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ARTICLE VIII.

BAPTISM OF INFANTS, AND THEIR CHURCH-MEMBERSHIP. — MODERN VIEWS.

BY REV. G. F. WRIGHT, ANDOVER, MASS.

(Continued from p. 265.)

BEFORE proceeding to a statement of the modern opinions which have prevailed regarding the significance of infant baptism, it will be well to make some remarks upon the relation of the views presented in the preceding portion of this Article to a few points not heretofore touched upon, and which may be considered by some of no small importance.

(1) What bearing do our principles have upon the question of the salvation of those who die in infancy?

Upon this point we have to say: (*a*) That our theory does not require us to form any opinion at all, except in regard to those who live to the age of personal responsibility. In the view here presented, the significance of the rite has been made to centre, mainly, in that period of life when the parents and the church are most active in consciously influencing the actual character of the child. If the child lives to act consciously for himself, the battle wages most fiercely during the opening years of his life. During this time the parents and the church, relying on the promises of God, are the most potent allies for good which the young and struggling soul has. As we conceive it, the rite of infant baptism serves an important purpose in warning these parties to be at their post.

But (*b*), If God in his providence takes children away from the world before the years of personal accountability, he removes them also from the need of the rite of infant baptism; and our general confidence in God's abounding mercy leads us to believe that he secures their development under such circumstances that they will all be saved.

But this is outside of the question we have been considering ; for, logically, our position steers clear entirely of any theory regarding God's method of dealing with those who die before responsible development in this life. We maintain our position, and consistently hold that all who die before years of personal accountability are saved. Our views so connect the significance of infant baptism with the development of character in this life, that no conclusion can be drawn from it adverse to the salvation of those who die unbaptized, and before years of personal accountability.

(2) The second point upon which we remark concerns the reasons for baptizing but once.

It will doubtless be suggested, as it has been in our hearing before this, that the ends which we propose to secure by infant baptism might be secured equally well, if we called our rite something less than baptism, and then had the real baptism at the time of the profession of faith.

To some Baptists this might be a satisfactory adjustment of the practice. Sprinkling would appear to them so light an affair, as compared with what they consider the only true mode of baptism, that it would not seem impossible to persuade them to sprinkle their children as we do, and call it "Christening," or some other such name, and then have their immersion come, as now, on admission to the church. Could the Baptists see their way clear to enter into some such arrangement as this, we are not sure that we could not hail it as a great advance. But, though we have heard this spoken of by some Baptists as a desirable adjustment of the matter, we are not aware that anything of the sort has been actually practised, and so their children are left to grow up without any church ordinance expressing their relation to the covenanted mercies of God.

But it will be seen that this would just reverse our ideas of the relative importance of things ; for we now do just the converse of what is proposed in the plan above. We practise infant baptism, and have adult confirmation or profession following, in which the significance of the act of baptism is

accepted by the person who has been baptized. We deem the ideas associated with the baptism of an infant so much more important than those which can be associated with the baptism of an adult, that it seems necessary to connect with it the greater sign. An important element in the symbolism of baptism is the fact that it is administered but once. In that rite the individual is outwardly admitted into that circle of spiritual influences which is the moving power of the church. To multiply baptisms would take away from their emphasis, and have an effect analogous to that upon miracles if they were indefinitely multiplied. It would be an expansion of the currency which would be connected necessarily with a depreciation of its value. In ordinary cases, we should say that careful instruction regarding the doctrine of baptism, and clear statements of it, would relieve the consciences of those who have doubts about the validity of the baptism with which they were set apart in childhood.

(3) As a logical result of the foregoing views of infant baptism, our churches have, as a rule, discouraged the practice of baptizing children whose parents or guardians were not visibly pious. This principle gave way, in great measure, during the prevalence of what is called the "Half-Way Covenant." The writings of Dr. Bellamy are exceptionally rich in arguments opposed to the practice of the "Half-Way Covenant."

Infant baptism is an inclosure of three sides. The promises of God form one side; the faithfulness of parents provides the second, and that of the church the third. The faithfulness of the parent is next to that of God in importance. God and the church conspire, in the rite, to emphasize the parental responsibility for Christian nurture. If, now, this emphasis of the parents' part of the covenant is allowed to fall out of the rite, as it must do if visible piety on the part of parents is not insisted on as a condition precedent to the baptism of their children, there will come in its place the dangerous heresy that baptism is an *opus operatum*, or a charm that has power apart from its connections. In reply

to the assertion that it is a hardship to the children themselves to refuse them baptism for lack of faith in their parents, we have to say, that the hardship consists in their having ungodly parents, and not in refusing them baptism; for in refusing them baptism we only express the truth of the facts themselves. And so the refusal of baptism may be made a means of grace to the children, through the influence of it on their parents. For such refusal is a most solemn assertion of the belief of the church that she is comparatively helpless in efforts to save children, unless the parents themselves co-operate with him.

(4) A fourth point that needs to be spoken of relates to the importance of the public performance of this rite. Infant baptism is not a symbol of private interpretation. Its influence should not end with the single family in which the baptism occurs. There are general, as well as individual, interests subserved by it. The church is a party to the covenant, and the families composing the church all need the quickening influence of its symbolism. Hence there is no small importance attached to its public solemnization. We should say, that where it is practicable, the rite should be solemnized in the most public meetings of the church.

We now pass to as detailed a statement as our limits will permit, of the modern views which have prevailed regarding the subject under discussion. We present:

I. THE DOCTRINE OF THE RUSSIAN CHURCH.

THE doctrine of the Russian church (which is in substantial agreement with the Greek church generally, and comprises six sevenths of it) concerning baptism is contained in the following extracts from their Primer and Catechism. "The Russian Primer for teaching Children to read the Ecclesiastical and Civil Characters" (7th ed., Moscow, 1825), has the following on baptism.¹ "Q. What dost thou receive by Holy Baptism? A. I receive remission of sins, and am added to the company of Christ's people; at the same time I promise before God, and before his church, to

¹ See "The Doctrine of the Russian Church. Being the Primer, . . . The Shorter and Longer Catechisms," etc. Translated from the Slavono-Russian Originals by the Rev. R. W. Blackmore, B.A. (London, 1845), p. 8.

live henceforth a clean and sinless life, even as I came up clean and sinless from the water."

"A Short Catechism, revised and approved by the most holy governing synod, and published by command of his imperial majesty for the use of schools (St. Petersburg, 1840),"¹ expresses itself thus: "Q. What is the tenth article of the creed? A. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. . . . Q. Why is baptism called a mystery? A. Because of the grace which mysteriously worketh in it. . . . Q. In what consists baptism? A. In this, that the believer is dipped thrice in water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Q. Why are we baptized? A. To the end that we may be mystically washed from sin, and receive a new life of grace.

"The Longer Catechism of the Orthodox, Catholic, Eastern church. Examined and approved by the most holy governing synod, and published for the use of schools and of all orthodox Christians, by order of his imperial majesty, (Moscow, 1839),"² has the doctrine thus: "In Baptism man is mysteriously born to a spiritual life." A sacrament is defined as "a holy act, through which *grace*, or, in other words, the saving power of God, works *mysteriously* upon man." "Baptism is a sacrament in which a man who believes, having his body thrice plunged in water in the name of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, dies to the carnal life of sin, and is born again of the Holy Ghost to a life, spiritual and holy." "Q. What is most essential in the administration of Baptism? A. Trine immersion in water, in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Q. What is required of him that seeks to be baptized? A. Repentance and faith; for which cause also before baptism they recite the creed. . . . Q. But why, then, are children baptized? A. For the faith of the parents and sponsors, who are also bound to teach them the faith as soon as they are of an age to learn. . . . Q. Why cannot baptism be repeated? A. Baptism is a spiritual birth; a man is born but once; therefore he is also baptized but once. Q. What is to be thought of those who sin after baptism? A. That they are more guilty in their sins than the unbaptized, since they had from God special help to do well, and have thrown it away."

In the "Treatise On the Duty of Parish Priests," composed and printed in 1776, by George Konisky, bishop of Mogileff, with the assistance of Parthenius Sopkofsky, bishop of Smolensk, and adopted by common consent "wherever the Slavonian church dialect is understood"³ it is enjoined that the "godfather or godmother be an orthodox believer and know those articles of faith which are necessary to salvation." It says also, "Any person, by whose negligence a child dies unbaptized, is, by canon lxviii. of the Nomocanon, to be withheld from the communion for three years, and must do penance by two hundred prostrations daily, and fast the Monday, Wednesday, and Friday in every week." After enjoining the necessity

¹ As above, p. 20 sq.

² As above, p. 84 sq.

³ As above, pp. 208-212.

of thoroughly instructing the children in doctrine, etc., it gives a reason for this as follows: "All this should be diligently instilled into them in their tender years; so that no occasion be given to evil propensities to gather strength in them, but rather they may be continually stirred up to the love of virtue and godly living; for childhood, like a vessel of earthenware, with whatever it be filled, whether good or bad, will give out an odor afterwards accordingly."

