declared and inexorable forces that so manifestly rule in it.

Many who are stern in their enforcement of rigid dogma within a strictly theological field will themselves entertain,

or readily admit in others, views, theories of intellect or of physical force which, consistently developed, must issue in atheism. Not to know religious truth in its relation to other truths, in its dependence on physical science, and above all on mental science, is to be ignorant of that concerning it which is most important to the guidance, the mastery of our times. To the ministry, as at once an educated and religious class, it belongs to acquire that breadth of knowledge and of sympathies which shall enable them to harmonize the two branches of their single faith, and to lay an equally strong hold on the fruits of science, which are natural religion, and of scripture, which are revealed religion. A good defence of our belief requires a thorough sympathy with all truth, and a profound repose of our faith on the laws of the world — the conjoint laws of the physical and spiritual creation.

Equally necessary is it that religious principles should be so broadened in their application as to meet and comprehend all wise social, practical theories and precepts. If men of science are offended by a supernatural element, that lies apart from nature, or is often found at war with it, yet more are men of active benevolence offended by those presentations of Christian faith which hold it aloof from the forward movements in society. For the immediate influence of the ministry it is not sufficient that they finally yield to foregone conclusions. They, as imbued with fundamental, ethical principles, are under obligation often to strike out and easily to recognize those principles which lie next in order in the progress of society. More breadth, therefore, is the demand made upon the ministry, both in the world of thought and of action. Since Christianity can not only rule in both directions, but is waiting for these adjuncts of science and morality for its own full development, it behooves the ministry to be able, without unnecessary jar and collision, to lay hold of and incorporate every gain into their own system, to unite it integrally to those supreme truths committed to them. This is to give breadth, as well as height, to Christianity — is to allow it to spring freely from the whole life

of man, his every thought and action, and thus to rule without obstruction or conflict in his mind and heart. The ministry are put by the science and the reform of the day under new responsibilities, and can only lead forward the Lord's hosts as they reconnoitre afresh, and choose every position of advantage and power. When the enemy have a commanding point, we should lose no time in shifting our camp, in seeking anew the elevations that should now belong to us.

But that on which most of all the influence of the pulpit must depend is the moral force with which its truths are held, the love and sympathy which they call out toward men. The pulpit is for the many, not for the few. Its purpose is not so much to pioneer the paths of progress, as it is to gather men in them, and urge on those who loiter by the way. No erudition can atone for any want of popular sympathy, of compassion, of Christlike love that goes in search of the lost. Christianity is at the utmost remove from the artistic, esoteric spirit of refinement, from the haughty exclusion, or quiet forgetfulness even, of literary culture. It must strike downward with long and searching and multiplied roots among the sorrowing masses, gather its material from dark places, and, absorbing on every side, lift all that it touches into the sunlight and beauty of its own towering growth. This working downward by love is even more than working upward by faith, or outward by comprehension. As fountains catch the descending water in successive basins, and gather it all in the last reservoir, so the gifts of Christianity are most abundant, its graces in largest volume, as it returns from each upward impulse to fill, beautify, and overflow its lowest receptacles in the rational world. The fulfilment of faith is in love. We look upward to God, only that we may look downward with him as his eye is bent in compassion on the children of men.

It is chiefly needful that the minister should be able to encounter the best thought of his day; that, commanding respect and influence, he may use these not in controversy,

but in the guidance and encouragement of men. It was necessary that Christ should be able to withstand the Pharisees, but chiefly that, holding these at bay, he might have access to the popular mind. While there is some theoretical infidelity in the world, there is much more practical infidelity — an infidelity of the heart, rather than the head, and which must be displaced more by love than by argument. A clear intuition of truth, a fearless, forcible enunciation of it, overawe adversaries, and make way for Christianity; but Christianity itself, the purifying, converting power of love, have yet their entire work to do.

