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Antipædobaptism Examined:

O R,

A STRICT AND IMPARTIAL

I N Q U I R Y

I N T O T H E

NATURE AND DESIGN, SUBJECTS AND MODE
O F

B A P T I S M.

I N C L U D I N G, A L S O,

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE NATURE OF
P O S I T I V E I N S T I T U T I O N S
I N G E N E R A L, A N D
O C C A S I O N A L S T R I C T U R E S O N H U M A N
C E R E M O N I E S I N M A T T E R S O F R E L I G I O N.

C O N T A I N I N G, I N P A R T I C U L A R,

A F U L L R E P L Y T O

Mr. Booth's Pædobaptism Examined.

By EDWARD WILLIAMS.

WHEN I HAD WAITED—I SAID, I WILL ANSWER ALSO MY
PART, I ALSO WILL SHEW MINE OPINION. ELIHU.

V O L. I.

S H R E W S B U R Y:

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MDCCLXXXIX.

P R E F A C E.

THE following work is not intended *merely* as an answer to Mr. BOOTH's *Pædobaptism Examined*; the author, as occasion offered, has taken notice of what appeared to him the most plausible arguments and objections contained in Dr. STENNETT's Answer to Dr. ADDINGTON, Dr. GALE's Reflections on Dr. WALL's History, and some others; and therefore, he has ventured to give the result of his inquiries the title of *Antipædobaptism Examined*; not so much as a counter-title to that of Mr. BOOTH's publication, as that the *Antipædobaptist System* at large, is made the subject of inquiry. This extent of design will, in some measure, account for the largeness of the work; to which I must add another reason, viz. That I was desirous my principles may be thoroughly understood by every reader, if possible, without hazard of mistake; and this appeared the most effectual method—to set them in different positions—and to shew their connection with the several branches of dispute, and their genuine practical tendency. Whence arises, eventually,

a double advantage to the inquisitive reader; he not only must needs perceive clearly what the principles are, but also has an opportunity to judge of their *truth*, by observing the universality of their application.

AT different intervals of relaxation from more important engagements, the subject of these volumes had attracted the Author's attention for some years; but he did not resolve to write and publish, till some time after Mr. BOOTH's *Pædobaptism Examined* made its appearance: nor was it his design, when he began to write, to handle the several branches of controversy in so extensive a manner. But, in his progress, the more he considered his leading ideas, in their various application to the different parts, the more he was induced to extend his plan.

WHEN I read Mr. BOOTH's Preface to the *second edition* of his work, which came out after the former part of mine was sent into the press, my curiosity was not a little gratified with the following paragraph: "Should this examination of Pædobaptism have the honour of being regarded as deserving an answer, and should any of our opposers write against me, it will not avail to refute some particular parts of the work, detached from the general principles

ples on which I proceed. No; the *data*, the *principal grounds* of reasoning, which are adopted from Pædobaptists themselves, must be constantly kept in view; or nothing to the honour of infant sprinkling will be effected. For as the grand principles on which my argumentation proceeds, and whence my general conclusions are drawn, are those of Protestants when contending with Papists, and those of Non-conformists when disputing with English Episcopalians; it will be incumbent on such opposer to shew, either that the *principles themselves are false*, or that my *reasoning upon them is inconclusive*. Now as I do not perceive how any Protestant can give up those principles, without virtually admitting the superstitions of Popery; nor how they can be deserted by any Dissenter, without implicitly renouncing his Non-conformity; so I conclude, that the whole force of any opponent must be employed in endeavouring to prove, that I have reasoned inconsequentially from those principles. That this might be easily proved, I am not at present convinced: and whether any of our Pædobaptist Brethren will consider this publication as of sufficient importance to excite such an attempt, is to me uncertain*.”

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* p. 19, 20.

The data, the principal grounds of reasoning must be kept in view. Well, I reflected, here is my task fairly pointed out; and I am not a little pleased to observe, that what is here prescribed is precisely the same as what I had from the first imposed upon myself: that is, not to nibble at some of the branches of his stately tree, but to lay the axe of opposite principles to the root of it; not to uncover a little here and there of his building, to find a few faults in quotations, translations, and the like, but to undermine the foundation. The *principal grounds* of reasoning I have endeavoured constantly to keep in view; and my aim is throughout to shew that the *principles* of Protestants and Non-conformists, taken in their only true sense and force, are either misunderstood or *misrepresented* by my opponent, and consequently his reasoning upon them, which derives all its plausibility from that misrepresentation, is *inconclusive*. His conduct in applying their maxims to his cause, may be compared to that of a Judge who should produce, from the best writers, definitions of Justice in the abstract, and then arbitrarily tack these to any cause, right or wrong, according to his humour. But will such an arbitrary application of a definition, formed abstractedly,

stractedly, make a cause more or less just in itself? Should not the circumstances of the point in litigation be first attended to, and the facts be accurately ascertained, in order to infer the *quantum* of justice or injustice in the whole aggregate? So far were the most eminent of the Protestants and Non-conformists from discarding the use of right reason and scripture analogy in their investigations of gospel worship and institutions, that sometimes they were not a little offended with insinuations to the contrary. The following words of Dr. JOHN OWEN may be fairly deemed a proper specimen of their thoughts upon the matter: "I have of late been much surpris'd with the plea of some for the *use of reason* in religion and sacred things; not at all that such a *plea is insisted* on, but that it is by them built expressly on a supposition, that it is by others, whom they reflect upon, *denied*; whereas some, probably intended in those reflections, have pleaded for it *against the Papists* (to speak within the bounds of sobriety) with as much reason, and no less effectually, than any amongst themselves*."

IN fact, the christian church has been shamefully abused by extravagant opinions and superstitious

* On the Sabbath, Exercit. I. § 8.

stitious ceremonies, which may well raise the indignation of a mind in love with the sacred authority of scripture, and rational devotion ; and this has occasioned some, in the height of their antipathy and pious zeal, to fly into the opposite extreme of adhering to the *mere letter* of divine laws, to the neglect of their *true spirit*. But this is not all ; what was designed as a preventive to the former disease, becomes itself, in common with it, the occasion (or, shall I say, the culpable cause?) of a malady far more dangerous. “ Among other prejudices,” — says a shrewd observer, who, hiding himself behind the scene, attentively watched their motions — “ among other prejudices there is one of a particular nature, which you must have observed to be one of the greatest causes of modern irreligion. — Whilst some *opinions and rites* are carried to such an *immoderate height*, as exposes the absurdity of them to the view of almost every body but them who raise them, not only gentlemen of the *belles lettres*, but even men of common sense, many times see thro’ them ; and then out of indignation and an excessive renitence, not *separating* that which is true from that which is false, they come to deny both, and fall back into the contrary extreme, a contempt of all religion in general *.”

* WOLLAST. Relig. of Nat. p. 60, 61. Edit. 1725.

I SHOULD be very sorry if what is advanced in the following Examination, should in any measure violate the sacred bond of christian charity and friendship that subsists between me and, in this instance, my differing brethren; with several of whom I wish to preserve and cultivate a fraternal affection. And those of them who bear the ministerial character, with whom I agree in weightier points of evangelical truth, are welcome to my pulpit, my house, and my heart; and none would be more so, according to my present views, than the author of the *Reign of Grace*, and *Pædobaptism Examined*.

I now submit the performance to the impartial judgment of the candid public, and implore the blessing of God on every grain of truth contained in it, for the reader's real benefit; earnestly wishing that evangelical knowledge may increase, and that all our acquaintance with God's word, covenant, institutions, and all the means of grace, may be reduced to experience and useful practice, to the glory of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

OSWESTRY, Dec. 9, 1788.

E R R A T A.

Vol. I. p.	7 line	1. Note, for Treatise on, read, History of.	
	89	10	(§) (§ 4.)
	95	29	negatives negative
	137	26	Rom. 1 Cor.
	184	4	Corrollary corollary
	198	ult.	corolaries corollariës
	200	23	shall should
	217	8	promisor promiser
	224	12	fants infants
	283	17	were where
	—	ult.	Grotius Grotium.
	286	15	<i>dele</i> as
	298	2 Note,	<i>state</i> happiness
	311	11	31 39
	356	33	<i>παλζαι</i> <i>παλζαι</i>
	386	penult.	their your
	395	penult.	<i>dele</i> <i>bad</i>
Vol. II. p.	3	17	catechresis catachresis
	63	18	tincturat tinctura
	120	13	let led
	199	1	case cause
	210	25	<i>παιδιαν</i> <i>παιδιων</i>
	211	12	sail seal
	213	4	<i>dele</i> <i>as</i> after <i>well</i>
	—	—	major magis
	268	28	his word God's word
	288	4	see it see to it.
	382	18	* Blackst. Comm. Introd. § 2.

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*Intended to be published, as soon as the Author's
other Engagements will permit,*

AN

E S S A Y

ON THE

EQUITY OF DIVINE GOVERNMENT,

AND THE

SOVEREIGNTY OF DIVINE GRACE.

Wherein, particularly, The
LATITUDINARIAN HYPOTHESIS OF INDETERMINATE
REDEMPTION,

AND THE

ANTINOMIAN NOTION of the DIVINE DECREES
being the rule of ministerial conduct, are
carefully examined.

By EDWARD WILLIAMS.

SHALL not the Judge of all the earth do right? Gen.
xviii. 25.

AND he doth according to his will in the army of Heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth. Dan. iv. 35.

WHY doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say unto him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Rom. ix. 19, 20.

THE secret things belong to the Lord our God; but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever. Deut. xxix. 29.

ANTIPÆDOBAPTISM EXAMINED.

INTRODUCTION,

Containing some Preliminary Remarks.

- § 1. *The importance of the subject.* § 2. *The advantages of a strict and impartial inquiry into it.*
§ 3. *Preliminary Remarks.* § 4. (1) *Of the kind of evidence required in this debate.* § 5. (2) *Concerning the main hinge of the controversy.* § 6. (3) *Of defining and explaining the principal terms.*
§ 7. (4) *Of human authority and opinion.*

§ 1. **T**HAT the subject investigated in the following pages is of a nature considerably important, will hardly be questioned by any who reflect, that *no person* professing christianity can lawfully exempt himself from paying it at least a practical attention; for, if he imagine (as the *Quakers*, and some of the followers of *SOCINUS* do) that he is under no obligation to

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espouse the practice of water baptism, as a *standing ordinance* in the christian church, surely he ought to have substantial reasons for that determination, or else must incur the censure of precipitate rashness and irreligion. It concerns him impartially to judge, whether or not the arguments adduced in favour of this christian practice be of *superior force* to those insisted on to justify an absolute neglect of it. If the ordinance be from heaven, a law once enacted by the Great Head of the church; is our evidence for its repeal stronger than any we have for its continuance? If not, the neglect must be highly criminal, as implying an impeachment of the divine wisdom, and a contempt of the divine authority*. But if it be an evident truth, that this ordinance is of *perpetual obligation*, no sincere christian can hesitate a moment from inferring, that it is of some importance to know, how he may *best* discharge any duty that relates to it? To say, that it is of no consequence *who* is baptized, or immaterial *how* the rite is to be performed, *without due*

* THE notion, "that this institution doth not extend to the descendants of professing christians; being neither suitable to their circumstances, nor intended to bind them," is justly stiled, by a Gentleman who has lately published on the subject, a *new idea* concerning baptism, as appropriate to *present times*; which he refutes by shewing — that there is nothing in the nature of any particular *command*, or any *circumstance* in the injunction that renders it peculiarly proper, or any ways limits it to the persons and times then present, or which immediately succeeded—and that there is nothing in the rite of baptism, in its meaning and *design*, that indicates its being founded on *partial* considerations. See TOULMIN'S *Essay on Baptism, passim*.

due examination, is incompatible with christian sincerity. Whatever bears the stamp of divine authority has an undisputed claim on our reverential regards. I may further add; the consideration of its frequent occurrence—that most gospel ministers have reiterated calls to determine about the subjects and circumstances of it—that there are innumerable families who have repeated occasions to decide upon the case—and, in a word, that no parent of a living child in the whole christian world, ought to reckon this ordinance as a matter of mere indifference—these considerations, I say, and others that might be mentioned, are concurring reasons at once to justify a strict and impartial inquiry into this controverted subject, and thereby an attempt to ascertain its comparative importance.

THUS far, therefore, I have the pleasure to agree with the respectable Author whose publication I more professedly examine, when he says, “Some persons affect to represent all disputes about the mode and subjects of baptism as not only stale and unimportant, but as unworthy the character of any who profess a warm regard for the Person, the atonement, and the grace of Jesus Christ. It must, indeed, be acknowledged, that church order, positive rites, and external forms of worship, are not of *equal* importance with those doctrines which immediately respect the object of our worship, as rational creatures; the ground of our hope, as criminals deserving to perish; or the source of our blessedness, as in-

tended for an immortal existence.—But is this a sufficient reason for treating the law of baptism as if it were of little or no importance—as if it were *obsolete*, or as if our Great Legislator had *no meaning* when he enacted it?—Are we not required to *contend earnestly*, but with virtuous dispositions, *for every branch of that faith which was once delivered to the saints*? If, therefore, infants be solemnly sprinkled by divine right, it must be the *indispensible duty* of Pædobaptists to contend for it*—especially when *attacked*. To this I would add, if the baptizing of infants be *at all* a duty, it *must* be an *important* one, for it is to be observed, as Bp. BUTLER has done before, “That all christians are commanded to contribute, by their profession of christianity, to preserve it in the world; for it is the very scheme of the gospel that each christian should, in his degree, contribute towards continuing and carrying it on; all by uniting in the publick profession and external practice of christianity †,” which cannot properly be done without duly attending to the introductory rite to such a profession.

§ 2. A FAIR investigation of the subject before us, in its full extent, and the *general principles* on which the weight of the controversy depends, may be attended also with some considerable advantages. A liberal, yet modest, inquiry after truth, especially in matters of duty and

* Mr. BOOTH'S Pædobaptism Examined, Preface, p. 7.

† BUTLER'S Analogy, Part II, Ch. I, p. 219. 2d. Edit.

and practice, cannot fail of being immediately advantageous to the inquirer, and, when attended with success, must be greatly beneficial in its consequences. For, to discover truth, and the *evidence* of truth, must needs afford more substantial profit, and a more generous pleasure, than can be expected in the mazes of falsehood and error, ignorance and prejudice. We may rest assured that the valuable gem, TRUTH, will lose nothing of its lustre or worth by a thorough examination. If what has appeared to us, in the semblance of a precious jewel, turn out on a closer search to be no better than a worthless pebble, it must be weak and preposterous still to retain and prize it as most valuable. But if long esteemed as of real worth, and pronounced genuine by many able judges, proportionable caution is necessary; we should turn and view it on every side, avail ourselves of the best light, and every proper advantage, lest, gulled by the artful, ourselves and our families sustain an important loss. If Pædobaptism be in reality what its opposers of the present day pronounce it to be, namely, “*absurd and unscriptural**,” to resign it will be no loss, but real gain. But if it be of God, it is a *truth*; and if it be a truth, there is *attainable evidence* for its being so; for, I confess, I have no high opinion of what Mr. B. calls a wonderful secret—*truth without evidence*—tho’ it were discovered by a right re-

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* STENNET’S Answer to ADDINGTON, p. 234.

verend prelate †. But I would not have Mr. B. be transported with joy at the idea of his possessing “greatly preponderating evidence on his side,” till he has better justified the *principles* on which he argues; lest while he is endeavouring to demolish the labours of others, and pleased,
 “greatly

† Bp. TAYLOR’s *Liberty of Prophefying*. This prelate, whom Mr. B. so often quotes, wrote the treatise here referred to in the times of the rebellion in England; in which he undertakes to shew, with a view to moderate the rigor of the parliamentary party, *how much* might be said of two sorts of Dissenters, the Antipædobaptists and the Papists.—And in his plea for the former, tho’ he there declares himself well satisfied with the principles of Pædobaptism, of which he gives a summary account, and says, that he takes the other opinion to be an *error*; yet under pretence of reciting what may be said for this error, he draws up so elaborate a system of arguments against infant baptism, and sets them forth to such advantage, that he is judged to have said more for the Antipædobaptists than they were ever before able to say for themselves. And Dr. HAMMOND says (*Six Queries*. Infant Baptism, § 49.) It is the most diligent collection and the most exact scheme of the arguments against Infant Baptism that he had ever met with. Therefore the Dr. wrote an answer to this piece, solving each objection particularly; towards the conclusion of which (§ 139.) he observes, “I have
 “passed thro’ all the several heads of arguments that are here proposed,
 “and considered them as nicely as I could, so as not to let fall one
 “word that seemed to me to have any shew of validity in it, or in
 “the consequence of it, and must consent to the truth of the author’s
 “[the Bishop’s] observations, “that the Anabaptists have been en-
 “couraged in their error more by the accidental advantages given them
 “by the weakness of those arguments that have been brought against
 “them, than by any truth of their cause.” And afterwards Bp. TAYLOR himself, having premised that he was sorry if any one had been so weak as to be misled by such objections, and that he counted it great condescension in Dr. HAMMOND to bestow an answer on them, wrote also his own answers to his own objections, and inserted them in a latter edition of the said treatise, (See WALL’s
 Treatise

“greatly pleased,” with the thought, his own foundation be undermined. Nor would I have him be so “greatly discouraged,” as he professes to be, in respect of an issue to the present controversy, while he thinks that the Baptists *alone* “will plead preponderating evidence, and firmly insist upon it as a maxim of logical prudence, that our *assent* should always be proportioned to the *degree of evidence*.” Sir, let not this discourage you; surely the Pædobaptists will think better of it than to reject so excellent a rule in pleading their cause. For my own part, I have the pleasure to assure you, that I feel no reluctance at all to appeal, on every occasion, to so equitable a maxim, be the consequence what it may. “Nor have I any apprehension” (to borrow the words of an opposite writer) that this trial will at all injure the cause I am defending; on the contrary, I am well persuaded

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Treatise on Infant Baptism, Part II. Chap. 2. § 6.)—After all, tho’ there be nothing which we can pronounce to be truth without suitable evidence, yet in a qualified sense I question whether the Bishop’s remark—“I think there is so much to be pretended against that [Pædobaptism] which I believe to be the truth, that there is much more *truth* than *evidence* on our side”—deserves all that severity of satire which Mr. B. bestows on it. For by *evidence*, I presume, he intends a particular *kind* of evidence, an *express* command, *totidem verbis*, or, demonstrable scriptural example: and by *truth*, a conclusion fairly drawn from *other* premises. Nor will Mr. B. deny, that there are many things of a religious nature demonstrably *true*, or in matters of practice absolute *duty*, the *evidence* whereof does not arise from *express* revelation. Whether this remark will apply to the subject in question, will be further examined.

it will serve it. It is the part of error, not of truth, to elude inquiry: and he who would establish a point in debate, if he is satisfied of the goodness of his cause, will know how even to avail himself of the objections of his opponents. Truth is always perfectly consistent with itself: and however collateral circumstances may be so disguised, or placed in such a point of light by skilful management, as, for a time, to weaken and confound the plainest evidence of a real fact; yet, when those circumstances come to be thoroughly looked into, they will not only cease to have their effect, but will corroborate and brighten that evidence to which they before proved so unfriendly.*”

§ 3. IT is no uncommon thing in controversial matters for the contending parties to misunderstand one another on their first setting out; either some ambiguous terms are not explained, on which, notwithstanding, considerable stress is laid; or something is much insisted on which has only a remote reference, but is far from being essential, to the subject in hand; or a multitude of arguments are produced in proof of a point, when most, if not all, would have not the least plausibility but from begging the question in debate. This method may, indeed, dazzle and confound the weak, but is ill calculated to convince the judicious. This being the case, and perhaps never more so than in disputes about baptism,

* STENNET'S Answer to A, p. 213.

baptism, it may be proper to make a few *Preliminary Remarks*.

§ 4. (I) I BEGIN then, with a pertinent observation of an ingenious Antipædobaptist, which he afterwards expressly applies to baptism. "No theological subject (says he) requires more accurate investigation than the article of *evidence*. Evidence is that which *demonstrates*. Now there are various kinds and degrees of evidence, and it would very much contribute to clear a point in debate, were disputants first of all to agree on certain data, or *what* should be allowed evidence in the case in question. In law this is a matter of great consequence, and when divines proceed in the methods used in our courts of law, they gain infinite advantage—They do, as it were, swear the witnesses before they admit them as evidence*."

IT is strongly insinuated by Mr. B. that whatever has been said in vindication of Pædobaptism is fit only to deceive "superficial observers." Take his own words. "It is manifest that notwithstanding the number of evidences usually subpœnaed against us, when the validity of infant sprinkling is to be *publicly* tried; and notwithstanding the formidable appearance they frequently make, in the eye of a superficial observer; yet, when these very evidences are impartially examined by Pædobaptists in *private*, without being perplexed with captious queries, they have not a word to say for infant sprinkling; but all

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their

* ROBINSON'S Notes on CLAUDE'S Essay, Vol. II, p. 247.

their depositions are directed to prove doctrines and facts of a quite different nature †." Surely this is very astonishing if true. What! are *all* the conclusions of *every* Pædobaptist disputant so naked, so arbitrary, so irrational, that not *one principle* is found which, as a faithful evidence, and unsuborned, will stand uniform in its depositions, unmoved, and unawed by cross-examination? I would now only beg of the reader to admit, that it is at least *possible* Mr. B. is misled by too hasty and partial a judgment. Is he sure, has he *demonstrated*, not only that the witnesses give evidence in his favour, but that, in Mr. ROBINSON'S phrase, they are "sworn before they are admitted?" I am not a little suspicious that his *principal* witness, nay the *only* one in which he seems to place any confidence, is not *legally* introduced.

To be a little more explicit; I apprehend the Antipædobaptists build on the following *supposition* as their chief corner stone, confide in it as their great palladium, and refer to it as the standard of all their arguments, namely, "That the law of baptism in the New Testament is of a nature *intirely positive*, as to the subject and mode of it;" and, if I understand them right, they are willing that their cause should stand or fall with it. Thus Mr. B. when animadverting on the conduct of one of his brethren for occasionally quitting that fort, "Except it be maintained, that *positive* ordinances are to be *intirely*

† *Idem* p. 449.

intirely governed by *positive law* and primitive example, it is *impossible* for him to stand his ground by *fair argument* in various cases, when disputing with Pædobaptists as such *.” “ All who pretend, (says a Gentleman before quoted) to defend infant sprinkling, do but trifle, except they go to the *true ground* of the debate, and either prove—that infant sprinkling is somewhere appointed by Christ our Legislator—or that the authority of Christ is not necessary to the establishment of a *positive institute*—or that some person has since appeared vested with such authority as Christ himself exercised †.” A dire dilemma! But, upon recollection, to ease myself a little of this tripple perplexity, I beg leave to return the *third* part of the difficulty to the author himself and the pretended successors of St. Peter, to be amicably settled between them. The two former I shall not *trifle* with, but shall endeavour fairly to answer them. For as our opponents seem willing to hazard the reputation and existence of their cause with the strength of the afore-said maxim, “ Baptism is a merely positive rite;”—and concluding it to be *divine*, they in their turn, “ in the language of self-gratulation, repeat the old *εὕρηκα* of ARCHIMEDES, *I have found it! I have found it!*”—it will be necessary, and it shall be the leading part of this work, to examine its pretensions with strictness. Thus I, also, shall attempt, on proper occasions, to ascertain the *kinds* and *degrees* of evidence, and

* p. 462.

† ROBINSON's Notes; Vol. II. p. 423.

“swear the witnesses.” Nor am I discouraged at the prospect of “proving, that infant baptism IS SOMEWHERE *appointed* by Christ our Legislator.”

§ 5. (2) I PROCEED to observe, that it appears to me extremely desirable, in controversial debates, that the disputants should be peculiarly solicitous to fix upon the *main hinge* of the difference between them, as that not only tends to reduce it in bulk, but would also supersede much impertinence, altercation, and false reasoning; hereby a fairer opportunity would be afforded for a close encounter, the combatants would stand, as it were, upon even ground, and thus we may hope the one party might avoid the charge laid against it by the other, *viz.* That it no sooner fixes upon a spot for the engagement, than it finds it necessary or expedient to quit that for another.

BUT how shall a man know what this turning point is? Mr. ROBINSON assures us that “Abraham’s covenant, greek particles, and a thousand more such topicks, no more regard the subject than the first verse of the first book of Chronicles, Adam, Sheth, Enosh *!” Dreadful scythe! And no mean mower, to cut so much at one stroke! — Dr. S. with more moderation, expresses himself as follows, “This question, says he, — WHETHER BAPTISM IS A MEAN OF FAITH AND REPENTANCE? — I take to be the *main hinge* upon which the dispute between us and the Pædobaptists

* Notes on CLAUDE, Vol. II. p. 423.

dobaptists turns †," I am at a loss, however, how to reconcile this declaration with what he says elsewhere; for instance, where he represents the supposed "JOINT INTEREST OF PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN IN THE COVENANT, as that upon which the *whole superstructure* of infant baptism stands," adding, "What pity then our brethren will not yield to the force of this plain truth, that positive institutions must in their own nature derive their authority, not from the uncertain deductions of analogy, but, from the clear and express declarations of God's word!" And what would follow? Why, "yielding to this proposition, they would at once find themselves obliged to lay aside infant baptism*." Certainly then, the said proposition must be no mean hinge, if not the main one. But has the Dr. or any one else, fairly proved not only that the proposition itself is true, but also *applicable* to the ordinance of baptism, and consequently that this "Yielding" is our *duty*. Ah, *hic labor, hoc opus est*, this, this is the main *difficulty*. What a pity the Pædobaptists should be so importuned to yield *without evidence*!—I also will shew mine opinion respecting the question to be decided, and it is this, WHETHER IT IS THE WILL OF CHRIST THAT THE INFANTS OF BELIEVING PARENTS SHOULD BE BAPTIZED? It certainly is his will that all who are proper subjects of baptism should be baptized; we contend that the infants of believing parents are such; and therefore should be

† Answer to A. p. 34.

* Idem p. 174.

be baptized. If they are proved to be *proper* subjects, that is, such as come within Christ's *intention* when he instituted the ordinance, it must follow that it is HIS WILL and pleasure they should be baptized.—I say the infants of *believing* parents, for it is not essential to the controversy to include any others; what may be said of *others* is only a circumstance which does not affect the argument. For the Antipædobaptists' arguments are intended to conclude against *all children* alike, and it must be as conclusive against their system to prove it to be the *will of Christ* that any *one* infant whatever should be baptized, as if *all* were included in the reasoning.

HENCE another question arises, namely, **HOW MAY WE KNOW WHAT IS THE WILL OF CHRIST IN THIS MATTER?** Mr. B. replies; “Seeing baptism is as really and intirely a positive institution, as any that were given to the chosen tribes; we cannot with safety infer either the mode or the subject of it, from any thing short of a *precept*, or a *precedent*, recorded in scripture, and relating to that very ordinance ¶.” He frequently expresses himself to the same purpose, as do all the writers of note on that side of the question. We see that Mr. B. intends that this declaration should be applied not only to the mode but also to the *subject* of baptism, that is, in other words, to this question, “**WHO is to be baptized?**” Now, independent of the *fact*, that
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the right of infants is or is not supported by a revealed express precept or precedent, nay, on *supposition* that there is in scripture *neither*, I maintain that the infants of believers are intitled to the ordinance, and of course that the rule he works by is a false one. It proves too much, and is reducible, on his own principles, to a downright contradiction. This assertion I hope to make good against our author in the following pages, notwithstanding what he says about “positive laws implying their negatives †.”

WHAT our opposing friends say about *positive rites, precepts, precedents*, “and a thousand more such topicks,” are to no good purpose, until they demonstrate that the faithful dictates of the law of our nature, of right reason and common sense, are no part of CHRIST’S WILL to his people and ministers, when these dictates are not *expressly* controuled and suppressed.

It is not a little surprising to observe how strenuously they oppose moral and analogical reasonings on this *one subject* of baptism, while they justly assume the same liberty with us on other subjects *equally positive*. I do not wish to see any, whom Christ has made free, wear the galling yoke of those ceremonies which he did not *intend* should continue, tho’ *commanded* by himself, and *practised* by his primitive disciples. Therefore, this liberty, I say, they *justly* take in all New Testament institutions, this of baptism *alone* excepted; and this liberty we assert is the
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right of us *all*, and without exception of *any* institution. The Antipædobaptists are guilty of a great piece of *inconsistence* in making such a distinction where there is no apparent ground of difference, and so in pronouncing judgment without suitable *evidence*; but we consistently claim a right of appealing to reason, analogy, and common sense, in connexion with the *nature* and *design* of the institution, and the most apparent *intention* of our Lawgiver. Nor is it in their power to maintain the *perpetuity* of this ordinance, against the Quakers and others, the obligation of ministers to baptize those who are *taught*, &c. but by those very aids which they would fain deny us.

§ 6. (3) INAUSPICIOUS to this controversy, above most others, *terms* of ambiguous import, and unexplained, have been bandied about by both parties, on which, however, considerable stress has been laid; and thus, much confusion and little profit have often attended very labour-ed arguments. For instance, the term INFANT SPRINKLING has been substituted for *infant baptism*, not indeed always by way of contempt, but often improperly, because thereby is conveyed the secondary idea of a necessary connexion between the mode *sprinkling* and the baptism of an infant. Whereas thousands are *dipped* in infancy as well as sprinkled, in the christian world, and some even in England. So that, upon our opponents' own principles, those infants who
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are dipped in the name of the Sacred Three, by a Minister of Christ, in obedience to HIS WILL, ought to be reckoned as BAPTIZED: for since they maintain that baptizing and dipping are synonymous terms, it follows that those are baptized who are thus dipped. Not to insist upon the absurd consequence of substituting the one term for the other; for then it would also follow, that there are *many baptisms* to which the *same person* ought often to submit for his health's sake; that as often as a child is dipped it is baptized; that as often as any person in the world, Christian, Jew, Turk, or Heathen, is plunged, on any occasion whatever, he is baptized; yea, that as often as *any thing* is plunged, according to them, it is baptized; whereas I know of no Pædobaptists who wish to make sprinkling, or indeed any other *particular mode* of using water, synonymous with baptism.

BESIDES, the question is not, whether scripture expressly enjoins *infant baptism*, by a direct specification, but whether it enjoins *baptism* to all *proper* subjects, and whether the administrator, who has a discretionary right of judging about qualifications, has sufficient reasons to conclude, or such evidence as the nature of the case requires, that infants are such as are included within our Lord's *intention*, when he instituted the ordinance. If infants possess, as I am persuaded they do, the essential qualifications of proper subjects, then it was not only needless but

but would have been *impertinent* to specify them. When therefore I speak of the mode, it is on supposition of agreement about the subject; and when I speak of the subject, it is on supposition of agreement about the mode.

THE remark already made on the abuse of terms, is notoriously exemplified in the word COVENANT, without adding any more instances. It must be acknowledged that many Pædobaptist writers have been extremely unguarded in this particular, which has afforded no small handle to the opposite party. But our opponents are not free of blame on this head, and I am not a little surpris'd to find a person of Dr. S.'s circumspection and polemical acumen prolong an argument to above thirty pages, which has no force at all but in proportion as the word *covenant* is taken in a sense which, I am persuaded, most Pædobaptists reject. And this conduct is the less excuseable in this ingenious and worthy writer, because he professedly "lays down all the *possible senses* in which persons may be said to be in a covenant*." The Doctor, surely, need but to be *reminded* of this matter, for his own sagacity must have *informed* him how inconclusive his reasoning is, had he taken all the *possible* senses of being in a covenant.

§ 7. (4) THE numerous *quotations* in Mr. B.'s *Pædobaptism Examined* make, indeed, a formidable

* Answer to A. Letter II. and III.

midable appearance, and the rather because there are among them, as he justly observes, "some of the most eminent Pædobaptists that ever filled the professor's chair, or that ever adorned the protestant pulpit." But my judgment intirely fails me if a *very great number* of these quotations are not perfectly *consistent* with the practice of the persons quoted, and therefore improperly introduced as evidences against themselves.

BUT supposing that all the passages our author employs were directly in his favour, and unexceptionably transcribed or translated; nay, were they an hundred times more numerous and large, and still more favourable to the cause for which he pleads, it is evident from his own declaration, that he ought not to consider "either the number or weight of such quotations, as constituting *any part* of the ground on which the distinguishing conduct of the party proceeds," or on which the cause depends. That many great and learned men have entertained different and even contradictory sentiments on the subject, does not affect it. That one should give up a topick in the debate, which another thought valid, is immaterial. It is of little consequence, in point of argument in the present case, to urge what is the *opinion* of good and wise men upon the matter; whereas it is of essential importance to inquire whether what is pleaded for be defensible or indefensible. *Amicus Socrates, amicus Plato; sed major amica VERITAS.* It is certainly
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very becoming, that the sentiments and testimonies of respectable authors should be treated with modesty and decorum, but I must beg leave to discard all human *authority*, or human *opinion*, singly or collectively taken, from bearing any part of the *principal* evidence; for I would appeal to the *case itself*, and not to the number or manner of its defenders or opposers.



C H A P. I.

Of the nature and obligation of positive laws and institutions in general, together with the use of inferential and analogical reasoning, with relation to the ordinance of baptism.

§ 1. *Of law in general.* § 2. *Positive laws and institutions defined and explained.* § 3. *Positive precepts distinguished from moral ones.* § 4. *Their comparative obligations.* § 5. *The importance of positive institutions.* § 6. *They are necessarily of an external nature.* § 7. *They presuppose the dictates of reason and revelation.* § 8. *All the institutions of christianity are of a mixed nature.* § 9. *As appears (1) from the false principle on which the contrary opinion is founded.* § 10. *(2) From the concessions of opponents, as to the nature of positive institutions.* § 11—14. *(3) From incontestible facts.* § 15. *How to determine what is positive and what is moral in a mixed law.* § 16. *The importance of analogical reasoning.* § 17, 18. *To deny the use of it in our inquiries about baptism, leads to absurd consequences. (1) Without it, we can know nothing about the ordinance.* § 19—22. *(2) Our opponents cannot prove their authority to administer, and the validity*

validity of the action. § 23—26. (3) *Nor to determine who is a proper subject.* § 27. (4) *Other ridiculous consequences.* § 28, 29. (5) *Transubstantiation retorted.* § 30. *Extremes of different kinds.* § 31—34. *Objections answered.* § 35. *Recapitulation.*

§ I. **L**A W, in its most general and comprehensive import, signifies a *rule of action*, dictated by some superior. And man, considered as a creature, must necessarily be subject to the Laws of his Creator, as to disposition and conduct; and is bound, from the very idea of his absolute dependence, to regulate his actions and behaviour according to the intimations of his sovereign pleasure.—The WILL OF GOD is the grand law of our nature. But this will is discoverable principally two ways; either by *human sagacity*—including that intuitive perception whereby we discern what is most conducive to our own welfare, which welfare the will of our Maker ever supposes, and the exertions of right reason—or by *direct revelation*. “If our reason (says an eminent writer) were always as in our first ancestor before his transgression, clear and perfect, unruffled by passions, unclouded by prejudice, unimpaired by disease and intemperance, the task of discovering what the *law of nature* directs in every circumstance of life would be pleasant and easy; we should need no other guide but this. But every man now finds the contrary in his own experience; that his reason

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is corrupt, and his understanding full of ignorance and error. This has given manifold occasion for the benign interposition of divine providence; which, in compassion to the frailty, the imperfection, and the blindness of human reason, hath been pleased, at sundry times and in divers manners, to discover and enforce its laws by an immediate and direct revelation. The doctrines thus delivered, we call the revealed or divine law, and they are to be found only in the holy scriptures. These precepts when revealed, are found upon comparison to be really a part of the original law of nature, as they tend in their consequences to man's felicity*."

It is to be carefully noticed, that revelation, as referring to human actions, performs a double part; it either renders more authentick and indubitable, what human sagacity perceived as probable, or else enjoins duties which mere reason could never have discovered. Hence arises the obvious distinction of moral and positive laws.

§ 2. By *positive laws* I understand, such laws as do not appear to us obligatory, except upon the *mere authority* † of the Divine Legislator. And
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* BLACKSTONE'S Commentaries, Vol. I. Introd. § 2.

† WHEN I say that the obligation of positive laws rests upon the *mere authority* of the Legislator, let the reader observe, that this is not to be confounded with an *arbitrary disposition* in the Deity. This distinction is well described by an elegant and philosophic pen: "When some speak of the *Will of God* as the *Rule of Duty*, they do not certainly mean a blind arbitrary principle of action, but such a principle as is *directed* by reason,

this *authority* is sufficiently and absolutely binding from the consideration of our being previously assured of the wisdom, justice, and goodness of God, who enacts the law. *Positive institutions*, strictly taken, are a species of positive laws, and differ as a *law* differs from an *institution*. The former *may* be transient, but the latter is, at least for a term, of standing obligation. The command given Abraham to sacrifice his son, was a positive *law*, but not properly speaking an institution; and the right of circumcision was a positive *institution* as well as a law. Jesus commanding Peter to walk on the water, was a transient law, but his command to go and baptize proper subjects of all nations, is a permanent institution. "And altho' no laws but positive be mutable, yet all are not mutable which be positive. Positive laws are either permanent or else changeable, according

"son, and governed by wisdom, or a regard to certain ends in preference
 "to others. Unless we suppose some principle in the Deity analogous
 "to our sense of obligation, some antecedent affection, or determination
 "of his nature, to prefer some ends before others, we
 "cannot assign any sufficient, or indeed any possible reason, why he
 "should will one thing more than another, or have any election
 "at all. Whatever therefore is the *ground* of his choice or will
 "must be the *ground* of obligation, and not the choice or will
 "itself.—That this is so, appears farther from the common distinction
 "which divines and philosophers make between *moral*
 "and *positive* commands and duties. The *former* they think *obligatory*,
 "antecedent to will, or at least to any declaration of it;
 "the *latter* obligatory only in consequence of a positive appointment
 "of the divine will. But what foundation can there be for
 "this distinction, if all duty and obligation be equally the result
 "of *mere will*?" FORDYCE'S Elements of Moral Philosophy.
 B. I. Sect. 3.

according as the *matter itself* is, concerning which they were first made †."

§ 3. IT is evident, upon the least reflection, that positive laws are no further binding than the authority by which they are enjoined is *discernible*. And it is equally evident, that there is no possible method of discerning the Lawgiver's authority and will, relative to these laws, but by his own express declarations; for if they are discernible any other way, they are no longer positive. The *difference*, therefore, between positive and moral commands is clear and obvious. "Moral precepts, (as Bishop BUTLER well observes) are precepts the reasons of which we see: positive precepts, are precepts, the reasons of which we do not see." But I would further observe, with the same sagacious author, that "this is the distinction between moral and positive precepts, considered respectively *as such*.—Moral and positive precepts are in some respects alike, in other respects different. So far as they are alike, we discern the reasons of both: so far as they are different, we discern the reasons of the former, but not of the latter. And, moral duties arise out of the nature of the case itself, prior to external command: positive duties do not arise out of the nature of the case, but from external command: nor would they be duties at all, were it not for such command, received from him whose creatures and subjects we are.—Care, then, is to be taken, when a

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comparisons

† HOOKER'S *Eccles. Polit.* B. I. § 15.

comparison is made between positive and moral duties, that they be compared no farther than they are different: no farther than as the former are positive, or arise out of mere external command, the reasons of which we are not acquainted with; and as the latter are moral, or arise out of the apparent reason of the case, without such external command. *Unless this caution be observed, we shall run to endless confusion *.*" Whether Mr. B. is sufficiently cautious in observing this necessary distinction, will appear, I presume, in the sequel of this treatise.

§ 4. THE following remarks from the above mentioned author, concerning our *comparative obligations* to obey positive and moral commands, appear just and pertinent. "Suppose two standing precepts enjoined by the same authority; that, in certain conjunctions, it is impossible to obey both; that the former is moral, i. e. a precept of which we see the reasons, and that they hold in the particular case before us; but that the latter is positive, i. e. a precept of which we do not see the reasons; it is indisputable that our obligations are to obey the *former*; because there is an apparent reason for this preference, and none against it. Farther, positive institutions, I suppose all those which christianity enjoins, are *means* to a moral end; and the *end* must be acknowledged more excellent than the means. Nor is the observance of these institutions any religious obedience at all, or of any value, otherwise

wife than as it proceeds from a moral principle. I add, that the whole moral law is as much matter of revealed command as positive institutions are; for the scripture enjoins every moral virtue. In this respect then they are both upon a level. But the moral law is, moreover, written upon our hearts; interwoven into our very nature. And this is a plain intimation of the author of it, which is to be preferred when they interfere. — Upon occasion of mentioning together positive and moral duties, the scripture always puts the stress of religion upon the latter, and never upon the former: which, tho' no sort of allowance to neglect the former, when they do not interfere with the latter; yet is a plain intimation, that when they do, the latter are to be preferred. — Our Lord himself, from whose command alone the obligation of positive institutions arises, has taken occasion to make the comparison between them and moral precepts; when the Pharisees censured him, for *eating with publicans and sinners*; and also when they censured his disciples, for plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath day. Upon this comparison he has determined expressly, and in form, which shall have the preference when they interfere. And by delivering his authoritative determination in a proverbial manner of expression, he has made it general: *I will have mercy and not sacrifice*. For the sense and the very literal words of our Lord's answer, are as applicable to *any other* institution, on a comparison between positive and moral

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duties,

duties, as to this upon which they were spoken. It is remarkable too, that, as the words are a quotation from the Old Testament, they are introduced, on both the forementioned occasions, with a declaration, that the Pharisees did not understand the meaning of them. This, I say, is very remarkable. For since it is scarce possible, for the most ignorant person, not to understand the literal sense of the passage in the prophet; (Hos. vi.) and since understanding the literal sense would not have prevented their *condemning the guiltless*; (Mat. xii. 7.) it can hardly be doubted, that the thing which our Lord really intended in that declaration, was, that the Pharisees had not learnt from it, as they might, wherein the general spirit of religion consists.— Yet it is highly necessary that we remind ourselves, how great presumption it is to *make light* of any institutions of divine appointment; that our obligation to obey *all* God's commands whatever, are absolute and indispensable: and that commands merely positive, admitted to be [*such*, and] from him, lay us under a moral obligation to obey them: an obligation moral in the strictest and most proper sense *.”

It may here be objected, “Was not Abraham commendable for obeying a positive command at the expense of a moral one?” I answer, Abraham did well to obey the command to sacrifice his son, for it was in perfect consistence with the *morality* of the sixth command. Which only
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* BUTLER'S Analogy, *ut supra*. p. 230—234.

implies that one *man* has no right to take away the life of another *unjustly*, but by no means intends that God has no right to take away the forfeited life of a sinful creature, which is absolutely at his disposal, by what methods he pleases. Whatever excellence there was in Abraham's obedience, must spring from a disposition regarding God's absolute dominion, power, wisdom, &c. And his sacrificing Isaac was no duty any further than he was *certain* God commanded it. Had he been more forward or particular in that business than the command was express and circumstantial, he must have been in that proportion guilty of a presumptuous crime; inasmuch as the positive command required him to offer violence to the natural feelings of humanity. Dr. GROSVENOR well observes, "Where the evidence is not *so clear*, the obligation is weakened in proportion; but where the terms are *plainly* binding, and strongly commanding, there the obligation is not to be evaded.—When we see the broad seal of heaven, where there is the divine warrant, *Thus saith the Lord*; it is worse than trifling, to cavil and say, It is but an external rite."—But we should not forget, that tho' *all* positive duties are above the reach of mere reason, some may be *more remote* than others; and the nearer those duties approach to our natural notions of congruity and expediency, the less is the evidence of positive authority, and therefore a smaller degree of it is proportionably binding.

§ 5. NOTWITHSTANDING the indisputable superiority of laws natural and moral to those of a positive nature, whenever they come in competition, the latter are of very great use and consequence. “The very notion of a visible church implies positive institutions, for the *visibility* of the church *consists* in them. Take away every thing of this kind, and you lose the very notion itself. So that if a visible church and an instituted method of education, are advantages, the reason and *importance* of positive institutions in general is most obvious, since without them these advantages could not be secured to the world†.”

§ 6. ALL acts of religious worship are either internal or external. All *internal* acts are of *moral* consideration as resulting from certain relations. As soon as these *relations* are discovered, whether by the dictates of reason or pure revelation it matters not, the obligation of duty naturally arises from them, independent of any external command to enforce the same. The propriety of this distinction will easily appear when we observe, that no internal act of religion *can* be our duty but what springs from *relative* considerations, and since no relation subsisting between moral agents can be *ascertained*, but we are immediately, from the nature of the case, laid under every obligation possibly assignable. Hence it follows, that whatever precepts and duties deserve the name of *positive*, must be of an *external* nature. Indeed “a *disposition* to obey
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† Idem, p. 216, 217.

divine orders, either positive or moral, (as Dr. GROSVENOR justly observes) is part of that *holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.*" But then it is equally true, that this very disposition is, in the properest sense, of moral obligation *prior* to any external command, and, therefore, is perfectly distinct in its nature from the *positiveness* of those divine orders. But notwithstanding all positive duties be in their own nature *external*, it does not follow, that all external acts of religious worship are also positive. To elucidate this matter a little I would offer these two remarks :

I. THAT God is to be worshipped *in general*, even in *some external* form, is of *moral* obligation. For, as the obligation of internal worship arises from the relation we stand in to God, without a positive command, so it is clear, from the nature of the case, this internal worship, reverence, gratitude, &c. ought to be externally *manifested* in a manner suited to these emotions. Nor can it be doubted, that there is a natural congruity between such internal emotions and certain *modes* of expressing them in preference to others as less proper; for there are, doubtless, *some postures* and gestures of the body, independent of national custom, or the like circumstances, that may with *more propriety* than others be termed, reverent, humble, modest, decent, devout, &c. and we are under a moral obligation to *prefer* the most becoming, whenever this is not determined by positive command.

2. THAT any *particular* external mode of worship is enjoined to men, the reason and propriety of which does not appear prior to the external command, is of *positive consideration*. Positive precepts may be considered as certain *exceptions* from a general rule, but as a general rule and common analogy ought to be quitted *only* where they are incompatible with the exception, and precisely in that *degree*; so we are to recede from moral and analogical reasoning, in our inquiries after the path of duty, *only* when obliged by a positive precept *as such*, or exactly in the proportion it is so, and no further. For to do otherwise would be to quit a common rule without any apparent necessity; and to deviate from a way, which is at least probably the right one, to another which is absolutely uncertain. To this I would add, that the circumstances of an action being *naturally convenient*, may and ought to have considerable influence in determining what is or is not our duty, in those circumstances of it that are indeterminate; for this plain reason, that we are sure the law of self-preservation is the law of God in all those cases where he has not shewn us the contrary. Whatever, therefore, appears to militate against life, health, and comfort, without any revealed warrant, may and ought to be avoided, on the principles of natural law and obligation. This is applicable to all the unprescribed circumstances of *positive* duties, as well as to those of a moral kind. “ This law of nature, (as Sir WILLIAM

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BLACKSTONE observes) being coeval with mankind and dictated by God himself, is of course superior in obligation to any other. It is binding over all the Globe, in all countries, and at all times *," when not *expressly* countermanded by positive interposition.

§ 7. FROM what has been said we may further conclude, that a positive institution is a kind of *ingrafture*, so to speak, upon the law of our nature; the former is the scyon, the latter is the stock. The choice of the institution depends upon the sovereign pleasure of God. But when this is determined, the law of nature written in our hearts, the principles of reason and common sense, or some revealed law, are *presupposed*, and may be compared to the stock upon which the ingrafture is made. For as the scripture itself sheweth not with certainty what books are divine; as all acceptable obedience to divine commands presupposes a suitable disposition; as all arts and sciences have their *præcognita*, and every branch of abstruse learning presupposes first principles, and even the most infallible geometrical demonstration its axioms and postulates; so all positive laws and institutions take some principles for *granted*.

§ 8. ANOTHER consequence that follows naturally from the preceding considerations is this: That there are *no precepts* now in force, at least, of a nature *merely* positive. None, I mean, wherein all the *minutiæ* of circumstances necessary

for the discharge of the duty commanded are specified by the Lawgiver; and therefore those institutions of christianity which are commonly termed positive are but *partially* so. The necessity of ascertaining this difference in the present controversy is very apparent; and yet it has somehow hitherto been strangely overlooked, by both contending parties. The Pædobaptists in general have tamely submitted to this position, "*Baptism and the Lord's Supper are positive institutions,*" in its most absolute and undistinguished sense, as a maxim not to be controverted; and the Antipædobaptists are, doubtless, much obliged to us for this piece of complaisance, as it is evidently the main pillar of their cause, and the armour in which they trust. Pertinent to our present purpose is the following remark of Bp. WARBURTON; "When two parties go upon different [principles] they naturally begin with examining one another's; whereby the true being at length settled or discovered, by its aid the controversy is timely determined; but where a *false* principle has the luck (as his Lordship expresses it) to be embraced by *both sides*, they may wrangle for ever, and be, after all, but farther from the truth*." But it may be asked, if we resign the good old maxim, "that the two standing ordinances of christianity, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are *positive* institutions, and *absolutely* so," and allow that they are of a *mixed* nature, or partly positive and partly moral; how are we to draw the line of

* Ep, WARBURTON'S Alliance, B. I. Sect. 1.

of distinction? If moral and positive precepts thus run into each other, like the shades of a painted figure, or the colours of the rainbow, how can we ascribe to all their due, or determine where the one ends and the other begins? Towards solving this difficulty I beg leave to propose the following observations.

§ 9. (1) IT is utterly abhorrent from sound divinity, as well as logical precision, not to say christian modesty, to determine, *a priori*, with what *degree* of evidence any given particular institution *ought* to have been delivered by the divine Legislator, any more than what the institution *itself* should be.

FOR, as Bp. BUTLER observes, “our principal obligation of searching the scripture, and to what all our inquiries ought to be directed, is, in order to see what the scheme of revelation *really is*, instead of determining before hand from reason, what the reason of it *must* be*.” To *investigate* the degree of evidence from the fact of the institution, and to *infer* the degree of the obligation from the evidence found, is *our* province; but to determine what the nature and degree of the evidence *must* be, is the exclusive prerogative of the Institutor himself, whose will and authority must be the sole and exclusive ground of the institution.

I AM, therefore, not a little surpris'd to find the gentleman, whose work I am more immediately examining, and for whose abilities and dis-

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position

* BUTLER's Analogy, *ut supra*

position I have a real esteem, expressing himself as follows: "Positive institutions originate in the divine pleasure, and derive their whole being from the sovereign will of God. — We *cannot know any thing* about their precise nature, their true design, the proper subjects of them, or the right mode of their administration *further than the scriptures teach.*—It does not appear from the records of the Old Testament, that, when Jehovah appointed any branch of ritual worship, he left either the subject of it, or the mode of administration, to be inferred by the people, either from the relation in which they stood to himself; or from general moral precepts; or from any branch of his moral worship; nor yet from any other well known positive rite: but he gave THEM special directions relating to the very case.—For as nothing but the divine will can oblige the conscience, and as *that will cannot be known, unless revealed*; so when made known, whether in reference to moral or positive duties, it must oblige. CONSEQUENTLY, SEEING BAPTISM IS AS REALLY AND INTIRELY A POSITIVE INSTITUTION AS ANY THAT WERE GIVEN TO THE CHOSEN TRIBES, we cannot with safety infer either the mode or the subject of it, from any thing short of a precept or precedent, recorded in scripture, and relating to that very ordinance. *It seems natural hence to infer*, that our sovereign Lord MUST HAVE REVEALED HIS WILL concerning the ordinance of baptism in a manner *proportional* to its obligation and importance.

For,

For, as an appointment of Christ, it originated in his will, and from a *revelation of that will* the whole of its obligation results. In proportion, therefore, as we annex the idea of *obscurity* to what he says about the mode and the subject of it, we either sink the idea of obligation to regard it, or *impeach the wisdom, or the goodness, or the equity of our divine Legislator*: for we neither have, *nor can have any acquaintance* with a positive institution, *farther than it is revealed*. We are, THEREFORE, obliged to conclude that our Lord HAS CLEARLY REVEALED his pleasure, with reference to this appointment, in that code of law, and rule of religious worship, which he gave to the church, in the volume of the New Testament *.”

THUS also Dr. S. “Here I would observe then, that all positive institutions depend *solely* upon the *will* of the institutor, and that therefore in every question relating to them, we must be guided by his *express declarations*, or by those of persons he has duly authorized to *signify his will*. Nor is it to be doubted that a wise legislator will, *in all matters of this sort*, take care to express his mind *in the most plain and intelligible manner*. Now baptism is a positive institution of Christ: and, agreeably to his infinite wisdom and goodness, he has expressed himself *in the most clear and explicit manner* respecting both the mode and the subject of it. — And THEREFORE the issue of this inquiry ought to be rested *alone* upon

upon his own *express declarations*, and those of his apostles and first ministers *.”—And again, “A right to baptism must depend, and depend alone, upon the direct *express command* of the institutor; for it is absurd to talk of analogy and consequence in the matter of positive institutions †.” And again, “As positive duties depend solely upon the will of the institutor, every question respecting them ought in reason to be decided by his *express declarations*; which declarations, *if he be a wise legislator, will, no doubt, be clear and explicit* ‡.” There are other passages in both these writers very much to the same purpose.

Not to stop to examine the truth and propriety of some things in the above quotations which are taken for granted; such as the *absolute positiveness* of every branch of ritual worship under the Old Testament œconomy; wherein *nothing* was to be *inferred* by the people; or to inquire whether it can be *justly* concluded that *because*, on supposition that the Old Testament rituals were of that kind, those of the New Testament *must* be so likewise; both which I believe they would find too difficult to prove: passing by such things, let us attend to the point of immediate consideration;—which is to demonstrate contrary to these assertions, that the New Testament institutions ARE NOT of a nature *merely positive*; or, in other words, that Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, in their completeness and comprehension, are

* Answer to A, p. 3, 5.

† p. 90.

‡ p. 293.

are institutions of a *mixed* nature, that is to say, partly positive and partly moral. And in prosecution of this design I further observe that,

§ 10. (2) FROM these gentlemen's own account, it follows, that the institutions of the New Testament are either of a *mixed* nature or not at all positive. For according to them, *all matters of this sort* should be expressed in the most plain and intelligible, the most clear and explicit manner; and, THEREFORE, seeing baptism and the Lord's Supper are not IN FACT so circumstantially described as not to need, or so minutely express as to prohibit moral reasoning, analogy and consequence; it inevitably follows, that, if these institutions are not of a *mixed* nature, partly positive and partly moral, they are no positive institutions AT ALL. And as they allow none to be of that sort but these two, christianity must be left without any; and since christianity is the last and unalterable dispensation of religion among men, it is impossible there should be any to the end of time; and so all positive institutions are, on their own supposition, fairly and utterly banished out of the world.

BESIDES, their anticipated mode of determining the degree of evidence with which a positive law *ought to be* enacted, is quite subversive of the very nature of such a law; for it is allowed on all hands, and by these gentlemen in the plainest terms, that the distinguishing nature of positive laws consists in the measure and the degree of their *institution*, and that they derive their
whole

whole being from the *sovereign will* of God. And thus their reasoning is built upon a *petitio principii*, a begging of the question, whereby they first take it for granted, that baptism is an institution merely positive, and then take it further for granted, that being such it *must be* free from all obscurity.

§ II. (3) BUT if it be contended, that our Lord has, *actually*, been plain and explicit in the institution of this ordinance, and that therefore it is easy to be understood: I might ask, to *whom* is it easy? and what *sense* of it is easy? Is it the honest christian, the judicious divine, the learned critic, or the profound universal scholar to whom the sense is *easy*? But what sense of the institution is so plain and easy? Mr. B. and Dr. S. no doubt, think that their *own* sense bids fair for this character. But here is an extraordinary phenomenon! here are not a few thousands of honest christians; not a few hundreds of judicious divines, learned critics, profound scholars; commentators who have developed the most abstruse parts of holy writ; who yet cannot see this sense of the institution which is so *easy*. Can *that sense* of a passage of scripture, or of the nature and design of an institution, be with any propriety called *plain* and *easy*, *clear*, *explicit* and *most intelligible*, which five men out of twenty contend is the true sense, but which the other fifteen, possessed of an equal share of parts, piety and learning, maintain is the wrong sense? That great numbers should unanimously stand out against some kinds of truth, not very ab-

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struse in their own nature, is a very possible case; either when a truth may not appear to be of so much importance as to engage persons duly qualified to study it with close application; or when it has been a point of mere speculation; or when slavish fear and worldly interest have prevailed over the honest dictates of conscience; but that so many protestant worthies, who have left all to follow Christ; that so many learned commentators and casuists, of unblemished character, of unexceptionable ability, having no interest to serve whereby the judgment should be biassed, or the conscience bribed; calling no man master upon earth, but, with a generous freedom, shaking off the prejudices of education, the shackles of custom, and the influence of different systems; that these, I say, should oppose unanimously the sense of an institution *quite plain* and *easy* to be understood, is a case, I believe, unparalleled and unaccountable. I would rather infer, and with what propriety let the reader judge, that either the Antipædobaptist sense of Christ's institution is *not at all* the true sense, or, at any rate, a sense *very difficult* to come at.

§ 12. BUT Mr. B. still urges, that "in proportion as we annex the idea of *obscurity* to what is said about the mode or the subject of baptism, we either sink the idea of obligation to regard it, or impeach the wisdom, or the goodness, or the equity of the divine Legislator." That his idea of the institution of baptism, as an ANTI-PÆDOBAPTIST, appears to by far the greater
number

number of competent judges an *obscure* one, is an incontestible *fact*; judges competent, I mean, in a moral as well as natural respect. And, therefore, it follows, on his own principles, that their obligation to adopt the Antipædobaptist Hypothesis is *sunk* in proportion; and that the persons, so qualified, who can see *no truth* in it, are under *no obligation* to embrace it; but are obligated to retain the PÆDOBAPTIST system, as what they see *more clearly*.

ALLOWING, therefore, our annexing the Idea of *obscurity* to what is said about the subject and the mode of baptism, in the respect now mentioned, to be true, I might be excused from vindicating myself and my friends from the crime of impeaching the divine wisdom, goodness, and veracity, by adopting the alternative of sinking the obligation; were it not that Mr. B.'s charges run still higher, when speaking of the signification of the terms of the institution. "Nay, says he, were the leading term in any human law, to have an ambiguity in it, equal to that for which our Brethren plead with regard to the word *baptism*; such law would certainly be considered as betraying, either the weakness, or the wickedness, of the legislator; and be condemned, as opening a door to perpetual chicane and painful uncertainty. Far be it, then, from us to suppose, that our gracious and omniscient Lord should give a law relating to divine worship, and obligatory on the most illiterate of his real disciples, which may be fairly construed to mean,

mean, *this* or *that* or the *other* action—a law which is calculated to excite and perpetuate contention among his wisest and sincerest followers—a law, that would disgrace a British Parliament in respect of its *triple* meaning, as being involved in the dark ambiguity of a Pagan oracle†.” What! and is Mr. B. also among the analogical, hypothetical, and consequential reasoners, upon the matter of a positive institution? This mode of reasoning, on *our* principles, would have some plausibility; on *his* is quite out of character. But what signifies setting up our own idea of propriety against a plain fact; it is a *fact*, that wise and good men *cannot* see the essentiality of dipping in the leading term of this law; while Mr. B. and his friends think they do. It is a *fact*, that wise and good men sincerely believe the law of christian baptism extends to infants, and that they are as much included in the very terms as their parents are. But does it from thence follow, that our Divine Legislator has less wisdom than a British Parliament; or designs an imposition like a Pagan oracle?

§ 13. MR. B.’s argument is, that as the principal terms of all approved human laws are without ambiguity in their meaning, *therefore* much more *ought* the laws of Christ relating to divine worship to be so. But do we forget that positive institutions depend intirely on the *sovereign will* of Heaven, and that we know *nothing* about them further than they are revealed? Al-

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lowing this; yet, it may be objected, if our all-wise Legislator *does* enact any law of this kind, we may reasonably presume that it will be so *plain* and *easy* that the most illiterate of his real disciples cannot mistake its meaning. This is still indulging *supposition* against *fact*.

LET us suppose, for illustration' sake, that an ante-diluvian saint had adopted this mode of reasoning.—“ It is true, it depends intirely on
 “ the sovereign will of God whether he will re-
 “ veal himself to my posterity, whether he will
 “ give them laws and positive institutions, to re-
 “ gulate their lives and prove their obedience;
 “ but *if he do* so favour them, I may easily infer
 “ from his infinite wisdom, goodness and equity;
 “ from his omniscience, and grace, that these
 “ laws and institutions must be so *plain* and *easy*
 “ that the most ignorant of the righteous, cannot
 “ misinterpret them. For were I, a sinful short-
 “ sighted creature, to form a code of laws for
 “ my posterity, they should be all of that charac-
 “ ter, and therefore much more will those which
 “ the Most High may deliver, be free from all
 “ ambiguity. Yes, He sees the end from the
 “ beginning; and as he is capable by reason of
 “ his unerring wisdom, so he is bound by his
 “ immense goodness, to prevent all occasion of
 “ chicane and painful uncertainty. If prophets
 “ be raised to address my ruined posterity, their
 “ message must be so *plain* and *easy* to be un-
 “ derstood, that none of those to whom they are
 “ delivered can mistake their meaning; their cre-
 “ dentials

“ dentials must be of such a nature as to admit
“ of no debate whether they should be credited
“ or not. And when the promised Saviour ap-
“ pears, he will, undoubtedly, deliver himself in
“ such a manner as to prevent all dispute among
“ his followers, especially concerning matters of
“ everlasting moment. There will be no ques-
“ tion among them whether this Saviour is the
“ Creator himself in man’s nature, or only an
“ extraordinary prophet of superior wisdom and
“ holiness; since all this may be prevented by a
“ few words out of his own mouth. He will
“ put it out of all doubt with all the wise and
“ pious of his followers, whether he is to be served
“ with, or without, a form of devotion in pub-
“ lick assemblies; whether christian magistrates
“ ought, or ought not, to form an *alliance* be-
“ tween the church and the state; whether or
“ not some person, for the time being, should
“ act as his viceroy to the end of time, at the
“ head of his universal church. And if he should
“ institute a rite of initiation into his church, it
“ is reasonable to expect that his wisdom and
“ goodness will prevent all painful uncertainty
“ respecting the *mode* of admission, and who are
“ the proper *subjects*,” especially when we consider
that “ all doubt of the matter might be precluded
by a few plain words.” Thus the pious ante-
diluvian might meditate, and reason, *a priori*, from
the wisdom and goodness of the Great Supreme;
rejoicing in the prospect of the halcyon days which
his posterity should enjoy, when all laborious
search

search, and tedious analogical reasoning, would be utterly precluded by the explicitness and perspicuity with which he would signify his pleasure. All this seems quite reasonable, very desirable, and mighty fine; but yet is attended with one great infelicity, it is a theory which does not agree with FACTS: But shall a benighted sinner exclaim, when *his* views of propriety and wisdom are confronted, deranged, and totally overthrown, “the LORD’s ways are not equal!” Rather let me shrink to my proper nothingness, and say, *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, how unsearchable are his counsels, and his ways, his providence and his various dispensations, how past finding out!* “Let us appeal (says Dr. S.) to the words of the institution, which no doubt are expressed, *as all laws OUGHT TO BE, in so clear a manner as that he who runs may read.*” I walk and read, stand and read, meditate and read, pray and read, and yet cannot discern the sense he puts upon the law of the institution. And, what is far more extraordinary, thousands whom it concerns, many of whom are far better qualified to judge than I am, are equally at a loss to discover, what Dr. S. pronounces to be *without doubt, so clear a meaning* that he who runs may read it. *

OUR

* WHAT the pious Mr. FLAVEL said of himself, is, no doubt, the unfeigned sentiment of numbers not less sincere and upright than he, however superior he was to most divines in ministerial abilities and usefulness; *viz.* “We have a witness in your bosom, “ (says he in his reply to Mr. CARY) that the defence of *Christ’s*

“pure

OUR opponents involve themselves in a glaring inconsistency. They maintain that positive rites depend solely on the pleasure of the Institutor, and then, with the same breath, plead that their evidence *must* be in a certain given degree of explicitness, that is, the superlative degree. For if they are not expressed in the *most* plain and intelligible manner, they are not worthy of a *wise* Legislator. This is to profess *absolute subjection* to the sovereign Lord, and afterwards to *prescribe rules* for him to enact his laws. Thus they insist upon a postulatium on which to erect their system, which it is out of our power to grant them without offering open violence to logical precision and sound Theology.