See also a concise *resumé* of the doctrines of the Greek church by Rev. Edward Arnold, D.D., Prof. in Hamilton Theol. Sem., N. Y., in *Bib. Sac.*, Vol. *xxi.*, p. 831 sq.

II. ROMAN CATHOLIC DOCTRINE.

John Adam Moehler, D.D., Dean of Wurzburg, and late Professor of Theology at the University of Munich, thus presents the Roman Catholic view: ¹ "They [the sacraments] work in us by means of their character, as an institution prepared by Christ for our salvation (*ex opere operato scilicet a Christo* in place of *quod operatus est Christus*), that is to say, the sacraments convey a divine power, merited for us by Christ, which cannot be produced by any human disposition, by any spiritual effort or condition; but is absolutely for Christ's sake conferred by God through their means. . . . Nay, the religious energies of the human soul are set in new motion by the sacrament, since its divine matter impregnates the soul of man, vivifies her anew, establishes her in the most intimate communion with God, and continues to work within all men, who do not show themselves incapable of its graces, or, as the council expresses it, do not place an obstacle in the way."

Speaking specially of baptism he says,² after reference to the richness of the symbolism connected with its solemnization in the Catholic church since the second century: "Symbol is crowded upon symbol in order to express, in the most manifest way, the one idea; that a total, permanent change is to occur in man, and a new, higher, and lasting existence is henceforward to commence; and hence, among other reasons, baptism is not repeated.

"Hereby on the part of the church, the confident expectation; on the part of the believer the solemn vow, is declared nevermore to fall into any grievous (mortal) sin; but rather to wax more and more in holiness of life. If such a sin be committed, then the darkness, the folly of the world, and the unpriestly life take again possession of the soul; and thereby is communion with God broken off, and the baptismal grace forfeited." And here comes in, in their view, the need of the sacrament of penance to reconcile the soul anew to God.

¹ *Symbolism or Exposition of the Doctrinal Differences between Catholics and Protestants.* Translated by J. B. Robertson, Esq. (3d edition, New York), pp. 198, 199.

² p. 215.

III.

The LUTHERAN VIEW OF BAPTISM is thus given by DR. KARL HASE:¹ "According to Christian usage and command, baptism has always been considered as a bath of regeneration and an initiation to Christianity. Baptism is a sacrament of initiation and regeneration, by which, through water conjoined with the divine word, divine grace is offered, and through faith accepted. (1) The terrestrial material is water; the celestial material is the divine word, which is seen first in the institution of Christ, and then in the grace that is efficacious for regeneration. (2) The internal form is the sacramental union of element and word. The external form is (a) essential and (b) verbal. The essential is, according to the New Testament and the symbolical books, immersion; or, according to Occidental church practice, since the eighth century, sprinkling. Although an emblem is lost through this last, still, the old church dogmatists have rightly called it an unessential form, not contrary to popular morals. The verbal form is the naming of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. (3) The end and effect [of baptism] is, primarily and internally, the impartation of grace and the sign of that impartation, which appears in regeneration; secondarily and externally, it is initiation into the sacred things of the church. This effect proceeds objectively from the divine word and the Holy Spirit, and is conditioned subjectively on faith. . . . The assertion that an actual condition of faith is produced in children is consonant with the church conception of faith only to this extent, that by this is understood the remission of the guilt of original sin through the working of the Holy Ghost, and the future development of faith.

"Since the consecrating act and the faith succeed each other only in time, the intervention of a few years in that which is determined for eternity, is immaterial.² But since baptism in the Spirit can be performed at all times, and can be repeated daily, so that water baptism is only the beginning of this continual spiritual baptism through repentance, so also still faith may come at the same time with the consecrating act. We are right in baptizing the children of the church, since, at all events, they are called to Christianity, as their culture without Christian influence is not at all to be thought of; and we are under obligation to do that, because we cannot break too early the power of original sin through the means of grace that are put into our hands. But the baptism of children is completed in confirmation, which is a sealing and consecration of developed faith. The necessity of baptism is asserted in the symbolical books only

¹ See "Hutterus Redivivus, oder Dogmatik der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche" (10th edition, Leipzig, 1862), p. 314 sqq.

² "Ecclesiastically and socially, the regeneration of children presupposes in its realization, though only as potential, that (a) the faith of the fathers and god-fathers, (b) the religious improvement of the child, (c) the faith of the baptizing church as connected with religious instruction and hope, are guaranteed."

in opposition to the opinions of the Anabaptists. The old church dogmatists held, accordingly, that neither the children of Christians nor catechumens, who died without baptism, were lost; for grace finds a chance to operate through the word before baptism."

The quotations in this book in support of these views are sufficiently explicit. (Catechismus Major of Luther, 546 [57]) "We ordain that children should be baptized by the minister of the church with this hope and feeling, that they will certainly believe, and we pray that God will give them faith; but we do not baptize for this reason, but rather because God has commanded us."¹ (Ibid. 546 [58]) "Wherefore those spirits are certainly too confident and crass who, concluding thus, infer that where there is no faith there cannot be true baptism. As if I should infer thus: that, if I do not have faith, it follows that Christ is of no account to me [more properly, 'accomplishes nothing in me']."² (Ibid. 548 [65]) "These two things, the submergence in water and the emerging from it, signify the virtue and work of baptism, which are nothing else than the mortification of the old Adam, and after that the resurrection of the new man. Which two things must be put into effect throughout the whole life; so that the life of the Christian is nothing else than a sort of daily baptism, which is begun once, but must be put into effect always."³

According to BAIER [A.D. 1647-95], baptism is "a sacred act, instituted by Christ, in which men, without regard to sex and age, are cleansed by water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that so they may be regenerated and renovated for the sake of consequent eternal salvation."⁴

BUDDEUS [A.D. 1700—]: "A sacrament of initiation, by which as many as give their names to Christ are received into the covenant of grace, according to the precept of the divine will in the New Testament."⁵

¹ "Puerum Ecclesiae Ministro baptizandum apportamus, hac spe et animo, quod certo credat, et precamur, ut Deus eum fide donet; verum propterea non baptizamus, sed potius quod Deus ita faciendum nobis praeceperit."

² "Quocirca nimium utique confidentes et crassi sunt spiritus illi, qui ita concludentes inferunt; Ubi fides non est, ibi nec Baptismus rectus esse potest. Quasi ita velim concludere; Si fidem non habuero, sequitur Christum nihilesse. [eigentlich nur: nihil in me proficere]."

³ "Hae duae res, in aquam mergi, et iterum emergere, virtutem et opus Baptismi significant, quae non sunt alia, quam veteris Adami mortificatio, et postea novi hominis resurrectio. Quae duo per omnem vitam exercenda sunt, ita ut Christiani vita nihil aliud sit, quam quotidianus quidam Baptismus, semel quidem inceptus, sed semper exercendus."

⁴ "Actio sacra a Christo instituta in qua homines, sine sexus et aetatis discrimine, abluuntur aqua, in nomine Patris et Filii et Spiritus Sancti, ut sic regenerentur ac renoventur, salutis aeternae consequendae causa."

⁵ "Sacramentum initiationis, quo in foedus gratiae secundum Numinis praeceptum in N.T. recipiuntur, quotquot Christo nomina dant sua"

REINHARD [A.D. 1753-1812] "A solemn washing, instituted by Christ, by which novices are initiated into the Christian republic, and receive a right to the eternal salvation that can be hoped for only through Christ."¹

In the "Articles of Smalcald" [A.D. 1536-37], LUTHER says (329 [2 s.]):² "We do not believe, with the Dominicans, who, unmindful of the word and institution of God, say that God has conferred upon the water, and endued it with a spiritual power, which washes away sin by the water. Nor do we agree with the Franciscans, who teach that sin is washed away in baptism by the assistance of the divine will, and that this ablution takes place only by the will of God, and not in the least by the word and the water."

MELANCTHON says [1531], in the "Apology of the Confession of Augsburg (of which Winer remarks, "With regard to its intrinsic worth, this work no doubt occupies the first place among the symbols in the Lutheran church"), (156 [52] Hut.):³ "a. Christ commanded to baptize all nations, therefore, also, infants. b. The kingdom of Christ exists only by the word and sacraments (John iii. 3). Therefore it is not possible for infants to be introduced into the kingdom of Christ, except through means of baptism. c. The promise of salvation belongs even to little children (Matt. xviii. 14; xix. 14; Mark x. 13). d. God himself has borne witness that he approves of the baptism of children, inasmuch as, through all the ages in which he has gathered the church out of the human race through the use of that sacrament with children, he has imparted the Holy Spirit to the baptized, and bestowed at length upon very many, eternal salvation. e. Baptism has taken the place of circumcision (Col. ii. 12)."

DR. KRAUTH⁴ presents the doctrines of the evangelical Lutherans in the

¹ "Solennis lotio a Christo instituta, per quam tirones reipublicae Christianae initiantur, ac sperandae per Christum sempiternae salutis jus accipiunt."

² p. 316. "Non sentimus cum Dominicanis, qui verbi et institutionis Dei obliti dicunt, Deum spiritualem virtutem aquae contulisse et indidisse, quae peccatum per aquam abluat. Non etiam facimus cum Franciscanis, qui docent, Baptismo ablui peccatum ex assistentia divinae voluntatis, et hanc ablutionem fieri tantum per Dei voluntatem, et minime per verbum et aquam."

