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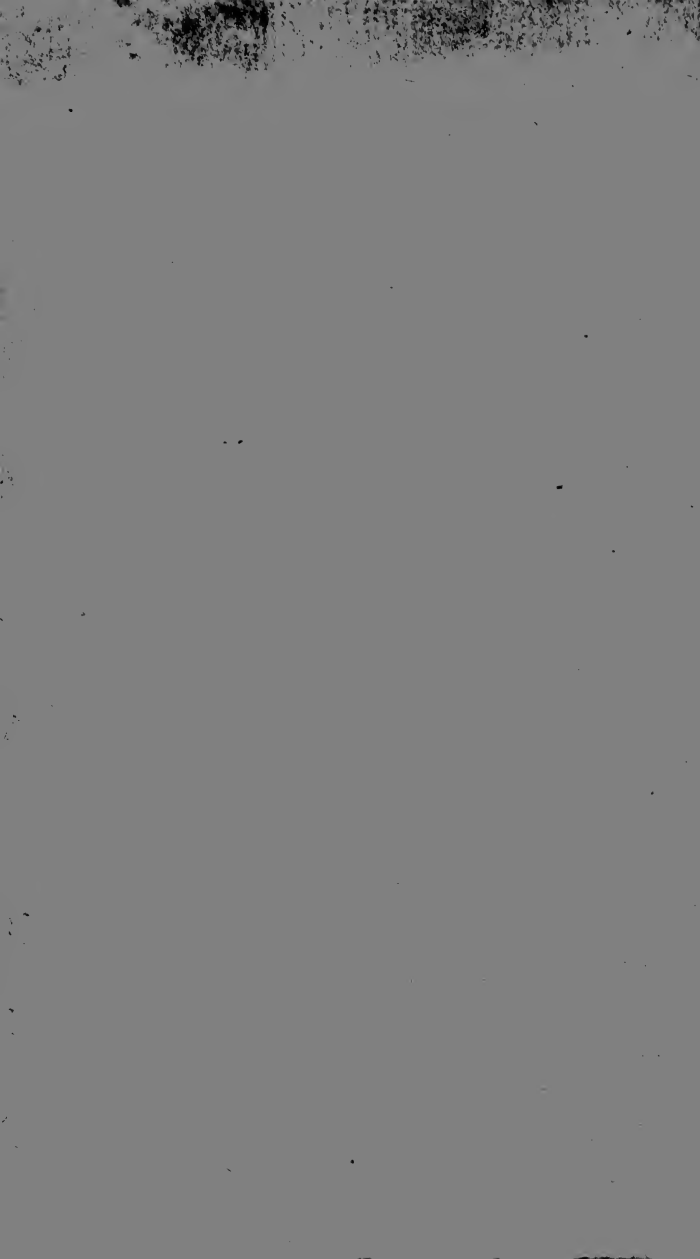
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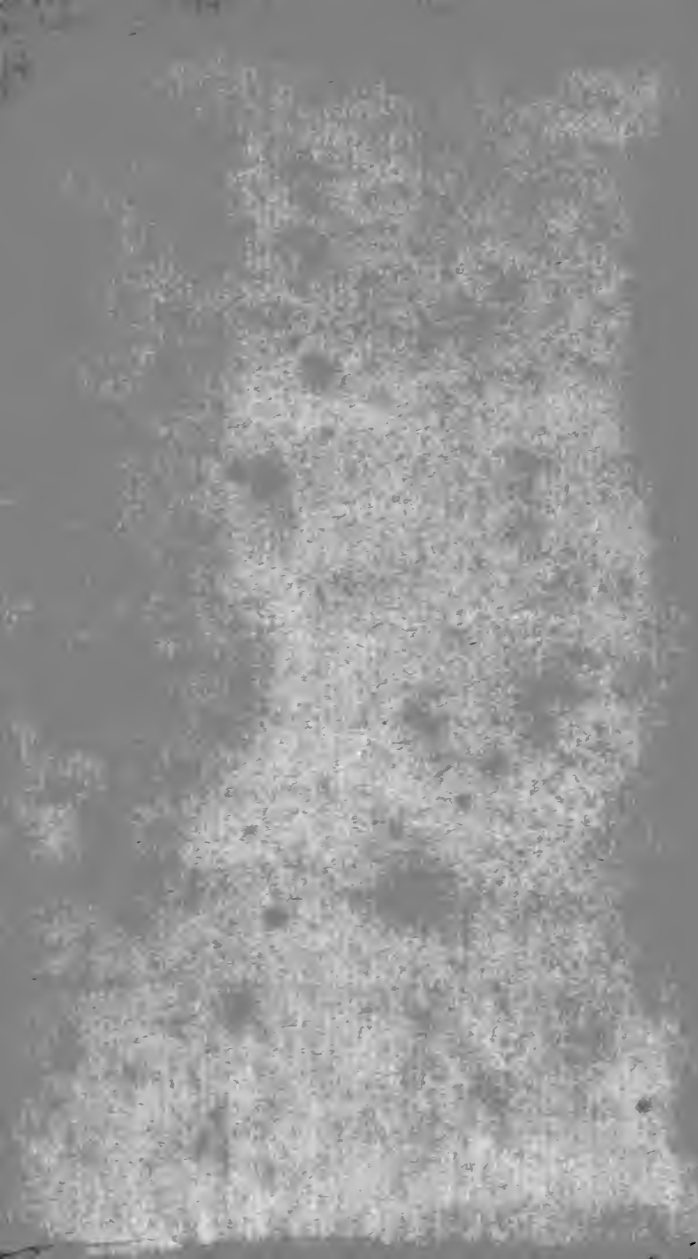
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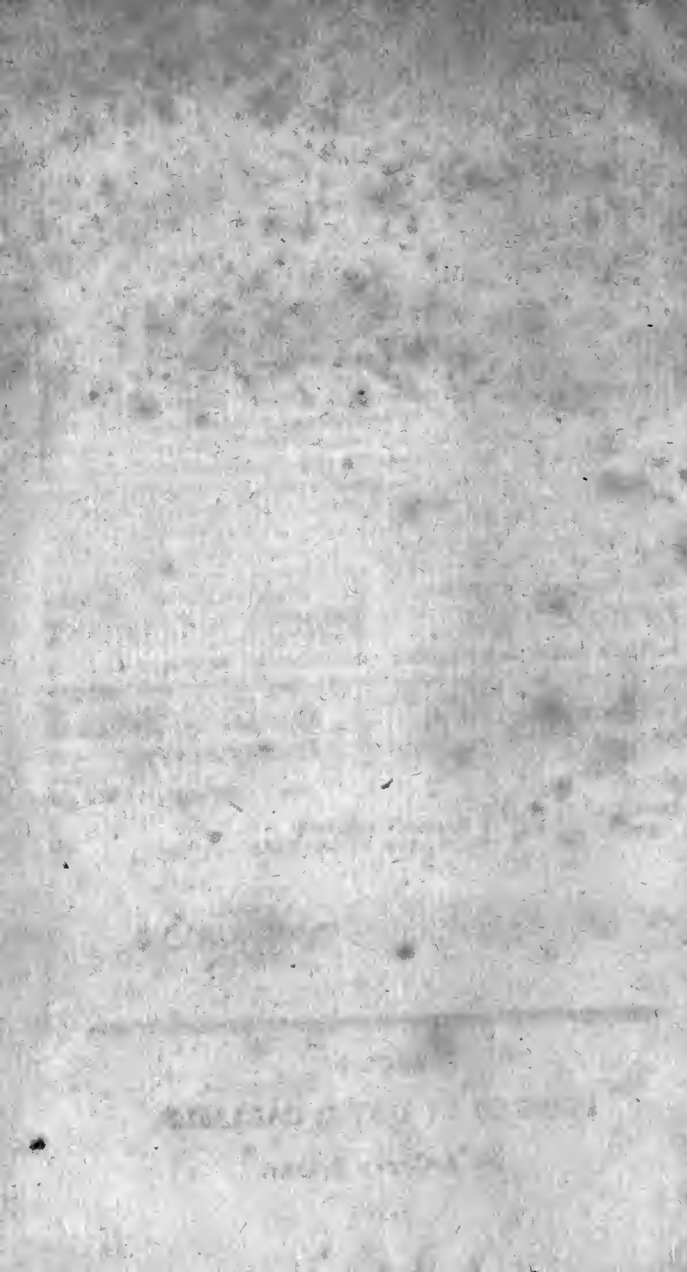


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NINE

DISCOURSES

ON

BAPTISM.

VIZ.

WATER BAPTISM,
JOHN'S BAPTISM,
CHRISTIAN BAPTISM,
BELIEVER'S BAPTISM,
INFANT BAPTISM,
BELIEVING PARENTS

AND THEIR CHILDREN
IN COVENANT
WITH GOD,
BEING BURIED WITH
CHRIST IN BAPTISM
ILLUSTRATED.

TO WHICH IS ANNEXED

MRS. JACKSON'S CONFESSION.

Daniel [✓]Oliver, ed.

BOSTON:

PRINTED BY DAVID CARLISLE,

No. 5, COURT STREET.

1806.

DISTRICT OF MASSACHUSETTS, *to wit* :

BE it remembered, that on the twenty first day of June, in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and six, in the thirtieth year of the Independence of the United States of America, Daniel Oliver, Clerk, of the said district, has deposited in this office the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as proprietor in the words following, to wit : " Nine Discourses on Baptism, viz. Water Baptism, John's Baptism, Christian Baptism, Believer's Baptism, Infant Baptism, Believing Parents and their Children in Covenant with God, Being Buried with Christ in Baptism illustrated, to which is annexed Mrs. Jackson's confession" — Boston : Printed by David Carlisle, No. 5, Court Street, 1806.—In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, " An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned ;" and also to an Act, entitled, " An Act supplementary to an Act, entitled, An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the authors and proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned ; and extending the benefits thereof to the arts of designing, engraving and etching historical, and other prints."

NATHAN GOODALE, } Clerk of the District
of Massachusetts.

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THE HISTORY OF THE

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THE

UNIVERSALITY AND PERPETUITY

OF THE

OBLIGATION UPON CHRISTIANS

TO

OBSERVE THE RITE OF

BAPTISM WITH WATER ;

OR,

WATER BAPTISM A STANDING ORDINANCE

OF THE

G O S P E L.



S E R M O N.

ACTS, X. 47.

CAN ANY MAN FORBID WATER, THAT THESE SHOULD NOT BE BAPTIZED, WHO HAVE RECEIVED THE HOLY GHOST AS WELL AS WE ?

THOUGH the religion of the gospel is a pure and spiritual service, not incumbered with ceremonies, yet being adapted to the nature of man, it does not wholly omit positive duties. It enjoins two simple, easy, and expressive rites, as signs and means of moral goodness and vital piety; viz. baptism and the Lord's supper. Baptism with water has been almost universally by christians believed to have been appointed by the author of the dispensation as a standing ordinance. The apostles evidently administered it to converts, Jewish and Gentile, in token of their admission into the number of Christ's followers, and as a public acknowledgment of the admitted persons, that they were his disciples, and owned him for their Lord.

and Master. There is reason to suppose, that this rite was uniformly observed by all professors of christianity, in the age immediately succeeding the apostles, and therefore had the sanction of both apostolic instructions and practice. It is believed that the early history of the church does not point to a time when it was considered as a novelty, or when the propriety and necessity of the ordinance were called in question.

The nature and design of this service have been variously explained, and without doubt grossly mistaken and perverted in subsequent periods. In our times, not only the mode and subjects, but even the obligation and use of the ordinance, have become matters of dispute with some, who name the name of Christ. There are those who contend against forms with a precise formality; and there are others who seem to think positive duties of no value, because moral duties are superior; and some have probably been led to disparage rites altogether, from disgust at the abuses attending them.

Different sects in modern times have maintained that baptism with water was not commanded by Christ; and that though it was administered by the apostles and first ministers of the church, yet they did not consider it as a gospel ordinance, but as a ceremony to be used or neglected according to their discretion. Hence they have inferred, that if baptism be lawful, yet it is not required. One sect professes to account it a Jewish carnal ordinance, which is abolished. Another talk of there being but one christian baptism, that of the Holy Ghost and of fire, at the same time admitting that if any wish for water baptism, either by sprinkling or im-

merfion; for themfelves or their infants, they may be gratified. In the following difcourfe we fhall attempt to fhew that *baptifm with water is a ftanding ordinance of the gofpel*. All unbaptized perfons fhould be baptized in testimony of their faith, engagements, and privileges as chriftians. The queftion of the right of children to this rite, and of the mode of adminiftering it, is not now to be confidered. The text has refpect to a fentiment of thofe who decry the rite in queftion, viz. that baptifm by *the fpirit* is all which is meant by baptifm in the New Testament. From this paffage it appears, that though the defcent of the fpirit, or fpiritual baptifm had preceded, yet the apoftle Peter alleges this as a reafon for baptizing with water afterwards.

1. The firft clafs of argument in fupport of the univerfal and perpetual obligation of this practice is derived from Chrift's commiffion to his apoftles. "Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghoft, teaching them to obferve all things whatfoever I have commanded you. And lo! I am with you always even unto the end of the world."