§ 14. FROM what has been said I conclude—since it is essential to an institution *merely positive*; our opponents themselves being judges, it should be free from all obscurity and ambiguity, relative to mode and subject, and since the institution of baptism does not bear that character, as stubborn facts proclaim—that baptism is an ordinance of a *mixed* nature. And it appears further reasonable to conclude, from the foregoing premises, that, as all allow baptism has *something* in it of a positive nature, “ the setting

“ *pure worship and institutions* hath cost us something; and as for
 “ me, were I convinced by all that you have here said, or any
 “ of your friends, that in baptizing the infants of believers we did
 “ really depart from the primitive purity, I would renounce it,
 “ and turn Anabaptist the same day.” FLAVEL’S Reply to Mr.
 CARY’S Solemn Call. *Works*, Vol. II, p. 1003. First Ed.

“ing apart a person apparently a proper subject
 “of the visible church of Christ, by the use of
 “water, in the Name of the Father, of the Son,
 “and of the Holy Ghost, by a teacher of christ-
 “tianity,” seems to bid fair for that character.
 Thus far Pædobaptists and Antipædobaptists
 generally agree; but whether a total *immersion*
 of the subject be *essential* to the ordinance, or
 even the *most proper* mode of admission; and
 whether some infants are not equally intitled
 to the privilege as adults; with other questions
 of inferior consideration, must be necessarily de-
 cided by moral and consequential reasoning.

§ 15. LET us now attend to what seems the
 only remaining method for determining about
 the degree and proportion of *positiveness* and *mo-
 rality* in a law or institution commonly termed
 positive. And here I observe, towards solving
 this difficulty, the two things following,

I. THAT we ought carefully to distinguish
 between what is true of a positive institute in
 its own nature, or simply and *abstractedly* con-
 sidered, and the same thing attended with its
 necessary circumstances. It has been shewn, that
 baptism is an institution which is positive but
 in part, and, therefore, that such a distinction as
 is here proposed is necessary. I am willing then
 to own the propriety of Mr. B.'s reasoning up-
 on the nature and essential properties of positive
 institutions, *as far as they are such*, but deny
 that any just consequences from them are fa-
 vourable to Antipædobaptism. And if we admit,
 what

what I hope has been sufficiently proved, and what the following pages will more abundantly demonstrate, that there is no institution of the gospel dispensation so merely positive as not requiring prudential and moral aid to determine about the due performance and proper subjects thereof; and consequently, that the ordinance of baptism does not agree to the *abstract* notion of positive institutions; I venture to assert, as no less true than extraordinary, that there is not ONE of all the quotations from Pædobaptist writers contained in the first part of his *Pædobaptism examined*, concerning the nature of positive institutions, but is PERFECTLY CONSISTENT with Pædobaptist principles! But the specious sophism was supported by arbitrarily uniting what were in themselves different; by extending the abstract nature of an institution, to the particular circumstances of it.

2. LAYING aside all preconceived ideas, we should carefully inquire *how far* any institution in question, from an impartial survey of what is recorded of it, *agrees* with the definition of a positive institution in its abstract sense. We all agree that such an institution, as deserves the denomination of positive, is *that*, the reason of which we do not see, yet delivered with such plainness, clearness, and circumstantial evidence, as is liable to no misconstruction from a person of common capacity and religious sincerity. Let us apply this rule to baptism, and we find, that there are *some* things wherein the rule and the

ordinance agree, and *other* things wherein they disagree. Bp. BUTLER will furnish us with a slight specimen of the manner of applying the above rule. "The most important obligations and privileges signified by baptism are of *moral* consideration.—For instance, if some are commanded *to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*; there are obligations of duty resulting from the command *as positive*, but the *importance* of these duties may be judged of by observing, that they arise not from positive command *merely*, but also from the offices which appear from scripture to belong to those divine persons in the gospel dispensation; or from the *relations*, which, we are there informed, they stand in to us*." This I call a *specimen*, but that the distinction above noticed is applicable to the subject and circumstances of baptism, will be afterwards considered.

§ 16. HENCE we may infer, that analogical and consequential reasoning is not only lawful, but *essential* to this controversy.

WE have seen (§ 12.) that our opponents themselves do occasionally run into this strain, however inconsistent with their favourite maxim; and we have seen that, hitherto, it has done them no service. From their being so extremely reluctant to admit of this sort of argument on the subject of baptism, we may justly suspect that it is proportionably injurious to their tenet. Mr. B. indeed, is very explicit on this head, as before

* BUTLER'S Analogy, *ut supra*.

fore observed; "Except it be maintained (says he) that positive ordinances are to be *intirely* governed by positive law and primitive example, it is *impossible* for the Antipædobaptists to stand their ground by *fair argument* in various cases, when disputing with Pædobaptists as such *." Dr. S. insists, "that presumptive proofs are insufficient to establish duties of a positive kind ||." And I take the liberty of insisting in my turn, that, as no such duty exists, in his application of the term *positive*, presumptive proofs are very good ones, because they are the very best that the nature of the case can admit of. To argue from what is *certain* in one case, the *probability* of a case less evident, when the latter bears some striking relation or resemblance to the former, has ever been reckoned fair and proper in subjects of morality and duty; it therefore follows, that, as the duty in question is partly founded on *moral* grounds, the same method of arguing is fair and proper to a certain degree in the present case. For when the *circumstances* of a duty commonly termed positive are left in an indeterminate state, and therefore of necessity must yield to *moral* considerations, and when these moral considerations do not arise immediately from the evident relation of the case in hand, or are not determined clearly by precept or example; what more rational method of determining these circumstances, than by recurring by means of analogy

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* p. 462.

|| p. 292.

to those which we are sure met with the divine approbation?

WHAT has been said already upon this article, might appear, I presume, quite sufficient, in vindication of a method of defence which our opponents would fain deprive us of, were it not that they are impertinently inimical to it upon every occasion, as might be easily shewn by numerous quotations out of their writings, and Mr. B.'s *Pædobaptism Examined* in particular. But as their favourite terms, POSITIVE LAW and APOSTOLIC EXAMPLE, as opposed to *moral* and *analogical* reasoning, are a two-edged sword, which they brandish with great parade, and with which they pretend to do great execution; let us now see whether this weapon may not be wrested out of their hands.

§ 17. THAT principle, whereby our opponents decry all use of analogy in this debate, is reducible to the most glaring *absurdities*. For,

(1) IT is impossible that Mr. B. Dr. S. or any one else in the present day, should know any thing about this ordinance without the aids of the very method which they so much oppose. This is evident when we reflect, that as scripture can never be proved to be of divine original, so neither can any particular part of it be proved to have *this* meaning rather than *that*, but by means of moral and analogical reasoning. The evidence of revelation is either external or internal; its *external* evidence must depend on the *faithfulness* of our predecessors who have recorded and transmitted

transmitted such facts as constitute the same; but will any man, *compos mentis*, hesitate a moment respecting the necessity of examining the pretensions and credentials of our fellow-mortals, when they assert they were sent of God to claim the attention, belief, and obedience of mankind? And how can this be decided without the assistance of moral reasoning? Its *internal* evidence must be sought by the same method; for nothing can be of God which is evidently and demonstrably false or impious, however recommended by signs and wonders.

NOR will it avail to say, the most abstruse things, indeed, will admit of such investigation, but some things are “so plain and easy to be understood that he who runs may read.” Such parts of scripture, then, need only to be proposed, and they appear *self-evident*. I will not deny but there are many such truths in scripture; inasmuch as some of the plainest dictates of common sense and reason are there recorded. And, indeed, this is no small part of the glory of revelation, that it is “a republication of natural religion; so that natural religion, in the words of Bp. BUTLER, seems as much proved by the scripture revelation, as it would have been, had the design of revelation been nothing else than to prove it *.” But it must amount to an evident contradiction to assert that *positive laws* are *self-evident* in their own nature; for, on the supposition, we know nothing about them further

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* BUTLER’S Analogy, *ut supra*.

than they are *revealed*. Nor will it mend the matter to say, that *when* revealed they are self-evident; for, it is likewise granted, that they derive their whole force and being from the sovereign *authority* that enjoins them; which authority itself cannot be self-evident, but must be examined, weighed, compared, and finally determined by some *antecedent* principles; and this is the province of moral reason and analogy.

§ 18. BUT if it be said, that “tho’ we need these aids to ascertain the truth of revelation, yet when that is once done we have no farther need of it:” I answer, this can by no means solve the difficulty; for in order to discover the import of any law or precept of holy writ, we must either take the *literal* and strict meaning of it, or we must have recourse to the *design* of the passage from the most probable intention of the Lawgiver; if the *latter*, the point is given up; if the *former*, the most absurd consequences will immediately follow. For it is evident to a demonstration, that two persons, who would undertake to perform a positive command, may both alike plead the strict *letter* of the law to be on their side, and yet one of them may *commit sin* while so doing, and the other discharge incumbent duty. And I may venture to say, there is not a positive law in all the inspired volume, relating to the mosaic or the christian œconomy, but might furnish an illustration and proof of what I assert. To avoid prolixity I shall insist upon the law of baptism only: on which Mr. B.
thus

thus reflects. "It should be well observed, that when our Lord after his resurrection, says, *Go—baptize*; he does not mention baptism by way of allusion, or incidentally. No, he speaks the language of *legislation*; he delivers *DIVINE LAW*. He mentions and appoints baptism as an ordinance of God, and as a branch of human duty. Where, then, must we expect precision in the use of terms, if not on such an occasion*?" Where? why, in those parts of revelation where man's everlasting welfare is more immediately concerned. For is it probable that the law of initiation into the visible kingdom of Christ, and an external relation to him and his church, is of more importance, and requiring greater precision in its terms, than that which ascertains their qualification for the kingdom of grace and glory? But supposing, for argument sake, that the law of baptism (Mat. xxviii. 19.) is delivered with greater precision than usual, and let us try—not with a view to impeach the wisdom or the goodness of Christ—let us try, I say, whether moral reasoning and analogy are not necessary for the right observance of it, even upon our author's own principles.

MR. B. will allow that this law consists of three parts; the action itself, *baptize*; the qualification necessary for the subject previous to baptism, implied in the word *teach*; and the commission given to the administrators, *Go ye*. The first of these ideas will be more professedly ex-

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amined

amined hereafter; but by the bye, one would think that the great diversity of opinions respecting this *action*, and the various practices of different nations and churches in performing what they apprehend to be included in it, might lead a modest and impartial observer to conclude—not that one party of christians exclusively are in the right, while all the others are *essentially* wrong, many of whom have seriously, deliberately and impartially examined the authority and the mind of their divine Lord in the matter, whose sovereign pleasure is more dear to them than their lives, and whom they would not wilfully offend therein for the world—to conclude, I say, either that the precept is not delivered with all that plainness and precision which our opponents contend for, in favour of *their* manner of performing the *action*, or else that it is of such latitude as to include divers manners. I would only remark, that, supposing (without granting) the exclusive invariable meaning of the term, *baptize*, signifies to immerse, I might, on *that* supposition so fulfil the command *literally*, in plunging a proper subject, as that Mr. B. I am persuaded, would either not admit it to be at all true baptism, or would require no small assistance from that very method of arguing which he oppugns, to prove its validity. But I shall observe, more particularly, some things with respect to the commission of the administrators, which will furnish a second argument against the opposers of analogical and moral reasoning on the subject.

§ 19. (2) IT is impossible, on the principle I am opposing, for Mr. B. or Dr. S. to prove their right and *authority* to administer the ordinance of baptism to any subject, and of consequence the *validity* of the action. The sentiment I refer to, is, that nothing short of a *precept* or *precedent* will suffice for the due performance of the duty. Now that every action performed by apostles, disciples, or saints, with, or without, the special directions of the Holy Spirit, is not to be regarded as a *precedent*, or an example to be imitated, will, I presume, admit of no debate. It therefore follows that we must either gather from moral considerations, or consequential deductions, whether any particular action is to be imitated by us, or not; or else that there must be a *precept* previously given, whereby any such action receives a special direction and determination to influence our choice. And so it remains that an action, however and by whomsoever performed, can be to us no rule of duty, *no precedent at all, OF ITSELF*. It is therefore absurd to say that we can regard *any action* as a precedent, without the aids of inferential reasoning. We are, now, driven to *precepts* to perform the difficult task. Let us, therefore, attend to that "language of legislation, that divine law where we may expect, we are told, the greatest plainness and precision." Go YE, *therefore, and teach.*—This is the *precept*. But to *whom* is it given? The answer, no doubt, will be, To the *disciples*, and to their *successors* in the

pel ministry. Rather, To the disciples, and, we may justly *infer*, to their successors in the gospel ministry to the end of time. For our Lord adds, "Lo! I am with you alway, even to the end of the world;" which *more likely* refers to our Lord's authoritative and gracious presence with all the then future, properly qualified teachers and propagators of the gospel, than exclusively his immediate successors, the apostles and disciples, who should be endowed from above with extraordinary abilities, remarkably owned, and attended with signs and wonders for the establishment of the christian religion, on the ruins of the jewish hierarchy.

BUT supposing, (without granting) that the former proposition is so self-evident as to preclude all need of inference, or analogy. The question still returns, what constitutes a disciple, and teacher of religion? Christian godly parents are disciples, and they also teach their children and domestics the principles of christianity; have *they*, therefore, authority to *baptize* such as they teach? Without analogy and inference how can their pretensions be disproved? May they not plead, from the very passage in question, that because they may teach, they may likewise baptize? It will be said, perhaps, the administration of gospel ordinances belongs to *publick* teachers. But publick and private are *relative* terms; and who shall draw the line of distinction *how far* publick his character and teaching must be? May any one run, without being sent, to teach and baptize?

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Does this constitute a teacher of christianity, that he *fancies* he may set up for one? or is he to be admitted to the discharge of his ministerial function in some more regular way? How shall we judge about the *regularity* of that way? The wearer of the tripple crown asserts an universal claim to this right of admission, as his sovereign prerogative. With a priestly nod, with roaring bulls, or with dire anathemas, he excludes all of us, who are of the heretical tribe, from approaching to officiate at the baptismal font, or the holy altar. And what is extraordinary, he urges *express, literal* passages of scripture, on which to found his pretensions.

§ 20. BUT Protestants, also, talk of the divine right of episcopacy, and the necessity of an episcopal commission, for preaching God's word, and for the valid ministration of the christian sacraments. And this they attempt to prove from the *holy scriptures*, as well as the doctrine and practice of the primitive church. Thus the *twenty third* article of the church of England, paraphrased by a faithful son and champion; "*It is not lawful by the law of God for any man to take upon him the office of publick preaching or ministering the sacraments in the congregation or church of Christ before he be lawfully called according to the law of God, and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent according to the law of God, which be chosen and called to this work by men, who by the law of God have publick authority given unto*

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them in the congregation or church of Christ, to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard. I have put in the words according to the law of God, (says the Paraphrast,) because it is certain that is meant by the word lawful in this place. These articles were drawn up by the Bishops and Clergy in convocation or synod, who were ever esteemed to be interpreters or expositors of the law of God, and to have authority to declare what was agreeable to his laws, and what not—Consequently (says this Doctor of Laws) when they say, it is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of publick preaching or ministering the sacraments in the church, they could not mean that it was not lawful in this realm only by virtue of the temporal laws here in force, because they had no authority to declare or expound those laws, but that it was not lawful according to the LAW OF GOD, and therefore could not be allowed in any realm, in any country, in any church or society of christians. — And in the preface to the forms of ordination, it is said, that it is EVIDENT to all men diligently reading HOLY SCRIPTURES, and ancient authors, that from the apostles' time, there have been these orders of ministers in Christ's church, bishops, priests and deacons, which offices were evermore had in such reverend estimation, that no man by his own private authority, might presume to execute any of them, except he were first called, tried, examined and known to have such qualities as were requisite for the same, and also by publick prayer, with imposition of hands, approved and

and admitted thereunto.—She [the church] also declares these three orders to be of *divine institution*, when she says that it is evident to all men diligently reading HOLY SCRIPTURE that there have been these orders of ministers in Christ's church.—And therefore according to the doctrine of the church of *England*, declared by her ordinal and articles as they expound each other, it is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of publick preaching, or ministering the sacraments in the congregation or church of Christ, before he be lawfully called and sent to execute the same by some BISHOP; that is, before he be EPISCOPALLY ORDAINED; and this by the LAW OF GOD, who by his Holy Spirit has appointed the order of bishops, and directed that only those who are of that order should ordain others, consequently is a law not only obligatory in the church of *England*, but throughout the whole catholic church.—She further declares, in the *twenty sixth* article, that *altho' in the visible church the evil be ever mingled with the good, and sometime the evil have chief authority in the ministration of the word and sacraments; yet forasmuch as they do not the same in their own name but in Christ's, and do minister by HIS COMMISSION and authority, we may use their ministry both in hearing the word of God, and in the receiving of the sacraments. Neither is the effect of Christ's ordinance taken away by their wickedness, nor the grace of God's gifts diminished from such, as by faith, and rightly do receive the sacraments ministered unto them, which be effectual because of*
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Christ's INSTITUTION and PROMISE, altho' they be ministered by evil men. Here the church plainly makes the *VALIDITY* of the sacraments depend intirely upon *Christ's COMMISSION*. For the reason alleged why they may be received from evil ministers, is because such ministers have *commission and authority* from Christ, and that sacraments so received are effectual because of *Christ's institution and promise*, which evidently implies that where there is no such commission there is not the institution and promise of Christ, consequently they are not effectual without the commission. Thus the church of *England* most clearly maintains and asserts both the *divine right of episcopacy*, and also the necessity of an *episcopal commission* to the *VALID* administration of the sacrament *."

§ 21. THUS the large body of venerable Bishops, together with their numerous sons and servants the Clergy, in convocation assembled, as the representatives of millions, deliver their final and permanent sentiments, concerning the *authority* necessary for ministers to discharge the duties of their function, and the *validity* of their ministrations thereon depending. But what is very remarkable is, that their determination appeals, not to the uncertain reports of tradition, to moral, inferential, or analogical reasoning, but to a *positive law*; to the *express institution* of Christ. And our expounding Doctor justifies these ecclesiastical decisions, *on the very same principles*, by appealing

* Dr. BRETT's Divine Right of Episcopacy, § 1—4.

appealing to the language of legislation, the divine positive command, to which we first referred. Thus he settles his point: "That the *apostolical* or highest order, which was appointed to supply the place of Christ himself after his ascension, was intended by him not for a temporary, but a perpetual institution, is evident from the commission he gave them after his resurrection. For, having singled out the eleven Apostles, out of above five hundred, to whom he appeared at once after his resurrection, and appointed them alone to meet him at a mountain in *Galilee*, he spake unto them, saying, *All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth*. And having thus declared his own power, he commits it to them, and says, *Go ye therefore, as my deputies and vicegerents, and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. And lo I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world, Amen*. In which words he plainly shews that their office was intended to be continued alway, even unto the end of the world, and he confirms this promise with an *Amen*, thereby testifying that he would verily and indeed fulfil it. Now it was *plainly* the apostolical office which our Saviour here promised he would be alway present with, to ratify and confirm their ministrations. For it was only the eleven disciples or apostles, whom he had before sent, as he was sent by the Father, to whom he made
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the promise. And that the promise was made to the *office* or *order* with which he had vested them, and not to their persons, is *evident*, because otherwise his promise must have failed at their deaths, and consequently he was so far from continuing with *them* to the end of the world in the discharge of this office, that he did not continue with them an hundred years, for all these eleven Apostles were dead in less than that time. But some pretend that the words which we here translate, *the end of the world*, signify no more than *the end of that age*. But if they are understood to signify no more, then the commission to disciple by baptism, and to teach what Christ had commanded, must end with that age also, and then christianity must have ceased with that age, so that ever since our preaching has been vain, and your faith also vain; for it has since had no promise of Christ to depend upon, if this promise is to be extended to no longer time; and that is not *faith*, but *presumption*, which is not founded upon any promise. But if the promise is to be extended to the end of the world, and that it must be, or there can be no christianity in the world, then must the office, the *apostolical office* or order, to which it was made, continue so long. For Christ did not say, *I am alway present to ratify and confirm these ministrations by whomsoever performed*, but *I am with you alway*; with you whom I have sent, as I was sent by the Father, with you whom I have appointed to disciple all nations by baptism

tism, with *you* whom I have appointed to teach all things which I have commanded and will ratify and confirm what *you* do in these ministrations, that is, *you* who are commissioned for that purpose. Therefore the office, *the apostolical office*, to which this commission was given, must continue for the ministry of these ordinances, or there is no promise that these ordinances shall be effectual to any after the death of those persons to whom this commission was particularly given. But if the ordinances continue, then the commission also is continued, for the promise is not made to the ordinances, but to the commissioners in the ministration of those ordinances; and therefore if those who have not the commission undertake to administer them, there is no word of promise to make such ministrations effectual.

“ Now whence do the sacraments receive their *validity*? Certainly not from any thing that is naturally intrinsic to the outward visible sign, but from the *institution* of Jesus Christ. But then it is not every kind of baptism, or of washing with water, that will have effect: it must be done according to *his institution*, or it is not the sacrament which he has ordained. Now when Christ ordered baptism to be administered to all nations, when he appointed that all should eat of that bread and drink of that cup, he did not only ordain in what manner, or with what form of words these sacraments should be celebrated, but likewise directed what particular *persons* should

should celebrate them. Thus when he ordered all nations should be made disciples by baptism, he did not indiscriminately command *all persons* that should know how to recite the form of words with which baptism was to be administered, to baptize, but the *Apostles* only, whom he chose out of a vast multitude of his disciples, and to them particularly, as I have before observed, he gave commission to *go and disciple all nations, baptizing them*. So also when he instituted the holy eucharist, he did not commit the ministration of it to all his disciples, but only to *the twelve*. And to them only he said *THIS DO*, that is, consecrate bread and wine, and distribute it, as I have now done, in remembrance of me.—The Apostles on neither of these occasions met our Saviour by accident, but by appointment. Whereas if he had intended to have commissioned *more* for either of these purposes, he could as easily have ordered more to have attended him upon either of these occasions. But by not requiring their attendance, and at the same time requiring that of the Apostles, he *plainly excluded* all the rest.—I know it is objected, that a bare omission in this case does not amount to a prohibition, and therefore since our Saviour only forebore to command, but did not prohibit his other disciples to administer his sacraments, we have no ground from scripture to say that none but *Bishops*, as *Successors* to the Apostles, may minister them, or that if any others do it, they are invalid, and of no effect
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whatsoever. But we answer, that *an omission in this case does amount to a prohibition.* For wherever a commission is necessary to authorize an act, whosoever is *left out* of the commission, is unauthorized, and therefore cannot perform that act so as to make it *valid.*—I never could understand that a prince when he granted a commission to levy, or any other commission whatsoever, did expressly or in direct terms forbid any other to do what he authorized those to do whom he did commission. For a commission is always given to authorize a man to do that, which without such commission neither he nor any one else has otherwise a right to do. —There was therefore no occasion for our Saviour to prohibit others from administering his sacraments, since the authorizing some and not others was itself in the nature of the thing as full a prohibition, as if he had forbid them to do these things in express words.—Now the promises of God with relation to the sacraments, at least to the sacrament of *baptism*, are not made to the act itself, but to the persons by whom that sacrament is ordered to be administered. For Christ does not say, I am with the act of baptizing, or washing in the name of the Father, &c.—But he says, *Lo, I am with YOU always, with YOU my Apostles, with YOU whom I have commissioned to minister baptism, and with YOUR Successors to the end of the world.* The promise being therefore not made to the bare baptism or washing with water, but to the Apostles and

and their Successors, who were commissioned to minister that sacrament, those that are not baptized by persons so commissioned, have no promise to depend upon, that they have received Christ's baptism; and therefore for any to believe that they have received it, is not *faith* but *presumption*, and being *not of faith* St. Paul tells us *it is sin*. It is sin in the person who pretends to *administer* it, for he takes upon him an office unto which God has not called him, he acts without authority, and presumptuously supposes God will ratify that which he has given him no commission to do: it is also *sin* in the person who *receives* it from one whom he knows to have no commission to give it, for he also is presumptuous, and expects a blessing where God has made no promise of any.—Any pretended baptism therefore ministered by such as have no commission, is destitute of this promise, and being so, is of no effect or validity, for it is not *Christ's baptism*, but a baptism of *human invention* *."

§ 22. THE attentive reader will easily observe, that Dr. BRETT, when he wrote the above, was on his road to *Rome*; taking, however, *positive precepts*, which always imply their negative, for his guide. And had he compleated his journey, he and his *principles* would have met with the most cordial welcome. For by such principles the papal chair is supported, and the whole structure of the holy catholic church can boast

* Ibid. § 9. 25—28.

boast of a similar foundation. "Yes, whether it be an assembly of presbyters, or a council of prelates; whether it be the injunction of a pope, or the mandate of a prince, by which the inventions of men are incorporated with the appointments of God; they admit of the *same kind* of defence." How Mr. B. would answer the above pretended apostolical succession, I will not take upon me to determine; but for my own part, since my Maker and Judge has given me eyes to see and ears to hear, I would attend to what the Spirit of truth saith unto the churches; I would diligently and with diffidence search my bible, and especially those parts that seem more immediately to refer to these matters; seek light and direction from the Father of lights, who liberally imparts wisdom, and prudence profitable to direct; I would examine, reason, *moralize, analogize*, and use ALL the means and methods which a gracious God has furnished me with; and, finally, I would shew that the Doctor's foundation, notwithstanding his appeal upon every turn to positive appointment and apostolic practice, is contrary to the genius of the gospel dispensation, and reducible to manifold *absurdities*, which can never be a part of the divine will.

§ 23. (3) But supposing, for argument' sake, these gentlemen could extricate themselves from the above entangling difficulty; it would prove but a temporary relief, for another still greater awaits them. I assert, therefore, in the next place, That it is impossible, on their own avowed prin-

principles, whereby they discard from their system all use of *moral* considerations, inference and analogy, to determine in practice who is a proper *subject* of baptism among adults and who is not; and if so, are not only *liable* to commit sin instead of performing duty, but as often as they perform the action of baptism they *inevitably* plunge themselves into sin.

LET us not lose sight of that “divine law,” where, *if at all*, we may expect precision with respect to the *qualifications* of the subject. Go — TEACH — baptize” — As “this instructive text, says Mr. B. is the first appointment of baptism for the use of the *gentiles*, and as it is the law of administration to the end of time, so it cannot but require the most submissive regard. For Jesus Christ, on this occasion, expressly claims *all authority in heaven and on earth*. He plainly appears as King of Zion, and Sovereign of the world. His language, here, is not a mere *allusion* to baptism, — but it is the *institution* of that ordinance, it is DIVINE LAW; and therefore the expressions contained in it, must be understood in their natural and obvious meaning, *except any absurdity* would follow such a construction of the sacred statute. — As to any *absurdity* following upon it, our opponents pretend none, but what implies a begging of the question disputed*.” — Overlooking a great piece of inconsistency observable in the above paragraph, where it is said that “this text is the *first appointment* of baptism,

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for the use of the Gentiles," implying that it was before appointed for the use of the Jews, which is the real fact; tho' that *first institution* is not mentioned in the evangelic history: and where it is also said, "that this is not a mere *allusion* to baptism, but is *the institution* of that ordinance;" which, if it has any determinate meaning, must imply, by the opposition intended, that it was *not before instituted*, which involves a contradiction. It was not a mere allusion, but *the institution itself*, of what was *before instituted*. Passing by this, what, pray, is that disputed question which the Pædobaptists *beg* at the hands of their brethren? Is it the *favour* of disputing about the *qualifications* of subjects on *moral* grounds? They have no need to *beg* that; it is their *native right*, as the preceding pages, I presume, do evince; and as the following will further establish. Or is it that the *natural* and *primary* signification of the greek term, μαθητευσατε, is to *disciple* rather than to *teach*? At present I only observe, that, whatever advantage would accrue to the cause for which I am pleading, from such a *grant* in its favour, Mr. B. and his friends will be no great gainers by a peaceful *possession* of what they so highly esteem. My present argument does not require a professed examination of the above question, and therefore let it be now supposed that the word is properly rendered, TEACH. I will also grant that Mr. B. is in the properest sense a qualified person to execute Christ's commission, as properly qualified

as those to whom the commission was originally given. After all, I insist it is not in his power to perform his appointed work, to *teach* in order to baptism, but by the aids of moral and analogical reasoning. Without this he will be at a loss about the *kind* and the *degree* of teaching. The word *teach* is vague and indeterminate, because it is not only of various kinds, about which however we will suppose no misunderstanding, but admits of endless *degrees*. How much teaching is sufficient? The *qualification* of the *taught* is by no means to be measured by the time, the pains, or the abilities employed by the teacher. Some are ever learning without ever coming to the knowledge of the truth; and few gospel teachers but have occasion to make the mournful observation. No given degree whatever of skill, of faithfulness, or of laborious diligence in the discharge of his high commission, can enable a teacher to decide who is fit for baptism and who is not. Were a teacher to come to this determination, that each catechumen should be sufficiently qualified when able to recite the Lord's prayer, the ten commandments, and a certain short creed; all this, and much more, may be taught a person, while he has not a grain of religion; nay, continuing openly irreligious. And should *such* be baptized? Besides, by what authority could he fix upon such a standard? The object and the end of this teaching, then, is the *moral improvement* of the instructed, of which the teacher is the appointed judge.

judge †. But what *positive* precept or example can enable him to do this? *Positive* institutions are of an *external* nature, as before shewn, (§ 6.) and are perfectly distinct in their nature from all *moral* considerations.

§ 24. MR. B. very frequently refers us to the Mosaic ritual as of a *similar* nature with baptism: or, in other words, finds an *analogy* between baptism and those antiquated rites, to which he is fond of referring us. And on a certain occasion, when speaking of the signification of terms, he throws down the gauntlet; and, *feeling the ground on which he treads*, exclaims, "We may safely challenge our opposers to produce an instance of this kind out of the Mosaic ritual*." Before we accept the challenge, I would fain learn, upon what principle Mr. B. draws a *comparison* between baptism and the Jewish ceremonies? How the law that enacts the former, *ought* to have any thing in it *analogous* to those enforcing the latter? It seems he makes it *requisite* that there should be an *analogy* between these laws; "the whole *being* of which, and all their legitimate connections, depend on the sovereign pleasure of God ‡."

BUT, instead of acceding to this proposal of producing an instance out of the Mosaic ritual enjoined in a manner *similar* to what we conceive

† "Admission to baptism lies *solely* in the breast of the *Administrator*, who is the *only judge* of qualifications for it, and has the *sole power* of receiving to it, and of rejecting from it." GILL'S Body of Divinity, Vol. III. B. III. Chap. I.

* P. 33.

‡ P. 460.

ceive the latter to be; I beg leave to demand ONE INSTANCE out of all the numerous precepts, which Mr. B. calls positive, delivered by Moses to the chosen tribes, that required in the subject a discriminating *moral qualification*? An institution *merely positive*, in regard to the subject, necessarily requires distinguishing marks in him of an *external* nature; a distinction that is sensible, circumstantial, not liable to misconstructions, and, in a word, infallibly characterized; otherwise, the choice of the subject, to whom the rite is to be applied, depends not upon *positive* rules, but *prudential* maxims, and *moral* considerations. Hence we may observe, that *those* rites were awfully guarded with temporal visible *penal sanctions*, which baptism is not. *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that BELIEVETH NOT, or rejects the Redeemer and his salvation, shall be DAMNED.* The neglect of baptism, in proportion as it is a duty, is sinful; but it is guarded with no penal sanction. There appears another important reason why the Mosaic ritual was connected with external characters, as distinguished from moral ones, and also their being guarded by penal threats, and that is, their being *typical* of future blessings under the Messiah; but no gospel ordinance, strictly speaking, is a type. — On the whole, then, we may observe this remarkable difference between the institutions of the Old Testament and those of the New; the *former* referred, for instance, to persons of such a *sex* and *age*, as circumcision; to persons who had

had certain *marks* on their bodies, as the cure of the leprosy; to persons who *touched* any thing declared to be unclean; to persons who *uttered* certain words, as the blasphemer; to persons who committed certain *actions*, as the manslayer; &c. —but the *latter* refer to *moral* qualities, to certain *dispositions* of mind, to persons in such *circumstances* as are answerable to the *end* and *design* of the institutions, according to the judgment of the Administrator. Mr. B.'s reasoning, therefore, is of no force when he argues, that because the terms of the Mosaic ritual left nothing to be *inferred*, respecting the qualifications of the *subject*, therefore the same must hold in baptism; and his challenge is impertinent. To discard moral grounds from this controversy, leads to this absurdity, for it is the same as to say, that Christ gave a command to his ministers, in executing which, no *reasoning* or *inference* is at all necessary, and yet without this they are liable to perpetual mistakes. It is like a sovereign giving his representative a *discretionary* commission to treat with a foreign power, but every word of the treaty, he is told, is *written* and unalterably *fixed*, and must be taken in its strictest meaning. Which is the same as to say, The nature of your commission necessarily requires some liberty and latitude, some discretionary power of determining certain points, which cannot possibly be included in these rules and this treaty, and yet you must not recede a hair's breadth from the particulars therein contained,

§ 25. IF it be objected, (what indeed seems to me to be the only objection of any plausibility that can be urged) “that tho’ our Lord has drawn no line in the command to determine *what degree* of instruction is necessary, yet according to the letter of the command *some degree* is requisite;” To this I reply, that *teaching*, in the present case, is of no further use than a *mean* to a moral end. Its *only use* seems to be to discover, produce, or promote a *moral qualification*. This is evident when we consider that if this important *end* is attained, the other is of course superseded; for whether the subject, on our opponents’ principle, has been *taught* by another, or has profited, in a solitary way, by prayer and reading, &c. as a pre-requisite qualification, is quite immaterial. The subject *has already* attained to what is a necessary qualification, in the Antipædobaptist sense, and therefore teaching for *that end* is unnecessary. Which sufficiently shews the weakness and futility of forming an absolute and indispensable connexion between *teaching* and baptizing. The objection, therefore, is of no force, but on supposition that human teaching is a *necessary* mean, without which there can be no moral qualification, which is contrary to fact; for it is demonstrable from the concessions of our opponents, that many of the human race are *actually* in possession of that end, to attain which is the sole use of the teaching intended, who yet are not beholden to its aid. Nor can it be denied, that there are *other* means
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of information *beside* what arise from the circumstance of teaching, whereby we may conclude with *sufficient* certainty, that is, with a certainty *equal* to what teaching can afford us, or equal to any *profession* whatever, that certain persons are in the *state* of which a profession, as the effect of teaching, is only an indication; except it be maintained that profession is an *infallible* sign, which is absurd.

BUT should any one still insist, that a competent knowledge of christian principles, and a credible profession are necessary; I ask, what is the standard of this *competency* or *credibility*? What positive rule can answer this purpose? And again, I ask, *necessary for what*? If the reply be, to answer the nature and design of the institution—it is evident this is only begging the question, as I shall fully shew in the next chapter; where I hope also to demonstrate, that there is nothing in the nature and design of baptism, but is *equally* applicable to the infant child of a believer as to himself, however eminent he may be in faith and piety. Upon the whole it appears, that teaching cannot be any way an *essential* qualification for baptism, and therefore is required in certain *circumstances* only.

§ 26. FROM what has been said it follows, that our opponents, if they act upon their avowed principles, are not only *liable* to commit sin by baptizing an unqualified person, but do *inevitably* commit sin, by renouncing and deserting the real and only guide left to conduct us in the

path of duty. To baptize the *instructed* would be no duty, without attending to the *moral* circumstances of the instruction; and to perform what is *materially* right without an adequate rule, is *morally* an evil, or sinful. It is the observance of the design and reason, the moral purposes of the command, as it refers to teaching, and not the mere letter of it, that constitutes a teacher's duty. For of two ministers, keeping to the letter of the precept, in a manner equally strict, one may be performing the intention of the Lawgiver, and the other committing a sin. The office of teaching, therefore, is a discretionary office, to be measured by the *moral* design of the institution to which it refers. How absurd to argue thus: OMAI the savage is *taught*—the *Paternoster*—the ten commandments—the apostles' creed—therefore he should be baptized; however destitute of christian virtue and religion. Yet, on the principle I am opposing, this must be good logic.—Now, if we ought to *reject* some candidates for baptism who yet are taught, because not in a state that seems to comport with the design of the institution; we are at liberty, for the same reason, to *admit* others who appear in a condition suited to that design, tho' not taught, if upon inquiry any such should be found. Whether infants be of that number, will be considered in its proper place.

§ 27. (4) WHAT innumerable other absurdities would follow from that mode of interpreting Scripture which Mr. B. contends for, even in reference

reference to the very commission in question! For instance, Whosoever believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; Simon the forcerer believed and was baptized; therefore he is saved. He that believeth not shall be damned; infants believe not; therefore (*horribile dictu!*) they shall be damned. And *these signs* shall follow them that believe: in my name they shall cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover: but *these signs* have not followed for many ages back; therefore, during all that time, none have believed. Or, on the other hand, many have believed without *these signs* following; therefore, Christ is not true to his word.—Again, Jesus spake nothing but in parables; but he spake the commission to preach the gospel and to baptize; therefore this commission is a *parable*. The command is not only *teach all nations*, but preach the gospel to *every creature*; (the latter being last written explaining the former;) but four-footed beasts, fowls, and fishes, &c. are creatures; therefore it behoved the disciples to preach to *these*. Again, *Paul* was not sent to baptize, but to preach the gospel; but he baptized *Crispus* and *Gaius*, and the household of *Stephanus*; therefore he did that which he was not sent to do, or acted contrary to his commission, and was blameworthy in baptizing them. How can such a

ridiculous mode of reasoning be confuted without *inferential* reasoning?

§ 28. WILL any say, that there is no danger of running into such ridiculous inconsistencies; that a very moderate share of common sense, a little sober reason, a small attention to the scope of a passage, and the analogy of faith, would prove a sufficient barrier against the apprehended danger? Very true; this is all we desire. But this is the very barrier which the Antipædobaptists would fain demolish. When Dr. S. professedly inquires by what kind of proof we are to be determined in this controversy, he says, "Here I would observe then, that all positive institutions depend solely upon the will of the institutor, and therefore *in every question relating to them* we are to be guided by his express declarations, or by those of persons he has duly authorized to signify his will.—Now this principle granted, I might very properly be excused considering the much greater part of Mr. A.'s book, which consists of analogical reasoning;—because *a matter of this importance* in its own nature *requires* an express positive declaration*." And Mr. ROBINSON is so well satisfied and pleased with this principle, (however repugnant in its genuine consequences to that freedom of inquiry which on other occasions he professes and adopts, and for which he is reprehended by Mr. B. as inconsistent with himself †) that he looks upon it as a most formidable weapon employed against the

* Answer to A. p. 3, 6.

† p. 462. Note.

the Pædobaptists; and publicly compliments his reverend brother, when he says, "Dr. STENNETT has given the *death wound* to Mr. A——'s arguments for infant baptism by this method §." But Mr. R. need not be informed that the warlike *Achilles* was not *invulnerable*, any more than the vaunting *Goliath*. And I am fully persuaded that the *merely positive system*, whatever gigantic and formidable appearance it hath made in the eyes of its votaries, and however loud and strong its defiance, must fall at the feet of sound reason and genuine analogy.—Mr. B. we may be sure, is otherwise minded; "This maxim, says he, [of adhering to precepts and precedents] is a firm barrier against encroachments on the government of Christ, by princely domination, priestly pride, and popular unsteadiness. It guards the throne of our ascended sovereign, and secures his honour as legislator in his own kingdom. This maxim duly observed, his disciples treat, with equal contempt, the mandates of a pope and the edicts of a prince, the canons of a council and the statutes of a parliament, whenever they presume to appoint rites of divine worship, or to *alter those which Christ ordained*." In reading this paragraph and some others of the same complexion, I could not help smiling at the thought, how well it would suit (*mutatis mutandis*) a popish doctor in defending—*transubstantiation*! In vain do Protestants wage war against this first-born of absurdities, while it is

defended by such a *firm barrier*. Entrenched in *this camp*, the catholics are secure; having *this* for their *guard*, no arguments can approach them; planting in front this *positive canon*, they defy every assault. In vain do we oppose to their maxim, common sense, the use of reason, moral considerations, the assistance of analogy; &c. for what has all this to do with a positive institution? “ Let the subject of inquiry be *moral truth*, “ or *moral duty*, may popish advocates reply, and “ we admit inferential proof in as large an extent as any of our opposers; concluding, that “ a *genuine* inference from a moral principle, “ and relating to things of a moral nature, has “ all the certainty of the principle itself. — But, “ when a *positive duty* is under our notice; — “ the case is greatly altered. For the inquiry “ being intirely conversant about the *sovereign* “ *pleasure* of God, concerning an article of human faith or duty, which absolutely depends “ on a *manifestation* of the divine will; the nature of the case forbids our expecting any “ intelligence relating to it, except what arises “ from divine revelation, precept, or scriptural “ precedent. Such is the ordinance of the eucharist; such was the system of ritual appointments in former times; and such is the mystery “ of *transubstantiation*, which is *essential* to the “ aforesaid ordinance, as it is founded upon the “ *plain words of institution*, THIS IS MY BODY. “ Methinks they need but be read, and they must “ produce conviction, if taken in their plain and “ *proper*

“ *proper* sense. And that they are to be taken
“ in their *proper* sense, in opposition to one that
“ is figurative, is apparent hence, for surely Christ
“ would speak in the *plainest* manner to his dis-
“ ciples, while his language is the *institution* of
“ that ordinance; it is DIVINE LAW. And what
“ is very remarkable, St. PAUL received of the
“ Lord Jesus, now ascended to glory, what he
“ was to communicate to the churches as of
“ standing obligation till the Lord come, a con-
“ firmation of the institution in the self same
“ words, *This is my body*; whereby the cavils
“ of heretics are for ever confounded. 'Tis true,
“ *before* the consecration it *was bread*; but *after*
“ that it was *his body*. And as to any *absur-*
“ *dity* attending our interpretation, none can
“ be pretended by those who admit, that the
“ Divine WORD *was made* FLESH; and other
“ gospel mysteries equally remote from human
“ comprehension.”

§ 29. MR. B. after quoting a passage from AINSWORTH'S *Arrow against Idolatry*, remarks;
“ By this abstract of the masterly mock apology
which the famous Puritan makes for the conduct
of Jeroboam—it appears—that the most detest-
able corruptions of ritual worship admit of a
plausible defence, when managed by persons of
genius, if you do but allow them the privilege
of arguing on *general* principles, as distinguish-
ed from positive laws, and on such passages of
sacred writ as are *foreign* to the subject in ques-
tion. It certainly behoves us, therefore, to be

exceedingly careful of deserting *positive law* and primitive example, when a ritual ordinance is under consideration; seeing this apology for Jeroboam defies the art of man to confute it, on any other ground *.” What! cannot *Idolatry*, that superlatively detestable *moral evil*, be condemned on *moral* grounds? Would this abomination, this spiritual whoredom, this root of all evil, be an *innocent* thing, then, were it not *positively* prohibited? *Credat Judeus*. While the masterly pen of AINSWORTH describes in *mockery* the conduct of the idolatrous Jeroboam, on *general* grounds; the learned and eloquent pens of a numerous train of Romish doctors vindicate in *earnest* the doctrine of transubstantiation on *POSITIVE* ground; and I may with the greatest propriety add, “their apology defies the art of man to confute it,” without the aids of inferential and moral reasoning; and that in the case of an institution *confessedly positive*.

A CERTAIN anonymous writer, who professes himself an enemy to the corruptions of Popery, after an appeal to *antiquity* and *universality*, to early *Fathers*, *Councils*, and *Liturgies*, in evidence that the practice of the church respecting the *eucharistick cup*, was to OFFER WINE MIXED WITH WATER, as best agreeing with the *original institution*; and having observed, that this is not the only *essential defect* the church of England is to be charged with in the commemoration of this great mystery, writes to his learned friend as follows: “Give me leave therefore to ask you in
what

what tolerable sense we may be said to retain this institution of our Lord's, when we observe neither the *matter* nor the *form* of it? If it be answered, that we do retain the institution, tho' maimed in some parts of it; I ask again, whether, in a POSITIVE INSTITUTION, every part of it be not *equally necessary* to be observed, especially when there is nothing in the nature of the things themselves which can produce the effects, but all the benefits we receive thereby are derived to us upon account of our *exact conformity* to the will of him that instituted them? But again, if every part of a *positive institution* be equally necessary, where is the power that can dispense with our non-observance of the foregoing particulars? If there be such a power, that power may dispense with as many more particulars, and so on till the whole be taken away, and then it will follow, that *our Saviour instituted something for a continual remembrance of his death, which might lawfully be taken away before his coming again.*" The reader should observe, that the writer of the above, and the person addressed, both stood on the *merely positive ground*, and accordingly the *latter* so felt the force of the *former's* reasoning on their common principle, that he made the following ingenuous acknowledgment: "To this long objection &c. I must confess *I know not how to return a satisfactory answer* †." Here is a man honestly submitting to the strength and evidence of his own avowed principle, however

† BRETT'S Divine Right, &c, Appendix, p. 189—191.

ever repugnant to *sound analogy* and the *genuine spirit* of the christian dispensation.

§ 30. THE real fact is, that the path of truth is daily transgressed on either side. Some leave the line of duty so slack and entangled, that it proves of little or no use to guide; others draw it to such a *positive tightness*, that it breaks; they surely are best off who cautiously observe the golden mean.

THERE is, no doubt, in the divine dispensations, an admirable *analogy* observable, an analogy established and confirmed by uncontested *facts*; nor should we quit the clue afforded by the former, in theological as well as philosophical subjects, but when obliged to do so by the latter. The Supreme Being observes in the works of creation and providence, in the revolutions of states, the rise and fall of empires, and the successive dispensations of religion, respectively, a wonderful *proportion*; and who can deny that a due attention to the same, as explained by facts, eminently distinguishes a wise politician from a weak patriot, or a judicious christian from an enthusiastick bigot. Among the extravagancies of the latter, of which the christian world furnishes too many instances, not a few are established and supported by the pretended aids of analogical reasoning, while others are beholden to the abused patronage of positive laws. But the real parent of the former is not sober and just *analogy*, but rather a kind of *anomaly*; and that of the latter *anomy* of lawless breed.

§ 31. (1) BEFORE I close this part of my subject, I shall take notice of some *objections* that may be made, beside those already anticipated, to what has been delivered in the preceding pages, whether in itself or in its consequences. And, first, it may be objected, “If the preceding account be true, that baptism is not an institution *merely positive*, as much so as any enacted under the Mosaic dispensation, then the present œconomy hath no institutions at all of that kind.” This objection supposes,

I. THAT precepts of a positive nature under the Mosaic dispensation, were absolutely so in all their circumstances; so as not to leave any thing to be inferred by the person or persons concerned, in the discharge of the duty enjoined.—But if these things were so, if the Jewish ritual was so express as to leave nothing to be determined by inference, one might well wonder whence could spring so many *Targums* and *Talmuds*, so many voluminous works intended to explain and illustrate the various circumstances attending the performance of these *positive duties* among others. Are not these *unprescribed circumstances* of ritual worship, and other positive injunctions, what in a great degree swell the interpretations of the *Rabbins*?—The truth is, that there were many precepts under the Jewish œconomy positive in a *considerable degree*, relative to the *subject* as well as the mode of an institute, and respecting the former, it was sometimes particularly scrupulous, for reasons already assigned (§ 24.); but it does
not

not follow that ANY ONE of these were so strictly positive, as not to take some things for *granted* respecting the circumstances of the duty, such as national custom, the common dictates of sense and reason, traditionary knowledge, the general principles of the law of nature, &c. And it should not be forgotten, that the administration of the Jewish rites had the subjects distinguished and characterized in a *sensible manner*, which qualification was to be determined by the same sort of evidence as any *facts* in common life; but the administrator of the Christian rites has no such grounds to proceed on; his commission is of a *discretionary* nature, arising from the nature and design of the institutions themselves, as before shewn (§ 23.)

2. THE objection again supposes, that there is some *excellency* in an institution being merely and absolutely positive, more than in one of a mixed nature. But this supposition is vain and erroneous. For what conceivable superior excellency can there be in any precept or duty on account of its *positiveness*? Were there any force in the objection, it would imply that the Christian dispensation is *less excellent* than the Mosaic; as having fewer positive rites, and their proportion of positiveness being also smaller. And it would also imply, that the reasonable duties of prayer and praise, as founded on the law of nature, as well as more fully enjoined by revelation, were *less excellent* than baptism and the Lord's supper; and it would follow, that the services of the church

church triumphant are in their own nature *less excellent* than those of the church militant; which are consequences from the force of the objection equally genuine and absurd. Our Lord's answer respecting the first and great commandment, shews at once that what is the most *important* duty, is also the most *natural*, and therefore the most remote from what is merely positive; and that is the *love of God*. This matter has been fully shewn before. (§ 4) In one word, the spirit of the objection is truly pharisaic.

§ 32. (2) SOME may perhaps object, " that this has been always admitted as true, that baptism and the Lord's supper are positive institutions of the New Testament; and that many Pædobaptists have availed themselves of this fort, in ascertaining the nature and enforcing the obligation of the latter, and particularly Bp. HOADLY. And as his Lordship's principle, in his *Plain Account of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper*, has been deemed unanswerable, Mr. FOOT, Dr. STENNETT, and others, have taken but the same method in treating about baptism." To this I reply,

THAT, as principles taken upon trust, dignified titles, and lawn sleeves, are light as a feather in the scale of argument; so, on the other hand, I am satisfied the Bishop of Winchester's positions, taken in a sound sense, nay, the *only* consistent sense in which they can be taken, are evidently true and important. The sum is this; " That all positive duties, or duties made such by institution

institution alone, depend intirely upon the will and declaration of the person who institutes or ordains them, with respect to the real design and end of them, and consequently, to the due manner of performing them." This is strictly true, *in the degree that any duties are positive*, but no further. And to denominate a precept or duty *positive*, tho' but *partially* so, I have no objection, for the sake of distinguishing them from such as are merely moral, and evidently founded on the reason and nature of things. "Except we observe this caution," as Bp. BUTLER observes, "we shall be in danger of running into endless confusion."

§ 33. (3) It may be said, "If we resign this maxim, that a positive precept or duty excludes all moral reasoning, analogy and inference, we open a door to numberless innovations, and deprive ourselves of a necessary barrier against the encroachments of popery, &c.*" In reply to this specious objection let it be observed,

I. That this maxim, whatever confidence our opponents place in it, is a very *insufficient* barrier for the defence of truth, if the objection implies, that it is calculated to defend truth against error, and not error against truth as well. For it is notorious, that there is hardly any extravagance, in the whole compass of the distinguishing peculiarities of religious practice, that is not barricaded by this very maxim. If *Protestants* use it against *Papists*, *Papists* in their turn use it against *Protestants*.

* Thus Mr. B. p. 190, 443, &c.

Protestants. If the *Quakers* are pursued and foiled when they occasionally quit this sort, they soon rally their controversial forces, and, entrenching themselves behind the strength of this maxim, the *warless race* becomes again *victorious*. Whence passive obedience and non-resistance? Whence an opposition to all *forensic* swearing, in common with profane? Whence the Quakers' nonconformity to what other serious christians consider as lawful? Their peculiar mode of salutation and address? Their method of conducting religious worship? The little stress they lay on the observance of the christian Sabbath? &c. Whence the popish absurd figment of transubstantiation *, apostolical succession †, extreme unction? &c. — On the contrary,

2. Not to distinguish between the *positiveness* and *morality* of a precept, ordinance or duty, and not to ascertain their respective *degrees*; and to deny that the *latter* distinction admits of moral reasoning, inference and analogy, open a wide door to *bigotry*, and numberless glaring abuses of the sacred oracles. By rejecting the analogy of faith and the *design* of scripture herein, we give the most effectual encouragement to every senseless intrusion. And what is still more remarkable is, that the *more firmly* any one adheres to the undistinguishing positive scheme, in reference to any christian ordinance whatever, the more closely will he be allied to the interest of genuine bigotry. For it has a direct tendency

* See § 28.

† See § 21.

dency to make the unprescribed circumstances of a positive rite, *essential* to the rite itself, and consequently to make that necessary and essential which the institutor has not made so. How far this is applicable to the Antipædobaptist's cause, will be further considered. — The doctrine that teaches the propriety of yielding our reason to positive institutions *as such*, or in the *degree* they are so, is just and proper, as founded on the sovereign, absolute and manifest authority of the Supreme Legislator; and in this view it has been of singular service in refuting the cavils of deistical impiety. But to carry the principle any further, tends to betray the cause of christianity into the hands of infidels, and to breed unhallowed party zeal and uncharitable animosities among its sincerest professors. “For who are most likely to put weapons into the hands of *infidels*; they, who seem to discard *reason* in the investigation of truth, or they, whose researches are founded on her most vigorous exertions, and most rational decisions? — They, who make scripture bow to their preconceived notions, in direct opposition to the dictates of reason and common sense, or they, whose arguments are founded on a *coalition* of scripture and right reason †?” Once more,

3. THE objection, as it includes Mr. B.'s favourite maxim, and tends to oppose the distinction above stated, involves a great inconsistency with itself. For on what principle, except what they

† DE COURCY'S Rejoinder, p. 252.

they affect to discard, do our opponents retain *some* of the positive rites of the New Testament and reject *others*? Why regard *baptism* and the *eucharist* as of standing obligation; while the *pedilavium* and *feasts of charity* (the *former* enjoined expressly by our Lord, and *both* practised by the disciples of the apostolic age, see John xiii. 14, 15. 1 Tim. v. 10. Jude 12.) are judged unworthy of continuance? Why receive *females* to communion, or adopt the *first* day of the week for the christian sabbath? How can they justify their conduct in these matters, these circumstances of *positive* institutions, without undermining their own avowed hypothesis? With regard to the sabbath, indeed, the Antipædobaptists are divided among themselves; while some are content with the *first* day of the week, others observe the *seventh*. On this point Dr. S. is very open and ingenuous; Mr. ADDINGTON appeals to an objecting Antipædobaptist, “whether he does not think himself sufficiently authorized to keep the christian sabbath, tho’ Christ has no where said in so many words, *Remember the first day of the week to keep it holy*||?” To this the Dr. replies, “There is, I acknowledge, some weight in this objection: and all I can say to it is, that not having yet met with any passage in the New Testament that appears to me to have repealed the fourth commandment, and to have required the observation of the first day, I cannot think myself sufficiently authorized to
“renounce

“renounce that, and to keep this †.” If the Doctor is professedly an observer of the Jewish sabbath, he is consistent with himself, however different from so great a part of the christian world; if *not*, he and his tenet are at variance; analogy and inferential reasoning have got the better of the positive system, which nevertheless must not be resigned, for fear of worse consequences.

§ 34. (4) ANOTHER objection much insisted on is, “If our Lord has left any thing to be *inferred* relative to the *subject* and *mode* of baptism, being a positive institute; or if he has not delivered himself *expressly* and *clearly* in every thing, respecting the question *who* are to be baptized, and the manner *how*; it implies a reflexion on his wisdom and goodness.” But this objection is impertinent on different accounts. For,

1. ITS force is derived from the supposition that the Institutor was somehow *obliged* to make his will known to men by *one* method only. But is the Great Supreme under any such obligations to his absolutely dependent creatures? What should we say of a philosopher, who, having to judge of any important phenomenon in physicks, should quarrel with the author of nature, because he had not confined his method of information to *one* source only, to the exclusion of all others? That his evidence, for instance, was not confined to the information of *sense*, to the exclusion of *reason* and *analogy*?

† Answer to A. p. 177.

analogy? Or what should we say of a person, who having to decide on the truth and reality of a miracle, should impeach the wisdom and goodness of his Maker, because he did not appeal to *one* sense only of his dependent and unworthy creatures, that of *seeing*, for instance, to the exclusion of that of *hearing*? The answer is plain, and the application easy.

2. THE objection is guilty of another impertinence, nearly allied to the former: it unreasonably requires *positive* evidence for what is discoverable by *other* means. It is demonstrable, and I think has been demonstrated, that the qualifications of the subjects of baptism (the *mode* also will be examined in its place) is what cannot possibly be determined by any positive rule whatever as such, but must be resolved to the *discretionary* nature of the commission, or the supposed *wisdom* and *prudence* of the administrators, in common with other parts of the same commission, such as the choice of an *audience*, the choice of a concionatory *subject*, &c. Preach the *gospel* to *every creature*, is a part of the commission, but the execution has no *positive* rule. Nor does this commission of preaching the *gospel* prohibit preaching the *law*, for a lawful use, or any branch of natural religion, notwithstanding Mr. B.'s excluding standard, that "positive laws imply their negatives." In like manner, the commission to baptize *believers*, and the *taught*, we contend and prove, does not mean to include *all sorts* of believers and taught persons,

persons, but such of them as the administrators judge fit, according to the rules of christian prudence and discretion. And we further insist, as shall be more fully shewn hereafter, that the terms of the commission, *believers* and *taught*, stand *opposed*, not to *non-believers* and *untaught*, but to *unbelievers* and persons *perversely ignorant*. What, therefore, falls *necessarily* to the province of inferential reasoning, is impertinently referred to a positive standard.

3. THE objection implies an *ungrateful* reflexion on the Institutor's wisdom and goodness, contrary to what it pretends to avoid. And this it does, by counteracting and vilifying those natural dictates of reason, prudence and common sense, that our all-wise and beneficent Creator has given us—his *goodness*, in not suspending their operations, but leaving them in full force, as to these circumstances of positive duties—his *wisdom*, in grafting what is positive of his laws on these common principles—and, finally, the favourable circumstance of his diminishing the degree of positiveness in New Testament institutions, as well as their number.

§ 35. LET us now recapitulate what has been said in this chapter. — From an investigation of the *nature* of positive precepts and duties, as distinguished from *moral* ones, together with their *comparative* obligations and importance, we have seen, that, in any case of supposed competition, the *latter* claims an undoubted *preference*. We have also seen, that nothing but absolute, decisive

five, *discernible authority* can turn the scale in favour of the *former*, or, indeed, place any law or duty in the rank of POSITIVE. Moreover, it has been shewn, that every duty resulting from any discernible *moral relation*, must needs be classed among *moral duties*; that some things appertaining to the very *essence* of baptism, on our opponents' own principles, are of moral consideration; particularly the qualifications of proper subjects; consequently, that baptism is an ordinance of a *mixed nature*, partly positive and partly moral. Of all which an unavoidable consequence is, that our opponents' outcry against all *moral* and *analogical reasons* in our inquiries respecting the subjects and mode of baptism, is impertinent and absurd, and to a demonstration contradictory to their own avowed principles.—The most material, I believe, of the *objections* that may be urged against my principles, have been answered. And this I can sincerely aver, that I have not intentionally concealed one objection, that has been or may be advanced, on account of any apprehended force therein. On the contrary, I have purposely and studiously sought out what appeared to me the *most forcible*. And I am satisfied that no objection *can be* fairly made, which is not capable of a fair and full answer, and which will not eventually contribute to illustrate and establish what I here contend for.

HAVING now fixed upon the spot, cleared
F the

the rubbish, and laid the foundation, I proceed to the superstructure, and first of all to investigate the *Nature and Design* of the baptismal rite.



CHAP.

C H A P. II.

Of the Nature and Design of baptism; containing an account of the facts, blessings, and obligations represented by it, impartially deduced from all the passages in the New Testament relating to it.

§ 1. *The best method to find the nature and design of baptism.* § 2—7. (1) *Those passages of scripture that speak of baptism in direct terms.* § 8. (2) *Those that are supposed to allude to this ordinance.* § 9. *Axioms of interpretation.* § 10—12. (1) *The difference between the baptism of John and that of Christ.* § 13. (2) *Their agreement.* § 14. *The general nature of baptism.* § 15—17. (1) *The blessings exhibited by it.* § 18—21. (2) *Obligations resulting from it.* § 22. *General conclusions; (1) baptism obliges to some duties, and exhibits some benefits not expressly mentioned in scripture; benefits and obligations being correlates.* § 23—35. (2) *The propriety of denominating baptism a seal of the covenant.* § 36. *And of consequence the Lord's Supper.* § 37. (3) *The unworthiness of minister or subject does not nullify the ordinance.* § 38. (4) *To renounce infant baptism, as such, by a desire of rebaptizing, militates against the very*

nature and design of the ordinance. § 39. (5) It is not necessarily attended with spiritual communications. § 40—42. (6) The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, not the principal facts represented by baptism.

§ 1. **T**H O' I have said so much in vindication of inferential proof and just analogy, in controversial debates about institutions *partially* positive, as baptism is shewn to be; I am far from desiring to evade the force of *any thing* recorded in the New Testament relative to this ordinance: on the contrary, the rules laid down in the preceding chapter require that we should very carefully attend to *revealed facts* before all other considerations, as all reasonings that may contradict these must needs be false and impertinent. It would be ridiculous to borrow the aids of analogy, while investigating any subject whatever, in *opposition* to plain facts. For as an hypothesis in philosophy is justly exploded, when the system-maker, in whose brain it was fabricated, forcibly drags all phenomena into its vortex, in defiance of well attested observations and experiments; so that system in divinity, whether it comprehends the whole body of it, or any particular part, must needs be precarious and vain when it *contradicts* revealed incontestible facts. And it is no less evident, that the pretensions of any hypothesis must be equally futile in proportion as it is *inconsistent* with itself. To avoid these inconveniences

ences I know of no better method, in general, than that which an ingenious writer on this subject has adopted, in a small treatise which he calls, *A Plain Account of the Ordinance of Baptism**; and that is, to lay together all the texts in the *New Testament* relating to it; that from these, as so many *data*, we may deduce the nature and design of the institution, and learn every thing else that the institutor hath been pleased to *reveal* concerning it. And this method I the rather adopt, not only because it is proper and rational in itself, but likewise cannot be objected to consistently by any of our opponents. The Author of the *Plain Account* produces *first* the passages concerning John's baptism, and *secondly* those that refer to Christ's baptism; and inserts promiscuously those passages that only *allude* to the baptismal rite. I shall attempt, however, a slight improvement of his arrangement, by placing *first* all the passages in the *New Testament* that speak of BAPTISM in direct terms and in whatever connection; and *secondly* those texts that are supposed to *allude* to the institution. This I think is less exceptionable, since the classing of the texts in the manner he does, seems to imply an essential difference between the baptism of John and that of Christ, as a circumstance taken for granted, before the inquiry is made.

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§ 2. (1)

* Anonymous, but generally ascribed to Mr. FOOT, of Bristol; addressed to Ep. HOADLEY, in a series of Letters.

§ 2. (1) LET us begin with those passages that speak of BAPTISM in direct terms and in whatever connection. Mat. iii. 5—7. Then went out to him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were *baptized* of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his *baptism* he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?—v. 11. I indeed *baptize* you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall *baptize* you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.—v. 13—16. Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be *baptized* of him. But John forbad him saying, I have need to be *baptized* of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus when he was *baptized* went up straightway out of the water; and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting upon him.—Chap. xx. 22, 23. But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be *baptized* with the *baptism* that I am *baptized* with? They said unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of my cup, and be *baptized* with the *baptism* that I

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am *baptized* with; but to sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my father.—Chap. xxi. 25. The *baptism* of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?—Chap. xxviii. 19. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, *baptizing* them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

§ 3. MARK i. 4, 5. John did *baptize* in the wilderness, and preach the *baptism* of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all *baptized* of him in the river of Jordan confessing their sins.—v. 8—10. I indeed have *baptized* you with water; but he shall *baptize* you with the Holy Ghost. And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was *baptized* of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him.—Chap. vii. 4. And when they come from the market, except they wash, [Greek, *baptize*,] they eat not; and many other things there be which they have received to hold, as the washing [Greek, *baptizing*,] of cups and pots, and of brazen vessels and tables.—Chap. xi. 30. The *baptism* of John, was it from heaven or of men? answer me.—Chap. xvi. 15, 16. And he said

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unto them, go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is *baptized* shall be saved.