³ p. 316. "a) Christus baptizari iussit omnes gentes, ergo et infantes. b) Regnum Christi tantum cum verbo et sacramento existit. John iii. 3. Ergo infantes quoque regno Christi ut inserantur, non nisi mediante Baptismo fieri potest. c) Promissio salutis pertinet etiam ad parvulos, Matt. xviii. 14; xix. 14; Mark x. 13. d) Deus ipse testatum fecit, se probare Baptismum parvulorum dum hactenus tot saeculis Ecclesiam, isto sacramenti usu infantibus collato, ex genere humano collegit, Spiritum sanctum iisdem baptizatis impertivit, ac tandem aeternum plurimos salvos fecit. e) Baptismus successit in locum circumcisionis, Col. ii. 12."

⁴ Baptism. The Doctrine set forth in Holy Scripture, and taught in the Evangelical Lutheran Church. By Charles P. Krauth, D.D., Professor of Theology in the Theological Seminary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, Philadelphia (Gettysburgh, 1866), p. 43 sqq.

following propositions, sustained by numerous quotations and arguments, for which we have not room. In his view, the Second Article of the Augsburg Confession teaches that (1) "When the new birth takes place, it is invariably wrought by the Holy Spirit." (2) But it has "baptism as an ordinary means." (3) "Baptism is the only ordinary means of universal application." "The Confession does not teach that the outward part of baptism regenerates those who receive it."¹ "The necessity of the outward part of baptism is not the absolute one of the Holy Spirit, who himself works regeneration, but the ordinary necessity of the precept and of the means."² "Baptism is not always followed by regeneration. Regeneration [is] not always preceded by baptism."³ "By Christian baptism our church understands not mere water (Cat. Min. 361. 2), but the whole divine institution (Cat. Maj. 491. 38-40) resting on the command of the Saviour, Matt. xxviii. 19 (Cat. Min. 361. 2), in which he comprehends, and with which he offers the promise Mark xv. 15 (Cat. Min. 362. 8), and which is, therefore, ordinarily necessary to salvation (Aug. Conf. ii. 2; ix. i. 3), in which institution water (whether by immersion, Cat. Maj. 495. 65, sprinkling or pouring, Cat. Maj. 492. 45), applied by a minister of the gospel (Aug. Conf. v. 1 and xiv.), in the name of the Trinity (Cat. Min. 361. 4), to adults or infants (Aug. Conf. ix. 2), is not merely the sign of our profession, or of our actual recognition as Christians, but is rather a sign and testimony of the will of God toward us (A.C. xiii. 1), offering us his grace (A.C. ix.), and not *ex opere operato* (A.C. xiii. 3), but in those only who rightly use it, that is, who believe from the heart the promises which are offered and shown (A.C. xiii. 2; Cat. Maj. 490. 33) is one of the instruments whereby the Holy Ghost is given (A.C. v. 2), who excites and confirms faith, whereby we are justified before God (A.C. iv., v. 3), so that they who thus receive or use it are in God's favor (A.C. ix. 2), have remission of their sins (Nic. Creed 9), are born again (A.C. ii. 2), and are released from condemnation and eternal death (A.C. ii. 2; Cat. Min. 361. 6), so long as they are in a state of faith, and bring forth holy works (Aug. Conf. xiii. 1, 6; Cat. Min. 362. 11-14); while, on the other hand, where there is no faith, a bare and fruitless sign, so far as benefit to the soul is concerned, alone remains (Cat. Maj. 496. 73), and they who do not use their baptism aright, and are acting against conscience, letting sin reign in them, and thus lose the Holy Spirit, are in condemnation from which they cannot escape, except by true conversion (A.C. xiii.), a renewal of the understanding, will, and heart (Cat. Maj. 496. 68, 69; Form. Conc. 605. 70)."⁴

IV. DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

The [High Church] Episcopalian view of baptismal regeneration is thus stated by BLUNT:⁵ "In the case of infants there can be no doubt that grace

¹ Ibid. p. 47.

² p. 48.

³ p. 53.

⁴ pp. 62, 63

⁵ Dictionary of Doctrinal and Historical Theology. Edited by Rev. J. H. Blunt, M.A., F.S.A. (London, 1871), Article "Baptism," p. 78 nota.

is always sacramentally given in baptizing; they cannot put any bar or hinderance to the infusion of grace, like an adult, by impenitence, nor was original sin ever regarded as *per se* excluding from the grace of regeneration. St. Augustine always either states or assumes, that all baptized children are regenerate (*De baptismo*, lib. iv. c. 24, 25 : *De prædestinatione Sancti*. sec. 29), a truth probably first denied by Calvin. (See *Institutes*, lib. iv. c. 15, sec. 10)."

DR. PUSEY states it thus:¹ "The view, then, here held of baptism, following the ancient church and our own, is that we be ingrafted into Christ, and thereby receive a principle of life, afterwards to be developed and enlarged by the fuller influxes of his grace; so that neither is baptism looked upon as an infusion of grace distinct from the incorporation into Christ, nor is that incorporation conceived of as separate from its attendant blessings." Again,² after having defended the translation of *ἀνωθεν* (in John iii. 3) by "from above" instead of "again," he says, "No change of heart, then, or of the affections, no repentance, however radical, no faith, no life, no love, come up to the idea of this "birth from above"; it takes them all in, and comprehends them all, but itself is more than all; it is not only the creation of a new heart, new affections, new desires, and, as it were, a new birth, but is an actual birth from above or from God, a gift coming down from God, and given to faith through baptism; yet not the work of faith, but the operation of "water and the Holy Spirit"; the Holy Spirit giving us a new life, in the fountain opened by him, and we being born therein of him, even as our blessed and incarnate Lord was, according to the flesh, born of him in the virgin's womb. Faith and repentance are the conditions on which God gives it; water, sanctified by our Lord's baptism, the womb of our new birth; love, good works, increasing faith, renovated affections, heavenly aspirations, conquest over the flesh, its fruits in those who persevere; but it itself is the gift of God, a gift incomprehensible, and not to be confounded with or restrained to any of its fruits (as a change of heart, or conversion), but illimitable and incomprehensible, as that great mystery from which it flows, the incarnation of our Redeemer, the ever-blessed Son of God." In reply to the question: "Do all the promises and descriptions of baptism apply to infant baptism?" he says: "Certainly, unless they did in effect, infant baptism were wrong. . . . In the one [adults] the healing antidote is infused when the poison has spread through the whole frame, and through the whole frame arrests; in the other [infants] it is imparted ere yet the latent poison has begun to work."³ Again, speaking of confirmation as a part of baptism, he says, "While we bear in mind the continued gifts of his goodness, in the life which he upholds, the fatness of the olive-tree which he imparts, the membership of the family which he continues, . . .

¹ Tracts for the Times, No. 67 (4th ed., London, 1836), p. 24.

² p. 47 sq.

³ p. 63.

still there is eminently one date from which all these present blessings are derived, differing from them in so far as it is one, the sun-rising, the engrafting, the adoption, the birth; one act, transitory as an act, although abiding in its effects. Now this is precisely the mode of speaking which Scripture uses in making mention of our Christian privileges. . . . It speaks of the gifts as having been conferred in the past, though they are continued on to the present to such as have not forfeited them."¹ He had said before, "Our life in Christ is, throughout, represented as commencing, when we are by baptism made members of Christ and children of God. That life may through our negligence afterwards decay, or be choked, or smothered, or well-nigh extinguished, and by God's mercy again be renewed and refreshed; but a commencement of life in Christ, after baptism, a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness, at any other period than at that one first introduction into God's covenant, is as little consonant with the general representations of holy Scripture, as a commencement of physical life long after our natural birth is with the order of his providence."²

HOOKE³ thus: "Baptism is a sacrament which God hath instituted in his church, to the end that they which receive the same might be incorporated into Christ, and so, through his most precious merit, obtain as well that saving grace of impartation which taketh away all former guiltiness, as also that infused divine virtue of the Holy Ghost, which giveth to the powers of the soul the first disposition towards future newness of life."

CURTEIS⁴ thus: "The word 'regeneration' is a technical expression. . . . The regeneration of an individual in the waters of baptism is, . . . in short, nothing less than a second birth, not now into the world, but into the family and household of Jesus Christ; there to be educated, there to come under — at once and by right, as sons — all the healthful, elevating influences of his family, and there to grow up by slow and (it may be) sadly interrupted degrees to 'the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.'"

Wesley is quoted by Curteis⁵ thus: "It is certain that our church supposes that all who are baptized in their infancy are at the same time 'born again,' and it is allowed that the whole office for the baptism of infants proceeds upon this supposition."

MOZLEY represents well the Calvinistic element in the church of England. His work on *Baptismal Regeneration*⁶ is of great value in many ways,

¹ p. 155.

² p. 28.

