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"ONE THING IS NEEDFUL." "ONE THING HAVE I DESIRED OF THE LORD." "THIS ONE THING I DO."

WHOLE NO. 257

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TERMS.—IN ADVANCE.

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Original Poetry.

"Go Forward."

"Go forward," was the voice of God
When Jewish children cried;
He bade his servant raise his rod,
The waters to divide.

"Go forward," still is God's command,
Whene'er his children pray;
He'll lead them to the promised land
If they will but obey.

"Go forward," Christian, never faint,
God's love thy soul can cheer;
He hears thy sighs and complaints,
He sees thy silent tear.

"Go forward," servant of the Lord;
In heaven thou shalt see
That great, and glorious reward
Which Christ reserves for thee.

"Go forward," aged child of God,
Thy toils are nearly o'er;
Thy feet are nearing Jordan's flood,
Thy'll land on Canaan's shore.

"Go forward," youthful Christian, go—
Thy way may yet be long;
Thy foes are great, but yet we know
Thy God can make thee strong.

"Go forward," feasting, trembling heart,
Let not thy courage fail;
Thy God will not from thee depart,
Nor let thy foes prevail.

"Go forward," sinner, in thy ways!
No: turn: thou know'st full well,
That God who gave thee being, says
Thy way would last till hell!

Super 1111, July 26th, 1857. MATTHEW.

Infant Baptism.—No. 8.

The ancient Corinthians maintained, that the Jewish Church was the Church of an inferior God, who had fallen from his pristine virtue and dignity; that the Old Testament Scriptures having been inspired by this inferior deity, were of no binding authority, and that the object of Christ's mission was to destroy his empire, and introduce the worship of the supreme God. The sect itself has long ceased to exist; but some of its objectionable opinions re-appear in those Baptist authors, who deny the Old Testament Church, as though its religion were false, and its ordinances of no value. But who are we that should speak lightly of institutions ordained by Infinite wisdom and purity? What though the great body of the Jewish Church, at different periods, departed from God, and perverted his ordinances? The very same things have befallen the Christian Church; and if the existence of the former, as a true Church of God, was destroyed by the general corruption of its members, the same thing must be affirmed of the latter. We should bear in mind that the constitution and laws which God gave to his Church, were good and pure, however they may have been abused by men.

Ever since the fall, God has had a Church on earth, professing the true religion. The external exhibitions of his grace to that Church, may be compared to a rivulet, taking its rise from the firm promise of a Saviour, and the appointment of burnt-offerings, and gliding onward to Noah, where it receives an important tributary. Thence it passes down to the father of the faithful, where it is swelled by the influx of a mighty stream. Then, as a broad, majestic river, it flows along the channel of the Jewish nation, till it meets the cross of Christ, when it overflows its banks, and extends its healing virtues to all nations of the earth. Since then, the Jewish and Christian Churches are substantially the same, the right of membership in both must be the same. And as infants, by express authority of God, were introduced into the one, they are equally entitled to membership in the other.

NATURE OF INFANT MEMBERSHIP.

To some persons it sounds strange to speak of infants as belonging to the Church. Membership in the Church is, in their minds, associated with communion at the Lord's table, and voting at ecclesiastical meetings. But those things are in no wise essential to church-membership. In the State of Pennsylvania, little children are recognized in the constitution and laws, as citizens of the commonwealth, just as much as adults. The State is not only bound to protect them in their persons and rights of inheritance, but to make provision for their education, by establishing schools and providing teachers. And in some countries, as Prussia, parents are required by law to send their children to the schools. Yet these infant citizens do not anywhere exercise the elective franchise, or hold office; they reach a certain age, and possess certain qualifications, before they are admitted to membership. In the same sense, the children of professing Christians belong to the Church, and have a right to the distinguishing badge of membership. They are to be enrolled as scholars in the Church, the school of Christ; and their parents placed under a solemn obligation to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. And when they attain to maturity, if they give evidence of faith in Christ, and repentance unto life, they are to be admitted to all the rights and privileges of adult members.