§ 4. LUKE iii. 3. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the *baptism* of repentance for the remission of sins.—v. 7, 8. Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be *baptized* of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?—v. 12—14. Then came also publicans to be *baptized*, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages.—v. 16. John answered, saying to them all, I indeed *baptize* you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose; he shall *baptize* you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.—v. 21, 22. Now when all the people were *baptized*, it came to pass that Jesus also being *baptized*, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.—Chap. vii. 29, 30. And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being *baptized* with the *baptism* of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of
God

God against themselves, being not *baptized* of him. — Chap. xi. 38. And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed [Gr. *baptized*] before dinner. — Chap. xii. 50. But I have a *baptism* to be *baptized* with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished! — Chap. xx. 4. The *baptism* of John, was it from heaven or of men?

§ 5. JOHN i. 25, 26. And they asked him, and sent unto him, Why *baptizest* thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I *baptize* with water. — v. 28. These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was *baptizing* — v. 31. And I knew him not; but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come *baptizing* with water. — v. 33. — He that sent me to *baptize* with water, the same said unto me, upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending and remaining on him, the same is he which *baptizeth* with the Holy Ghost. — Chap. iii. 22, 23. After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them and *baptized*. And John also was *baptizing* in Enon, near to Salim; because there was much water there; and they came and were *baptized*. — v. 26. And they came unto John and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold the same *baptizeth*, and all men come to him. — Chap. iv. 1, 2. When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and *baptized* more disciples than John, (tho' Jesus himself

baptized not, but his disciples).—Chap. x. 40. And went away again beyond Jordan, into the place where John at first *baptized*; and there he abode.

§ 6. ACTS i. 5. For John truly *baptized* with water; but ye shall be *baptized* with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.—v. 22. Beginning from the *baptism* of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us.—Chap. ii. 38, 39. Then Peter said unto them, Repent and be *baptized* every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.—v. 41. Then they that gladly received his word were *baptized*; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.—Chap. viii. 12—17. But when they believed Philip, preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were *baptized* both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also; and when he was *baptized*, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs that were done. Now when the Apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: Who, when they were come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost. For as yet he was fallen upon none of them; only they were
baptized

baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.—v. 36—38. And as they went on their way they came unto a certain water. And the Eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be *baptized*? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still. And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he *baptized* him.—Chap. ix. 18. And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose and was *baptized*. Chap. x. 37, 38.—That word (I say) you know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the *baptism* which John preached; How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost, &c.—v. 47, 48. Can any man forbid water, that these should not be *baptized*, which have received the Holy Ghost, as well as we? And he commanded them to be *baptized* in the name of the Lord.—Chap. xi. 15, 16. And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed *baptized* with water; but ye shall be *baptized* with the Holy Ghost.—Chap. xiii. 23—25. Of this man's seed hath God, according to his promise, raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus: When John had first preached

before his coming, the *baptism* of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he.—Chap. xvi. 15. And when she [Lydia] was *baptized*, and her household, she besought us, &c.—v. 33. And he [the jailor] took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was *baptized*, he and all his, straightway.—Chap. xviii. 8. And Crispus the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were *baptized*.—v. 25.—He [Apollos] spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the *baptism* of John.—Chap. xix. 3—5. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye *baptized*? And they said, Unto John's *baptism*. Then said Paul, John verily *baptized* with the *baptism* of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were *baptized* in the name of the Lord Jesus.—Chap. xxii. 16. And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be *baptized*, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

§ 7. Rom. vi. 3, 4. Know ye not, that so many of us as were *baptized* into Jesus Christ, were *baptized* into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by *baptism* into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk
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in newness of life.—1 Cor. i. 13—17. Were ye *baptized* in the name of Paul? I thank God that I *baptized* none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say, that I had *baptized* in mine own name. And I *baptized* also the household of Stephanas; besides, I know not whether I *baptized* any other; for Christ sent me not to *baptize*, but to preach the gospel.—Chap. x. 2. And were all *baptized* unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.—Chap. xii. 13. For by one Spirit are we all *baptized* into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one spirit.—Chap. xv. 29. Else what shall they do, that are *baptized* for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? Why are they then *baptized* for the dead?—Gal. iii. 27. For as many of you as have been *baptized* into Christ, have put on Christ.—Ephes. iv. 5. One *baptism*.—Col. ii. 12. Buried with him in *baptism*, wherein also ye are risen with him.—Heb. vi. 2. The doctrine of *baptisms*.—Chap. ix. 10. Which stood only in meats, and drinks, and divers washings [Greek *baptisms*] and carnal ordinances imposed on them until the time of reformation.—1 Pet. iii. 21. The like figure whereunto, even *baptism*, doth also now save us (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.—Rev. xix. 13. And he was clothed with a vesture dipt in [Gr. *baptized* in or with] blood.

§ 8. (2) I SHALL now produce those passages that are supposed to *allude* to the ordinance of baptism, tho' the *term* be not used. John iii. 5. Except a man be born of *water* and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.—v. 25. Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews, about *purifying*.—2 Cor. vi. 11. But ye are *washed*.—Eph. v. 26. That he might sanctify and cleanse it, with the *washing of water*, by the word.—Tit. iii. 5. According to his mercy he saved us, by the *washing* of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.—Heb. x. 22. Our bodies *washed* with pure water.—1 Pet. i. 9. And hath forgotten that he was *purged* from his old sins.—Rev. i. 5.—Unto him that loved us, and *washed* us from our sins in his own blood. — Perhaps the following texts, and some others, allude to the christian purification. Tit. ii. 14.—And *purify* to himself a peculiar people.—James iv. 8.—Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and *purify* your hearts, ye double minded.—1 Pet. i. 22.—Seeing ye have *purified* your souls in obeying.—2 Cor. vii. 1.—Let us *cleanse* ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit.—1 John i. 7. The blood of Jesus Christ *cleanseth* us from all sin. v. 9.—To *cleanse* us from all unrighteousness.—May I not add? Acts ii. 33.—Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath *shed* forth this, which ye now see and hear.—Rom. v. 5. The love of God is *shed* in your hearts by the Holy Ghost.—Tit. iii. 6.

iii. 6. Which he *shed* on us abundantly thro' Jesus Christ our Lord.—Acts x. 45.—On the Gentiles also was *poured* out the gift of the Holy Ghost. &c.

§ 9. BEFORE I proceed to consider these passages, I would propose the following remarks as axioms of interpretation.

1. EVERY one of these texts, seperately, considered in its proper connection, must have one principal design and determinate meaning.

2. As they all proceed from the same infallible source, they must have one general meaning, collectively, in which they all agree.

3. THAT cannot be the design and meaning of any particular text which is *contrary* to this general design, or even contrary to any other passage which is more evident than itself.

4. THAT is to be deemed the general meaning of these passages, and their true interpretation, which most unexceptionably harmonizes with the whole revealed will of God, which is ever consistent with itself.

5. As the law of nature, viz. That rule of action which derives its being from the *nature* of God and man, and the *relation* thence arising, was never superseded as useless under any dispensation of religion; but on the contrary always remained in force, and ever will remain; no interpretation of these texts, or indeed any other, should be admitted as true, which *seems* to offer violence to this law of nature, otherwise called the moral law, except it be supported by
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the clear, indubitable, positive authority of God. The reason is evident; for as this law of nature is always binding in every part of the globe, and thro' every period of time; whatever appears to be *probably* conformable to it, or a faithful dictate of it, every man is laid under a proportionable obligation to obey its voice; until an infallible authority interposes, ushered in with *stronger evidence* against the former supposed probability, from whose decisive verdict there lies no appeal. This I the rather insist upon, because it may serve to explain the genuine meaning of a maxim on which Mr. B. lays considerable stress, viz. "Positive laws imply their negative*." Positive duties as far as, or in the respect that they are *positive*, that is, having no apparent reason to recommend them but the *mere authority* of the Lawgiver, imply their negatives, for this reason, that no law whatever, on the supposition, enjoins these negatives. Not the *natural* or moral law, for then they would not be ranked among positive duties: not any *positive* law; for then the term *negative* would be inapplicable. On the contrary, whatever appears, upon the whole, a *moral* duty, cannot with any propriety be termed the *negative* of any positive duty.

§ 10. (1) I SHALL now make some observations on the foregoing texts. And it is obvious, in the first place, that there is some *difference* between the baptism of John and that of Christ and his Apostles.

I. THE

1. THE immediate *Institutor* of John's baptism was God the *Father*. John i. 33. HE that sent me to baptize with water, the SAME said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the *Spirit* descending and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. Here we see that He who sent John to baptize was a divine Person distinct from the Son and Spirit; who must be therefore the Father.—But the immediate *Institutor* of the Christian baptism, which is of perpetual obligation, is Christ the *Son* of God. John iii. 22. After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them and baptized. v. 26. And they came unto John and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan to whom thou barest witness, behold the same baptizeth, and all men come to him; &c. Mat. xxviii. 19. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them &c. From these passages we observe, that Christ was the *Institutor* of baptism *before* his death; and more explicitly before his ascension.

2. JOHN's baptism was a *preparatory* rite, referring the subjects to Christ, who was about to confer upon them spiritual blessings. Mat. iii. 11. I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. Mark i. 8. I indeed have baptized you with water; but he shall baptize you with
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the Holy Ghost. Luke iii. 16. John answered, saying to them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose; he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. John i. 31. And I knew him not, but that he should be made manifest to Israel, *therefore* am I come baptizing with water. Acts i. 5. For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. Chap. xix. 4. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus, &c.—The Christian baptism was an actual *initiation* into the Messiah's visible kingdom. Acts ii. 41. Then they that gladly received his word, were baptized; and the same day there were ADDED unto them about three thousand souls.—This *addition* was to the number of the *disciples*, and *subjects* of Christ; for *then*, when they were *baptized*, were they reckoned among his followers.—The baptism of John did not actually introduce any into the gospel kingdom, or make them disciples of Christ; but those whom John baptized were properly his own disciples, and expectants of the Messiah's blessings. Whereas those whom Jesus ordered to be baptized, were strictly *his* disciples, and were taught to expect the promise of the Spirit, in his various gifts and graces.

3. IT appears from the texts first recited, that the baptism of John was confined to the *Jews*, and temporary; Mat. iii. 5—7. &c.—But the Christian baptism was common to *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and of standing obligation. John iii. 26. The same baptizeth, and *all men* come unto him. Mat. xxviii. 19. Mark xvi. 15, 16. &c.

4. IT does not appear that John had any *formula* of administration; nor, indeed, have we any account of his *commission*, but what may be inferred from what he says John i. 33. He that SENT me to baptize with water. And we may further infer that his baptism was FROM HEAVEN, from what our Lord says to the chief priests and elders of the people, Mat. xxi. 25. &c.—Whence it appears that he was *divinely* authorized, and, as before observed, that the *Father* was the Institutor.—But the Christian baptism has a *formula* of administration. Mat. xxviii. 19. IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST.—And still shorter, Acts ii. 31. Be baptized every one of you IN THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST. Also Chap. x. 38. IN THE NAME OF THE LORD.

5. IT may be added, that the baptism of John was the concluding scene of the *legal* dispensation, and in fact part of it. Hence the least in the kingdom of God, *viz.* the gospel kingdom, was greater than he. It may be considered as a final and general purification, performed by John as the last priest. That he discharged his office as a purifying priest to the thousands

thousands of Israel, see Acts xiii. 23—25. Thus John went before Jesus in the spirit and power of Elias (as promised Mal. iv. 5.) to turn the hearts of the fathers with the children to him, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord. See Luke i. 17.—Christian baptism is the regular entrance into and is a part of the *evangelical* dispensation. Gal. iii. 27. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ, &c.

6. IT does not appear from the inspired narrative (however probable from inferential reasoning) that any but John *himself* was engaged as operator in his baptism; whereas Christ himself baptized none, but his *disciples* by his authority and in his name. John iv. 2.

§ II. SOME have supposed another distinction between the baptism of John and that of Christ, viz. That the *latter* had an immediate reference to the *Holy Spirit*, requiring of the baptized faith in him as a divine Person, and an expectation of his promised influence; that the *former* had no respect *at all* to that divine Person, nor supposed any information concerning him; in proof of which they urge, Acts xix. 2.—That Christian baptism has an immediate relation to the promise of the Spirit exhibited in the gospel dispensation, I grant and maintain, but that any baptized by John (or even his disciples) should be so grossly ignorant as not to know any thing about the Holy Ghost, or never
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to have *heard* of him, is highly improbable. There is nothing upon the subject more expressly and emphatically noticed by the evangelists, than that John directed those whom he baptized to Christ, *as one who would baptize with the Holy Ghost* and with fire. It appears probable, therefore, the disciples at Ephesus meant by their answer, That they had not been informed that the Holy Ghost, in his miraculous influence, had been actually conferred on any of the disciples of John or of the Messiah as yet. As if they had said, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy-Ghost, miraculously communicated, much less have been made partakers of the same.—If this be not the import of their strange answer, what must we infer? Were they baptized by John in their *infancy*, about thirty years before? Were they children of parents who were so ignorant or so careless as not to inform them of this very important part of John's ministry? Could they be baptized by this popular reformer, or have any connection with those whom he discipled, and not be informed of that extraordinary fact, the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Jesus at his baptism? And was not the appellation *familiar* to John and his followers? Whether we consider these twelve men as natives of Ephesus or foreigners, as Jews or converted Gentiles, whether baptized with their parents in infancy, or when adults; attending the one interpretation there remains insuperable difficulties,

difficulties, according to the other none at all. See Acts x. 37, 38.

§ 12. THE baptism of John, therefore, was a rite appertaining to the legal dispensation, instituted by God the Father for the use of the Jews alone, for a short time, to prepare them for the kingdom of the Messiah then approaching, as by an extraordinary general purification*, attended with suitable instructions and exhortations to the people, and performed by John himself.—And Christian baptism, as far as it has been considered, is an evangelical rite, instituted by Christ, the Son of God, for the use of Jews and Gentiles, to the end of time, to be administered in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, or, more fully and properly, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, performed by Christ's disciples.

THUS John's ministry and baptism were, in a manner, the voice of the FATHER crying by him in the wilderness to prepare the thousands of Israel for a suitable reception of his divine Son.

* John's baptism is to be considered as one of those "divers washings," in use among the Jews on many occasions; for he did not attempt to make any alterations in the Jewish religion as settled by the Mosaic law, any more than to erect a new dispensation. And as these washings were intended not only for "the purifying of the flesh," but to be signs and symbols of moral purity; so the rite of baptism was, in this view, very suitable to the doctrine of repentance, which John preached. JENNINGS'S *Jewish Antiquities*, B. I. chap. iii. Art. Proselytes. — And the same Author concludes, from a passage in Josephus, that the latter makes John's baptism to be of the nature of the Jewish purifications or ceremonial washings.

SON. BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD! Let your attention be drawn from all legal sacrifices, as about to cease; and let it be directed to HIM in whom all the law and the prophets have their accomplishment, and who is shortly, in a wonderful manner, to bear away the sin of the world!—And lo, a voice from heaven, saying, THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED!—*Hear ye him.*—But the Christian baptism is the institution of the SON, proclaiming the necessity, and directing to the influences of the divine Spirit; and these influences poured upon the disciples of Jesus is the baptism of the SPIRIT. And thus we are led with wonder and gratitude to contemplate the *love* and provident care of the *Father*, the *mediation* and grace of the *Son*, and the efficacious and everlasting *operations* of the *Holy Ghost*. These three are one; and they concur in bearing record to the truth and glory of the blessed gospel. See 1 John v. 6—8. And those who are baptized in the name of Jesus, or the sacred Three-One, should incessantly breathe after the spirit of grace, to which the ordinance refers us. Jesus, our divine Master and Lord, is able and ready to baptize us with the Holy Ghost and with fire: not by conferring *miraculous* gifts, but, what is infinitely more important to us, *sanctifying* graces, whereby we may be purified and made meet for his heavenly kingdom.

§ 13. (2) It must be allowed, in the next place, that between the baptism of John and that
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of Christ, there is an *agreement* in some particulars. And

1. THEY were both from heaven, or of *divine* institution. The one instituted by the *Father*, the other by the *Son*, but both alike by the highest authority.

2. THERE appears no mark of difference, in the two institutions, as to the *action* of baptizing; we may, therefore, conclude, for aught the different accounts say to the contrary, that it was the same. Pure water was the common element, but the nature and mode of the action itself will be considered in its proper place.

3. THE same may be said concerning the qualifications of their respective *subjects*; which qualifications and the grounds thereof, will be examined at large in the subsequent part of this treatise.

4. THERE was an agreement respecting some of the *blessings signified* and exhibited; particularly the *remission of sins*. Mark i. 4. Luke iii. 3. and Acts ii. 38.—They both referred to *Christ* as the *sovereign dispenser* of the influences of the Spirit, the one indeed in a sense more *remote*, and the other *directly*. See Mat. iii. 11. &c. and Acts ii. 38. &c.

5. SOME *obligations* were also similar; especially that of *repentance*. See Mat. iii. 11. Acts xxii. 16.—Also that they should *believe on Christ*. Acts xix. 3—5. and chap. viii. 37.—Both required a suitable *reformation* of life and conduct.

§ 14. I AM led by an attentive and impartial survey

survey of those sacred passages that have any reference to the baptismal rite, to consider it in its most *general nature*, as “the instituted ordinance of a *regular admission into the visible kingdom of Christ*, or, as it is sometimes called, the kingdom of heaven; wherein the *minister solemnly recognizes the fitness of the baptized to be a subject of that kingdom.*”

1. IT is the instituted ordinance of a *regular admission*. See Acts ii. 41. Charity, and the nature of the case, compel me, to conclude, that there are many whom we should deem subjects of Christ's kingdom, even in its visible form, who were never admitted into it *ministerially* by baptism. Among whom we may reckon at least the *promising* (not to say the *infant*) offspring of Antipædobaptists; many well meaning tho' erroneous disciples of FOX and BARKLEY, &c. Nor should this concession seem at all strange to those who disclaim the pretended *infallibility* of a visible church. But however willing we may be to embrace these in the arms of christian charity, as fellow subjects of Christ's kingdom, yet as they were never initiated into it by the solemn right of baptism, we cannot consider them as *regular* subjects.

2. IT is an ordinance of admission into the *visible kingdom of Christ*. Compare Acts viii. 13. x. 47, 48. The Redeemer's kingdom is to be considered in two respects; as to its *spiritual form*, and its *external administration*. Many, no

doubt, belong to the *former*, who have no *regular* connection with the *latter*; and many, it is equally certain, are introduced to the Messiah's kingdom thro' the baptismal ceremony, (even in adult age,) who are not the subjects of his spiritual government. It is highly probable this was the case with great numbers of disciples who followed Christ but for a season, and then forsook him; we might also instance in Judas, Simon the forcerer, &c. And many will say at last, We have eaten and drunk in thy presence, who yet will be disowned. However *regular* the admission, and however unimpeachable the *external* allegiance of some persons, they may be, notwithstanding, essentially deficient in a *spiritual* view, and be at last translated into the kingdom of darkness.

3. IT is a solemn *recognition* of the fitness of the baptized to be a subject of that kingdom. See Mat. xxviii. 19. The *qualifications* of the subjects must be of a moral nature, as before shewn, and baptism does not *produce* these but *suppose* them. So far is it, therefore, from saving a soul, *ex opere operato*, that it does not even *constitute* a visible subject or member, but only *recognize* one; and so far from *making* the baptized a child of God, a member of Christ, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, in the proper sense of these terms, that it is only *declarative* of his fitness to be a subject of the external administration of that kingdom. Acts viii. 13.

4. THE person whose right it is to determine this fitness is the *minister* who does solemnly recognize it. See Mat. xxviii. 19. Whatever extravagant notions have obtained respecting the power of the keys, in admitting into the kingdom of heaven or shutting out of it, there is, however, a sound sense in which this power is assigned to ministers. They are the appointed guardians of the institution, and have a negative voice in opposition to all claims. If they abuse this power, as *fallible* persons may, to their own Master they stand or fall. Their Sovereign and Judge is at hand.

§ 15. (1) LET us next inquire, by scripture evidence, into the things represented by this significant rite. Passages of information relating to this particular are very numerous; but if I mistake not, there is not one but is naturally reducible to these two heads, viz. *blessings exhibited by it, and obligations resulting from it.* I shall begin with the former.

I. ONE of the important blessings exhibited in the ordinance of christian baptism, as in a bright mirror, is the *remission of sins.* Acts ii. 38. In this, as observed before, the baptism of Christ agreed with that of John, and I may add, with the divers baptisms under the law (Heb. ix. 10.) Indeed it is not easy to conceive how there could be a dispensation of grace, or exhibition of mercy to fallen man, in any period of time, without including this blessing as an *essential* part of it.

2. IT exhibits *salvation thro' Christ*. Mark xvi. 16. 1 Pet. iii. 21. The display of *salvation*, simply considered, is not *peculiar* to the christian œconomy, more than the remission of sins; but the peculiarity of the one and the other blessing under the gospel dispensation is, that they are proposed thro' the mediation and atonement of the Messiah *actually come*. Now, in this last most perfect and unshaken establishment of religion, the initiatory rite of it, baptism, exhibits *salvation* and life eternal to its highly favoured subjects, as not only procured by the *merits*, but also conferred by the *hands* of its divine Founder.

3. IN christian baptism is exhibited *union* and *communion* with Christ and with his body the church. 1 Cor. xii. 13. Rom. vi. 3, 4, &c. Col. ii. 11—13. Under every œconomical publication of mercy to the apostate race of Adam, *communion with God* was a privilege singularly important. This Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and indeed all the faithful, enjoyed in every age, more or less; and the subjects of those dispensations, respectively, were favoured with the *exhibition* of it. But it is our distinguished lot, as subjects of the gospel kingdom, to have communion with Jehovah as our God and Father *in Christ*, with whose meritorious sufferings and perfect righteousness he is well pleased, displayed to us in the most explicit and endearing terms, and particularly in the significant institution of baptism. But *communion with Christ* the Son of God,

God, is of a nature still more discriminating. For this supposes not only an access to him for spiritual blessings, and a reception out of his fulness of a liberal supply, but also a twofold *union*; the one *federal*, the other *mystical*. He exhibits himself, therefore, as a complete *covenant* head, to his visible church, and therewith a correspondent communion; and in virtue of which *general* exhibition, a foundation of hope and encouragement is administered to all without exception. And whenever the ordinance of baptism is duly administered, this glorious truth is represented and signified. Christ is also a head of *influence*; this truth, equally glorious and important, he also exhibits in the same general way; wherever the gospel and its ordinances come, a proclamation is made, that Christ is the head of influence, that there is a most precious endearing communion between him and his people, that he regards them in point of nearness and tender love, *members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones**. And as Christ is thus the head, all quickened by his vital influence, are members in particular. Hence arises the communion of saints. *For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ and his Church; For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.* See also 1 John i. 3.

4. It exhibits Christ as our spiritual *covering* and complete righteousness. Gal. iii. 27. Re-

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* Eph. v. 30.

markable to this purpose are the words of Mr. LOCKE—"So that to God, now looking upon them, there appears nothing but Christ. They are as if it were covered all over with him, as a man is with the clothes he hath put on. And hence he says in the next verse, that they are all one in Christ Jesus, as if there were but that one person †." In every instance of baptizing into Christ, an exhibition is made of him in this illustrious view: He is *set forth a propitiation*. He is displayed as a sun and shield, a robe of righteousness to cover our naked souls, and a garment of praise as a preservative from sorrow. That the *woman* should be *clothed with the Sun*, the church enrobed with the Lord her righteousness, was esteemed a great wonder in *heaven* ‡, and should be marvellous in *our sight*.

§ 16. 5. IN baptism is eminently exhibited the *down-pouring* of the Holy Spirit. To this John bore constant witness, Mat. iii. 11. Mark i. 8. Luke iii. 16. John i. 33.—And this our Lord confirmed, Acts i. 5.—This, moreover, Peter repeats, and further authenticates for the information and encouragement of the Gentiles, Acts ii. 38, 39.—Thus do the ancient promises and prophecies run respecting these divine influences, Prov. i. 23. Turn ye at my reproof, behold I will *pour out my Spirit* unto you.—Isa. xlv. 3. I will *pour out my Spirit* upon thy seed.—Joel ii. 28. And it shall come to pass afterward

† Paraph. in loc.

‡ Rev. xii. 1.

ward, that I will *pour out my Spirit* upon all flesh, &c. that is, I presume, “Under the gospel dispensation I will make an exhibition of this invaluable privilege to Jews and Gentiles without distinction.” This prediction Peter applies to the *miraculous* effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 17, 18. But that he does not exclude his *common* influences in after times from being a part of the promise, appears from v. 29.—To the same purpose is the language of Zec. chap. xii. 10. And I will *pour* upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplications, &c. Such a general promise must intend an *æconomical exhibition* of the blessing; as is evident from the apostolick writings, Heb. iv. 16. James i. 5. &c. And especially from our Lord’s declarations and conduct, Luke ii. 13. John vii. 37—39.—Under *former* dispensations God granted to his people his Holy Spirit; when he was comparatively but *as the dew* unto Israel, or the *small rain* on the tender herb; but now he is *poured* on the Gentiles, and *shed abundantly*, not only thro’ the mediation, but also by the actual communications of Jesus Christ our Lord, Tit. iii. 6. Acts ii. 33. x. 45. John i. 33.

6. REGENERATION, or the quickening influence of the divine Spirit on a sinful soul, is another blessing exhibited in the baptismal rite. John iii. 5. Tit. iii. 5. From the evident reference baptism has to this effect of the Spirit on

the souls of the redeemed, the ancient Fathers termed the ordinance itself, Παλιγγενεσία, *regeneration*. And others have observed a striking analogy between the baptismal element, and the regenerating efficacy of the Spirit. “*Water* is “the *principle* of very many living things, and “in their creation the Spirit brooded on the “waters, Gen. i. 3. The earth produces scarce “any thing that has life, either of the vegetable “or reptile kind, unless it be impregnated with “water, Psalm lxxv. 10. The very generation of “the human foetus is said to be from water, “Isa. xlviii. 1. Psalm lxxviii. 27. Thus in like “manner, the blood and Spirit of Christ, as the “mystical water, are the principles of our re- “generation and new creation. John iii. 5. and “as that is signified by the water of baptism, so bap- “tism itself is called, Tit. iii. 5. *The washing of “regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost*.*

7. SANCTIFICATION, or the cleansing effect of the Spirit on a polluted soul, is a mercy very significantly represented, and graciously exhibited in baptism. 1 Cor. vi. 11. Ephes. v. 26. *The washing away the filth of the flesh*, as Peter (1 Ep. chap. iii. 21.) calls baptism, is not only an apt and expressive sign of the Spirit’s purifying influence, but also a divinely appointed mirror, if I may so express myself, in which God exhibits the blessing to all thus regularly enrolled among the subjects of his kingdom, in the most conspicuous manner. This remark is equally applicable to all the other particulars

* Witsii Oecon. Fœder. Lib. iv. Cap. xvi. § 24.

ticulars before mentioned as to this of sanctification. And it is a distinction I could wish the reader fully to enter into, being of no small moment in this debate, as will appear hereafter.

§ 17. 8. WHAT crowns all the other blessings, and in which indeed they are all virtually included, is man's chief and ALL-SUFFICIENT GOOD; and this is what baptism exhibits in a very express and glorious manner, Mat. xxviii. 29.—The ever adorable and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, uses and dignifies this ordinance for the purpose of *displaying* his wonderful condescension and grace to every subject, introduced thro' this avenue into the visible christian kingdom, thereby explicitly testifying, as of old to Abraham, that he is GOD ALL-SUFFICIENT. He declares himself a merciful and loving *Father*, an almighty and gracious *Redeemer*, and most holy *Sanctifier*. But it is a consideration peculiarly worthy of our regard, that herein he does not merely declare what he is in himself, but what he is in relation to guilty helpless sinners. To those who have escaped the corruption that is in the world thro' lust, or have been regularly entered as the subjects of the Redeemer's kingdom, are exhibited exceeding great and precious promises, that by these they might be partakers of a divine nature. 2 Pet. i. iv.—*Blessed is the people*, comparatively so at any rate, *whose God is the Lord*, who are authorized and encouraged to approach JEHOVAH as the object of their worship, trust and confidence;

and blessed in a manner still more emphatical if their hearts, however corrupt by nature, are assimilated by grace to his moral image. Psa. xxxiii. 12. clxiv. 15.—It is further observable, that the unworthiness, yea the moral unfitness of the subject, does not eclipse this glorious truth; for as the heavenly Father maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust, so the *æconomical exhibition* of himself, under the most illustrious and endearing characters, is to every subject of his gospel kingdom without exception. Whatever reception his mercy meets with among men, *he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself.* See 2 Tim. ii. 11—14. And he still *shineth, even in darkness*, tho' *the darkness comprehendeth him not.* John i. 4, &c.—This hath been the common and exalted privilege of the subjects of every dispensation of true religion that ever was in the world, viz. That JEHOVAH graciously *proposed* himself to them as their CHIEF GOOD. But this *proposal*, or revealed exhibition, of the GREAT SUPREME made by himself to those whom his providence singled out, tho' it seems the principal and most distinguishing feature of each *æconomy*, from the first to the second Adam, hath yet been characterized by different degrees of explicitness. What the wise man says of the path of the just, that it *shines more and more to the perfect day*, is peculiarly applicable to the gradual openings of the dispensations of grace. The fall of Adam brought upon his posterity

posterity a night of moral darkness, uncertainty, and justly apprehended danger; while additional discoveries were made of the divine will, and numerous witnesses raised to promulgate the certainty and approach of greater and better blessings; till, at length, the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS appeared to illuminate the hemisphere of the gospel church, as a prelude to a state of unclouded and immortal glory. By the gospel life and immortality are brought to light, and placed in full view. What was hidden from ages and generations is now made manifest to the saints; and they are encouraged, with open face, to behold the glory of the Lord. O glorious privilege! Blessed are the eyes that see, and the ears that hear these things! The meanest christian hath no need to envy the dignity of kings, or the honour of prophets, that died without this sight. And let not the reader forget, that the very exhibition made in baptism of such blessings, is an important privilege.

§ 18. (2) THE *things signified* in baptism are either *blessings* or *obligations* ; we have considered the former, and now proceed to the latter, which we shall find to be great and important. And

1. FROM christian baptism results the obligation of *repentance*. Acts xxii. 16. Every display of divine goodness obliges a sinful creature to repent, (Rom. ii. 4.) but an exhibition of mercy and forgiveness increases the obligation. And as in baptism are held forth the greatest mercies and blessings, it must proportionably oblige

to a disposition corresponding thereto. Now tho' *remission of sins* be represented in scripture as *generally* granted *upon* repentance, (Acts iii. 19.) it does not follow that there is no remission granted without it; but this is clear, that actual *impenitence* persisted in, excludes remission. And those who are the subjects of forgiveness, but under a natural incapacity to repent, may be said, notwithstanding, to be under obligation in this sense, viz. That the *principle* of holiness and rectitude, from which evangelical repentance must proceed, is what every child of Adam is *obliged* to, or *ought* to possess. And the natural capacity itself is under an absolute obligation to subserve the dictates of that principle.

2. FROM baptism arises the obligation to *destroy the body of sin*. Rom. vi. 3, 4, &c. That the passage now quoted refers to the OBLIGATION resulting from baptism, to *renounce*, to *crucify*, to *destroy* and *bury* sin, is evident from the connection. The apostle had been shewing that a sinner's *justification* was obtained freely by the righteousness of Christ imputed, and so the privilege not founded on any deeds of the law, or any good quality whatever in the person justified; no efforts or worthiness of the guilty sinner could ever deliver him from the condemnation of sin. This representation of the subject gave rise to an Antinomian objection, which the apostle first rejects with abhorrence, and then particularly refutes. And this he does by shewing that *holiness*, as well as righteousness, is an essential

essential part of the christian character; that sin must be *subdued* as well as *pardoned*; and that as our righteousness was obtained by the perfect work of Christ, so our sanctification is effected by virtue of a vital *union* with him. Now this mystical, vital, spiritual *union* is one of the great blessings exhibited in baptism; and from it result the most important obligations. Such a union requires particularly, that we should concur with the grand *designs* of Christ as the Saviour of his people. In regard to *sin*, it was his *design* to resist it in every instance, to renounce it in every shape, to nail it to his cross, and so to destroy and bury it, that neither himself nor his redeemed people should be in any respect voluntary subjects of sin's power; *he* of its imputative force, *they* of its enslaving and defiling dominion. The person who is baptized into this union with Christ, (and so is every one that is baptized at all) is, from the very notion of such a union, under an obligation of universal conformity to this important design. Christ is the vine, his disciples and subjects are the branches. As divine justice dealt with sin in Christ the surety, so ought we to deal with it in ourselves. In him it was condemned, crucified, utterly destroyed and buried; our union with Christ represented by baptism obliges to a cordial concurrence in the same design. If justice spared sin in Christ, so may we in ourselves, otherwise not. If justice avenged itself on sin in our representative and head, so should we in ourselves. Christ, in his
unparalleled

unparalleled condescension, and by virtue of his federal engagement, became so united to our imputed sin, that he and sin must live or die together. If he had not died, sin had not died. If he had not been buried, sin could not be buried. Then the union was dissolved, when both were dead and buried. But the same glorious power that was pleased to bruise, to smite, to put him to grief, and sacrifice him to death, when united to sin; did, when he became disengaged from it, raise him up to immortal life and glory. Nor can our new man be raised, till our old man be dead and buried. Therefore, instead of cherishing and animating in ourselves the monster sin, for the eternal destruction and burial of which Christ was crucified and buried, we are under the strongest *obligation* to concur with his design, to bring it to a state of death and keep it there, putting our foot as it were on its horrid neck whenever it attempts to rise. And as Christ, the tree of life, was taken from the trees of the wood, and after his death planted in the earth, that, freed from sin, he might grow and flourish with immortal vigour; so we ought to plant ourselves with Christ, that our corrupt nature may be left with his imputed sin and weakness, and our spiritual nature may grow up with him into a similar fruitfulness, vigour and glory. Or, as a graft cannot participate of the sap, life and fruitfulness of another tree except it be first severed from its old stock, leaving it for ever behind; so we cannot partake of spiritual life
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and fruitfulness from Christ, but by being severed and entirely disengaged from our sinful selves, that we may grow up into him in all things. The apostle's similitude when treating of the resurrection is not inapplicable to the subject of this mystical union. *That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die.* All seeds, and some species of plants, never spring up into new life, but by the death and corruption of at least a part thereof. When the germen sprouts forth, the other part consumes away in the ground. Thus as baptism obliges to a concurrence with the *design of this union in general*, which is exhibited in baptism, so particularly with that of mortifying and *destroying the body of sin.*

§ 19. 3. FROM baptism results the obligation of *newness of life and heavenly-mindedness.* Rom. vi. 4, 8, 11, 13, 19, &c. And this is peculiarly enforced by the apostle from the doctrine of vital union to Christ; union of design, union of interest; a certain oneness of spirit, of life, light, and liberty. For as Christ is risen and ascended to a state of triumph over sin and hell, a state of refined pleasure, and an inexpressible, serene delight, in spiritual purity and the beauty of holiness; so every person baptized *into Christ* is baptized into *his life*, and lies under the strongest obligations of being thus conformed to him.

4. FROM our baptism arises the obligation of an inviolable *attachment to Christ* as our supreme Master and Lord. 1 Cor. i. 13. Christ is our master; he demands of us to regard him as
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such, and he alone is deserving of it: No one else deserves to be called Master on earth. And as none can serve two masters of different and opposite interests, with the same fidelity and affection; by baptism, the right of a regular entrance into his family and service, we are obliged to be faithfully attached to him and his interest intirely. Christ is a King, and his church is a kingdom (but not of this world) and every subject of this kingdom is in loyal duty bound to adhere to Christ as the lawful and infinitely worthy Sovereign.

5. AN obligation is laid on the baptized person to seek and maintain *the answer of a good conscience* towards God. 1 Pet. iii. 21. God's requisitions and demands from us are very great and awful. As a holy and just God, he claims perfection of state and obedience from the creature; nothing short of perfection will God accept, or the conscience approve of. How, then, can a sinner make a *confident appeal* to God, when answering his demands as a judge, or claiming the peculiar blessings of a God in covenant? What provision is made to calm the surges of the mind? What can dissipate the gloom of adverse providences, or support the soul, conscious of much frailty and imperfection, in the apprehensions of approaching death?—A *consciousness* of being united to Christ as the risen Saviour. As united to him we are *justified* by his *resurrection*; and *saved* by his constant intercession, his heavenly and immortal *life*. In baptism
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tism, indeed, are represented and exhibited God's all-sufficiency, his matchless greatness and goodness, the boundless and unfathomable riches of his grace; and a cordial, conscious embracing of these blessings must satisfy conscience and produce a serene content in the mind. But what the conscience has to do with, in the passage above cited, is, I presume, more immediately, the claim of divine justice and holiness. The *resurrection of Christ* is, then, the great *evidence* we have that justice is satisfied with his finished work, and so it becomes an objective ground of confidence to the conscience (otherwise terrified with guilt and condemnation) in its reply to the divine claims. And being conscious of a *vital union* with Christ, the consideration of his victorious resurrection and triumphant ascension lays the foundation of holy joy and triumph. But it is a remark not a little important, that here the remedy is *proportioned* to the disease; the answer of a *good conscience* is to the *believer*, adequate to the clamours of an *evil conscience* to the *unbeliever*.

§ 20. 6. FROM baptism results the obligation of filling up (honourably no doubt) the place of departed christians. Rom. xv. 29 What Solomon remarks of the generations of the world of mankind, thro' the successive revolutions of time, is applicable to the church of God in the world. *One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh* *. All alike make
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* Eccles. i. 4.

their exit thro' the gate of death; for it is appointed for *all men* once to die, by an irreversible decree. How, then, is the depopulated kingdom of Christ to be recruited? When persecution with its merciless attendants, and the wasting messengers of death, render the church like a desolate island, how is it to be colonized? By constant supplies from the wide world. The world is a common nursery from whence the church is planted; but the watering of baptism is not of itself sufficient to ensure the future growth, verdure, and fruitfulness of the plants; for in this plantation, the church visible, every plant which the heavenly Father planteth not (of which there have always been awful instances) shall be rooted up. Paul may plant and Apollos may water, but God giveth the increase. But notwithstanding this, ministers are commissioned to transplant and to water, leaving the event to God. But to speak without a figure, it is evident, that when any are brought into the church regularly by baptism, to fill up the room of others, they are obligated to do it honourably and usefully; even as a member that is chosen into any body corporate, or a soldier to fill a place in a rank or regiment.

7. FROM the ordinance of baptism arises the obligation of *waiting for the promise of the Spirit*. Acts ii. 38, 39. viii. 12—17. The gospel dispensation is eminently distinguished from all preceding it, by a rich display and communication of the influences of the Spirit, not only
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in a miraculous way, but also as a *Sanctifier*, and especially as a *Comforter*, to the church. And as this is a blessing of unspeakable value, and most explicitly exhibited in christian baptism, every person to whom it hath been administered is under the strongest obligation to seek and wait for all necessary divine influences. This is the unction from the Holy One which we all want; and thro' the divine mercy, there is in the institution of baptism a foundation laid for the most importunate and unwearied application for all needful supplies thereof. We can never be too ardent and importunate in our desires and prayers for the illuminating, quickening, teaching, and transforming influences of the Spirit. And this incessant breathing of the soul after the divine influences, is not only its interest and comfort when so employed; but, in consequence of baptism, where the blessing, by virtue of the divine appointment, is clearly set forth, it is what every subject is absolutely *obliged* to do. And as no one can be so far replenished as not to need further supplies, the obligation must be constant, thro' every step of our life.

§ 21. 8. ANOTHER obligation highly important resulting from christian baptism, is an absolute devotedness to the *grace* and sovereign *will* of GOD, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST. Mat. xxviii. 19.—Baptism (εἰς ὄνομα) *into the name* of Father, Son and Spirit, implies an obligation,

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(1) To receive this God, and him *alone*, for our God, as the object of our worship, the sovereign of our heart, and our everlasting portion; to the absolute disavowal and renunciation of all competitors whatsoever.

(2) To receive him under the representation here given of himself, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. That these three terms belong to God only, and not the first to the true God, and the other two to beings of an *inferior* class, (and if at all *inferior*, they must be *infinitely* so) seems evident from the *manner* in which they are connected; for from *this* nothing less can be observed than *equality* among them; and the importance of this remark rises still higher when we reflect, that the goodness of God, — his detestation of idolatry, — the excellency of the gospel above other religions, — and the exalted character of Jesus as the founder of it, — are necessarily *degraded* if this be not the fact. For thus to associate the terms, Father, Son, and Spirit, in a solemn ordinance of religion, the very *introductory* ordinance, on supposition that an infinite disparity subsists between the objects they refer to, appears like putting a dangerous stumbling-block at the very porch of the christian temple. But his true disciples have not so learned Christ; and wisdom is justified of her children.

(3) EVERY baptized person is laid under obligations of duty to Father, Son, and Spirit, *respectively*

respectively, according to the scripture representations of these divine Persons, and their several *relations* to him, whether absolute or exhibited only.

(4) ANOTHER obligation included in the form of administration is, cordially to embrace the infinite mercy, grace, and love of God, herein exhibited. Every expression of benevolence and favour from God, obliges the person to whom it is directed, to answerable gratitude; but no one that hath been admitted, by baptism, into the number of Christ's regular subjects, can say that he hath not had represented in his baptism unspeakably great and glorious blessings, and this he may be as certain of as he can be of the *fact*—THAT HE WAS BAPTIZED. Whether he be certified of his baptism by the evidence of *sense*, or competent human *testimony*, does not alter the case; to be sure of the *fact* is to be equally sure of the exhibited blessing and the correspondent obligation.

(5) To be influenced, actuated, transformed, directed and governed by that mediatorial grace and mercy which is displayed by the medium of this ordinance. Tho' the divine mercy be like a most delightful sun-shine, in itself, yet mankind are so situated in the present state as not to be benefited by it but by reflection. (See 2 Cor. iii. 18.) The face, or person of Christ,—the inspired records,—the ordinances and institutions of the gospel,—and this initiatory rite in particular, do eminently answer this important

important end. And in proportion as this last does so, the baptized person is obliged by it.

(6) To be absolutely devoted to the sovereign *will* of God; so as to be at his command and disposal in every respect. As our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, he hath an undoubted right to us; all we are, all we have, and all we do; which right being evidently represented, and as it were reflected, by the ordinance, to every subject of it, obliges to a suitable and adequate devotedness to his will.

§ 22. HAVING now considered the blessings exhibited by baptism, and the obligations resulting from it, by an attentive regard to what the New Testament says on the subject, I proceed to make some remarks that seem to follow from the whole as obvious *conclusions*. And

(1) WHATEVER blessings are, according to the scripture account, represented and exhibited by baptism, there are *answerable obligations* resulting from them, tho' not particularly specified. And this appears from the very nature and spring of moral obligation; for one person is *obliged* to another in proportion as he is *indebted* to him, so that to be under obligation to another, with respect to *universal justice*, is the same as to be his debtor; and the nature and degree of this *debt* must be ascertained by the comparative *worthiness* of the person to whom we are indebted, in all those respects in which we suppose him to have a demand or claim upon us. For instance, if *obedience* be the debt, then it should

should be according to the worthiness of the comparative *authority* requiring it; if the debt be *gratitude*, it should be according to the worthiness of the benefits, or expressed benevolence, of the party benefiting, compared with the worthiness or unworthiness of the party benefited; and if the debt be *love* or benevolence, it should be according to the worthiness or excellence of the person himself, which worthiness consists in the joint consideration of greatness and goodness. Let us apply these reflections to the present case. God is infinitely great, and infinitely good; hence every intelligent being is under infinite obligation to *love* him, because he is infinitely excellent and worthy, yea, is *worthiness itself* in every possible respect.—God's *benefits* to man are emanations from his matchless benevolence, and the greatness of those benefits exhibited in the gospel dispensation, or, which is the same thing, in its initiatory rite, are of unparalleled excellence and importance. Behold, says an inspired Apostle, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us! And, says another, To us are given exceeding great and precious promises. The riches of Christ are unsearchable riches; then what must be the gift of Christ himself! And what must be the mission of the Divine Comforter! What a worthiness of favour is here, and what a call to *gratitude*! Again, God's *authority* is supreme, and its worthiness is infinite; and, as every exhibition of mercy and favour designed for sinners, and *addressed* to them as
such,

such, claims from them a suitable and corresponding tribute of gratitude, and the obligation or debt rises and multiplies as the favour does, it follows, that the most free and sovereign grace of the gospel must, in this respect, have all the force, influence and authority of a law upon all to whom it is directed. All the exhibitions of gospel blessings, therefore, have an authoritative and binding power, (for this is necessarily implied in the very idea of obligation) even when they are not delivered in a commanding form; but when a disregard to gospel blessings is *declared*, in the most express terms, to be displeasing to God and destructive to ourselves; when we are positively told, that a non-compliance with the proposals of mercy is the same insult as *to charge the God of truth with impious falsehood*, (1 John v. 10.) the authority with which gospel grace appears invested is infinitely important. From these considerations it appears, that wherever we meet with a benefit or blessing exhibited in baptism, we may as safely conclude that an *answerable obligation* results therefrom, as if that obligation were mentioned in form. — Another conclusion, which is in a manner the converse of that now mentioned, is the following, viz. That whatever obligations we find specified in the New Testament as actually connected with baptism, or derived from it, we may be sure that the foundation of that obligation is laid in the exhibition of *answerable benefits*, tho' not expressly mentioned in that view.

§ 23. (2.) IF the above representation of the nature and design of this ordinance be just, it may contribute to vindicate the *right use* of two very important terms, commonly employed in the controversy, liable to abuse, and, may I not add, very seldom explained in a consistent manner? I mean the terms SEAL and COVENANT. Hardly any thing more common in explaining the nature of baptism than some such phrase as this — “It is a sign and *seal* of the gospel covenant”: and the authority usually urged in favour of this application of the word *seal*, is what the Apostle says touching circumcision, Rom. iv. 11. *And he received the sign of circumcision, a SEAL of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised.* Waving a particular discussion of the many strange things this notable passage has been made to speak, and the absurd deductions following thereupon; I would observe, that the chief, if not the only, source of these mistakes, has been owing to the want of a proper attention to the *different uses* of SEALS among the ancients, in connection with the *different acceptations* of the term COVENANT.*

THE word *covenant*, as I shall shew more fully afterward, frequently intends, in the holy scriptures, a gracious *decree*, the exhibition of a free *promise*, or the like, directed for the use of any; and in the above text the *exhibited blessing* is the *righteousness of faith*. This is the divine proclamation, full of mercy and grace, that

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righteousness and eternal life should be received by *faith*, as that is opposed to work and *merit*; which by no means implies, that the blessing is never communicated to any of the human race but in consequence of a certain act of the mind called believing. Prevailing *unbelief*, it is true, excludes all actual interest in the contents of the gracious charter; as it indicates a want of union with the divine Saviour, which is the grand foundation of our being accepted as righteous: and *true belief*, for a similar reason, entitles to that righteousness which faith regards. But faith, or believing, as an *act* of the mind, is not the fundamental and essential bond of union; for in *that* respect the spirit of Christ, whereby the fallen sinner is apprehended, is the bond; and which may subsist without the existence of any such act, as all must allow who admit that it appears agreeable to the divine constitution to impute righteousness to infants, who have neither works nor faith. This is sufficient to shew that the *righteousness* exhibited and reckoned to Abraham, which was the infinite merit of the divine Interposer, may have its complete effect on *some* of the human race, without any actual stipulation on their part: tho' at the same time, it lays them under *obligations* of a suitable return, whether designed for life or death. And if so, here is a *covenant*, (if we intend thereby an *application* of mercy and righteousness) without any sealing, or so much as *consenting*, on the part of the person benefited.

AMONG

AMONG the ancients, as well as the moderns, the use of SEALS was various; and by no means confined to *contracts*, or agreements between two or more parties. An act, patent, or charter, &c. of a monarch is sealed, as well as a mutual contract. Seals were affixed to *letters* and *decrees*. 1 Kings xxi. 8. Esth. iii. 12, 15. Chap. viii. 8, 10. &c. &c. In short, merchants were wont to put a seal or mark (usually on a thin piece of lead, not wax) on their commodities; different things were sealed for security against intrusion and deceit, as bags, chests, doors, &c. Thus, for instance, God says (Deut. xxxii. 34.) Is not this laid up in store with me, and *sealed* up among my *treasures*? And thus Job says, (Chap. xiv. 17.) My transgression is *sealed* up in a *bag*. When Daniel was cast into the lions' den, a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the *den*, and the king *sealed* it with his own signet; (Dan. vi. 17.) and the stone on our Lord's *sepulchre* was *sealed*, (Mat. xxvii. 66.)—When, therefore, the apostle styles circumcision a *seal of the righteousness of faith*, it seems an unwarrantable liberty to infer, that the seal here referred to must necessarily be that of a restipulator in acceding to the terms of a contract; as if the *faith* of Abraham, or of his descendants, or of any other whose faith *should be* in uncircumcision, gave existence to circumcision *as a seal*. Why not rather consider it, as what the eternal King has thought fit to affix

to an *act of grace*? What the instrument to be sealed contained, was an *exhibition of righteousness*; and, for confirmation that this righteousness was recommended, as the only foundation of a sinner's hope, and as an all-sufficient introduction to eternal bliss, God appointed circumcision to ratify or *seal* it. This instrument or *covenant* contained glad tidings of great joy, which should be first to the house of Israel principally, and afterwards to all nations; it was the gospel in miniature. And the *seal* was to continue until the seed should come; when express order should be given for its abolition, to make way for another. But as long as this ordinance continued in force, it *exhibited*, not only to the subject himself but to all who should observe it, whether male or female — nor only while the ceremony was performed, but in every period of life — the *certainty* of these glad tidings. If any doubt arose concerning either the *covenant blessings* or *obligations* represented, they were to have recourse to circumcision, as the broad seal of heaven; whereby they might be certified, that the *former* continued in full force and virtue, by way of exhibition, for their use, whether male or female; and that the *latter* were unavoidably incumbent on them.

§ 24. LET us now advert to what Mr. B. has to say on this subject. “If Dr. LIGHTFOOT’s version of Rom. iv. 11. and his observation upon it, be just; there can be little reason
for

for calling *baptism* a *seal* of the *covenant*, on account of *circumcision* being denominated a *seal* of *righteousness*. His translation of the text, and part of his remark upon it, are as follow. “*And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith, which SHOULD HEREAFTER BE in uncircumcision. Which should be, not which had been. Not what had been to Abraham, as yet uncircumcised; but which should be to his seed uncircumcised; that is, to Gentiles that should hereafter imitate the faith of Abraham.*” Which version and interpretation (adds Mr. B.) are agreeable, so far as I can perceive, both to the scope of the passage and the letter of the text. For the Apostle does not represent circumcision as a seal of righteousness to the Jews, *in common*; but to Abraham, *in particular*.—Or, if our brethren must needs call it [*baptism*] a seal of the covenant, we desire to be informed, what *spiritual blessing* it ascertains, really ascertains to infants, any more than to unbelieving adults, who have at any time been baptized; or, than circumcision, to similar characters, under the former æconomy? Millions of Jews were circumcised in their infancy, and numbers of Proselytes, who lived and died in rebellion against the government and grace of God. Simon the forcerer, professing faith in Jesus Christ, though he had it not, was baptized by Philip; and many, no doubt, in former and latter ages, have been baptized on a similar profession, whose

conduct disgraced the christian character. Now, must we consider these, *all* these, as having had the *righteousness of faith*, or the *covenant of grace*, RATIFIED OR SEALED to them? Far be it! Why, then, should baptism be represented at every turn, and without hesitation, as a *seal* of the covenant, when applied to infants?"† To this I will subjoin the following remarks from Dr. STENNETT. "The practice of affixing *seals* to covenants is of very early date. The use and intent of it is, to bind the parties contracting to the fulfilment of the conditions agreed on between them; and to preserve to that end, an authentic proof of the transaction.— Now IF this be the practice alluded to, there is an impropriety in the phrase itself, of persons *having a right to the seal of the covenant*: for if sealing be a matter rather of *duty* than of *right*, to use this kind of language is much the same as to say, that persons have a right to do their duty. But what I have principally to observe is, that it follows from *this* account of the usage of sealing, that interest in a covenant does not in all instances give person's a right to the seal of it, or, in other words, make it their duty to affix their seal to it. A man may be included in a covenant or benefited by it, who is no way a party to it, and whose signature therefore is not at all requisite. Children, for instance, frequently derive advantages from covenants

† Pædob. Exam. p. 313.

nants which, with all the authentic forms of them, existed long before they were born." † And on Rom. iv. 11. he further remarks: " Abraham believed in the promise of God respecting the Messiah, and by voluntarily *submitting* to circumcision in obedience to the divine command, he gave clear evidence of his faith; and so circumcision became, in regard of *him*, a seal or authentic proof of his justification; it was a seal affixed by Abraham himself to the covenant, and an attestation, on the part of God, to his interest in the blessings of it. And in the same light it might be considered in regard of *others*, who submitted to it in *riper* years, and upon the conviction of their judgment. It was an expression of their assent and consent to the covenant, and so a seal affixed by them to it. And it was on the part of God (to speak with reverence) a seal affixed by him to the covenant, that is, a gracious assurance, with respect to those who thus in faith submitted to it, that he would pardon, accept and save them. || — It is easy to see that baptism cannot be a seal of the righteousness of faith, that is, of their justification, to infants, they not having *faith*: nor can it be in regard of them a test of new obedience, they not *voluntarily submitting* to it." — And again, " Circumcision was a token of the covenant between God and Abraham. A positive arbitrary sign, instituted by God

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† S's Answer to A. p. 105. || p. 107.

to bring to remembrance that transaction, in the same manner as the bow in the heavens was appointed by God, as a token of the *transaction between him and Noah.*" § Thus I have endeavoured to give these gentlemen's objections and reasons all the strength they admit of; nor have I designedly evaded the force of any one circumstance; but forbear further quotations, to avoid prolixity: concluding, that if these positions are fairly and solidly refuted, as far as they tend to oppose Pædobaptist principles, this is sufficient for my present purpose. I only observe here previously, that if the reader will give himself the trouble to consult and weigh impartially what I have said in the last section, most, if not all that is here advanced, is in effect answered or precluded. However, I shall not decline a more particular examination of what they urge.

§ 25. WHATEVER appearance of argument there is in these quotations, against the propriety of calling circumcision and baptism *in general*, that is, considered merely *as institutions*, independent of the genuine *faith* of the subject, *seals* of the covenant, is reducible to these positions.—“ Abraham's covenant was a *contract* between God and Abraham, and as such required a *mutual* agreement of both parties. — Mr. B. will have it, that circumcision was not a *seal* of righteousness to the Jews *in common*; but

but to Abraham, *in particular*. Dr. S. maintains that it was so to *all believing* Jews; but both agree, that it was not a *seal* of righteousness to Jewish infants: and the common reason is, that they were not capable of *assenting* or submitting to the contract.—And on these accounts baptism is not a seal of righteousness to any infants, or even adults who are not true believers.”—— Here are several things taken for granted which ought to have been first proved. And, first, I maintain, it is not true that what is called the Abrahamic covenant was a *contract* between God and Abraham; as if it could not be properly termed God’s covenant *to* or *with* Abraham, without the latter’s *believing consent*. For,

I. NOTHING is more clear, than that the first publication of mercy to our fallen parents (Gen. iii. 15.) was of the nature of a *free promise*. We may, perhaps, not improperly call it, The first edition of the covenant of grace that was ever published and revealed to man. Nor was it in their power to alter its nature as a covenant. Their not believing could not have made the faith of God of no effect. The revealed and exhibited blessing was God’s covenant *to* man, or, if you please, *with* man, which amounts to the same thing in regard of God’s transactions with sinners, independent of his assent and consent to the terms of it. For God to publish his covenant to sinners, few or many, is one thing; and for these to give it a cordial reception, is,

another. Such a transaction, on the part of God, may stand on the most absolute foundation; and if we believe not, he abideth faithful and true to his declaration: but a *believing* concurrence, or a *disposition* suited to such an exhibited favour, is what proceeds from a very different dispensation; that of the Spirit of grace in executing the hidden counsel of Heaven.—The covenant of grace is ONE. In its original *internal* form, which comes under the notion of a contract or mutual agreement in the strictest sense, it is perfectly *absolute*; as founded on the sovereign pleasure and irreversible decrees of God. It is also *absolute* in its *exhibition* to some rather than to others; for in this sense as well as the former it may be said, God will have mercy on whom he will have mercy, and compassion on whom he will have compassion. Whatever is *conditional* of it is on account of man's *free nature* and God's *moral government*. Its publication and exhibition to man, *as a free agent*, solicits and requires his approbation—his obedient reception of what is proposed to him by his Creator and Benefactor. But mankind being universally sinners, and *as such* infinitely unworthy; and what is more, totally averse from what is required of them; no soul could be saved if the covenant in its *absolute internal* form did not *ensure* the direction of its blessings to the intended persons; as also a disposition suited to their enjoyment. Thus, when God gave Adam and Eve an abstract of his covenant of redemption,

redemption, which was absolute and infallible in its internal form as settled in the divine counsel; the *exhibition* of it was also *absolute*, both to *them* and *all those* of their posterity who should be informed of it: importing, that there was mercy with God that he might be feared. Yes, not less absolute than his covenant of the night and of the day; which no one, surely, will maintain was sealed, certified, confirmed, or made more absolute, by the *assent* and *submission* of man, to whom it was given. It was in that very display and promulgation of it an unspeakable blessing; and, as such, absolutely *obliged* them to suitable acknowledgments; previous to, and independent on any dispositions of the persons, whether good or bad. — And not only so, but it is highly probable the institution of *sacrifices* was given to Adam, as a *seal* of the covenant, as well as a type of Christ. “For, (as WITSIUS observes) the *institutions* which commemorated sin, also signified and *sealed* the future expiation of it by the Messiah.” * Again he says: “These *sacrifices* were *seals* of God’s covenant. For though there is a difference between sacrifices and sacraments formally considered; because sacraments are given by God to men, but sacrifices are offered by men to God: nevertheless, there is no reason why the consideration of a sacrament and sacri-

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* WITS. Oecon. Fœd. Lib. iii. Cap. iii. § x.

fice may not, in different respects concur in one and the same thing. For even sacrifices are given by God to men, that is, are *instituted* by divine authority; that by these ceremonies, the coming of the Son of God in the flesh, &c. might be signified and SEALED." †

2. Not less absolute was God's covenant or *free promise* to Noah, (which Dr. S. quaintly calls a "transaction between Him and Noah") that he would drown the world no more by a flood. This was a seasonable *covenant* granted to Noah, to all mankind, and literally to *every creature* capable of the benefit; and particularly so, as it was an adumbration of the covenant of grace, or connected with it. But what is very remarkable is, that God's covenant to Noah, and his seed for ever, was confirmed and sealed, by a token on the part of God *only*; independent of any consent and *submission* on the part of Noah and his descendants. God made a covenant, and set his *bow in the cloud* as the confirming seal of it; but where was Noah's assent and submission, on behalf of himself, his posterity, &c. to render the contract valid? For if it was a COVENANT made with all flesh, should it not, on the principle I am opposing, have the *consent* of the parties contained in it, as the *impression active*, before it could be said to be ratified or sealed to them? Rather I would ask, is not the rainbow a sign and

† Id. Lib. iv. Cap. vii. § vii.

and confirming seal of God's covenant not less to the atheistical philosopher than the grave divine? Nor should we suppose that fallen sinners are so far complimented, and that God's *institutions* are so liable to be degraded and nullified, as that nothing could be a *seal* of his covenant to men, but what they are pleased to make valid, by their *faith* and *submission*.

§ 26. 3. WHAT has been said of the dispensations of God's covenant to Adam and Noah, with their respective seals, is applicable to that publication of it made to Abraham; but with some remarkable circumstances of *limitation* in regard of the *additional blessings* exhibited, and the *superadded seal* of it, circumcision. The *former* were principally addressed to Abraham's descendants in the line of Isaac and Jacob, though not exclusively, for a gracious provision was made in favour of profelytes and their seed; and the *latter* was confined to Abraham's *male* descendants, and those of the profelytes. This restriction of the seal of the covenant, to be applied only to the males, was, we may be sure, founded on the wisest and justest reasons; and may be in some good measure accounted for, by attending to the civil and ecclesiastical polity of the Jews, in connection with the Saviour's incarnation. To investigate the particular reasons of this restriction, my present argument does not require. I would only add, that as the institution of sacrifices was a *seal* of the former dispensations of the covenant, and a part of family

family religion; we ought not to infer that Abraham's *female* descendants had *no seal* of God's covenant in common with the males. All that can be said of them is, that they were deprived, by an express restriction, of this *additional seal*, for reasons the most proper; while they enjoyed every thing else in common. So far then should we be from supposing, that a Jewish circumcised *male* had not in his flesh the seal of God's covenant, even from infancy; that I think it may be justly affirmed —— the *female* part was highly obliged to the divine goodness for what may be properly termed a *seal of the righteousness of faith*; — to *assure* them of blessings exhibited *to them*, and of their important obligations. If, therefore, God's COVENANT of redemption to fallen man, in its external form and manifestation, is nothing else but a DECLARATION of *sovereign grace* and a *divine righteousness*; which, in everlasting transcendent love and compassion, is provided for the use and service of wretched sinners, who live within the pale of such a declaration: and if to this God institute a sign, yet not a *mere* sign, but a confirming token —— a demonstrating *evidence* of the truth of what is testified, and of God's infallible, unchanging veracity —— be that sign what it may, and directed to be applied or administered to the subjects of a dispensation indiscriminately; or else *expressly restricted*, for wise and obvious reasons, to a certain class, as in circumcision

cision to the males only: is there not the greatest propriety in calling such a token THE SEAL of God's *covenant*, perfectly unconnected with and *independent* of the *faith* of the subject, as in the case of Jewish infants?

§ 27. BUT this is not all. The principle I am opposing, is fraught with an inconvenience little short of a gross absurdity. For this implies, "that circumcision became a seal or authentic *proof* of their justification, only to those of *riper* years, who, upon conviction of their judgment, *submitted* to that ordinance; and the same rule (our opponents contend) holds as to the ordinance of baptism." *This*, it is evident, the above quotations maintain, and the following proposition is the sum. "Then *only* may circumcision and baptism be termed *seals*, when they are PROOFS of justification to persons submitting to them."—Now I ask,

I. MAY we infer that a man is certainly in a justified state, and what is more, *assured* of his justification, *because he has submitted* to an instituted ordinance, such as circumcision or baptism? If not, how can his affixing his seal to the covenant, which according to Dr. S. must be matter of duty, be any *proof* to him of his justification? Previous to this *duty* of sealing the covenant, the performer must either be *assured* of his being in a justified state, or he is *not*: if the *former*, how can the observance of such an external right be a *proof* to him of his justification? What is designed it seems, for this external

external right to perform, has been *before* effected by other means. As a *proof* then it comes too late, if the person was assured of righteousness antecedently. But if he was *not* assured previous to his performance of the duty, and yet was conscious of no insincerity of heart, is the mere addition of the performance of the duty a seal or certain proof to him that he is justified? It should seem then that no person who submits to baptism upon conviction, and who is conscious of no hypocrisy, can be at a loss to determine upon the goodness of his state; for baptism is to him a *seal* whereby he may be certified of his justification. But if this be true, how comes it to pass that any sincere souls, who have made that submission, are yet harassed with fears and doubts respecting their state? or, must we pronounce them all hypocrites and unsound, who hesitate about their interest in Christ, and maintain that, in this respect, he who doubteth is damned?

2. IF it be said, that baptism is a seal to those only who have *real faith*, and that such persons *only* may be *assured* of justification and the consequent blessings of the covenant; I reply, that then it follows, that baptism can be no seal to any but such as have the assurance of faith: for if they doubt of the *reality* of their faith, they must proportionally doubt that baptism is a seal; and the consequence will be, that since, on the principle I am opposing, baptism is a seal of the covenant as a *duty* performed by the believer

liever, and on the part of God, an attestation of his interest in the blessings of the covenant; — God's attestation is no attestation to any who doubt of the reality of their faith, and so is a seal of a certainty that certifieth nothing!