³ Hooker, quoted by Pusey. *Ibid.* p. 24. *Ecl. Pol. b. v., c. lx. § 2.*

⁴ *Bampton Lectures, 1871. Dissent in its Relation to the Church of England.* By Geo. H. Curteis, M.A. (London, 1872), p. 235.

⁵ p. 390.

⁶ *The Primitive Doctrine of Baptismal Regeneration.* By J. B. Mozley, B.D., Fellow of Magdalen College, Oxford. (London, 1856).

and not the least in his defence of some of the fundamental principles of interpretation. He maintains that the word regeneration expresses, both in the Bible, and in the writings of the Fathers, and in the symbols of the church of England, not merely a capacity for goodness, as the high churchmen maintain, but a state of actual goodness, and that it is applied to all baptized persons by way of concession, or as a charitable hypothesis, as when the prayer-book speaks of "our religious and gracious queen." He ably maintains¹ that this form of high hypothesis is of frequent occurrence in language, and is as allowable, certainly, as for the high church party to explain away the meaning of regeneration till it signifies nothing but a "germ" or "capacity" for goodness. He would depart from the strict letter of the prayer-book in his general conception of the phrase, while retaining the proper high meaning of regeneration. They would depart from the letter in their explanation of the word "regenerate." The most favorable view of the other party is given in the words of Wilberforce: "When this work (regeneration) is wrought in individual men, what is effected is not the complete and instant change of their whole nature, but the infusion of that divine seed of a higher humanity by which their spiritual progress is commenced. Such a gift does not exclude the action of man's own responsibility. It is but to place men in a higher state of trial by the infusion of a principle above nature. The new seed must have time to overcome the old principle of corruption; its existence must be recognized, its growth encouraged. Those who deny regeneration in baptism are ready in common to admit that the children of Christian parents are placed by birth in a state of higher Christian privilege than others. . . . Does not experience prove that principles lie dormant in the mind which it requires fitting occasions to call forth? Does not this happen perpetually in respect to natural endowments, the capacity for art, the faculties of judgment? And why, then, may not the same thing be expected in the case of a higher nature which is supernaturally engrafted on the ancient stock of their kind."² Upon this Mozley remarks: "This is a description of regeneration as a new and mysterious spiritual capacity simply, and not as actual goodness."³ And to such a low conception he all along objects.

V. PRESBYTERIAN VIEW.

The theory and practice of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches are too well known to need extended notice here, and we have already presented them as fully as our limits will allow.⁴ It is enough to say, that

¹ See Cap. iii. Also, Pref. p. xxxi sqq.

² Wilberforce's *Doctrine of Holy Baptism*, pp. 27-33.

³ Mozley, *Introd.* p. xxv.

⁴ See preceding Number of the *Bibliotheca Sacra*, pp. 284-294; also, below, p. 568.

in their confessions they maintain that, the visible church consists of believers and their children; that baptism is the door of admission to the church; that baptism is not always followed by regeneration. Except in this country, the visible signs of conversion pre-requisite to the admission of baptized children to the church are much less insisted on in Presbyterian, than in Congregational churches.

We add a sentence or two from JOHN M. MASON, D.D.¹ "They [children of believers] are in virtue of their birth, members of the church of God, and entitled during their infancy to baptism in his name. . . . Children of believing parents, i.e., of visible Christians, are members in virtue of their birth." It is in the province of this Article to present more fully,

VI. THE CONGREGATIONAL VIEW.

In giving a detailed account of the views of New England Congregationalists, with regard to the meaning of baptism and the relation of baptized children to the church, we must consider the later modifications of their Calvinism² and their general views of the constitution of the church, as well as the more definite limitations which they give to their words. For it must be confessed that the early leaders in the work of forming our thoughts and shaping our practices on this subject seem to say, on the face of it, that children are by baptism made church members, while their whole influence was practically and logically opposed to that idea.

This is notably the case with the elder Jonathan Edwards, who in that very argument on "Qualifications for Full Communion," which did more than any other one thing to shape the later practices of New England churches in making positive (as opposed to negative) evidences of regeneration a prerequisite to admission to the church, speaks of its being generally acknowledged, that "infants, who are the proper subjects of baptism and are baptized, are in some sort members of the Christian church."³ But that his "in some sort" made the idea of infant church-membership perfectly harmless is evident from the whole aim of his "Humble Inquiry." And on the next page he says: "The late venerable Mr. Stoddard, and many other

¹ Complete Works (New York, 1849), Vol. ii. pp. 350, 387.

² The Calvinism of New England has been characterized by numerous re-statements, designed to give due prominence to the doctrine of the freedom of the will, which was supposed to be somewhat overshadowed in the older forms of statement. A broad line of distinction has ever been drawn by New England theologians between *certainty* in the action of the will and *necessity*. This tendency in their Calvinism has been a constant force, operating to throw the responsibility of choice upon the unconverted, whatever their privileges may have been. Preachers have made great use of these modifications to remove the mask of fatalism, behind which the wicked are so ready to hide, and especially so when trained under a ritualistic view of the means of grace.

³ The Works of Pres. Edwards (1st Am. ed., Worcester, 1808), Vol. i. p. 153.

great divines, suppose that even excommunicated persons are still members of the church of God." "It is therefore requisite," he says, "in the question before us, that a distinction should be made between members of the visible church in general and members in complete standing." It was not President Edwards' design to discuss the relation of children to the church, so his language is such as would lead him to get by the perplexities of that question with as few side-issues as possible. And he expressly says,¹ the difficulties of this latter question are so great "that it would require a large dissertation by itself to clear it up."

Writers may, for convenience, be divided into two classes with reference to their views on the church-membership of baptized children. All hold that confirmation, or profession of some sort, is to follow the baptism of children before admission to complete standing. But they are divided on the question as to which party is to assume the burden of proof of fitness for full admission. (1) One party claims that every baptized child is to be presumed to be regenerate and prepared for admission to the Lord's table, unless the church can show positively to the contrary. (2) The other party holds that the presumption is that every person is unregenerate until he exhibits some visible, positive (as opposed to negative) signs of regeneration. This distinction is put by Edwards,² in the work before referred to, with remarkable force and clearness.

JOHN ROBINSON, the father of modern Congregationalism, was not an extremist. His mind was remarkably clear and well-balanced, as a perusal of his too-much neglected works will evince to any one. The state of things in the English church which he opposed is thus described³ in his reply to Mr. Richard Bernard's "Invective" against the "Separatist's Schism" (1610): "We cannot acknowledge some of you brethren; but we must acknowledge all amongst you, . . . as your own rhyme teacheth, 'And makest us all one brotherhood.' Now, by the Scriptures we have not learnt to enter any such fraternity, where we must acknowledge brother priest, brother half-priest, brother dumb-priest, . . . brother blasphemmer, brother wizard, brother conjurer, and lastly, brother recusant papist, if not living, yet dead; for so you must bury him as your dear brother, committing his soul to God and his body to the earth."

Regarding the statement, "That only saints — that is, a people forsaking all known sin of which they may be convinced, doing all the known will of God, increasing and abiding ever therein — are the only matter of the visible church," he says:⁴ "This position, which you account error, rightly understood, and according to his exposition from whom you received it, is

¹ p. 195.

² See preceding Number of *Bibliotheca Sacra*, p. 290.

³ Works of John Robinson, Pastor of the Pilgrim Fathers (Boston, 1851), etc. Vol. ii. p. 109.

⁴ Vol. ii. p. 110.

an undoubted truth. For of such only, *externally and so far as men can judge*,¹ the true church is gathered." "All persons baptized neither do in truth, nor are by us to be judged to have put on Christ, to have remission of sins, etc., but only such as to whom by virtue of the covenant of grace baptism appertaineth. We must not conceive of baptism as of a charm, or think it effectual to all it is put upon, but must judge it available and of use according to the covenant of promise which God hath made to the faithful and their seed, and none otherwise. . . . I read in the Scriptures that unclean persons and things do pollute and unhallow clean persons and things (Lev. xiv. 46, 47; xv. 4, 11, 12; Hag. ii. 12-14), and that a 'little leaven leavens the whole lump' (1 Cor. v. 6, 7); but that clean persons or things should hallow persons or things which are unclean, or that a little sweet meal should make sweet a sour lump, that I read not, but the contrary." By way of caution, he says:² "We speak here of visible and external holiness only, whereof men may judge, and not of that which is within and hid from man's eye. For we doubt not but the purest church upon earth may consist of good and bad in God's eye, of such as are truly faithful, . . . and of such as have only for a time put on the outside and vizard of sanctity, which the Lord will in due time pluck off, though in the meanwhile man's dim sight cannot pierce through it."