Here we fay is the institution of water baptifm by Jefus Chrift; a general account of its meaning and defign; and a ftrong intimation of its perpetual obligation. Here our Lord exprefsly appoints that water fhall in a folemn manner be applied to believers. The apoftles are not only to teach or difciple, but to baptize; and to baptize in the paf-

* Matthew, xviii. 19, 20.

sage under consideration, must mean to make an application of water. Though water is not expressly mentioned in the commission, there is not the least reason to doubt that it was intended. Words are always to be taken in their literal, proper, common, and obvious signification, unless they be otherwise explained, or unless some good reason appear for understanding them otherwise. Now it is certain that the literal, proper, common, and obvious signification of baptism is a wetting, bathing, or aspersing with water. There is no necessity, there is no ground for affixing a different meaning to it in the passage before us. It would be contrary to all the approved rules of interpretation—it would confound the meaning of language, and render it useless to any purpose of instruction. Where baptism is used with relation to the descent of the Holy Spirit, it is used in a figurative sense, and the Holy Spirit is expressly mentioned. That the apostles *must* have understood Christ in his commission to intend water baptism, may be inferred from the received and general sense of the word ; and from the circumstance, that during the whole term of his personal ministry, they had practised baptism with water.* That they *did* understand him to intend this baptism is evident from their subsequent conduct ; for in pursuance of his commands, they proceeded to baptize all their converts. This commission, therefore, contains an injunction of the Author and Finisher of our faith, delivered to his first ambassadors, to apply water to the subject in admitting him into the number of christians, and implies the obligation of those who

* John, iii. 22. iv. 1, 2, 3.

heard the gospel, not only to believe it, but to testify their belief by submitting to this application. What is said thus far may be allowed, and yet the *perpetuity* of the rite be denied. To show that it was not to be a custom peculiar to the apostolic age, we may draw arguments from the character of Christ as a divine teacher of the world, from the nature and use of the act to be done, and from the very language of the commission to the apostles. Is there not ground for the following remarks? "Jesus Christ was sent of God to promulgate a divine dispensation of religion to mankind, to deliver doctrines of universal concern, to enjoin laws of universal obligation. All his injunctions must be understood to be universally binding, unless he himself see fit in some way to limit them, or somewhat in the nature of the things or circumstances of the injunction limits them. This general principle is true, not only of his moral precepts, but of other precepts, peculiar to himself and his religion. Thus, for instance, the directions and promises, which he delivered concerning offering prayers to God in the name of Christ, though addressed directly to his immediate followers, without any express mention made of his future disciples, yet have been understood by all christians as obligatory on themselves, and a sufficient foundation for their practice." Were nothing said by Christ, intimating that not only his immediate ambassadors, but all his ministers in all future times should administer baptism to believers; and that all believers in succeeding ages should ask and receive it, it would still be our duty to inquire whether any thing in the nature or circumstances of the injunction, con-

fined it to the persons, to whom it was first delivered. Now the reasons on which baptism is founded are common to all ages.

This ordinance was directed to be given and received in or into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and in the name of Jesus Christ ; i. e. in token and acknowledgment of our relation to them, and their relation to us ; and particularly as a sign that we look upon ourselves as the disciples of Jesus Christ, obliged to hearken to his doctrine, to follow his instructions, and to obey his commandments ; and that we desire to have an interest in his mediation. The words of Christ's commission to his apostles represent baptism as a solemn initiation into the christian profession ; and all its engagements and privileges. Other passages teach that it typifies in a particular manner the necessity of moral purity and righteousness. * “ Christ gave himself for the church, *that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.*” These are moral uses of the ceremony not confined to any age of the church. As all persons of all times are interested to pay due regards to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; and to exercise the faith, and trust, to make the resolutions and vows that belong to christians, so are they alike interested in a rite which expresses these acts and dispositions.—Hence because the words of the commission do not limit the duration of the observance of baptism ; and there is nothing in its nature, or the circumstances of the times to limit it, we have reason to think it intended to be perpetual.

* Rom. vi. 3, 4. 1 Peter, iii. 21. Ephes. v. 26.

On the other hand, the words strongly intimate that it should be continued. They enjoin upon those to whom they are addressed two acts, that of teaching or making disciples, and that of baptizing. They contain an encouragement to these services, which is the promise of the presence of the Redeemer to the end of the world. The duration of the duties is to be supposed coeval with the duration of the promise. This construction is confirmed by the very general terms of the direction in Mark, xvi. 15, 16. "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." We cannot think that baptism would be mentioned in such a connection, as an act necessary to express and accompany faith, unless it were important, and required to be observed by all believers.

2. The practice of baptism with water by the apostles, during the Lord's personal ministry, affords arguments in favour of the ordinance in question, John, iii. 22. After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea, and there he tarried with them and baptized. iv. 1, 2, 3. When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John; though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples, he left Judea and departed again into Galilee. Christ is said to do what the apostles did, because they acted by his direction. Had our Lord no design in this? It must probably have been intended to be introductory to christian baptism.

3. Another proof is taken from John, iii. 5. compared with verse 26 of the same chapter. "Jesus answered, verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." As if he had said to the Jewish ruler, "you must have new principles and a new character, and in token of your conversion be baptized with water, in order to become a regular member of my kingdom." In the same chapter, v. 26, it appears that they who received Jesus as the Saviour were baptized.

4. The doctrine of this discourse is confirmed by those numerous passages which directly or impliedly speak of baptism by water, as a standing ordinance in the spiritual religion of Jesus Christ, according to apostolic practice. Rom. vi. 4. *We are buried with him by baptism.* Ephe. iv. 5. *One baptism.* Col. ii. 12. *Buried with him in baptism.* Heb. vi. 2. *Doctrine of baptisms.* 1 Pet. iii. 21. *Baptism doth now save us.* Acts, ii. 38. *Be baptized every one of you.* EVERY ONE OF YOU. 41st verse. *They that gladly received his word were baptized.* viii. 12. *They were baptized both men and women.* NO DISTINCTION OF SEX AS IN CIRCUMCISION. 13th verse, *Simon believed and was baptized.* 16th verse, *Only they were baptized in the name of Jesus.* 38th verse, *Here is water, what doth hinder to be baptized?* 38th verse, *And he baptized him,* ix. 8. *Saul received sight, and arose and was baptized.* x. 47. *Can any forbid that these should not be baptized?* 48th verse. *Peter commanded them to be baptized.* COMMANDED. xvi. 15. *Lydia was baptized and her household.* 33d verse, *The Jailor was baptized, he and ALL HIS*

Straightway. xviii. 8. *Many of the Corinthians believed, and were baptized.* xix. 5. *And when they heard this, they were baptized.* xxii. 16. *Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins.* Rom. vi. 8. *Were baptized into Jesus.* 1 Cor. i. 16. *I baptized the household of Stephanus.* x. ii. *And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud.* xv. 29. *Else what shall they do, that are baptized for the dead?* Gal. iii. 27. *As many as have been baptized.* These are some of the principal places in the New-Testament, where *baptism* and *baptize* are used: and they all mean the ORDINANCE of water baptism, or allude to the use of it, as a *standing ordinance*. Other passages, which do not assert, plainly allude to water baptism. Tit. iii. 15. "Not by works of righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us by the washing (or lover) of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Rom. 6. 4. "We are buried with him by baptism." The apostle has this exhortation to christians, "Having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water, let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering."

5. The apostles were unanimous in administering baptism as an appointment of their Lord and master after he had ascended. They baptized all their converts without one exception, that we can find on sacred record. Acts, ii. 38. ii. 1. They positively commanded their converts to receive the ordinance. Acts, x. 48. "And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." Is it reasonable to suppose that all the apostles in all parts of the world, among Jews and Gentiles, in all

the churches which they gathered, would unitedly, without one scruple or one objector or objection, go into the practice of baptizing with water, if it was not an institution of their Lord, designed to be perpetuated in his gospel kingdom, to the end of the world.

The consent of the church from the earliest period of christianity, through fourteen centuries, in the belief of the right and duty of water baptism is a strong proof in its favour. Had it been an innovation, we should hear of some objection to it in the first age of christianity; we should be able to get some evidence how and when it was introduced. The following are the words of Justin Martyr, who lived in the age next after the apostles. "As many as are persuaded and believe the things taught and said by us to be true, and promise to live according to them, are washed with water in the name of the Father and Lord of all, and in the name of Jesus Christ our Saviour, and in the name of the Holy Spirit."

It may be proper to consider objections to particular parts, or the general conclusion of the foregoing arguments.

Some have appeared to think that we have no reason to conclude that water baptism is meant, where baptism is mentioned without an express mention of water. The answer is, if we have reason to conclude that any instances alluded to are not the figurative baptism of the Holy Spirit, we have reason to conclude that water baptism is intended. For only these two kinds of baptism are noticed in the New Testament. But we have no reason to believe that baptism with the Holy

Spirit is intended, unless it be expressly so termed. Christ, not the apostles baptized with the Holy Spirit, and being baptized is also distinguished from receiving the Holy Spirit.

It has been said that though the apostles did baptize with water, this was not done in pursuance of Christ's commission. Paul said that Christ sent him not to baptize, but to preach the gospel, and he was thankful that he baptized so few. John's baptism, it is pretended, had not ceased, and when the apostles administered the rite, they either considered it as John's baptism, or did it in compliance with the prejudices and wishes of the people, who were attached to such an ordinance. To these objections it is replied,

1. It is not correct to say the apostles did not profess in administering this rite, to do it by virtue of Christ's authority. If the contrary does not appear, it is our duty to presume that they had such authority; but their baptisms were administered in the name of Jesus Christ. One of the obvious and acknowledged senses of the phrase, acting *in the name of Christ*, is acting by his direction, as his messenger, according to the rules and spirit of his religion.

2. Paul is speaking not of his mission generally as an apostle, but of his being sent to Corinth. His saying that this was not to baptize but to preach the gospel, is not to be taken absolutely, but comparatively. Examples of such phraseology in the scriptures are frequent. See Jeremiah, vii. 22. Hosea, vi. 6. Matth. ix. 13. John vi. 27. Preaching was his principal business, and he rejoiced that he had baptized no more, not because he was not author-

ized, but because in their divided state, and their wicked and foolish contests about different teachers, this people might say he “baptized in his own name,” as the head of a party.

3. As to John’s baptism, Paul thought that those, who had received it, ought yet to be baptized in the name of Christ. Acts, xix. The apostles administered no other baptism than that which Christ instituted.

4. To suppose that the apostles baptized without any warrant, in compliance with the prejudices and inclinations of the Jews, is to suppose something against scripture and reason, for it appears continually in this history, that they did baptize *in the name of Jesus Christ*, by his authority and warrant. Moreover, the most express instances of water baptism, mentioned in scripture, were of Gentiles who had not been accustomed to the water baptisms practised among the Jews, and had no previous biases or partialities upon the subject. When the Jews were baptized on the day of Pentecost, it was not done in condescension to their desires, but in consequence of the exhortation of Peter. The same may be observed of the Gentiles, who were baptized at the house of Cornelius.

Other objections against the perpetuity of this rite are taken from our Lord’s washing the disciples’ feet and directing them to do it to each other, from Paul’s circumcising Timothy, St. James directing that the sick be anointed with oil—and the decrees of the first apostolic council at Jerusalem.

In respect to the first circumstance, it was an example not of a particular act to be performed, but of a spirit and temper to be exercised and displayed

by all. Could it be shown that washing one another's feet, of which Christ gave an example and command to his apostles, would be as useful in all ages and places as it was then in Judea, that it was understood in a strict and literal sense, and practised immediately and constantly by them and their successors, and delivered to the church as a command, we might think ourselves obliged to regard washing one another's feet as a stated duty of our religion.

Paul's circumcising Timothy was dictated by a reason peculiar to the times. The ordinance of circumcision was not then *declared* to be abolished; and Timothy, *born of a Jew*, might well submit to the rite, in order to aid his reception with the Jews. The *anointing the sick* in the name of the Lord was an appointment for their *miraculous cure*. But the age of miracles has passed away. The *decree* of the famous apostolic council at Jerusalem was adapted to the case and circumstances of the Gentiles at the time, excepting one article of a moral nature.

Let us make an improvement of the doctrine here mentioned.

Our first duty is to direct our serious attention to the designs and uses of this ordinance. It has been affirmed to be a vain and unprofitable observance. Did Jesus Christ impose on his church a useless and absurd rite? It is instructive and beneficial, as it teaches us our sinfulness, our need of renewal—as it brings to our view the objects of our faith, love, fear, and hope; and as it implies our engagements and vows to “live the lives we live in the flesh by the faith of the Son of God.” Let us

learn to consider this appointment with respect and gratitude ; for it teaches us by a striking sign some of the most important doctrines, truths, and duties of our religion.

2. Who are the proper subjects of this baptism, will be a matter of inquiry in another place. Generally it is to be received by all who confess that Jesus is the Christ ; who avow belief in his religion, and give credible evidence of sincerity in their profession, that they are the real disciples of Christ. Such persons may enjoy the rite for themselves and their infant seed.