3. THERE seems but one method of evading this conclusion; and that is, that however doubtful a person may be of his state before or at his baptism, yet, *after* he has submitted to the duty upon conviction, he may be *assured* of his interest in the blessings of the covenant. — Yet this evasion is of no use, except we borrow for its aid another principle, which maintains, that the ordinance produces a real moral change in the subject, *ex opere operato*. For if it be said, that the certainty is obtained from God *after* we have in faith complied with a known duty, and from the consideration of our submitting to it *as such*; I would fain know how *this* rather than any *other* duty, enjoined by the same authority, becomes an *evidence* of our interest in covenant blessings? or, how we are *certified* of a divine attestation to our justification in any other way, than we may infer from any other christian duty whatever? Is it not absolutely inconceivable how baptism can be a *confirming seal* of our interest in Christ and his benefits, on the part of God, in any other sense than all other duties may be so termed when performed by faith? And if so, it follows from our opponents' own principles, and contrary to what Dr. S. maintains, that neither baptism nor circumcision

sion can be any *distinguishing seals* at all, any more than any other moral duty performed in faith.

4. FROM the above considerations it must also follow, if Mr. B. and Dr. S. are right, that circumcision could not be a seal of the righteousness of faith, even to Abraham himself, contrary to the Apostle's express words, (Rom. iv. 11.) as an institution; without a superadded revealed assurance given him of the *reality* of his faith and submission. And thus we are driven, at length, to this conclusion, that circumcision was no seal to Abraham or any of his descendants but in *consequence* of the sealing of the Spirit; and the purport of God's language to Abraham must be (Gen. xvii. 9 — 14.) "Though I enjoin upon thee, and thy seed after thee, the right of circumcision as a token of the covenant betwixt me and you; yet it shall be no token of confirmation, no seal of the covenant at all, but to such of you as have previously the infallible witness and sealing of my Spirit, to certify you of the undoubted reality of your faith and submission. And observe further, that this honour is not to be extended to thy seed who shall be circumcised in infancy; for, not having faith, it can be no seal to them: no, this honour is reserved for those who shall be bought with money of any stranger, or any proselytes not of thy seed; and these must be sealed by the Spirit, or have the certainty of their interest in the covenant, *before* they have any just grounds to conclude that circumcision is

to them the seal of my covenant." But is this a declaration worthy of God?

5. It therefore follows, on Dr. S's hypothesis, that to be of the seed of Abraham, was a privilege not worthy to be compared with that of a proselyte. To Jacob and the patriarchs for instance, circumcision was not a seal of the covenant, for they had *no faith* when circumcised; but the proselyte of a day, who submitted to the rite upon conviction, had in his flesh a confirming seal of his justification. Had not a native Jew here an irresistible temptation to envy the proselyte? A Jewish master to envy the privilege of his servant bought with his money, even supposing their piety to be equal? How happy those children above others, who, through the neglect of their parents, or any other accident, were left uncircumcised in their minority; whereby they had an opportunity in *riper* years to *submit* to the important rite, and thereby of obtaining a *seal* of their justification!

§ 28. AWARE of these inconveniences, Mr. B. avails himself of Dr. LIGHTFOOT's version of Rom. iv. 11. and his remark upon it — "A seal of the righteousness of the faith, which *should hereafter be* in uncircumcision. Which *should be*, not which *had been*." Why the Dr. should supply the elliptical passage (της εν τη ακροβυσια) which in uncircumcision, with a *should hereafter be*, requires no small critical discernment to determine.

I THINK it must be allowed by any impartial competent judge, that the supplied part of the sentence

sentence is *far fetched*, and should not be preferred without manifest necessity. The Vulgate Latin renders it — *quæ EST in præputio*; the Syriac Version is rendered — *quæ FUERAT*; the Arabic — *quæ ERAT*; and the Æthiopic thus: *Et circumcisio signaculum justitiæ ejus fuit quam ei dedit, & signum ejus, ut ei innotesceret de hoc, quod per fidem Deus justificaret Abraham quum non fuit illo tempore circumcissus.* The scope of the passage is evidently this: The apostle in prosecution of his grand proof, that justification and eternal life are not obtained by human worthiness, works or observances of our own, but are solely and absolutely the fruit of sovereign grace; shews that this doctrine, though more clearly revealed in the gospel, was yet the common language of preceding dispensations. That this was the import of the *Jewish* dispensation, David testifieth, ver. 6. *Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works.* And that this method of acceptance through grace and a divine righteousness, was not *peculiar* to the circumcision, but belongs to the uncircumcision also; appears from the history of Abraham, whom the Jews were so ready to boast of on every occasion. Ver. 9. *Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision ONLY, or upon the uncircumcision ALSO? For we say that faith* (as contradistinguished from works or any manner of worthiness of his own) *was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.* Ver. 10. *How was it*
then

then reckoned? *When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.* Ver. 11. And (Καί) as a following consideration, many years after the righteousness of faith was made known to him, *he received the sign of circumcision, a SEAL of the righteousness of the faith which* (the relative having a respect either to the antecedent *faith* or *righteousness* *) *he had (or, possessed) in uncircumcision; that uncircumcised state* just spoken of. That the phrase, *ἐν τῇ ἀκροβυστίᾳ*, refers to Abraham's uncircumcised state rather than to the Gentiles, in this place, may appear from what immediately follows. To the intent *that he might be the father of ALL believers*, — a conspicuous example to Jews and Gentiles that justification is not the consequence of ceremonial observances, or any human merit, worthiness or consideration whatever; — (δι' ἀκροβυστίας) *thro' uncircumcision*, — by reason of his being the favourite of God in his uncircumcised state, as well as after; — to the end *that righteousness might be imputed unto them ALSO.* Ver. 12. *And that he might be the father of circumcision*, — that is, of spiritual circumcision; (an incontestible instance that the *blessings exhibited in and by that rite, and of which circumcision was the seal, were not intended for christian gentiles exclusively, but had*

respect

* *Quæ* (ambiguum est, & referendum, vel 1. ad fidem: vel potius, 2. ad justitiam fidei, h. e. quam ex fide exceperat) *est in præputio.* Estius. — *Fidei quæ* (vel, *quæ* fuerat; Erasmus, Pagninus, Tremellius, Flaccius Illyricus, &c. vel, *receptæ*, Beza, Piscator; vel, *quam* habuisse dignoscitur, Zegerius) *in præputio.* POLI Synop. in loc.

respect) to them who are not of the circumcision ONLY, but also walk in the steps of that faith of our Father Abraham, which he had (*ἐν τῇ ἀκροβυστία*) being yet uncircumcised. — Thus the Apostle cuts off boasting on either side. The Jew had no ground to slight the Gentile, nor the Gentile to slight the Jew. The grace of the covenant was exhibited and applied to Abraham before circumcision; and yet circumcision was instituted as a sign and seal of the same grace, righteousness, or covenant, to the Jew. I would further remark — as just criticism requires, that similar renderings should be given to similar phrases in the same connection, it seems an unaccountable liberty to render the same phrase, *ἐν τῇ ἀκροβυστία*, in ver. 11. as referring to the Gentiles, which in ver. 12. must be referred to Abraham's state of uncircumcision; while at the same time there is no pretended necessity for such a variation.

§ 29. THUS, I think, we may pronounce Mr. B's favourite interpretation of the passage in question — far-fetched and unnecessary. But supposing he were indulged with LIGHTFOOT's critical weapon, I presume it would be but of little service to him; since there is another consideration that so blunts it, as to render it perfectly inoffensive.

Now supposing, without granting, that Abraham's circumcision being a seal to him, that the Gentiles should, in some after period, be justified by faith, were the meaning of the controverted

verted text; what is the consequence? Why, if ver. 11. implies that he received a seal to assure him that righteousness, (or by a periphrasis, the righteousness of faith) would be imputed to the future Gentiles without ceremonial observances, works or worthiness of their own; ver. 12. must in like manner, from the *connection* of the two verses, necessarily imply, that he had the same confirming seal to assure him of the same important truth in relation to the Jews. He received a seal, of what? Of righteousness. What kind of righteousness? That which is of faith, as opposed to legal observances, works, merit, or worthiness of the creature. Who should be the happy objects of this favour? The uncircumcision; suppose the Gentiles. But to what end was such a seal given to Abraham?

1. *That he might be the father*, or the appointed and highly honoured pattern, of *all among the Gentiles* in the most distant periods, who should obtain righteousness and salvation of *free and sovereign grace*, exclusive of works of righteousness which they should do. Thus it was that he received mercy, without any works of the law; and therefore properly styled the *father* of all among the Gentiles who should have no pretensions at all to any ceremonial and legal righteousness of their own. And was this the *only* design of his receiving circumcision as a seal? Far from it, for,

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2. ANOTHER very important one is immediately subjoined, ver. 12. AND that he might be *the father of circumcision*, a SIMILAR PATTERN to the *Jews also*, that none of them may trust to the law, ceremonies, or any other consideration: and those among them who were beholden to mercy, as Abraham was, without works, were his CHILDREN in the same sense as the gracious among the Gentiles are. Thus it appears, that circumcision was to Abraham a SEAL of the *righteousness of faith*, or of *free grace*, not more to the Gentiles than the Jews; and consequently, Mr. B's attempt, to confine the purport of circumcision as a seal, with reference to *Gentiles only*, proves abortive.

§ 30. OUR last inquiry respected the persons concerning whom Abraham received a seal; but now another question returns, viz. *To whom* circumcision was a seal of righteousness? Mr. B's reply is short and plain, "To Abraham in particular." * Herein, however, he differs from Dr. S. For thus the latter writes: "Though I object to the idea of circumcision's being a *seal* of the covenant, at least in regard of infants, and understand the passage just referred to as only saying, that it became to Abraham, and by consequence to all others who believed, a seal or attestation to their justification; yet I readily admit, that it was a *sign* or *token* of the covenant between God and Abraham in all who were

* P. 313.

were circumcised †." And a little after: "Circumcision, though it became a seal of the righteousness of faith to Abraham, could not be a *seal* to his *infant* posterity, at least in the same sense it was to him." — In conformity to this principle he further adds, "It is easy to see that baptism cannot be a *seal* of the righteousness of faith, that is, of their *justification*, to infants, they not having *faith*: nor can it be in regard of them a test of new obedience, they not *voluntarily submitting* to it."

BUT have these assertions any foundation in scripture or reason? And,

1. Is there any truth in the supposition, That nothing can be a test of new obedience, or lay us under additional obligations of duty, without our *voluntary submission*? Is not this singular notion, so much insisted on by our adversaries, confronted with the fundamental principles of morals? For it is demonstrable, from the nature and spring of moral obligation, that if baptism be a *benefit* to infants, as we maintain, it must be to them such a test, or *oblige* them to *additional* duties. — Again, I would ask,

2. Is there any propriety in the supposition — because infants cannot *believe*, they therefore cannot be *justified*? or what amounts to the same — because infants have not actual *faith*, *therefore* their *justification* cannot be *sealed*? But all this stands on another rotten pillar — that there is no difference between a seal being ap-

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plied to a person, and the *certainty* of his actual justification. On the contrary, is it not abundantly evident, that God's covenant of redemption, AS REVEALED TO FALLEN MAN, is of the nature of a gracious proclamation? If so, what necessity is there to suppose, that there can be no *sealing* of such a covenant to any person without thereby certifying his justification? May not the Eternal Sovereign institute a *memorial* of his mercy which endureth from generation to generation; to the intent, that every lost sinner to whom it is duly administered, may be certified, as far as any thing short of a miracle can do, that this gracious God does actually and incessantly exhibit *to him* the blessings of his covenant — with the merciful design to encourage his future faith, and to engage his grateful obedience?

3. MAY we not say, that such an institution is the *seal* of God's covenant, without supposing the efficacious *grace* of the covenant experienced by the sealed? For, *who* seals? God, by his commissioned ministers. — *What* does he seal? His own gracious proclamation, exhibited to the subject. — The voice of God's heralds is to this purpose: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, publishing to a lost world, the most merciful terms of reconciliation: and if any suspect the *truth* of our message, or the *faithfulness* of our divine master, behold both ratified with his own SEAL!" — I suppose it has been proved, that *circumcision was* not designed, nor indeed *could* be

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be, to Abraham or any other, as a *proof* of actual justification, without involving a great absurdity. Therefore,

4. It must be a seal, AS AN INSTITUTED RITE, which God affixed to his covenant. This *must* be its purport in reference to Abraham, as far as it *assured* him of any thing; nor can it be denied, that in *this* sense, which I think is demonstrably the true one, it *ought* to be considered, in regard of every individual subject of it. — Thus the twelve patriarchs, for instance, had in their flesh, not only a *sign*, but a *seal* also of God's covenant: purporting, that he thereby proposed himself *to be to them a God*; that they, in return, *may be to him a people*. The fact of the institution, sealing the covenant, and not their personal qualifications of any kind, was the *ground* of their obligation; and this *increased* with their years. When grown up they might thus reflect: “By this mark in our persons, we are *assured*,
“in consequence of what the Lord said to our
“father Abraham, that he is graciously willing
“to become, not only the object of our wor-
“ship, but our all-sufficient portion. And, sure-
“ly, this consideration obliges us, incontestibly,
“to become his people,—to love and serve him
“with all our powers.” — But will any one say, that circumcision was not *to them* a seal? or not without their devout approbation of it? That cannot be, except we maintain this absurd position, That the very essence of a divine institution depends on the precarious determination of

the sinful creature. This, however, is in perfect consistence with another position, equally absurd, viz. That what we do not *voluntarily submit* to, cannot be to us a test of new obedience.

§ 31. FROM what has been said, we infer, that the hypothesis which maintains — infants were not *sealed* by circumcision, because of their not having *faith*, or not *submitting* to it upon conviction, — is untenable. Yet, as our opponents have treated this subject with undeserved contempt, we shall, *ex abundanti*, take another turn with them.

Now, if circumcision was a seal of righteousness to Abraham, and not to the infant subjects of it in the *same sense*, it must be owing — either, to their being *incapable* — or, to some *difference* in the original *institution*, specified or implied — or, to some scripture evidence whereby this distinction is made necessary. I affirm, then, in general,

THAT none of these considerations, nor any other sufficient reason whatever, can shew the *necessity* of the pretended *distinction*. Now, the question is not, Whether or no circumcision, as a standing rite, had *other uses* of an ecclesiastical or political nature; but, Whether it was a *seal*, on God's part, to circumcised infants? The former is not disputed; and therein it agrees with the institution of sacrifices, which were not only a type of the Messiah's atonement, but, in a secondary view, answered the end of a tribute, to support the priesthood. Nobody, I presume, will

will deny, but one institution may, by divine appointment, subserve *various* purposes — moral, typical, ecclesiastical, and political; as numerous instances in the Jewish œconomy support the fact. Therefore, to enumerate several purposes, for which we may suppose circumcision was instituted, *besides* that of a seal of righteousness, is impertinent; when intended to conclude against the idea of its being a seal to infants. Yet Dr. S. expatiates largely upon the different uses of circumcision, as a reason why it was not a seal of the covenant to infants. But how shall we reconcile the following passages with truth, or with each other? “As to circumcision, it was a *token* of the covenant between God and Abraham. — But what was the *purport* of that transaction? I readily agree, that the *grand* object of it was the coming of the Messiah, and our redemption by him; on which account the gospel is said to have been preached unto Abraham. But this surely was not the *only* object of it*.” And again: “Those matters in the covenant between God and Abraham, which seem to be the *chief*, if not the *only* ground or reason of circumcision, and which that rite was peculiarly adapted to express, are matters to which *baptism* hath no reference at all†.” Has baptism, then, *no reference at all* to our redemption by Christ? Or, is it conclusive to infer, that because the coming of the Messiah, and our redemption by him, was the *grand object* of

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circumcision

* Dr. STENNETT'S Answer to Dr. ADDINGTON, p. 112.

† Ibid. p. 118.

circumcision, but not the *only* one; therefore, it was not a seal of righteousness to infants?

§ 32. CONSIDERING circumcision as an instituted rite, designed to afford the strongest evidence, that righteousness was attainable *only* as a free favour — that it was God's *seal*, as the impression active of his authority, administered by his servants; attesting, not that the subject is actually possessed of the spiritual blessings represented by it, (for *this* no external rite whatever is capable of, as before shewn, § 27.) but, that it is the divine pleasure to *exhibit* therein to him the blessings of his covenant — that the fact of an exhibited *benefit*, lays earliest infancy under obligations of future returns (§ 22.) — considering, I say, these things, it is evident,

1. THAT infants were CAPABLE of circumcision as a seal; if not, we must say, that the incapacity lay either in their apparent *state*, or in their want of a professed *subjection*. But *neither* of these is *essential* to being the subjects of the seal of God's covenant; and therefore are required qualifications in certain circumstances only, viz. in persons who are capable of dissenting and rejecting, as well as assenting and submitting. If any again insist, that the concurrence of the subject is absolutely necessary to constitute the sealing, as this must be on the part of God and the creature; this would be only objecting to the sense, in which I have explicitly declared I understand the term and notion of sealing; and which I think is demonstrably the only consistent

tent sense in which it can be taken in reference to the institution either of circumcision or baptism. For the *general* thesis under consideration, requires me only to shew — That there is a proper and consistent sense in which *any* divine ordinance intended to *exhibit* the blessings of the covenant, and to *oblige* the subject to a cordial reception of them, and other answerable returns, *may* be termed a *SEAL of the covenant*: and that baptism, being proved an ordinance of that nature, is properly denominated *such a seal*. And the argument under present consideration is — That *such* an ordinance, is *equally applicable* to infants and adults; and, therefore, that no pretended incapacity in the Jewish infants could be a sufficient reason why circumcision was not to *them* as well as *Abraham* a seal of righteousness. Let any one, therefore, reflect in what sense I understand the word *seal*, and he may immediately perceive the validity of this branch of the argument, that infants are *not incapable* subjects of it.

§ 33. 2. BUT tho' circumcised infants were thus *capable* of having the *seal* of God's covenant in their flesh, is there not something in the INSTITUTION ITSELF, whereby it appears, that circumcision was a *seal* to Abraham, while it was only a *token* to his infant seed? I think not. The words are very express and particular. Gen. xvii. 7. "And I will *establisb* my covenant between me and thee, AND THY SEED AFTER THEE, in their generations, for an everlasting

lasting covenant; TO BE A GOD UNTO THEE, AND TO THY SEED AFTER THEE. ver. 8. — AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD. ver. 9. And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, THOU AND THY SEED AFTER THEE, in their generations. ver. 10. This is my covenant, which YE shall keep between me and YOU, AND THY SEED AFTER THEE; EVERY MAN CHILD AMONG YOU shall be circumcised. ver. 11. — And it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and YOU. ver. 13. — And my covenant shall be in YOUR flesh for an everlasting covenant.” On these words I observe,

(1.) THAT Abraham and his seed are here considered as one aggregate body, as well as in strict conjunction. God not only addresses Abraham in these terms, respecting the covenant and its token, “thee AND thy seed,” which abundantly shews a *similarity* of design in their direction to Abraham’s *seed* as well as to himself; but they are also addressed in these collective terms, YE, YOU, YOUR, without any discriminating clause. There is, therefore, in the institution itself no ground of distinction, why circumcision should be a *seal* to Abraham and not to his seed, of which the latter were equally capable.

(2.) THE grand covenant *bleſſing exhibited* to Abraham, extends *equally* to his seed. I will establish my covenant — to be A GOD unto thee

thee AND to thy seed after thee. And I will be THEIR GOD.

(3.) THE *obligations resulting* from the institution are the *same* to Abraham and his seed. For God said unto Abraham, "Thou shalt KEEP my covenant therefore, THOU, AND THY SEED. This is my covenant, which YE SHALL KEEP between me and you." There was not indeed an *application* of grace to all the circumcised alike, but there was an *exhibition*, and the *obligation* was general.

§ 34. IT has been confidently asserted by our opponents, as before observed, "That there were *other* ends, uses, and significations of circumcision to Abraham's own person, than those for which it was dispensed to his seed; such as — that he should be the father of all believers — that his seed should inherit Canaan — that Christ should come out of his loins." From whence they infer, "That the covenant of circumcision, *in every* of those respects in which circumcision was given Abraham as a *seal* of it, was not given to all the Jews and their children: nay, which his seed (indefinitely) had no promise of at all*." But is there any thing in these dogmatical assertions better than magisterial trifling? For,

1. To say that circumcision was a *seal* of Abraham's *fatherhood* of all believers, or of his seed inheriting Canaan, is directly contrary to the apostle's assertion, that it was a seal of the *righteousness of faith*. That these particulars were

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included

* FIEHER'S Christianismus Redivivus, p. 18, 19.

included as *inferior* parts of the Abrahamic charter, is granted; but it is absurd to make them synonymous with the righteousness of faith; which our opponents must do to be consistent. Nor is it *true*, that the promise of Canaan was *peculiar* to Abraham, in any other sense than that he was *foremost* upon the list. See Gen. xvii. 19. chap. xxviii. 13—15. Was not Jehovah a God to Isaac and his seed, and to Jacob and his seed, as well as to Abraham and his seed; and in the *very same* respect? And, says the Lord to Jacob, in the passage last cited, “The land whereon thou liest, TO THEE WILL I GIVE IT, AND TO THY SEED.” Seeing, then, that this divine charter includes Abraham and millions of his descendants *in common*; and, as before shewn, without any ground of difference; and seeing the same charter has been confirmed, to Isaac and Jacob, and their seed—to make the circumstance of Abraham’s *priority* on the list of persons benefited by the grant, the foundation of the pretended distinction, is to the last, nugatory and impertinent.

2. To urge that the clause “of Christ’s coming out of his loins,” was a privilege *peculiar* to Abraham, in such a sense as that circumcision was to *him* a *seal* of it, but not to his seed; is equally futile. For tho’ it was granted him, that he should be the progenitor of Christ; yet it was said to Jacob as well, “IN THEE, AND IN THY SEED SHALL ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED.” Nor must

must we confound Abraham's *carnal privilege* with the *righteousness of faith*. Circumcision is said to be a seal of the *latter* expressly, but not of the *former*; nor does there appear any reason or propriety in saying that the carnal privilege was sealed to Abraham, but so far as it was subservient to the Saviour's infinite and everlasting righteousness. Thus it appears, that as infants were *capable* of circumcision as a *seal*, so there is abundant evidence from the *institution itself*, that it was equally applicable to them as to Abraham.

§ 35. HOWEVER unfavourable to the purpose of Antipædobaptists might be the institution itself of circumcision, were there notwithstanding any *other* producible evidence from a subsequent divine statute in their favour, it would alter the case proportionably. But this, I believe, is what none of those whose interest it is to produce it, attempt to do; except Rom. iv. 11. which has been already considered; and I think fairly shewn from the scope and design of the apostle, to be inconsistent with their confined view of it. The apostle's argument is, that both Jews and Gentiles are justified by the same divine righteousness, and not by the observance of any law whatever, or any worthiness of their own: now, is it any thing else but ridiculous trifling to contend, and still worse to make the apostle maintain, that the inestimable privilege of *righteousness imputed without works* is COMMON to Jews

and Gentiles, BECAUSE circumcision was to Abraham ALONE a seal of righteousness?

THERE is, indeed, another passage that has been occasionally subpœnaed to serve this tottering cause; and that is, John vi. 27. *Him hath God the Father sealed.* "In the same sense," says the author last quoted, "in which the Father is said to *seal* the Son, to be the giver of meat that endures to eternal life, i. e. authorised to that business, honoured with that office, is God said to give circumcision to Abraham, whereby to seal him up, and settle him for ever in that glorious title, viz. *The father of all that believe*; in which sense circumcision was never given to any one of Abraham's posterity at all*." To this I reply,

THAT there were in use among the ancients sealings for *different* purposes, as before observed; and a *person* may be said to be sealed when he receives a *commission*, is invested with *authority*, or bears well authenticated *credentials*, &c. And thus was Christ sealed of the Father. His miracles were incontestible proofs of his divine mission. But how does this help the notion, that neither Isaac, Jacob, or any other beside Abraham, received circumcision as a seal? For where is it said or implied, that God *sealed Abraham*? It is said, indeed, that he *received* the sign of circumcision, a seal of righteousness. But who would infer, that because a promise, a law, or a sacred rite, was *received* by an individual for the use and service of himself
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* Ibid.

and his posterity; it must signify one thing to the first receiver, and another thing to all the rest; when no such distinction is intimated, and when the case does not require it? Is it reasonable to conclude, that, when a person *receives* a certain privilege for himself and his heirs, collectively and indefinitely, it has one meaning when it regards himself, and another when it refers to his heirs; where there is no manner of necessity for such an interpretation? Would any one conclude, that because Moses *received* the law for himself and the Israelites, it spoke to *him* one thing, to *them* another? — Finally; I conclude it must appear to the impartial reader of the preceding pages, that the rite of circumcision, CONSIDERED AS A DIVINE INSTITUTION, was appointed to all the subjects of it, indiscriminately, a SEAL of the *righteousness of faith*; viz. a declarative and *certifying* token that a man, whether Jew or Gentile, is justified by faith, as opposed to merit or worthiness of his own; or *saved by grace*. And I presume, it must further appear highly proper, to term circumcision a *seal* from the very NATURE of the institution; as it most assuredly *exhibited* the grand blessings of the everlasting covenant, and was attended with suitable *obligations**. And moreover,

* As to what some have urged from Acts xv. 10. where circumcision is called a *yoke*, and Gal. v. 3. where the circumcised are represented as *debtors to do the whole law*; it is manifest that nothing can be fairly concluded against what has been here advanced; since these passages refer, not to the NATURE and

over, since the ordinance of christian baptism, *exhibits* the same spiritual and principal blessings, with the same infallible certainty, and *obliges* to similar corresponding duties; it follows, that baptism is properly and strictly a *seal* of the christian covenant, or the exceeding great and precious promises of the gospel, to every person, indiscriminately, to whom it is duly administered, and may be so denominated *from its very NATURE*.

§ 36. FROM what has been said respecting the *nature* of baptism and of circumcision, and the propriety of calling them *seals of the covenant of grace*; it follows, that there is an equal propriety in calling the *Lord's supper* a SEAL; as it is a divine institution in the church, most assuredly *exhibiting* the great blessings of the covenant, and *obliging* the subjects to answerable returns of gratitude and obedience.

§ 37. (3.) ANOTHER general conclusion from the nature and design of baptism is, That the actual unworthiness of minister or subject has no invalidating influence on the blessings and obligations represented in the ordinance. For if baptism be a *seal*, and does really represent the aforementioned particulars, *as a divinely instituted ordinance*, neither the holiness nor the sinfulness

and genuine design of circumcision, but to the ABUSE and perversion of it by legalists. Paul himself circumcised Timothy; but did this champion for sovereign grace, and gospel liberty, put on his neck a yoke, which, in its proper nature, use and tendency, subjected him to legal bondage? Surely not.

ness of the *minister* can alter its nature and design; for to suppose it a seal to a proper subject when administered by a *good* man, but not so if by a *bad* man; is to rest the validity of a divine ordinance on a basis totally unworthy of God. It would also render the *baptized* liable to constant doubt and suspense, nay, absolute uncertainty, whether he has received the seal of God's covenant or not, in proportion as the moral state of the administrator was not certainly known; which inconvenience would be a source of perpetual confusion in the church; and therefore the supposition is inadmissible for the clearest and strongest reasons. Again: to suppose that baptism, duly administered, is a seal only to the *true believer* and not to *other* baptized persons as well, is attended with the same inconvenience. For if baptism be valid and a seal to none but *true believers*, none but such can infer, that any benefits are exhibited to *them* in particular *as baptized*, or that any consequent and answerable *obligations* are thereby incurred; and it also follows, that altho' the subject be a *true believer*, yet if he do not *know* it, or have not a *certainty* that he is so; he must be proportionably at a loss whether the ordinance be or be not to him a mere nullity. For, on the supposition, it is not the *truth* but the *assurance* of faith, can enable him to draw the inference, that he is in consequence of his baptism under any additional obligations of duty. But how absurd to say, that none are thus *obliged* except they

they are *assured* of the truth and reality of their faith !

§ 38. (4.) FROM what has been said we may draw another corollary, viz. That for any person to desire *rebaptization* (I mean, on supposition of agreement about the mode) from a pretence that he was not properly qualified for his former baptism, or cannot recollect it, or was not active and voluntary in it; is virtually to deny that gospel blessings are at all exhibited therein *to him*, and that his baptism did lay him under any obligations of duty resulting from this institution, *because* he was not *then* duly qualified. But I think it has been demonstrated, that consent is no necessary prerequisite of future obligation — that an administrator of baptism has a discretionary power of determining who is a qualified subject and who not — that no unworthiness in minister or subject renders the baptismal act a nullity; — for a person, therefore, who has been baptized before properly, as to the *manner*, by a gospel minister, under the aforesaid pretence of non-consent, &c. to be *rebaptized*, or to *desire* it, is wrong, unreasonable and unscriptural. This being the case, is not a desire in any to *make void* the first, that they may *submit* upon *conviction* to another baptism, which they apprehend requires them to make an open testimony of their allegiance to Christ; too much like the subject of a State, who desires to *rebel* against his

his sovereign, by a temporary withdrawing of his allegiance, tho' introduced into his kingdom when an infant — that he might have the pleasure of *submitting upon conviction* to the legal and rightful authority of his sovereign? For, if baptism *does* lay every person, however unworthy, that has been baptized by a christian teacher, under the obligation appertaining to that ordinance; to renounce, *that* baptism, is to renounce *its* obligation; and consequently to rebel: and this *rebellion* is for the specious, but spurious, reason of personally, openly and fully acknowledging *future allegiance*! Again: Is not this desire of *rebaptization* too much like that of a person who enjoys the privileges, and even *seals* of friendship, on another's part; but who has a mind to introduce a *quarrel*, by declaring that he has been hitherto under no *obligation* to his friend on account of any *former* seal of his friendly disposition and conduct, to the intent — that he may, after the quarrel was made up, take occasion to *profess* his friendship to his benefactor!

I WOULD here remark, that it is pretty evident from the natural dictates of conscience, that one who rejects christianity after he has been baptized *in due form* in his infant state, and brought up in a christian family, is in a more *wretched condition* than an infidel who has not been *so devoted* to God. Nor is this a begging of the question, but an appeal to the common notices and impartial practical conclusions of mankind

mankind. Let but an intelligent apostate reflect, that IF what is represented in baptism be *true*, however unfit he was to comprehend and receive it; whether or not his *guilt*, in renouncing christianity, would be the *greater* on account of his having been recognized by baptism a subject of Christ's kingdom? I verily believe there is no sensible person of that description, but must conclude, from an attentive regard to the nature and design of the ordinance, that he incurs *additional* blame, (supposing christianity to be *true*), in consequence of his infant baptism. This then argues, on the supposition, a *benefit* received, and *obligation* incurred; for otherwise there could be no ground of blame. If a gospel minister, who has a *discretionary* commission relative to the fitness and qualification of an admissible subject, *judge* (supposing, for argument sake, he were under some mistake as to his determination of fitness) that an *infant*, in some cases, may be baptized according to the nature and design of the ordinance, and the institutor's intention; must this *act* of a discretionary commission, and, I will boldly assert, an act consistent with the strictest sincerity of determination, regarding the glory of God, the will of the Redeemer, and the good of the subject, — must this act be deemed a mere nullity? When the baptized afterwards reflects upon the fact, must he conclude, that because it was done without his consent, therefore he is not *obliged* by it as true baptism? For an answer to this question, I appeal, not
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to the passions, but to the rational powers, and deliberate impartial judgment, of thousands who love their Lord and his authority more than their own lives; and doubt not that their reply is, **WE ARE UNDER OBLIGATIONS**, even all those which result from the ordinance, as a divine institution. When I express my own sentiments on this head, those of my brethren will be echoed; and they are these, — I look upon my baptism as exhibiting to me incessantly the forementioned blessings, and find my conscience constrained to answerable obligations of love, gratitude and obedience, and all the particulars abovementioned. I have a rational certainty of the fact, and I am *certain* (pardon the expression) that the action of a professional minister pouring water upon me, when an infant, in the name of the Father, &c. does really and *truly* oblige my conscience according to our Lord's intention in christian baptism. Nor can I conceive of baptism answering the ends of exhibiting and obliging *more truly and powerfully* if administered this very day, than in earliest infancy; of its having any better moral tendency, or being better calculated to strengthen faith or administer comfort*. For if I cordially

* “ Sacraments were never intended by God to exert their virtue only *in*, or *during* the administration. For then it would follow, that the baptism once received, at whatever age, is no further to be improved by the party receiving it; and so, either baptism must be altogether a barren sacrament all our lives, but only during the little time of its administration: or else to *renew the BENEFIT* thereof, we must often *renew the administration itself*.” Dr. FORD's Practical use of Infant Baptism. Dial. ii. p. 10.

dially and morally approve of this transaction, of which I was confessedly a *capable* subject, performed thirty or forty years ago, and on supposition that it is to be done but once in my life time, I am at a loss to conceive, why it may not answer every valuable purpose in reflecting upon and approving the fact, as if done this day. If it be a *fact* that I was *baptized into Christ*, in the sense before explained, as I am persuaded it is, the obligation to *put on Christ* is incessant and perpetual, and not at all weakened but rather *strengthened* by the distance of time.

§ 39. (5.) THOSE, whether ancients or moderns, who suppose a *real communication* of spiritual blessings *constantly attendant* on the ordinance of baptism, are under a mistake, if a just account of its nature and design has been given in the preceding pages. For there we find, that what the institution does *infallibly*, is to *exhibit* blessings, and *oblige* to duties; but as to any moral and spiritual favour *communicated* by it, this we should refer, not to any virtue in the duty, or any *certain connection* between this and any supposed favour, but to the *sovereign pleasure* of the God of means. Much less have we ground to infer that baptism is the true christian *regeneration*, or that a certain *immortalizing spirit* is imparted with it, as some have whimsically affirmed.

§ 40. (6.) FROM an attentive and impartial survey of the nature and design of baptism, deduced from all the passages of the New Testament

ment relating to it, we may again infer, That to make the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ the *only* or even the *principal* FACTS represented in the ordinance, is partial and unjust. Mr. B's third chapter is entitled, "The DESIGN of Baptism; Or the Facts and Blessings represented by it, both in regard to our Lord, and his Disciples." And under this title he musters together no less than *fifty six* pœdobaptist writers; who, having made some *concessions* respecting the propriety and expressiveness of immersion to represent the facts of Christ's *death, burial and resurrection*, he imagines greatly assist his cause. It appears that the chief reason of these concessions was their supposing the apostle, Rom. vi. 3 — 6, and Col. ii. 11 — 13. alluded to the mode of *dipping* the subject when baptized. But is there any *necessity* for such a supposed allusion? or is that the most *natural* and *significant* import of these texts? I think not; but am of opinion with Mr. HENRY'S Continuator (and more than *fifty six* others that might be collected, were the controversy to be decided by *numbers*, as certainly it is not) that the allusion is not to any *mode* of baptism whatever, but to a *spiritual disposition* to which baptism as a divine institution, *obliges* the subject. "Why this burying in baptism should *so much as allude* to any custom of dipping under water in baptism, any more than our *baptismal crucifixion* and death should have any such reference, I confess, I cannot see. It is plain, that it is not the *sign*, but the *thing signified*

nified in baptism, that the apostle here calls being buried with Christ; and the expression of *burying* alludes to *Christ's* burial."—— And again, "We are both buried, and risen with him; and both are signified by our baptism; not that there is any thing in the *sign* or ceremony of baptism, which represents this burying and rising, any more than the crucifixion of Christ is represented by any *visible resemblance* in the Lord's supper ||." In addition to this, and what was said before on these passages (§ 18, 19, of this chapter) I would propose it to any impartial person, acquainted with the nature of the mystical union between Christ and his church, of which Paul often speaks, whether it is not a strict and weighty truth, — that every christian, tho' UNBAPTIZED, is *dead, buried and risen* with Christ? and, as baptism is an *initiatory* ordinance, representing these things *in common* with various *other* momentous facts of a *quite different* nature, whether it is not *most natural* to conclude, that the Apostle in these places urges a *particular branch* of duty, of being *conformed to Christ's death* &c. from the GENERAL NATURE of the exhibitory rite, however administered, and not that he should press them to the same duty from the supposed *manner* of administration? And is not the *former* a topic far more noble and powerful than the *latter*, to answer the apostle's grand design?

§ 41. BUT, it may be objected, "Supposing the

|| HENRY'S Commentary on the Rom. vi. 4 and Col. ii. 12.

the apostle does urge the *special* duty of the mortification of sin, from the consideration of the *general nature* of baptism as *binding* the subject to *universal* duty, and consequently *that* very important one; and supposing that the apostle **PRINCIPALLY** alludes to this *general obligation* of duty resulting from the *nature* of the ordinance; does it not follow that the motive would be yet *stronger* if the mode was immersion?

I ANSWER, with Mr. B. that “we have no more authority to *invent* a signification for any rite of holy worship, than we have to *appoint* the rite itself||.” And if the texts in question do not *require* this additional allusion, it must be either *invented* to serve an hypothesis, or it must be sought in some *other* part of holy writ. There is no alternative, and therefore let our opponents take which they please, their fond conclusion is not *proved* from these premises. That the sacred passages referred to, do not *require* an allusion to the *mode* of baptizing, has been shewn, and whether or not immersion appears to be the most proper mode from *other* considerations, is not to the present argument, therefore to *suppose* an additional force and propriety in them on that account, is no better than begging the question.

§ 42 LET us hear Mr. B. “Now, if such [to represent the death, burial and resurrection of Christ,] be the *chief design* of the ordinance; if *these passages* of holy writ [Rom. vi. 4. Col. ii. 12.] be pertinently applied; and if there be
any

any *correspondency* between the sign and the things that are signified by it; immersion *must* be the mode of administration†.” Here is a bold conclusion drawn from premises couched under three hypothetical propositions; the *second*, I presume, is sufficiently enervated already; to the *first* and the *third* I shall make the following replies. And,

I. I AFFIRM there does not appear, from any thing said in the New Testament or any thing urged by Mr. B. that the *death, burial, and resurrection* of Christ are the PRINCIPAL facts designed to be represented in baptism. For, if no passages of scripture are adduced, nor any consideration urged by our author to support his conclusion, except the two places above mentioned;—and if the direct meaning of these passages amount to no more than this, viz. That as baptism exhibits the blessing of the church’s union to Christ and communion with him *indefinitely*; so it lays the baptized under obligations of *conformity* to him as the surety; and hence his *incarnation, his obedience, his sufferings*—when he was devoted to the curse as the sacred victim, and (*dreadful baptism!* Luke xii. 50. Mark x. 38.) when the cup of divine justice was poured out § on him without mixture—his

crucifixion,

† p. 71.

§ The almost constant scriptural mode of expressing God’s infliction of punishment when the metaphor is taken from water. See Psa. lxix. 24. lxxix. 6. Jer. vi. 11. x. 25. xiv. 16. Ezek. vii. 8. xiv. 19. xx. 8, 13, 21. xxi. 31. xxx. 15. Hos. v. 10. Zeph. iii. 8. 2 Chron. xii. 7. xxxiv. 21, 25. Jer. vii. 20. xlii. 18. xliv. 6. Ez. xxii. 22, 31. xxxi. 18. Rev. xiv. 10, and xvi. throughout, &c. &c.

crucifixion, when his body was bathed in its own blood, the circumstance which above all others St. Paul preached and gloried in — his dying for sin — his burial for three days and three nights — his victorious resurrection and triumphant ascension to heaven, — are ALL illustrious FACTS, by which the christian, in virtue of the said union, is bound to all suitable conformity; — if this, I say, be the apostle's meaning, as before shewn; it is plain Mr. B's conclusion is ill founded. For, maturely reflect, reader, do not christians *suffer* with Christ? are they not *crucified* with Christ? do not they *live*, and *sit* and *reign* with him in heavenly places? and are not these privileges in virtue of *union*? does not baptism represent that union *in general*? If so, why *confined* to these *three particulars* to the exclusion of others? “Know ye not, as if the apostle had said, that so many of us as were baptized *into Jesus Christ*, were baptized into him *at large*, (see Gal. iii. 27.) and *of course* into his death, that as he died *for* sin, so should we die *to* sin; as he buried our sin with his mortality, we should concur with his design by unremitted efforts to keep under subjection the body of sin; and as he rose to triumph over sin, we should not continue its deluded captives, but act as becomes a *royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people*.” Was not Christ crucified the most impor-

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tant theme of Paul's apostolic teaching? (1 Cor. ii. 2.) And, God forbid, says he, that I should glory save in the *cross* of our Lord Jesus Christ. I am *crucified with* Christ; nevertheless I live.—Now this union being *general*, when any one branch of it is selected, it is according to the moral purpose in view. For it is evident, from the consideration of the *general and universal nature* of union and communion between the church and the divine Sponsor, represented in baptism, that had the circumstance of *crucifixion* answered the apostle's *moral design* better, he might have properly said, “being *crucified* with him in baptism.”

Now who sees not, that the restrictive notion of baptism *principally* representing the death, burial and resurrection of Christ, is inadmissible, being repugnant to an equitable axiom of interpretation, (§ 9. ax. 3.) That no meaning of a text, which is contrary to another passage *more evident than itself*, can be the true one. Nothing can be plainer than this, that the apostle Paul, repeatedly, considers baptism as representative of union and communion with Christ and his people *indefinitely*; (1 Cor. xii. 13. Gal. iii. 27. &c.) but this Mr. B's limiting hypothesis virtually denies. For it is the same as to say, *that a part is greater than the whole*: that a few particulars, (however important) are *more principal* than the whole aggregate of the Redeemer's vicarious substitution.

UPON the whole, then, it appears, that to
confine

confine the signification of baptism to this part of the surety's meritorious work, is contrary to the scriptural idea of baptism representing union to Christ at large in *all those respects* in which he is the sinner's substitute. Nor is it easy to say, how *any mode* of ministration whatever is adapted to express this more than another. From whence I infer, that neither the death, burial, resurrection of Christ, nor any other *corporal state* thro' which he passed, were to be *at all* represented by the ordinance. For the church has union and communion with him in *all the states* of his suretyship, which were so various as not to be *capable* of an external representation in one *single act* as baptism is. Which leads to another conclusion, that may serve as a sufficient reply to Mr. B's remaining argument, which implies, that "if there be any *correspondency* between the sign and the things signified, *immersion must* be the mode of administration," and that is,

2. FROM the clearest testimonies of scripture, and from Mr. B's own maxim, it follows, That *if any facts at all*, of an *external* denomination, are represented in the mode of administration, we are referred, above all others, to the VISIBLE DESCENT of the Holy Spirit. Now this, as it is expressly called, without controversy, a BAPTISM, is a more certain clue to find out and ascertain the mode, mostly used, than any other. I say *mostly used*; for I own it does not appear to me likely that one uniform

mode prevailed even in the apostolic age. When, therefore, I object to the baptist sense of Rom. vi. 4. &c. what I would be understood to mean is — these passages do not amount to a *proof*, either that our Lord's death, burial and resurrection are the *principal facts*, signified by baptism, or, that the ordinance was *designed* visibly to represent those facts — that, so far from countenancing the *essentiality* of dipping, they are *no evidence at all* of any allusion to such a mode. For further confirmation of which position, I refer the reader to that part of our subject which treats professedly of the *mode*.

BUT why should Mr. B. exert himself so much in an attempt to establish, from *two* controverted passages, that the death, burial and resurrection of Christ are the principal facts alluded to and represented, while there are *many more* texts, and those *uncontroverted*, which represent the *descent and influences* of the Holy Ghost to be the things signified? Nay, I scruple not to assert it, there is *no object whatever* in all the New Testament, *so frequently* and *so explicitly* signified by baptism, as these divine influences, see Mat. iii. 11. Mark i. 8—10. Luke iii. 16, 21, 22. John i. 33. Acts i. 5. ii. 38, 39. viii. 12—17. v. 47. xi. 15, 16. &c. &c. Yet these things he *prudently* overlooks. The reason is at hand; *plunging* is practised by himself and his constituents, and there is a greater resemblance between that practice and a burial, than between the
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said plunging and the active communication and application of divine influences to the soul.

BESIDES, Mr. B.'s maxim may be thus retorted; if in baptism there is an *expressive emblem* of the descending influences of the Spirit, *pouring must* be the mode of administration, for *that* is the scriptural term most commonly and properly used for the communication of divine influences.

To conclude, when we impartially consider these things, and withal, that the Gospel dispensation is in the strictest sense THE MINISTRATION OF THE SPIRIT ||, it appears *most probable*, that the *various influences* of that divine Agent are *principally* represented in baptism. I own there appears to me great beauty in this scriptural view of the ordinance, especially when considered in connection with the other standing institution of the gospel. The *initiator* rite, which is not to be reiterated, represents the *promised influences* of the spirit of grace; and by *exhibiting* these blessings as about to be imparted repeatedly and successively, *obliges* the subject to unremitted and earnest applications for them. While the *confirming* ordinance, which is to be repeated, represents the *death of the Lord* §, and by *exhibiting* this important transaction as a past event, *obliges* the subject to celebrate it eucharistically, or in thankful remembrance of the great sacrifice. The *former* teaches what the subject may *expect*, the *latter* to what he is *beholden*.

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CHAP.

|| 2 Cor. iii. 8, &c.

§ 1 Cor. xi. 26.

C H A P. III.

OF the proper Subjects of baptism ; particularly, whether it is the WILL OF CHRIST that the infants of believing parents should be baptized ?

§ 1. *Of the proper point in debate.* § 2. *How we may know what is the will of Christ in this matter.* § 3. *Pretended scriptural evidence against Pædobaptism, and the supposed silence of the New Testament about it.* § 4. *All these Antipædobaptist objections confronted with two propositions.* § 5. (I.) Baptism is APPLICABLE to infants ; as appears (1) From the nature and design of the ordinance. § 6 — 9. (2) From the scriptural account of necessary qualifications. § 10. (3.) From the concessions and principles of our opponents. § 11. (II.) It is the WILL OF CHRIST our children should be baptized, as appears, § 12 — 17. (I.) From the dictates of the law of nature, which are his will, when not contravened by positive authority, to BENEFIT our children. § 18 — 28. (2.) From God's constant approbation of this principle, in all preceding dispensations. § 29 — 35. (3.) From the language of prophecy respecting children in gospel times. § 36 — 54. (4.) From New Testament passages, which corroborate the preceding arguments. § 55. *Corrolaries.*

§ 1.

§ 1. **H**AVING, in the former chapters, investigated the nature of positive institutions in general, together with the nature and design of baptism in particular; we proceed next to consider, who are the proper subjects of that ordinance? And here it would be impertinent to enlarge on the evidence we have in scripture, that Jews and Heathens upon renouncing their *false* and embracing the *true* religion were baptized; for about this we have no dispute. We do not inquire, whether it be right or not to baptize qualified *adults* who had not been baptized *before*; nor, whether a profession of faith and repentance and a consistent moral character be necessary for *such*; but whether *any infants* are to be baptized? or, to bring the question to a still narrower compass, “Whether it is the WILL OF CHRIST that *believing parents*, should endeavour to have their children *baptized*; and, virtually, being the other’s correlate, whether it is the WILL OF CHRIST that *his ministers* should comply with their request in baptizing them?” The Antipædobaptists adopt the *negative*; it is my business to make good the *affirmative*. Nor am I apprehensive that our opponents themselves will object to this statement of the controversy, but will allow, that if what is proposed be *fairly demonstrated*, our cause as Pædobaptists is good, and our practice commendable.

§ 2. THIS being the matter in debate, our

next inquiry must be respecting the *allowable medium* of determining the question. I doubt not but it will be allowed, to save proving what is so evident, that whatever shall appear to be the will of GOD, is equally the will of CHRIST, and *vice versa*. When I speak of Christ's WILL, I mean that will, *upon the whole*, as discoverable by us. This *will* being to us the *Supreme Law*, it is evident that wherever it appears, upon the whole, to preponderate, we are under proportionable obligation of concurring with that preponderation. — Again, no one, who deserves to be reasoned with, will deny, that it is *perfectly indifferent* by *what means* this is ascertained, provided *it be* but ascertained; for if all *possible mediums* of proof be not allowed, then Christ's will, *upon the whole*, or all things considered, is not the deciding standard, which is absurd. Beside, this rule is consistent with our opponents' own principles; for, when they appeal on every turn to baptism as a positive institution, they can mean nothing else than that it is Christ's will, *all things considered*, we shall *not* baptize our infant children.

THE *positive evidence* of scripture, in reference to baptism, or any other doctrine, privilege, or duty, holds the same rank in theology, as *experimented evidence* does in reference to any hypothesis in philosophy. As, in the latter case, there is no disputing in favour of a system *against facts*, phenomena and experiments; so, in the former case, no reasoning can be valid in *opposition*

sition to *positive evidence*, or express discernible authority. This authority must be *discernible*, else it is no authority at all, for then *nothing* would remain to influence our determination. Nor can it be *positive*, but in proportion as it is express and unequivocal. For, in the present case, *positive authority* is that, the reason of which we do not, and cannot *otherwise* find out. Therefore, that positive evidence, for or against, which, if ascertained, must needs preclude all further investigation, should *first* be attended to. And if on examination no such evidence appear, the inquiry must be transferred to another *medium*, the nearest, in the scale of importance, to which it is applicable. Let any one propose a more just and satisfactory mode of investigating the subject, (*et erit mihi magnus Apollo*) I shall venerate his abilities, and will sincerely thank him for the discovery.

§ 3. THE first inquiry to be made being concerning the *positive evidence* of scripture, I should produce all those passages out of the New Testament which relate to the subject, were not this done already; but as it is done, the reader is referred to the beginning of the last chapter, to prevent needless repetition. Now since it would be endless, as well as unnecessary, for me to examine every sacred text produced against us, or which may be so produced, — and since that would be imposing on myself to prove a negative, — it only remains that I should bring to the test those which our opponents lay the

greatest stress upon; and this step is the more reasonable, inasmuch as it is to be presumed their own interest in the debate would prompt them to produce the strongest. And here I must beg of my reader he will give me credit when I say, that I shall endeavour all along to place the Antipædobaptist objections in what appear to me the strongest light, and dwell chiefly on those points which are of the most radical importance in the controversy.

WHEN we consider the dictates of nature in parental feelings; the verdict of reason in favour of privileges; the relation children bore to the institutions of ALL preceding dispensations; and especially the language of prophecy in reference to the children of the gospel church; — it may reasonably be presumed, from their inflexible opposition, our opponents have something very express to urge out of the *New Testament* to counteract so strong a *probability* in our favour. And, surely, *express* they must be, to resist the united forces of such considerations. And yet, strange to think! I do not find that any of the Antipædobaptists pretend to adduce ONE SINGLE TEXT as an express and positive testimony for this purpose. Therefore, the mercenary forces they place in front must be such as these. “There is no *express precept*, or *precedent*, in the New Testament for pædobaptism. — That such passages are our *only* rule of doctrine and worship. — That the scripture *forbids* what it does *not mention*. — That in religious matters “ it

“ it is not only sinful to go *contra statutum*; but
“ to go *supra statutum*.” — To these they add,
“ that to imagine the first positive rite of religious
“ worship in the christian church, is left in so vague
“ a state as Pœdobaptism supposes, is not only
“ contrary to the *analogy* of divine proceedings
“ in similar cases, but renders it morally im-
“ possible for the *bulk* of christians to discern
“ the *real* grounds on which the ordinance is
“ administered. — We have both express *com-*
“ *mands* and express *examples* for baptizing such
“ as *profess faith* in Jesus Christ; but for *none*
“ *else*. — That the *qualifications* required of those
“ for whom our Lord intended the ordinance,
“ do not agree to an infantile state. — That *faith*
“ and *repentance* are pre-required in baptism. —
“ Hence Philip said, *If thou believest with all*
“ *thy heart, thou mayest*, Acts viii. 37. The com-
“ mand of Peter was, *Repent and be baptized*,
“ Acts ii. 38. — That the sacraments are not
“ *converting* but *confirming* ordinances. — The fol-
“ lowing scriptures are also urged. Mark xvi. 16.
“ *He that believeth and is baptized*. Acts ii. 41.
“ *Then they that gladly received his word were*
“ *baptized*. 1 Pet. iii. 21. *The like figure whereunto,*
“ *even baptism, doth also now save us (not the put-*
“ *ting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of*
“ *a good conscience towards God) by the resurrec-*
“ *tion of Jesus Christ*. Again, That the scrip-
“ tures *confine* its administration to such as *pro-*
“ *fess faith* in the Son of God. — That our
“ practice restrains it almost *intirely* to such as lie

“ under a natural incapacity of professing repentance and faith. — That positive laws imply their negative ; — that our Lord having given a commission to baptize those that are *taught*; without saying any thing elsewhere, by way of precept or of example, concerning such as are *not* instructed being included in that commission ; there was no necessity for him to *prohibit* the baptizing of those who are *not* taught : much less the baptizing of infants, that *cannot* be taught, in order to render the baptism of them unlawful. — That since office, or duty, means an action conformable to law, it is plain that duty cannot be conceived without a law ; that he does not perform a duty, when the law, or the *reason* of the law ceases †.” — These, I believe, are Mr. B.’s *most capital* objections, which are *excerpta* taken out of his eighth chapter, entitled, *No express precept, or precedent, in the New Testament, for Pædobaptism*. But numerous as they are, their whole collective force from van to rear, consists in these two things,

1. THAT such are the *qualifications* for baptism, required in scripture, that children are *incapable* of it.

2. THAT, supposing they were qualified, since infants are not *expressly* and uncontrovertibly mentioned in connection with baptism, it is *not* the

† Pædob. Exam. p. 168, 174, 176, 179, 181, 183, 184, 185, 187, 188, 190.

the will of Christ they should be baptized; because in a positive institution, nothing short of an *express precept* or *plain example* can indicate his will.

§ 4. ON the contrary; to confront, to break, and to rout this boasted sophistical phalanx, I shall shew,

I. THAT the ordinance of baptism *is applicable* to infants, not less than to adults: or, in other words, that infants are possessed, according to scripture, of all *necessary qualifications* for baptism, and therefore *are capable* of it.

II. THAT there is sufficient *positive evidence* it is the WILL OF CHRIST baptized believing parents should endeavour to get their children baptized. Let us begin with the former.

§ 5. (I.) THAT the ordinance of baptism is applicable to infants, as well as adults, appears hence,

(I.) THAT there is nothing in the *nature* and *design* of it, but is equally applicable to an infant as to its parent. For,

I. WHAT is its *nature*? It is a *seal*. This, I flatter myself, has been demonstrated in the foregoing chapter; and am bold to say, is capable of manifold demonstration. But *what* does it seal? Not that the subject, *rightly baptized*, as some have affirmed, is assured thereby that he is justified and saved: which must imply, if any thing, that he who is *notso assured* was *not rightly* baptized; than which nothing need be

be more absurd. For, then, numbers baptized by the apostles themselves were not *rightly* baptized. And yet, being a seal, it must assure the rightly baptized subject of something. But what is this something? Is it that the subject is *sincere*, that he HAS a *good conscience*, is *actually possessed* of certain personal endowments, or *certainly entitled* to new covenant blessings? This is impossible, on any other hypothesis than the Popish figment of sacraments being effectual to the subject, *ex opere operato*. What it *assures*, therefore, is not any thing *subjectively* to the baptized, whereby he is distinguished from others; but as the only alternative, the *sealing* must imply an *objective certainty* afforded him by the Institutor. Now,

2. WHAT is the *design* of this objective sealing? and what are the *truths* thus certified? (I say *truths*, for nothing which is not *true* does the God of truth certify.) The answer is plain — *That he will be A GOD to all the sealed*. Or, more fully, this is the record, “That God gives i. e. *exhibits* to such eternal life, thro’ the mediation of his Son, and the influences of his spirit.” But when I say, that God assures the baptized in and by the *fact* of the ordinance, he will be a *God* to him, I do not intend the erroneous, but too common notion, that a declaration or promise of his being A GOD to any, in the œconomical revelation of mercy, implies a *certain connection* between the *promisee* and his future (much less his present) *possession* of the

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Chief Good. For such declarations and promises cannot, I think, be conceived of, when addressed to man, under any other notion than that of a *proposal* from a first mover of covenant terms; for the *free nature* of man requires that he should be addressed in this way. But how man *answers* the divine requisitions, or how he *comes by* a nature and disposition which, as an echo, makes a suitable reply to such a proposal, belongs intirely to *another dispensation*, namely, that of SOVEREIGN EFFICACIOUS GRACE; the Holy Spirit therein executing the decree of election. It is evident, therefore, that the Lord may be properly said to be *the God* (or the *chief good*) of a person or people, in divine ordinances, independent of any adstipulation from the creature. For he was, in this sense, *the God* of the infant Jews, and uncircumcised in heart, no less than Abraham himself. But,

3. WHO sees not that if it be a *truth* he may be *a God* to any, infants or adults, independent on their gracious disposition, the same truth may be consistently *sealed* and certified to them. This I insist *was* done to all, adults or infants, rightly circumcised; and this *is* done to all, adults or infants, rightly baptized. However some have made an improper use of the topick of circumcision in the baptismal controversy, one would think there is *one thing* at least that may be inferred from it—that the seal of God's covenant to man, be that seal and that covenant what they may, is APPLICABLE to an infant as well as to its parent. If, indeed, God's requisitions *could not* be

be answered in *any other way*, than by the *believing consent* of the sinner, there would be some force in the objection of infants' incapacity and inability of being the subjects of God's covenant seal. But this is not the case. For tho' infants are sinners, and have no believing consent; yet some infants, our opponents being judges, answer God's requisitions, or, in other words, are justified. The truth is, the infant of a day, and the convert of three-score years, are accepted on the *same account*, tho' attended with different circumstances. Union with the Saviour, formed by a sovereign act of grace, answers all demands. All other considerations are merely circumstantial. If, then, infants are capable of answering the *grand condition* of acceptance, nay *equally* so with adults, it is evident that they are capable of being under obligations, and still *more capable* of baptism, the seal of the objective certainty of exhibited blessings.

§ 6. (2.) THAT infants are *capable subjects* appears, also, from the scriptural account of *necessary qualifications* for baptism. Infants are capable not only of what is *equivalent* to faith, repentance, the answer of a good conscience, a profession of Christ, &c. and a *subjective suitability* for the institution; but also of *that very thing*, from which these *qualities* derive all their value.

I. INFANTS are capable of what is *equivalent* to faith, &c. in the most important concerns, such as acceptance with God, justification to life,

life, &c. and where these very things are pronounced *as necessary* as in the case of baptism. For instance, He that *believeth* shall be *saved*; but he that *believeth not* shall be *damned*. Without *faith* it is impossible to *please God*. Except ye *repent*, ye shall all likewise *perish*. He that *believeth not* God, hath made him a *liar*. With the heart man *believeth* unto *righteousness*, and with the mouth *confession* is made unto *salvation*. Now, what can be more evident than that these, and innumerable similar passages, are *not intended* to exclude from the benefits of redemption, all *infants*, but UNBELIEVERS, IMPENITENT sinners, DISPLEASERS of God, and DISOWNERS of Christ. This conclusion does not, indeed, appear from the passages themselves, for they are as express and peremptory as can be, in *restricting* the qualifications for SALVATION, to FAITH, REPENTANCE, &c. yet, when we consider infants' capacity for the *former*, as moral and immortal beings, and their incapacity for the *latter*, (however peremptorily the conditions and qualifications are specified;) and when we consider the favourable regard shewn them, in every dispensation, by the Great Father of all; we are fairly led to conclude, that such passages of holy writ do not affect infants, as *non-believers*, *non-penitents*, *non-pleasers*, or *non-professors*. For the positive virtues and graces which divines call conditions of salvation, *sine qua non*, are opposed, not to the *mere absence* of those qualities in their activity and exercise, but to their *active opposites*,
unbelief,

unbelief, impenitence, &c. which can take place only in adults.

FROM the premises, then, it is clear, that if infants are *capable* of those things which are *equivalent* to faith and repentance, as qualifications for the *most important* privilege of salvation, they are also capable of what are equivalent to them as qualifications for the *less important* privilege of baptism. For, if the one be denied, so *may* the other; and if the one be granted, so *ought* the other. Infants are capable of a divinely constituted *union* with the infinitely worthy Saviour, not less than adults; and are they incapable of the *symbol* of that union? Infants are capable of the *influences* of the holy Spirit, not less than adults; and are they incapable of the *symbol* of those influences? He that CAN believe it, let him believe it.

§ 7. 2. INFANTS are capable of a *subjective suitability* for the institution. The nature and design of baptism require, as is plain to common sense, that *ostensible foes*, such as unbelievers, impenitents, and the like, ought not to be treated as *apparent friends*; that those who *evidently* love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil, should not be ranked with the *visible* children of light; but does it follow, that infants must be classed with the former, and not with the latter? There is a *suitableness* in excluding *open enemies* from an external token of a *supposed fitness* to be subjects of the gospel kingdom. But does it follow that infants ought to

to be also excluded? Again, there is a *suitableness* in this, that none but believers, penitents and professors should be baptized, *among adults*, because if they are not such, they must be positively the reverse; for *in them* there is no alternative; there is no medium between faith and unbelief, between repentance and impenitence. Of *them*, he that is not *for* Christ, is *against* him. But can the same be said of infants? Because they are not *intelligent* and *voluntary* subjects, must they be treated as foreigners? nay, as rebels? Is there no *medium* between loyal active obedience, and rebellion? And because the infants of any community do not make an active part of the state, does it follow that there is no *suitableness* in their being subjects at all? But if there be a *suitableness* in infants being admitted proper subjects of a civil kingdom, *much more* is there a *suitableness* in their being admitted subjects of the gospel kingdom; the requisitions of the *latter* having a respect to *grace*, which is applicable to both alike, but those of the *former* having a respect to *reason*, of which infants are incapable.

MOREOVER: it is apparent, that faith and repentance are no distinguishing characteristicks of a christian *as such*, but of a christian *as adult*; these qualifications are not *essential* to christianity, (if we intend thereby salvation thro' Christ) for this may exist without them. Now if the initiating ordinance of christianity has relation to the *essence*, *nature* and *design* of christianity, and
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not merely to a *particular mode* of it, it follows that the ordinance is applicable to infants. To say, that this initial rite refers not to christianity itself, but only to a certain mode or circumstance of it, is flatly to contradict its nature and design. For baptism exhibits *the whole* of christianity, and not merely *a part*; its *essence* and not a mere *circumstance*; as appears from the preceding chapter. It *exhibits* regeneration, sanctification, mystical union, salvation, &c. which are common to infants and adults. Nor does it appear, I believe, that *any thing* is therein exhibited, which is not *equally applicable* to both. Nay, were we, for argument' sake, to allow Mr. B. 's account of what it represents, viz. The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and communion with him therein, it still follows, that infants are not less *capable* of these blessings than believers, penitents and professors. They are also *capable* of being put under *obligation*, except we adopt one of the most absurd positions — That we ought not to be grateful, when grown up to manhood, for a benefit received in infancy. Thus we see, that *suitableness* to the nature and design of baptism, belongs to the infant no less than his parent.

§ 8. 3. AGAIN: they are capable of *that very thing* from which faith, repentance and profession derive all their value. That there is in scripture a connection formed between *believing* and *baptism* in *adults*, is clear from particular passages, as well as the nature and design of
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the ordinance ; but it is not less clear that this connection depends on these qualities, not as they are *in themselves*, but only as they are *indicative* of something more essential †. These qualities are no further valuable than they are *expressive* of the person's moral and relative *state*. For, on our opponents' own principles, a preponderation of evidence *against* the latter, would abolish the pretensions of the former. They will allow, that the most plausible *profession* of knowledge or faith, is *of itself* no sufficient ground for baptizing adults ; for if such a defect in a candidate's moral character, as demonstrates to the minister at the time of baptism, the insincerity of his profession, and the badness of his state, be proved against him, it would certainly disqualify him for the ordinance. It is clear from the nature of the case, that the beforementioned qualities, rather than any *other* christian virtues, are connected with baptism, because they are the most striking and decisive *indications* of a real change of state, or at least suitability of state and disposition to commence a subject of the gospel kingdom. Does an infidel become a *believer* ? Does a criminal become a *penitent* ? Is the ignorant become *knowing* ? Then they give a minister the best evidence the case can afford, that they are proper subjects ; that is, in a state suited to the nature and design of the institution. Could we suppose a person possessed of the clearest understanding
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† See Mr. BOOTH'S *Apology for the Baptists*, p. 2.

of christian doctrines ; making the most devout and abundant professions of sincerity, of the soundness of his faith and the genuineness of his repentance ; the integrity and circumspection of his conduct for a length of time past ; — but, while the candidate is standing ready for the ordinance, and the minister is going to execute the command of Christ, incontestible evidence is produced of his being that very day guilty of a notorious deliberate crime, which he had studiously concealed ; what can the minister do ? Must he forbid water ? On what ground ? His knowledge, profession of faith, repentance, &c. are now superseded on a *moral* account. On the supposition, his baptism was to have taken place *because* of those qualifications, but now he is excluded *because he wants* THAT VERY THING of which children are *capable*, viz. a state of grace and acceptance. But, if it be said, that the reason of his rejection was because his profession was not *sincere*, it amounts to the same thing ; for what is the difference between a state of *sincerity* and a state of *grace* ?