That infants were members of the Old Testament Church, will appear if we inquire.

HOW PERSONS WERE ADMITTED INTO THAT CHURCH.

How, for instance, would a heathen, who desired to renounce idolatry and embrace the true religion, be received into the ancient Church of God? What religious rites were performed on the occasion? The answer is, that from the time of Abraham, circumcision was required. See the account of the institution of this ordinance in Gen. xvii: 9-14. From that time circumcision was the distinguishing mark of God's professing people. Accordingly, in Exod. xii: 48, 49, we find that the stranger who would unite with the Jewish Church must first be circumcised. But were his children to be left out and still counted as heathen? No: the same passage says, "Let all his males be circumcised." Thus we see that when parents

were admitted into the Church, their children were admitted with them, and subjected to the same religious rite with themselves.

IMPORT OF CIRCUMCISION.

Let us now consider that rite by which infants of eight days old were recognized as members of the visible Church, and see if its import is not essentially the same as that of baptism.

1. Circumcision bound all its subjects to obey the whole law. Gal. v: 3; "I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law." Does baptism impose stronger obligations than these?

2. Circumcision was a sign of holiness of heart. Rom. ii: 29; "Circumcision is that of the heart." Deut. x: 10; "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul." All agree that baptism is a sign of regeneration.

3. Circumcision being a bloody rite, pointed to the atonement of Christ. Baptism directs our minds to the blood of sprinkling. Heb. x: 22; "Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

4. Circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith. Rom. iv: 11; "And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised." Can more be affirmed of baptism?

Now we are gravely told by Baptist writers that circumcision was intended as a mark or badge of Hebrew descent and of temporal privileges, rather than of a religious relation. In proof of this, they urge that the Ishmaelites and Edomites were circumcised. "The Ishmaelites and Edomites were apostates from the faith. Abraham was not but perceived that the abuse of circumcision by apostates, proves that it was not the initiating rite of the Church? Why not argue, that since Mordecai practised baptism and yet do not enter into the Christian Church, baptism cannot be an initiatory rite?"—*Rice on Bapt.*, p. 220. No clearer proof is needed, that circumcision was not a mark of Jewish descent, than the fact that strangers of any nation, who embraced the true religion, were circumcised. Says the Divine injunction, "One law shall be to him that is home born and to the stranger."—Exod. xii: 48, 49. And if half the world had embraced the religion of Jehovah, they would all have been circumcised.

Such is the nature of that ordinance, which was administered to infants of eight days old, by the express command of God. And we do not but perceive that our Baptist brethren, had they lived under the old dispensation, with their present views of Divine ordinances, would have been most strenuous opponents of infant circumcision. Do they object to the baptism of infants because it imposes obligations which the child can not, at the time, understand and affirm? We might have been urged against circumcision. Do they argue that baptism implies holiness of heart and life? So did circumcision. It is not, however, necessary to our main argument, that we should prove baptism to have come in the room of circumcision, yet it is very evident that the two ordinances, if they do not correspond in every particular, hold the same place, signify the same things, and impose similar obligations.

INFANT MEMBERSHIP NEVER ABOLISHED.

From the previous discussion it is apparent that infants having once been admitted into the visible Church by the authority of God, must retain the right of membership until the same authority pleased to revoke it. But, where, in all the Scriptures, have we the slightest hint that the right has been retracted? We call upon the advocates of "explicit warrant" to answer the question. The burden of proof rests upon them. Let them tell us where, in his Word, the God of heaven has enacted, that though children were once admitted into his visible church, they are never forever excluded. Where, I say, can they discover the least shadow of authority for thrusting little children out of the kingdom of heaven? They can produce none, either in the Old Testament or the New. In the absence of such authority, to exclude infants from membership in the Church, is a virtual attempt to make laws for God! It is more; it is an attempt to legislate in opposition to the authority of Jehovah! Fearful, indeed, is the responsibility they assume, who banish from the nursery of the Church those who have been placed there by the enactment of heaven, for whom the Lord Jesus shed his blood, for whom he has shown the tenderest affection, and of whom he has declared, "of such is the kingdom of God."