3. With regard to the mode of administering the ordinance of baptism. It is the application of water in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, or in compliance with the command of Christ. This is essential to christian baptism, which being once performed is not to be repeated to satisfy the mistaken notions of baptized persons.*

* Some persons who have once received baptism have expressed a wish to receive it again and been urgent in their application. There is nothing in the nature of the ordinance or the terms in which it is prescribed, favourable to the opinion that baptism is ever to be repeated. It is a form of initiation into Christ's church, though vicious members are to be cast out of the church, there is no intimation given in the scriptures that when so admitted they are to be baptized again, 2 Cor. ii. 68. Baptism is an outward sign of being in covenant with God ; a token of obligation on the persons who have received it to fulfil the conditions of this covenant and to obey the whole law of God, when it is once performed according to the prescribed rules all its outward effects take place, baptism is good and is not to be renewed.

“ One of the ends of baptism, observes Dr. Burnet, is that we are all *baptized into one body, we are made members one*

4. Would we prove ourselves the true disciples of Christ, let us feel and testify an unshaken attachment to all divine institutions. We should esteem them. We should love them. We should constantly and diligently attend upon them. Ordinances are the helps to salvation, provided by a wise and gracious God. Their appointment displays his love and grace, his goodness and patience, his wisdom and condescension. Let our eye be to God, to bless and sanctify to us all the means of religion, which he has ordained.

of another, 1 Cor. xii. 13. We are admitted to the society of christians, and to all the rights and privileges of that body, which is the church. And in order to this, the outward action of baptism when *regularly* gone about is sufficient; a second end of baptism is internal and spiritual, it represents regeneration, Tit. iii. 5. our being dead to sin, and buried with Christ and our being *risen* and *quicken*ed with him and made *alive* to God, Rom. vi. Col. ii. It is a just and natural distinction to say that the outward effects of baptism follow it as outwardly performed; but that the inward effects of it follow upon the inward acts. This difference is to be observed between inward acts and outward actions, that when the outward action is rightly performed, the baptism must be considered good; and not to be renewed, but if any one has been wanting in the inward acts, those may and must be afterwards renewed or exerted and the want made up by repentance and obedience."

It may be proper to subjoin the following remarks, "as to the *necessity* of baptism, some seem to have laid too great a stress upon it, as if it were absolutely necessary in order to salvation, grounding their argument chiefly on John iii. 5. Mark xvi. 16. Nevertheless it will be readily allowed that for any to abstain from baptism, when he knows or has sufficient means to know that it is an institution of Christ, and that it is the will of Christ that he should subject himself to it, in such an act of disobedience to his authority, as is inconsistent with true faith."

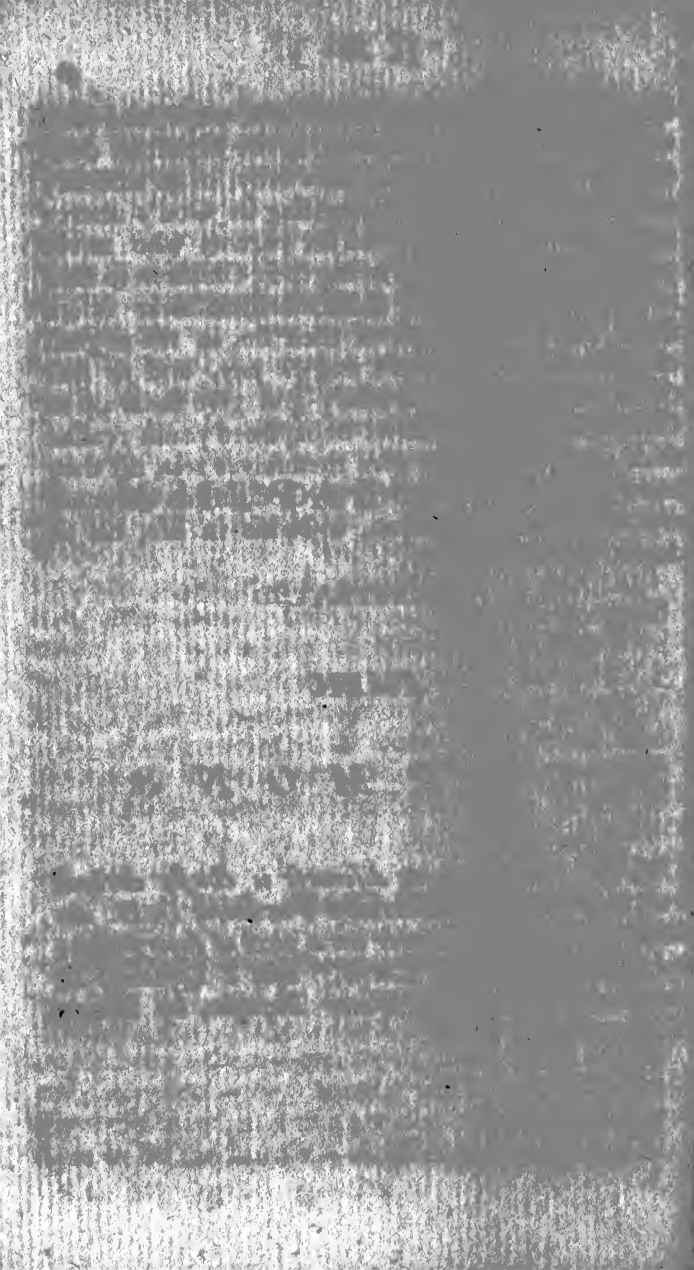
5. It is the duty of all people to be qualified to enjoy the ordinance of baptism. All parents should see that they lose no time, to enjoy it for themselves, if unbaptized, and for their children. What is required of you, dear friends, is to seek and know God; to desire, to know, and do your christian duty; and to honour your Maker and Redeemer in the appointed ways. Give yourselves no rest, till you have obtained reasonable evidence that you are meet for gospel ordinances. It is a mournful thought, that so many live in the total neglect of this edifying and holy sacrament of baptism. Either they do not seek to know the will of God, or knowing, they disregard it. Unbaptized children! Unbaptized parents! Unbaptized youth! Do not contemn or postpone a compliance with your christian obligations. Behold now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation. Today if ye will hear his voice; there may be no morrow for you; no more time—no more seasons of grace.

6. From what hath been said, let all who have enjoyed the ordinance of baptism, feel the sacred bonds thereof, and seek divine grace to enable them to live up to their baptismal vows. Let parents who have come forward and had baptism for their Children, and have devoted them, therein, to God, to be his, and for him, bring them up in the ways of Religion—teach them to pray—and pray with, and for them in their houses:—instruct and govern them for God—set a pious example before them—and teach them their baptismal dedication—the meaning and import of it, as above explained, and as a peculiar privilege binding them to be the Lord's.—And let such parents, far-

ther examine their own hearts and ways, and see if they gave up their Children, in the baptismal dedication, in outward appearance only, or in sincerity and in truth, hoping and trusting in God's mercy and truth for them.—And let parents who never prepared themselves to bring their Children to God in baptism, when they look on their dear infant flock, feel a deep sense of their sin, in the neglect of their duty to them : and *so pity*, and *so love* them, as to come forward, and give them up to God in baptism.—and let unbaptized youth realize their duty, and never give themselves rest, till they have dedicated themselves to God, in his covenant and baptismal institution, to be his in life, his in death, and his for ever.

AMEN.

N. B. *The foregoing discourse is chiefly derived from two Sermons of NATHAN PERKINS, D. D. entitled, "Baptism by water not a piece of superstition ; but appointed by Jesus Christ," and a Discourse on the Divine Institution of Water Baptism, by MOSES HEMMENWAY, D. D.*



THE
NATURE AND DESIGN
OF
JOHN'S BAPTISM,
ILLUSTRATED
IN TWO
S E R M O N S.

BY JOHN CRANE, D. D.

PASTOR OF THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH IN NORTHBRIDGE.

B

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

PHYSICS DEPARTMENT

REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF WORK

FOR THE YEAR 1954

BY THE FACULTY

PRESENTED TO THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

AT THE ANNUAL MEETING

HELD AT CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

ON DECEMBER 15, 1954

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

1955

PRINTED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

S E R M O N I.

ACTS, XVIII. 25.

KNOWING ONLY THE BAPTISM OF JOHN.

THIS was said of the eloquent Apollos, who was one of the greatest teachers in the school of John the Baptist. This mode of expression imports his imperfect acquaintance with the doctrines and institutions of the gospel. It places him back, in a time when less perfect notions of christianity prevailed. He needed more instruction, in order to be completely furnished for preaching the gospel. When, therefore, Aquila and Priscilla perceived his ignorance, "they took him unto them, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly." Apollos then knew only the doctrine and baptism of John. Hence we conclude, that John's baptism belonged to a dispensation less perfect than the christian dispensation.

The principal inquiry is, what was the design of John's baptism? Are we to consider it a christian ordinance, or a Jewish rite? Shall we place it under the gospel, or the legal dispensation? In order to take a proper view of the subject, it must be observed, that the disciples of Christ, under his di-

rection, administered baptism. I now propose to consider John's baptism, and the baptism used by the disciples of our Lord.

It will first be made to appear, that John's baptism, and that of the disciples under our Lord's direction, were designed to answer the same purpose. In doing this, let us pay particular attention to the character and preaching of John, and also to the preaching of the disciples, who were sent out to preach during our Lord's ministry. The character given of John, in the prophets, is that of a forerunner of Christ. It was foretold, that John should be sent to prepare the way of Christ. Isaiah, xl. 3, "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a high way for our God." When John came, the first words which he uttered, were, "Repent ye: for the kingdom of Heaven is at hand." The principal design of John's preaching was to give notice of the immediate approach of the Messiah; to inform the Jewish nation, that Christ was at hand, and to prepare the people to receive him. Such was the great Redeemer, and such was his divine mission, that a forerunner was necessary to proclaim his immediate approach. This information was suitable to prepare the people to receive him. Luke, i. 76, 77, "And thou, child, (John) shalt be called the prophet of the highest: for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways; to give knowledge of salvation unto his people by the remission of their sins."

John's preaching was chiefly designed to prepare the Jewish nation for the reception of Christ. The twelve and the seventy disciples were sent forth upon a similar errand. The directions

which our Lord gave the twelve disciples are found in Matthew, x. 5, 6, 7, "These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not : but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And as ye go, preach, saying, the kingdom of Heaven is at hand." The commission, which our Lord gave to the seventy disciples is found in Luke, x. 1—11, "After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place whither he himself would come." And among other things, which he gave in charge to them, he directed them to say, "The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you."

The particular directions which our Lord gave to the seventy disciples clearly discover the principal design of their mission. They were sent, two and two, before the face of Christ, into every city and place which he intended to visit. They were required to go before the Saviour, and give notice of his coming, that all the people might be in readiness to receive him. This was the object contemplated in John's preaching. The same may be said of the preaching of the twelve disciples. Christ said to them, Matthew, x. 23, "But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another ; for verily I say unto you, ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come." The language of Christ to his disciples, on this occasion, was this ; when you preach in one city, and they begin to persecute you, do not stay to contend with them, but flee to another place ; for your time is short to make me sufficiently known to the cities of Israel.

John, and the disciples of our Lord, were employed in giving information to the Jewish nation, that Christ was at hand, and would soon erect the Gospel kingdom. John proclaimed a Messiah about to come. The disciples of Christ proclaimed a Messiah already come, who would soon appear among the people. John published his message and ceased. At, or near the close of John's ministry, the disciples began their mission. The preaching of John and that of the disciples united in one design. The conclusion is, that as John and the disciples were sent out for like purposes, so John's baptism, and that of the disciples were used for the same end.

Nothing, perhaps, exhibits more fully the important mission of our Lord than the preparations made for his reception. John was sent to give notice of his coming, and introduce him to his public ministry. The twelve and the seventy disciples were commissioned to go forth, two and two, and communicate the interesting tidings, that the Messiah had come, and would soon make his appearance, in the cities of Israel.

As, therefore, the preaching of John and that of the disciples united in design, it is highly probable, that John's baptism and that which the disciples used, in the time of our Lord's ministry, were designed to answer the same purpose, or rather were the same kind of baptism.

The principal inquiry yet remains; is John's baptism to be placed under the Christian, or Jewish dispensation? Before I proceed to examine this question, let me consider the instance of John's baptizing Christ. While John was baptizing the Jews, Jesus came to him and presented himself for

baptism. Matthew, iii. 13, 14, 15, "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."

It seems that when Jesus offered to be baptized by John, John would have modestly declined that honour, saying unto Jesus, I have need rather to be baptized by you, than you to be baptized by me, that is, in other words, you are by much the greater person. I can baptize with water only ; but you shall baptize your disciples with the Holy Ghost. I have sins to repent of, and be cleansed from ; whereas you are entirely without sin, and consequently you can have no need of the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. For these and the like reasons, the honour seems too high for me. Unto John Jesus replied, "Suffer it to be so now." I did not come to desire baptism of you without a divine direction. I acknowledge what you allege is, in general, true. I am your superior, and am without sin ; but it is my Father's good pleasure, that as Aaron, the high priest, was consecrated by the prophet Moses, so I should, in this manner, and by you, as an extraordinary prophet, be introduced to my ministry as Messiah. Whatever I know to be the will of my Father, I am ready to perform ; and so ought you to be ready to do also. For thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness ; that is, not to comply with every moral duty only, but every positive institution also, or every appointment of God. Then John submitted, and consented to do what Jesus desired of him.