§ 9. SHOULD it be still urged, that “ what is deemed by the Antipædobaptists as the grand qualification, is a *credible profession* ; not grace apart, nor profession apart, but the *union* of both ; of which infants are incapable : ” I answer,

THIS distinction, however specious, is a mere evasion. For if there be any force in it, it militates alike against their *salvability*. For we
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are *saved* by grace, *thro' faith*. We are *saved* by *hope*. With the mouth *confession* is made to *salvation*. If any man *love not* the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema maranatha. *Repent*—that your sins may be blotted out. Now if this *union* be requisite in *one* case, it must be so in the *other*, since it is required with *equal* explicitness in both. And salvation is connected, not with grace apart, nor profession apart, but with the *union* of grace and the expressions thereof in faith, hope, confession, love to Christ, and repentance. But whatever shews this latter instance to be fallacious is proportionably conclusive against the objection. Suffice it to observe, as before—that in *each* case, the scriptures require these expressions and signs of a gracious state, of those *only* who are capable of their active opposites, or the contrary vices. And they derive their value intirely from the *circumstances* in which they are placed †, and not from any supposed excellency resulting from their union as such.

BESIDES, that there is no such *union* as the objection supposes, no such indispensable connection between these qualities and baptism, as founded on divine *positive authority*, is apparent hence; that in the New Testament *different qualities* are required of *different persons*, according to the circumstances in which these persons are found. If any are charged with some notorious sins, the exhortation is, *Repent* and be bap-

† See Pædobaptismus Vindicatus, p. 15, &c.

baptized; if any are in a state of inquiry after salvation, the qualification is, *believing on the Lord Jesus Christ*; if any hesitate in giving their assent to his messiahship, *believing with the whole heart* is required. In like manner the *confession of sins, receiving the word with joy, the answer of a good conscience, &c.* are required in different circumstances. But what renders this argument irrefragable is, that our Lord was a *suitable subject of the baptism of repentance*, tho' *incapable of repentance*. He possessed, indeed, what was *equivalent* to it, but not the *thing itself*. The same may be said of *regeneration, &c.* The baptism of John required repentance and the confession of their sins of those only who were in circumstances *capable* of these things, but they were not *essential* qualifications; for what was essential to the nature and design of the institution, Christ must have possessed, else there was no propriety and suitableness in his being the subject of it.*

As to what is called a *credible profession*, it is plain the epithet *credible* is predicated of profession to shew, on the one hand, the insufficiency

* “ Neque ob stare debet, quod non omnia quæ itidem per
 “ baptismum significari solent, in istam ætatem [scilicet infantiam]
 “ proprie congruant. Nam et *pœnitentia*, quam scimus baptismo de-
 “ signari, *majorem* certe in iis qui, cum vitam diu impuram
 “ egissent, vitæ t. t. mutandæ propositum testabantur, quam
 “ in aliis, locum habebat; in CHRISTO vero, quem Johannes
 “ baptizavit, NULLUM; qui, ut TERTULLIANUS loquitur, *nul-
 “ lius pœnitentiæ debitor vincens est.*” POLI Synops. in Matth.
 xix. 14.

ciency of *mere* profession, and on the other, that the *supposed possession* of the thing professed, gives to profession *the whole* of its value. Thus in respect of promises and oaths, they are no further valuable, in a moral and religious sense, than they are exact delineations of the respective principles from which they are supposed to proceed. A promisor or a juror, known to be *false* in the matter promised or sworn, is detested. The value of these things arises from their *credibility*, that is, from the *supposed connection* between the sign and the thing thereby signified. So far, then, it is clear, that if there be any profession *at all*, that profession ought to be *credible*. But from the consideration, that no profession is available but what is credible, it does not follow, that *profession* of this or any other kind is *necessary*. For the nature of the gospel kingdom, and of this institution, do not require, any more than the nature of civil government, that infants, because not capable of *professing* allegiance to their respective kings, should be considered as *no subjects*; tho' the nature and design of the one and the other require, that where it is suitable there should be a profession at all, it should be a *credible* one.

§ 10. (3.) IT may be made to appear, from the principles and concessions of our opponents, that infants are not *naturally incapable* of baptism; but the incapacity they object to is deduced, from the supposed essentiality of faith and profession, as qualifications for the ordinance. For thus Dr. S. writes in reply to Dr. AD-

DINGTON's enumeration of benefits resulting from infant baptism: "Now, Sir, IF these advantages, which no doubt are very great and important, were the natural and proper effects of the application of baptism to infants; or IF the ceremony were *appointed* by God to these ends; or IF the omission of it did at all lessen the obligations of parents to take care of the education of their children, or of children to make all suitable returns to their parents and to demean themselves well in life, or of ministers to instruct and exhort them both to their several duties: IF this were the case, *I acknowledge it would be both cruel and impious to deny them to children* ||."

HERE it is plain, from the *avowed connection* subsisting between the consequence and the hypothetical antecedents, that nothing is necessary to render infants equally CAPABLE of baptism with adults, but a *divine appointment* of its application to them, or its *useful tendency* when applied. And, therefore, no *incapacity* in infants, Dr. S. being judge, can be fairly objected, but what arises from a begging of the question in debate. For, if it shall appear, that it is the *will of Christ* believers should get their infant offspring baptized; or, if it shall appear, that there is a preponderation of *solid advantages* in its favour, the pretended incapability urged is totally annihilated.

§ II. (II.) I AM now to shew, that it is the WILL OF CHRIST baptized believing parents should endeavour to get their children baptized. When I express myself thus, I would not be understood

stood to mean, that those parents who are *not baptized*, and do *not believe*, are under *no obligation* with respect to their own baptism and that of their children ; but our controversy with the Anti-pædobaptists does not require a greater universality than is expressed in the proposition. It must be left to the candid reader to determine, whether the preceding pages evince the *capability* of infants to answer the nature and design of the institution. But our opponents contend, “ That, supposing they were capable and qualified, since infants are not *expressly* and incontrovertibly mentioned in connection with baptism, it is not the *will of Christ* they should be baptized ; because, in a positive institution, nothing short of an *express precept* or *plain example* can indicate his will.” The fallacious impropriety of connecting the abstract notion of a positive institution with the ordinance of baptism in its complex form, and especially in extending its *positiveness* to the moral *qualifications* of the subjects, has been shewn in the first chapter ; to which the reader is referred. Now, against the remaining part of the objection I maintain, that *on supposition* infants are not expressly and incontrovertibly mentioned in connection with baptism, there is sufficient *positive evidence* in favour of Pædobaptism. For,

§ 12. (1) THE *law and light of nature* require, and consequently the *will of Christ*, that parents should introduce their children to all the *benefits* and *privileges* of which they are capable.

THAT infants are subjects capable of baptism (*capable*, I mean, in the properest sense) has been demonstrated. For, *baptism* being the SEAL of God, to be ministerially applied to all the subjects of the visible gospel kingdom; and *circumcision* being a SEAL of the righteousness of faith; the latter therein eminently agreeing with the former; it follows, that if an infant be *capable* of the one, it is *equally* so of the other.—It remains therefore that we attend to the remaining parts of the complex proposition. I say, then,

I. BAPTISM is a *benefit* and privilege when applied to capable subjects, possessing all the qualifications necessary to answer the scriptural design of the ordinance. That it is a *benefit* to such is apparent, when we consider what baptism when applied necessarily includes. It includes a relative change of state; thereby the subject is translated, ministerially, from a state of distance to a state of nearness; is separated from the world and joined to the universal church; is thereby legally entitled to all the other external privileges of the gospel dispensation, of which the subject is capable, this being the right of *initiation* into them. Again, it includes, a dedication of the subject to Father, Son, and Spirit; is a *seal* of God's covenant to the subject, assuring him to his dying day, that therein are *exhibited* to him exceeding great and precious promises; and, of course, lays a foundation for the most rational and interesting obligations of duty. And, indeed, the
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single consideration of baptism laying all suitable subjects to whom it is ministerially applied under such obligations, is alone decisive in support of the point under consideration. And here we may ask, If infants are capable and suitable subjects, as we have proved they are, and if the above important particulars belong to all these when baptized, *as such*; what greater *benefit* can we conceive to appertain to a divine institution? Could Paul himself regard his baptism in a more *beneficial* light? For, if it be said, that an adult has an opportunity at his baptism to *testify* his faith and repentance, to *profess* his subjection and allegiance to Christ, it is plain this is only confounding what are in themselves distinct, divine *benefits* and human *duties*. To call the discharge of duty a divine benefit, in strictness of speech, is to say that the *grounds* of moral obligation, and the *discharge* thereof, are one and the same thing, which is absurd. The grounds, motives and encouragements of duty are divine benefits, together with the ability, inclination and the effective cause of compliance with duty; but, properly speaking, *duties themselves* are not so. And this must necessarily be the case while man is free in his actions and accountable for them.

§ 13. If the above reasoning be just, and if I do not greatly misunderstand our opposers, *their* notion of baptism is *no benefit at all*. We consider the baptismal ordinance as a *seal* of God's covenant to *fœderati*, and of consequence the

right to it a *benefit*. To this Dr. S. replies, "If sealing be, as you have seen, a matter of *duty* rather than of right, to use this kind of language is much the same as to say, that persons have a right *to do their duty*†." But be it known, that this worthy author does not say, as indeed he could not with any colour of plausibility, that infants are *incapable* of being *benefited* by free grants and covenants, for thus he subjoins: "A man may be included in a covenant or BENEFITED by it, who is *no way a party* to it, and whose signature therefore is not at all requisite. CHILDREN, for instance, frequently derive *advantages* from covenants which, with all the authentic forms of them, existed long before they were born ||." The Reason, therefore, why infants, according to him, are not proper subjects of baptism, is not because of any incapacity in them of being *benefited*, but because they are incapable of *duty*. And so essential is the subject's *duty*, on these principles, to the ordinance of baptism, that separate from this obsequious concurrence, the institution itself is not a benefit or a privilege, but a mere non-entity. Consequently, for any to disregard baptism, is not to disregard a *benefit* mercifully held forth to them, but the neglect of a *duty*, in the same sense as prayer, or any other moral duty is neglected. On these principles, therefore, which represent baptism as *no benefit* in any sense but that in which the *performance of any duty* is so, it

† Ans. to Dr. ADDINGTON's Reasons, p. 196. || Ibid.

it is no wonder that our antagonists should pronounce the baptizing of infants an absurd practice, for it is the same as to put an infant on performing duty! But if it be so, it equally follows, that baptism is *no benefit*, properly speaking, to believers. And if no benefit, it can lay them under no obligations of gratitude, for gratitude necessarily supposes a benefit. What they must lay for a foundation of gratitude on these principles is their *own performance* of duty, and that properly being no divine benefit, their gratitude must terminate on *themselves*. But what are our opponents' *avowed grounds* of obligations of duty in this matter? Dr. S. replies: "There can be no doubt that we are to consider it [baptism] as a solemn test, whereby we VOLUNTARILY BIND OURSELVES to new obedience.—Nor can it be in regard of them [infants] a test of new obedience, they not VOLUNTARILY SUBMITTING TO IT*." Is this the language of a protestant orthodox divine? Is our NEW OBEDIENCE founded on our OWN SUBMISSION? Is our OBEDIENCE obligatory in proportion as we BIND OURSELVES to it? Be it so; there is one consequence inevitably follows, viz. That no person in the world is under any *obligation* to perform what he does not voluntarily submit to, or to regard any thing as a *duty* until he *binds himself* to the performance of it. A doctrine this, that will be always grateful to the human mind, in proportion as it

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* *Ut supra*, p. 109.

is disaffected to the requisitions of its Creator! How much more rational and scriptural the supposition, That baptism, as a divine institution, is a *benefit* conferred on all who are the capable and actual subjects of it; and, as such, exhibiting blessings and obliging to answerable duties? To conclude this paragraph, I will subjoin the words of a Prelate on this subject, in whom the power of godliness, sound learning, and judicious moderation, seemed to unite their splendors: “ Either baptism is a *benefit* to infants, or it is not. If none, why then administered at all; but if it be [which was his real sentiment] then why should the poor innocents be prejudged of it for the parent’s cause, if he profess but so much of a christian as to offer his child to that ordinance.” We now come to shew,

§ 14. 2. THAT as baptism is a *benefit* applicable to infants, the *dictates of nature* require our applying it to them; and, provided these dictates are the *will of Christ*, and if they are not contravened by positive authority, the conclusion is clear as the day, That it is the WILL OF CHRIST professing parents should solicit baptism for their children, and gospel ministers should baptize them.

LET us not mistake the state of the question, and the force of the argument. I do not say that BAPTISM is discoverable by the light of nature, but that the *revealed* account of it considers it as a BENE-

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FIT; and that the law and light of nature require we should confer on our children all the benefits of which they are fuitable subjects, and which lie within our power. This is of importance to be observed; for there is a very obvious difference between the *discovering* of a benefit and the *application* of it, when discovered, to one rather than another. This distinction Dr. S. overlooks, when he thus interrogates and replies: "Is *infant baptism* a duty the *light of nature and reason* teaches? This surely will not be pretended*." But this is artfully blending what are in themselves perfectly distinct. We do not say that BAPTISM, viz. The christian purification in the name of the Father, and so on, is taught by the light of nature and reason; but is, on the contrary, a *positive appointment*. And what then? Does it follow that the light of nature and reason is not concerned in the *application* of baptism to one subject in preference to another? The ministerial commission to *baptize* (as well as to *preach*) is a *discretionary trust*; the gospel revelation is the RULE and positive directory; but can any one, who properly considers the nature of divine laws, their separate and respective influence, the nature of positive authority in particular, hesitate a moment about the necessity of the *light of nature and reason* to assist in the *application* of that rule? To suppose that, by insisting on the necessary aids of the dictates of nature in the *application* of the scripture rule in many cases,

we derogate from the *true perfection* of the sacred volume, is a surmise demonstrably weak and impertinent. Suffice it to observe with St. AUSTIN: "To reject the conduct of the *light of nature* is not only foolish but also impious*." With TERTULLIAN: "Those *notions* and "persuasions of the human mind that are *common*, are capable of making us wiser, even "in *divine matters*, provided we employ them "in defence of truth, not for the support "of error †." With HOOKER: "The will of "God, which we are to judge our actions by, "no sound divine in the world ever denied to "be in part made manifest even by *light of nature* and not by scripture alone ‡." With CHILLINGWORTH: "It is very meet and reasonable and necessary that men, as in ALL "their actions, so especially in that which is of "greatest importance, the choice of their way "to happiness, should be left unto — *right reason*, grounded on *divine revelation* and *common notions*, written by God in the hearts of "all men; — deducing, according to the never-failing rules of logic, consequent deductions from them. And he that follows this "in all his opinions and actions, and does not "only seem to do so, FOLLOWS ALWAYS GOD||."

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* AUGUSTINUS de Trin. cap. vi. *Luminis naturalis ducatum repellere, non modo stultum est, sed et impium.*

† TERTULLIANUS de Resur. carnis. cap. iii. Est quidem et de *communibus sensibus* sapere in *Dei rebus*, sed in testimonium veri, non in adiutorium falsi.

‡ HOOKER'S Eccles. Polity, B. III: § 8.

|| CHILLINGWORTH'S Religion of Protestants, Pref. § 12.

The influence, therefore, here ascribed to the light of nature, is not the *discovery* of baptism as a *positive* appointment, (which would imply a contradiction) but the *application* of baptism to some persons rather than others, with the assistance of the scripture rule. If the scripture rule *clearly counteract* what *seemed* before a natural dictate, this latter, it is evident, should submit to the former; if not, and supposing revealed positive evidence out of the question, the natural dictate continues in full force, being, on the supposition, the *only* evidence remaining in the case. But if to this last mentioned evidence be *super-added* any given degree of scriptural authority, the force of obligation is *increased* in that proportion.

§ 15. WHEN I speak of the *Law of nature*, in this connection, I would be understood to mean nearly with GROTIUS: "That [regular] " DICTATE OF RIGHT REASON WHICH SHEWS " that there is in any [human] act, from its " AGREEMENT. OR DISAGREEMENT WITH " [OUR] RATIONAL [AND SOCIAL] NATURE a " moral turpitude, or a moral necessity; and, " of course, that such an act is either FORBID- " DEN OR ENJOINED BY GOD THE AUTHOR " OF NATURE*." And, with CALDERWOOD, I would term any human act INDIFFERENT " which has no *moral* goodness or pravity; " that is, which is neither enjoined nor for- " bidden, by any law natural or divine.†"

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* GROTIUS De Jure Belli ac Pacis. Lib. I. Cap. I. § x. 1.

† CALDERWOOD Altare Damascenum. Cap. ix. De rebus adia-
phoris et ceremoniis. p. 366.

All human acts, therefore, *morally* considered, in their general and universal nature, are either GOOD, BAD, or, *secundum speciem*, INDIFFERENT; tho' no human act, in its particular and singular nature, *secundum individuum*, terminating in actual existence and attended with all its circumstances, can be morally *indifferent*. By the *light of nature* I understand with DODDRIDGE: "That part of the law of nature which man
" by the exercise of his reason *has actually discovered* ||," and not merely what he *may discover*, by that means.

HERE let it be observed, that as the reports of *sense* may be taken for true, when there is no reason against them; because when there is *no* reason *not* to believe, that alone is a reason for believing them: so, the reports of the *law of our nature* may be taken for true, when there is *no revelation against* them; for to do otherwise would be to deny our assent to what, on the supposition, is the *best evidence*. And where *certainty* is not to be had, probability must be substituted in the place of it: that is, it must be considered, which side of the question is the *more probable*. With whatever contempt some may affect to treat this rule, they should be reminded that the object of such contempt is *truth itself*. Besides, unless it be reasonable to put out our *candle*, because we have not the light of the *sun*, it must be reasonable to direct our steps by probability when we have nothing clearer

clearer to walk by. The only alternative is to wander and fluctuate in *absolut* uncertainty †.

NOR can it be denied, "that every man," as PUFFENDORF observes, "of mature age, and a sound mind, possesses so much of this natural light, that using proper means and due attention, he may very well discover at least the general precepts and principles of the law of nature; and, at the same time, judge, that these are perfectly suitable to his nature and state *. But if any thing be determined, by rational investigation, to be a part of the law of nature, this must not, on that account, be pronounced *opposite* to what the sacred scriptures deliver *more clearly* on the same subject; but should be distinguished as it were by *abstraction*§."

§ 16. HAVING premised these things respecting *natural dictates*, as being of divine origin, and of universal and perpetual obligation, when not contravened by the express will of the supreme Lawgiver, who alone has a right to controul them; we proceed to inquire what are some of the most important and *universally acknowledged parts and principles thereof*, that relate to our present purpose.

THE following things seem to be of that description: "That man is a social creature:
" and

† See WOLLASTON'S Religion of Nature, § III. 14, 15, 16.

* Vid. PUFFENDORFIUM De Officio, Lib. I. Cap. I. § 4.

§ Id. Pref. § 4.

“ and the subject of moral obligation. That
“ all injustice is wrong and evil, and *vice versa*.
“ That to render all their due, is justice: and
“ to detain any thing that is another’s, is injus-
“ tice. That infant children are to be regard-
“ ed as parts of their parents. That parents
“ have a just right of putting their children,
“ even in earliest infancy, under future obliga-
“ tions: or, in other words, that they *ought to*
“ *benefit* their children, when it is in their
“ power to do so. That parents ought to take
“ the *best care* of their children they can, en-
“ deavour to provide for them, and to be al-
“ ways ready to assist them. That in order to
“ the good of children, there must be some
“ authority over them lodged by nature in the
“ parents: that is, the nature of the case is
“ such, as *necessarily requires* there should be
“ in the parents an authority over their chil-
“ dren *in order to their good*. That parents
“ ought to *dispose* of their children according to
“ the *best* of their judgment. That as the
“ child *grows up*, the case is still the same in
“ *some degree* or other, till he arrives at the age
“ reckoned mature; and very often longer.
“ That parents, in consulting the *good* of their
“ children, ought to adopt those means, which,
“ according to the best of their skill, abilities,
“ and opportunities, they find most conducive
“ to *that end*. That children are laid under
“ *obligations* to their parents in proportion as
“ they are *benefited* by them; and to God su-
“ premely

“ premely, as the ultimate source and first cause
 “ of all. That the *natural affection* which re-
 “ gularly and mutually subsists in parents and
 “ children, ought to be observed and followed,
 “ when there is no reason to the contrary. For
 “ when there is no reason why we should not
 “ comply with it, its own very solicitation, and
 “ the agreeableness we apprehend to be in com-
 “ plying, are *preponderating* arguments. This
 “ must be true, if *something* is more than *no-*
 “ *thing*. Nay, if this *sympathy* be only a kind
 “ of *attraction* in the mere matter of parents
 “ and children; yet still this physical mo-
 “ tion or *sympathy* ought not to be over-ruled
 “ if there be not a *good* reason for it. On the
 “ contrary, it ought to be taken as a *suggestion*
 “ of nature, which should always be regarded,
 “ when it is not superseded by something *su-*
 “ *perior*; that is, by *reason*, &c. — Therefore
 “ not to act *according to* it, is not to act ac-
 “ cording to reason, and to *deny* that to be which
 “ is ||. Consequently, That when parents do
 “ not act according to these *dictates*, without a
 “ divine warrant to act otherwise, they lie a-
 “ gainst the truth, and *deny* themselves and their
 “ children to be *what they are*; and the *relation*
 “ that subsists between them. That when any
 “ do not *benefit* their *offspring*, and those in their
 “ *house*, who are not of age to *reject* the pro-
 “ posed favour, act an *unnatural* part.”

§ 17. FROM what is said, the conclusion is
 inevitable

inevitable — That it is the WILL OF CHRIST, his disciples should devote their infant children to him in baptism. — For,

THE dictates of nature, uncontrouled by revelation, are the *will of Christ*, and our rule of duty. (§ 15.) — The WILL OF CHRIST, expressed in these *dictates*, requires us to *benefit* our children as they are capable. (§ 16.) — *Baptism*, as the initiatory *seal* of God's covenant, is a *benefit* of which infants are *capable*. (See chap. II. § 23—25. and ch. III. § 5—10.) — This evidence is not *eclipsed*, but *brightened*, by scripture authority, as we shall see in the sequel of this chapter.

LET the reader carefully notice, that we do not suppose, by insisting on this argument, the insufficiency of *direct scripture* evidence: for *this* has been frequently urged with advantage, to satisfy persons of the best dispositions and abilities. That is, reader, “some of the most eminent Pædobaptists that ever filled the Professor's chair, or that ever yet adorned the Protestant pulpit.” But since our opponents insist, that what has been so often urged, is not conclusive; and *modestly* affirm, it is only calculated to catch “the eye of a *superficial* observer;” they are desired once more impartially to weigh this reasoning, and then, if they are able, to refute it. Let them know, however, that hackneyed phrases without meaning — principles taken upon trust — and empty declamation — must not be palmed on us instead of solid arguments.

WERE it necessary, it would be easy to shew,
that

that the principles above urged are no *novelty* ; but are perfectly agreeable to experience, — and to the practical judgment of the most serious Pædobaptists, both illiterate and learned. But waving this, proceed we next to another corroborating proof of the main proposition.

§ 18. (2) WHAT we contend for is, That it is the WILL OF CHRIST we should baptize our infant children. In proof of this we have shewn, first, that the *dictates of right reason* require us to *benefit* them, and consequently to baptize them ; as baptism is always a benefit when administered to *capable* subjects. We come, secondly, to shew — That God has constantly approved of this principle, in all preceding dispensations. In other words — That the principle of the last argument is so far from being *weakened* by scripture evidence, that the Lord's *approbation* of IT, in his conduct towards the offspring of his professing people, in all the dispensations of true religion, is abundantly *illustrated* and *confirmed*.

Mr. B's misapplied but favourite maxim — “ Positive laws imply their negative,” has no force in the baptismal controversy, until he demonstrates, in opposition to what is advanced, that the dictates of right reason must be *smothered*, or else, that revelation *countermands* their influence. But to *demonstrate* the former, in matters about which, on the supposition, scripture is silent, is no easy task. And the difficulty will be *increased* in proportion as the sacred oracles corroborate

corroborate reason's verdict. Let us now appeal to these oracles.

§ 19. I. WE appeal to that period of the church, and dispensation of grace, which extended from Adam to Noah. The inspired narrative of this long space of time is very short: on which we make the following remarks. We then assert,

(1) WHATEVER exhibition of grace was made to antediluvian *parents*, was constantly made to their *offspring*; and consequently whatever *seals* of grace were granted to the former, must equally appertain to the latter, if not voluntary *rejectors* of them. Therefore, all such parents had a *revealed* warrant to regard their offspring as entitled to the *seals* of the covenant, in *like manner* as themselves, according to their capacity. For,

(2) ALL allow that Gen. iii. 15. contains the promulgation of gospel grace; nor are we authorised to question the interest of *children* therein with their parents, without an express contravention. For, it were *unnatural* for a parent to *confine* such a *benefit* to his own person to the exclusion of his children, who are not only parts of his family but of *himself*. To which we may add, that the phrase THY SEED, tho' principally referring to the Messiah, respected Eve's *natural seed* as sharers in common with herself in the exhibition of mercy; and we suppose not less so than her HUSBAND. For this application of the phrase *thy seed*, compare Gen. xvii. 7. and Gal. iii. 16. Again,

(3) IT

(3) IT is generally agreed, that not only the institution of *sacrifices*, but also the *coats* of skin (Gen. iii. 21.) were *emblematic* of covenant blessings; and not only so, in common with mere types, but *seals* of the covenant, as earnest and pledges of exhibited favour. "Who will deny," says WITSIUS, "that God's cloathing our first parents was a *symbolical* act? Do not Christ's own words (Rev. iii. 18.) very clearly allude to this*?" As for *sacrifices*, they were slain at God's command after the promulgation of the covenant. For, if Abel *offered by FAITH*, (Heb. xi. 4.) it presupposes the divine *institution* of them. And this institution, most probably, took place when God — taking occasion from the insufficiency of the aprons of fig-leaves, which the fallen pair sewed together, to cover the shame of their nakedness — himself cloathed them with coats of skins. And most divines agree, that it is very probable, these were the skins of those beasts which were slain for *sacrifices*. However, God gave testimony to these oblations of the antient patriarchs, that they were *acceptable* to him; but this cannot be supposed without admitting them to be *divinely instituted*. Besides, a distinction of *clean* and *unclean* animals was observed before the deluge; which was not from *nature*, but the mere divine pleasure; and may we not add, with a particular respect to *sacrifices*? Now

(4) IF

* WITS. Oecon. Fœd. Lib. iv. cap. vii. § 4 — 7.

(4) IF, according to WITSIUS and others, these *skins of beasts*, and *sacrifices*, were appointed *SEALS of the righteousness of faith*; I would ask — Was the *covenant* (using the term in the sense before explained, chap. ii. § 23, &c.) directed for the use of their *SEED in common* with the parents, and not the *seal* in like manner? For, if the seals be affixed to the covenant for *confirmation* of its contents, as well as, in another view, for signification; I would fain know, by what rule of construction we can infer, that the covenant *itself* belongs to the parents and their seed *in common*, while the *confirmation* of it belongs *exclusively* to the former? Is it not contrary to *custom* and *unreasonable* to conclude, that a charter of privileges, or a testamentary instrument, (which by the way expresses the nature of the covenant) belongs to a man and his heirs *ALIKE*, but the confirming seal respects the former *ONLY*; while on the supposition, the sovereign, or the testator, has given *no ground* for such partiality? Besides,

(5) IF the covenant itself be a *benefit* to the persons to whom it is directed, as it certainly is in *every* dispensation of it, it follows that the *confirmation* of it is so; for parents, therefore, to *deny* their offspring all the share in such common benefits they are capable of, without a divine warrant, is *unnatural*, and an act of *injustice*. We may therefore conclude — that from Adam to Noah, the *covenant* and its *seals* appertained

appertained to *infants* in common with their parents.

§ 20. 2. WE appeal next to that period of the church which extended from Noah to Abraham: On which we observe,

(1.) WHATEVER benefits and privileges belonged to the former dispensation, continue to flow on to the present, if not *expressly* repealed; for the change of a dispensation, *of itself*, is no adequate cause of their abrogation. That would be as unreasonable as to suppose that the bare change from night to day was, *of itself*, an adequate cause of a man's being disinherited. Or we may as well say, that the abstract notion of an epoch in chronology has a real influence on the sequence of events. Whatever covenant privileges, therefore, belonged to Noah and his family *before* the deluge, if not *expressly* repealed, must belong to them *after* the deluge. But,

(2.) So far were these privileges from being abridged at this period, that they were greatly enlarged and confirmed, by additional discoveries. For thus we read, Gen. vi. 18. *But with thee will I ESTABLISH MY COVENANT; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.* Again, chap. vii. 1. *And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou, AND ALL THY HOUSE into the ark; for THEE have I seen righteous before me in this generation.* And again, chap. viii. 20. *And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and OFFERED BURNT OFFERINGS*

INGS on the altar. Once more, chap. ix. 8, 9, 12, 13. *And God spake unto Noah, and to his SONS with him, saying, And I, behold, I ESTABLISH my covenant with YOU, and with YOUR SEED after you. And God said, This is the TOKEN OF THE COVENANT — I do set my bow in the cloud.* Hence we further learn,

(3.) THAT the covenant or divine charter, first given to Noah, *included* the preceding; it was the SAME covenant with *additional grants*: for the Lord says, “ I will ESTABLISH my covenant.” Left Noah should infer that the drowning of the world in wrath disannulled the well known covenant, God dissipates his fears, by saying, “ I will *establish* my covenant.”

(4) ON Noah's account, or as belonging to him, ALL HIS HOUSE or family was privileged. The privilege is, — “ Come thou, and *all thy house* into the ark.” The ground and reason of that privilege — “ *for THEE have I seen righteous.*” It is true, the natural dictates of reason and affection, whereby a *father pitieth his children**, and whereby an infidel *careth for his own, especially those of his own house* ||, would have prompted this righteous person to bring *all his family*, (except any adults refused compliance) into the ark, (*the like figure whereunto is BAPTISM*, as an inspired teacher assures us, 1 Pet. iii. ^{te} 21.) yet the Lord was pleased to brighten his evidence and strengthen his obligations of duty by express revelation.

(5) AFTER

* Psalm ciii. 13.

|| 1 Tim. v. 8.

(5) AFTER the flood the institution of *sacrifices* continued as the seal of the *first* part of the covenant; and the *rainbow* was instituted as the seal of the *additional* part, or, as PAREUS calls it, “*appendix* of the covenant of grace †.” And here it is worthy of notice, that as the first exhibition of the covenant and its seals respected the offspring of *fæderati*, and the *renewal* or *establishment* of it to Noah retained that privilege in full force: so also the *appendix* of the covenant comprehended his SEED.

(6) RESPECTING this appendix of the covenant of which the rainbow was the seal, tho’ we suppose, with WITSIUS, it was not formally and precisely the covenant of grace; yet we observe, with the same excellent author, “it does not seem consistent with the divine perceptions, to make such a covenant with every living creature, but on *supposition* of a covenant of grace, and having a *respect* to it. ||” And as this covenant, in its universality, implied the covenant of grace, we are not to deny, but the promises of it were also *sealed* to Noah and his seed by the rainbow. (See Rev. iv. 3. x. 8.)

(7) IT is observable, finally, that NOAH, his SONS, and THEIR SEED were *fæderati*, in this ratification of the covenant; consequently whatever *seals* of the covenant belonged to Noah, belonged to *his sons*, and *their seed*, while non-dissentients.

§ 21. 3.

† Ap. WITS. Oecon. Fæd. Lib. iv. cap. vii. § 19. || Ibid.

§ 21. 3. APPEAL we next to a very important period of sacred history, viz. From Abraham to Moses. On this also we make the following remarks.

(1) THE Abrahamic covenant *included* the preceding dispensations, on the general principle — that grants and privileges continue in force until *repealed*. Which repealing, if it be not either *express*, or arise from the nature of the case, in itself *plain*, can have no binding influence, that is to say, no existence at all: except we maintain, that we are *bound* to resign an important good without an assignable cause; which is in fact to maintain that we ought to *deny* that to be, which is.

(2) I SUPPOSE it will be granted, that the *principal blessing* exhibited in the foregoing dispensations was THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH; the great importance of which to the human race, in every age of the world, no one will deny who considers things *as they are*. This covenant, therefore, was in force to Abraham *prior* to what is called the Abrahamic dispensation; and in this connection we might mention Lot and his family. But, behold,

(3) A MOST explicit ratification of it, with *superadded* favours, Gen. xii. 3. — IN THEE SHALL ALL FAMILIES OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED. Chap. xvii. 7. *And I will ESTABLISH MY COVENANT between me and thee, and thy SEED after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; TO BE A GOD UNTO THEE*

AND

AND TO THY SEED AFTER THEE. v. 10. *This is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, AND THY SEED after thee: every MAN-child among you shall be CIRCUMCISED. v. 12. He that is EIGHT DAYS OLD shall be circumcised among you, every MAN-child in your generations; he that is born in the house, OR BOUGHT WITH MONEY OF ANY STRANGER, which is not of thy seed. v. 24—27. And Abraham was NINETY YEARS OLD AND NINE, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. And Ishmael his son was THIRTEEN YEARS OLD, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. In the SELF SAME DAY was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son. And ALL THE MEN OF HIS HOUSE, born in the house, and BOUGHT WITH MONEY OF THE STRANGER, were circumcised with him.* Hence we learn,

(4) THE nature and extent of the ABRAHAMIC COVENANT OR PROMISE. Whatever blessings are promised to ruined man, must be in virtue of the covenant of grace. All promised blessings, therefore, must imply an EXHIBITION of gospel grace. And the glad tidings of salvation thro' Christ preached to the GENTILE WORLD, is expressly called — THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM (Gal. iii. 14.) Not that this link is the FIRST in the chain of exhibited mercy to the fallen race in general, or with an universal and unlimited aspect, if the reasoning in the last sections be just: but for its explicitness, and precious (because expressly diffusive) intend-

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ment, it may be justly termed a GOLDEN LINK. In this respect Abraham may well be stiled — *The FATHER of us all*; not to the disavowal of Noah, with whom the covenant was before ratified, or Eve, who received the *first* intimation of it, and who in *this* respect eminently may be called — *The MOTHER of all living*. The *covenant* of grace, in its external manifestation, containing an EXHIBITION of *exceeding great and precious* PROMISES to every human being on the face of the globe, to whom providence directs the joyful news, may be compared to a flowing stream: it proceeds ultimately from the immense ocean of sovereign grace in Christ; its *first* visible source we trace to paradise, where it rises in a small spring, and glides on to Noah. During this part of its progress, there were but few comparatively who participated of its cleansing and healing virtues, tho' none were debarred from it. This continuing to glide along, without interruption, (notwithstanding God's awful visitation of a corrupt world by the deluge) we discern thro' the person of Noah *another* source, whence is poured forth a second stream which empties itself into the former channel. The streams thus *united* become a river, which flows on to Abraham — a river to which *all* are invited, but *few* come, and these made willing by the omnipotent energy of *divine influence* which observes the laws of another — a HIDDEN dispensation, running parallel as it were

were with the former; which was also the case in the preceding period. Then, thro' the highly honoured person of Abraham we behold another mighty spring copiously pouring forth the waters of salvation, and again uniting itself to the former river; and from him to Christ, with a wide majestic flow, it proceeds along the consecrated channel of the Jewish nation; gradually increasing by the accession of other streams, till it arrives at the Saviour's finished work; where, impatient of confinement, it breaks over its banks on every side, and the healing waters flow to the most distant regions—THAT THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM MIGHT COME UPON THE GENTILES. (Gal. iii. 14, 8. compared with Gen. xii. 3. xviii. 18. xxii. 18.) Paul expressly says, that "the GOSPEL (even the very same as the New Testament contains—*salvation by GRACE*) "was preached to Abraham:" And (Heb. iv. 2.) it was preached to his unbelieving descendants in the wilderness.

(5) As it is *natural* to expect, that whatever exhibition of privileges the parents enjoyed should be extended to their children, in common with themselves; so we find that *in fact* they are *expressly included* in *this* dispensation as well as the preceding. The covenant is established between God and Abraham's SEED, *in the VERY SAME sense* as with Abraham HIMSELF; the essence of which is—TO BE A GOD TO HIM AND HIS SEED. And lest it should be objected that the term *seed* refers to his *adult*

posterity who should tread in his steps, to the exclusion of infants, all doubt is dissipated by the appointment of applying the *seal* of the covenant in early infancy.

(6) *Sacrifices* continuing in full force to SEAL the covenant, till the divine oblation should be made; and the *bow* of the covenant continuing as a token and SEAL of it, until the Messiah's *second* coming; at the commencement of this period is given an *additional* seal—CIRCUMCISION. The very *nature* of the rite shews that all *females* are excluded from being the subjects of it; as well as the discriminating specification — *every MAN-child*. Here observe in general, that children, in this rite, have the same privileges as their parents. The males are treated as Abraham, and the females as Sarah: *These*, therefore, had the covenant sealed in the same manner as their honoured mother. Again: tho' Sarah and her sex were not the *subjects* of this rite, they were constant *witnesses* to the institution; and therefore there was an important sense in which circumcision was a seal to Sarah and her daughters: a sense analogous to that in which sacrifices were.

(7) EVERY domestic head being, in truth, a prophet, priest, and king, in his own family; a question must arise, Whether the covenant and its seals are restricted to the parent head of the family, and his children, or else extended to the *other domestics*? Nor would the question be unimportant; for his *instructions*, his *prayers*, and *commands*, answerable to his three-fold

fold office, must be directed accordingly. To this question right reason replies : If the covenant and its seals are *beneficial* to all capable subjects, benevolence requires that they should be extended to the other *non-dissenting* members — except forbidden by indisputable authority. This is the voice of reason; and we find that this is the voice of God. The privilege is common to the seed, and to *him that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, WHICH IS NOT OF THE SEED*, Gen. xvii. 12.

§ 22. IT has been objected, “ that the covenant with Abraham was a covenant of *peculiarity* only, and that circumcision was no more than a token of *that* covenant;” but if so, as Mr. HENRY observes, “ how came it that all PROSELYTES, of what nation soever, even *the strangers*, were to be circumcised; tho’ not being of any of the tribes, they had no part or lot in the land of Canaan? The extending the seal of circumcision to *profelyted strangers*, and to THEIR SEED, was a plain indication, that the New Testament administration of the covenant of grace would reach, not to the covenanters only, but their *seed**.” But it has been proved that circumcision *sealed* to Abraham and his seed *the righteousness of faith*; and therefore it does not affect the point in debate to contend that temporal promises were sealed *also*. The reader is referred to Chap. ii. § 23, &c. where the subject has been considered at large.

§ 23. 4. WE next appeal to the long and interesting period from Moses to Christ. On which let the following observations be considered.

(1) WHATEVER appertained to the Abrahamic covenant was not disannulled by the Mosaic dispensation. This St. Paul asserts in plain terms, Gal. iii. 17.

(2) IT may not be amiss to take notice, before we proceed, of Job's family; who, being as is generally supposed, cotemporary with Moses, and unconnected with his history, deserves a previous regard. Of him it is said, that "he *sanctified* his children, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings, according to the number of them all—Thus did Job continually," or, all the days. (Job i. 5.) On this I would only observe, let the *sanctifying* be what it may, the *sacrifices* must have been of divine institution, and used by Job, being an eminently righteous man, as the *seals* of the covenant of grace;—with respect to his children *separately*.

(3) SUPERADDED to the foregoing seals of the covenant, is the PASSOVER; a divine rite of the nature of a sacrifice, instituted in memory of Israel's deliverance out of Egypt, representing and sealing spiritual blessings. "As to the *guests*," says WITSIUS, they were, first, all native *Israelites*, who were not excluded by legal uncleanness. For all the congregation of Israel is commanded to solemnize the passover. (Exod. xii. 6. 47.) And, next, the *Profelytes* circum-

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“ cised and become Jews; (Esth. viii. 17.)
 “ whether bondmen born in the house or bought
 “ with money, &c. Exod. xii. 48. *When a*
 “ **STRANGER** *will sojourn with thee, and keep the*
 “ *passover to the Lord, let ALL HIS MALES be cir-*
 “ *cumcised, and then let him come near and keep it,*
 “ *and he shall be as one that is born in the land†.*”

On this passage in Exodus, Dr. JENNINGS observes these two things: “ *First*, That when a
 “ man thus became a Profelyte, *all his males*
 “ *were to be circumcised as well as himself*, where-
 “ by his *children* were admitted into the visible
 “ church of God, *in his right*, as their father.
 “ *Secondly*, That upon this, he should be *entitled*
 “ *to all the privileges and immunities of the*
 “ Jewish church and nation, as well as be sub-
 “ ject to the whole law: He should be as “one
 “ born in the land§.” In short; not only men
 and women, but also young children partook of
 this ordinance, *as soon as they were capable of*
 answering the revealed design of it, for — no
 POSITIVE rule was given them on this head,
 like that of circumcision. It is manifest that
 since the injunction respected not only indivi-
 duals of such a description, but also families *as*
such, every member without exception had a *legal*
right to the ordinance; and nothing prevented
infants from a participation, but what lay in the
natural incapacity to answer the design of it.

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(4) “ BESIDES

† WITS. Oecon. Fæd. Lib. iv. cap. xii. § 11.

§ Jewish Antiq. vol. 1. p. 132.

(4) “ BESIDES the *ordinary* and *universal* sacraments of *circumcision* and the *passover*, some *extraordinary* symbols of divine grace were granted to the Israelites in the wilderness, which in the New Testament are applied to Christ and his benefits, and said to have the same signification with our sacraments. And they are in order these — The *PASSAGE* in the cloud THRO’ THE RED SEA — the *MANNA* which was rained from heaven — The *WATER* issuing out of the *ROCK* — and the *BRAZEN SERPENT* erected by Moses for the cure of the Israelites*.” To this we may add, among other things, with the author now referred to — the clear and familiar display of the *DIVINE MAJESTY* — and the adumbration of divine mysteries daily *sealed* by religious *CEREMONIES*. Our subject does not call for an investigation of these particulars, but I would remark in general, that the principle for which we contend, is so far from being weakened, that it is abundantly corroborated by the inspired testimony of every dispensation, and the Mosaic in particular — That it is a common dictate of right reason, children should from their earliest infancy share in their parents’ privileges, as far as they are capable, when no positive authority contravenes it.

§ 24. FROM the preceding induction of sacred evidence in favour of children being sharers of the seals of grace in common with their parents, we conclude, that for the space of four thousand

* WITSIUS *ut supra*, cap. x. § 1.

thousand years, that is to say, FROM THE CREATION TO CHRIST, it was a rule *universally* incumbent on parents to treat their children as entitled to religious privileges *equally* with themselves, according to their capacity. — And as a counterpart of what was observed of privileges, we may remark that, in virtue of the same uniform principle, often when the parents were punished with excommunication or death, their infant children were included with them. As might be instanced in — the deluge — the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah — the case of Achan the Son of Zerah (Josh. vii. 24.) — the matter of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram — the case of the conquered nations (Deut. xx. 16, 17.) — and many more instances, down to the destruction of Jerusalem. Far be it from us to suppose, that the parents' crimes and impenitence made their suffering children incapable of *mercy* — that mercy which proceeds on an invisible plan, and belongs to a purely spiritual dispensation. Yet, that children, during their *dependence* on their parents, should share equally with them in judgments and mercies externally, is the effect of an all-wise constitution coeval with mankind.

§ 25. Mr. B. when treating of *external covenant relation*, objects: “ All reasoning from *data* of a moral kind and the supposed fitness of things, or from the natural relation of children to parents, is wide of the mark. As baptism is not a duty *naturally* resulting from our relation to God, as *reasonable* creatures; for then it

would be incumbent on *every man* to be baptized : as our obligation to regard it does not arise from any moral, or civil relation, in which we necessarily stand to our fellow creatures ; for then the same consequence would inevitably follow : and as this duty does not originate in the natural relation between parents and children ; for then *all* parents, *whoever they be*, would lie under an obligation to have their infants baptized : so it is altogether vain to search any where for the proper subjects of baptism, except in the appointment of Christ and apostolic practice ; these being the only rule and law of its administration†.” But this objection, however plausible, does by no means affect the above reasoning. For, *data* of a moral kind are very good ones, when no positive evidence lies against them. Besides, there appears to me a manifest impropriety (not to say impertinence) in making the *kind* of argumentation an objectionable matter. For it is [demonstrable, that positive laws, tho’ they conclude *affirmatively*, do not conclude *negatively*, except in matters that are absolutely indefensible on all *data* whatever. Nothing can possibly be established by sound reasoning, but what is *reasonable and right* ; and when this is done, it is plain that nothing but *affirmative* positive evidence can invalidate the conclusion. The conduct of our opponents in this instance is not unlike that of Arminians when disputing with Calvinists. It is objected

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† Fædob. Exam. p. 286.

to the latter that their reasoning is *metaphysical*, or may be reduced to the science of *metaphysicks*, and to the Pœdobaptists that their reasoning is of the *moral* kind. But the cavil is well refuted by a masterly pen; part of which refutation, *mutatis mutandis*, we here apply: “ If the reasoning be
 “ good, ’tis as frivolous to inquire what science
 “ it is properly reduced to, as what language it
 “ is delivered in: and for a man to go about to
 “ confute the arguments of his opponent, by
 “ telling him, his arguments are *metaphysical* [or
 “ of a *moral* kind] would be as weak as to tell
 “ him, his arguments could not be substantial,
 “ because they were not written in *French* or
 “ *Latin*. The question is not, Whether what
 “ is said be *Metaphysicks*, *Physicks*, *Logick*, or
 “ *Mathematicks* [*morality*, *divinity* or *criticism*]
 “ *Latin*, *French*, *English*, or *Mahawk*? But,
 “ whether the reasoning be good, and the ar-
 “ guments truly CONCLUSIVE? The foregoing
 “ arguments are no more *metaphysical* [or
 “ *moral*] than those which we use against the
 “ Papists, to disprove their doctrine of *transub-*
 “ *stantiation*; alledging, it is inconsistent with
 “ the notion of corporeal identity, that it should
 “ be in ten thousand places at the same time.—I
 “ am willing my arguments should be brought to
 “ the test of the justest and strictest reason, and
 “ that a clear, distinct and determinate meaning
 “ of the terms I use should be insisted on; but
 “ let not the whole be rejected, as if all were

“ confuted, by fixing on it the epithet|| ” — *moral*, consequential, or analogical. — “ As to the arguments “ I have made use of, if they are *quibbles* [adapted “ to dazzle “ the eye of a superficial observer” “ only] they may be shewn to be so: such “ knots are capable of being untied, and the trick “ and cheat may be detected and plainly laid “ open. If this be *fairly* done, with respect to “ the grounds and reasons I have relied upon, “ I shall have just occasion for the future to be “ silent, if not to be ashamed of my argumenta- “ tions. I am willing my proof should be tho- “ roughly examined; and if there be nothing “ but *Begging of the question*, or mere *Logomachy*, “ or dispute of words, let it be made manifest, “ and shewn how the seeming strength of the “ argument depends on my *using words without “ a meaning*, or arises from the ambiguity of “ terms, or my making use of words in an “ indeterminate and unsteady manner; and that “ the weight of my reasons rests mainly on such “ a foundation: and then I shall either be ready “ to retract what I have urged, and thank the “ man that has done the kind part, or shall be “ justly exposed for my obstinacy †.”

§ 26. BUT what has Mr. B. to urge in support of his assertion, that “ reasoning from *data* of a *moral* kind, and the supposed *fitness* of things, or from the *natural relation* of children to parents

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|| EDWARDS'S Inquiry into the freedom of the will, p. 390.

† *Ut supra*, p. 393.

is wide of the mark?" *His* reasoning is, "If *baptism* were a duty, naturally resulting from our relation to God, as reasonable creatures, then it would be incumbent on *every man* to be baptized." And what a dreadful consequence! But will our author favour us with the curious intelligence of *any man* unbaptized, in a christian country, on whom it is *not* incumbent to be baptized? The objection confounds two things which in reality are quite distinct. It makes no difference between an obligation to perform a duty *before* it is revealed, and *after* it is revealed. Neither the righteousness of faith, nor any part of the gospel mystery, demand the belief and cordial reception of mankind, *before* they are promulged; such a revealed exhibition of mercy depending on the divine pleasure, with which only a small part of the human race is actually favoured; but does it follow, either—that the African Hottentots, who are without such a revelation, *are* under obligation to believe what they have not heard, or—that any in a christian land *are not* laid under obligation to believe and practise what is revealed to them? And does not this obligation "naturally result from our relation to God as reasonable creatures?" For can any thing be more reasonable than that we should thankfully receive what revelation testifies is a proffered mercy? Methinks it requires no great labour to shew—that if the exhibition of grace be a *benefit* to man, it is his DUTY to receive it; and that the denial of this tends directly

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to sap the foundation of religion and morals. In like manner *baptism*, as a seal appended to the gospel covenant, is as much a matter of *revelation* as the covenant itself; but *this* is no sufficient reason why the seal should not be obligatory in as extensive a manner as the instrument sealed. On new discoveries being made to the creature, or benefits bestowed on him, new relations commence; and hence duties *naturally* result, answerable to these relations, with all that certainty and universality which belong to duties resulting from *unrevealed* relations.

AGAIN: our Author draws another consequence equally formidable: "If the duty of parents to baptize their children originate in the *natural relation* between parents and children, then [sad alternative!] *all* parents, *whenever they be*, would lie under an obligation to have their infants baptized." We are still at a loss to find out wherein lies the inconvenience of the intended conclusion. For we have no objection at all to the idea, that *all* parents, *whenever they be*, IN A CHRISTIAN COUNTRY, lie under an obligation to have their infants baptized; but if my opponent objects to the clause *in a christian country*, as acknowledging *others not* being under the obligation, and therefore not originating in a *natural relation* between parents and children, it will do him no service; until he demonstrate either — that this *natural relation does NOT oblige all* parents without exception to BENEFIT their children, in every part of the globe and every period of time,

as we maintain; or—that baptism is NO BENEFIT to infants, in opposition to those arguments that shew it is a benefit. But the *nature* of the benefit, or the *manner* whereby it appears to be so, make no part of the *criteria* whereby we should judge, that the duty originates in the natural relation between parents and children. Whether the *benefit* relate to the body or the mind, to property or liberty, to politicks or morals, to time or eternity, to the chief or an inferior good,—is out of the question: and, Whether it *appear to be a benefit* by the medium of sense or testimony, of right reason or revealed facts, by direct assertion in scripture or just consequence, by positive or moral evidence, or by any other mode whatever of collecting the *fact*, —is equally immaterial. For it still follows, that the parent's *duty* originates in a *natural relation* between him and his child, be the *nature* of the benefit, and the *mode* of ascertaining it, what they may.

§ 27. OUR author still objects: “ Were it allowable to reason from *covenant interest*, to the enjoyment of a *positive rite*, Abraham and his posterity might——have circumcised their FEMALES! in some way or other*.” His reasons are,—“ circumcision is a *sign* of the covenant—that covenant extends its benign influences to *both* sexes—God has made us *reasonable* creatures; and he requires that we should use our intellectual powers, on the nature, the application, and the design of all his institutions. Hence it appears

* Pædob. Exam. p. 287.

appears, (says he) that a little *reasoning* on the covenant made with Abraham, and a few deductions from the nature and fitness of things, would have inferred the right of Jewish *females* to circumcision, in a manner similar to that by which our brethren endeavour to authenticate the baptism of infants*.” On this singular argument *ad hominem* I make these two remarks.

1. OUR author seems to make no manner of difference between the solid deductions of right reason, and the specious pretences of sophistry. For, according to him, nothing more is necessary to establish the propriety of female circumcision, but to admit this *datum* of arguing from *covenant interest*. But we deny that any such consequence would follow, for two plain reasons. First, the *most evident* revealed account of the *nature* and design of the institution forbid it; in confirmation of which, we appeal to impartiality itself, and the *universal* suffrage of Jews and Christians. *Secondly*, The phrase—*every MAN-child*—is so decisive in itself, and so often repeated in the institution, as to put it out of all doubt; in favour of which we might again refer to the whole body of Jews and Christians, who (*nem. con.*) understand the males *exclusively*.

2. THO’ we contend for the *proper use* of moral and analogical arguments, we do not suppose that they conclude *in opposition* to positive evidence, but only *in subordination* to it. Common sense, like common law, ought to influence our proceedings

* Pædob. Exam. p. 287.

proceedings when not controuled by *superior* authority; but in proportion as decisive statute evidence appears, the operation of the *inferior* principle is suspended.

§ 28. ONCE more: "It is worthy of consideration, says Mr. B. whether this doctrine concerning the *federal interest* of infants, be not calculated to *harden their consciences* in an unconverted state, and to flush them with *false hopes*, when grown to years of reflection." This objection has been frequently urged by the Anti-pædobaptists, but with how little justice and force, may appear from the following observations.

1. IF this federal interest consist, as the current of Pædobaptist writers hold, in the children's being entitled to the *external privileges* of the covenant in common with their parents; how can this tend "to harden their consciences," or "to flush them with false hopes," more than their parents? Or when these latter *abuse* their privileges, are we to infer, that such privileges are *calculated* "to harden their consciences," or "to flush them with false hopes?" But if such arguing be fallacious in the *one* case, it must be equally so in the *other*.

2. IT seems absolutely unaccountable, nay demonstrably absurd, to suppose that this federal interest, including divine grants, blessings, benefits and privileges, should, in its *native tendency*, "flush any with *false hopes*." The effects it is calculated to produce are such as these.—repentance
— cau—

—caution—thankfulness,—gratitude—obedience, &c. With equal propriety may we pronounce, on the principle of the objection, that the *federal interest* of Jewish infants, their church membership, their right to the seals and shadows of grace in common with their parents;—that the possession of Canaan, the worship of the temple, the spirit of prophecy, and the promise of the Messiah;—that our Lord's preaching and mighty works among the Jews—were all “calculated” to *harden* the consciences of that people, and to flush them with *false hopes*!

3. It is the united language of those who maintain the children's *federal interest* in their parents' privileges, that an *abuse* and *misimprovement* thereof heighten their guilt and danger; which necessarily implies, that the thing itself is a real good. Thus Mr. STRONG: “That it is a special privilege for *parents* and *children*, that they [the children] are taken into their parents' covenant, will appear by these arguments and demonstrations.——It will *aggravate their sin* if they *abuse* it; therefore it's a mercy and a privilege *in itself*: for what is not a mercy and privilege in itself, that *cannot* add to a man's sin and judgment. Now as it is in riches and honours, and all the blessings in this life, they will be unto a man *judgments* if they are *abused*; therefore they are blessings in themselves; blessings in the *thing*, tho' a snare to the *man*. So this very argument, that is brought to prove that they are no blessings, and
“ give

“ give no benefit, doth clearly prove, that the
“ *thing itself* is a privilege and a *bleſſing*. — For
“ a child to be diſinherited, and caſt out of his
“ father’s covenant, is a very great *judgment*, and
“ the foreſt of all outward afflictions that can
“ beſal a man; as we ſee in Cain — *Thou haſt*
“ *caſt me out from the face of the earth, and from*
“ *thy face I ſhall be hid*. It is the ſentence of
“ excommunication that the Lord paſſeth upon
“ Cain: and ſo upon Iſhmael — *Caſt out the*
“ *bond woman and her ſon*: — Now if it be a
“ *great judgment* to be caſt out, ſurely it is a *great*
“ *privilege* to be taken into their parent’s cove-
“ nant. — It is promiſed as a ſpecial *bleſſing* for
“ the viſible church of God to continue in any
“ man’s poſterity. So it was in Seth, Gen. iv.
“ 25. in Shem, Gen. ix. 27. In the family of
“ Aaron, and afterwards of Phineas, and David.
“ — And it is looked upon as a great *judgment*
“ for a family and a poſterity to be diſinherited:
“ as in Eſau, Saul, and Cham. — It is the
“ greateſt wrath that God doth pour out upon
“ men in this life, to caſt them out of external
“ church privileges. The Apoſtle ſaith [of the
“ Jews] *Wrath is come upon them to the uttermoſt*:
“ therefore if the wrath be ſo great in a caſting
“ out, ſurely there is a great deal of mercy
“ ſhewed in the taking in. — The Apoſtle ſpeaks
“ even of an intereſt in the external privileges
“ of the covenant as a very great matter, Rom.
“ iii. 1, 2. — To be caſt out from being a viſible
“ member is the greateſt judgment that can be-
“ fal

“ fal a perfon or people in this life. 1 Cor.

“ v. 5. — Hof. 1. 1—9. There is a pedigree

“ of judgments fet down, but yet the higheft

“ is *Lo-ammi* ¶.”

§ 29. (3.) WE come next to confider the language of prophecy refpecting gospel times. On which obferve in general,

1. THAT the *evidence* of prophecy, in its own nature, is direct and pertinent ; and when its meaning is afcertained, its verdict (*cæteris paribus*) is indisputable.

2. THERE are fome *subjects* of prophecy which, in their own nature, are more plain, while others are intricate. It is often difficult to afcertain with exactnefs points of chronology, the duration of empires, the identity of fovereigns, and the like ; but the nature of the cafe is fuch, that — while we are investigating this queftion, Whether the offspring of parent fubjects of the gospel difpenfation are or are not to be confidered as parts of their parents, to fhare with them in all the church privileges of which they are capable — we may with comparative eafe learn the infpired meaning. Befides,

3. WHATEVER affirmative pofitive evidence our fubject derives from prophetic language is *ex abundanti* ; for fince infants did actually make a part of God’s church at the time of delivering thefe prophecies, and ever had been held in that relation from the beginning of the world, it is evident that we ought to be influenced by nothing fhort

short of a decisive contravention from the Supreme Head of the church, to alter our conduct towards our offspring: and whatever the spirit of prophecy pronounces in their favour, is the addition of light to light.

4. AND, relative to the *national* aspect of prophecies, tho' addressed to *individuals*, Bp. NEWTON, (when speaking of the curse of Canaan, the blessing of Shem, and the enlargement of Japhet) says: "It is thinking meanly of the ancient prophecies of scripture, and having very imperfect, very unworthy conceptions of them, to limit their intention to particular persons. In this view the ancient prophets would be really what the Deists think them, little better than common fortune-tellers; and their prophecies would hardly be worth remembering, or recording, especially in so concise and compendious a history as that of Moses. We must affix a larger meaning to them, and understand them not of single persons, but of *whole nations*; and thereby a nobler scene of things, and a more extensive prospect will be opened to us of the divine dispensations||."

§ 30. IF any prophecies represent decidedly christian conversions in a *national* view, I think it must be allowed, that the *infant* part, on a fair construction, must be included in such an idea. Out of many passages that might be adduced to this purpose, I shall insist but on the few following.

GENESIS

GENESIS xii. 3. *In thee shall ALL FAMILIES OF THE EARTH be blessed.* And chap. xxvi. 4. *In thy seed shall ALL THE NATIONS OF THE EARTH be blessed.* These passages are not only precious *promises*, but also important *prophecies*; the former delivered to Abraham, the latter, being a repetition and confirmation of it, to Isaac. And the same was expressly made to Jacob afterwards (chap. xxviii. 14.) It is evident, the terms *families* and *nations* are here used synonymously; nor does there appear any necessity, or sufficient ground, for understanding them otherwise than *indefinite*, comprehending the *general body*, great and small, of people inhabiting certain territories and provinces. Whether our Lord intended such *national conversions* in his commission to—*disciple all NATIONS*, Matt. xxviii. 19. shall be further considered.—Again, when Isaac unwittingly blessed his son Jacob he said, chap. xxvii. 29. *Let PEOPLE serve thee and NATIONS bow down to thee, &c.* “When the gentiles were converted “to christianity, the prophecy was fulfilled literally, and will more amply be fulfilled, when “*the fulness of the gentiles shall come in, and all “Israel shall be saved*†.”

PSALM lxxii. 11. *Yea all kings shall fall down before him [the Messiah]; all NATIONS shall serve him.* ver. 17. ult. *all NATIONS shall call him blessed.* I believe it is generally agreed, that divers passages in this Psalm are quite inapplicable to Solomon, tho’ entitled, “*A Psalm for Solomon,*” and

† NEWTON’S Dissert. *ut supra*, p. 83.

and equally so to any other King but the *Messiah*. It should therefore be considered as referring to Solomon but imperfectly, while it has its clear and full accomplishment in Christ and the gospel dispensation. And from these passages of this prophetick sublime Psalm it appears,

1. THAT the Messiah's kingdom, in its *external* aspect, should have kings and their subjects, or *whole nations*, as such, included in it.

2. THAT in some future period this should be *universally* the desirable case. *All* kings shall submit and worship; *all* nations shall become his subjects, to serve him and call him blessed. To the like purpose is Ps. lxxxii. 8. *ult.*

ISAIAH xix. 23—25. *In that day, shall there be a high-way, &c.* On which passage Bp. NEWTON thus remarks: "By the means of the Jews and proselytes dwelling in Egypt and Syria, Israel, Egypt and Syria were in some measure united in the same worship. But this was *more fully* accomplished, when these countries became christian, and so were made members of the same body in Christ Jesus. And we piously hope and believe, that it will receive its most perfect completion in the latter days, when *Mohammedism* shall be rooted out, and *Christianity* shall again flourish in these countries, when *the fulness of the gentiles shall come in, and all Israel shall be saved*§." On the whole it appears, That *Egypt* and *Affyria*, whether they stand for the converted Gentile nations indefinitely, or those countries literally, should be on the *same footing* with Israel in this particular, viz. Their conversion would
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be *national*, and *not* confined to adults *only*. On Antipædobaptist principles, none should be deemed subjects of the gospel kingdom externally, but those adults who make a credible profession; but how well this agrees with the prophetick representations of *national* conversions, let the impartial judge.

VERY remarkable to the same purpose is another text in the same prophet, chap. lii. 15. *ſhall HE SPRINKLE MANY NATIONS*. On which observe,

1. THAT the term HE refers to Christ, is very evident from the context; and many of the Jewish doctors, as well as the Chaldee paraphrast, apply it directly to the Messiah; and so striking is the reference to *Christ*, that it is said, “divers Jews have been convinced and converted to the Christian faith, by the evidence of this prophecy.”

2. IT is as clear, that the ACTION here ascribed to him relates to the *New Testament* Dispensation.

3. THE obvious and natural acceptation of the term SPRINKLE, in this connection, is that of *purifying*; and it undoubtedly *alludes* to those Jewish ceremonial purifications which were performed by sprinkling persons and things.

4. THO’ these ceremonial sprinklings under the law represented and typified the atoning blood of Christ, and the cleansing efficacy of his grace, yet it would be forced and unnatural to ascribe this internal, spiritual, and saving influence, to MANY NATIONS. Therefore,

5. THE prediction properly and directly intends that *external holiness* whereby *Christian nations* are
pro-

professionally *distinguished* from others. And how great the privilege, how signal the honour, conferred on such nations! They are *set apart* by a gracious distinguishing Providence, and by the proselyting ordinance, to be to the Lord *a people*, while he exhibits himself to be to them *a God*! Blessed is the people that is in such a case, yea blessed is the *nation* that has *the LORD* for its God! But

6. MUST we *exclude* infants from being parts of these *nations*, and from the privileges of their parents? The law of nature, that is, the *law of God*, and the analogy of all divine dispensations that were ever made known to man, forbid the contracted thought, while unsupported by any so much as pretended divine warrant.

