

It is one thing to insist on “the uselessness of all forms and constitutions and dispensations to a man, unless he punctually and for himself claims the benefit of them.” But it is something else to speak “as if there were no constitutions, no dispensations of which one can claim the benefit, as if faith created the benefits of which it availed itself.” Similarly, it is one thing to speak “good tidings of an established harmony, a constituted order, intended for man as man, be there never so few who as yet understand what it means, and are admitted to it.” But it is something else to contend that “the act, by which I claim my birthright in an inheritance purchased long ago by a dreadful agony, an act which, . . . upon the largest view of its value, confers no certain portion of grace upon the unconscious subject, constitutes my title to this new and magnificent estate” (*Subscription No Bondage*: 106).

How should we meet the Anabaptist? By laying hold of “the positive truth, that there must be a conscious and voluntary recognition of our Church-membership, besides the act of sacramental fellowship,” and showing him that “this is as much our tenet as his, that our service of Confirmation is a distinct acknowledgement of it.” But also by showing him that “it is only the negative part of his creed,—the denial that there is another act of admission into Christ’s body, an act setting forth that the constitution of the Church of Christ is an established constitution, not dependent on human faith, but fixed and certain in Christ, though no man should enter into it” (112 f.).