If it should be objected, that the baptism of John was the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, and that as Jesus had never committed any sin, he could have no occasion for the baptism of repentance, nor for the remission of sins. Why then did Jesus go and desire the baptism of John? or why did he not acquiesce, when John would have declined baptizing him? In answer to this objection it might be replied, that the same divine institution may, to persons in different circumstances, answer different ends and purposes. Here let it be carefully observed,

1. That the baptism of Christ by John was not designed to manifest his repentance. When John administered baptism to the Jews, their baptism signified repentance. "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance." Take away the idea of repentance, and you take away the principal, if not the only design of John's baptism, when the Jews were the subjects of it. But no repentance was intended to be manifested in the baptism of Christ by John. For Christ was not a sinner. Hebrews, vii. 26, "Who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,"—1 Peter, ii. 22, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."

When Christ offered up his life a sacrifice, he was without sin. Hebrews ix. 14, "Who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God." Baptism then was not applied to Christ, for the same purpose for which it was applied to the people of Israel. In them it signified their repentance. In Christ it signified no repentance.

2. Neither did Christ receive baptism from John, as a token of his being washed from sin. Baptism, under the gospel dispensation, is expressive

of a man's being cleansed from sin. So it is understood in the words of Ananias to Paul, Acts, xx. 16, "Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins." But it is certain, that Christ did not receive baptism for this purpose. He could not; for he had no sin to wash away. He, who was pure, could not be washed from sin; nor was it possible that he should receive a token of being washed from sin. The baptism of Christ by John was used for a different purpose, than baptism was intended to express, when either Jews under the legal, or believers under the gospel dispensation were the subjects of it.

3. Neither did Christ submit to be baptized by John, as an example to the Jewish nation, or believers among the Gentiles. Christ was a great and shining example to the Jewish nation, in all his actions which are imitable. He is an example to all believers, in all ages of the world, as far as his practice was designed for imitation. But in the instance of his submitting to be baptized by John, he was not a pattern for the people of Israel to follow; nor is his baptism by John an example of imitation to believers under the gospel. Had Christ designed that his baptism by John should have been an example of imitation to the Jews, he would probably have submitted to it at a much earlier period than he did. John had almost finished his ministry, when our Lord was baptized. John had baptized almost all the people, who received his baptism at all, before Jesus came to him to be baptized. Jesus was among the last, who received baptism by John. Luke, iii. 21, "Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened."

Christ did not design to lead the Jewish nation down the banks of Jordan, in imitation of his baptism; for he came to John too late, to suppose that he meant his baptism as an example to the Jews. The greater part of the people, who submitted to John's baptism, had been baptized before Christ came to John.

Neither could Christ, in his baptism by John, mean to be followed by believers, in gospel times. For his baptism did not import the same thing, nor was it used for the same purpose, for which baptism is used by christians. If the mode of administration was the same in John's time, as it was afterwards, it was designed for different purposes in Christ, from what it was in christians; and therefore it became virtually another, and a different rite.

No man can submit to christian baptism, in imitation of Christ's baptism by John, if regard be had to the things signified by Christ's baptism. For no instance of baptism among men, can in any case mean the same thing, which Christ's baptism meant. There being nothing signified in Christ's baptism, which is signified in christian baptism. Therefore following Christ, in his baptism, is totally without foundation.

4. Christ's baptism by John was a conformity to some law, which had respect to that occasion only. When Jesus came to John, he said to him, Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Fulfilling of righteousness must have respect to some law already in existence. And Christ, in submitting to be baptized by John, fulfilled righteousness, or conformed to some divine rule. But the righteousness, which was per-

formed, in Christ's baptism by John, had respect to what passed between John and Christ at that time. It was confined to that occasion. Whether this righteousness is imitable by men will be determined, when it is considered what divine rule was brought into use in the baptism of Christ by John. Therefore,

5. Christ's baptism by John must be considered as his obedience to divine appointment, in respect to the inauguration of the priesthood. To obey a positive, or instrumental precept, is fulfilling righteousness, no less than obeying a moral command. It was the special command of God, that Aaron and his sons should be consecrated to office, by washing with water, or baptism. Exodus, xxix. 4, "And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, and shalt wash them with water." See also Exodus, xxx. 18, 19, 20, 21, concerning the mode of washing. The hands and the feet were to be washed with water. Moses, an extraordinary prophet, by God's direction was designated to perform the inaugural services at Aaron's consecration. John, an extraordinary prophet, was by divine authority designated to introduce Jesus to his ministry, by baptizing him. Jesus had now arrived to that period of life, at which the priests, under the legal dispensation, might be consecrated to the service of the sanctuary. It was the command of God, that no priest, under the law, should enter on his public ministry till he was thirty years old. Numbers, iv. 23, "From thirty years old and upward until fifty years old shalt thou number them; all that enter in to perform the service, to do the work in the tabernacle of the congregation." Jesus was now quali-

fied for the priesthood, in respect to his age. Luke, iii, 23, "And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age." This was said of him, at the time when he received baptism from John. And here several considerations deserve attention upon this subject. I shall mention to you the resemblance between Moses and John; the transferring of the priesthood; the visible consecration of Christ, and the frequent allusions to the ancient inaugurations of prophets, priests, and kings.

1. There is a resemblance between Moses and John. Moses and John were both of the same family, the tribe of Levi. Moses, the greatest prophet that then had ever arisen, introduced Aaron to the priesthood. John, as great as Moses, introduced Christ to his public ministry. Moses was not washed himself; but at the command of God he washed Aaron. So we have no account, that John was baptized; but he was sent of God to baptize Christ. Moses resigned his office to Joshua. So John resigned to Christ. Moses soon died, after he had given up his office to Joshua. So John soon died, after he had baptized Christ, and introduced him to his public ministry. Moses pointed out Christ. So did John. Moses prepared the way for Aaron's introduction to office. So John prepared the way of Christ, and invested him with his office. Between Moses and John there is a similarity. Moses was a special agent appointed of God to bring forward the legal establishment. John was a special agent appointed of God to administer baptism to Christ, at his introduction to his public ministry.

2. The priesthood was regularly transferred from the order of Aaron to Christ, in his baptism.

No man, under the law, might take the office of priest, unless he was regularly called of God. And Christ did not take this office upon him without the command of God. Hebrews, v. 4, 5, 10, "And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. Called of God an high priest, after the order of Melchisedec." A modern author has this observation upon the subject, "Christ did not usurp the priesthood, or take it upon himself at random, without rule and order."*

Christ abolished in his death, the order of Aaron, and was invested with the priesthood of a higher order. Hebrews, vi. 20, "Even Jesus made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec." It is undeniable, that the priesthood was changed from the order of Aaron to a higher order. Hebrews, vii. 12, "For the priesthood *being changed*." This change in the priesthood was completed at the death of Christ. The baptism of Christ by John was the inaugural rite, by which he was regularly introduced to his priestly office, or rather publicly and openly declared to be the true Messiah.

Though Christ received an unchangeable priesthood, yet the Levitical priesthood was not abolished, nor was a change made in the law, until the death of Christ. The Jewish ritual remained till Christ offered a better sacrifice, than could be offered under the legal dispensation. Hebrews, x. 12, "But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God."

* Chaplin, page 97.

3. The baptism of Christ by John may be considered as necessary to his visible consecration to office. Had not Christ entered upon his public ministry, in such a manner, as to shew that he was the true Messiah; had he not been consecrated according to divine appointment, the Jews would not have been censurable in rejecting him. Christ entered upon his public office in a regular manner, and according to divine rule. John was designated, as the proper officer to administer baptism to him, and his baptism, with its attending circumstances, was his visible consecration to office. Here then you see the principal design of Christ's baptism by John. It was the rite, which denoted his consecration to the high office to which he was introduced. Hebrews, vii. 28, "For the law maketh men high priests, which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore."

4. The frequent allusions to the ancient inaugurations of prophets, priests, and kings, justify us in considering the baptism of Christ, as the introductory ceremony to his office as Messiah. Allusions to ancient usages and ceremonies are frequent in the New Testament.

It cannot be doubted that the number of the apostles was twelve, in allusion to the number of the twelve tribes of Israel. It is probable, that seventy other disciples were sent out after the apostles, in allusion to the number of the Jewish sanhedrim. In the epistle to the Hebrews, Jesus is represented, as the christian lawgiver, in allusion to Moses, and the christian high priest, in allusion to Aaron; and preferred to both of them, being called an high priest for ever, after the order of Melchif-

edec. And elfewhere Jefus is called the great high priest of our profeffion. I fhall here give you my fentiments in the words of a learned writer.* “ The two things with which our Lord was baptized, were water and the holy Spirit. Let it be further obferved, that the Jewish high priest, and the other priests of that nation, were initiated into their facred office by baptifm, or being washed with water. See Exodus, xxix. 4, Leviticus, viii. 6, 7, and their anointed with oil, which was poured upon the high priest’s head. Exodus, xxix. 7, Leviticus, viii. 12, and xvi. 32; to which there is a fine allufion, Pfalm, xxxiii. 2. Our Lord, as has been abundantly obferved, is a high priest of a higher order than that of the family of Aaron. And after he had been baptized, or washed with water, he was anointed with the facred unktion of the holy Spirit, that *oil of gladnefs above his fellows*. For he received the Spirit, in a more honourable manner, and in greater plenty, than any of the prophets. They had it in a limited degree, but Jefus without meafure. If we confider him as the great prophet of the church, then we may remember, that he was initiated into that high and facred office by baptifm and the holy Spirit.”

At his baptifm he was endued with the power of working miracles. Thus qualified, he began his miniftry. It had been prophefied of him, many ages before, Ifaiah, lxi. 1, 2, where the prophet introduced the Mefiah, as fpeaking and faying concerning himfelf, “ The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, becaufe the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek.” This very paffage our Lord read in the fynagogue at Caper-

* Dr. Benfon’s Life of Chrift.

naum, and declared it to be a prophecy concerning himself, which was then actually fulfilled, Luke, iv. 16. In allusion to that, he is called, Acts, iv. 27, God's holy Son, or servant, whom he anointed. The word Messiah in Hebrew, and Christ in Greek, signifies the anointed. And christians, who in the apostolic age had so generally miraculous gifts of the Spirit, are said also, 2 Corinthians, i. 21, to be anointed of God. And in John, to have had an unction from the Holy One.

Kings also used to be inaugurated, by being anointed with oil. Thus God expressed himself concerning David, the progenitor of the Messiah, Psalm, lxxxix. 20, "I have found David my servant; with my holy oil have I anointed him." And our blessed Lord, who was set upon the throne of David, and who was actually king of this spiritual kingdom, was anointed at his baptism with the holy Spirit, that oil of gladness above his fellows. So that, in whichsoever of his offices we view the blessed Jesus, whether as prophet, priest, or king, the baptism with the holy Spirit was highly proper, to initiate him into his high, sacred, and distinguished ministry.

Taking into consideration the numerous allusions to the ancient ceremonies, at the inauguration of prophets, priests, and kings, it is natural to conclude, that the baptism of Jesus by John was his regular introduction to his office, as the Messiah. It was fulfilling righteousness, in relation to the law, for consecrating men to the priestly office. It was a practical conformity to divine directions, for introducing men to the priesthood. Christ was "A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man."

S E R M O N II.

ACTS, XVIII. 25.

KNOWING ONLY THE BAPTISM OF JOHN.

THE inquiry, respecting the baptism of Christ by John, being finished, it now remains to consider John's baptism, and that used by the disciples under our Lord's ministry. And here I shall be understood to speak of John's baptism, when administered to the Jewish nation, including the baptism of the disciples under the direction of Christ. "Though Jesus himself baptized not," yet his disciples, for a time, did baptize. The main question now to be decided, is, whether John's baptism is to be placed under the christian, or legal dispensation. In other words, was John's baptism christian baptism? I answer, it was not. The following reasons are now offered to prove, that John's baptism was not christian baptism.

1. The ends proposed by John's baptism were different from those of New Testament baptism. The principal design of John's baptism was to manifest, or point out Christ to the Jewish nation.—John i. 31. "And I knew him not; but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water." But New Testament

baptism is designed for other purposes. Believers are said to be baptized into the death of Christ. Romans, vi. 3 "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death?" John's baptism could not be used for this purpose. For Christ was not crucified.

2. John's whole ministry must be placed under the legal dispensation. John was a prophet, but he lived and died under the legal dispensation.— John the Baptist was a minister of the Jewish, not the christian church. Luke, vii. 28, "For verily I say unto you, among those that are born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist: but he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." These words evidently suppose that John's ministry pertained to the legal dispensation. They make John one of the greatest prophets, who had ever appeared under the Mosaic establishment; but they make him inferior to the least in the gospel kingdom.

As John was the last prophet under the Jewish dispensation, he lived, as it were, in sight of gospel times, and therefore was the greatest prophet that had arisen; but compared with the gospel state, he was inferior to the least in the gospel kingdom.

Christ, therefore, places John's ministry under the Mosaic economy. John seemed to consider himself and his ministry in this light, when he spoke of himself and of Christ. John, ii. 30, "He must increase, but I must decrease." By which he intimated, that the dispensation, under which he ministered, was about to come to an end. The conclusion is, that as John is placed back in times anterior to the gospel day, he did not administer ordinances peculiar to the gospel church. Therefore his baptism was not christian baptism.

3. The legal dispensation actually continued till the crucifixion of Christ. Much has been said in favour of giving an earlier date to gospel times. It is presumed, however, that no man would plead in support of this scheme, unless he were driven to it, in defence of some peculiar favourite tenets.