7. IT appears from the New Testament records that the appointed ordinance of initiation into this state of relative holiness, individually and *explicitly*, is, the Christian purification — BAPTISM. Consequently,

8. FROM the premises it unavoidably follows — That the spirit of prophecy, in this passage, affords a venerable and sacred sanction to Pædo-baptist principles.

WHETHER the interpretation now given, or Dr. S's, who says of this text, "The plain meaning is, that his doctrine should descend like rain upon many nations and people†," be most agreeable to truth, let the impartial reader judge.

§ 31. THIS *national* (and consequently *Pædo-*
N *baptist*)

† Remarks on the *Christian Minister's Reasons*, &c p. 3.

baptist) view of the gospel dispensation, is implied in many more prophetick passages, Isa. lv. 5. *Behold thou shalt call a NATION that thou knowest not, and NATIONS that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God, &c.* Jer. iv. 2. ult. *The NATIONS shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory.* Dan. vii. 14. *And there was given him dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all PEOPLE, NATIONS, and languages should serve him.* Ver. 27: ult. *And all DOMINIONS shall serve him.* Mic. iv. 2. *And MANY NATIONS shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, &c.* Zech. ii. 11. *And MANY NATIONS shall be JOINED TO THE LORD in that day, and shall be MY PEOPLE.* To which we may add, Matt. xxi. 43. *Therefore say I unto you, THE KINGDOM OF GOD shall be taken from you, and GIVEN TO A NATION bringing forth the fruits thereof.* Rev. xi. 15. ult. **THE KINGDOMS OF THIS WORLD ARE BECOME THE KINGDOMS OF OUR LORD AND OF HIS CHRIST.** Here I observe,

I. THAT the phrase, “the kingdoms of this world,” in the last text, must be understood in its plain literal import, from the obvious opposition intended between it and the other, “the kingdoms of our Lord;” and for a like reason, the *latter* must intend KINGDOMS PROFESSEDLY CHRISTIAN. For the words are a prophetick representation of what *should* take place in some future period of the Christian church. Now in what sense can the KINGDOMS OF THE WORLD

BECOME

BECOME the kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Christ, if not in that we contend for? They were *his* in every other sense *prior* to the date of this prophecy. They were *always* the Lord's as the God of *providence*. By HIM kings have ever reigned, and princes decreed justice. Nor was there ever a time when the whole earth was not HIS, and the fulness thereof, with all its nations; and kingdoms; to enlarge or contract them; to raise or to sink them; to cause and regulate their revolutions and successions in every age. It remains, therefore, that Christian kingdoms are the *Lord's* in a sense similar to that in which Israel was *his*; with this difference, that the yoke of Mosaic ceremonies should be removed, and a spiritual evangelical worship introduced.

2. OUR Lord (Matt. xxi. 43.) speaks of the kingdom of God being transferred from ONE *nation* to ANOTHER *nation*. Now what less can we infer hence, than—that the kingdom of God was not *abolished* but *transferred* from one people to another—and that the *national* aspect of the former (at least so far as to *include* the children with their parents) should be the subject matter of the transfer. If it be said that what was *taken away* from the one, and *given* to the other, did not imply, notwithstanding, the *church-membership* of infants: I reply, if the church-membership of infants, in the kingdom of God *to be* transferred, be an *essential* part of that kingdom, this essential part must be included in what *was given* to the other nation, or the gentile part

of the world. But the former is true, as might be easily shewn; and therefore so is the latter. And that by the *kingdom of God* we are not to understand merely the *preaching of the gospel*, is decisively clear hence, viz. That *this* was not what they once *possessed* and *gloried* in, but their *national adoption*, their church state and privileges; and therefore this latter (from the scope of the text) must be what was *taken away*, and not merely a preached gospel. It is true the rejection of the Messiah, as the most signal instance of unfruitfulness, was the *cause* of their vineyard being laid waste, their branches cut off, and their kingdom transferred; but the apostolick resolution—*lo! we turn to the gentiles*, was by no means the full accomplishment of the prediction. It intended, as what resulted from their rejecting the counsel of God against themselves, a *disinheriting* of the Jewish nation, which differs from their *not receiving the gospel*, as the effect differs from the cause. Besides, the phrase, “shall be given to another nation,” is to be considered as a *judgment* on those from whom it is taken; but this could not have been the case if it meant no more than—henceforth the gospel, which is preached to you, shall be preached to the gentiles *also*—for that could be no judgment to any, but a blessing to all. Nor is it true *in fact*, that the gospel was *taken from* the Jews otherwise than from any unbelieving gentiles. The commission was, *Go, preach the gospel to every creature*, BEGINNING AT JERUSALEM. And Peter assures his brethren, that

that the *gospel* promise, or the exhibition of mercy, is to *them and their children*, as well as to *those that were afar off*. Nor do we find any *repeal* of this grant, this *universal* aspect of the *gospel* promise, and therefore what was *taken from* them was their CHURCH STATE, whereby *wrath*—this predicted *wrath*—*came on them to the uttermost*. From this they were *broken off*, (and not from the *gospel* call) and to this the *gentiles* were *adopted*. The *fall* of the one, became the *riches* of the other. What the one *fell from*, the other was *promoted to*; and what can this be, but their *church state* as a body of people?

3. THAT remarkable text in *Zechariah* (chap. ii. 11.) speaks of *many nations* that should, under the *gospel* dispensation, be *joined to the Lord*, and accounted *his people*. On Antipædobaptist principles, which deny the church-membership of infants and the validity of their baptism, this prophecy neither has been, nor is ever likely to be, fulfilled in whole or in part. Nay, according to them, it is absolutely *incapable* of being fulfilled. For infants and children ever have made, and ever will make, a very considerable part of a *nation*. But if none, on our opponents' hypothesis, are to be deemed as *joined to the Lord*, but such as make a profession of faith and repentance, not only all infants and young children are struck off from visible church-membership, but, for aught we have yet seen, the *bulk* of a nation, or the *far greater* part. Nor will it avail them to say, that this prediction refers to the latter day

glory; for be the day ever so glorious, and the success of the gospel ever so great; let it be that all the adults in a nation shall be born to God in one day, still the *younger part* of the nation, which is very considerable in number, must not be joined to the Lord; and therefore, if our opponents be right, no NATION, properly speaking, is *capable* of being *joined to the Lord*, and of being *his people*, in any period of the gospel church however glorious.

§ 32. To this view of *national conversions* it may perhaps be objected, “That the term *nation* in the above places is taken *improperly* and *figuratively*, not for the *whole* of a people small and great, but for a considerable *part*, i. e. for those in a nation that would make a profession of their faith and repentance. As in Isa. xvii. 12, 13, &c. I answer,

1. IN all equity the term should be taken according to the nature of the subject; which has no reference to the incursion of *armies*, but the accession of *profelytes*; which latter ever included the children with their parents.

2. IN the passages first produced (§ 30.) the words *nations* and *families* are used synonymously; which latter cannot be understood in that connection to the *exclusion* of children. Therefore, to *limit* the term *nation*, to signify those in a nation who profess faith and repentance, is taking an unwarrantable liberty; a liberty for which no tolerable reason, I think, can be assigned.

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As to the objection, "That religion is a *personal* thing"; either it has no force at all against Pædobaptist principles, or it must condemn all preceding dispensations. But loth to impeach infinite wisdom for giving sanction to infant church-membership in every age of the world, we conclude, that whatever truth is contained in the proposition—"religion is a personal thing"—stands in perfect consistency with our principles.—But if by religion's being a *personal* thing, be implied—that a person's *own consent* is necessary to make him the subject of religious obligations; I dare affirm that the proposition in that sense is of most pernicious tendency. Not less so, than the modern notion of the—"innocence of mental errors!"

Will it be objected, "That God requires to be worshipped *now* in spirit and in truth?" And pray, *when* was it that he did *not* require to be so worshipped? Was Abraham's worship, for instance, of a *carnal* complexion? Was his family religion *less spiritual* than that of those who reject infants, as far as in them lies, from the bosom of the christian church? We cannot help thinking, that those objections which are urged against the church-membership and baptism of infants, drawn from the great *spirituality* of the gospel dispensation, favours not a little of the *Socinian* leaven †, which degrades the Old Testament as much as possible, to keep its votaries in countenance when explaining the New. On the con-

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|| Dr. STENNETT's Answer to Dr. A. p.

† Vid. MARKII Medul. Cap. xii, § 4, 8, 12, 15, &c.

trary, we think it reasonable to conclude, that the more spiritual and excellent the dispensation is, the *stronger* the argument in favour of Pædobaptist principles and practice.

OR will any say, "Supposing *all former* dispensations admitted infants to a participation of the same religious rites with their parents, it does not follow that they *now* must." We say it *does* follow, by the most just and certain consequence, if we have no scriptural affirmative evidence to the contrary. For whatever source it proceeds from, it is a privilege in itself. Whether this *universal fact* of infant children having been included with their parents in church privileges, arises from its natural reasonableness, and the apparent incongruity, unreasonableness and unnatural severity of the contrary; in other words, from the original *constitution of human nature*, whereby its divine Author has not only characterized it as *social* and communicative of benefits, but also formed the strongest *connection* between the parents and their offspring, as to all the benefits and privileges of the former: Whether the fact arises from this, I say, or from a *covenant grant*,—it should not be renounced but by the highest authority. And this authority must be, if at all existing, either an explicit repeal, or an implicit and virtual abrogation. We maintain that *neither* exists; and therefore we cannot renounce the church-membership and baptism of our infant children, without denying these things to be a *privilege*, that is to say, without DENYING a plain FACT.

§ 33. BUT

§ 33. BUT an objection still more formidable yet remains, viz. "If the above prophecies refer to *national conversions*, does not that lead to *national churches*? And what then becomes of the dissenting and congregational plan?" I reply,

THAT a national establishment, if WELL ORDERED, appears more agreeable to the prophetick passages we have been considering than the Antipædobaptist plan; nay more agreeable to the general tenor of revelation. I say, "well ordered;" for, in the present case, the question is not how they *are*, but how they *may be* established. Nor does there appear any irreconcilable difference between a national establishment and congregational discipline.

It is necessary that infants make a part of nations, but it does not at all follow, that the civil magistrate should — be the visible *head* of the church — prescribe to all the nation, to the greatest nicety, the terms of christian communion — publish acts which impose *uniformity*, rigid uniformity, in religious matters, under heavy penalties — require obedience in things which no one pretends to be vindicable on scriptural or rational grounds — and especially should require of ministers the subscribing of *plain contradictions*.

ON the whole it appears, that the language of prophecy, respecting *nations* becoming visibly *christian*, is quite inimical to the Antipædobaptist hypothesis. — We now proceed to investigate a few prophetick testimonies of another kind.

§ 34. OUT of many that might be urged in favour of infants, let the following be considered. Psalm cii. 28. *The CHILDREN of thy SERVANTS shall continue, and THEIR SEED shall be established before thee.* On which I observe,

1. THAT these words most undoubtedly belong to the Christian dispensation, as appears from St. Paul's quotation (Heb. i. 11, 12.) of the foregoing verses; for *those* he expressly applies to Christ, and *this* stands in strict connection with them. It therefore follows, that these *servants* are the servants of Christ, and who can these be, but either his *real* or *professing* people? And whether the one or the other be intended, it follows,

2. THAT their *children* shall *continue*. But in what respect shall the children of christians CONTINUE? Does it refer to the *continuation* of the *human race* thro' their instrumentality? Is *this* the full import of the sacred text, that christians should not be surpassed by *infidels*, but should be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, *as well as they*? We cannot suppose that so low and jejune a meaning is worthy of the pen of inspiration. It therefore remains, that the prophetick promise refers to the religious privileges of the children of christians, and imports — that they should *continue* (*fisheonu*) dwell, abide, or tarry in the visible church of God, as they were wont to do, along with their parents in every other œconomy of grace that ever was. To this is added,

3. THAT *their seed* shall be *established*. It is hardly

hardly necessary to observe here, that by *seed* is meant *offspring* as such, without excluding the youngest infant. And whether the pronoun *their*, relates to the antecedents *servants* or *children*, is immaterial, (tho' the connection seems to refer it to the latter,) it still follows that the offspring — yes, the *infant* offspring — of christians are to be *established before* the Messiah. In what sense *established*? and how *before* the Lord Christ? It cannot mean that the seed of believers should be established in the *grace* of the covenant. We conclude then that the purport of the words is, —that the offspring of christians were intended by the spirit of prophecy to be *established*, confirmed, unmoved from and settled in their former standing *before the Lord* in his church.

SHOULD any contend for this general meaning, that the christian church should be a kingdom in perpetuity, to continue for ever as what cannot be moved, it will not alter the case; for the words clearly point out the *manner* and *means* whereby this is effected, viz. by the children of professors, and their seed being continued and established in the church.

§ 35. THE next passage I shall advert to is Isaiah lxxv. 23. *They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble: for they are THE SEED of the blessed of the Lord, and THEIR OFFSPRING WITH THEM.* Hence observe,

I. THAT the prediction refers evidently to *gospel* times, and the accomplishment must be sought among *Christians*. For tho' it were maintained, that the spirit of prophecy here eyed the

Jews in their glorious restoration to church privileges after the fulness of the Gentiles was brought in, *that* can make no manner of difference; for the Jews when *called* will be CHRISTIANS as well as the called Gentiles. The *middle wall of partition*, which caused the celebrated distribution of the human race into Jews and Gentiles, has been taken down. And it is obvious that what the Gentiles now *do enjoy* by right of evangelical privileges, is the *very same* as what the Jews *would have enjoyed*, if wrath had not come upon them to the uttermost, to their un-churching and dispersion. The removal of the separating wall evidently implies an intended incorporation, and a community of privileges. And it is equally plain, that what they *would have enjoyed* if they had then received the Messiah, was the same as what they *shall enjoy* on their future reception of him. Therefore, whether the converted Gentiles or Jews be intended in the words, they are CHRISTIANS, or subjects of the *last* and unalterable œconomy of mercy.

2. WHATEVER honours and privileges belong to THE SEED *of the blessed of the Lord* (and whoever be intended thereby) their OFFSPRING are pronounced *blessed* WITH THEM, co-participants of the same benefits. But all religious benefits being either *internal* and real, or *external* and relative; and the *former* blessings do not devolve on the children, as *their* children, (which needs not to be formally proved to Antipœdobaptists;) it follows—that these privileges, of
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which the *offspring* of christians are co-participants *with their parents*, are the external and œconomical benefits of the christian church. And if *baptism* be a *benefit*, as it demonstrably is to all capable subjects, and it is equally demonstrable that infants are such, it irrefragably follows that, according to the language and design of prophecy, the infant children of christians are entitled to baptism with their parents. On the whole, the *connexion* between parents and children, relative to church privileges and sacred ordinances, so reasonable and conformable to the law of nature in itself, and so countenanced by the sanction of Heaven, is here ratified and confirmed.

§ 36. (4.) THAT it is the WILL OF CHRIST we should introduce our infant children into the christian church, by the initiatory ordinance of baptism, will further appear from the corroborating evidence afforded in the NEW TESTAMENT.

BUT, previous to our investigation of particular passages, it is necessary to repeat a remark before made—that the TRANSITION from one dispensation to another, is *of itself* no adequate reason for abrogating any benefit or custom appertaining to the former, which would be really a benefit under the latter. Hence we find, (conformably to that wise and benevolent apophthegm, Mark ii. 21, 22.) that the change from the Jewish to the Christian œconomy, was *gradual* and most tender. Nothing was altered without a manifest necessity, and that always for the *better*. Our Lord and his apostles, being native Jews, not only were ob-

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servant of the *religious* worship and ceremonies of the Jewish church, but also complied with their innocent *civil customs*. It is beyond all reasonable doubt, that *baptism*, as a purifying rite, and the holy *supper*, as a solemn Jewish festival, were in use before their appointment as standing ordinances in the church*. The Apostle Paul assures us (Heb. ix. 10.) there were *before* Christ *divers baptisms*. Therefore the baptism of the New Testament has nothing new but its appointment to the *particular purpose* of proselyting into the Messiah's visible and universal church. And this is perfectly conformable to the divine proceedings in former periods; as might be instanced in the appointment of the *rainbow* as a token and seal of the covenant, the Mosaic institution of *sacrifices*, &c.

THESE things duly considered, it must be a weak prejudice, a false notion taken upon trust, unsupported by one solid principle, That there is any thing in the *mere change* of a dispensation, which implies an abolition of former *privileges*, and a promiscuous annihilation of *every part* of church relations and connections. The *substance* of true religion is the same in all periods; and to suppose otherwise, would be as ridiculous as to suppose that whenever a man changes his *clothes*, his *body too* is metamorphosed! The spiritual and moral parts of religion are the same now as ever; and tho' the gospel presents to us new *objects*,
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* See, among others, the following authors on this head: WILTIUS's Oecon. B. iv. chap. xvi. § 2. also § 3—10. GODWYN's Moses and Aaron, Lib. iii. chap. ii. HAMMOND's Letter, Q. iv. § 5. GROTIUS in Matth. iii. 6. xxvi. 26—30, xxviii. 18.

or rather the same objects in a clearer light, yet the *principles* of true piety, *faith*, *love*, &c. continue invariably the same in every age. Again : duties of *natural obligation* are no more superseded by any change of dispensation in the church, than the principles of common sense are superseded by true philosophy. Whatever, therefore, appears of natural obligation, and meets with no revealed *positive* interruption, flows on uniformly and quite unaffected by a mere change of œconomy.

OF this *invariable* nature, we insist, is the obligation of parents to *benefit* their children by introducing them to a participation of their *own* privileges, even *all* those of which they are suitable subjects, be these privileges what they may: for, properly speaking, their *nature* does not constitute the *criterion* whereby we judge of the obligation, but the *capacity* and *suitableness* of the subject. It has been, I think, demonstrated, that baptism is an ordinance of which infants are not less capable than their parents, that they possess all necessary suitableness and qualifications to answer its nature and design; and therefore that the obligation of parents to baptize them is absolute and strong. This being the case, nothing short of a divine *express warrant* should influence any christian parent to the contrary. But scripture is so far from affording any such evidence, that it abounds with corroborating proofs to the contrary. We have appealed to every successive dispensation of revealed religion, we have appealed to the language of prophecy relative to gospel times, whereby the original thesis acquired additional confirmation;

firmation; and now we chearfully appeal to the New Testament records.

§ 37. JOHN the Baptist, or the Baptizer, makes his appearance as a Jew among the Jews; in spirit, aspect and manners, another Elijah. But *whom* does he baptize? *Who* were the subjects of his extraordinary *purification*? “Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan.” Matt. iii 5—7. “All the people that heard him, except the Pharisees and Lawyers.” Luke vii. 29, 30.—The whole account of the subjects of his baptism is but short and general, as may be seen at one view, Chap. ii. § 2, &c. On which I remark,

TOWARDS an accurate and judicious interpretation of this concise account, in reference to the *particulars* of our present inquiry, it is necessary to keep a steady eye upon the proper and allowable *data* for that purpose. The Antipædobaptists lay *this* down as a general rule—“If the scripture be *silent* about infants as the subject of baptism, or even not *decisively express* in their favour, we are to take it for *granted*, that they were *not* baptized.” To face this cannon, however formidable, we venture to plant another—“If the scripture be silent about infants as the subjects of baptism, or even not decisively express *against* them, we are to take it for *granted*, that they WERE baptized with their parents.” The general reason of this rule has been already produced repeatedly; but with regard to its propriety and just application

tion in the case before us, let the following things be observed :

1. IF John's baptism was *beneficial* to the parents, as a *divine institution*, and their children were equally *capable* of being the subjects of it with themselves, (which our opponents in fact allow, by promising to accede to our practice on the evidence of a clear precept or example, which they could not promise to do on supposition of absolute incapability); there appears some reason and propriety *for* Pædobaptism, and nothing against it.

2. IF we consider the constitution, the genius, the state and circumstances of that church of which John lived and died a member, and the persons who were the subjects of his baptism, we may safely conclude—that infants *were* partakers of the cleansing rite with their parents.

JOHN was a *Jew*, and so were those, *all* those, he baptized; nor did they cease to be members of the Jewish church on account of his baptism. Their minds were indeed raised and directed to Christ, as one who would baptize them with the Holy Ghost; but *that* did not change their church relation, any more than the believing lively views and longing expectations of the patriarchs, prophets and other saints, in reference to the future kingdom of the Messiah, did change *their* church state.

Now what was the *nature* of that *rite* of which John was the appointed administrator? I answer, It was a Jewish cleansing, or ceremonial purification. In proof of which assertion, (omitting numerous respectable authorities that might be produced

produced, sufficient at least to exculpate from the charge of novelty) let this consideration be duly attended to—That, independent on the testimonies of the Jewish doctors concerning proselyte baptism, since we are certified by the pen of inspiration, (Heb. ix. 10.) there were *divers* BAPTISMS in use among the Jews, we *ought not* to consider John's baptizations as any other than these Jewish purifications and cleansings, any further than we are *necessitated* to do so from the New Testament records. It is therefore incumbent on those who hold that this rite was of a *different* nature, to shew clearly wherein the *difference* consisted, or else be content with the censure due to those who adopt an hypothesis without proof. Convinced, however, that these divine records favour no such discrimination as the abettors of that hypothesis contend for, we conclude that John's baptism was one of the *divers* BAPTISMS, before mentioned*.

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* I am not a little surpris'd at Dr. GILL's remarks on John's baptism (Body of Div. Vol. iii. B. iii. Ch. i.) where he attempts to prove that water-baptism is *peculiar* to the gospel dispensation. "This is oppos'd," says he, "to the sentiments of such " who say baptism was in use before the times of *John*, of *Christ* " and his apostles.—There were indeed *divers* washings, bathings, " or BAPTISMS, under the legal dispensation, for the purification " of persons and things unclean, by the ceremonial law; which " had a doctrine in them, called the *doctrine of baptisms*, which " taught the cleansing of sin by *the blood of Christ*; but there was " nothing similar in them to the ordinance of water-baptism, BUT " IMMERSION ONLY!" How the Dr. takes for granted, without proof or apology, that the passage referred to (Heb. ix. 10.) signifies *divers* IMMERSIONS! a passage his opponents have always pleaded as decisive *against* him! *Nothing similar to water-BAPTISM but IMMERSION.* That is, on his principle, which maintains that

Βαπτισμος

It is plain the exprefs *design* of it was to *prepare the way* of the Lord. For, as Moses was commissioned to SANCTIFY the people, i. e. to prepare them by a ceremonial purification in expectation of an approaching new œconomy (Ex. xix. 10, 14.); in like manner, John was sent to the same honoured family, the house of Israel, not only to proclaim to them that *the kingdom of heaven*, that is, a new and more excellent œconomy, was at hand, but also to second the important message by a general purification||.

BUT, the question now returns, what was the constitution of the Jewish church as to *infants*? The reply need be but short to so plain a case: Infants shared in the *same rites* with their parents, even all those of which they were capable subjects, were not particularly distinguished and excepted. Not more sure is it, that children oft, particularly *infant* children, were unavoidably subjected to ceremonial *pollutions* with their parents than they were entitled to the *same cleansings*. Therefore, whatever was the nature of John's cleansing rite; we may securely infer — parents and children partook of it in common.

3. WHEN.

Βαπτισμος is *immersion* — there was nothing in those *divers immersions*, similar to the ordinance of *water-immersion*, but *immersion* only!! To such ridiculous inconsistencies is that hypothesis reducible which makes the biblical use of the words baptism and immersion convertible and synonymous! He proceeds: "John was the *first* administrator of the ordinance of baptism." — This is flatly contradictory to the Dr's. concession immediately foregoing — "that there were *divers baptisms* under the legal dispensation," and consequently *baptizers*.

|| Vid. GROTIUS in Matth. iii. 6.

3. WHEN we consider, in connection with these things, the general and *universal terms* made use of in the narration, we are rather confirmed than otherwise in favour of Pœdobaptism, as practised by the venerable son of Zacharias. When we read of, *all the people—the multitude—all that heard him*, and the like, in reference to an ordinance in which infants and young children were capable of sharing as well as adults; by what equitable rule, I would fain know, are we authorized to set up an excluding barrier? If because *infants* and children are not *mentioned* particularly, by the same rule we must exclude *women* from the privilege of John's baptism. But if the *silence* of the inspired narrative is no sufficient reason for excluding the *latter*, neither is it for excluding the *former*. The very use of *general terms* is sufficient evidence (*cæt. par.*) for including all the species to which they are applicable.

§ 38. BUT here I am aware of an objection that may be thought unanswerable against the above reasoning, viz. "That those who were baptized by John *confessed their sins*, which infants could not do." To this irrefragable argument, falsely so called, we shall oppose the following answers.

1. IN all equitable and fair construction, nothing more can be inferred from such passages as speak of "Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, being baptized of John in Jordan, *confessing their sins*," (Matt. iii. 5, 6.) than that *such* of them as were *actual* sinners made a *general* confession of their sins and iniquities; where-

as, to serve the antipædobaptist cause, the narration should support a proof widely different, viz. That John baptized *no others* but those who made a *personal* confession of their sins. But this, which alone would be available to our opponents, the history of John's baptism I believe will *not* support.

WHAT better clue can we fix upon towards investigating this point, than those scripture passages which treat of national and general *confessions of sin*? Thus, for instance, the Lord himself says with respect to Israel, Lev. xxvi. 40—42. *If they shall CONFESS THEIR INIQUITY, and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespasss which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked against me—if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity; then will I remember my covenant—and I will remember the land.* Thus also Solomon, in his excellent prayer, on that memorable and eminently solemn occasion of introducing the ark of God into the new erected temple, 1 Kings, viii. 47—53. *If they shall bethink themselves—and REPENT, and make supplication unto thee—saying, WE HAVE SINNED, AND HAVE DONE PERVERSELY, WE HAVE COMMITTED WICKEDNESS; and so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul—then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling place, and maintain their cause—and give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them; for they be thy people and thine inheritance, &c.* In like manner, on another solemn

lemn occasion, when a national reformation was attempted, and a general fast observed, it is said, Neh. ix. 2. *The seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and CONFESSED THEIR SINS, and the iniquities of their fathers.*

FROM these and similar passages we may observe, (1) That the PEOPLE IN GENERAL, or as a body, are said to *confess their iniquity, to repent, and to say, We have sinned, &c.* (2) That notwithstanding, *infants were not capable* of these acts. But, (3) Nevertheless, there was no privilege, national or ecclesiastical, which an infant was capable of enjoying, but was participated by the child as well as the parent, as connected with, or consequent upon, such as repentance and confession of sin. And (4) We may note the *general form* of confession,—“We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness.”—How parallel this account is with the repentance and confession of, “Jerusalem and all Judea,” let the impartial reader judge. Let him reflect, particularly, that repentance and confession of sin were the prescribed *conditions* in both cases, and the *benefits* suspended on these conditions were, in the one case, God’s remembering his covenant, and the land—maintaining their cause, and giving them compassion before their enemies;—and, in the other, the *blessing* (not the *duty*) of the ecclesiastical purifying rite, and whatever external privileges were connected with it.

AGAIN: it is not supposeable that “Jerusalem
and

and all Judea," were *deemed* by John *true penitents*; and the sequel of the history shews abundantly they were not *in fact*. *All*, who did not *reject the counsel of God against themselves*, (Mark i. 5. Luke vii. 30.) were baptized of him; *ALL* the people but the *Pharisees* and *lawyers*. Therefore, seeing the repentance, humiliation and confession were of the *general nature* above described, there is no sufficient reason assignable why the infants and children *should* not, or *did* not, share with their parents in the baptismal *benefit*, as the consequence of those conditions.—It would be easy to make the same remarks on the humiliation of the Ninevites; when Jonah cried in the city, as John did in the wilderness, that destruction and wrath awaited the impenitent, the effect was pretty much alike; a *general humiliation* ensued, and we are sure that in the *one* instance, *infants* shared in the parent's consequent privilege; therefore, since that participation was not founded on a *positive grant* but the *law of nature*, we are constrained to conclude—that the parent's privilege, in the *other* instance, extended to his infants, and dependent family, in virtue of the same uniform law. Besides,

2. WHEN we consider how little notice is taken of children in the subsequent history of the christian church, particularly that part of it which treats of the progress and success of the gospel, and the evangelizing of nations, as well as in the sacred records of the Old Testament; where yet
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from circumstances we may gather with certainty the avowed church-membership and baptism of infants; it is very conceiveable how the New Testament should leave this point as we find it. The same remark is applicable to most reformation in the church, and revolutions in civil society, while the membership and privileges of infants in these cases stand confessed in the estimation of their respective historians.

CONSIDERING, therefore, these things—that the ordinance *in itself* does not exclude infant subjects, but admits them not less than adults, as before proved;—that the constitution, genius, and uniform custom of the Jewish church (of which John and his disciples were members) included infants with their parents;—that there appears in the brief account of John's ministry nothing *against* infants, but the *general* terms used are rather *in favour* of them;—and that nothing can be gathered, in fairness and equity, of objectionable weight, from the account of the people *confessing their sins* as a conditional qualification for enjoying the baptismal privilege; for, on supposition that infants *were baptized*, no *other* language could be reasonably expected, as further appears from the Old Testament and the most approved ecclesiastical and civil records—we conclude, That John was a POEDOBAPTIST *de jure*, THEREFORE, (*cæt. par.*) that we ought to regard him such *de facto*.

§ 39. WE next appeal to Christ's public ministry. Our Lord and his servants, we are expressly told,

told, made and baptized *more* disciples than John, tho' the latter baptized so great a number. How numerous then must they be! But were they *all* considered as *true believers*, or *real converts*, that is, justified and sanctified persons? Did our Lord, by his ministers, baptize the innumerable multitudes on *that supposition*? Nothing less. All that can in reason be thought of them is, that they made a general surrender of themselves as families and assembled crowds, after the manner of John's followers; and indeed, their so general defection from Christ on occasion of his searching discourses, and his approaching death, renders the fact indubitable.

WE may here again observe, that *the same reason* remains in force, in behalf of the privileges of children, in this period as before; as there is no ground of *repeal*, we think, either expressed or implied. But tho' we have nothing *against* them, we have something *in favour* of them. What I shall insist upon from this part of scripture evidence, shall be confined to two things—our Lord's confirming and decisive *sentence* concerning the *church privileges* of infants—and the same thing *implied* in what he says of certain towns and cities as a general body, thro' the whole course of his ministry.

LET us begin with that passage Mat. xix. 13—15. recorded also, with some variation, Mark x. 13—16. and Luke xviii. 15—17. Instead of transcribing these passages at length severally, as every reader may easily consult them, I shall give

them in one connected view from the *harmony* of the ingenious and candid Dr. DODDRIDGE. “ And they brought infants and young children “ to him, that he should touch them, or put “ his hands on them, and pray; and when his “ disciples saw it, they rebuked those that brought “ them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much “ displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little “ children to come unto me, and forbid them “ not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily “ I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the “ kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in “ no wise enter therein. And he called them “ unto him, and took them up in his arms, “ and put his hands upon them, and blessed “ them; and departed thence †.”—Jesus was now, it seems, at *Bethabara*, which was beyond *Jordan*, over against *Jericho*, where he tarried with his disciples some months. Hither great multitudes resorted to him to receive his instructions, spiritual blessings, and miraculous cures. During his abode at *Bethabara*, previous to his going to *Bethany*, these things are recorded particularly,—the doctrine of divorce and matrimony, in answer to the tempting Pharisees—his doctrine concerning infants and children, occasioned by the importunity of their friends and the *harsh imprudence*, or the *inconsiderate officiousness* of the disciples—the danger of riches, occasioned by the question of the young ruler—bigotry and a party spirit, a very [prevailing sin of the Jewish nation,

† Fam. Expof. vol. ii. Sect. 136.

nation, reproved in the parable of the labourers. — This, I believe, is all we have recorded belonging to this period, tho' of several months continuance.

Now, let us attend to the circumstances and import of that passage relating to infants and young children, as above. On which I would offer the following reflections; which shall relate to — the children's friends — the disciples — and our Lord's doctrine on the occasion.

§ 40. 1. THE most probable motives of the children's parents or friends seem to be, that the fame of Jesus being abroad about his condescension to children and his peculiar fondness for them, as is manifest from Mat. xviii. 2, &c. they were anxious of receiving some token of his condescending notice, and important benediction. In the instance just referred to, Jesus while at *Capernaum*, had called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of his disciples, taking him up in his arms and telling them — that they must become *like* little children — that kindness shewn to such, was like shewing it to *himself*. And, indeed, when we consider the propriety and amiableness of the thing itself, in connection with the character of Jesus, we should think too contractedly to imagine, that the few instances recorded by the Evangelists, were the *only* ones wherein he manifested a gracious regard for them. These considerations fully justified the *motives* of the persons in question, whether *they* or the *children* were baptized or

not, by John or any of Christ's disciples heretofore, and without supposing them to have any design of offering themselves or theirs to be baptized at this time; and indeed, this is the more improbable, in that, most likely, they had certain appointed opportunities for that purpose, whereas their express design, as here recorded, was to receive his *benediction*.

2. THE next inquiry is, What could induce the disciples to *rebuke* these persons? I readily agree with Dr. S. That it is not probable their conduct is chargeable with the guilt of DESPISING LITTLE CHILDREN *as such*, "having a far
" better opinion of those men of God, than
" to suppose them capable of an evil, which
" very few of the most profligate among man-
" kind are chargeable with;" but is rather imputable to "their *imprudence* and *inconsidera-*
" *tion*, than to any inhumanity or cruelty in
" their tempers*." In fact, it seems to me pretty evident, that what gave *offence* to the disciples was, what might appear to them an UNSEASONABLE *importunity*. Every one knows how much depends upon *well timing* an application to persons of much business of an important nature. This remark is sufficient to shew the inconclusiveness of Mr. B.'s reasoning on this point: "Is it not strange, unaccountably strange,
" that our Lord's most intimate friends should
" have been *offended* with the persons who brought
" those children, if it had then been customary
" to

* Answer to Dr. A. p. 58.

“to baptize infants †?” *Strange!* not at all; much less *unaccountably* strange. If there be any force in the reasoning it is this,—If our Lord’s attendants had been Pædobaptists, then no *ill-timed* application, no improper *manner* of applying, no *circumstance* whatever, could have been a cause of *offence* to them. I would exclaim in my turn, and with how much greater propriety let the reader judge, “Is it not strange, unaccountably strange,” that my respectable opponent should be so inattentive to logical conclusiveness, as to rest an argument on such a foundation! Suppose an opulent and generous person, distributing liberally to proper objects on convenient and seasonable opportunities, were addressed by the medium of servants or attendants *unseasonably*; and upon these giving the importunate solicitors of his charity a *short answer*, or perhaps a *reprimand*, it should be divulged—The public is mistaken in regard of the character of the person, as if generous and charitable, and particularly his attendants who are reported to be of the same disposition with himself; for else “is it not strange, unaccountably strange,” that the person’s most intimate friends should have been *offended* with those solicitors of their master’s bounty, and should even have *rebuked* them, if it had been *customary* for him to relieve the distressed? Any one acquainted with the world, and the nature of important business, might well say, Did you apply at a

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convenient

convenient time, and in a *prudent* manner? Equally futile is the inference, that Christ and his disciples were no Pædobaptists, else the latter could not have been *offended* with the persons who brought the children. — Besides; Mr. B. seems to forget or conceal the circumstance of our Lord's being *greatly displeased* with the disciples for their conduct; which he would not have been, without any *ground* of blame. And I believe with Dr. S. that his displeasure "was expressed with the greater warmth, in order the more deeply to impress the minds of spectators with the exceeding great tenderness he felt for little children. And I imagine it was chiefly with a view to mark this distinguishing feature of benevolence in our Lord's character, and to instruct us in the duty we owe to our children, that the evangelists have so particularly related this pleasing story†." While all attention, perhaps, to some heavenly doctrine, the disciples inadvertently thought he ought not to be interrupted by *children*, by *infants* (Βρεφον) who are incapable of attending to and comprehending the divine lecture*. But he soon convinces them of what they ought to have had always fresh in mind — "what exceeding great tenderness he felt for little children." But

3. WHAT

† p. 58.

* Apostoli rem minus dignam Christo putabant, contingendis pueris occupari. POLI Synops. in loc. "Si impositum ejus capiti fuisset diadema, libenter nec sine plausu exceperent: quia proprium ejus munus nondum tenebant," CALV., in Matt. xix. 14.

3. WHAT was our Lord's doctrine on the occasion? *Suffer the little children to come unto me, FOR of such is the kingdom of heaven.* "Hunc clypeum Anabaptistis non temere opponimus†." This I venture to call a *decisive sentence* in favour of the *continued privilege* of the church-membership of infants under the gospel dispensation, and consequently their title to baptism; the evidence of which let us now investigate.

§ 41. From the passage under consideration we may learn,

1. "THAT these little children, being stiled (τα βρεφη) *infants*, (Luke xviii. 15.) and taken up in Christ's arms, (Mark x. 16.) were children not yet come to the age of discretion: for βρεφη, according to EUSTATHIUS and PHAVORINUS, is το ἀπὸ γαστρὸς παῖδιον, καὶ τρεφόμενον ἀπο τῆθης — *a new born child, nourished from the teat* *."

2. WHATEVER may be included in this blessing, *of such is the kingdom of heaven*, we are not to suppose it *confined* to those children, much less to adults. "I cannot approve of rendering τοιῶν, *such as resemble these*. It is the part of a faithful translator, not to *limit* the sense of the *original*, nor to *fix* what it leaves ambiguous ||." And Mr. HENRY observes, that "the word *generally* signifies not *similitude*, but *identity*; nor can any one instance be found where it excludes

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" the

† CALVIN *in loc.*

* WHITBY *in loc.*

|| DONDR. Fam. Expos. vol. ii. Sect. 136.

“ the person or thing mentioned †.” “ Horum
 “ et similibus: puerorum ut ætate, ita et mori-
 “ bus: non excludit pueros, a quibus facit ini-
 “ tium, sed includit adultos eis similes; q. d.
 “ Pueri, a me jam benedicti, jam nunc idonei
 “ sunt regno cœlorum: vos adulti qui diu mea
 “ presentia & benedictione fruimini, nondum ido-
 “ nei estis, &, ut idonei fiatis, reddamini oportet
 “ illis similes quos contemnitis, a fastu alieni,
 “ &c. *” “ Hac voce tam parvulos quam eorum
 “ similes comprehendit. Insulse enim Anabaptistæ
 “ pueros excludunt, a quibus *initium* fieri debe-
 “ bat †.” And Dr. S. understands *Τοις ἁπασιν*, —
 “ *of such little children*, LITTLE CHILDREN IN
 “ GENERAL §;” which I am by no means in-
 clined to dispute.

YET afterwards he qualifies this universality
 thus: “ All little children WHO DIE IN THEIR
 “ INFANCY. And this,” says he, “ I take to
 “ be our Lord’s meaning, *Of such*, of little chil-
 “ dren PASSING OUT OF LIFE IN THEIR IN-
 “ FANCY, *is the kingdom of heaven*. And con-
 “ sidering what prodigious numbers, out of all
 “ kindreds, nations and tongues, are removed
 “ hence at that early period, heaven may very
 “ properly be said, a great part of it, to consist
 “ of them.” Yet our author adds, “ There is
 “ no way by which it can be credibly known,
 “ which

† Treatise on Baptism, p. 104.

* MALDONAT. ex ORIG. HIERON. AUGUST. &c. et LUC.
 BRUGEN. ap. POLI Synops. in loc.

† CALV. in loc. § Answer to Dr. A. p. 61.

“ which of them do possess such title to the kingdom of heaven, till they die ||.” Hence he concludes, that because we cannot certainly or credibly know which of them shall *die* in their infancy—we are to regard NONE of them, while they live, *as subjects of the kingdom of heaven*; except we rest our judgment “ upon a presumption of their dying.”

BUT what says Mr. B. on this head? “ That it is *lawful* for a parent, or a *minister*, to GIVE UP INFANTS to God by solemn prayer, which is a moral duty, we readily allow; and that the conduct of Christ, on this occasion, manifested his regard for *little children*, is beyond a doubt; at the thought of which, we are so far from being pained, that we rejoice. Yes, it is a matter of joy; because, in our view, it wears a *smiling aspect* on the *final state* of such as *die* in their infancy; and that without any restriction, in reference to *carnal descent*; which limitation has the appearance of a Jewish tenet†.” Mr. JAMES RUTHERFORD is still more explicit: “ As I cautioned my hearers, in like manner let me intreat my readers, not to entertain the *least suspicion* that my sentiments are harsh and uncharitable, respecting the happy state of children who die in infancy; for tho’ my conclusions so peremptorily exclude them from any part in the outward church state, and deny their right to every ordinance thereof, yet I dare not affirm they are incapa-

¶ Ibid. p. 64.

† Pedob. Exam. p. 350.

“ ble of internal washing, or without a part in
 “ eternal glory: For altho’ I have not met with
 “ *one word*, either in the Old or New Testa-
 “ ment, from which the *final state* of those who
 “ die in infancy can be *inferred*, yet where the
 “ matter is so liable to *dispute* among men, and
 “ the scriptures so *silent* about it, always choose
 “ to take the *most charitable* side; on which
 “ account, I am inclined to *believe* the salvation
 “ of ALL who *die in infancy* *.” After all, ac-
 cording to Mr. B. the conduct of Christ mani-
 festing his condescending regard for little children,
 without baptizing them, makes nothing for
 infant baptism. “ He who can fairly prove the
 “ point, or make any advances towards it, from
 “ such premises, must be a wonderful proficient
 “ in the art of syllogizing †.” On the contrary,
 we cannot help thinking, that “ he who can
 “ interpret these words, “ suffer little children,
 “ &c.” to the denial of infants’, *all* infants’, church-
 membership and consequent right to baptism, is
 no mean proficient in the art of evading evi-
 dence. However, let us examine this matter a
 little more closely.

THESE authors unanimously agree, that the
 phrase, “ of such,” includes, “ little children in
 “ general

* Thoughts on Believers’ Bap. p. 15. See, also, GILLARD’S
*Probability of the future state of infants, who die in infancy, stated
 and considered.* The Author, who is an Antipædobaptist, says of
 his design: “ The idea pursued in this Treatise is, the probability
 “ that ALL who die in a state of infancy, are *elect* and there-
 “ fore certainly saved.” p. 9.

† Pædob. Exam. p. 351.

“ general, without any restriction, in reference to “ carnal descent.” They also unite in supposing the salvation of ALL such as *die in their infancy.*” Yet, if Mr. RUTHERFORD’s opinion be admitted, — “ that there is not *one word*, either “ in the Old or New Testament, from which “ the final state of those who die in infancy can “ be INFERRED” — the above concessions (for so I may call them) come from Antipædobaptists with a very ill grace. However, tho’ I cannot admit of Mr. RUTHERFORD’s premises, I can easily fall in with the general conclusion, for reasons that need not be here produced, (See § 6.) But tho’ our opponents be thus unanimous in allowing children, dying in their infancy, a place in the church *above*, they are not less so in denying them a place in the church *below*; for were they to grant them the *latter* privilege, their obligation to *baptize* them, as belonging to, or members of, the church of Christ, could not be disputed. Here I would ask our opponents,

§ 42. CAN they coolly and impartially believe, that those very children whom Christ *actually blessed*, to the joy of their parents, and the instruction of his ministering servants, were NOT *members* of the gospel church, in the same sense as their parents or any other disciples were, at least AFTER this benediction*?

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As

* “ Certe non lusorium nec inane symbolum erat manuum impositio, nec frustra preces in aerem Christus effudit; solenniter autem offerre Deo non potuit quin puritate donaret. Quid
“ vere

As Jews, they were members of the church of God, as well as their parents. But when a Jew believed Jesus to be the Messiah, and professed attachment to him, was he required to *renounce* his former religion, in like manner as a heathen was required to renounce his? Or, was there any thing whatever required of a Jew, but to *believe* what Christ *taught*, and to *observe* what he *commanded*? But believing what he taught, and observing what he commanded, no way interfered with the continued and uninterrupted church-membership of his children. Nay, his *own* church-membership was not *changed* but *improved* by confessing Christ. Therefore, for such a parent to treat his children as *dispossessed* of their church-membership, when he himself was not, and without any pretence of necessity from any thing which Christ taught or commanded, must be evidently unjustifiable. Consequently, in proportion as these parents judged and acted agreeably to *truth*, they must have conducted themselves towards their children, as *actual members* of the church of God.

BUT since it appears that not only the less instructed among the Jews, but our Lord's disciples

“vero illis precatus est, nisi ut reciperentur inter Dei filios?

“Unde sequitur regenitos Spiritu fuisse in spem salutis. Ipse

“denique amplexus testis fuit censer i ipsos a Christo in suo grege.

“Quod si donorum spiritualium quæ figurat baptismus, compotes

“fuerunt, externo signo privari absurdum est. Sacrilega vero au-

“dacia est, abigere procul ab ovili Christi quos ipse in sinu suo

“fovet, & quasi extraneos clausa janua rejicere quos prohiberi

“non vult.” CALV. in Matt. xix. 14.

ciples who constantly attended him, formed very wrong conceptions of the nature of the Messiah's kingdom, which they called *the kingdom of heaven*, (See Mat. xviii. 1—4.) what can be more natural than to consider our Lord's declaration in the text, as a direct answer to such a mistake? Why should we not, therefore, interpret, "the *kingdom of heaven*," of the Messiah's kingdom? In the last mentioned text, the disciples, labouring under this common prejudice, inquire of their Lord, "Who should be greatest in *the kingdom of heaven*?" His answer to their question was, by an action similar to that we are considering; and (except we suppose the answer *foreign* to the question) in the *former* instance, the requisition for membership in the gospel church, or for subjects in the Messiah's kingdom, was—*conformity* to a little child, which he proposed to them as a model; in the *latter*, he seems to cut off all occasion of the absurdity of *confining* his doctrine to the case of adults, whose excellency consisted in likeness to infants, to the exclusion of infants themselves. Therefore, the *kingdom of heaven*, i. e. the *gospel church*, is made up, as to the true character of its subjects, not only of those who are *like* little children, but of little children *themselves*. Not only such adults as *resemble* these, but *these*, and *such as these*, in the strictest sense, belong to my kingdom now about to be established.

To this Dr. S. objects: "That he means
 "the *world of glory*, and not his kingdom on
 "earth, appears plain to me from the words
 "immediately

“ immediately following, as reported by Luke,
 “ *Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God*
 “ *as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein,*
 “ that is, Whosoever shall not receive the gospel
 “ with the simplicity and teachableness [*teach-*
 “ *ableness!**] of a little child, he shall in no wise
 “ enter into the world of glory — not surely he
 “ shall in no wise enter into the visible church,
 “ for into that some of the vilest hypocrites have
 “ entered †.” If this be a just account of the
pre-requisites for glory, what becomes of infants,
 who do not receive the gospel at all? Our re-
 spectable author seems to forget, that simplicity and
 teachableness are not *universally necessary* for en-
 trance into the kingdom of glory, which he must
 allow in granting the salvation of dying infants.
 Passing by this, let us attend to his main argument:
 “ Not the visible church, for into that some of
 “ the vilest hypocrites have entered.” But if this
 proves any thing, I fear it will prove too much.
 On other occasions we are told, “ He that
 forsaketh not all to follow Christ, — and hateth
 not father and mother, &c. for his sake, can-
 not be *his disciple*, i. e. cannot be a *subject of*
his kingdom.” But who sees not that in such
 passages we are to understand the term *disciple*,
 not as implying mere *profession*, but the *possession*
 also of what is professed? In like manner,
entering

“ * When Mr. — makes their *docibleness* the thing intended by
 “ Christ, he forgot that he judged them incapable of being *disciples*.
 “ Why may not those be *disciples*, who are not only *docible*, but
 “ *exemplary* for their teachableness?” BAXTER’S Plain Script.
 Proof, p. 105.

† Answer to Dr. A. p. 65.

entering into the kingdom of heaven, or the church of Christ, is twofold; either into the *number* of subjects *externally*, or into the real *spiritual happiness* it exhibits. And in this view the impartial Dr. DODDRIDGE paraphrases the passage in question, Mark x. 15. and Luke xviii. 17. "*Who-soever shall not be willing to receive the kingdom of God, or the GOSPEL DISPENSATION and the HAPPINESS IT PROMISES, as a little child, divesting himself of those prejudices, and those secular views which men contract in their riper years—he shall not in any wise, or on any terms, enter into it, be his genius ever so sublime, or his circumstances in life ever so considerable* †." This I believe is a plain, natural and consistent interpretation of the text; and avoids *five* great inconveniences with which the other appears clogged.

(1) THE confined sense of the words, for which our opponents contend, referring them exclusively to the *world of glory*, labours under this inconvenience, viz. That then they are *not so direct* and full an answer to the reigning prejudice of the persons addressed, particularly the disciples, whose wrong views of the Messiah's kingdom are here, it seems, intentionally rectified. (See Matt. xviii. 1—4.)

(2) IT labours under another disadvantage, viz. It virtually renounces that well known scriptural distinction of a *twofold* entering into the kingdom of Christ; into its *external privileges*, and its *internal blessings*: as if these words, "Whosoever shall

† Family Expos. vol. ii. Sect. 136.

shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein," must *needs* refer either to a mere external relation to Christ and his people, or to heavenly glory. Whereas it is equally true, that the worldly minded miser, or the self-righteous pharisee, can not enter into the *happiness* of the gospel dispensation, as that they can not enter into *glory*.

(3) IT seems to deny, that the *state of grace* as well as the *state of glory*, may be called the *kingdom of heaven*. Nothing is more evident, or more universally acknowledged, than that the gospel dispensation, in its external aspect, is so called. Nor is it much less evident, that the *spiritual economy* of the gospel is so denominated in the following places. Matt. iii. 2. iv. 17. x. 7. xii. 28. xvi. 28. &c. &c.†

(4) IT excludes these very infants from *present* interest in the blessing pronounced concerning them. Is it supposeable that they have no real privilege either confirmed or conferred? Was our Lord's laying his hands on them, and reproofing his disciples for their sakes, expressive of no favour towards them, but a mere empty sign? But if this wonderful condescension and loving regard to them was attended with any benefit to them, are we at liberty to fix on any which fancy dictates, to the exclusion of what the words plainly express? *Of such is the kingdom of heaven*. The benefit here pronounced on them, (if at all here included, which cannot reasonably be denied,

as

† For a large collection of such passages, see WHITEY on Matt. iii. 2.

as before shewn) was a *present* benefit, whether now conferred or only asserted and confirmed. And to deny this will be attended with another inconvenience, viz.

(5) If they were at all included, it must either make the plainest language of the time present refer to time *future*; or, convert the declaration, “of such is the kingdom of heaven,” into a *prophecy* concerning their eternal state—both which will be thought sufficiently improbable; and the more so, when we reflect, that there is not the least necessity of running into such extremes.—I would again inquire,

§ 43. HAVE we any ground to suppose, that our Lord would have denied the privilege here expressed, to any *other* infants or little children, had they been brought to him? Was not his declaration, “of such,” abundantly encouraging on behalf of *any such* that should be brought to him? Or must we interpret what is expressed in terms so general, as exclusive of *all the infants and little children* in the world? Strange interpretation! For, then, what encouragement or even propriety can there be in the preceding gracious declaration, “Suffer them to come unto me, and forbid them not?” How could this be *founded* on the general doctrine, “Of such is the kingdom of heaven? Or must we say, in compliance with our opponents’ interpretation,—“Such as *DIE* in their infancy go to glory, *THEREFORE* let these which are *ALIVE*, and *SUCH* as these, be brought unto me!”

AGAIN

AGAIN : Seeing what was done to these children was not of a miraculous nature, have we any authority to assert, that parents *in the present day* are debarred from every privilege tantamount to this with respect to their children? Yet, on Antipædobaptist principles, which deny their church-membership and baptism, this is the case! For, according to them, we cannot conclude, that “ theirs is the kingdom of heaven,” but on supposition of their *dying*. But our Lord’s gracious mandate, “ Suffer them, &c.” was not *that they may* partake of the kingdom of heaven, but *because* of these, and such as these, is the kingdom of heaven.

MOREOVER : How can parents bring their children to Christ, in the Antipædobaptist sense of bringing them, *because* theirs is the kingdom of heaven? Or were it further granted, that our Lord meant, heaven above was in a great measure peopled with such infants, *therefore* these were welcome; will it not still follow, that *ours* are welcome in the same sense and for the same reason? And if *bringing them to him* be followed with no church privilege, if no possible disposition or conduct of a parent be attended with present advantage, and if the children of heathens (as my opponents hold) be equally admitted to heaven with those of believers, dying in their infancy,—what possible advantage can there be to our offspring, or encouragement to ourselves, from *these words* of our Lord?

ONCE more: if parents or ministers may now
lawfully

lawfully, in the language of Mr. B. "GIVE UP INFANTS TO GOD by solemn prayer," *because* there *are* infants in glory, it still follows—that we may lawfully *give up infants to the church* of God, because there are such in glory. For to hold, that they may be *given up* to God with the view of their obtaining the *grace* of the covenant, and yet debarred from the *means* of the covenant, without any personal forfeiture, is absurd. Nor can it be maintained, with any shew of reason, that our Lord's words, "Suffer them to come, and forbid them not," are the same in meaning as—"Do not hinder parents to *pray* for their children;" for *this* neither the disciples nor any other person who would permit a *parent* to pray at all, would once think to *forbid*.

BUT supposing, for argument sake, so unnatural and forced an interpretation were allowed, which grounds the reproof of the disciples, and the encouragement of parents to bring *living* infants to him, on the happiness of the *dying*, and of *theirs* if they die while infants——still, I say, if I am not greatly mistaken, we ought to regard infants as parts of the *visible church*. For, if Mr. TOWGOOD's calculation be just, viz. That "from the exactest observations, it appears, that of those who are born into the world, scarce a *third part* attain to the age of *one year*†:" nay, upon a more moderate calculation, if, instead of a "third part," we say *one half* attain to the age of *two years*:——there is not a new born infant in the world, our

opponents

† Baptism of Inf. Reason, Serv. p. 1.

opponents being judges, but of that it may be said — it *more probably* is an heir of glory than of woe. And, tho' the matter were not quite so clear, Mr. RUTHERFORD candidly observes, “ we “ should always choose the *most charitable* side.” Hence it follows, that tho' none were to be visibly brought to Christ, or admitted to church-membership, but those whom we charitably judge to be heirs of glory, we ought, on the concessions of our opponents, to treat our new born infants as those who are visibly related to Christ, or church members. For a *probable* visible relation to the kingdom of glory, includes a *certain* visible relation to the church militant. If we have any charitable probable ground of judging — “ the kingdom of heaven belongs to such, *much more* a “ standing as members in the visible church: for “ what is it to be a member of the church visible, “ but to be one that in seeming, or appearance, “ or to the judgment of man, doth belong to “ the invisible church, or the kingdom of heaven? For the church is but one, and the difference respective — Therefore, both visible and “ invisible, both military and triumphant, are called “ in scripture, The kingdom of heaven, or of God. “ If a man be [but probably] *known*, or any sort “ of men, to belong to the church invisible, then “ they *visibly* belong to it; and then they are visible “ members of the church. So that this proof “ [founded on our opponents' concessions] is “ more full for infants' church-membership, than “ if

“ if it had been said, They may be visible church members: for it saith much more of them, “ which *includeth* that*.”

BESIDES: have our antagonists any thing more than *probability* to influence their determinations with respect to adults? *Infallibility*, we know, they disclaim; and a *medium* between both, will not be pretended. Now if a visible probability of relation to the kingdom of glory be, according to our Lord, a reason of a visible access to him; and if he says “ of such ” (understanding thereby with our opposers, the *species* of infants dying in their infancy) “ is the kingdom of heaven,” or heavenly glory; it follows, that we have a *stronger reason* for concluding that any child whatever belongs to the visible church, than any can have respecting any adult. In the latter we *may* be deceived, in the former we *cannot*. The premises duly weighed, we dare not hesitate to conclude, —that the balance evidently turns in favour of Pædobaptism.

SHOULD any object, that to acknowledge the church-membership of infants would not amount to a concession to justify Pædobaptism; —I answer, If baptism be the only regular way and manner of solemn admission into the gospel church (as the learned Mr. TOMBES allows†, and if I mistake not the generality of Antipædobaptists); it will be time enough to prove the certain *connection* between church-membership and baptism, when our opponents enter their protest against it.

BEFORE

* See BAXTER's Plain Script. Proof. p. 105.

† Apology. p. 54. See BAXT. Plain Script. Proof. p. 24.

BEFORE I dismiss this branch of our subject, the length of which has been occasioned by the subtle evasions of our adversaries, I would present the reader with the following words of Mr. RICHARD BAXTER: "Doth Christ take them
 " [infants] in his *arms*, and would he have them
 " *all* put out of his *visible church*? Would he have
 " us receive them *in his name*, and yet not receive
 " them into his church, nor as his disciples? How
 " *can* infants be received in Christ's name, if they
 " belong not visibly to him and his church? Nay,
 " doth Christ account it a receiving of himself,
 " and shall I then refuse to receive them, or ac-
 " knowledge them, the subjects of his visible king-
 " dom? — For my part, seeing — Christ hath given
 " me so full a discovery of his will in this point,
 " I will boldly adventure to follow his rule, and
 " had rather answer him, upon his own encour-
 " ragement, for ADMITTING A HUNDRED IN-
 " FANTS into his church, than answer for KEEP-
 " ING OUT OF ONE ||." " I desire any tender
 " conscientious christian, that is in doubt, whether
 " infants should be admitted members of the visible
 " church, and would fain know what is the plea-
 " sure of Christ in this thing, to — bethink himself,
 " Whether it be more likely that it will *please*
 " *Christ better* to bring, or solemnly admit, in-
 " fants into the church, or to shut them out?
 " And whether *these words* of Christ, so plain and
 " earnest, will not be a *better plea* at judgment for
 " our admitting infants, than any that ever they
 " [Antipædobaptists] brought, will be to them
 " for

“ for refusing them*?” “ I bless the Lord Jesus,
 “ the King of the church, for having so great a
 “ tenderness to the infants themselves, and so great
 “ a care of the information of his church con-
 “ cerning his will, as to speak it thus *plainly*, that
 “ plain meaning men may well see his mind:
 “ even as if he had therefore done this because
 “ he foresaw, that in these latter days some would
 “ arise that would *renew the disciples’ mistake* in
 “ this point†.”

§ 44. HAVING, as proposed, (§ 31.) considered our Lord’s confirming and decisive *sentence* concerning the church privileges of infants; we proceed to consider more briefly, the same thing *implied* in what he says of Israel and certain towns and cities, through the whole course of his ministry.

I. IT is well known, that the mission and ministry of Christ were primarily intended for the use of the Jews, Matt. xv. 24. with which coincides his commission to the seventy, Matt. x. 6. Now if our Lord by his ministry addressed *Israel* as a *body of people*, even as they were wont to be addressed by the former prophets; and the same was given, in commission to the seventy disciples, that they should “ *go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*, preaching, and saying, “ the kingdom of heaven is at hand”—it follows, that their *national conversion* was proposed, and but for their unbelief, and general rejection of the Messiah, would

* Ibid. p. 106.

† Ibid. p. 107. — See also Dr. DODDRIDGE’s excellent Improvement of the sacred story, Fam. Expof. Sect. 136.

would have been effected. Therefore, it was œconomically and ministerially *intended* that the Jewish *infants* should be among the converted, or subjects of the Messiah's kingdom. Consequently, it would be absurd to suppose, that those who *did receive* him were not favoured in regard to their children, as they would have been on the general conversion of their countrymen, except obliged thereto by a revealed fact. But no such revealed fact exists. Hence we conclude, that the infants and dependents of converted Jews were *de jure* members of the gospel church, and, for aught appears to the contrary, *de facto* likewise.

2. THE same thing is implied in our Lord's instructions to his disciples Luke x. 5—15. They were instructed to direct their message to *families* and *cities*; the family was blessed, profelyted or *discipled* if the *son of peace* was there; and in proportion as a *city* gave reception to them and their message, it was *discipled* in like manner. But if they and their message were despised and rejected, an awful curse was denounced. The threatened woe was levelled against the inhabitants of a place, *collectively*; in which the parents and children shared alike, at least externally; which implies, that the contrary blessings would have been shared in common, on supposition of the parents receiving the gospel. Now it appears, that what was required of these families and cities for the continuance and extension of their religious privileges, was their *not rejecting* the gospel message; but

but personally to *repent* and *believe* in such a sense as is peculiar to the regenerate, cannot be supposed to be that, and that alone, which entitled whole *families* and *cities* to discipleship and gospel privileges.

3. WHAT our Lord says in his lamentation over Jerusalem, Luke xiii. 34, 35. and chap. xix. 41—44. and Matt. xxiii. 37, 38. implies, that, had it not been for its ingratitude and unbelief, in that *general* sense before mentioned, its religious privileges would have been continued, confirmed and enlarged, as well as its temporal calamities averted. “How often (says the compassionate Saviour) would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not?” Again, “He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst, (or Oh! that thou hadst) known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes — BECAUSE thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.” Is it not here *implied*, that the genuine tendency and express design of our Lord’s ministry complied with, would have prevented their awful doom? But what was that doom? Did it not include a dissolution, not merely of their civil polity but of their *religious privileges* also? And did not these include the *church-membership* of their infant children, which we have seen was by no means *peculiar* to the mosaic dispensation, and therefore

would not have been abrogated with the mosaic ritual?

4. THE same conclusion is evidently inferable from Matt. xi. 20—24. where our Lord *upbraids* the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they *repented* not; and the kind of repentance that would have been available, for the purpose of admission into the gospel dispensation, is mentioned ver. 21. “a repenting in sackcloth and ashes;” in the same manner as Nineveh; (compare Matt. xii. 41.) From whence, and from the foregoing passages, we infer, — That the whole tendency, and express design, of our Lord’s ministry and that of his disciples, *implied*, that the church-membership and religious privileges of parents were to be extended to their children under the gospel. Consequently, the Antipædobaptist plan of evangelizing and discipling the *nations*, which admits none to the christian church, in its more universal form, *but* on personal profession of what is deemed saving faith and repentance, differs essentially from that of Christ through the whole course of his ministry. — Should it be said, that we ought to distinguish between the averting of judgment from a people, and their partaking of religious privileges and rites; I answer, it is true these are *distinguishable*, but it is equally true, that no such distinction can be of any real service to the Antipædobaptist cause. For, being *Jewish* towns and cities, families and people — the *mode* of their conversion is to be sought from their *own*,
 history

history, and the former revolutions that *had before* obtained in the church of God; except a different manner be *expressly* specified. Whatever hypothesis is erected in defiance of this fundamental rule, must be necessarily a *baseless* fabrick. Or, we may as soon contrive an even balance possessed of the wonderful property of outweighing *something* with *nothing*! as to contrive a rule for excluding infants from the church of the New Testament, without an *express* injunction for so doing.

§ 45. IN confirmation of our general argument, that it is the WILL OF CHRIST infants should partake of all their parents' privileges, and consequently that of baptism, we next appeal to that capital text, Matt. xxviii. 19. *Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them,* and so on*.

"The whole tenour of the succeeding

P 2

"books

* Mr. BOOTH says, this "is not a mere *allusion* to baptism, nor an *incidental* use of the term,—but it is *the institution* of that ordinance." But what *proof* does he offer in support of this assertion? Why, "It is the first appointment of baptism for the use of the *Gentiles*;" and "Jesus Christ, on this occasion, expressly claims *all authority in heaven and on earth*." (Pædob. Exam. p. 322.) But how can the fact of its being now first appointed *for the use of the Gentiles*, disprove its being before appointed *for the use of the Jews*? With as great propriety may it be inferred, that because in this commission we have the first appointment of *preaching the gospel* to the *Gentiles*, therefore the gospel was not preached before to the Jews!—Did not the disciples baptize *before* this period? And was not that done *by commission* from Christ? Had he not *authority*, divine authority, to commission? Or was it now his *kingly office* commenced?—"He plainly appears as *King of Zion, and Sovereign of the world*." But will Mr. B. say, that he was not so *prior* to this period? If not, how does this shew that baptism was not *before* instituted?