AN "EXPLICIT WARRANT," UNNECESSARY.

And here we see, more clearly than ever, why the Saviour gave no express command, to the disciples, to receive infants into the Church. For, as he made no charge in respect to membership, they perfectly understood that the same persons were to be admitted as formerly. The Church being essentially the same under both dispensations, and baptism having been substituted for circumcision as the initiatory rite, it followed, as a matter of course, that infants still retained the right of membership, and consequently were to that effect would have express command to admit them as needful as a command to admit females to the table of the Lord. Neither the one nor the other could have been needed for the direction of the Apostles, who, being Jews, knew perfectly well of whom the visible Church consisted. Accordingly, when they, in full Assembly, decided that circumcision was no longer obligatory; instead of authorizing any baptism to membership, they perfectly understood that they intended it to remain.—See Acts xv: 23-29. For, if Christ had required them to exclude infants, there could hardly have been a more suitable opportunity to announce the change.

And yet there are persons who say, "Show us an express command in the New Testament for the admission of infants. No matter what the Old Testament says in regard to infant membership; if you can find a *Thus saith the Lord* for it in the New, they must be excluded." It is easy passage says, "Let all his males be circumcised." Thus we see that when parents

of an infant to an inheritance is contested, a gentleman of the bar should offer the following argument to the Court: "It is true that children were once permitted by the laws of this Commonwealth to inherit the estates of their parents. But, those laws are of a comparatively ancient date. In the mean time the Constitution and laws of the Commonwealth have undergone various changes. Show us a law of the last Session of the Legislature, by which the rights of infants are re-affirmed. Unless such an enactment can be found in the journal of the last Session, infants are no more to inherit the estates of their parents." The absurdity of such reasoning is obvious; but it is not more absurd than the argument that infants are to be excluded from the Church because there is no express command in the New Testament for their admission.

FEMALE COMMUNION.

Besides, this reasoning will go to exclude females from the Lord's Supper. It can not be pretended that there is any express command or inspired example recorded in the New Testament in favor of the admission to that ordinance. Mr. Boodin, indeed, supposed he could find an explicit warrant for female communion in the words, "Let a man examine himself," &c.—1. Cor. x: 28. For he alleges that the Greek word *ANTHROPOS*, man, being of the common gender, denotes both men and women. But, Peter Edwards has produced nineteen instances from the New Testament in which the word is used to denote the male in distinction from the female; see 1. Cor. vii: 1. "It is good for a man (anthropos) not to touch a woman." Thus the boasted "explicit warrant," is lost in the clouds.

The famous "direct warrant," invented by Mr. Alexander Campbell, runs thus: "In 1. Cor. xii: Paul speaks directly of men and women; and gives them directions accordingly. He uses the word *MAN*, fourteen times and *woman*, sixteen times; then in their stead he puts the pronouns *ye* and *you*, fourteen times, and gives these same persons the command concerning the Supper." On this I will only remark, that whoever can discover an "explicit warrant," in such a fog has keeper optics than our own.

EVIDENCES OF REGENERATION.

Letter III.—The Great Change.

All things are become new.—2. Cor. v: 17.

MY DEAR FRIEND:—In former letters I have spoken of God, his personality, character, and law; of sin, and the consequent need of regeneration and justification; of the way of deliverance from sin; of regeneration, its necessity, nature, the Agent, means, and end or design. Let us now consider, briefly, regeneration and its evidences; and more particularly the evidences of regeneration, as this is the subject introduced in my last letter, and suggested by the words of the Apostle, as before explained: If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.—2. Cor. v: 17. What are the evidences of this great change?

But, let us first take a brief review of what has been said of regeneration—the great change itself. This, in the passage just quoted, is called "a new creature," and the next verse it is said to be of God; for all things are of his, who hath reconciled us to himself by Christ; for we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.—2. Cor. v: 17, 18; Eph. ii: 10.