Speaking³ of that exposition of the parable of the tares (Matt. xiii. 10, 11) which assumes that the field is the church, and that the servants are absolutely forbidden to meddle at all with the tares, he says: "If the parable be thus meant, how can it be defended that any church should cast out any offenders whomsoever? How dare the prelates in England, with their substitutes, take this forbidden weed-hook into their hands, and use it against any tare amongst them? If any tares be to be plucked up, why not all? And if all be to be let alone, why meddle with any?" His whole exposition of this parable and of that of the drawn net, is a remarkably fine specimen of exegesis. Again:⁴ "Upon this very ground, also, it is, that the children of the faithful are of the church, and baptized, though they make no profession of faith at all, because the Scriptures declare them to be within the gracious covenant of God's mercy and love and under the promises of the gospel, and so by us to be reputed holy. . . . So that it is not for the profession of faith, *ex opere operato*, or because the party professing utters so many words, that he is to be admitted into the church; but because the church by his profession and other outward appearances doth probably, and in the judgment of charity, which is not causelessly suspicious, deem him faithful and holy indeed, as in show he pretendeth." Also:⁵ "The visible, external, and apparent union of God with man, of man with God, and of one man with another, [must] arise from the visible, external,

¹ Italics our own. ² Vol. ii. p. 115. ³ p. 118. ⁴ pp. 122-129.

⁵ pp. 284, 285.

⁶ p. 329.

and apparent work of the Spirit." In Cap. 5 of his work on "Religious Communion, Private and Public" (1614), his views on infant baptism are more fully set forth.¹ "Christ neither excludes the children of believers from baptism nor from salvation for want of faith" (Mark xvi. 15, 16). . . . "The sacraments are, in their first and main end, works of God to men, by which he can both declare and effect his goodness towards infants." The following² is valuable as an argument for infant baptism, and as giving his conception of its effect: "In all which, with other Scriptures, we see how the tenor of the Lord's promise and blessing runs upon godly governors and their families. Not but that it comes oft to pass otherwise, and that faithful governors have unbelievers in their households; but this is the ordinary and orderly state of things, and where it falls out otherwise, it is, at least, the governors' cross, if not their sin. Now, in this, as in all other particulars, we must consider of the dispensation of the Lord's ordinances according to the orderly state of things. . . . Though I doubt not but they, under godly government in the family, may be admitted into the church upon the manifestation of a very small measure of grace, with promise of submission unto all good means of growth, public and private; as might they yet with a lesser measure have been admitted into the Israelitish church, having a far less measure of revelation of grace than we now." Again:³ "That, then, which I have written and do avouch is, that God ordinarily includeth in the parents the infants, as branches in the root, either for blessings or judgments visibly or in respect of men, reserving to himself the secret dispensation of things, according to the tenor either of his mercy or justice." Again:⁴ "But, as it were absurd to say that infants cannot enter into the church and state of glory, because Christ cannot profess of them that they have fed the hungry, etc., so is it as absurd to exclude them from the church or state of grace, because they cannot themselves make profession of faith and repentance."

THOMAS SHEPARD, first pastor of the first church, Cambridge, Mass., who died in 1649, left in manuscript a letter written some years before to a friend, establishing the "Church-membership of Children, and their Right to Baptism." This was published after his death. As Mr. Shepard, both by his position and his native worth, was a man of great influence on our church practices, we give an abstract of his views on the question in hand.⁵ He held that children of visible Christians are in "external and outward covenant, and therefore outwardly church members, to whom belong some outward privileges of the covenant for their inward and eternal good." Their privileges are, that they are called by the Lord's name, that they have "above all others in the world the means of doing them good;" that they have the promise of the Lord to take their evil heart away; that the

¹ Works, Vol. iii. pp. 200, 201. ² pp. 222, 223. ³ p. 228. ⁴ p. 235.

⁵ The Works of Thomas Shepard (Boston, 1853), Vol. iii. pp. 517-540.

“ outward covenant is not merely conditional, but there is something absolute in it ”; that “ he [God] will prune and cut and dress and water them, and improve the means of their eternal good upon them, which good they shall have, unless they refuse in resisting the means; nay, that he will take away this refusing heart from among them indefinitely; so that, though every one cannot assure himself that he will do it particularly for this or that person, yet every one, through this promise, may hope and pray for the communication of this grace, and so feel it in time.” He further held, that inward holiness is not the only ground of admission to church-membership, but external or federal holiness, “ whether externally professed, as in grown persons, or graciously promised unto their seed ”; that the promise of God made to the seed of the faithful gave “ as much ground of faith to hope well of churches rising out of the seed of the godly, as of the professing parents themselves ”; that “ God was as holy and as exactly requiring holiness from the Jewish church, as well as from Christian churches.” But he would say, further, that “ children not being able to examine themselves nor discern the Lord’s body, hence are not to be admitted to the use of this privilege ”; that “ when young children shall grow positively such [profane and hypocritical] . . . they may be dealt with as any other members for such like offence.” Speaking of the good that follows from the use of the ordinance as he understands it, he says that it is a token of God’s adopting love “ to improve all means for their good,” “ and to give indefinitely among them, and particularly to many of them, such hearts as that they shall not be able to refuse the good of those means ”; that parents divine therefrom “ some comfortable hope of their children’s salvation, because they be within the pale of the visible church ” (p. 536); that they will have the “ special watch and care of the whole church,” and the “ more fervent prayers of others for their good.”

The CAMBRIDGE PLATFORM:¹ “ 1. The doors of the churches of Christ upon earth do not by God’s appointment stand so wide open that all sorts of people, good or bad, may freely enter therein at pleasure; but such as are admitted thereto as members ought to be examined and tried first, whether they be fit and meet to be received into church society, or not. . . . 2 The things which are requisite to be found in all church members are repentance from sin, and faith in Jesus Christ; and therefore these are the things whereof men are to be examined at their admission into the church, and which, then, they must profess and hold forth in such sort as may satisfy rational charity that the things are there indeed. . . . 3. The weakest measure of faith is to be accepted in those that desire to be admitted into the church, because weak Christians, if sincere, have the substance of that faith, repentance, and holiness which is required in church members, and such have most need of the ordinances for their confirmation and growth in grace. . . . 7. The like trial is to be required

¹ Cap. xii. [1648].

from such members of the church as were born in the same, or received their membership and were baptized in their infancy or minority, by virtue of the covenant of their parents, when, being grown up unto years of discretion, they shall desire to be made partakers of the Lord's supper; unto which, because holy things must not be given to the unworthy, therefore it is requisite that these, as well as others, should come to their trial and examination, and manifest their faith and repentance by an open profession thereof, before they are received to the Lord's supper, and otherwise not to be admitted thereunto. Yet these church members that were so born or received in their childhood, before they are capable of being made partakers of full communion, have many privileges which others, not church members, have not; they are in covenant with God, have the seal thereof upon them, viz., baptism; and so, if not regenerated, yet are in a more hopeful way of attaining regenerating grace and all the spiritual blessings both of the covenant and seal. They are also under church watch, and consequently subject to the reprehensions, admonitions, and censures thereof for their healing and amendment, as need shall require."

The same points appear in the "HEADS OF AGREEMENT assented to by the Presbyterians and Congregationalists in England, 1690." "1. . . . [We] do conceive the whole multitude of visible believers and their infant seed (commonly called the catholic visible church) to belong to Christ's spiritual kingdom in this world. . . . 3. [We agree] that none shall be admitted as members [i.e., of particular churches], in order to communion in all the special ordinances of the gospel, but such persons as are knowing and sound in the fundamental doctrines of the Christian religion, without scandal in their lives, and to a judgment regulated by the word of God are persons of visible holiness and honesty; credibly professing cordial subjection to Jesus Christ."

HALF-WAY COVENANT. — The movement in favor of what is known as the "Half-way Covenant" is also of great importance, as evincing the strength of the adherence of New England churches to the ideas defended by the Puritans regarding the importance of securing a presumably regenerate church-membership. Church-membership was in the early history of New England a condition of full citizenship. Large numbers of baptized children grew up, without giving the evidences of regeneration required for admission to the church. There were three ways out of the difficulty: (1) To come squarely out, and dis sever wholly the connection of church and state. This they were not enlightened enough to do. Or, (2) lower the terms of communion, as the English and Scotch churches had done. This they were too earnest Christians to allow. So they adopted (3) the middle course, of allowing baptized persons, though not communicants, to exercise the civil rights of church-membership.¹

¹ Article i.

² See a Historical Sketch of the Congregational Churches in Massachusetts, from 1620 to 1858. By Joseph S. Clark, D.D. (Boston, 1858).

The Synod which formulated the ideas of that movement says :¹

“ Prop. 3. The infant seed of confederate visible believers are members of the same church with their parents, and when grown-up are personally under the watch, discipline, and government of that church.”

“ Prop. 4. These adult persons are not therefore to be admitted to full communion, merely because they are and continue members, without such further qualifications as the word of God requireth thereto.”

The sentiment on this point appears still more decidedly in, “ A DEFENCE ”² of these propositions, from which we quote :³ “ Besides, it is well known that those expressions (of holding forth faith and repentance, etc.) have been constantly so taken, in *this country*, as to hold forth the qualifications for *full communion*. And that was it which our brethren strove for, so to screw up the expressions for baptism as that all that have their children baptized must unavoidably be brought to the Lord’s table, and to a power of voting in our churches, wherein we cannot consent to them ; and, however we are charged with corrupting the churches, yet we believe time will show that the principle that over-enlargeth full communion, or that will have all of whom we can have *any hope* that they have any good in them to come to the Lord’s table ; this, we say, will prove a church-corrupting principle, and those that have labored to keep up the partition here will be found to have been seriously studious of the purity and safety of the churches.”