“ books of the New Testament shews, that Christ
 “ designed by this commission, that the gospel should
 “ be preached to *all nations* without exception, not
 “ only to the Jews, but to all the idolatrous
 “ gentiles: but the *prejudices* of the Apostles led
 “ them at first to *mistake the sense*, and to ima-
 “ gine, that it referred only to their going to
 “ preach the gospel to the Jews among all nations,
 “ or to those who should be willing to become
 “ Jews*.” It is, I believe, generally agreed,
 that by *all nations* (*παντα τα εθνη*) is intended, the
 Gentile world at large, together with the Jewish
 nation. They were no longer to *confine* their la-
 bours among the lost sheep of Israel. The mid-
 dle wall of partition being taken down, their com-
 mission is unlimited. The whole habitable globe
 is their diocese, in which they were to employ
 their extraordinary talents, and seraphic zeal,
 without any official superiority.

IN our inquiry into the *controverted* part of this
 important passage, it will be necessary to premise,
 what is properly the point contended for from
 these words? And this is the rather necessary, on
 account of the following remarkable declaration:
 “ Could it be proved, that *μαθητευσατε*, sometimes
 “ conveys the idea of making disciples, where
 “ there is *no teaching*; and that *βαπτιζοντες*, is
 “ occasionally used for pouring or sprinkling, where
 “ there is *no immersion*; yet the dispute between
 “ us and our brethren would not be decided:
 “ because this question would still remain for
 “ discussion;

* DODGE, Fam. Expos. *in loc.* Note.

“ discussion ; Is making a disciple *without instruction*, in the one case ; and *pouring or sprinkling*, in the other ; the NATURAL and PRIMARY signification of those Greek words*?” In settling this point, if we wish not to confound, it will be necessary to distinguish.—*Still the dispute would not be decided ; because of the NATURAL and PRIMARY signification.* Here let the following things be considered.

1. THERE is an important difference between a primary PHILOLOGICAL or ETYMOLOGICAL, and a primary LEGAL sense of terms ; founded on this ground—That terms acquire different acceptations according to the positions in which they stand. There is hardly any law, sacred or civil, but may furnish a confirmation of this necessary distinction †.

2. IT follows, that a term, in its primary *legal* sense, *may* have one acceptation ; while, in its primary *philological* sense it occupies another. And this, we contend, is the case here, even on supposition—that *μαθητευω* (referring the *other* term to its proper place) signifies, in its primary

P 3 philological

* Pædob. Exam. p. 322.

† “ It must be observed, that in translating, we are not to render word for word, but *sense for sense*, and that the most *literal versions* are not always the most *faithful*. There is a great deal of difference between the *letter* and the *literal sense*. The *letter* is the word explained according to its *etymology*. The *literal sense* is the meaning of the author, which is frequently quite different from the *grammatical* signification of the words.” BEAUSOBRE and L'ENFANT'S Introduction to the reading of the Holy Scriptures, a p. Bp. WATSON'S Collect. of Theol. Tracts, Vol, iii, p. 103.

philological meaning, and in certain positions, what Mr. B. contends for.

3. NOTHING is capable of fixing the exact *legislative force* of a word or phrase, but a careful and impartial attention to circumstances; and these refer either to the Sovereign or the subject. For, if we overlook relations, time, place, customs, laws already in force, and the like, what success can be expected in ascertaining the sense?

4. THAT must needs be the most *natural* signification, which results from a due weighing of all circumstances. Should not the force and comparative influence of terms be sought in connection with the constitution and genius, and especially the former statutes of any state? And is not this rule equally applicable to that kingdom which is not of this world?

THESE things considered, then, may we not justly expostulate—How was it possible for the disciples,—who were native Jews, and brought up in the bosom of the Jewish church, receiving instructions from the Messiah who was alike circumstanced,—to understand the terms employed in this text, in any other sense than that which includes infants with their parents? Would they understand their commission in a sense to which they never had been accustomed? take words *capable* of *two* constructions in that sense which excluded infants from their parents' privileges? A sense, I will add, they never heard of; nay, that NEVER HAD BEEN HEARD OF SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN? Or, had they been previously versed in our opponents' notions about
positive

positive rites? These we have seen, and seen I think demonstrated, to be inconsistent with truth; and therefore, may boldly affirm, they were governed by no such maxims. Moreover; could they so easily forget, in the interpretation and execution of their commission, their Lord's repeated declarations, that "of infants was the kingdom of heaven?" Could they forget his being *greatly displeased* with them, for their not paying infants that attention which was their due, and to which culpable neglect their ambitious and erroneous views of the gospel kingdom had betrayed them? Had they not just reason ever after to fear adopting any sentiment or practice which would exclude infants from a visible access to their Divine Friend and Saviour; by whom their privileges, as visible church-members, had been so expressly asserted and confirmed? (See § 39—43.)

"ARE these the senses of those terms, says Mr. B. that would naturally *first* occur to the mind of a wise and impartial person, on reading or hearing this law of baptism?" and again; "each of these emphatical words, making a capital figure in the heavenly edict, should be understood in its *most plain*, and *common*, and *expressive* signification: for, as to any *absurdity* following upon it, our opponents pretend none, but what implies a begging of the question†." We answer, that in connection with all those circumstances of legal interpretation which *ought* to be taken into the account, the sense which includes infants with

P 4

their

† Pædob. Exam. p. 322.

their parents, in this phrase — μαθητευσατε παντα τα εθνη βαπτισατες αυτους — is not only the *first* that would occur to the mind of the disciples, but we maintain that there is the “highest evidence” the Legislator did *intend* that sense. Nay further, we insist that it is “highly absurd” to interpret them otherwise than what we contend for, and that without “begging of the question disputed.” For, is it to “beg the question,” to take into the account the circumstances of legislation? And were not the disciples always accustomed, as Jews and as the disciples of Jesus, to reckon infants as members of the church with their parents, in every preceding dispensation? Besides; on supposition that our Lord intended, in so many words, to establish our sense of the text, how could it be more properly expressed, or more effectually established? And though designed for all ages and nations, that does not hinder their being adapted to the circumstances of the persons first addressed. Upon the most equitable ground, therefore, it would be *absurd* to suppose the disciples understood them of adults *only*. This being the case, nothing can be admissible in evidence against Pædobaptist principles, from this or any other text, which does not reject and excommunicate infants in the most express and unequivocal manner. I say *excommunicate*; for can it be any thing short of this, when the whole *species* of infants is *cut off* from the church militant at one blow? Before we accede to such a step, is it not proper to pause—to pause again—and

and to inquire with holy alarm;—On what ground are *they* excluded from the church on earth, who are confessedly admitted to glory, dying in their infant state? The Jews were *cut off* for *unbelief*; but this is no adequate cause in the case of infants born in the city of God. Is the species of infants *more wicked* now, than before and after the deluge, that they should be debarred from their parents' privileges? Where is the broad seal of heaven to ratify that absolute authority which puts an end to all strife? I must ingenuously confess, that, with all the *light* Mr. B. has thrown upon the point, I can discover no such authority. But I see, or think I see, every part of the divine dispensations, and the whole of the sacred oracles, perfectly consistent with Pædobaptism, and delivering a verdict not a little favourable to it.

§ 46. BUT Mr. B.'s most formidable objection, and that on which he seems to lay the principal stress, is still behind. Its figure is that of a horned dilemma. "If this law of the Lord have any regard to instruction, as a prerequisite for baptism; that instruction must be required, either of *all* or only of *some*. To affirm the *latter*, there is not the least ground in this divine canon; because it makes no distinction between what is required of some, and what is demanded of others.—It remains, then, that *all* must be taught, that *all* must become disciples, before they are baptized*." This does not appear to me consequential and solid, though subtil. I would, therefore, propose.

what, to my apprehension, seems to be the precise meaning of our Lord in the text, viz. That gospel ministers should *profelyte, disciple, or teach*, and *baptize* ALL PROPER SUBJECTS in all nations, introducing them thereby into the gospel kingdom, and exercising their commission discretionally, *pro captu singulorum et instantium rerum*. And not only do I think this to be the genuine intent of the commission, but apprehend that, by fair criticism and argument, it is *impossible* to settle the meaning of the text, by any other interpretation †. For, if it be said, that *παντα τα εθνη* must be taken *strictly* and without any such qualification—if *μαθηλευσαι* be understood in that sense of profelyting which may be done *without instruction*, absolutely and unconditionally—if we say that *all who are taught* may be baptized without distinction—they all lie equally exposed to exception, uncertainty and error.

BUT

† “It seems to me (says the judicious Dr. GUYSE), that “*μαθηλευσατε παντα τα εθνη*, *Disciple all nations*, relates to “the WHOLE DESIGN of Christ’s commission for making disciples to him; and that *βαπτιζοντες*, and *διδασκοντες αυτες*, “*baptizing and teaching them*, are mentioned, as PARTICULAR “BRANCHES of that general design, the order of which was to be “determined by the *circumstances of things*. And *these* indeed made “it necessary, that in discipling ADULT *Jews and Heathens*, they “should be taught *before* they were baptized; but *other circum-* “stances, in the settled state of the gospel kingdom, make it *as* “necessary, that in discipling the children of believers [i. e. of “Christians] they should be *first baptized and afterwards taught*, “as the CHILDREN of Jews, and of profelytes to their religion, “were *first circumcised*, and when they grew up were instructed “in the faith of the God of *Israel*.” Note *in loc*.

BUT here it is observable, that what Mr. B. cites as *concessions* from HOORNBECKIUS, RIDGELEY, CALVIN, POOLE, BECKMANUS, BARROW, MASTRICHT, BURNET, WHITBY, VENEMA, &c. who were professed Pædobaptists, should be understood in the sense just proposed; and what those passages fairly imply is—that it would be an abuse of the term μαθητευσαί to plead from it the mode of discipling which the church of Rome has sometimes adopted, to the disgrace of the christian religion. It is extremely improbable, nay highly uncharitable to suppose, that these eminent characters should be capable of so glaring a contradiction, as to hold any sense of the word μαθητεω incompatible with infant discipleship and baptism. However that be, my business is not to vindicate characters, but to investigate truth.—In fact, the text is capable of abuse in two opposite extremes: the one strains them into a sense *too general*; the other into a sense *too particular*, or unreasonably contracted. But if repentance and faith be required ONLY of adults, as conditions, *sine qua non*, of *salvation*; for the very same reason—teaching is required ONLY of adults, as a condition, *sine qua non*, of *baptism*. Here the hackneyed distinction between the different kinds of evidence required in moral duties and positive rites, is useless. For, is it not an act equally sovereign, to prescribe the conditions of salvation and the qualifications for baptism? And is not the *former* as much included in Mr. B.'s definition of positive absolute

authority as the *latter* can be? Besides, are not these qualifications for salvation and baptism, respectively, delivered in the *same commission*? It follows, therefore, inevitably, that if this commission (see Mark xvi. 15, 16.) excludes infants from baptism, it must on the same principle exclude them from salvation and glory, contrary to our opponents' declarations. Nor will it ever be in their power, I scruple not to affirm it, to prove the greater probability of dying infants' salvation than their perdition, without at the same time furnishing us with premises from which we may fairly conclude they may be baptized while living. For if it be said, that their *salvation* may be gathered from *other* considerations; so may the duty of parents and ministers to baptize them. But this I hope has been sufficiently established before.

"HERE one can hardly forbear to remark," says Mr. B. "in what *opposite* ways this capital text is interpreted, to make it agree with different hypotheses†." True: And we claim the liberty, in turn, to class his interpretation among those which are so *different* and *opposite*. Or can he suppose, that *his* hypothesis must needs pass for true, because he finds a disagreement among other authors? Were this mode of arguing admitted, with what ease might the Quakers confute the Pædobaptists and Antipædobaptists alike; the Papists our Protestant principles; and Deists our common christianity!

§ 47. IT

§ 47. IT would be easy to produce a long list of eminent authors, ancient and modern, who render the word μαθητεύειν, by TO PROSELYTE, TO DISCIPLE, OR TO MAKE DISCIPLES, as well as by *to teach*. Let the few following suffice. Thus LEIGH, in his *Critica Sacra*: “μαθητεύσατε, *Go and teach all nations*; or word for word from the Greek, GO MAKE THEM DISCIPLES, as it is expounded, John iv. 1.” BULLINGER: “DISCIPULATE, five, facite mihi discipulos†.” DUTCH ANNOTATORS: “Instruct all the nations; or MAKE DISCIPLES among all nations, as the word is also taken, Acts xiv. 21. Mark xvi. 15.” POOLE’S CONTINUATORS: “The Greek is, μαθητεύσατε, MAKE DISCIPLES all nations.” DODDRIDGE: “Go forth therefore and PROSELYTE all the nations of the earth||.” Turretine “Vox μαθητεύειν, qua Christus utitur, proprie non tam est docere per predicationem quam DISCIPULOS FACERE, quod fit etiam administratione baptismi, qui est sacramentum initiationis, & primus in ecclesiam & familiam Christi introitus*.” STOCKIUS: “Μαθητεύω, FACIO DISCIPULUM. Proprie discipulatum innuit, & *transitive*, notans, DISCIPULUM FACERE §.” BEZA: “μαθητεύειν hic non neutropassive pro, *discipulum esse*, sed *active* accipitur; q. d. DISCIPULATE.” GATAKER: “*Discipulos facite*.” LIGHTFOOT: “Introducite
per

† Crit. Sacr. ad verb. || Fam. Expos. vol. ii. § 202.

* Instit. Theol. Loc. xix. Quest. xx. § 4.

§ Clav. Nov. Test. in voce.

per baptismum, ut doceantur. — Errant qui hinc colligunt, necessario docendos qui baptizandi sunt. — Dixit ethnicus ad Hilelem, *profelytum me fac, ut me doceas**." HAMMOND: "Mat. xxviii. 19. — The phrase which is there used in the original is a singular one, not duly expressed by our english, *teach*. It is μαθηλευσατε, MAKE DISCIPLES, or *receive into discipleship*, all nations, baptizing them in the name, &c. making this form of baptism their ceremony of receiving them. — John iv. 1. μαθητας ποιει, και βαπτιζει, is all one with μαθηλευσατε βαπτιζοντες. — Διδασχοныες, *teaching*, follows after βαπτισοντες, *baptizing*: all that are thus brought and received *ad discipulatum*, to be for the future instructed, and instituted in the christian faith, may surely be received in baptism, the ceremony which is there prescribed by Christ, with which to receive disciples †." WITSIUS: "Mat. xxviii. Go ye, therefore, and μαθηλευσατε, DISCIPLE all nations, baptizing them, &c. There Christ commands that disciples be gathered into his school, and, as persons in covenant with him, sealed with the seal of baptism. But it is evident, that when parents become disciples of Christ, their *children* likewise are reckoned in the number of *disciples*. Just as among the Jews, together with the profelyte parents their infants were initiated in the Jewish rites. It was needless therefore that Christ should make express mention of infants as the subjects of baptism||."

To

* POLI Synopf. in loc. † Six Queries. Quer. iv. § 25.

|| WITS. Oecon. Fœd. Lib. iv. cap. xvi. § 41.

To these respectable authorities many more might be added, were it necessary; in whom we find μαθητεω is expressive of such *discipleship* as includes infants and young children, no less than adults; and consequently, that previous teaching is by no means *essential* to discipleship. Therefore, the word must be a *general term*, which does not, nor is intended, to express the *specific mode* of discipling. The *manner* of executing the command depends, entirely depends, on the capacities and circumstances of the persons to be disciplined. And this discretionary nature of the commission, well attended to, is the only preventive against abuses.

AGAIN; if infants and children cannot be *disciples*, they cannot be *christians*, for these terms are convertible, and used synonymously (Acts xi. 26.); and if not christians, they cannot belong to Christ; but there are many such, our opponents grant, who belong to Christ (see also Mark ix. 41.); therefore infants *may* be *disciples*, except it be said, they may be admitted to glory without belonging to Christ, which is absurd. And if so, they may be *disciples* without human teaching, in the New Testament sense of discipleship.

BESIDES; if παντα τα εθνη be the object of the command, μαθητευσατε; we insist that the rendering, DISCIPLE, is more *obvious* and *natural*, than the other, *teach*. For *discipling*, in the sense now explained, may naturally and strictly belong to *a nation*, to *all the nations*; but not teaching.

Hence

Hence we further argue—if the *discipling* in the text be such as *may* comprehend a nation, nay, *all the nations*, as it certainly is (except Christ commands an impossibility), then it is such as *cannot* agree to that specific mode of discipling which is effected by *teaching, exclusively*. For, on Antipædobaptist principles, what tolerable propriety can there be in making *all nations* the objects of discipleship! According to them, the term *nation* must have a very singular acceptation indeed; for, in the first place, they must *exclude* from it *all infants* and young children; and, in the next place, they would exclude all adults, except the *few*, comparatively *very few*, who are deemed by them fit subjects of baptism. Well, when they have *taught* them, few as they may be, they must say—that the *nation!* is disciplined. Does not such an interpretation militate against the plain and natural use of terms, and bid defiance to the force of language? On our principles, it may be some time first before *a nation* be disciplined; but on our opponents', no nation *ever can* be. How much more rational, and agreeable to the language of prophecy; and how much more worthy of the nature of the Messiah's visible kingdom, the following words of the judicious and venerable TURRETINE? “*μαθητας ποιειν* non est simpliciter docere, sed *discipulos facere*.—[Mat. xxviii. 19. Probatur Pædobaptismus ex hoc mandato] ab antithesi nam *omnes gentes* opponuntur omnibus & solis Judæis, ut postulat discrimen Veteris & Novi.

Novi Testamenti. — Qui præcipit *omnes gentes* baptizari, is etiam præcipit baptizari *infantes*, præceptum enim de genere includit *omnes species*†.” To this let me add the following words of Bishop BEVERIDGE: “Our Lord Christ, a little before his ascension into heaven, left orders with his apostles, and in them with all that should succeed in the ministry of the church to the end of the world, to make *all nations* his disciples, *by baptizing* them in the name, &c. as the original words plainly import Mat. xxviii. 19. — It is to be further observed, that when our Saviour ordained baptism to be the way or means of admitting persons into his church, or the congregation of his disciples; lest we should think, as some have done, that he meant it only of those who are of riper years, he used the *most* GENERAL TERMS *that could be invented*, requiring that *all nations* should be baptized; and if *all nations*, then children also, which are a great, if not the greatest part of every nation||.”

MOREOVER: There seems to me a peculiar propriety in our Lord's using terms of such *general import*; for had it been instead of μαθητευ-
σαι any term which *excludes* teaching as a mode of discipling, what a handle must ignorant and cruel bigots make of it in subjecting nations to the christian faith! Ambitious missionaries might then justify their cruelties with specious arguments

† Instit. Theol. Loc. xix. Quest. xx. § 4.

|| Priv. Thoughts, Part ii. On Christian Education, p. 6.

arguments, and abuse their commission by pretending to divine credentials. Would not *any other* term be liable to greater abuses and stronger objections than that which is wisely chosen? For instance, had διδάσκω or παιδεύω been adopted as terms *less general* to express the pre-requisition for baptism, it would have weakened what we apprehend our Lord meant to countenance, viz. our obligation to receive children together with their parents into the visible church, by the initiatory rite of baptism. On the other hand, had μύω or τέλω been substituted for μαθητεύω, the same inconvenience would have followed. For tho' the two former, I presume, might have conveyed the main idea contained in the latter (and accordingly some of the greek fathers seem to use them synonymously, see ISIDORE of *Pelusion* Lib. ii. Ep. 37. &c.) yet they would have been on many accounts less eligible.

ONCE more: Why, we wish to know, must we put a construction so unfavourable to infants (when no necessity requires it), upon every clause of the law which is deemed the rule of entrance into the church militant; while our opponents themselves assume, and justly assume, the liberty of giving an *apparently opposite* construction to that law which refers to their admission to the church triumphant? "He that *believeth not* shall be damned." Nay, we may add, we have greater apparent reason, from this very commission (Mark xvi. 15, 16.) for excluding infants from salvation, than from baptism.

For

For we contend that it is a law of nature, that children should partake of all the external rites and privileges of religion they are capable of, and therefore baptism, together with their parents; which cannot be said of their salvation.

To conclude: If infants were deemed, and justly deemed, *proselytes**; they may in like manner,

* Dr. STENNETT, indeed, seems to deny this, when he says, "Is it proper to say of persons, that they may be *proselyted* or disciplined without any previous instruction, conviction or persuasion?" (Ans. to Dr. A. p. 133.) To this I reply,

1. If it was *customary* among the Jews to call those who were translated from Heathenism to the true religion, or the kingdom of God among them, GERIM, *foreigners* or *inmates*; and if it was *customary* for the Greeks to call these Προσευλιτοι, *proselytes*, αὐτοὺς προσεληλυθεναι; and if it be FACT that *infants* were always reckoned, and by divine appointment, (Exod. xii. 48, and Numb. xv. 14, 15.) among these *inmates*—We may well ask, what *impropriety* is there in calling an infant a *proselyte*?

2. It is an *incontestible fact* that the Jewish writers, speak of *infants* and little children, as *proselytes*. 'Tis not only the *Gemara*, but the text of the *Misna* itself, both in the *Babylonian* and *Jerusalem Talmud*, which speaks of a *child* becoming or being made, a *proselyte*.—And the *Gemara* speaks expressly of "a *proselyte* in infancy." And MAIMONIDES calls a little child or an *infant* "a *proselyte*." (See Dr. WALL's History of Infant Baptism; Introd. § 3, 4, with the Authors there referred to.) This, Dr. GILE himself could not gainsay, and therefore gives it up. Body of Div. vol. iii. 486.

3. If a *proselyte* be *advena*, a *stranger*, one come over from one place or relation to another, as the term imports; what *impropriety* is there in applying it to infants? When we say "*strangers* are come to a place," is there any *impropriety* in our including *infants*, because *these* are strictly brought?

4. When our Lord says of *infants* (Matt. xix. 14.) "Suffer them, and forbid them not ελθεῖν πρὸς με," is there not the strictest propriety in calling *infants* when brought, PROSELYTES?

ner, be deemed *disciples*: for, (as a great critick observes) “a disciple and a profelyte being perfectly all one, save only that the latter denotes a *coming* from some *other nation* or country, which difference hath no place in this matter, where the disciples are specified to be received from *all nations*†.” And if *disciples*, they ought to be *baptized*; for the text in dispute affords no ground of exception against any who are *disciples*. “Nor ought that hoary maxim of legal interpretation to be hastily cast aside;—*We* must not distinguish, where the *law* does not distinguish.”—And should it be objected, that infants are not *made* disciples, and therefore should not be baptized; we answer, if they *are* disciples, they must be *constituted* such; and whether that constitution be derived from a divine appointment in favour of the *species*, from a ministerial act whereby they are profelyted to the christian religion (as heathen families were profelyted to the Jewish religion) or from any other cause, is perfectly immaterial in the present argument.—As to the trite objection urged from the *order* of the words, “*teach—baptizing them*,” I answer with Dr. ADDINGTON; “It is, in every view, indefensible and ill-grounded. It is a *mere english* criticism ||.” And with Dr. HAMMOND; “The phrase which is there used in the *original*, is a singular one, not duly expressed by our English*.” But, even in *our translation*

† Dr. HAMMOND'S SIX QUER. Q. iv. § 27.

|| Christian Minister's Reas. p. 112.

* Ut supra, § 25.

translation, there is no conjunction to denote a diversity of acts: for it is not "*teach AND baptize,*" but "*teach, baptizing them.*" Hence the author last quoted says, "We know from that place of Mat. xxviii. that baptism is the solemn ceremony of receiving into Christ's school the church ||."

AND, indeed, were our opposers indulged with their favourite rendering, *teach*, they must either renounce their singular notion of *positive institutions*, as utterly excluding all analogy and inferential reasoning, or find themselves involved in endless uncertainty; for on what authority can they deny baptism to *any* who are *taught*? And yet, how very unfit for baptism, our opponents being judges, are numbers who *are taught*, and who *profess* that Jesus is the son of God and the only Saviour? But if "*we* must not distinguish where *this law* does not distinguish," what gross absurdities would follow? Not more opposite is the Antipædobaptist hypothesis to the *truth*, than subversive of *itself*!

§ 48. LET us next inquire, In what sense the Apostles understood their commission? And particularly, whether they did not understand it to include the discipleship and baptism of infants with their parents? But here it is necessary to prescribe the limits of our inquiry. Now since the *positive part* of the evidence has been already established, it would be sufficient for us, in point of strict argument, to act henceforth only on the *defensive*

defensive; for until that part be disproved (which, I presume, will not be done in a hurry) the smallest probability will be a corroborating addition. We shall therefore attend, in the remaining part of this chapter, to what we apprehend to be, in connection with the premises, *additional* evidence; reserving for another place an examination of those passages in the apostolic writings, which are supposed by our opposers to be inimical to Pædobaptism.

LET us begin with Acts ii. 39. For *The PROMISE is to you, and to your CHILDREN, and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall CALL.*—There are three terms in this passage,—*promise, children, call*—the exact meaning of which it is necessary to ascertain before any deduction be attempted.

I. WHAT are we to understand by *the PROMISE*? —A satisfactory answer to this question requires, that we should fix the meaning of the term (*επαγγελία*) *promise*,—and determine what is the *matter promised*; for every promise is *of something*. Respecting the word *επαγγελία*, STOCKIUS remarks:
 “Generatim et vi originis ANNUNCIATIONEM
 “significat. Speciatim autem notat *promissionem*.
 “In hac significatione adhibetur nunc *proprie*,
 “nunc *improprie* et *metonymice*. *Proprie* si
 “adhibetur, denotat *actum voluntatis*, quo pro-
 “mittens se aliquid alteri daturum, vel facturum
 “indicat ac denuntiat. — *Improprie* et *metonymice*
 “significat *rem promissam*. — *Complementum et*
 “*eventum*

“*eventum promissionis*, &c.†” The word often occurs in the New Testament, and is variously rendered by Latin interpreters; as, *Promissum*, *promissio*, *pollicitatio*, *repromissio*, *nuncium*, &c. And BEZA observes: “*Est autem notanda hæc propria significatio ἐπαγγελίας a doctissimo BUDÆO observata, quæ gratuitum esse Dei promissum declarat*.*” In our translation, it is generally rendered, *promise*. But in 1 John i. 5. *Message*. — The passage we are upon, seems to be of the same import with Acts xiii. 26. *Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you that feareth God, TO YOU IS THE WORD OF THIS SALVATION sent.* ver. 32, 33. *And WE DECLARE UNTO YOU GLAD TIDINGS, how that the PROMISE which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised Jesus again.* Or, “*And we evangelize unto you that promise which was made unto the fathers, how that God, &c.*”

Now, whether the term *promise*, in Peter's address, signifies strictly, according to the force of the original (ab ἐπι et αγγελος, Denunciatio divinæ voluntatis et beneficentiæ†) *declaration*, *proclamation*, *annunciation*, *denunciation*, of the divine will and pleasure, a *message*, &c: or, more particularly denotes “*an act of the will, whereby the promiser shews and declares, that something shall be given to another, or done for him,*” it amounts in fact to the same thing, the difference being only circumstantial. For in this they both agree

† STOCKII Clav. Nov. Test. sub voc. * Annot. in loc.

†. Vid LEIGH Crit. Sac.

agree, that the *will* of the promiser must be *announced* to constitute either; and therefore must imply—"A DECLARATION OF GOD'S WILL concerning something." Nor is it again material whether it be taken *properly*, or *metonymically* for the *thing promised*; because, in the present case, "*the promise OF A THING*" is tantamount with "*the thing promised*." No difficulty therefore remains but what lies in ascertaining the *contents* of the promise, or *that* of which the promise is made.

SOME seek the Apostle's meaning from ver. 21. "*And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord SHALL BE SAVED.*" Some seek it from ver. 38. where "*the REMISSION OF SIN*" is promised. Others, from the last clause of the same verse, "*and ye shall receive the GIFT OF THE HOLY GHOST;*" and the rather because this *immediately precedes* the controverted text. And others suppose, that Peter here uses the phrase, "*The promise,*" by way of eminence and distinction. "The word [*promise*] in the New Testament," says Mr. CRUDEN, "is often taken for those promises that God heretofore made to Abraham, and the other Patriarchs, of sending the *Messiah*: It is in this sense that the Apostle Paul *commonly* uses the word promise.†" This use of the word in the text before us implies; The aspect of the promise in its present accomplishment in Jesus Christ, is towards you and your children. In vindication of this sense, several Expositors distinguish between the

† Concord, under the word *Promise*.

the Apostle's *advice*, and his *encouragement*. His *advice*—(1) Repent, (2) Be baptized, (3) Every one of you. His *encouragement*—(1) The remission of sins, (2) The gift of the Holy Ghost, (3) The well known promise refers to you and yours, notwithstanding your ungrateful and cruel treatment of the Messiah, who was the end and sum thereof. Thus BENEDICTUS ARETIUS: “*Consilium Petri duas complectitur partes. Prior monstrat facienda: Posterior addit rationes. Nam sine rationibus aliquid jubere rebus afflictis non satis est prudentis oratoris. Itaque orator apostolicus perspicuitati studet. Jubet facienda, ac consilii subnectit admodum perspicuas rationes. — Primum a fine rei commendat: In REMISSIONEM PECATORUM — Alia ratio est, QUIA ACCIPIETIS DONUM SPIRITUS sancti. — Tertio, VOBIS ENIM est PROMISSIO FACTA ET LIBERIS VESTRIS, h. e. de Messia, et illius beneficiis, promissiones in primis spectant ad vos. — Quarto, declarat personas, ad quas spectant promissiones. VOBIS & LIBERIS VESTRIS, ET QUI LONGE SUNT*.*”

THIS view of the passage appears to me most agreeable to the scope and occasion of it. For the Apostle's reply and encouragement must be supposed *answerable* to the solicitude and enquiry of the awakened multitude. What particularly struck them, it seems, was, “the evidence with which the Apostle urged the *Messiahship* of *Jesus* from

* BENED. ARET. Comment. in Act. ii. See also CALVIN'S admirable Notes on the text in question.

from the Jewish writings, and the miraculous gifts which were now visible and astonishing.”— This was the great design of those miraculous effusions, “to reprove the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment;” that is, to be an unparalleled and invincible demonstration of the Messiahship of Jesus Christ. This is what he *principally* aimed at, and this idea he fixes in their minds, “as a nail fastened in a sure place,” by concluding in these pungent and persuasive expressions—ver. 36 “*Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*” The historian adds, “*Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the Apostles, Men and brethren what shall we do?*” Peter replies, “Repent; and your sins, particularly your rejection and crucifixion of the Messiah, shall be remitted. Be baptized, every one of you; submit to this initiatory ordinance of his kingdom, which exhibits the influences of the Holy Spirit; and Christ shall baptize you, as John his forerunner has often declared, with the Holy Ghost; at least this is your path of duty,—he has the residue of the Spirit,—and do not imagine that the *grace of Christ*, or the blessings of his kingdom, are *peculiar to us*. For the well-known promise, grant, covenant, or EXHIBITION of *mercy and grace*, is common to us all. Do not suppose that *we* have any *other* divine charter, whereby we are entitled to these unspeakable blessings,

blessings, than what was granted of old to our forefathers: and this, you may be sure, is no less open to you, as a ground of application for the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom, than to us. And, according to what was said of old, that in HIM all the families of the earth were to be blessed, the time is come that the *gentile* nations, as well as our own, are to be called to him."

To *confine* the promise to the *miraculous* gifts of the Spirit, would be unworthy of an apostle; for it would be prescribing a remedy to the multitude, cut to the heart with remorse for their cruel treatment of Jesus, inadequate to the disease. When he speaks of *the promise*, it must be as a *ground* of their faith and their access to God; but nothing can be so to fallen man but a dispensation of mercy, a sacred warrant, salvation thro' a Redeemer, the ministry of reconciliation, in a word, the *covenant of grace* in its exhibition and direction to him. I say in its EXHIBITION or external form, for this, and this *alone*, properly speaking, is the ground of a sinner's approach to God. "To us are given, that is, EXHIBITED for our use and encouragement, *exceeding great and precious PROMISES, that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature.* (2 Pet. i. 4.) For the apostle to assure his hearers, that *the promise was to them*, in their present circumstances, was the same as to *preach the gospel to them*. And these are used synonymously. (See Gal. iii. 8 and 18.) For, *to give Abraham*

a *divine* PROMISE, is the same as, *to preach the GOSPEL to him.*

BESIDES: Is there any probability *in fact*, that ALL who complied with this exhortation received *the promise*, if the *miraculous gifts* of the Spirit as about to be conferred upon them, be thereby intended? Or was *this* promise made to the mixed multitude; to their children *as such*, whether their immediate offspring or posterity; to *all* afar off, whether Jews or Gentiles, that the Lord should *call*? If this interpretation were admitted, would it not follow, that we sinners of the Gentiles, being some of the ALL *that were afar off*, upon being *called* of the Lord, upon *repentance* and *baptism*, may expect from *the promise*, the *miraculous gifts* of the Holy Ghost? In my opinion, it could be *then* no *just motive* either to repentance, to be baptized, or to any christian duty, *of itself*; and to us who are called and afar off, it can be *no motive at all*. And, indeed, had any complied from such an expectation of miraculous endowments, except in subordination to a *more important* promise, their mercenary motive must stand condemned as unworthy of christianity, and therefore unworthy of an inspired teacher of it to recommend. — But should any contend, that the *promise* refers to the Holy Ghost in his ordinary gracious influences, and not merely those which were miraculous, this is virtually to admit that sense of the passage for which I plead; for it implies and eminently contains what the scriptures

scriptures term, καὶ ἐσχεν, *the promise*. “To conclude this point, the apostle himself has plainly informed us, in another place, what he here intends by the promise; see Acts iii. 25. where, urging much the same exhortation upon his Jewish hearers, as he does here, he enforces it with this argument: “Ye are the children of the covenant,” [or promise, according to Gal. iii. 18.] “which God made with our fathers” [or granted to our fathers; ἡς διεθelo ὁ Θεος προς τας πατερας ημων,] “saying unto Abraham, and in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed; unto you *first* [or *primarily* for your sake,] God hath raised up his son Jesus, and sent him to bless you, &c. †”

§ 49. 2. WHO are the *persons to whom* the promise is made? “The promise is unto YOU, and to your CHILDREN, and to ALL that are AFAR OFF, even AS MANY as the Lord our God SHALL CALL.” The promise is unto YOU, says the apostle; *you* who now hear me; *you* who compose this vast assembly, of every nation, rank or age. *You* does the Lord our God call to repentance, who have rejected and murdered the Prince of Life; on whom the guilt of the horrid deed, so impiously imprecated on yourselves and children, must otherwise abide. *You*, without exception, who are capable of remorse, does the Lord our God call to repentance, in as much as all of you have sins to repent of; and a

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† BOSTWICK'S Fair and Rational Vindication of Inf. Bapt. p. 9.

state to be changed for the better. And to *each* one of you, without the least exception, is the *promise*, the glad tidings of mercy, made. And as *baptism* is the instituted *seal* of that promise, you may be sure that if the one belongs to you, the other does of course; for if the testamentary grant be yours, it follows that every confirmation of that grant is yours, of which nature baptism is. Here we might ask, Is it not reasonable to suppose, that among so great a multitude there were some children and infants in arms before the apostle; and if so, by what rule were such excepted from being included in this declaration — the promise is unto *you*? Were they not addressed as a body? Or, will it be said, “All who are capable of *repentance* were addressed?” Nay, rather, all who were capable of repentance were called to repent; and all who were capable of the promise or divine grant, and its seal, were included therein. And no one can deny that infants are capable of bequeathments and grants (and consequently the *sealing* of them) in their favour.

BUT to put this matter further out of doubt, the apostle adds, “*the promise, or grant, is to your CHILDREN, τοις τέκνοις.*” It appears to me a matter of no great moment, in this controversy, whether we understand by the term *children*, sons and daughters, seed, offspring, descendants, posterity, or any other the like; for none of these expressions *exclude* infants, which is sufficient for our purpose. If there be any *exclusion*

sion in the case, it must be sought, not from *these terms*, but some *other* considerations; which is foreign to the present point. Suppose, for instance, our opponents attempt the exclusion of infants, by adopting the term, *posterity*; it will not serve their turn: for who can we understand by the *posterity* of a person or persons, but those who lineally come after, or descend from such? And is not the term applicable to them, as soon as they exist? Are they not such in every stage of life? Besides: Were that interpretation allowed, which excludes all from posterity but adults, what would it prove? Why, that the *promise* is to the adult *posterity* of this audience, tho' they were Jews or Mahometans, but *not* to the infant offspring of any Christian. But must we regard our infant children, tho' born in sin, in a *less favourable condition*, as to any merciful grant, than the obstinate Jew, and the deluded Turk? He that *can* believe it, let him.

NOR is it material, whether the phrase, "*all that are afar off*," refer to distant Jews or Gentiles; distant as to place or time. From this phrase infants are not excluded, nay are clearly implied.

BUT, says Mr. B. "There is nothing said about the promise respecting any, besides those whom *the Lord our God shall call*. Yes, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, whether they be parents or children, they must be *called*, before this text will permit us to view them as interested

in that promise of which it speaks †." To this we readily subscribe; but deny what he immediately subjoins: "which intirely excludes infants from all consideration here." This will lead us to inquire,

§ 50. 3. WHAT are we to understand by the term, προσκαλεσθαι, CALL? The word Προσκαλεομαι, which often occurs in the New Testament, (tho' never I believe in its active form,) plainly and properly signifies, *advoco, accerso, adisco, arcesso, &c.* LEIGH: "Utrumque significat, & *convocare* & *ad se vocare*, Mat. x. 1, &c.*" STOCKIUS: "Generatim notat *advocare*, connotato termino ad quem, five hic sit persona five res personæ opposita.—Est *vocare gentes AD ECCLESIAM*, per predicationem evangelii, Act. ii. 39||." But here we should carefully distinguish between *God's call* and *men's compliance* with it. The latter of these ideas is out of the present question; being excluded by the nature of the subject, and the proper force of the term. Nor should we confound the CALL of the gospel, with God's secret choice of individuals, or his efficacious drawing of them to himself to love and serve him in spirit and in truth. These things belong to a sovereign invisible dispensation; a dispensation of quite a different nature from what our apostle mainly intends. And indeed, with regard to what is termed *effectual calling*, which Mr. B. seems to take for granted is here intended, the
call

† Pædob. Exam. p. 362.

* Critica Sacra, sub voce.

|| Clav. Nov. Test. sub voce.

call must not be confounded with the *effect* of it. In my apprehension, the secret and efficacious influence of God on the sinner's mind, whereby it is disposed to receive the truth, is very improperly termed God's *call*. For his *calling* of them, properly speaking, is by his *word*, his will *revealed*, the *ministry* of reconciliation, &c. but what renders this calling *effectual*, is the imparted influence or powerful operation of the Spirit on the mind, and thereby a disposition, inclination, or moral ability, is produced, to *comply* with the call. Hence *many* are *called*, but *few* are *chosen* *.

BESIDES: The promise, or gospel grant, is not any blessing conferred *in consequence* of *effectual calling*, but in *subserviency* to it. For the promise is the *foundation* of our access to God, and our *encouragement* to repentance, and not a blessing consequent upon either. Repenting, complying, coming to God, &c. are *our* acts and exercises; but without a promise they have no ground, no motive, no existence. Persons, families, and nations, are *called* THAT THEY MAY COMPLY, and the promise is given them as the *inducement*. When any *actually comply* with the purport of the call, we are taught and obliged to ascribe that efficiency, not to our own distinguishing worthiness and ability, but to the power of God, executing the plan of sovereign distinguishing love. Thus God *calls*, but man, through the stupifying effect of sin, refuses; yet

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* Matt. xx. 16, xxii. 14.

when God *works* in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure, who can let? Nevertheless, the blessings promised, or exhibited in the promise, become actually ours in consequence of our answering the divine requisition or *call*.

ON the whole: As the apostle has no reference to the *internal* power of grace, we are constrained to seek his meaning in the *external* call of the gospel. Into whatever part of the gentile world, as if he had said, the cloud of divine providence moves, from henceforth, the ministry of reconciliation, or God's *call* to men by the Gospel, is designed to follow it. Our call has no limitation but what arises in the course of providential conduct. If *all* the gentile nations are not actually evangelized, such confinement and seeming partiality is not owing to any limiting clause in our commission, but to the all-wise conduct of providence, while it opens a door of entrance to some nations, and leaves others for a time shut. But no sooner is a person, a family, a nation, or a people, *evangelized*, or addressed by a gospel ministry, than we can assure them, that the promise is to *them and theirs*. If they *reject* the call, they reject also the promise; and if they *reject* the promise, grant, or covenant, they have no right to the *seal*; for the instrument and the seal must not be separated. *External* compliance is sufficient to secure whatever is in the covenant of an *external nature*; and baptism, the initiating seal, being *such*, by that compliance it is secured. But an *internal* and spiritual compliance, and that alone

alone, secures to us whatever is in the covenant of an *internal* and spiritual nature. And whence the ability to comply, as before observed, belongs to another question, and flows from the covenant of redemption, well ordered in all things and sure, in its *internal form*.

WE might again ask : Are any individuals, families, tribes, or nations, *profelyted* to the visible church of God, without being *called* ? Does not *profelyting* of necessity imply *calling* ? Yet infants may be *profelyted* with their parents, as parts of themselves, as members of families, and as making a very considerable part of those *nations* that may be *joined to the Lord* ; and therefore such infants should be reckoned among the *called*. On the whole, the following remark of CALVIN on the place, appears very just and comprehensive.

“ Christus diruta maceria, utrosque reconciliavit
 “ Patri, & veniens annunciavit pacem his qui
 “ *prope* erant, & his qui *procul*. Nunc tenemus
 “ Petri mentem. Nam ut Christi gratiam am-
 “ plificet, eam Judeis sic proponit, ut Gentes
 “ quoque fore consortes dicat. Ideo utitur *verbo*
 “ *advocandi* : ac si diceret, Quemadmodum vos
 “ prius in unum populum sua voce collegit Deus,
 “ ita vox eadem ubique personabit, ut qui remoti
 “ sunt, ad vos accedant, ubi novo Dei edicto
 “ fuerint accersiti†.”

Now if this be the meaning of the text, it appears—(1) That wherever the *dispensation* of the gospel comes, there the *promise* comes. For

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† CALVINI Comment, in Act. ii. 39.

to be *called* is to be "*invited* to the honours and privileges of the visible church;" and to be *the called*, as expressive of a continued state, in the scripture style, is to be actually possessed of such privileges. Thus Isa. lxviii. 12. *Hearken unto me, O Jacob, and Israel* MY CALLED. Rom. i. 6. *Among whom are ye also* THE CALLED of *Jesus Christ*. ver. 7. *To ALL that be in Rome, beloved of God, CALLED to be saints, &c.* (2) That no people are actually *the called* of God, in a state of gospel privileges, but their children, *as theirs*, or in virtue of their right in them, are included with them. (3) When we consider this, in connection with preceding revelations, we cannot say, properly, that infants' *right* to their parents' privileges, inclusive of the promise and initiatory seal, is *founded* here, but *confirmed*: rather, what is *founded* in the law of nature, what is *implied* in every dispensation, and what has been in many instances explicitly *ratified*, is here *asserted* and *confirmed* against all suspicion to the contrary, viz. That the promise, covenant, or grant of mercy, is not more to the parents than to their children; and consequently the initiating and confirming seal of that grant, baptism*."

§ 51. WE come now to inquire what *additional* evidence we have from the account given us of HOUSEHOLDS, from ACTS xvi. 15. *When she*

* It may be here remarked, that the interpretations of Dr. OWEN and WITTIUS, of HAMMOND and LIMBORCH, are not at all inconsistent with Pædobaptist principles as here stated, tho' produced by Mr. B. in favour of Antipædobaptism; and the same remark is applicable to numerous other instances, in the work I am examining.

she was baptized and her HOUSEHOLD. — Acts xvi. 33. *And was baptized, he and* ALL HIS, *straightway.* — I Cor. i. 16. *I baptized also the* HOUSEHOLD *of* Stephanus. But here it is necessary to premise what is the just use and real importance of these passages in the controversy. Our opponents would fain insinuate, that if we cannot demonstrate hence there actually were infants in these families, and that these were baptized, the texts in question are of *no use* to the Pædobaptist cause. But this is a great mistake. We insist, from *other* premises, that parents *ought* to baptize their children; therefore we do not urge these texts to *prove their right*, but to *increase the probability* that they were *de facto* baptized. I say, to increase the *probability*; for it is evident from the nature of the controversy, that these texts, which refer to a case of *fact*, should be weighed only in the scales of *right*; and that the balance of probability will preponderate according as the previous right is proved or disproved.

WE have insisted from various topicks—the law of nature—the divine dispensations—prophetick language—our Lord's ministry and commission, &c.—that religion, that is, Christianity, (for the *nature* of it does not alter the case) is a *family* concern. In other words, a man's children, and non-opposing domesticks, are not only to be *denominated* from his religious profession, as the head of the family, but are entitled to all the external *privileges* of that religion, as instituted means of grace and godliness, according to their respective capacities. When therefore we
hear

hear of a man who has a family, that he became a believer, a disciple, or a christian, we infer (and the more excellent the nature and quality of his religion the more rational the inference) — we infer, that his family is a *christian family*; and that each member of it, that is not an *opposer*, is entitled to those privileges he himself enjoys, according as it is capable: I say not an *opposer*, for to compel any, who are *sui juris*, would be impious, since christianity, in this important particular, does not interfere with the rights of nature. And the matter of *right* standing thus, it would be *uncharitable* and *unreasonable* to suppose the matter of *fact* to be otherwise, especially in the apostolic age. We may therefore conclude, when we read — “her HOUSEHOLD — his HOUSEHOLD — ALL HIS” — were baptized, that these things are spoken of *households* or families *as such*, or *collectively*; and that we should not understand the terms distributively, but with the proviso of *preceptu singulorum*. For, if a man’s children be equally capable of baptism with himself, and believing or repenting is a qualification not at all essential to the ordinance, as belonging to its *nature*, but only necessary to those who are capable of them, there remains no ground of exception against infants; that is, if there were any children or infants in any of the families referred to, we *ought* to conclude they *were* baptized. The parent, or head of the family, would *of course*, according to all the sources of information he could consult, if a *heathen*, the light of nature, if a *Jew*,
the

the Old Testament, and more especially in either case from the *genius* of christianity, consider his dependants, particularly his children, being at his disposal for their benefit, as entitled to the *same privileges*, or means of grace and religion, as himself—if *not EXPRESSLY PROHIBITED*.

Mr. B. availing himself of LIMBORCH's concession, that the argument from the account of *households* being baptized, amounts to no more than a *bare probability* that there were any *infants* baptized as well as adults in those families; seems to forget that a *bare probability* (*cæt. par.*) is *very sufficient* to influence an impartial mind. For if one side of a question be only *barely PROBABLE*, all things considered, the other side surely is *so far IMPROBABLE*. "It may admit of a query," says Mr. B. "whether, in this metropolis, a *majority* of households have any mere infants in them." Granted: but will it admit of a query, whether *three families* for *one* in the metropolis, or in any city, town, or parish in the kingdom; or, more properly, in those parts of the world, and that age, which these passages refer to, had any? Our argument fairly rests not on *ONE* family *separately* considered, but on the *THREE* unitedly. Otherwise, could we produce a *thousand* instances out of the sacred records of a person's *household*, or *all his*, being baptized, Mr. B.'s mode of arguing would leave the *probability* the *very same*; which is absurd.

As to what is urged from these phrases—"Elkanah and ALL HIS HOUSE went up to offer unto the
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the Lord the yearly sacrifice. A nobleman at Capernaum believed, and his WHOLE HOUSE. Cornelius feared God with ALL HIS HOUSE. Unruly talkers subvert WHOLE HOUSES. Paul and his companion spake the word of the Lord to the Philippian jailor, and to ALL that were in his house. He, believing in God, rejoiced, WITH ALL HIS HOUSE. Ye know the HOUSE of Stephanas, that IT is the FIRST FRUITS OF ACHAIA, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints*—and the like; let any unprejudiced mind reflect, whether such phrases be not perfectly consistent with our account of households; nay, whether they do not directly tend to establish it. For is not this an idea most naturally suggested,—that religion, according to the sacred oracles, as well as from the reasonableness of the thing, is, tho' internally considered a personal concern, yet as externally professed a family concern. Do not such passages intimate, and more than barely intimate, that no surer do the means of grace belong to a person, than they belong to his household as such?—"In all which examples," says Mr. B. "infants must be excepted||." If by examples he intends the actions connected with the universal terms, "whole house, all his house, &c." such as, "all his house went up to offer, his whole house believed, all his house feared God, unruly talkers subvert whole

* 1 Sam. i. 27. John iv. 53. Acts x. 2. Tit. i. 11, 12. Acts xvi. 32, 34. and xviii. 8. 1 Cor. xvi. 15.

|| Perdob. Exam. p. 369.

whole houses, Paul *spoke the word* to all in a house," and so on; it is manifest such examples are nothing to the purpose. For our arguments do not *imply*, what such a remark seems alone calculated to shew, that we ascribe to infants what they are *naturally incapable* of. But if by "examples" he means the universal terms, "all, whole, &c." as being the *subjects* of those actions, and therefore there could be *no infants* in those families; our author confutes himself: for he owns "it is not uncommon for the sacred writers " to assert this, or the other, concerning a household, without any express limitation; which " is manifestly meant of only the *greater part* *." His "examples," therefore, neither tend to shew that there were *no infants* in the households in question, nor, supposing there were any, that they were *not baptized*. Not the *former*; for in the very examples he produces, there might have been infants, from his own *concession*, provided the *greater part* be adults. Not the *latter*; for that an infant should be *baptized* implies no *impossibility*, as the *actions* in the "examples" produced do; nor any thing *improbable* without begging the question in debate. What the objection really proves, is what no one ever denied, —that there *may* be families *without* infants! To which we beg leave to make a reply suitable to its importance—there *may* be families *with* infants. But is it not *probable* that in *three families*

* Ibid.

lies there was an infant or a young child? And is it not *very probable*, if infants were *capable* of the rite of baptism as well as the parents, that they were *baptized*? — But what do I say? will not the following objection marr the whole?

“ IF our opposers would be true to their argument, by acting consistently with it, they must, when called to baptize the *master* of a family, administer the same ordinance to his *wife*, his *children*, and his *domesticks*, without exception, if not baptized before, whether they profess repentance towards God, and faith in Christ, or not*.” No, this is not a legitimate consequence. For

1. THO’ a master has a right over his children, and in some measure his other domesticks, for their good and benefit, this does not imply that he ought to act the tyrant, to force the conscience, or to use compulsion in religious matters.

2. OUR argument, and our acting consistently with it, require no such promiscuous and unreasonable proceedings as the objection insinuates. The law by which we suppose a parent or a master ought to be ruled in those cases is this — that he benefit his children, and *all his*, as they are *capable*. And accordingly we insist,

3. THAT *infancy* is no greater objection to baptism, than to proselytism or circumcision, that is, is no just plea of exclusion at all; whereas an *opposition* to Christ, his gospel, and the means of

* Pædob. Exam. p. 370, 371.

of grace, is a reasonable and scriptural ground of exclusion. No man has a right to *force* another, in matters of judgment and conscience, in proportion as that other has a right to judge for himself, even in the most advantageous and momentous concerns. And that there may be adult persons in a family, whose unalienable right of private judgment overbalances the authority and right of the domestick head, I suppose none will deny. Hence we conclude, that

4. THO' the promise and its initiatory seal may be *rejected* by some of a man's domesticks, yet that these were *intended* and directed to him and to ALL HIS-*as such*; and consequently that this is a sufficient reason for us to conclude, that ALL of them are entitled thereto, œconomically, who do not *reject* the counsel of God against themselves, as the Pharisees and lawyers did, Luke vii. 29, 30*.

§ 52. AMONG

* “ When Zaccheus, who was not by birth a son of Abraham, but a sinner, a Gentile, was thus converted, Christ enlargeth his COVENANT to his family also — *This day is salvation come to this HOUSE, in as much as he also is a son of Abraham*, Luke xix. 9.— He makes [his believing in Christ] the reason why his HOUSE should be saved also, and so the *covenant* stuck with them of his family likewise, *because the father of the family was now a believer*. — And let me add this, that as Christ once before in the conversion of the Centurion, the first-fruits of the Gentiles, (Matt. viii) did first break open the treasury of the Gentiles' conversion; so upon occasion of this man's conversion afterwards, he shews the *privilege* of the Gentiles *when* converted — shewing how their *covenant* was to run by HOUSEHOLDS, in a conformity to Abraham's family at first.—Thus in like manner, when the apostles came to preach the gospel to a Gentile *householder*, master or father of a
“ family

§ 52. AMONG those passages which tend to shew in what sense the apostles understood their commission with respect to the Jewish and Gentile nations, is Rom. xi. 11—31. on which I would offer the following reflections.

I. NOTHING

“ *family*, they carried the offer of it in *this tenour*, and in the way of
 “ *this privilege*, as a MOTIVE to conversion.—In the New Testament
 “ we find in the *event* (which still answers to *promises*) that the
 “ gospel spread itself thro’ *whole HOUSEHOLDS*, this being the tenure
 “ of our *covenant*—Now then, when the covenant thus runs with
 “ the *heads of houses* for the *families* themselves, I argue thus from
 “ thence for their *children*, That *they* must needs be included and
 “ intended in a more *special* manner; for they are the *natural* branches,
 “ and servants but *engrafted*, as was said of the Jews and Gentiles in
 “ the like case.—The *house* of Aaron and his *children*, are put for
 “ one and the same, Ps. cxv. 12, 15. In like phrase of speech Leah
 “ and Rachel in bringing forth children, are said to build up the *house*
 “ of Israel, Ruth iv. 11. And so the word HOUSE is used for
 “ *posterity* in all languages. And for the further confirmation of this,
 “ namely, that this tenure of the Gentiles’ covenant in a conformity
 “ to Abraham’s, should run thus *by families* from the *heads* there-
 “ of, this doth fully suit with the original promise made to Abraham
 “ himself, when the scripture foresaw (as Paul’s phrase is) that the
 “ Gentiles should be justified—as *his seed*. The promise (Gen. xii.
 “ 3.) runs in these terms, *In thee shall all the FAMILIES of the*
 “ *earth be blessed*; as elsewhere (Gen. xviii. 18. and xxii. 18.) it run^d
 “ in these terms, *All the NATIONS of the earth shall be blessed*.
 “ These expressions are both used;—to shew, the seed should be of
 “ all *nations and people*; yet so, as withal, the covenant was to run
 “ *by families* in those nations. Therefore the New Testament quotes
 “ it in both senses. Gal. iii. 8. says *πᾶντα τὰ ἔθνη*, all nations.
 “ —Acts iii 25. *καὶ πατρίαι*, fatherhoods of the earth.

“ And further:—this was the *primitive and natural church way*,
 “ under the *Law of nature* afore Moses; unto which therefore for
 “ ever God hath suited this *family covenant*, and in Abraham ratified
 “ and sanctified it to the end of the world.—And the reason why God
 “ chose this of a *family* to convey the covenant by, was, that this soci-
 “ ety was the only *natural society* of all others, and therefore God did
 “ always

I. NOTHING less seems implied by the apostle, than that the conversion of the Gentiles was intended to be *national*, as appears from the whole of his reasoning. That is, he considers them as a *people*, or as a *body*, in the same sense as the Jews were so. All must allow his idea is a *collective* one; and we further insist, that the *individuals* or members of the gentile or gospel church here described cannot be adults *exclusively*. His idea of the gentile church is such as *cannot* agree to a company of adult believers, or the Antipædobaptist notion of the gospel church. And if this assertion be made good, either they or Paul must be wrong. Let us briefly analyze and investigate the apostle's reasoning.

(1) HE

"always choose it throughout all states of the church,—God herein
 "engrafting (as he uses to do grace on nature in our spirits, when
 "he converts us, so) his covenant of grace upon this covenant of
 "nature to run in the channel of it." See Dr. THOMAS GOODWIN'S Works, Vol. ii. p. 391, 392, 393.—But let the less informed reader carefully distinguish, in judging of God's covenant to man, to families, &c. between the *exhibition made* and the *grace possessed*. The present controversy has to do immediately only with the *former*; which is *alone*, strictly speaking, the foundation of a sinner's encouragement to draw near to God for mercy, grace, and every needful blessing. As to the notion of hereditary *grace possessed*, as if *this* descended from father to son, it is equally unscriptural and absurd. That the Lord should condescend to declare, that he *will be* A God *unto me, and mine*, is one thing (and how unspeakable the privilege!); but for me to conclude from thence that I am *possessed* of grace, or a person *actually justified*, would be highly presumptuous. He is my God, *that I may BELIEVE*, &c.; but not that I may conclude upon my *state* as if it proved my *justification*, &c. And yet, when from just premises I infer my *justified state*, I may safely call the Lord "*my God*" in the *more peculiar* and discriminating sense.

(1) HE employs such *general terms*, in contrasting the gospel church with the Jewish, as, we apprehend, would be very improper to express any other church state, than that which agrees to a body of people, comprehending old and young. Thus he uses the terms *Gentiles*, or *nations*; the *world*; *Israel*; &c.

(2) THE manner in which he *contrasts* the *partial fall*, and the *complete restoration* of the Jews; as also the different states of the Jews and the Gentiles; is *incompatible* with that hypotheses which we oppose.

(3) HIS *figurative illustration* of the Jewish and gospel churches, affords another argument in favour of our view of the subject. He speaks of the two churches as the *root and branches* of a tree; and the *lopping off* answers to the *grafting in*.

(4) THE *assignable cause* of the Jews' rejection, *unbelief*, and the *remedial means* of their reinstatement, *believing*, are mentioned in such a connection and light, as cannot be understood of their subjects as *individuals*, but as a *body of people*, consisting of old and young, parents and children. Their unbelief consisted in the general and *national rejection* of the Messiah; and their faith, the only mean of their desirable reinstatement, must consist in a *general reception* of Christ.

(5) THE *universality* of their *future conversion* is represented in such a manner as totally disagrees with the Antipædobaptist view of gospel privileges

privileges in general, and church-membership in particular.

(6) As their *standing* before their renunciation of the Messiah was *complete*, like a perfect olive tree consisting of root and branch, or like the vine which God brought out of Egypt, planted in Canaan, and which covered the whole land with its luxuriant ramifications; so their having *quitted* that standing is represented by the apostle in such a manner as to shew them highly *blameable* and *criminal*. That *standing*, then, was what they *ought* to have maintained; therefore it was not any *peculiarity* of covenant relation designed to cease and to be annihilated under the Messiah. Whatever they were *before* their national unbelief, their *stumbling*, and *diminishing*; whatever that *fulness* was they *fell from*, on account of which they are here represented as *faulty* and *sinful*; it inevitably follows, that it was such a *standing* and *fulness* as the gospel was not *intended* to abolish, but was calculated to establish and promote. But what could such a *standing* and *complete fulness* or abundance be? Was it their *standing*, fast in *personal piety*? Was it their abounding in *adult believers*, when it was attempted to prevent their downfall? Was it any *peculiar privilege* designed to last until the Messiah came, and no longer? No: neither of these suppositions can possibly be true. Not the *two first*,—for they are contradicted by plain matter of fact; nor the *last*,—for it is incontrovertibly *implied*, that if they left their standing,

standing, and lost their fulness, it was owing to their sin, their *blindness*, &c. and on the other hand, if they, as a nation or body of people, received the Redeemer, their fall and diminution would be *prevented*.

IN short, from the very dawn of gospel light nothing else was intended than their *national salvation*, or continued *church-relation* to God as a body at large. To this tended the flaming zeal of John the Baptist; to this tended the venerable ministry of the Son of God, and the constant efforts of his ministering disciples, under his direction; to this tended the unwearied labours, fervent prayers, and affectionate exhortations of his inspired apostles; and especially after this Paul ardently pursued; to accomplish this he could *wish himself accursed from Christ*, and for non-success herein he had *great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart*. (Rom. ix. 2, 3.)

BUT, if this was the real avowed *intendment* of the gospel ministry, which Mr. B. neither does, nor, I presume, can deny, relative to all the inhabitants of Judea; it follows from the *whole drift* of the apostle's argumentation—from the *general terms* he employs—from the *contrast* he draws—and from his *figurative illustrations* and comparisons,—that the real avowed intendment of the gospel ministry among the Gentiles or *all the nations* of the world, is nothing less extensive than their *national salvation*, that is, their external church-relation to God as bodies
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at large, comprehensive of all ages and descriptions of mankind*.

MOREOVER: the *future fulness* of the Jews, to be accomplished by their embracing Jesus Christ as their Messiah, will *reinstate* them in their former position, ver. 23. *And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be GRAFTED IN AGAIN.* "Grafted in again!"—how? *reinstate* them! in what? No solid answer but one can be assigned, viz. In all those *church-privileges* which they enjoyed, as a general body of people, excepting what was merely typical and ceremonial. But the *church-membership* of infants and children was *not such*; it was before Moses, before Abraham, more ancient than the flood, yes, coeval with the first family in the world. Therefore, *this* will be a part of the restored privilege. While they continue to renounce all connection with Christ the Life of the tree, his church, they must needs be withered branches; but, re-
R ceiving

* The inspired prophets " extol not merely the inherent excellence, but *wide extent*, of the heavenly kingdom. Whenever the prospect rises before them, and it was often presented to their view, their heart glows with instant rapture at the splendid scene; the powers of language are exhausted to convey their lofty conceptions of those days of gladness, when all nations whom the Lord hath made shall turn unto him, and walk in the light of his holy word. We do not assert, that in order to warrant the expressions used on this occasion, it is necessary that every individual of the human species should serve God with a pure heart and faith unfeigned: but if the *whole race* shall not hereafter be, what they have not yet been, **VISIBLE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST**, language is useless, and words have no meaning." CHURTON'S Pampton's Lectures. Sermon. vii. p. 223.

ceiving him, both the branches and their *buds* shall vegetate again in the visible universal church.

Mr. B. in his *Reflection* on ver. 16. says : “ Here “ it may be observed, that baptism is not the subject of Paul’s discourse.” Granted : but he must grant also in his turn, that *church-membership* and *church-privileges* are the subject of Paul’s discourse. And he will find it too difficult to shew, that baptism is not *included* therein ; which leads me to another reflection, viz.

§ 52. 2. THAT the apostle’s reasoning *necessarily includes infant baptism*. It has been I think demonstrated, in the last section, that infant church-membership and privileges are included in his reasoning ; that the christian church both of Gentiles and Jews, must, according to him, be made up in a great measure of infants and children. That is to say, the gospel ministry or dispensation *designs* and *intends*, in its own nature, nothing short of this. But if so, the consequence is evident, that they are *intituled* thereto by the very nature of the gospel church, and a *divine grant*. According to Paul, that is, according to the genuine spirit and native tendency of the gospel ; according to the *Will of God* ; according to the last will and testament of Jesus, which he sealed with his own blood ; and according to the witness of the spirit of truth, by whose infallible direction Paul reasoned and wrote,—infants have a *right* of church-membership with their parents. But who sees not, that if they have that right, they have, of course, a right to *baptism*, the ceremony of *initiation*. To deny this

this would be as ridiculous as to say, that a man and his family have a legal right to a house, but dare not enter it thro' the door, the only door, that leads to it; or, that he has a legal right to certain premises, but has nothing to do with the ways and avenues leading thereto.

THE apostle says (Rom. xi. 16.) *For if the first fruit be HOLY, the lump is also HOLY: and if the root be HOLY, so are the branches.* On which Mr. B. reflects, that the word *holy* is mentioned, “in reference to the *ancient patriarchs*, “especially Abraham: in reference to those converted Jews, that were the *first fruits* of a “christian ministry: and in reference to the *future conversion* of Abraham’s posterity, in the “latter day.” And immediately infers, “that “the passage has no regard to any christian parent, as a *root*; or to his infant offspring, as “*branches* arising from it†.” But how do the premises, supposing them unexceptionable, support his conclusion? For suppose the *first fruit* be the *ancient patriarchs*, were not those their descendants who *received* the Messiah a part of the *Lump* or consecrated mass? Or, must we say, that their reception of him, and submission to his righteous government, made them an *unholy*, or *less* holy, part of that Lump? It cannot be denied, that what is here called the *lump* intends the *descendants* of these patriarchs as such, without any exception of infants; the *infants*, therefore, of their descendants, who had not as yet embraced the Messiah, were of the *holy* lump, and shall those parts of the same mass be pro-

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nounced *unholy*, BECAUSE of their parents' obedient faith? While *to-day* the parent *rejects* the Messiah, he and his children are parts of the *holy lump* alike; but *to-morrow* the parent *embraces* the same invaluable blessing, and HE *continues* in his privilege, and has it greatly *increased*, but his CHILDREN — still the *descendants* of Abraham, and, were it not for their parents' *faith*! would still be *holy*—his *children* become *unholy*. While they were *holy*, it was their *privilege*, for in that view the apostle speaks of it. But lo! on Antipædobaptist principles, the parents' *faith*, makes the child *unholy*! The parent's *promotion*, *degrades* the child! "He that *can* believe it let him believe it."