Regeneration—this great change is necessary because we are sinners, and as such, unfit for heaven. We have original sin, and this "consists, let it be the guilt (by imputation) of Adam's first sin, or the legal accountability of every soul for that sin, in which every one federally participated. 2. "In the want of original righteousness," or an entire destitution of all holy principles, feelings and tendencies. 3. "In the corruption of the whole nature"; that is, not only a privation of all holiness, but the infection of the nature with positive depravity. See Bible Dictionary; and Vincent's Catechism, published by the Presbyterian Board, page 78, Ques. 8, 9; and 1. John iii: 1-10.

"But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.—1. Cor. ii: 14. The things of the Spirit are foolishness to the natural man; they are to him absurd, insipid and distasteful. And he can not know them, because he is to discern the nature of any thing, whether as true, or good, or beautiful. To know God is to discern his truth and excellence; to know the truth is to apprehend it as true and good. The wise are the good; that is, those who discern the truth and excellence of Divine things. The fools are the wicked; those who are insensible to truth and goodness. What, therefore, the Apostle here affirms of the natural or unregenerated man, that he can not discern the truth, excellence, or beauty of Divine things. He can not do it. It is not simply that he does not do it; or that he will not do it, but he can not. We do not say of a clown that he will not discern the truth, excellence, and beauty of a poem. The difficulty is not merely in his will, but in his whole inward state. The thing is foolishness to him. So the Scriptures do not say of the natural man merely that he will not discern the things of the Spirit, because the difficulty in his case is not in the will alone, but in his whole inward state. He can not know them. And the reason is, because they are spiritually discerned. They are discerned through the Spirit. There, therefore, those who have not the Spirit can not discern them. If the effect of sin on the human soul is to make it blind to the truth, excellence, and beauty of Divine things; if, as the Apostle asserts, the natural, or unregenerated, man is in such a state that the things of the Spirit are foolishness to him, absurd, insipid and distasteful, then it follows that he can discern them

only through the Spirit. [He must be born again—born of the Spirit.] His inward state must be changed by the influence of the Spirit before he can apprehend the truth and excellence of the Gospel. There must be congeniality between the perceiver and the thing perceived. Only the pure in heart can see God. If our Gospel be hid, says the Apostle, it is hid to them that are lost. The only hope of the unregenerated, therefore, is in doing as the blind did, in the days of Christ. They must go to him for spiritual discernment, and those who go to him he will in no wise cast out. Hear Hodge's Commentary on 1. Corinthians ii: 14, and throughout. It is excellent—exceedingly valuable.

As to its nature, regeneration is a new birth; it is a change of heart. It is the infusion of spiritual life, the implanting of a holy principle, writing the law of God in the heart, restoring the lost image of God to the soul, enlightening the mind; renewing the will, raising up the dead soul and uniting it to Christ by faith. As because of sin we are blind, and have no capacity of spiritual perception, and can not discern the things of the Spirit; the Spirit opens our blind eyes in this great change enables us to see spiritual objects, and gives us the power of truth and of holiness and Divine things. The opening of the eyes of the mind, or the giving to us the power of capacity to perceive the things of God, or the removal of our blindness and giving us sight, is regeneration; the new views, the spiritual illumination attending the removal of our blindness, and the new views, is the first effect of regeneration; and is inseparable from saving faith; be that is spiritual judgment all things, discerns and appreciates them.—1. Cor. ii: 15. When the mind is thus spiritually enlightened, there is that faith which unites us to Christ, so that we are in him, united to him; and if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, and is born again. Our vital saving union with him, and his Spirit, is not a mere outward strength, but the reality of our faith. Where there is faith, there is regeneration and a new life. Says Dr. Alexander, "Suppose life to be given by Divine power to a dead seed, so that it springs up and grows; that illustrates the nature of regeneration." We are dead in sin; regeneration makes us alive; you shall be quickened, and will be quickened and believe and are in Christ new creatures; savingly united to him.—Eph. ii: 1-8; 2. Cor. v: 17, 18.