In opposition to the system, which makes the gospel kingdom commence under the ministry of John the Baptist, I bring forward the example and doctrine of Christ. Christ, throughout his whole ministry, both yielded and taught obedience to the ceremonial part of the Jewish law. He attended the appointed feasts. He kept the Jewish passover with his disciples, even the very night in which he was betrayed. To the cleansed leper he said, Matthew, viii. 4, "But go thy way, shew thyself to the priest, and offer the gift, that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them." Did our Lord teach obedience to rites, which were already abolished? If the ceremonial part of the law was abrogated; if gospel times had commenced, why did he give an example of obedience to the ceremonial law? Why did he teach and practise in conformity to the Jewish ritual, if it was done away? The Jewish rites and ceremonies were in being during the ministry of Christ, or they were not. If they were set aside, why did Christ give them support, by his example and direction? Without hesitation, it may be declared, that the legal dispensation, with all the Jewish ritual, continued through the ministry of Christ, even to his death. It remained in full force until the vail of the temple was rent in twain. This is clearly the doctrine of the Bible. Hebrews, ix. 8, "The Holy Ghost thus signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing.

Here it may be observed, that the first tabernacle was standing till the death of Christ. Gifts and sacrifices might be offered in it, till the death and crucifixion of Christ. Therefore the gospel dispensation did not commence until Christ put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. This receives confirmation from the following words, Hebrews, ix. 16, 17, "For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead; otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth." According to these words, New Testament times cannot be dated earlier than the death of Christ. For a testament does not begin its operation till the death of the testator. The death of the testator is necessary to give life and existence to the testament. Common sense teaches us, that a testament does not begin to be in force while the testator liveth.

In order to explain away the import of this text, it may be said, as some have affirmed, "that a testament is made, signed, sealed, and witnessed, before the testator dies, and he whose will is a sovereign law, to govern in all the concerns of his testament, may, if he please, bring things into that state before his death, which he intends they should be in afterwards."* This author asserts that the testator's will is a sovereign law. I add, it is while he lives. His will, and not his testament is the law, during his life, but this does not prove, that the testament of the testator becomes a law during his life. It does not. Therefore according to this writers statement, New Testament times did not begin till the death of Christ. Consequently John's baptism belonged to the legal, not the christian dispensation.

* Edward Clark;

4. The commissions with which the twelve and the seventy disciples were furnished during our Lord's ministry, afford additional evidence, that John's baptism belonged to the legal dispensation. The commissions which the twelve and the seventy disciples received from Christ are recorded, Matthew, x. 5—14, Luke, ix. 1—5, Mark, iii. 14, 15, and Luke, x. 1—11. Here are all the instances of Christ's sending out his disciples to preach. In their commission, we find several particular directions given the disciples, for the rule of their conduct. Their whole duty was pointed out. They were authorized to do all that Christ wanted them to do. But they were not authorized to baptize.—The administration of baptism was not included among the articles of their instruction. The omission of baptism cannot be imputed to forgetfulness, but to design. Had John's baptism, or the baptism used by the disciples under Christ's direction, been christian baptism, or had the christian dispensation begun its operation, we should have found a command for baptizing in the instructions given to the twelve and the seventy. For New Testament baptism is an ordinance of the gospel, and as soon as the New Testament dispensation commenced, Christ commanded his disciples to teach and to baptize. Matthew, 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." Whoever will carefully examine the particular directions, which our Lord gave to the twelve and the seventy disciples, will find, that he did not design that his disciples, at that time, should administer baptism. The omission of baptism, in our Lord's instructions to his disciples, on this occasion,

evidently supports the conclusion, that John's baptism was not christian baptism. Christian baptism could not begin, till there was a command for it. There was no command for it, in the forementioned instructions to the disciples; consequently neither John's baptism, nor the baptism used by the disciples under our Lord's directions, was christian baptism.

5. It is evident, that John's baptism belonged to the legal dispensation, because there was no instance of water baptism, from about the time of John's imprisonment to the resurrection of Christ. From the death of John, till the resurrection of Christ, there was an interval, or space of considerable length, in which no mention is made of the practice of an instance of water baptism. In this season, there were doubtless proper subjects for baptism. The want of instances of baptism, it is probable, is not to be ascribed to the want of proper subjects.

Neither must the omission of baptism be imputed to the neglect of the disciples. For had it been the fault of the disciples, Christ would undoubtedly have reproved them for their negligence. But no reproof of this nature is found in the Evangelists. When the seventy returned to Christ, and gave him some account of their mission, our Lord did not suggest to them any failure in their duty, or the omission of any performance, which pertained to their office. We are therefore justified, in supposing, that the disciples did not baptize, in this space of time, because Christ did not command them to baptize; since therefore we find no instance of John's baptism, or that of the disciples, or any other water baptism, from the death of John to the resur-

rection of Christ, we have satisfactory evidence, that no water baptism, before the resurrection of Christ, was christian baptism.

6. John's baptism was not christian baptism, because it was not performed in the name of the Holy Trinity. This needs no proof. Christ was not declared to be the Messiah when John began his ministry. But the subject is placed beyond doubt in the account given us, Acts, xix. 1—7, "And Paul finding certain disciples, said unto them, have ye received the Holy Ghost, since ye believed? and they said unto him, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. 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." It may be observed, that the twelve disciples, mentioned in the words now quoted, appeared to be ignorant of the use of the Holy Trinity in baptism. They said, we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. They had been baptized unto John's baptism, but appeared not to have heard the Trinity named in their baptism. From this consideration, we may conclude that the Holy Ghost was not named in John's baptism. Consequently John's baptism was a different kind of baptism, from New Testament baptism. Indeed, the question which Paul asked them, supposed there were different kinds of baptism. If not, what propriety was there in his question?

Moreover, the twelve disciples before mentioned were *rebaptized*. This is plain. For when Paul had explained to them the nature of John's baptism, and told them, that it was merely preparatory to their receiving Christ, then they were again baptized by Paul. What further proof is wanting to convince us, that John's baptism was not christian baptism. For had it been the same kind of baptism, which is used under the gospel dispensation, it would have been needless and unwarrantable to repeat it.

In this place, give me leave to recite to you the words of Dr. Benson upon the subject. "When Paul had finished his journey through the upper part of Asia Minor, he returned to Ephesus, and there found twelve persons that were the disciples of John the Baptist. And being willing to impart unto them some spiritual gifts, if they had not received any already, he asked them whether they had received the Holy Ghost. They replied, that they had not so much as heard, that the Holy Ghost had been poured out, or that any person had been baptized therewith, as John the Baptist had predicted. No, saith the apostle; not without wonder and surprize; what not so much as heard of the effusion of the Holy Ghost? Pray, unto what then were ye baptized? They answered, we have been baptized only unto John's baptism. The apostle said, John did indeed prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah, by baptizing with the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. When they heard this, they were baptized again, and that in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."

A late author, * to evade the force of the argu-

ment drawn from this passage of scripture, makes the account given in these verses, Paul's account of John's doctrine and baptism. This certainly makes nonsense of the account. For it is saying, that those on whom Paul laid his hands were the people whom John taught, and that all the men whom John taught were about twelve.

It is undeniable, that these twelve persons whom Paul found, were baptized again. It is also probable, that some of the three thousand, who were baptized on the day of pentecost, had been baptized before by John. For they were Jews and Jewish profelytes, some of whom had lived in Judea, and had been concerned in the murder of Christ. As John's baptism had been administered to the greater part of the Jewish nation, doubtless many of these converts had received John's baptism. If then it be admitted, that some, who had been baptized by John, were baptized again after the resurrection of Christ, it follows, that the apostles did not consider John's baptism to be christian baptism. There is abundant evidence to support the belief, that John's baptism belonged to the Jewish, and not to the christian dispensation.

1. From what has been said upon this subject, we learn that neither John's baptizing the Jews, nor his baptizing our Lord, are examples for our imitation. Baptists are fond of taking a stand near the waters of Enon and Jordan. They say much about following Christ down the banks of Jordan. A late author* has traced the origin of the baptists to Enon and Jordan. This man is uncommonly sanguine in his assertions, and for one who had, according to his own declaration, but just emerged

* Mr. Merrill's Seven Sermons.

from darkness, seems by no means to abound with modesty. In his history of the baptists, he carries back their origin to John the Baptist. The same imagination, which could form the image of baptists at so early a period, might, if the same reason had urged him, drove him back to the antediluvian age, and there found the name, or the substance of the baptist religion among the people of the old world. He has told us, that great and learned men have been perplexed to find when the baptists first began. But strange! his imagination could surmount all difficulties, and without proof or evidence make the origin of the baptist religion coeval with John the Baptist. What he calls a miniature history of the baptists is mere conjecture, unsupported by testimony. With as much propriety, another man might conjecture, that the name and substance of the baptist religion was unknown in the world, till after the twelfth century. But notwithstanding all that this author has said to the contrary, it may be asserted, that no man has authority to administer christian baptism from any command or example which existed before the resurrection of Christ. The authority for administering christian baptism is derived from the commission which our Lord gave to the apostles, after he arose from the dead. Matthew, 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." John's baptism belonged to the legal dispensation. We may not imitate Christ in his baptism. For it was not designed for our imitation. There is as much authority for following Christ in his fasting forty days—walking upon the water—riding into Jerusalem on an ass—work-

ing miracles—dying between two thieves—or making his grave with the rich in his death, as in his baptism by John. In opposition to the sentiment now advanced, baptist writers urge, with the appearance of plausibility, that the gospel kingdom began its operation with John's ministry. It must always be evidence that a cause labours, when it is necessary to press in its support, arguments which are false, or to deny what is fully revealed in the Holy Scriptures. One author* in the baptist interest, with apparently greater zeal for the defence of his peculiar tenets, than love to the truth, has denied that Christ was a Jew. This seems to be done to prove that the gospel began with John's ministry. After quoting from a late publication these words, "Christ was *born a Jew, he lived a Jew, and died a Jew,*" he then makes the following assertion; "This in a literal sense is false."—But who, even on the baptist side of the question, will give credit to such assertions? Jesus said, Revelation, xxii. 16, "I am the root and the offspring of David." The apostle said, Hebrews, vii. 14, "For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Judah." If then David was a Jew, Christ was a *Jew*. If the tribe of Judah were Jews, Christ was a *Jew*. Moreover, Christ was called a *Jew*, and taken to be a *Jew*. John iv. 9, "How is it that thou being a *Jew*, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria?" He was called the king of the Jews. Pray for what purpose did Matthew and Luke, in their gospels, trace the genealogy of Christ? To prove that he was not the Son of David? No: but to prove that he was the seed of David according to promise.

* Mr. Edward Clark of Medfield.

Another writer,* who pleads strongly in favour of making the gospel dispensation begin with John's ministry, has supported his opinion, by an argument drawn from the four first verses of the first chapter of Mark: a slender argument in support of a hypothesis of such magnitude. The words in Mark are these; "The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God; as it is written in the prophets," &c. But why did not this author carry back the gospel dispensation to Abraham's time? He might have proved with as much force of argument, that the gospel began in Abraham's day, as he has that it began with John the Baptist. The gospel was preached to Abraham. He has evidently forced a construction upon the four first verses in Mark, which may seem plausible, but which will not bear examination. All his argument rests upon the word beginning of the gospel. Read it as it means, and his argument is lost. The beginning of the narration of those facts which respect the ministry of John and Jesus Christ. Beginning here refers to the relation of facts, and not to the time when the gospel kingdom commenced. The kingdom of God was not yet come, when John began his ministry. John himself only said it was at hand.

The same writer proves that the gospel dispensation began with John's ministry, because it is said, Luke, xvi. 16, The law and the prophets were until John.

The meaning of this text is explained by its parallel, Matthew, xi. 13, For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. That is, the law and the prophets foretold those things which

* Dr. Baldwin.

should take place in John's time. The law and the prophets pointed out John, and the Messiah who was to come after him. This by no means proves that the legal dispensation ceased upon the approach of John. For the ceremonial law was not taken out of the way till the death of Christ. Colossians, ii. 14, "And took it out of the way, nailing it to the cross." And the New Testament could not begin till the death of Christ, consequently the legal dispensation continued till the death of Christ. "For a testament is of force after men are dead; otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth." There is therefore no authority for imitating Christ in his baptism by John.

2. From this discourse, it appears that we cannot ascertain the mode of christian baptism from the administration of John's baptism.

I know that writers on the baptist side seem to consider it improper to inquire after the mode of baptism. They say that baptism is immersion. They say to dip is to baptize, and to baptize is to dip. According to them, if I understand them, baptism, in no case, can exist unless by immersion. But this is the question in dispute. We say, and we think the scriptures justify us in saying, that there are divers baptisms. We say, that immersion, affusion, and aspersion, are called baptism. But be it as they say, still we have no authority to plead John's baptism, in support of immersion, under the gospel. Because John's baptism belonged to the legal dispensation. And further, it is by no means certain, that John's baptism was performed by immersion. If Christ's baptism by John had allusion to the inaugural ceremonies at the introduction of the high priest, it is doubtful whether he was

plunged all over in water. We find that only the hands and the feet of the priests were washed with water. John said to the Jews, Matthew, iii. 11, "I indeed baptize you with water,—but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Consider a moment, what John said to the Jewish nation, and keep in mind that the Jews knew perfectly well the manner of John's administering baptism. Let us then suppose, as the baptists do, that John baptized by plunging, and then read his words, as the baptists will have us read them. I indeed plunge you all over into water, but Christ shall plunge you all over into the Spirit. What absurdity! Read them as we say they must be read. I indeed pour water upon you, but Christ shall pour the Spirit upon you. This reading will be natural and intelligible.