“ Now, it is well known that, in our admissions into full communion, we are not behind in anything that Bucer and Parker do require, but do expect positive and comfortable signs of regeneration already wrought, and some experienced fruits thereof.”⁴

“ There is, apparently, a greater danger of corruption to the churches by enlarging the subjects of full communion, and admitting unqualified or meanly qualified persons to the Lord’s table and voting in the church, whereby the interest of the power of godliness will soon be prejudiced, and elections, admissions, censures so carried as will be hazardous thereto. Now, it is evident that this is and will be the temptation, viz., to over-enlarge full communion, if baptism be limited to the children of such as are admitted thereunto.”⁵

“ In sum, we make account that if we keep baptism within the compass

¹ Propositions Concerning the Subject of Baptism, etc. By a Synod of Elders and Messengers of the Churches in Massachusetts Colony, assembled in Boston according to appointment of the General Court, 1662 (Cambridge, 1662), pp. 15-17.

² A Defence of the Answer and Arguments of the Synod which met at Boston, 1662, Concerning the Subjects of Baptism, etc. . . . By some of the Elders who were Members of the Synod ; together with an answer to the Apologetical Defence set before that Essay (Cambridge, 1664).

³ p. 24.

⁴ p. 40.

⁵ p. 45.

of the non-excommunicable, and the Lord's supper within the compass of those that have (unto charity) somewhat of the power of godliness (of grace in exercise) we shall be near about the middle way of church reformation. And as for the preservation of due purity in the church, it is the due exercise of discipline that must do that, . . . not the curtailing of the covenant."¹

COTTON MATHER² holds that discipline should be extended unto baptized children as to those who have made personal profession: "The discipline which we count owing unto these persons is: an instruction in the laws of our Lord Jesus Christ, an admonition upon a scandalous violation of those laws, and, upon incorrigibleness in evil, an open rejection from all ecclesiastical privileges; and, although persons are most clearly liable to this process when they have actually renewed their baptismal covenant, and recognized their subjection to the government of our Lord in his church, and the children of the church are to be accordingly labored withal, that they may be brought hereunto, yet we do not think that any of the said persons refusing or neglecting thus to do are thereby exempted from such care of the church to bring them unto repentance."

It is difficult to see what privileges we could consistently reject children from who were not admitted to full communion; for he distinctly holds that the children of those who had been baptized in infancy were not to be baptized, unless their parents had made public profession of faith, or had been "inevitably hindered" from it while giving evidence of qualification for it.³ The loose way of talking of this subject is seen in his saying that "members of the visible church are the subjects of baptism,"⁴ and that "baptism is the seal of the first entrance or admission into the visible church."⁵

The views of the elder EDWARDS have been sufficiently presented in preceding portions of this Essay.⁶

DR. BELLAMY⁷ says: "Baptism alone, in the apostolic age, never made any adult person a church member without a profession. Profession was first made, and then they were baptized. Those, therefore, that are baptized in infancy, in order to be members in this sense, must make a profession when they become adult. The New England churches, therefore, are right in demanding it. . . . They [baptized children] are bound by their parents' act and deed to comply with the covenant of grace itself, as soon as they become adult. . . . Whenever they appear to do it, we receive them to full communion; but if they openly renounce the God of their fathers, and obstinately persist in it, they must be consistent and treated as persons who have visibly renounced their baptism."

¹ *Ibid.* p. 46.

² *Magnalia, etc.* (New Haven, 1820), Vol. ii. p. 217.

³ p. 240.

⁴ p. 239.

⁵ p. 241.

⁶ See *Bibliotheca Sacra*, April, 1873. pp. 286-294, also above p. 558 sq.

⁷ *Works of Joseph Bellamy, D.D., etc.* (Boston, 1853), Vol. ii. p. 690.

“ One baptized in infancy, who in the sight of God practically renounces his baptism when adult, as all do who reject Christ and continue impenitent, is not considered by God as entitled to the blessings of the new covenant, but as under the curse of the law.”¹ Of the advantage of infant baptism he says: “ It must, apparently, be an unspeakable advantage to be under the watch and care of a godly church, who have a real spirit of fidelity in them.”² But his views of the desirability of securing a regenerate church-membership may be seen in the sentence following: “ It is equally evident that it can be of no advantage to be under the watch and care of an ungodly church, who will neither walk in the ways of God themselves, nor bring up those committed to their care for God.”

DR. SAMUEL HOPKINS is not so extreme in his views as some of his statements seem to imply. He says:³ “ Real holiness and salvation are secured to the children of believers by the covenant into which the parents enter with God as it respects their children, if the parents faithfully keep covenant and fulfil what they profess and promise respecting their children when they offer them in baptism.”

“ Therefore, when a parent in Israel circumcised his children, and neglected to do the duties enjoined, professed, and promised, of which the circumcision of his children was a token and pledge, and so did not keep the law of circumcision, but broke it, his children were, in this respect, as if they had not been circumcised, and the covenant of circumcision was as really and as much broken as if he had neglected to circumcise his children, and his children were by this neglect cut off from the promises and blessings of the covenant.”⁴

“ But there is no promise in this covenant that if they [parents] do, with a degree of sincerity, give up their children to God, and profess all those exercises, and promise to perform all that duty towards them which are implied in bringing them up for God, that they shall certainly do all this.”⁵ Their failure, he says, will cut them off from the promised blessings of the covenant (see whole sermon).

“ But if they [baptized children] be immoral, or neglect the duties of Christianity, and refuse or neglect to make a Christian profession, and to attend upon the Lord's supper, the church is to use proper means to reclaim them and bring them to their duty; and if they still neglect and refuse to hear the church and comply with their duty, they are to be rejected and cast out of the church, and treated in all respects as any adult persons are to be treated who have been members of the church, and are rejected for disobedience to the laws of Christ.”⁶

Dr. Hopkins, with some difficulty, answers the question whether, if there

¹ Works of Joseph Bellamy, D.D., etc. (Boston, 1853), Vol. ii. p. 674.

² p. 509.

³ Works of Samuel Hopkins, D.D. (Boston, 1854), Vol. ii. p. 124.

⁴ p. 127.

⁵ p. 129.

⁶ p. 158.

was such a calculable connection between the parents' keeping their covenant vows and the regeneration of the baptized child, the parents should not be censured and excommunicated by the church as covenant-breakers, if their children did not exhibit visible signs of regeneration.

DR. DWIGHT considers baptized children members of the church universal, but not of any particular church. "Thus, in every point of view, the doctrine that baptism is regeneration, that it ensures or proves that it is attended or followed by it, either regularly or commonly, is erroneous, unfounded, and unscriptural."¹

"That infants should be baptized, and then left by ministers and churches in a situation undistinguishable from that of other children appears to me irreconcilable with any scriptural views of the nature and importance of this sacrament."²

"They [baptized infants] are members of the church of Christ, that is, of the church general. They are members in the same sense in which the eunuch was a member; in which those dismissed in good standing and not yet united to other churches are members; in which men lawfully ordained are ministers of the church; in which adults, after their profession and baptism, are members, antecedently to their union with particular churches. . . . It is evident that such persons [baptized children] cannot be excommunicated."³ Their "discipline . . . is committed supremely to their parents and guardians." Church members should also "reprove and admonish baptized persons whom they see in the commission of sin."

DR. WARDLAW⁴ is in substantial agreement with Dr. Dwight: "Baptism, it seems evident from the New Testament, is not to be regarded as a social or church ordinance. It did not, when administered to adults, introduce the persons baptized to connection with any particular church or society of Christians. They were simply baptized into the faith of Christ and the general fellowship of the gospel. We have one clear and decisive exemplification of this in the case of the eunuch of Ethiopia. . . . I am disposed to regard the children of believers as disciples in a situation somewhat analogous. . . . They have been baptized; they have become subjects of spiritual instruction — of 'the nurture and admonition of the Lord'; and they are in training for the full fellowship of the people of God in all the ordinances of his house. . . . I do not go so far as to speak of their being separated from the church at any particular age by a formal sentence of exclusion, when they do not give evidence of the reception and influence of the gospel, for the reason just assigned — that their baptism has not constituted them properly members of a particular society, but only disciples of Christ, under training for the duties and enjoyments of his king-

¹ Dwight's Theology, [Sermon 156] (New York, 1828), Vol. iv. p. 305.

² [Sermon 157], p. 318.

³ p. 321.

⁴ [Sermon 163], p. 390

⁵ A Dissertation on . . . Infant Baptism. By Ralph Wardlaw, D.D. (Third edition, 1846), p. 188 sqq.

dom." In a note he says that this was written before he had read Dr. Dwight's one hundred and fifty-seventh sermon.

The benefits of infant baptism are summed up by Dr. Wardlaw, in these propositions: "(1) It is a memorial of original sin.¹ (2) It "reminds us ... that little children are not incapable of being subjects of the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ, and participating in its blessings."² (3) It "admonishes all that they are as undeserving of grace as a little child."