AGAIN: supposing the *first fruit* to intend the first Jewish converts to christianity; it still follows that the *whole mass*, of which they are a part, is *holy*: and it appears from the scope of the passage, that this holiness of the lump is not what *shall hereafter* take place, as the *effect* of gospel preaching; but is represented as the encouraging reason why the gospel *ought* to be preached to them. The apostle's argument, it seems, is not, Inasmuch as some Jews *do* now believe, this is a token and pledge that Abraham's posterity at large *shall* believe hereafter: but rather, —because the *other* parts of the lump are *no less* holy than that which received the Messiah; *therefore* there was an encouraging prospect of their conversion also. But if this be denied, the case is still worse. For if it be said, that the Jewish converts to christianity were the *first fruit*

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in reference to the future church state of *all Israel*; and that the consecration of the *part* sanctified the *whole*: it then follows, contrary to what our opponents are willing to allow, that the unconverted are *sanctified*, or made *holy*, by being only related to christians; and if so, for the same reason children may be said to be sanctified or holy by their relation to christian parents. For to say, that the *remote* posterity of any is holy on account of its relation to him, but not his *immediate* descendants who are more nearly and closely related to him, is, I suppose, sufficiently absurd. I now appeal to the intelligent and impartial reader, whether this is not a fair and full reply to Mr. B's objection.

BUT as it is my professed design not only to confute error, but also to investigate truth, it may be proper to inquire, what is the real import of the term HOLY, here used by St. Paul? "By *holy* is here meant," says Mr. LOCKE, "that relative holiness whereby any thing hath an *appropriation* to God†." Or, more particularly, we may say, A *holy* person, in the relative sense of that word, is one to whom God gives a covenant grant of mercy and the means of grace, and in virtue of which grant he is *appropriated* to God. This appears to me to be the leading idea of the term, and its precise import in the present connection; tho' sometimes used in a different sense. For if the whole nation of the Jews was *holy* in the apostolic age, the *whole mass*

as well as the *first fruit*, the *natural branches* as well as the *root*, as the apostle asserts; if the *future* descendants of Abraham and the patriarchs are to be regarded as *holy*, as Mr. B. allows, and for which reason they are not to be despised and insulted by the Gentiles; then the *present* Jews are so in the like sense: except we hold that the *both ends* of a genealogical chain has an *appropriation* to God, while the *intermediate* links are *unclean*. Which is the same thing as to say, that this genealogical chain is at once, and in the same respect, a *conductor* and a *non-conductor* of this relative holiness.

BUT what is deserving of particular notice is, that there are several *degrees* of relative holiness; and that, in scripture estimation, a person may be, relatively, *holy* in one sense, while *unclean* in another. Accordingly, in a very general sense, *no man* is to be deemed unclean under the gospel dispensation (Acts x. 28.), but *every man*, whether Jew, or Gentile, is deemed *holy*; i. e. in virtue of the gospel *grant* of mercy and the means of grace to the Gentiles as well as the Jews, *all mankind* without distinction of nation or tribe, are *appropriated* to God, or pointed out by him as the intended objects of such a grant. When the command was given to preach the gospel to *every creature*, to propose the means of grace to *all mankind*, they were virtually declared *holy*, and not *dogs* as before reckoned. The *promise*, or covenant grant, is now not only to the Jews and their children, but to *all that are afar off*; for
all

all the nations are as much the *designed* objects of the call, as the inhabitants of Judea were when the apostle wrote; and when any are actually among *the called*, that design is in them accomplished.—Now, when incorporated with the visible church, they are termed *holy* in a more particular sense. They are then more particularly appropriated to God; the promise is to them more directly; they are more expressly intitled to all the means of grace and salvation, according to their capacity. And, compared with this degree of relative holiness, those who are *holy* in the former sense, are yet *unclean*. Thus an idolater and his family in the one sense, that is, in reference to any divine *prohibition*, or any *exclusive* clause in the covenant, promise, or grant of mercy, is no longer common or unclean, but relatively *holy*. Yet in reference to the *called*, the incorporated members of the visible church, the same idolater and his family are *not* holy but *unclean*. The one is *holy* because he *may partake*, in virtue of a divine appointment; the other is *more holy* (and in *comparison* of whom the former is unclean) because he actually *does partake* of general church-membership and privileges, and therefore baptism.

I SAY *general* church-membership, to distinguish it from that which belongs to any *particular* congregation, or even denomination of christians. For tho' we contend that baptism is the rite of admission into the *universal* church of

Christ, or *general body* of christians, of which all denominations of christian people are parts; yet this is perfectly consistent with congregational worship and discipline, with dissenting churches, and the independent form in particular. And this indeed the practice of independents abundantly confirms, for when they admit any into *special* membership, it is immaterial whether the parties were baptized in Russia or Italy, in Holland or England; in the establishment or among dissenters, or by what denomination of dissenters; it is sufficient in that respect, that they have been recognized *general* church-members by baptism. The *other* membership is not to constitute them professed christians, but is intended for the better promoting of their edification, in a manner as near as possible to the intention of the inspired rubrick.

§ 53. WE now proceed to examine another passage, from whence we may gather, in what light the apostles viewed the children of believing, or christian parents; and that is 1 Cor. vii. 14. *For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.* “On the *most* and most impartial “consideration of this text,” says Dr. DODDRIDGE, “I must judge it to refer to *infant baptism*. Nothing can be more apparent, than “that the word *holy*, signifies persons, who *might* “be admitted to partake of the *distinguishing rites* “of God’s people. Compare Exod. xix. 6. “Deut.

" Deut. vii. 6. chap. xiv. 2. chap. xxvi. 19.
 " chap. xxxiii. 3. Ezra ix. 2. with Isai. xxxv.
 " 8. chap. lii. 1. Acts x. 28. &c. And as
 " for the interpretation, which *so many* of our
 " brethren the Baptists have contended for, that
 " *holy signifies legitimate, and unclean illegitimate;*
 " (not to urge that this seems an *unscriptural*
 " sense of the word) nothing can be more evi-
 " dent, than that the argument will by no means
 " bear it*." It was not without reason that
 the Doctor expressed himself with some limita-
 tion respecting the interpretation he opposes, thus,
 " which *so many* of our brethren the Baptists;"
 for they are by no means agreed, how to com-
 pass the wresting of this text from the Pædo-
 baptists. Dr. S. for instance, is of opinion
 " that legitimacy is not here intended †." And
 thus he assigns his reasons for dissenting herein
 from some of his brethren: " If one party's
 " being a believer makes cohabitation lawful,
 " it should seem to follow as a natural conse-
 " quence, that when neither is a believer co-
 " habitation is unlawful; which is a proposi-
 " tion no one will maintain. But (says he,) let
 " us examine the question respecting *legitimacy*
 " a little more attentively. The apostle's object
 " in this context was, no doubt, to dissuade
 " those christians who were married to unbe-
 " lievers from any thoughts of a separation. And
 " the consideration of their having been law-
 " fully married, was most certainly a good
 " argument to enforce such advice; and the

R 5

rather:

• Fam. Expos. in loc.

† Ans. to Dr. A. p. 3.

“ rather, as a divorce would be likely to bring
 “ dishonour on their offspring, in the opinion
 “ of those who might not know the true cause
 “ of it. But if he meant to urge this argu-
 “ ment, it is scarce imaginable he would de-
 “ scribe the lawfulness of the marriage contract
 “ by the phrase of *the unbelieving husband's being*
 “ *sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife*
 “ *by the husband*; since the validity of the
 “ marriage did not, could not, in the nature of
 “ the thing, depend upon one party's being a
 “ *believer*. Whether he or she were or were
 “ not a believer, the marriage would have been
 “ good; nor would a separation, upon pretence
 “ of their not being of the same faith, have
 “ made the children *illegitimate* ||.” Mr. BOOTH,
 however, warmly pleads for what Dr. STEN-
 NETT strenuously opposes.

BUT as the real meaning of the text very much depends on the exact import of certain terms, it will be necessary to pay our principal attention to them; and thence to deduce the apostle's meaning.

I. THE terms *ακαθάρτος* and *αγιος* should be ascertained. These “ are used here by the apostle in the Jewish sense. The Jews called all that were Jews, *holy*; and all others they called *unclean*. Thus *proles genita EXTRA sanctitatem*, was a child begot by parents whilst they were yet heathens; *genita INTRA sanctitatem*, was a child begot by parents after they were proselytes. This way of speaking
 “ St.

“ St. Paul transfers from the Jewish into the
 “ christian church, calling *all* that are of the
 “ christian church *saints*, or holy, by which rea-
 “ son all that were out of it were *unclean**.” The
 same author elsewhere observes: “ The heathen
 “ world had revolted from the true God, to
 “ the service of idols and false gods, Rom. i.
 “ 18—25. The Jews being *separated* from this
 “ corrupted mass, to be the *peculiar people* of
 “ God, were called *holy*, Exod. xix. 5, 6. Numb.
 “ xv. 40. They being cast off, the professors of
 “ christianity were *separated* to be the people of
 “ God, and so became *holy*, 1 Pet. ii. 9, 10†.”
 Thus Mr. BAXTER: “ The common and I
 “ doubt not true exposition is, That it is meant
 “ of a state of *separation to God*, as a peculiar
 “ people from the world, as the church is se-
 “ parated.——It is generally agreed, that the
 “ *most common* use of the word *holy*, if not the
 “ *only*, both in scripture and prophane writers,
 “ is, to signify *a thing separated to God*: and
 “ to *sanctify* any thing, is to *separate it to God*.
 “ *Omne sanctum est DEO sanctum*; whatsoever is
 “ holy, is holy *to God*. This therefore being
 “ the *proper sense* and *ordinary* use of the word,
 “ I take myself bound to receive it as the mean-
 “ ing here, till I know more reason to the contrary.
 “ —Now as *holiness* thus signifieth *a separation*
 “ *to God*, so it may be distinguished thus; a
 “ person or thing may be holy, or separated

R 6

“ to

* LOCKE's Paraphr. in *loc. Noté.* † Id. chap. i. 2. *Note.*

|| Plain Script, Proof, p. 80.

“to God, either in state and *standing relation* ;
 “or else only for some particular *act* or *use*,
 “whether for shorter time or longer*.” When
 contending with his redoubtable antagonist, Mr.
 TOMBES, and bearing hard on him by urging
 the constant use of the word *holy*, he gives him a
 syllogistick overthrow thus: “If the constant
 “meaning of the word *holy* be for a *separation*
 “to God, then we must so understand it here,
 “except there be a palpable necessity of un-
 “derstanding it otherwise; but the constant sense
 “of the word *holy* is for a separation to God,
 “and here is no palpable necessity of under-
 “standing it otherwise: Therefore we must so
 “understand it here*.” And here it is obser-
 vable, that Mr. TOMBES denied not that the
constant meaning of the word *holy* was as Mr.
 BAXTER said. The latter had also urged, that
 the sense of the term *holy*, for which he pleaded,
 was used in scripture near SIX HUNDRED TIMES,
 and the other sense NO WHERE used. “Here,”
 —says the keen disputant, conscious of the
 truth on his side, and somewhat touched with
 indignation; and is it to be much wondered at,
 when his side of the question was illuminated
 with near *six hundred* rays of evidence, and the
 other confessedly *all dark*? —“here Mr. TOMBES
 “denied not but that the word was taken *so*
 “oft in my sense, and never in his; and yet”
 —and yet! —“denied the consequence.
 “I do therefore (says the good man) here re-
 “quire all men that are not of desperate resolu-
 “tions,

“ tions, and prostituted consciences, to consider
“ faithfully; whether he be likely to make a
“ more comfortable answer before the bar of
“ Christ, who saith, Lord, I searched after thy
“ will in thy word as far as I was able, and I
“ durst not rashly venture on my singular fancy,
“ but in my admitting or bringing infants into
“ thy visible church, I grounded my judgment and
“ practice on thy word, in the same sense as
“ it is used near *six hundred* times in the scrip-
“ ture — I say, will not this man have a bet-
“ ter plea than he that shutteth infants out of
“ the church upon the exposition of scripture in a
“ sense as it is *never* else used in, but near *six*
“ *hundred* times otherwise?” — Again: “ If the
“ apostle by *holy* should have meant, *that they*
“ *were not bastards*, then he should have spoke
“ in a phrase which they were unlikely to
“ understand; and so his speech might tend to
“ draw them into mistakes, and not to edify
“ them. For if the word *holy* were *constantly*
“ used (even near six hundred times in the bi-
“ ble) for a *separation to God*, and NEVER used
“ for legitimacy (all which Mr. TOMBES de-
“ nieth not), then what likelihood was there
“ that the apostle should mean it for legitimacy,
“ or the people so understand him? If I should
“ write an epistle to a christian congregation
“ now, and therein tell them, that their chil-
“ dren are all by nature *unholy*, would they
“ ever conjecture that I meant that they were
“ all *bastards**?”

BUT

BUT here, were we disposed to retort on the use of terms, with what propriety may we ask, "Is *illegitimate* in one case, and *legitimate* in the other, the NATURAL and PRIMARY signification of those Greek words (*αναθαπλος* and *αγιος*)? Are these the senses that would naturally *first* occur to the mind of a wise and impartial person, on reading or hearing the apostolick observation ||?" The inquisitive and learned Mr. BAXTER replies,—"Six hundred to one it is not." And Dr. GUYSE observes: "The terms (*αναθαπλος*) "*unclean*, and (*αγιος*) *holy*, occur almost numberless times in the *Seventy* and in the New Testament; but I don't find that they are *ever* "*ONCE* used to signify *illegitimate* and *legitimate*, which is the sense that some would here put upon them. And as the apostle was speaking of persons already married, and marriage is a civil ordinance of the God of nature, there was *no room to doubt*, whether the children of such unbelieving and believing parents were *legitimate*, or not, since *that* depends intirely on the legitimacy of the marriage and not at all on the religious character of the husband and wife, whether one, or both, or neither of them, were christians or no*." To this I will add the following remarks of Dr. WHITBY: "He doth not say, *Else* were your children *bastards*, but now they are *legitimate*; but, *else* were they *unclean*, *i. e.* heathen children, not to be owned as an holy seed. — That this is the true import of the words *αναθαπλᾱ* and *ἅγιος*, will be apparent

"parent

“ parent from the scriptures, in which the Hea-
 “ thens are styled *the unclean*, in opposition to
 “ the Jews in covenant with God, and there-
 “ fore styled *an holy people*. So Isa. xxxv. 8.
 “ ἀκαθάρτος, the UNCLEAN, *shall not pass over it*.
 “ —Chap. lii. i. There shall no more come
 “ unto thee ἀκαθάρτος, the UNCLEAN. So Acts
 “ x. 28. *God hath shewed me that I should call no*
 “ *man common, or, ἀκαθάρτον, UNCLEAN*. Whence
 “ it is evident, that the Jews looked upon
 “ themselves as δῦλοι Θεῷ καθάρτοι, *the clean servants*
 “ *of God*, Neh. ii. 20. and upon all Heathens,
 “ and their offspring, as unclean, by reason of
 “ their want of circumcision, the sign of the
 “ covenant. Hence whereas it is said, that
 “ Joshua *circumcised* the people, chap. v. 4. the
 “ septuagint say, περιεκαθάριεν, *he cleansed* them.
 “ Moreover, of Heathen children, and such as
 “ are not circumcised, they say, *They are not*
 “ *born in holiness*; but *they* on the contrary are
 “ styled σπέρμα ἁγίου, *an holy seed*, Isa. vi. 13.
 “ Ezra ix. 2. and the offspring from them,
 “ and from those proselytes which had embraced
 “ their religion, are said to be *born in holiness*,
 “ and so thought fit to be admitted to circum-
 “ cision, or baptism, or whatsoever might initiate
 “ them into the Jewish church. And therefore
 “ to this sense of the words *holy* and *unclean*,
 “ the apostle may be here *most rationally* supposed
 “ to allude, declaring that the seed of holy per-
 “ sons, the offspring born ἐκ τῶν ἁγιασμένων, *of*
 “ *saints*, as christians are still called in the New
 “ Testament

“ Testament, are also *holy*. (See note on chap.
 “ i. 2.) And though one of the parents be still
 “ an Heathen, yet is the denomination to be
 “ taken from the *better*, and so their offspring
 “ are to be esteemed not as Heathens, i. e.
 “ *unclean*, but *holy*, as all christians by denomi-
 “ nation are. So CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS
 “ (Strom. L. iii. p. 445. D.) infers, saying,
 “ *I suppose the seed of those that are holy is HOLY,*
 “ *according to that saying of the apostle Paul, The*
 “ *unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband,*
 “ *&c.*—The word used for a *bastard* by this
 “ apostle being *νόθος*, Heb. xii. 8. and the word
 “ *γνήσιος* being the proper word for a *legitimate*
 “ offspring, had the apostle *intended* such a sense,
 “ [as our opponents plead for] he would have
 “ used the words, which in the greek writers
 “ are generally used in that sense, and not such
 “ words as in the septuagint, and in the Jewish
 “ language, ALWAYS have a relation to *foederal*
 “ [or relative] holiness, or the want of it; but
 “ NONE AT ALL to the *legitimacy* or *spuriousness*
 “ of the birth*.”

THESE quotations are inserted, not so much
 to shew what were the *opinions* of these learned
 writers (for the general current of expositors
 runs in the same channel) but for the sake of
 the *reasons* and *grounds* by which their inter-
 pretation is supported. A gentleman well known
 to my opponent, on a certain occasion borrows
 the following passage, which, because it is com-
 mon

mon property, I here insert: “ We are not
 “ to forsake the *genuine* and *natural* signification
 “ of words, unless there be the HIGHEST EVI-
 “ DENCE that the author did otherwise intend
 “ them, saith the Civil Law. And as AUSTIN
 “ says, The proper signification of words is al-
 “ ways to be retained, unless NECESSITY inforce
 “ us to expound them otherwise.—What better
 “ evidence can we have of the sense of a place,
 “ than that, had an author *intended* such a
 “ meaning, he could have used no plainer
 “ expression to declare it*.”

BUT says Mr. B. “ Whatever the apostle
 intends by the word *holy*, as here applied to
 children, one of whose parents is a - believer;
 it is not confined to the *infants* of such per-
 sons, but belongs to *all* their offspring, whe-
 ther younger or older; whether born *before* the
 conversion of either parent, or after that happy
 event had taken place: for the *children*, without
 any distinction are pronounced holy †.” And
 what then? Does the aspect of the gospel dis-
 pensation, or God’s *grant* of mercy to the Hea-
 then, who were not *a people*, appear *less* amiable
 because it smiles on *all* the children of a chris-
 tian, and not on some only? Or, what incon-
 venience is there in allowing, what impropriety
 in maintaining, that the relative holiness for
 which we plead, while granted to the parent,
 should

* Pædob. Exam. p. 324. From FERGUSON’S Interest of Reason
 in Religion. p. 328, 333, 334, 462.

† Pædob. Exam. p. 389.

should be also granted to *all his*?—But will not this be the fearful consequence? “If it be lawful to baptize them on the ground of this holiness, while infants, it must be equally so when grown up.” Very true,—and what harm can this blunted arrow do? Is not this the very thing we plead for; provided you grant that this reasonable postulate should be taken into the account; viz. That whatever *right* an adult has, in virtue of a divine *grant*, to any religious privileges, Christianity will justify no *compulsive* measures for the purpose of intruding on him these privileges against his good will and liking. Christianity does not annihilate, nay in this instance does not suspend, the *natural rights* of parents and children. And what can be more plain than this, that the natural authoritative right of parents over their children, for their good, is in a great degree absolute, while *infants*; and that *in proportion* as they grow up to reason and manhood, this authoritative right is *lessened*? Nor is there any more difficulty in ascertaining these degrees, than in transacting the common concerns of life, where any degree of wisdom and prudence are required. At least, a christian minister could not, in the nature of the thing, be more at a loss how to act in this case, than in determining the *degrees* of teaching, and the kind of profession, requisite in adults. We will suppose, therefore, that God by his apostle pronounces *the chil-*
dren

dren of a christian without exception *holy*, and let us further suppose some of them are *infants*, and others *grown up*. If God pronounce them *holy*, that is, direct his grant of mercy to them, declaring *the promise* is to them, and that they are all alike, in common, with their parents, welcome to his visible church; it is manifest there lies no objectionable ground to their baptism, but their own *dissent* from the christian connection, their perverse *opposition* to its humbling doctrines and holy laws. Are they *compliant*? willing to enter into the school, that is, the church of Christ? or, in other words, do they believe with all the heart, that Jesus Christ is the true Messiah? Who can *forbid* water? On the other hand, do they *oppose*? are they unwilling to enter the school, to embrace its doctrines and to be governed by its laws? Who has power to *constrain*? For, in the nature of the case, in proportion as the opposition is criminal or morally evil, the authority of the parent is weakened.

It is again objected: "That *holiness* of which the inspired author speaks, is not inferred from the *faith* of the believing parent, but from the *sanctification* of the unbelieving party, *by*, or *to*, the believer†." But does not this involve a contradiction? For, surely, if the sanctification of the unbelieving party is *by* the *believer*, as such, it must be inferred from his *faith*. And again, if the sanctification be *by* the believer, how can it

† Pædob. Exam. p. 389.

it be *to* him? Are not the two renderings of the preposition *ev*, *by* and *to*, of which the objector gives us our choice, essentially different and contradictory? If we say *to* him; the effect, sanctification, must be caused by another, that it may terminate on him. But if we say *by* him; he must be the cause, that the effect may terminate on another.—This diversity of rendering, and the importance of the term *sanctified*, make it necessary that we should,

§ 54. 2. ATTEMPT to ascertain the import of the phrase *ηγιασται ev*. “On this term “*sanctified*, says Mr. B. the inspired writer manifestly lays a peculiar emphasis; *such* an “emphasis, that it seems to be the governing “word of the whole sentence, and a *key* to “its true meaning. For it is twice mentioned “as containing the *grand reason*, why the believing party should neither desert, nor divorce, “the unconverted companion; and also as expressing *the ground* of that holiness which is “ascribed to their children†.” This, then, being the *key* to unlock the text, and discover its contents, let us examine the *wards*, and see whether they fit Mr. B.’s interpretation. “BENGELIUS, says our author, considers the holiness of the *children*, and of the “*unbelieving* parent, as *the same*; because *ηγιασται*, “and *αγια εστιν*, differ only as, to be *made holy*, “from to *be holy*.” On which he reflects: “If “then, that sanctification of the unbelieving husband

“band

† Ibid. p. 400.

“band, gives him no claim to baptism; the
 “holiness thence arising cannot invest his *chil-*
 “*dren* with such a right†.” This our author
 seems to consider as an insurmountable ob-
 jection. And in the same light, we suppose Dr.
 S. views it. “Now I readily admit, says he,
 “that the children of believers, or of parents,
 “one of whom only is a believer, are here
 “stiled *holy*. But then I insist, that such chil-
 “dren are in no other sense *holy*, than is the
 “unbelieving parent also. For the apostle as
 “expressly asserts that the unbelieving husband
 “is sanctified or made holy (*ηγιασται*) by the
 “wife, and the unbelieving wife sanctified or
 “made holy by the husband, as that the chil-
 “dren of such parents are holy (*αγια*). And,
 “thus considered, it will follow, that if the
 “holiness of the children, whatever be the sense
 “of the word here, is to be admitted as a
 “proof that they are included in the christian
 “covenant, the holiness of the unbelieving pa-
 “rent is to be admitted as a proof that such
 “parent is included in the christian covenant
 “also. And, if upon this ground the former
 “have a right to the positive institutions of
 “Christ, upon the same ground the latter has
 “also§.” But this objection has been suffici-
 ently replied to, virtually, in the last section;
 when treating of *adult* children, who are rela-
 tively *holy* though unbelievers, or opposers to
 the

† p. 390.

§ Ans. to Dr. A. p. 81, 82.

the christian faith. And were we to grant, according to our opponents' wishes, that the children are holy in no higher sense than the *unbelieving* parent is, it would still follow, on the principle already stated, that the *children* ought to be baptized, but not the parent. The one and the others have the grant of a privilege, the covenant and its initiatory seal; and the believing parent has a divine right and rubrick for having the seal applied to the *children*, who are at his disposal for their good, and who do not *oppose* the faith; but this cannot extend to the *unbelieving* partner, his unbelief counteracting his relative sanctification.

THUS we may observe, these two respectable authors, though widely differing in their interpretations of the text, are equally confident that *relative holiness*, which intitles to christian ordinances, is not intended. "It may be difficult, says Dr. S. to fix his [the Apostle's] precise meaning; but if we will make reason, scripture, and fact our guide, it cannot be difficult to determine upon some of the senses given, that they are not his meaning. Personal *internal holiness*, for instance, cannot be here intended*." In *this* decision, I believe the generality of Pædobaptists will readily concur; though some divines have pleaded for *real holiness*, as here ascribed to the *children*, and particularly Dr. THOMAS GOODWIN†. On this head

* Ibid.

† Works, Vol. ii. p. 400, &c.

head Mr. B. is sufficiently explicit: "Neither have we any reason to think, that the children of believers are denominated holy, in reference to *internal sanctification* §." What, then, does this gentleman think was the *holiness* referred to, whereby the unbelieving party was *sanctified* by the believer? That which you have seen confuted by Dr. STETNETT in the last section—*marriage*! Take his own words: "The public and voluntary act of taking the woman for a wife, and the man for a husband. By this transaction, according to the legal custom of their country, they mutually gave up, or set apart, themselves one to another*." Well, reader, what say you to this? Here is, —one infidel SANCTIFYING another! Or, if you had rather, each infidel SANCTIFYING himself!

IF *νυίαι* signify no more than *to be married*, or to be *given up* in marriage, the one party to the other, it had no influence to satisfy their scruples. For the Israelites, who had married idolatrous wives, could say the same; yet it was no sufficient plea that one of them had been *νυίαι*, in Mr. B.'s sense, *set apart* to the other. The question would still return, How shall I know that this party that has been *given up* to me, is not to be discarded, or put away, as in Ezra x. 3, &c.? If our author's explanation be admitted, it is to make the Apostle to solve a case of conscience in a manner totally unworthy

thy of him ; for he must do it by asserting a *fact*, that they were once married, of which they were as well assured before it was asserted : while he says nothing of the *lawfulness* of that fact, which could be the only ground of scruple. The doubts of these Corinthian querists were raised by reflecting on the *quality* of the relation contracted, and not the *fact* ; whereas the apostle, if our author be right, solves the difficulty by passing by the *quality*, and asserting the fact ; that is to say, by saying something wide of the point, but nothing at all to the purpose. Whereas, had it been his design to prove the *validity* of their marriage, would he not naturally have done it by suggesting some middle term or consideration, besides barely referring them to the fact ? Was it not necessary for them, that they should be certified of the *lawfulness* and *propriety* of their marriage relation ? On Mr. B.'s hypothesis this *is not* done ; on ours *fully*. If the question be proposed to him, Why should the believer cohabit with the unbeliever ? he must reply, Because they were formerly married. Or rather, Not because you, believer, have been devoted to your partner, and are bound to fulfil your engagement ; but because your infidel partner has formerly given himself to you. But was this a remedy suited to the disease ? Or should it be said, This is a satisfactory consideration why the parties should continue, not merely because there has been a mutual *dedication*, but because there has been a divine appointment

pointment of marriage as the basis of it. But the duty of marriage was from the beginning; yet those in the time of Ezra were obliged to put off each man his wife, to which nevertheless he had been *wedded*. Nor is it available to say, That those in Ezra offended against a *positive* divine law, but not these; for that is the very point in which they desire satisfaction, viz. Whether the christian law does or does not require a *separation*? His answer is not, The law of nature is binding, and christianity has nothing against it. This would have been his idea if *nothing more* was intended than the *validity* of marriage. But he says more; the unbeliever *has been* (from the moment of the partner's conversion to christianity) or, by an ennalage of time, *is*, made holy or sanctified by the believer, in virtue of a *divine grant*, which divine grant is much in favour of infants. The grant of the parent's covenant and its seals being always intended for them and their children, according to their capacity, be it known, as if Paul had said, That tho' God hath been displeased with mixed marriages, and tho' he still says, "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers," yet the idolatry and unbelief, that is, the heathenism, of the one parent, shall be no prejudice to their children. They are not debarred from any privileges given by divine grant to other children *both* whose parents are christians. The faith, or christianity, of the one shall avail more

S

to

to insure those privileges, than the unbelief of the other to prevent them.

THIS is a medium of proof calculated to satisfy their scruples. To the pure, all things are pure; the unbelief of your partner shall not pass over to you, as if you were involved in his unbelief and guilt; or as if the precept "touch not, taste not, handle not," affected you. God will graciously deal with *you and your children* without any reference to your partner's unbelief. He shall stand or fall alone; his obstinacy shall be *personal*, centering in himself; but *mercy* herein *rejoicing against judgment*, the promise is *to you*, christian party, and to your children, tho' your partner oppose.—Nature dictates that a *father*, who is king in his own family, should exercise his authority to the benefit of all his domesticks; but by a *gracious express appointment*, the children common to both shall be deemed *holy*, on account of the *mother* as well as the father, so as to be treated as if both parents believed. The seed of mixed marriages were not deemed *holy*, Ezra ix. 2. Neh. ix. 2. it might be objected. True, says the Apostle, and to answer your scruples I am authorised to say, That under *this* dispensation there is the difference I have mentioned; and let this quiet your minds. Your continuance together, rather than those you refer to, is owing to a *special grant* in their favour, as more agreeable to this dispensation.

God

God does not now insist on a divorce as he did heretofore, for wise reasons, and among others, because he designs hereby *more speedily to christianize all nations*. For if the unbelief of one party were sufficient to denominate and regard their common offspring in the class of heathens rather than christians, how slow must be the progress of christianity! but now, if one believes in the Messiah, all the family is christian, and is treated accordingly. Otherwise, were not this God's plan and our practice, your children and the whole family but yourself must be deemed *unclean*, or *heathenish*, and visibly related to Satan's interest. But as an unbelieving son, daughter, or servant, is not sufficient to class the family of which either is a part among heathen families, so neither shall the unbelief of your partner, even a husband, have that influence.

AGAIN: If my opponent be right, "the epithet *unbelieving*, as BEZA well observes, would be quite superfluous, as also the *implied* epithet *believing*; *believing* wife, and *believing* husband*."

S 2

"For

* "In uxore, εν τη γυναικι, Vulg Per mulierem FIDELIEM,
 "εν τη γυναικι πιση: quam lectionem in Claromontano et alio
 "præterea manuscripto Græco codice invenimus: et rursus paulo
 "post εν τω ανδρω πισω, per virum fidelē.—AUGUSTINUS L. i.
 "quo exponit sermonem in monte habitum, legit, In fratre fidei,
 "εν αδελφω τω πισω. Vetus autem interpretis habet, Per mulie-
 "rem fidelem, et, per virum fidelem; et nos in uno VETUSTO
 "CODICE reperimus ad marginem annotatum πιση priorē loco,
 "et

“ For we should consider, what is the subject
 “ matter in dispute; namely, Whether matri-
 “ mony contracted between two persons, one an
 “ infidel and the other a believer, is holy, and
 “ for that cause the believer is bound to con-
 “ tinue in it? Were it not so, why should Paul,
 “ in the other member, add the epithet *unbe-*
 “ *lieving*? Nor can any one truly say, that the
 “ marriage between two infidels is *holy*, and that
 “ their *children* are *holy*.—I grant that the mar-
 “ riage of infidels is valid in a civil sense, nor
 “ is their matrimonial commerce to be re-
 “ garded *coram Deo pro jortatione*. But what
 “ has this to do with Paul’s design, who treats
 “ of a case of conscience, or a religious scru-
 “ ple†?” The *unbelieving* husband is sanctified
 by the *believing* wife, and *vice versa*. Whereas,
 if Mr. B.’s hypothesis be true, the *sanctification*
 was neither *by* nor *to* the believer, as a *believer*,
 but was possessed of it while an infidel. But if
 the *sanctification* does not respect the party *as*
believing, it seems inserted for no other use than
 to mislead us. If the apostle only meant sim-
 ply, “ you have been *married*,” or, “ you have
 been *devoted* to each other by marriage,” why
 introduce and *interchange* the expressions and
 ideas—“ the *unbelieving* by the *believing* party?”
 Mr.

“ et πῑσω posteriore. Claromontanus autem codex habet, *ἢ ἀνδρὶ*
 “ ἀδελφῷ, *In viro fratre*, id est, qui sit frater sive fidelis. Et
 “ certe etiam si hæc epitheta non addas, tamen NECESSARIO subau-
 “ dienda sunt. BEZA in loc.

† BEZA ut *supra*.

Mr. B. seems to be aware of this objection, and observes: "The *unbeliever only* could entertain a doubt, concerning the *lawfulness* of cohabiting with an unbeliever." Very well; but the question still returns, If the apostle meant, as our author would have it, That the unconcerned party was *married* to the *scrupulous*; is it not reasonable to suppose, that the idea would be *differently* expressed? Is it not confessedly an *unprecedented mode* of expressing a *common idea*? Whereas, if he intended to shew—that the christianity of the one party was more prevalent, in virtue of the more merciful and extensive grant of God, and the genius of the gospel dispensation, towards classing the children among the christians; than the *infidelity* of the other party towards the classing them among *idolaters*—what expressions could he use better adapted to express the sentiment?

MOREOVER: be it observed, that the very existence of the other opinion depends on rendering the preposition *ev*, *to*, which rendering ought not to be adopted without manifest necessity, if on any consideration whatever, in that sense of *to*, which denotes a *dative* case. It is well known that the most common acceptations of *ev* are *in*, *by*, *among*, *with*, and sometimes it is used for, *because of*, *for*, or *for the sake of*, *by reason of*; and the like||.

S 3

imports

|| "Εν τῇ γυναίκι, *by the wife, Uxoris gratia*, BECAUSE OF the wife; i. e. he is to be reputed as sanctified, because he is one

" flesh

" imports the *state* and *disposition*, the *abode* and *situation*; *habitus et situs*, says VERGARA; " corresponding to the Latin *in**." And " it commonly marks the term of rest, or the state in which a thing is; wherefore it *only* governs an *ablative*†." But what has Mr. B. to say in vindication of his rendering? " The unbelieving husband is sanctified *to* the wife.—" So Dr. DODDRIDGE and others render the particle *εν*; and I think more properly in *this* passage than in our common version. So the preposition is translated in the very next verse; " as also in Luke i. 17. 1 Thess. iv. 7. and six or seven times over in 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7‡." But *why* is the rendering *to*, more proper in *this* passage than in our common version? This answer we have still to learn. We hear a language somewhat different whenever it is found in connection with *water*, and especially a *river*. Thus, we may be sure, were we to meet with *εν ποταμω*, in connection with baptism, it would be *IN*, and not *at* or *by* the *river*. However, let us a little more narrowly inspect

" flesh with her who is holy. So *Israel served εν γυναικι*, for " a wife, and, *εν γυναικει*, for a wife he kept sheep. Hos. xii. 12. " I desire that you faint not, *εν ταίς θλιψεισι με*, BY REASON OF " my tribulations, Eph. iii. 13, and, that no man be shaken *εν ταίς θλιψεισι ταυταις*, BY REASON OF my tribulations. See NALDIUS " in the 23d signification of the particle *Buth*," WHITBY *in loc.*

* *Messieurs DE PORT ROYAL's* New Method. p. 195.

† *Ibid.* p. 334. and their *Greek Primitives*, by NUGENT, p. 297.

‡ *Pædob. Exam.* p. 295.

inspect the authorities produced, and I am very much mistaken if *any one* of these instances answer the purpose for which they are adduced: for if they do not answer the idea of a *dative*, which implies that something is GIVEN TO the object, they are useless. And I believe the best Criticks and masters of the Greek language unanimously maintain, that the preposition *ev* never conveys that idea §." The *dative* case is so called, "quia per eum alicui aliquid nos dare demonstramus †." This the particle in question *never* signifies, any more than the latin *in*; and yet without that use of it Mr. B.'s interpretation is a baseless fabrick.

WE are referred to "the very next verse" following the controverted text (1 Cor. vii. 15.) *God hath called us, ev εἰρήνη, TO peace*, according to our version; whereas Dr. HAMMOND justly observes,

S 4

observes,

§ " *Ev τῇ γυναίκα*, by or thro' the wife. This the preposition, *ev*, so ordinarily signifies, that it cannot need to be further testified (and in this notion it is, that we here take it); whereas the notion, which by opposers is here affixt to it, that it should signify *to* (that *to*, which is a sign of the *dative* case)—is never once found to belong to it in the New Testament; nor can with any tolerable congruity or grammatical analogy, be affixt to it. All the places that are produced for this sense are commonly mistaken—And so still the rendering it *to the wife* [in the *dative* sense] will be without any one example, and the turning it into quite another phrase, as if it were *γυναίκα* without *ev*; which to do without any necessity or reason, save only—to serve the opposer's turn upon the place, and support his false opinion, must needs be very unreasonable." HAMMOND'S Six Quer. Q. 2. iv. § 32.

† LITTLETON, sub voce *dativus*.

observes, "It is not *to* as the note of a *dative* case, but *UNTO* *peace*, as *εἰς* is taken for *εἰς*†." Again we are referred to Luke i. 17. *To turn — the disobedient to the wisdom of the just*. But this is by no means the sign of a *dative*. There is nothing *given to* wisdom. "ELSNER would render it, as Dr. DODDRIDGE observes, *BY the wisdom of the just**." And thus Sir NORTON KNATCHBULL: "*Et infideles instruat in sapientia justorum*||." And so other literal versions; "*IN prudentiam justorum*§." "*AD scientiam rectorum*§§." "*AD scientiam justorum*††." "*AD prudentiam justorum***." "*Ad intelligentiam justorum*|||," &c. In like manner, 1 Theff. iv. 7. For God hath not called us unto (*ἐπὶ*) uncleanness, but *εἰς* *αγιωσμῶ*, *UNTO holiness*. That is, in the phrase of Dr. DODDRIDGE, "to the love and practice of universal holiness." But what has this to do with *giving to* a recipient? As to 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7. it seems still less to his purpose. *Add to your faith virtue, and to virtue knowledge, &c.* *ἐπιχορηγησατε* *εἰς* *την πίστιν ὑμῶν τὴν ἀρετὴν, εἰς δὲ τὴν ἀρετὴν τὴν γνῶσιν*, &c. i. e. bring forward, *with* your faith, virtue, and, *with* virtue, knowledge. "The word *ἐπιχορηγησατε* properly signifies to *lead up*, as in "a dance, one of these virtues after another in "a beautiful and majestic order†." "Respexisse
"videtur

† Dr. HAMMOND *ut supra*. * Fam. Expof. *in loc.* || Animadver. *in loc.* § MONTAN. §§ SYR. INTERPRET.

†† ARAB. INTERPRET. ** Vulg. ||| ÆTHIO. INTERPRET.

† Dodd. Fam. Expof. *in loc.*

“ videtur Apostolus ad antiquum morem ducendi
 “ *choros*; vox enim ἐπιχορηγέει proprie significat
 “ *chorum ducere* †.” Accordingly the same Au-
 thor renders the passage, “ Jungite invicem *cum*
 “ fide virtutem, *cum* virtute scientiam, &c.” I
 repeat the question, What has this to do with
 giving to a recipient? Or what similarity has
 it to Mr. B.’s *dative* sense?—Who knows not
 that the article *to* has various acceptations, be-
 side what Mr. B. would force upon it? For
 instance, we say, *appointing to* an office, *going to*
 a place, *calling to* enjoy, *turning to* wisdom, &c.
 yet such an acceptation of the particle *to* will
 not serve him.

NOR will Dr. DODDRIDGE’s version answer
 his purpose in sense, tho’ in sound. For tho’
 he renders νηιασαι “ *sanctified to*, yet the particle
 has not the *dative* signification. He evidently
 gives the original particle the acceptation of the
 Greek “; or Latin *in*, signifying *towards*, *in*
respect of, *for*, &c. It is but fair the Doctor
 should explain himself: “ *For in such a case as*
 “ *this, the unbelieving husband is so sanctified to*
 “ *the wife [in uxorem], and the unbelieving wife*
 “ *is so sanctified to the husband [in maritem], that*
 “ *their matrimonial converse is as lawful AS IF*
 “ *THEY WERE BOTH OF THE SAME FAITH:*
 “ *Otherwise their children in these mixed cases*
 “ *were unclean, and must be looked upon, as*
 “ *unfit to be admitted to those peculiar ordi-*
 “ *nances by which the seed of God’s people*
 “ *are distinguished; but now they are confessedly*
 S 5 “ *holy*

“ *holy*, and are as readily admitted to baptism
 “ in all our churches, as if BOTH the parents
 “ were christians: So that the case you see,
 “ is in effect decided by this prevailing prac-
 “ tice*.” In a *note* the Doctor opposes the
 idea of legitimacy; by shewing “that the argu-
 ment will by no means bear it.” But is it
 not surprizing that persons of discernment, that
 Mr. BOOTH in particular, should suppose this
 rendering, *sanctified to*, gives the least counte-
 nance to his *dative* notion? Is this any thing
 better than a play upon the various acceptations
 of an english particle? Is it not taking, or at-
 tempting to take, an advantage of sound against
 sense? And is it not still more surprizing that
 Dr. S. should express himself thus: “ Indeed
 “ Dr. DODDRIIDGE, to whose character for learn-
 “ ing, candour, and piety I pay great deference,
 “ has so expressed himself in his *paraphrase* on
 “ this passage, as *very naturally to convey this*
 “ *idea* [of legitimacy], tho’ in his note he op-
 “ poses the sentiment. How to reconcile him
 “ with himself I am at a loss†.”—*The para-*
phrase very naturally conveys this idea. And I
 am quite at a loss to know, by what medium
 the Dr. views it. Whereas it appears to me
 “ very naturally to convey the *contrary* idea.”
 Does it not evidently resolve the *lawfulness* of
 matrimonial converse, in such a mixed case, to
 a *divine grant*, declaration and appointment, that
 is, to the party’s being *so sanctified*, in virtue of
 a gra-

* Fam. Exposit. in loc.

† Answer to Dr. A. p. 83.

a gracious privilege conferred under the gospel, *as if they were both of the SAME FAITH?* And does not this clearly imply, that what *sanctified* the unbeliever was (not his *giving* himself to the other in marriage, but) God's favourable *appointment* in such a case? Had they been of the *same faith*, no scruple could have existed; the PRIVILEGE therefore consists in the *opposing* party's being *so sanctified* for the use of the other, *as if both believed alike*; otherwise, their having "mutually *given up*, or *set apart* themselves one to another," would have been no security against a *divorce*, which was the point in question, if the Lord were equally strict against infidel and idolatrous connections under the present, as he was under the preceding œconomy (*Deut. vii. 3, 4, &c.*): and the PRIVILEGE moreover is expressly extended to the *children*; which would have been reckoned (according to *Ezra ix. 2. Nehem. ix. 2.*) not among the relatively *holy* seed, in such a mixed case. Such a grant of special privileges, therefore, the text and the paraphrase imply; and *nothing short* of this could tend to satisfy the scrupulous querist.

BUT tho' Dr. DODDRIDGE appears to me perfectly consistent with himself, while he opposes the idea of *legitimacy*; yet I cannot help thinking but he is more reserved than he had need to be, if he had meant to confine the *sanctification* to the matrimonial converse. For, tho' we

should allow that the *sanctification* of the unbelieving partner and of the children is *the same*; and that the terms *sanctified* and *holy* imply a qualification, as far as a divine grant can qualify, or a declarative permission and liberty, “to partake of the distinguishing rites of God’s people;” yet, as before shewn, the *opposer* of the gospel should not be *forced*; for violent measures are no weapons of the gospel, and should not be employed in its propagation, or in administering its initiatory seal. To which we may add, that such an opposing infidel or idolater, being an *avowed enemy* to the head of the church, does not possess a subjective *suitableness* to enter upon a visible relation to him and his subjects. He may, therefore, possess a *right*, in virtue of his relative sanctification or holiness, a right founded on a divine grant, and yet no minister has a right, or lawful authority, to *impose* upon him what he *rejects*, however beneficial it might be to him if accepted. But this is only a *circumstance*, that takes its rise solely in adults from the perverse exercise of human liberty, the sacred rights of conscience in religious matters, and a subjective unsuitableness to answer the design of the ordinance. The *sanctified* unbeliever is *entitled* to the covenant and its seal, unconditionally; which *title* he derives, independent of his choice, from his relation to his christian partner, and as the Gift of God: but the actual *application* of the external privilege ministerially, is suspended on a *condition*,
viz.

viz. his accepting of it in a manner suitable to his condition and circumstances.—On the contrary, supposing the children to be *holy* only in the same sense, still the rule holds, that infant ones ought to be baptized; because they are capable subjects, and have not forfeited the grant, nor failed in any *condition* required of them.

It may not be improper to remark, that, notwithstanding we have, for argument's sake, admitted Mr. B.'s idea of *sameness* in having been *sanctified* and being *holy*, there seems to be a *difference*: As if the Apostle intended to shew, that the unbelieving partner was sanctified, not *merely* for his own sake, but as also having a *further* influence on the children, and without which they would have been *unclean*. The influence of the unbelief and heathenism of the one party, as if he had said, is annihilated, by the counter influence of the other party's faith or christianity, with respect to their offspring. The faith of the one party, by the merciful tenour of the gospel dispensation, is more efficacious towards classing the children among the christians, than the unbelief of the other towards classing them among heathens. The unbeliever is *sanctified*, i. e. his professed unbelief is *overpowered* by the *professed holiness* of the other, in reference to their respective influence upon their children, which were to be ranked either among heathens or christians. But as to the *children*, their holiness appears in stronger and more expressive terms, alluding, it should seem, to a well known *fact* that they
were

were treated as *holy*; were deemed members of the christian church, and made partakers of its privileges according to their capacity. (Επει αρα,) *Otherwise* were your children unclean, (νυν δε) *but now* are they holy. “Nam particula νυν hoc “ in loco, says BEZA, non est temporis adverbium, sed est conjunctio quæ adhiberi solet in “ argumentorum assumptionibus, ut alibi ostendimus*.” Therefore the phrase νυν δε αγια εστιν, is tantamount to, “*sancti sunt autem.*”

THUS we see that the interpretation for which Mr. B. contends, is in every view indefensible. It directly tends to make the apostle Paul, with all his superior abilities and supernatural endowments,—an unskilful casuist, a very abstruse, if not an inconclusive, reasoner, and a blunderer in

* Annot. in loc.—The following exposition of this part of the text, and the reflections, by a masterly critick, are worthy of insertion here.—“Επει αρα—*Alioquin* [nisi parentum alteruter esset fidelis] “ *liberi vestri essent immundi*, i. e. manerent Ethnici: νυν δε, *nunc* “ *vero* [quoniam parentum alter est fidelis] αγια εστιν, *sancti* “ *sunt*, i. e. reputantur membra Ecclesiæ Christianæ. Et in hac “ notione credo Apostolum sæpius usurpare vocem αγιος, ut in “ initio hujus epistolæ, &c. Ecclesia enim et sancti sunt sæpius apud “ Apostolum Synonyma, ut apparet etiam alibi, manifestissime vero “ 2 Cor. i. 1, &c.—Non quod omnes, qui essent in Ecclesia Corinthi “ vel Ephesi, erant revera sancti, sed quia membra erant visibilia ecclesiæ, ideo vocabantur *sancti*, & ob eam causam liberi eorum ex alterutro parente fidei, qui fuit vocatus sanctus, participes facti “ sunt BAPTISMI, quomodo filius Profelytæ factus est particeps “ circumcisionis, etiam infans octiduanus. Et si liberi eorum qui “ vocantur *sancti*, cum sint etiam ipsi *sancti*, non capaces sint “ baptismi, in quo præcellunt *sancti* immundis? quid inde habent “ commodi, eo quod vocentur vel reputentur *sancti*?” Animadv. in loc. a NORTONO KNATCHBULL.

in the language in which he wrote. Whereas ours regards him, as indeed he was, a skilful casuist, a masterly reasoner, and a good writer.

BUT we must not quit this subject without attending for a few moments to Dr. S.'s compromising plan. Having discarded the intention of personal internal holiness, legitimacy, &c. from the text, he observes: "If Mr. A. will but give
 " up his general proposition [that the children of
 " pious parents are included with them in the
 " christian covenant] in those exceptionable sentences of it to which I have all along objected,
 " we shall perhaps be able to *compromise* the
 " matter upon this text without much difficulty. I agree then, that there is a sense in
 " which every good man may be said to SANC-
 " TIFY *his wife and his children*. He DEVOTES
 " them by faith and prayer to God, he *sepa-*
 " *rates* them, as far as his influence reaches,
 " to the fear and service of heaven.—Thus
 " Job is said to have *sanctified* his children, ch.
 " i. 5†." But instead of *compromising* the matter, the Dr. seems to me to *give up* the point. And one would think he is apprehensive of it himself; for, after having endeavoured to support his notion by a full paraphrase, he observes: "This paraphrase may perhaps not satisfy, nor
 " do I lay any great stress upon it*." But seeing this notion is hardly expected to give satisfaction, he flies to the *dernier* resort of Antipædobaptists, I mean, their peculiar notion about
 positive

† Ans. to Dr. A. p. 87.

* *Ut supra*, p. 89.

positive institutions: “ Could it be proved that
 “ the children of christian parents are included
 “ with them in the christian covenant, and on
 “ that account *holy*: it would not follow that
 “ therefore they should be baptized: their right
 “ to baptism must depend, and depend alone,
 “ upon the direct express command of the In-
 “ stitutor; for it is *absurd* to talk of *analogy*
 “ and *consequence* in the matter of positive in-
 “ stitution†.” And yet *this* fort is untenable;
 yes, I am bold to affirm, it is a vain and use-
 less refuge in the present cause. (See Chap. i.)
 If the reasoning contained in the preceding
 pages be just, I say it again, “ Instead of com-
 promising the matter, the point is *given up*.”
 For, if every good man, as priest in his own
 house, may SANCTIFY *his wife and children*,
 may DEVOTE them *by faith* and prayer to God,
 and SEPARATE them to the fear and service
 of heaven; if those who are thus treated may
 be termed *holy*, and are so termed by the apos-
 tle, as the Dr. supposes—the very nature of the
 case shews, that the *holiness* spoken of is *rela-
 tive*; and the nature and design of christian
 baptism shew, that he may with *equal* propriety,
set apart all of them, as HIS, for that ordi-
 nance; and it appears from what has been said,
 that none in such a family should be left un-
 baptized, except those who *reject* the counsel of
 God, or are manifestly *disaffected* to the chris-
 tian church and its divine Founder.

§ 55. FROM

† Ibid.

§ 55. FROM what has been said in this chapter we may draw the following obvious corollaries.

1. *Coroll.* Those *principles* whereby infant children are debarred from their parents' privileges, from a visible standing in the church of Christ, and particularly from baptism, which is itself a privilege, and the only introductory rite to that visible standing among God's people, are *unreasonable, unscriptural, and highly uncharitable.*

(1) *Unreasonable*—because “infants are *capable* of the OBLIGATIONS of baptism; for the *obligation* ariseth from the EQUITY of the thing, not from the understanding and capacity of the person*.” And “if we consider baptism as an ordinance of *dedication*—it is the indispensable duty of believers to devote themselves, and *all they have*, to God; which is *founded in the law of nature*, and is the result of God's right to us and ours.” And if it be objected: “Since infants cannot *devote themselves* to God in this ordinance, therefore it is not to be applied to them; to this it may be replied, That as there is no other *medium* which can be made use of to prove that the solemn act of consecration, or dedication to God in baptism, is to be made *only* by ourselves, but what is taken from a supposition of the matter in controversy, by those who assert that infants are not to be baptized: so if this method of reasoning be allowed of, we might as well say, on the other hand

* POOLE'S Annot. on Matt. xxviii. 19.

hand ; Infants are to be baptized ; therefore baptism is not an ordinance of self dedication, since they cannot devote themselves to God ; and that would militate against what is allowed of by all, that baptism, when applied to the adult, is an ordinance of self-dedication. — When I do, as it were, pass over my right to another, there is nothing required in order hereunto, but that I can lawfully do it, considering it as *my property* ; and this is no less to be doubted concerning the *infant seed* of believers than I can question, whether an adult person has a right to *himself* when he gives up himself to God in this ordinance. — And from hence it may be inferred — that infants descending from parents, either both, or but one of them professing faith in Christ, are to be baptized : since *one* parent has as much a right to the child as the *other**.” To these reflections of the judicious Dr. RIDGLEY, I will add the following from the justly celebrated Dr. OWEN : “ All children in their infancy are reckoned unto the covenant of their parents, by virtue of *the law of their creation*. — Those who by God’s appointment, and by virtue of the law of their creation, are and *must of necessity* be included in the covenant of their parents, have the same right with them unto the privileges of that covenant, no *express exception* being put in against them. This right it is in the power of none to deprive them of, *unless they can change*

the

* RIDGLEY’S Body of Div. vol. ii. p. 408, 409.

the law of their creation†." To attempt which, it is hardly necessary to remark, that it is sufficiently *unreasonable*.

(2) *Unscriptural*. In addition to what has been said on the various dispensations of the covenant of grace, or the grant of mercy to men; the declarations of prophecy; and the records of the New Testament; let the following remarks from the author last referred to, be impartially weighed. "Believers under the New Testament, have lost nothing, no privilege that was enjoyed by them under the old. Many things they have *gained*, and those of unspeakable excellency, but they have lost nothing at all. Whatever they had of *privilege* in any ordinance, that is continued; and whatever was of *burden* or *bondage*, that is taken away: all that they had of old was on this account, that they were the *people of God*.—Into this great *fountain privilege* believers under the gospel have now succeeded.—This I suppose is unquestionable; that God making them to be *his people* who were *not a people*, would not cut them short of any privilege which belonged before to *his people* as such.—Let men but give *one instance* to this purpose, and not beg the matter in question, and it shall suffice.—And is it possible that any man should be a loser by the *coming of Christ*, or by his *own coming* unto Christ? It is against the whole gospel once to imagine it in the least instance. Let it now be inquired, whether it were not a
great

† Tract of Inf. Bapt. ap. Collect. of Serm. p. 577.

great *privilege* of the *people of God* of old, that their *infant seed* were taken into covenant with them, and were made partakers of the *initial seal* thereof? Doubtless it was the greatest they enjoyed, next to the grace they received for the saving of their own souls. — Without this, whatever they were, they were not *a people*. Believers * under the gospel are, as we have spoken, the *people of God*; and that with all sorts of advantages annexed unto that condition, above what were enjoyed by them who of old were so. How is it then that this *people of God*, made so by Jesus Christ in the gospel, should have their *charter* upon its *renewal* razed with a deprivation of one of their choicest rights and privileges? Assuredly it is not so. And therefore, if believers are now, as the apostle says they are, the *people of God* (Heb. iv. 9.) their children have a right to the *initial seal* of the covenant†.”

(3) *Uncharitable*. Is it not uncharitable (to say nothing worse) to conclude, that all the infants in the christian world are as unqualified for a visible membership in the church of God, as the most hardened infidel? Nay, much further from the gospel kingdom; since the latter *may* come to be a member in a few days, while the former *must*, on this plan, be shut out for years; and this exclusion must continue for ever, if

* UNDERSTAND by *Believers* and the *people of God*, CHRISTIANS; that is, those who are such by *denomination*; which remarks are still more forcible with respect to the truly pious.

† Dr. OWEN, On the Hebr. vol. ii. p. 256.

if the party do not *submit* to such terms of communion, as nine godly persons out of ten judge and sincerely believe are *unreasonable* and *unscriptural*, viz. a *renunciation* of the baptism and church-membership of infants, and of every mode of receiving and administering the ordinance, except a total immersion of the body. Our opponents, indeed, extend their charity as far as we could wish, to *dying* infants, while they are so sparing of it to the *living*. The dying are numbered with the *saints*, the living, as to church relation and privileges, are classed with *infidels*. And is it not strange to astonishment, that the *excellency* and *spirituality* of the gospel dispensation should be considered as an argument by men of sense, for excluding infants from a visible relation to Christ and his people! But if this be a just plea of exclusion, why so freely allow them a standing in a state far *more* excellent and spiritual? How can these things hang together? Does it not involve an *absurdity*, as well as uncharitableness, to say, that a person may be very well admitted to heaven, *without* believing and repenting, but not to be a member of the visible church? The church, it is allowed, is the common nursery from whence paradise is planted; and yet infants must not be taken into this nursery, but heaven must have them from the wild waste!—Dr. JOHN OWEN was a man whom no modest person would venture to pronounce either a shallow divine or a superficial reasoner; he was a person much conversant with the controversial parts of divinity

nity, eminently versed in the *rationale* of the divine dispensations, well acquainted with the nature of positive institutions in general; and the subjects and mode of baptism in particular, possessed a share of his investigations. Thus qualified to instruct us, let us hear his words: "Why is it the will of God, that *unbelievers* and *impenitent* sinners should not be baptized? It is because, not granting them the *grace*, he will not grant them the *sign*. If therefore God *denies* the *sign* to the infant seed of believers, it must be *because* he denies them the *grace* of it; and then *all* the children of believing parents, dying in their infancy, must without hope be eternally damned. I do not say, that all must be so, who *are not* baptized; but *all must be so whom God WOULD HAVE NOT BAPTIZED* *." Infants being not *naturally incapable* of baptism, as before shewn, any more than of circumcision, and scripture evidence affording no express exception against them, but on the contrary contains much in their favour as members of the christian church, and their right to baptism, may we not ask, if Dr. OWEN's reasoning be just (and we may safely challenge the whole *corps* of Antipædobaptists to refute it) must not *our denying* baptism to our infant children be a conduct towards them highly *uncharitable*, as well as unscriptural and unreasonable? We impeach not the tenderness and affection of our brethren to their children in *other* respects, and readily suppose that there is a sense in

* Dr. OWEN of Inf. Bapt. *ut supra*.

in which every good man among them “devotes them (as Dr. STENNETT expresses it) by faith [tho’ in this respect weak] and prayer to God — separates them as far as his influence reaches [except in the case of church-membership and baptism] to the fear and service of heaven, and they derive from their connection with him such external advantages of a religious kind [tho’ in an irregular way, if it be irregular to separate what God hath joined, the *charter* and the *seal*; and to tear away the stamp and signature of the only charter whereby they enjoy those external advantages] as often prove the happy means of their conversion and salvation †.” The *uncharitableness* we are speaking of consists, not in restraining prayer before God for them, or in neglecting moral parental duties (except what arises naturally and necessarily from their distinguishing tenet); but in acting the part of the disciples over again, who *forbad* infants and children to be brought to Christ in all the *external ways* they are capable of being brought.

2. *Coroll.* From what has been said it may evidently appear, what that *church membership* is which we claim for infants, and what those different *relations* are in which they stand to Christ and his people before and after baptism. The term itself, *church-membership*, being expressive of relation and comparison, admits of different *degrees*; so that the same person may be a church-member in one sense, but not in another. The gospel church is a select body of people of which Christ

† Ans. to Dr. A. p. 87.

Christ is the head, and each person of which it is composed is a member. But this body may be *select* in a manner less or more strict; and consequently the *relation* of the members to the head and to each other must be proportionally remote or intimate. Accordingly we may observe,

(1) THAT persons are often called *church-members* in this controversy, when they are so only *de jure*, or *quoad debitum*. And in this sense we regard all adults *before* baptism, who nevertheless *may* be lawfully baptized. The infant children of professing christians, those of our opponents not excepted, we also regard as church-members in the same sense, tho' not baptized. And we cannot but consider this circumstance with pleasure and gratitude, on behalf of children, that there is *one degree* of church-membership, that which is *quoad debitum*, which it is out of the power of men to deprive them of. The propriety of their being denominated *members* of the church, antecedent to their being ministerially recognized such, arises hence, That they actually possess the qualifications of members, and therefore *are so* in the *divine estimation*, and *ought* to be so in ours, tho', *quoad eventum*, they may never be baptized, thro' the mistakes and faults of others. This relation to Christ is appointed and determined by himself, and stands absolutely independent on the will of others.

(2) PERSONS are called *church-members* in a *strict* sense, when they have been regularly admitted

mitted by baptism, the ordinance of admission, into the number of those who are professed *christians*, in contradistinction to Jews, Heathens, &c. And it is evident from the nature of the case, that *this* degree of membership depends on the will and ministry of man, *quoad eventum*. The *right* of membership, being a divine gift, must needs be *absolute*; but the publick avowal and recognition of that right by an ordinance instituted for that purpose, must needs depend on the judgment, volition, and agency of men. If any abuse this discretionary trust, they are accountable to the Judge of all; nevertheless, with regard to the validity of *ministerial* acts, in admitting persons into *this* membership, or shutting them out, we may say, that what is bound on earth is bound in heaven, and what is loosed on earth is loosed in heaven. Therefore, the first relation is to be sought from the determination of God, but the last from the determination of man. And then alone is the latter right, when it coincides with, and is expressive of, the former. And in reference to baptism we may say, it *belongs* to the first, but *makes* the second.

(3) AGAIN: Persons are called *church-members* in the *strictest* sense, when they have consented to associate together for divine worship and christian fellowship, for promoting their mutual edification, the conversion of souls, &c. But such a body is not, strictly speaking, *the church* of Christ, but *a part* of it. Christ has
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but

but *one* body, the church, mystically; and but *one*, visibly; and as to congregational churches, so called, they are but collective parts of that one visible church. Or if we borrow an illustration from the starry heaven, we may say, That a *particular* church is a *constellation* of stars, which makes but a small *part* of the general catalogue.

BUT what particularly deserves our notice is, That the *first* relation entitles to baptism; that the *second* relation supposes the *application* of baptism; and the *third alone* is what infants and young children are to be debarred from. And this exclusion is no arbitrary proceeding, but results from the very nature and design of such a society. The only *positive* qualification requisite for this last membership, is, that a person be baptized; and in that respect every baptized person may be said to have a legal right to it. But again, seeing the nature and design of such a society, as may be gathered from nature and revelation, does not comprehend infants and children, and adults^s evidently disqualified by error and wickedness; the one not possessing natural, the other not moral qualifications; the not admitting baptized infants to the Lord's Supper, which is *peculiar* to church-members in this strictest sense, is founded on the justest principles; for when laws and rights *positive* and *moral interfere*, the former must yield to the latter.

IF our opponents wilfully overlook these plain and necessary distinctions, it is no wonder, if
so

so disposed, that they should be able to represent the Pædobaptists in an inconsistent and ridiculous light: for what armour is proof against such weapons? At this rate, the sacredness and dignity of truth itself are no defence. Mr. B. having made some remarks on the word "covenant" as used by Mr. MATTHEW HENRY (as if *that* term also had not *various* acceptations), adds: "The conduct of Mr. HENRY is quite: "similar, in regard to *church-membership*. For "in one place he tells us, that baptism is an "ordinance of Christ, *whereby* the person baptized is *solemnly* ADMITTED a member of the "visible church: yet in the same treatise, he assures us, that baptism is an ordinance of the "visible church, and pertains therefore to those "that ARE *visible members* of the church.—Their "covenant right and their *church-membership*, intitleth them to baptism—Baptism doth not "give the title, but *recognize* it, and compleat "that church-membership which before was imperfect†." But does this passage deserve all the ridicule Mr. B. affects to treat it with? Is there any thing here deserving of "the sarcastic reflection of a profane poet?" Mr. B.'s *ironies* in the present case, affect—not Mr. HENRY's *cause*, nor the *sentiments* here advanced, but—the defect of language, or at most an omission in *defining* terms and making distinctions, to prevent the cavils of those who seek occasion.

† Pædob. Exam. p. 322, and Mr. Henry's Treatise on Baptism, p. 25, 66, 107.

tion.—Having examined as proposed, Who are the proper *Subjects* of baptism; particularly, whether it is the WILL OF CHRIST that the infants of believing or christian parents should be baptized? we proceed to consider next the *mode* of administering the ordinance.

END OF VOL. I.