Certainly there is a correspondence between the ancient custom of anointing with oil, and baptism with the Holy Ghost. Christians are all baptized with the Holy Ghost. They are all anointed of God. But it is difficult to attach the idea of immersion to this unction, or baptism. Nothing can be gathered from John's baptism, in support of baptism by immersion.

3. In the light of this subject, it appears that baptism by immersion only, is not sufficiently supported by express scripture declarations. It must be considered, that the question is, what does the Bible teach us upon this subject? If you have recourse to remote antiquity, testimony against testimony may be produced. Criticism upon the original words used for baptism, may be employed in support of a favourite theory, and a long list of names of pædobaptist authors may be added, to prove that baptism

is immersion. But a resort to such means will never decide the main question. Saith a modern author, "But when an article of christian doctrine of momentous importance, is either assailed or defended by criticism alone, there is always something suspicious." Much, indeed, has been said on our side of the question, against the baptists, for excluding all christians from their communion, who do not unite with them, in believing that christian baptism is immersion. It is true that serious and extensive evils result from a rigid adherence to this sentiment. Their excluding all pædobaptists from a visible standing in the church of Christ, creates coldness, and excites jealousies among brethren. In consequence of their rigid adherence to their peculiar notions of baptism, the baptists and pædobaptists act, in many respects, in opposition to one another, and weaken and destroy one another. They lose all that energy, which their united influence would give them. But great and serious as these evils are, the baptists are entirely consistent with their own system. If baptism be immersion only, then all who are not immersed are unbaptized. Their practice, in treating pædobaptists as unbaptized persons, results from the belief that nothing is baptism but immersion. Grant them their creed respecting this subject, and grant them too, that baptism is a term of christian communion, and they are shielded to the heel. Their error is, their maintaining that baptism, in all cases, is immersion. This is certainly taking a stand which can never be supported by express scripture authority. Where, in all the Bible, is it said, in so many words, that baptism shall be administered after this or that manner? When our Lord gave directions concern-

ing prayer, he said, "After this manner therefore pray ye." Had there been the like explicit declarations, in favour of baptism by immersion, the cause would be decided in support of the baptists. But since this positive declaration concerning baptism by immersion is wanting; since baptism does not, in all cases, mean the total immersion of the thing baptized; since it is certain that, in some instances, baptism means no more than the application of water, either by asperision or affusion, it undoubtedly follows, that the baptists assume too much to themselves. Accuracy in faith rests upon the authority on which it is built. If there is positive divine declarations, in support of our creed, we are not chargeable with error, in positively maintaining our belief. If a subject be left undecided, as to the manner of performing it, no man may be positive, in declaring how it shall be performed. Had the baptists embraced immersion, as in their opinion the scriptural baptism, and not have positively denied that affusion was scriptural baptism, they would have exhibited a modesty much more becoming christians than what now appears in their writings. Since the baptists are not able to bring positive conclusive proof, that in all cases baptism in the New Testament does mean immersion only, they seem to be tenacious of an article of their faith, not so much because they have scriptural reasons for it, as because it is a favourite idea in their scheme.

Take away John's baptism, as an example, and the consequence is, they must resort to times succeeding the resurrection of Christ, to determine whether baptism is immersion or not. It has already been observed, that there is no proof, that

John baptized by immerfion. Consider candidly the instance of Paul's baptism, Acts, ix. 9—18. Paul appears to have been baptized in the same place, where he had remained three days.

The circumstances attending his baptism, are such as naturally lead us to think that he never went out of the house to receive baptism. "And he received sight forthwith, and arose and was baptized." No man, in reading the account of Paul's conversion and baptism, would ever suppose that he was plunged all over in water.

It is highly improbable, that the jailer and his house were baptized by immerfion. Paul and Silas had been confined in the inner prison. The jailer brought them out of the inner prison, and probably placed them in his own apartment. It was a late hour in the night when the jailer was baptized. It is not said that they went out of the house to a river or to any water. Nothing is said about their return to the house again. Nothing is said about their changing garments on this occasion. Nothing is said, which makes it even probable, that their baptism was performed by immerfion. Peter's speech, at the baptism of Cornelius and his friends, imports the application of water in a manner different from immerfion. "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as me?"

This form of speech, taken in connection with their being baptized at the command of Peter, makes it probable that they were baptized in the same place where they were; and that water was brought in some vessel for the purpose.

Without having recourse to other instances of similar import, it may be observed, that there is no positive proof that baptism, in the apostolic age, was in any case performed by immersion. It certainly cannot be proved that immersion was invariably in use, from any circumstances attending the administration of baptism. No mention, in a single case, is made of changing garments on the occasion; a circumstance, the omission of which it is difficult to account for, upon the supposition that baptism was invariably performed by immersion.

If any person, after all, should believe that the apostles baptized by plunging all over in water, because it is said that they resorted to the water, when they baptized; and at the time of administering baptism, they went down into the water, and came up out of the water, let him consult the following extract from the Rev. Ebenezer Chaplin's Treatise on the Nature and Importance of the Sacraments, relative to the words in question, page 123—127.

“Presuming on the candour, and indulgence of my readers; I observe, that the words under consideration, are a part of speech called prepositions. The Greek word in those places translated *In*, is *En*. The word expressing, Jesus went up *Out of* the water, is *Apo*. The word expressing, Philip and the Eunuch went down *Into* the water, is *Eis*. The word expressing they went *Out of* the water, is *Ek*.

“Now I could easily have told, that these prepositions, and all others, take various constructions, and different words, in translating from one language to another; according to the different circumstances attending, events related; and according to the different Idioms of languages. And I

could have given a long catalogue, of those various constructions, from the Lexicon and Dictionaries ; without costing me any labour. But as those constructions in the Lexicon, are grounded on all the Greek authors extant : and as I from the beginning, professed to go solely by the Scriptures ; I have given myself, the trouble, and labour to examine all those four prepositions, through the books wherein they are used, relative to baptism, viz. Mat. Mark, Luke, John, and Acts. I have examined those prepositions, in all those five books, how they are translated in every place, where they are used.* There are of all that I have examined, 2859. *En* is used 1033 times, of which 47, are rendered in adverbs. 25, The sense is involved in other words, so that there is no distinct word in English, answering to *En*, in the Greek. The rest, 964, are rendered in English prepositions, seventeen different ways ; viz. *in, by, with, among, within, for, under, at, through, on, before, unto, into, of, to, about, over*. It is translated *in*, more than all the rest ; but it is rendered *at* 53 times, *by* 44, *with* 42, *among* 45, *on* 30. The rest are less, as 10, 7, &c.

“ I will give the reader examples of those I have specified.

Examples of *En* translated.

“ IN—Mark, i. 4. John did baptize *En, in* the wilderness.

* I have aimed, to make the examination correct ; yet very probable, in such a multiplicity of words, there may be some errors : But it may be relied on, there are none such as affect the object in view ; viz. to give the common reader, a general Idea, of the various constructions of words, in translating from one language to another.

AT—John, xviii. 39. Ye have a custom, that I should release unto you one *En*, at the Passover.

“ BY—Mat. xii. 27. If I *En*, by Beelzebub cast out Devils, *En*, by whom do your children cast them out.

“ WITH—Acts, ii. 29. His sepulchre, is *En*, with us unto this day.

“ AMONG—Luke, i. 42. Blessed art thou *En*, among women.

“ ON—Luke, x. 31. And passed by *En*, on the other side.

Apo Examined.

“ *Apo*, is the Greek word, translated *out of*, in Mat. iii. 16, and Mark, i. 10. Where it says, Jesus went up *out of* the water. This word *Apo*, I have found used 423 times, in those five books I have examined. 6, are rendered adverbs, 11, are involved. The rest 406, are rendered in English prepositions, thirteen different ways; viz. *From*, *of*, *out of*, *for*, *since*, *off*, *with*, *at*, *away*, *by*, *out*, *ago*, *upon*. It is translated *from*, 235, all the rest 172; so that *from* is many more than all the rest. *Of* 92, *out of* 42, *for* 11, *since* 7.

Examples of *Apo* translated.

“ FROM—Luke, xvi. 18. Whosoever marrieth her that is put away, *Apo*, from her husband committeth adultery.

“ OF—Mat. vii. 15. Beware *Apo*, of false prophets.

“ OUT OF—Mat. vii. 4. Let me pull out the mote, *Apo*, out of thine eye.

“ FOR—Luke, xix. 3. And he sought to see Jesus, who he was, and could not *Apo*, for the press.

“SINCE—Mat. xxiv. 21. Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not *Apo, since* the beginning of the world.

Eis Examined.

“*Eis*, is the Greek word, translated *into*, Acts, viii. 38, Where it says, they went down both *into* the water.

“This word *Eis*, I find used 955 times, in those five first books of the New Testament. 17, are rendered adverbs. 36 are involved. The rest 902, are rendered in English prepositions, seventeen different ways; viz. *Into, in, unto, to, for, of, by, among, against, at, upon, toward, throughout, on, from, concerning, before*. It is rendered *into* 388, *to* 188, *unto* 97, *in* 86, *on* 45, *for* 23, *at* 18, *against* 18, the rest are less, as 10, 8, &c.

Examples of *Eis* translated.

“INTO—John, iii. 24. For John was not yet cast *Eis, into* prison.

“TO—John, ii. 2. And both Jesus was called, and his disciples *Eis, to* the marriage.

“UNTO—John, vii. 8. Go ye up *Eis, unto* this feast.

“IN—Acts, viii. 23. For I perceive that thou art *Eis, in* the gaul of bitterness.

“ON—Mark, xiv. 6. She hath wrought a good work *Eis, on* me.

“FOR—Mat. v. 13. It is thenceforth good *Eis, for* nothing.

“AT—Luke, iv. 61. But let me first go, and bid them farewell; which are *Eis, at* home.

“AGAINST—John, xii. 7. *Eis, against* the day of my burial hath she done this.

Ek, Examined.

“ *Ek* is the Greek word in Acts, viii. 39, translated *out of*. And when they came up *Ek*, *out of* the Water.

“ This is found 446 times, in those five first books of the New Testament. 4, are rendered adverbs, 6, are involved. The remainder 435, are rendered in English prepositions, thirteen different ways; viz. *Of, out of, from, among, by, for, on, away, with, off, unto, since, at*. It is rendered of 191, from 102, out of 77, on 30, with 17, the rest are less, 6, 4, &c.

Examples of *Ek* translated.

“ OF—John, i. 13. Which were born not *Ex*,* *of* blood, nor *Ek*, *of* the will of the flesh, nor *Ek*, *of* the will of man: But *Ek*, *of* God.

“ FROM—John, vi. 66. *Ek*, *from* that time, many of his disciples went back.

“ OUT OF—Acts, vii. 3. Get thee *Ek*, *out of* thy country.

“ ON—Acts, ii. 34. The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou *Ek*, *on* my right hand.

“ WITH—Acts, viii. 37. If thou believest *Ek*, *with* all thy heart, thou mayest.”

Now unto him who is able to keep us from falling into errors—to God our Saviour be glory in the churches, world without end,

AMEN.

* This is *Ex* before a vowel, *Ek* before a consonant.

FIVE SERMONS .

ON

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM;

IN WHICH THE

PRIVILEGE OF BELIEVERS,

UNDER THE GOSPEL,

RESPECTING THE

MODE AND SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM,

IS ESTABLISHED AND ILLUSTRATED.

BY JEDIDIAH CHAPMAN, *V. D. M.*

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST AT ORANGE DALE.

2 E R M O N I

ON CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

MATTHEW XXVII IN 20

GO YE, THEREFORE, AND TEACH ALL NATIONS,
BAPTIZING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FA-
THER, 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 ALWAYS, EVEN
UNTIL THE END OF THE WORLD.

My dear friends, and beloved brethren,

IT is my great desire to address you
on this subject, and in the name of the Father,
the Son, and the Holy Ghost, I have written
to you, and I shall endeavor to handle the
subject of baptism, as I have done in the
past, and I trust, that you will find it
of great value in the study of the
word of God, and in the pursuit of
holiness, and in the attainment of
that glory which is the inheritance of
the saints in glory. I am, my dear
brethren, your affectionate servant,
and your fellow-laborer in the
gospel of Christ Jesus our Lord.

S E R M O N I.

ON CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

MATTHEW, XXVIII. 19, 20.

GO YE, THEREFORE, AND TEACH 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 ALWAYS, EVEN UNTO THE END OF THE WORLD.

My dear friends, and beloved brethren,

IT is my present design to address you on the serious and important subject of Baptism.—Treating this point, as God shall enable me, in a course of sermons, I shall endeavor to handle the subject with great plainness and candor, not seeking so much the applause of man, or the conviction of those who differ from us, as the establishment of your minds in the truth. The words which I have now read are joyful, solemn words. They were spoken in a very affecting situation—they are some of the last words of our blessed Lord and Saviour to his dear disciples. In the preced-

ing chapter, we have an account of his crucifixion and painful death on the cross—In this, of his joyful resurrection and appearance to the apostles, whom he informed of his acceptance with God as the Mediator and Saviour, and of his great power in heaven and earth. He gave them the commission in our text—“Go ye, therefore, and teach 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.”