Furthermore, "it is a remembrancer of important duties, and an encouragement to their performance." (1) The ordinance is inseparably connected, and all Christian parents ought so to regard it, with the incumbent duty of "bringing up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." "If this connection is lost sight of, — if it is not contemplated at the time, and is practically disregarded afterwards, — the ordinance becomes nothing better than a useless ceremony, and an idle and profane mockery of its divine Author."³ (2) Children are reminded of their privileges and responsibility.⁴ (3) The church is reminded of its responsibility, and is placed under obligation to discipline members who neglect the religious training of their children.⁵

So far, the writers speak of baptized children as church members. Yet it is evident that they had not been called upon to logically adjust that idea to their idea of the church, which involved an intelligent, credible, and voluntary assent to the covenant. Some of them held, however, that in the case of those baptized in infancy sufficient length of silence gave consent.

When we come, now, to the views of more recent writers, we shall see, as a result of the Edwardean revivals and the discussion that followed, a nearer, and in many cases a complete, accord with the ideas formulated in the body of this Essay. We begin with JOSIAH HOPKINS, D.D.⁶ Speaking of

¹ Ibid. p. 183. ² p. 185. ³ pp. 191, 192. ⁴ p. 208. ⁵ p. 217.

⁶ The Christian Instructor, containing a summary Explanation and Defence of the Doctrines and Duties of the Christian Religion. By Rev. Josiah Hopkins, D.D., late Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church, Auburn, N.Y. Fifth edition revised and enlarged. (Hudson, Ohio, 1853). This book was first published at Middlebury, Vermont, in 1825, when Dr. Hopkins was pastor of the Congregational Church in New Haven, Vermont, and it represented fairly the sentiment of the churches of that State. It had an extensive circulation among Congregational and New School Presbyterian Churches. The third edition contains very hearty and emphatic letters of recommendation and endorsement from Professors Dickinson, Stowe, Allen, and Lyman Beecher, of Lane Seminary, Cincinnati, Ohio, and from Professors Hickok and Halsey, of Auburn Theological Seminary, Auburn, N. Y. Also, from Drs. Cleveland, S. H. Cox, William Patton. It is not necessary to remind the reader that in everything but ecclesiastical polity New School Presbyterians and Congregationalists have been one in their general practices and beliefs.

the church-membership of baptized children, he says:¹ "Baptism, as we understand it, is a seal or token of the engagement into which the believing parent enters with God. The object of this engagement, so far as the child on whom the token is placed is concerned, is, that the great Jehovah may be to him a God, and the child become one of his children; in other words, that he may become a Christian. This is what God in great mercy has promised, on condition that the parent is faithful; and we have already shown that, although the parent may fall vastly short of being perfect, yet if he make this engagement in faith, and is often led by it to commend his child to God in prayer, his child will be far more likely to become the subject of these blessings than if no such engagement were made. Now, to be a member of the church is to be in profession a Christian. But the object of baptism is not to mark or designate the child as being already a Christian, but to show that his parent believes in God, has entered into covenant with him to pray for his child and instruct him for God, that he may be a Christian. If we say that infants are members of the church, we say that the object for which they were baptized is already accomplished; whereas the nature of the covenant presupposes a time of trial before, even if we are faithful, we can expect it. However young a child may be who gives satisfactory evidence of faith in Christ, we do not baptize him, if his parent become a believer at the same time, on account of the faith of his parent, but on account of his own. Did we believe that baptism is regeneration, it might be proper to consider baptized children as professed Christians, and treat them as such; but so long as we view their baptism as pointing forward to their conversion, and as an important means, when viewed in all its connections, of bringing it about, to treat them as Christians or as members of the church must be manifestly improper.² This view of the subject must show us that baptism, as it respects our children, is a solemn and important duty. . . . Though children are not made members of the church by baptism, it is an important means to bring about their conversion and salvation."

The way in which children are benefited by baptism is stated as follows:³ "In the covenant which exists between the believing parent and God, there is an engagement upon the side of both parties. The parent engages to walk before God and be faithful; while the great Jehovah, on his part, is pleased in mercy to promise that he will be a God to the parent and to his seed. Baptism is a seal or token of this agreement. In addition to other important purposes, this seal, by being placed upon the forehead of his child, can scarcely fail to remind him, every time he casts his eye upon his child, of the solemn obligation he has taken upon himself. The only question that remains now to be settled is this: Will that parent be more likely to pray for his child, and feel the importance of instructing him for God, who has solemnly promised to do it, and who by a significant and

¹ p. 291.² The first edition had "absurd."³ p. 288.

instructive token is continually reminded of that promise, than if he had not made this engagement, and had no monitor of this kind to remind him of his duty? If means are important in other cases, this question must be answered in the affirmative. There is no one, who conscientiously believes in the Bible, but that believes in the importance or the use of means. And why should we make a profession, and solemnly covenant to be faithful in the service of God, if we are not more likely to do it in consequence of such an engagement?"

After stating that, from the results of three general revivals that had occurred in his ministry, he estimated that the probability of the conversion of baptized children was eight times that of unbaptized children, he says: "It is readily admitted that the reason why they are converted is because they are favored with these means [hearing the gospel, etc.]; and from this principle is it not evident that the more solemnly the parent binds himself, and, of course, the more faithful he is in the use of the means,—especially such as prayer and religious instruction,—the more favorable is the prospect that his children will be made heirs of the grace of God. . . . Though the salvation of children cannot be certainly inferred from the covenant in those cases where parents are unfaithful, still, as there are degrees of holiness, the parent may be more faithful, though he fall far short of his engagements, and God may be more likely to call in his children, than if he had never taken this covenant upon himself."

The ANDOVER CREED,¹ so far as it bears on the case in hand is as follows: "Repentance unto life, faith to feed upon Christ, love to God, and new obedience are the appropriate qualifications for the Lord's supper." "A Christian church ought to admit no person to its holy communion before he exhibit credible evidence of his godly sincerity."

The confusion of terms spoken of in a former part of this Essay,² appears curiously in an interesting and valuable work of PRESIDENT STEARNS.³ The quotations will speak for themselves, and show that President Stearns did not, in reality, differ from the views set forth in the other writers of this period from whom quotations are made, except in a phraseology less happy and perspicuous.

He says:⁴ "The position to be maintained is briefly this: The baptized children of professing Christians are, strictly speaking, members of the church, and, with exceptions made necessary by their incapacity and their personal character, should be treated in other respects as such. They are not, of course, members by profession; nor are they members in full com-

¹ Constitution and Statutes of the Theological Seminary (Andover, 1839), p. 19.

² See *Bibliotheca Sacra* (April, 1873), p. 282.

³ *Infant Church-Membership, or the Relation of Baptized Children to the Church.* By William A. Stearns (Boston, 1844).

⁴ p. 16.

munion; nor are they in complete standing. Still, they are truly members of the church; they are entitled to its prayers, to a Christian education, an affectionate supervision; they are standing candidates for full communion, and are to be received to the table of the Lord as soon as, but not before, they give evidence of possessing the requisite knowledge and faith, and are prepared to take upon themselves the baptismal obligations by a public profession of religion."

"Having thus shown that baptized infants are, strictly speaking, members of the church, it is next in order to inquire into the nature and degree of that church-membership."¹

"Having arrived at a suitable age, and having sufficient religious knowledge to act understandingly, if they now give evidence of personal faith, they should be invited to ratify the doings of their parents by an open profession."² If for any reason, they should not be received into full communion, "they would not be immediately unchurched by their refusal or rejection, but should rather be looked upon as members walking in darkness and in violation of baptismal vows. They are still members; they can never cease to be members, except by actual or virtual excommunication."

He compares the distinction between "real membership" and "membership in full communion" to that between an infant king and a crowned king, green apples and ripe.³

"Being church members, they are to be treated in all respects like other church members, so far, and only so far, as the peculiar circumstances of their age and condition will allow."⁴

"It is required by the very nature of the sacrament that children, in order to a participation in it, should give evidence of saving faith. . . . Infants and very young children are excluded from the Lord's table by the very nature of the ordinance, nor can they be welcomed until they possess both requisite knowledge and faith."⁵

"We say, then, that an orderly profession of religion, by each baptized person, in successive generations, is indispensable to a perpetuation of the privileges of the baptismal covenant."⁶

"The nature and degree of infant church-membership must now be apparent. . . . Hence they are truly members of the church, but not in full enjoyment of its privileges. They stand within the precincts of the temple, though not admitted to the most holy place."⁷ "Nothing but a credible evidence of piety and visible profession of faith can qualify even baptized persons for the privileges of full communion."⁸

Dr. LEONARD WOODS's position on this point is equally safe. He says:⁹ "The relation of children of the church is generally represented,

¹ Ibid. p. 54.

² p. 56.

³ p. 57.

⁴ p. 58.

⁵ p. 69.

⁶ p. 72.

⁷ p. 77.

⁸ p. 88.

⁹ Lectures on Infant Baptism (2d ed., Andover, 1829), p. 170.

by the most respectable authors, as infant membership. Against this I can see no valid objections, if the language is understood with suitable qualifications. In a very important, though in a very qualified sense, baptized children may be considered as infant members of the Christian church."