The Agent in regeneration is the Holy Ghost. It is his work to enlighten our minds and renew our wills; it is his work to open our hearts; give sight to our blind minds, and impart a capacity of spiritual perception and susceptibility of holy feeling. It is his work to quicken the dead "sin." To be born again, to be born of the Spirit; regeneration is the re-quickening of the Holy Ghost. Spiritual things were discerned through the Spirit.—John i: 7, 8; Titus iii: 4-7; 1. Cor. ii: 14, 15.

The means in regeneration is the Word of God, the Gospel, the truth; of his own will he beget us with the word of truth.—Jas. i: 18. Hence, the importance of reading the Bible and other good books, and of his favor, renewals and sanctities and sanctities, and family instruction; and of hence, too, the importance of prayer, and of all the means of grace. God works by means; and in the diligent use of these means we may hope for his blessing; for though he does not bless us for the use of the means, he does bless us in their use. When he sends his Gospel to a place, it is because he has designs of mercy toward some; and while he continues his Gospel in a place, there is reason to hope that he has a people there to be reached, and blessed, and saved by it; and when he removes his Gospel from a people, there is reason to fear that they are doomed to perdition, or that the unregenerate among them are to be left to perish; and when he removes the Gospel from among them, it is just what Satan delights to see, as it gives him good hopes of holding his subjects without molestation. As God has given you his Word and the means of his grace, (and so far restored your health as to permit you again to visit his house), use these means, and pray for his blessing on them; for it is not a vain thing for you, because it will give you faith to come by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.—Deut. xxxii: 47; Rom. x: 10-17.

The end or design of regeneration is the glory of God. God hath made all things for his own glory; men by their sins have broken his law and dishonored him; when, in carrying out the scheme of redemption, he brings them back to a place, it is to his favor, renewals and sanctities and sanctities, them, it is that they may live in his glory in this world, and to the praise of his glorious grace in the next.—Eph. ii: 4-10. In a word, as the glory of God is the end of creation, so it is of the new creation. The song of redemption is Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men of good will.

Now, we must not only have right views of truth, but a right state of heart, and these involve each other; the natural man can not know right things of the Spirit; they are spiritually discerned.—1. Cor. ii: 14. Religion is not a set of notions merely, nor does it consist in mere feeling; it does not divide the intellect and the emotions; it concerns, and it controls both. The truth is to be embraced and, of course, it must be known, and hence it must be preached, and preached with all plainness and fidelity, and the whole counsel of God declared; and the truth, God's own truth, when perceived, and embraced, and accompanied by the Spirit, will produce proper feelings and emotions, and a desire to be sanctified. That feeling which is not produced by the truth and the Spirit of God, is not religious feeling; and, of course, of no account; it is even worse than useless—a real injury—as it gives wrong impressions, and may lead to false and delusive hopes. Hence, the danger of mere sympathy and excitement. Usually, the more excitement the religion; the more noise and confusion, the less real devotion. All the feeling there is in the heavenly world, is the result of truth rightly apprehended; and if we would have right religious feelings, we must strive to have right views of Divine truth. The soul is one; while the intellect is wrong, the feelings can not be right. To have right feelings, we must have right views. To aid you, in this important matter, is the humble

design of these letters; and to accomplish this design, I have deemed it expedient to repeat, more than once, some of the most important truths advanced, and shall continue thus to do for your present and eternal benefit. As Paul said to the Philippians: To write the same things to you, to me indeed is not grievous, but for you it is safe.—Phil. iii: 1.

It is safe, because truth, Divine truth, perceived and embraced by the intellect and the heart, must regulate and control the affections. There is no other rule by which they can be regulated, than the truth and power by which they can be controlled, but the truth and Spirit of God; and the truth and the Spirit of God are always in harmony; they never disagree. What is not according to God's truth, is not and can not be from God's Spirit. Are our feelings, our affections and affections, in harmony with God's truth? Then, let us consider the truth and power by which they can be controlled, but the truth and Spirit of God; and the truth and the Spirit of God are always in harmony; they never disagree. What is not according to God's truth, is not and can not be from God's Spirit. Are our feelings, our affections and affections, in harmony with God's truth? 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