I shall here mention several things of great importance to the subject before us, in which all parties agree; and beg you will keep them in view through the ensuing discourses.

First, Our blessed Saviour’s command, in this text, is equally binding on all his ministers, in all ages of the world—that they are to preach the gospel to every creature, and to teach all who are capable of instruction, in all the doctrines he has revealed in his word.

Second, The ministers of Christ are to baptize among the nations, “in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,” all those, and only those, who, according to his revealed will, are the proper subjects of baptism.

Third, All his ministers, by this, are bound to teach the nations to observe and obey all things, whatsoever he hath commanded; all the laws, ordinances, and institutions, which, according to the scriptures, are in force under the gospel dispensation.

Fourth, Let it be well observed, that according to this promise, Christ will be, with *his* ministers, to

support and comfort them—to bless and succeed them in the glorious work unto the end of the world. These things being observed, I shall proceed to consider our text, with reference only to the sacrament of baptism—and shall endeavor to shew,

I. That baptism with water is an institution of Christ, to be a standing ordinance in his church to the end of the world.

II. I shall speak of the mode of baptism as it respects the controversy between us and our brethren called Baptists.

I. I am to speak of water-baptism, and shew that it is an institution of Christ, to be a standing ordinance in the church to the end of the world.

There is a baptism of the Holy Ghost, and with fire, agreeably to Mark, i. 8. “I, indeed, have baptized you with water, but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.” Luke, iii. 16. “He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire.” But its administration Christ has reserved to himself. We nowhere read of his commanding any to administer such a baptism. Some, indeed, since the apostles’ day, have undertaken to do it; but we expect they will stand reprov’d in the great day of the Lord.

That baptism by water is an institution of Christ, is very evident from our text. “Go, says Christ, teach, or disciple all nations, baptizing them,” &c. They are commanded to teach, and they are commanded to baptize. The same precept is also recorded, Mark, xvi. 15, 16. “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel unto every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”—We accordingly find

the apostles, and primitive ministers of Christ, baptizing all whom they disciplined to him. On the day of Pentecost, when three thousand were added to the church in one day, the apostles called on them to repent, and be baptized. The Quakers, and some others, deny that baptism with water is to be continued in the church; but the contrary seems evident, from the very face of the command. The apostles, and succeeding ministers of Christ, were commanded to teach, to preach the gospel, and to baptize all nations; and in faithfully teaching and baptizing, Christ promises to be with them to the end of the world. Our blessed Saviour, likewise, expressly enjoins on the apostles, to teach his disciples to observe all things whatsoever he hath commanded them; but baptism by water was the command which had just then proceeded from his sacred lips. It is manifest that the primitive church received the practice from the apostles, and observed it is a command of Christ.

The design of baptism as a seal of the covenant, and badge of the Christian profession—its use as an initiating ordinance into the church, and its obvious signification, all plainly shew it to be a standing institution in the church, and to be administered with water, to all proper subjects, “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,” by all the faithful ministers of Jesus Christ.

II. I am now to speak of the mode of baptism.

Before I proceed, two remarks are worthy of particular notice.

1. As baptism is merely a positive institution of Christ, nothing, with regard to its mode, should be made essential, but what Christ has expressly enjoined. This observation must be too evident to meet

with any opposition. Should any think this or that mode most decent, convenient, or significant, let them answer a good conscience, where the scriptures are silent; but let them not make it essential to baptism, unless it is expressly enjoined by Christ.

2. No denomination of Christians has a right to set up one mode of baptism as essential, and exclude all other modes without express scripture warrant, or some positive proof, that it is the will of Christ, the great king and head of the church. The reason of this is plain. Since it is the prerogative of Christ to appoint the ordinances of his church, it must belong to him alone to determine, what should be considered essential to them. For any, therefore, to determine the exclusive mode of baptism, or make any thing essential to it, which Christ himself has not appointed, is not only very uncharitable to their brethren, but also a great presumption on the prerogative of Christ. Our brethren, the Baptists, my hearers, hold with us, that baptism must be administered, by a regular minister of Christ, with water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; but, they assert, that it must be done in the mode of dipping, or plunging the whole body under water, otherwise it would be no christian baptism. Let us now candidly examine this matter. The question is not, whether dipping or plunging is baptism, but whether plunging or dipping is the only mode of christian baptism. It is not sufficient for them to prove in the clearest manner, that plunging is a proper mode of baptism; but they ought to prove, and must prove, if they do any thing to the purpose, that plunging is the only mode of baptism by water instituted by Christ. Inattention to this circumstance,

I believe, has been the occasion of much doubt and confusion in the minds of some, if not the source of real imposition, in this point, on many christians. But, I hope, your minds may be free from all such impositions, and that you may be able, in the truth, to stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made you free.

Let us now, keeping these things in view, consider the words of the institution, as we have them in our text. "Go ye, therefore, and teach 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." Here we have the plain command to baptize, but not any thing positive respecting the mode. Does this prove that plunging is the only scripture baptism?—Would not one of the baptists have expressed it differently, if he designed to establish dipping the body under water as the only mode of baptism? Since the baptists assert, that the true meaning of the word baptize, is to dip or plunge under water, this must command some attention ; but as it will lead us back to the original language in which the gospel was written, waters too deep for most of you, my dear hearers, I shall first lead you where you may see for yourselves.

1. We assert, that the word baptize does not now generally signify to plunge or dip any thing under water ; nor is it any where confined to this signification alone, but among the baptists.—They say, on the contrary, that we have perverted the word to support our own practice.—We therefore assert,

2. That the word baptize did not, in our Saviour's time, always signify plunging or dipping. Luke, xi. 38, "And, when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled, that he had not first washed before dinner;" or, as it is in the original, that he was not first baptized. We all know that *baptizing* here does not mean the dipping or plunging of the whole body under water, but only the washing of the hands. But is the word baptize here misapplied and perverted? Who has done it?

It is also certain, that this word is used by inspiration to signify divers washing without any reference to the mode, Mark, vii. 4, "And from the market, except they baptize or wash, they eat not." The word *baptismous*, in this and the eighth verse, deserves particular attention. Being in the plural number, it must signify various modes of washing, of cups, pots, brazen vessels, and of tables. The word is likewise applied to the many kinds of ceremonial washings. Heb. ix. 10. "Only in meats and drinks, and divers baptisms or washings." Some of these washings or cleansings were performed by pouring, others by sprinkling, and some of them could not be done by dipping or plunging.

There are many other places in the scriptures where the word is used to signify any kind of washing or cleansing, even where there is no dipping. Some of our brethren, the Baptists, may, perhaps, still insist, that according to the best lexicographers and most approved masters of the original language, this word signifies dipping or plunging only.

It may therefore be necessary for their sakes, to pay some farther attention to this matter; though if all the Lexicons in the world should confirm their appropriate meaning of the word, it ought to

have no weight with you contrary to the known use of it by divine inspiration—However, for your better satisfaction, I have examined a number of lexicographers, and find, that all of them allow the word *baptizo*, to signify any kind of washing, or cleansing with water. This matter I believe, will be clear beyond all doubt, to any one who will take the trouble to examine Hesychius, Budeus, Scapula, Stephanus, and Dr. Leigh's *Critica Sacra*. They are all acknowledged to be great masters in the Greek language, and they allow the word to signify washing in general.

In their Lexicons and Commentaries, they say, *baptizo lavo*, which signifies, beyond all dispute, washing in general—*baptisma lavatio, ablutio*, washing, ablution, which we all know may be done, and is often well done, without plunging the body all under the water. It is of no force to say, that the word also signifies to wash by dipping, or plunging; because it then allows of other modes of baptizing besides dipping.

This is granting all we contend for in the text, that our blessed Saviour did not command and fix any particular mode of washing with water in the sacred institution of baptism, and that he does not require dipping or plunging, any more than sprinkling or pouring, but only baptism.

Some say, that the word *baptizo* is derived from *bapto*,* which all allow to signify dipping or plunging only, as the dyers do when they mean to tinge, or form a bright colour; and, therefore, it must have been the design of our Saviour to fix the mode of baptism by that word.—But this is nothing

* Even the word *bapto* does not always signify to dip or plunge. It is used in Dan. iv. 33, where it signifies to wet or sprinkle.

to the purpose. If our Saviour designed to establish the mode by the word, why did he not in the institution of baptism, make use of *bapto* instead of *baptizo*, which would at once have carried the allusion more strongly, and forever fixed the mode of baptism to plunging only, as the Baptists would have it?—It is more than probable that the word *baptizo* was used by our Saviour, and not *bapto*; because it carried the beautiful allusion of the other, but left his church at liberty to use the various modes of administering the holy ordinance according to the different climes and seasons—according to the different circumstances and necessities—and according to the various infirmities of his dear people.

It was his maxim, “I will have mercy and not sacrifice.”—But not to weary you with these remarks, we shall return to the law and testimony—I imagine you see that the mode of dipping as the only true baptism, is not enjoined by our Saviour in the words of the institution, where we should most certainly have found it, had it been his design—let us examine scripture example respecting the mode of baptism. There we have a right to expect some positive proof, that dipping is the only mode, especially since it is not positively and expressly enjoined in the words of the institution. But if all the examples of baptism we have recorded, were most evidently performed by plunging, it would no more than prove that plunging is one scriptural mode, or at least it would not alone prove, that it is indispensably necessary to baptism. The baptism of our blessed Saviour, by John, in Jordan, claims our first attention. Matt. iii. 16, “And Jesus when he was baptized, went straightway out of

the water.”—This may be true history, though he were not baptized by plunging. His coming up out of the water may have no respect at all to the mode of baptism; for it was manifestly after he was baptized. Here we might most surely have expected it to have been established, were any one of the modes of baptizing to be the only true baptism. But we are still left without any thing certain to determine, whether our blessed Saviour himself was baptized by sprinkling, pouring, plunging, or some other way.—Mark also says, “Jesus was baptized of John, in Jordan;” but respecting the mode, he is wholly silent.—He might have been baptized by either mode, especially as there was water enough for dipping.—The fact that Jesus came up out of the water after he was baptized, cannot with any certainty prove, that he had been plunged all under the water upon that solemn occasion.

The next example is John’s baptizing at Enon, John, iii. 23, “And John was also baptizing in Enon, near to Salem, because there was much water there; and they came and were baptized.” This does not even prove that John baptized by plunging, much less that dipping is the only mode of baptism. Where there were such multitudes of people as resorted to John, much water must have been necessary for their use, had he baptized by pouring or sprinkling.

John, notwithstanding all that appears to the contrary from the sacred history, might have used all the modes on different subjects, according to their sex, age, and circumstance. On the day of Pentecost, when there were three thousand added to the church in one day, is it not very improbable

that any of them, since it is incredible that all of them, were baptized by plunging? The baptism of the Eunuch is another example recorded in scripture—we have a particular history of this in the 8th chapter of the Acts of the apostles—“and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized him; and when they were come up out of the water, the spirit of the Lord caught away Philip.” This is a very particular description of the solemn transaction upon which the Baptists must insist, as a clear and positive proof, that plunging is the only scripture baptism.

But I hope, in a few words to shew, that this is so far from proving, that dipping is the only scripture baptism, that there is not any certain proof whether the Eunuch himself was baptized by plunging, pouring, or sprinkling. Here let it be noticed, that the Greek preposition *eis*, does not always signify, into, as it is here translated, but is often translated, *to or unto*—and *ek* translated, out of, very frequently signifies, *from any thing*. Agreeable to this, the passage may be thus read—“And they went down both to the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized him; and when they were come up from the water,” &c.*

I may now appeal to any impartial mind, that if

* Some suppose that the *mode* of baptism is clearly ascertained, by its being said of Christ and others, that at the time of their baptism they went down into the water, and came up out of the water. If such will turn to the history of Israel's transit over Jordan, they will find it repeatedly asserted that they went down into Jordan, (the same river in which Christ was baptized,) and came up out of Jordan, and wet the soles of their feet only. If Israel went down into Jordan, and came up out of Jordan, and were not plunged all over in Jordan, as it is certain they were not, then Christ's going into Jordan, and coming up out of Jordan, furnishes no evidence that he was baptized by plunging.

any one should read this history, who has heard of baptizing only by pouring water upon the person baptized, whether he will not immediately say the Eunuch was baptized in that way; and whether he who has never seen the ordinance administered only by sprinkling of clean water, will not as certainly conclude, that Philip baptized him by that mode?—But could this possibly be the case, if there were in the text any clear and certain proof in favor of plunging? We will now consider the passage more critically—“and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch.” The going down into the water could not be the baptism here recorded; because Philip must then also have been baptized, since they both went down into the water. But the plain fact is, that the going down into the water, is no part of the baptism here, but a distinct thing—“And he baptized him.” This sentence contains the baptism, and all that is certain about the mode in which it was administered. After the Eunuch was baptized, it is said, “they both came up out of the water.” Does this prove that the Eunuch was plunged? and why not Philip? Since he also came up out of the water. Should it be granted that the Eunuch was dipped, which is by no means certain, it will not establish dipping as the only scriptural mode of baptism. Neither will it prove, that it is essential to the right administration of the ordinance, especially as it is not made necessary by him, who is the acknowledged author of the sacred institution.