It is worth while, also, to quote a single sentence from E. B. FOSTER, D.D.:¹ "The thought is never entertained, even for an instant by those who baptize infants, that their children are made members of the church by being baptized. . . . It is like prayer, like parental instruction, like the reading of the Bible, like the observance of the Sabbath, like the preaching of the gospel; not itself regeneration, nor certain to secure regeneration, but wonderfully adapted to instruct the mind and impress the heart." It brings to view, he says,² "our need of sanctifying grace, our dependence upon divine aid, our pledge to be wholly consecrated to God, our obligations as parents, as a church, as children. It reminds us of God's covenant."

To the same purport is this from a book of the Massachusetts Sabbath-School Society:³ "There is no rule which entitles baptized children to the peculiar privileges and ordinances of the church, till they publicly profess faith in Christ. They are brought only within the outer enclosure of the church, and, through the covenanted mercies of God, are peculiarly its hope."

To the same effect, DR. LEVERETT GRIGGS, formerly pastor of the Chapel Street Congregational church, New Haven, Connecticut, says:⁴ "Baptized children are not members of the church in full." "They sustain a peculiarly near and endearing relation to the church; but they are not entitled to its privileges simply because they have been born within its fold and received the token of its covenant."⁵ "They are the children of the church. They are the seed of parents with whom God has made a precious covenant."⁶ "Children are not members of the church in full, till they take the same step for themselves, and give evidence that they discern the Lord's body."⁷

The views of Dr. NEHEMIAH ADAMS⁸ are of great weight in determining this point. He says,⁹ or makes "Mr. R." say: "I am compelled to say, at once, that I differ from the views expressed by the reader, if he means by the terms 'members' and 'membership,' which he employs, all

¹ Sermons on Baptism. By E. B. Foster, of Henniker, N. H. (Concord, N. H., 1844), p. 37.

² p. 38.

³ Infant Baptism an Ordinance of the Gospel. By Rev. Jotham Sewall (Massachusetts S. S. Society), p. 85.

⁴ Infant Baptism Explained and Defined (Hartford, 1845), p. 63.

⁵ p. 64.

⁶ p. 67.

⁷ p. 68.

⁸ Bertha and Her Baptism (Boston, 1857), cap. 9.

⁹ p. 219, 220.

which they would convey to the majority of hearers. But I noticed that when he and those excellent men whom he quotes come to define what they mean by members and membership, in this connection, they make explanations and qualifications, and also protestations, showing that no one can be, in their view, a member of the spiritual, or what is called the invisible, church of Christ, without repentance and faith. . . . It admits of a question, therefore, in my view, whether the terms 'members' and 'membership,' as applied to children, really mean that which these writers themselves intend to convey by them; for certainly they do not mean all which their readers at first suppose. The terms in question require a great deal of explanation, which a term, if possible, ought never to need. And, after all has been said, a wrong impression is conveyed to the minds of many, while opponents gain undue advantage in arguing against that which for substance all the friends of infant baptism cordially maintain." He concludes the chapter¹ by fixing on the term, "children of the church," as the more appropriate name for those who are baptized in infancy, and says:² "Did infant church-membership admit to the Lord's supper, as it did to the passover, the children would now with propriety be said to be 'members of the church.' But inasmuch as, under the Christian dispensation, they cannot come to the sacrament which distinguishes between the regenerate and the unregenerate, without a change of heart; . . . they are, under the Christian system, removed from outward membership." But he adds: "The children of the church have privileges and promises which go far to increase the future probability of their church-membership, and directly to prepare them for that sacred relation."

PROF. POND, of Bangor Theological Seminary, Maine, says:³ "Baptism teaches, (1) That infants are moral beings, and capable of receiving spiritual blessings. (2) That they are depraved beings. (3) This ordinance does not, indeed, import that those to whom it is applied are regenerated in heart; . . . but it does import that there is cleansing for them in the gospel, and that this is to be effected through the special operations of the Holy Spirit. (4) Baptism is the seal of a covenant between God and the parent respecting the child. It is, in fact, no other than the covenant of the church — the covenant with Abraham." "If covenanting parents will be faithful to their children, and train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, he promises to bestow upon them converting grace, and to be their God and portion in this world and forever."⁴ "The child, though not yet an actual member, belongs to the church by promise. It is promised to the church, and the promise, unless annulled by parental unfaithfulness, will sooner or later be fulfilled."⁵

¹ Ibid. p. 254.

² p. 253.

³ Lectures on Christian Theology. By Enoch Pond, D.D. (Boston Congregational Board of Publication, 1867); *Lecturæ* lxxv.

⁴ p. 679.

⁵ p. 680.

President NOAH PORTER¹ speaks of the constitution of the family institution as being one of the strongest warrants for infant baptism. The Christian family "may be said to be the ante-room or vestibule to the inner sanctuary [the church]. . . . To initiation therein [this ante-room] there is appointed a rite symbolizing the privileges and hopes which gather about the infant that is admitted through its portals."

We add a quotation from one of the ablest of living ENGLISH INDEPENDENTS,² expressing our own sentiments better than we could ourselves. "We should also contend that formally a religious society ceases to be a church when it ceases to require personal union with Christ as the condition of communion with itself, and when it consciously, voluntarily, and of deliberate purpose includes within its limits what John Robinson, after the manner of his age, calls 'a mingled generation of the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent.' . . . No man is a member of a Congregational church by birth. Nor is baptism a sufficient qualification for membership, nor an orthodox creed, nor a blameless moral life. For three hundred years, whatever changes may have passed upon our theology, and whatever modifications may have been introduced into the details of our church organization, we have steadily and with unflinching fidelity maintained that only those who are in Christ have any right to be in the church. Nor do I know that there are any of us who have consciously renounced this principle. . . . We have heard something, occasionally, about the church-membership of children. If those who use this phrase meant nothing more than to affirm that children who love God and cling to the infinite goodness of Christ have a right to be received into the church communion; if they meant to protest against the perverse folly of requiring as signs of the presence of the Holy Ghost in a child the sharp agony of repentance for sin and all the shame and conflict and fear which are natural only in those who have sinned against God for twenty or thirty years;³ . . . if this were all, then there would be no reason for apprehension. Or, if they intended only to remind the church of its forgotten and neglected duties to the children of its members,—duties which have been forgotten and neglected in our very eagerness to rescue from ignorance and irreligion the children of those who are outside,—they would be rendering us good service. But by those who use it, the phrase 'the church-membership of children' appears to be intended to assert the claims of baptized children, or of the children of Christian parents, to be acknowledged as church members by virtue of their baptism or of their birth. Their birth seems, however, to be regarded as of primary importance;

¹ *New Englander*, Vol. vi. p. 140.

² Essay of Rev. R. W. Dale, M.A., on the "Idea of the Church in Relation to Modern Congregationalism," in *Ecclesia*; "a Second Series of Essays on Theological and Ecclesiastical Questions" (London, 1871), p. 356 sq.

³ pp. 377-379.

baptism is a very subordinate matter. Now, it may be conceded, for the moment, that considerable advantage might come to the children, if instead of having to find their way into the church when they become conscious of restoration to God, they were required to separate themselves from it by their own deliberate act, if at the age of fifteen or sixteen it was clear that they had not yielded to influences of a Christian education, and received the Holy Ghost. But, apart from the consideration that this advantage might be fully secured in another way, it requires to be shown, that the claim is not inconsistent with the idea of the church. Church-membership implies participation in the supernatural life of the church. Is that life transmitted by the ordinary laws of descent? Does faith in Christ come to us by birth, like our features and our complexion, like the color of our hair and the form of our limbs? We may inherit the temperament of our parents, and their passions; but do we inherit the inspiration of the Holy Ghost? That the children of eminently good men may be born with moral dispositions which show the ennobling effect of their parents' piety; that they may possess in exceptional strength those natural sentiments which are akin to the supernatural affections, and are often mistaken for them; that they may pass out of this 'present evil world' into 'the kingdom of heaven' without any sharp and severe moral conflict, ... it is not necessary to deny; ... but, unless we go very much farther than this and contend for the existence of a law under which God grants the supernatural life to the children of all regenerate parents, no adequate reason can be shown why such children should be constituted members of the church on the ground of their birth."

To show how extremes meet on the subject of baptismal regeneration, we append a brief statement of

VII. THE CAMPBELLITE VIEW.

In the "Debate on Baptism,"¹ Alexander Campbell says: "This solemn and significant moral change or transition out of the world into Christ is consummated in the following manner: The gospel is proclaimed to them without the kingdom. Men have it, believe it, become penitent, and are baptized in water into the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. They have then put on Christ, are baptized into Christ, and are henceforth in him a new creation. ... It [baptism] is an introduction into the mystical body of Christ, by which he [the baptized person] necessarily obtains the remission of sins. He puts off [in baptism] his old relations to the world, the flesh, and Satan. Consequently, that moment he is adopted into the family of God, and is personally invested with all the rights of a citizen of the kingdom of God."

¹ Debate on Baptism, Campbell and Rice (Cincinnati, 1844), p. 442.