The clergy now rest, more than ever before, on a purely commercial basis in the performance of their labor. While many advantages belong to this form of connection, — advantages which increased intelligence will serve to enlarge, — it in part removes the manifest evidence of Christian love which attaches to missionary labor. Nothing can be more destructive to the true influence of the ministry than a strictly commercial spirit; since this is one whose law is pre-eminently self-love. The minister must know how to penetrate the commercial form which life is constantly assuming with the disinterestedness of the Christian temper. The apostle Paul, following the example of our Saviour, met the suspicious, distrustful spirit of his time by refusing compensation, and making all his labors a gratuity. This, in our altered times, would be to ruin the sense of justice and the rightful estimate of labor in those large bodies of Christians who are the chief recipients of ministerial instruction. Most unfortunate will it be, if both church and minister are led thereby, in large measure, to overlook the gratuitous element of love that must always enter into Christianity, and constitute, for the masses of men, its convincing, persuasive power. Churches that grow into wealth, and therefore come under its liabilities, are most effectually cut off from that demonstration of the Spirit which, opening up in the daily life the love of Christ, proclaims it with a persuasion which men cannot resist. The elegance and wealth of our churches are

the proclamation of a practical infidelity to the gospel of Christ, which cannot but result, in the ranks of those who feel themselves overlooked and deserted, in the stolid unbelief of an aggrieved and censorious heart. For these reasons it is that the power of love—real, undeniable, Christian love—is always sure to outstrip, in practical work, superior cultivation and large intellectual insight. The foundations are more than the superstructure, the heart more than veins or arteries. He preaches Christ best who shows most of his spirit, in whom love has actually wrought the largest salvation. He is able to reach down to the bottom of society, deeper than its thought; to go beyond the cold convictions of men, further than its thought; to mount up, by the secret forces of faith in the soul to God, higher than its thought. We may in many ways get ready for victory; but we conquer, as Christ upon the cross, by love.

These three methods of increasing influence—that of uniting the mind closely in belief to the supernatural, that of widening the supernatural in theory and in practice so that it shall find affiliation everywhere with the natural, and that of permeating our thought and heart with Christian love—are yet one in the intimacy of their interdependence and the manner of their acquisition. We may, indeed, give to one element a relative preponderance; but we are sure thereby in the end to weaken even its hold on the mind, and, by destroying the balance of movement, to give it a wayward, hesitating, and unsafe character. The supernatural acquires orderly and sufficient development, exerts a healthy and invigorating influence on the mind, only as it is closely joined with the natural, and ever issues in it. It is in connection with known, proportionate, constant forces that man can labor and thrive intellectually and spiritually. On the other hand, there is no such dreary waste of thought as the natural alone, separated from a supernatural origin and end, from a ministration to supernatural purposes and a providential management under them. There is in it a concatenation of causes, but no chain; a prolongation, not a continuation; a

motion, yet one that is the mere spinning of a wheel on its axis, giving no progress to the hopes and aspirations. There is need throughout of the same union that we meet with of the human and divine in the person of Christ. Without divinity, we lose even goodness and greatness, and have fanaticism, a strange inebriety of the excited, unsober reason. Without true humanity, we have mere illusive, evanescent, unsubstantial appearance. The God of nature is before the God of revelation, and the God of revelation brings but new distinctness and interpretation to the God of nature. Moreover, both the natural and supernatural will lose their power over the soul, except as they are brought into immediate ministrations to a life of Christian love, and are made to yield the conditions of spiritual growth. We understand the work of God, and we work with him, only as we seek in all things the conditions of social progress. Science, even, owes much of its advancement to the care with which it submits its labors to the uses of men.

The ministry also have a united, as well as a separate, influence. While it is desirable that each should be able to meet, in a more or less independent way, the wants of the time, it will inevitably happen that to one will fall one branch of effort, and to another another branch. All may not be able successfully to encounter the various forms of scientific and critical unbelief. It suffices if the ministry furnishes among its numbers those who can wisely confront, attack, and guide thought in each direction; for the household of faith is one, and its defence, enlargement, and nourishment are one interest. Each enters into the labors of every other, and sees his own services at once lightened thereby and made more valuable. The ministry, with all its feebleness and blind work, will meet with justification so long as the kingdom of God is working its way onward by means of it, and finds in it the best, broadest, safest hold of spiritual truth.