Let us now consider those particular passages of sacred scripture, which are brought to prove that plunging is the only true mode of scripture baptism—The first I shall take notice of is in Colossians,

ii. 12, and the parallel text in Romans, vi. 4, "Buried with him in baptism, wherein ye also are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. 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 in newness of life." It is very clear that the design of inspiration in these words, was not to establish any particular mode of baptism. It was to shew, that all those to whom he addressed himself, who were truly baptized into Jesus Christ, had really the internal change signified by baptism. They were baptized into his death, as the apostle expresses it. They were really dead, and buried with Christ as to sin, and with him were risen again; and they also were really alive unto God, and could not desire to live any longer in sin.

This is true with respect to all those who have this internal spiritual change, by the washing of regeneration, and sprinkling of the blood of Christ signified by baptism; though they were baptized only by sprinkling. They are truly and spiritually baptized into his death—They "are buried with him by their baptism into death;" and they also "are truly risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Christ from the dead."

Let us not, my hearers, be too strenuous, but candid and generous to our brethren, who seem to be a little straitened on this subject. Let us allow, that the apostle has reference to the external mode of baptism. It will then prove that plunging is an allowed mode—But grant that it was an approved mode; grant that it was a mode of baptism prac-

tised in those warmer climes ; and, still farther, grant that it was the only mode practised by the apostles, even then it will not by any means follow, that plunging is the only christian baptism. It is not expressly commanded, and exclusively enjoined by our Lord and Master, in the original institution ; neither any where else in the sacred scriptures, is it intimated to be his will.

Some, to prove dipping to be the only baptism, have made use of 1 Cor. x. 2. "And were all baptised unto Moses, in the cloud, and in the sea." But it is probable, that they who imagine it to the purpose, are still where our fathers were, under a cloud, and have not yet passed through the sea. Should any think it refers to the mode of christian baptism, I shall only observe, that the spray of the waters on the right and left, and the mist of the cloud above, as they passed through the sea, gently sprinkling them, do as aptly represent, to an impartial mind, the mode of sprinkling. But the apostle, Eph. iv. 5, says, "One Lord, one faith, one baptism." It is true that we acknowledge but one baptism by water, even *that* instituted by our blessed Lord in our text ; but still there may be different ways of applying the water in the sacred washing, such as may answer a good conscience, and may most aptly represent the manner of his death with Christ, as to sin, and his rising again to spiritual life. The three modes used in the protestant church, taken together, may most fitly represent the out pouring of that all powerful influence of the Holy Spirit, by which the command comes home to the guilty soul : by which sin revives, and the sinner is overwhelmed in death. They may also represent that spiritual washing of regeneration

and sprinkling of the precious blood of Christ, by which the soul is cleansed from sin and guilt, and rises with Christ to a new spiritual life and comfort, through faith, which is of the operation of God.

On the whole, it at least is evident, that our brethren the Baptists ought to be a little less positive on this subject, and more modest and charitable toward those who differ from them in that respect. They hold that without dipping or plunging the body all under the water, there is no christian baptism; esteeming themselves, from this principle, the only christian church in the world: they will hold no christian communion with any of the protestant churches.

The Episcopal church administers baptism by pouring, and those of their communion use that mode. We think the mode of sprinkling as scriptural as pouring or plunging; but yet we can use either mode as may best answer a good conscience to him who is baptized.

The mode of baptizing, by sprinkling clean water, we think was holden forth by the Jewish types, and clearly foretold of the christian church in Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you.—A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." It is expressly promised to Christ, in Isa. lii. 15, "So shall he sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at him, for that which had not been told them shall they see; and that which they had not heard, shall

they consider." This mode of baptism is very expressive of our being washed and cleansed from our sins, filth, and pollution, by the precious blood of Christ, which is, therefore, called the blood of sprinkling. Heb. xii. 22—24. "But ye are come unto Mount Zion—and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."—1 Pet. i. 2. "Elect according to the fore-knowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."

Upon the whole, it is clear to me, beyond a doubt, and I seriously think it will also appear to every impartial mind, that it was not the design of Christ to confine his church in the administration of baptism, to either of the modes which have been mentioned. He, therefore, has given sufficient light in his word, to countenance the use of either mode, as the circumstances and necessities of his people may require. To ascertain the proper subjects of this ordinance, is a matter of much greater importance. I shall, therefore, proceed upon that subject, after making a few remarks.

1. Our brethren are most certainly wrong and schismatical, in rejecting all other christian churches, on account of their difference in the mode of administering baptism. They have no sufficient warrant to make dipping or plunging essential to the very being of baptism.—We do not doubt that many of them think they are right; but it is very clear to me, that such have never thoroughly and impartially examined the sacred scriptures, or have not yet learned what that meaneth, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice."

2. We may, and ought to own those ministers and churches which Christ Jesus owns, and blesses with his graces, presence and influence in the administration of his word and ordinances, agreeably to his precious promise in the text.—We believe he thus owns some of the Baptist churches and ministers; and, if we make the comparison, we trust some of our ministers and churches are nothing behind them. Should we not then bless God together, and love one another as brethren? Who objects to this? Let him answer it to our Lord and master. But rather let him now, in love, receive the light and truth as it is in Jesus—let him learn to be less bitter and censorious—let him be more modest and charitable towards the church of Christ, and let him not make a schism where Christ makes no difference.

3. It is of great importance as matters now stand, that we all should critically and impartially examine the sacred scriptures on this point. Important for us that we may know and have our minds established in the truth; and be able to “stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free.” Important for the Baptists, that they may be less zealous in matters non-essential; but more zealous in the things that make for the peace, and the edifying of the body of Christ in love; lest some of them suffer loss when they shall be saved so as by fire, and others stand reprovèd in the great day of the Lord.

S E R M O N II.

THE QUALIFICATIONS IN ADULTS FOR ADMISSION TO BAPTISM.

ACTS, VIII. 37.

AND PHILIP SAID, IF THOU BELIEVEST WITH ALL
THINE HEART, THOU MAYEST.

THIS was the answer given by Philip, an eminent preacher of the gospel, to the Ethiopian Eunuch's request to be baptized. "See," said the Eunuch, "here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip replied, "if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest."—The Ethiopian answered, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Upon this profession he was baptized.

There are two questions about the proper subjects of baptism. One respects adult persons—the other infants. Our text has immediate reference only to the former, and is a proper answer to that question.

We shall, therefore, now proceed to consider, who, among the adults to whom the gospel is preached, are to be baptized, or what qualifications in such are necessary to baptism. Let it here be well remembered, that as the sacred scriptures are the rule, we must neither increase, nor diminish the qualifications therein prescribed.—I shall, therefore, call your attention,

I. To the sacred scriptures on this subject.—
And then proceed,

II. To prove the necessary qualifications for adult baptism, from the nature, use, and design of the sacred institution.

The enquiry now before us is, who among the adults, that live under the light of the gospel, and are capable of hearing and understanding its solemn and interesting report, are to be baptized?—The observations which shall be made in this discourse, are to be understood with reference only to these. The other question, respecting infants, must be distinctly considered in another place.

On this subject, my brethren, we have the Bible open before us; but the text claims our first attention, because of its place at the head of this discourse; “If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest” be baptized. This text must be allowed to import, that if thou dost not believe with all thy heart, thou must not be baptized—I may not baptize thee. It is evident that Philip here intended two things by his answer. 1. To refer the Eunuch to his own conscience before God. 2. To obtain some credible evidence of the true state of his mind. The first being clear, the Eunuch readily and solemnly answers the second in the following emphatical words—*I believe that Jesus Christ is*

the Son of God. What kind of faith is here required by the Evangelist, is the only question that remains to determine the sense of the text; for it must be supposed, that the Eunuch professed the same faith which Philip required. Some imagine it to be only what is called an historical faith—a common bare assent of the understanding to the history of the gospel—such as those commonly have who are educated under its light. But how this can be called believing with all the heart, can hardly be conceived, since the very definition wholly excludes the heart.

Others suppose it is the faith that, in some measure realizes to the mind the solemnity and importance of the facts holden up to view in the gospel, which must greatly affect the soul, and make the sinner tremble; but does not imply any change of heart, or real conformity of it to the things believed.—But how can this be a believing with all the heart, which is, according to the supposition, a believing against the heart!—Thus the apostle says, “The devils believe and tremble.” But let the scripture explain itself, and we shall not here be at a loss. Rom. x. 9, 10. “That if you shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.” To believe in the heart, and with the heart, is a saving faith in scripture-language; “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness.” It is also observable, that the true confession with the mouth flows from a believing heart; for thus confession is made unto salvation.

It is evident, that in order to baptism, the Evangelist required saving faith in Christ, and that of one also who was not a heathen. It seems, hence, clearly to follow, that of those to whom the gospel is preached, no one is to be baptized but the believer, and he only upon giving credible evidence of his saving faith in Christ Jesus. This agrees with the most obvious sense of the commission, Matth. xxviii. 19. Mark, xvi. 15, 16. "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel unto every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."

It accords with the doctrine Christ taught long before, see John, iii. 5. "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God. Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water, and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."

It also seems to have been the uniform practice of all the apostles, according to the inspired records of their conduct. Acts, ii. 38—41. "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. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls."

True repentance necessarily implies a change of heart; therefore to give up ourselves to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, as called upon

in the text, pre-supposes a saving faith.—It pre-supposes that faith, which is connected with the forgiveness of sins. But to clearly determine the matter, it is added in the 41st verse, “then they that gladly received the word,” which is the same as believing with all the heart, “were baptized.” Here it is manifest that the apostles baptized none of the many thousands, who heard them preach on that solemn occasion, but those who appeared cordially to embrace the gospel, Acts, viii. 12, 13. “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,” &c. Simon was baptized only on the supposition of saving faith, and was rejected immediately when it appeared, that he was in the gall of bitterness, and bonds of iniquity. I find no example in this sacred history, of adult persons; who were baptized, but what confirms the same thing.*

Upon the whole, it is very evident, that though the apostles preached the gospel to every creature, to Jews and Gentiles, yet they baptized no adult persons, unless they made a profession of real religion, and gave credible evidence of saving faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus it appears from scripture, that nothing short of true and saving faith renders an adult person a proper subject of christian baptism.—I shall now proceed,

II. To argue the necessary qualifications for adult baptism, from the nature, use, and design of the sacred institution.

Under this head I shall endeavor to shew, from

* See the instance of Lydia and the Jailer—Acts, xvi. 15—34.

a variety of considerations, that faith in Christ, and nothing short of it, qualifies an adult person for baptism.

This will appear, *first*, from the use of baptism as an initiating ordinance into the church. Our blessed Saviour, speaking of adult persons, says, John, iii. 3. "Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." In the 5th verse—"Except a man be born of water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. And in John, xviii. 36. "Jesus answered, my kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is my kingdom not from hence." The apostle also asserts, Titus, ii. 14, "That Christ gave himself to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."

If the church of Christ is to consist of a peculiar people, separated from the world—if a man must be born of the Spirit to enter into this kingdom, it must follow that baptism, which introduces an adult person into the visible church, as a qualified member, ought not to be administered to any of these but upon credible evidence, that they are thus qualified. This is exactly agreeable to the answer of our question, in the Shorter Catechism, which says, "That baptism is not to be administered to any who are out of the visible church, until they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him."

2. From the design of baptism, as a seal of the covenant of promise, both on God's, and on our part. In this covenant are promises to the church in general, and to the believer in particular, for

himself and his children, as I shall shew on another occasion. But nothing short of faith in Christ brings an adult person into this covenant, and entitles him to the promises. The promises are yea and amen, only in Christ Jesus, agreeably to 2 Cor. i. 20. Since it is by faith only that a person, who acts for himself, or who, according to the gracious constitution, acts for others, agrees to the covenant, or takes hold of the promise, it is a great absurdity to administer baptism, which is a seal of the covenant to any adult unbeliever. Faith, therefore, in Christ, or an hearty agreement to the covenant on our part is absolutely necessary to baptism.

3. Adult baptism is a public solemn profession, that we do forsake our sins, that we renounce our idols, and give ourselves and ours to God through Jesus Christ. But no person actually does this except he has faith in Jesus Christ. Philip, therefore, said, "If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest" be baptized. Consequently true faith is a necessary qualification in adult baptism. But to sum up the whole, and bring it before you in one view—If adult baptism signifies any thing spiritual on the part of the baptized, if it seals to him any promise for himself, or for his children, it must suppose real faith. For example: the washing away of our sins by the blood of Christ must certainly suppose faith in Christ, or else it signifies that which is not true. If it seals to adults the promised blessings of the new covenant for themselves, or for their children, it is only through Christ, and necessarily supposes faith. In whatever light we consider the subject, saving faith appears to be a qualification essentially necessary for adult baptism. All the instances of adult baptism, we have record-

ed in the sacred scriptures, are full on this point. They clearly shew, that the apostles, and primitive disciples of Christ did not baptize any to whom they preached the gospel, on the supposition of a mere historical faith, or because they were only seriously affected. Felix trembled, but was not baptized. And, no doubt, many others trembled under the powerful preaching of the apostles on the day of Pentecost ; but we do not read that any of them were baptized, except those who gladly received the word. When the apostles went out to the Gentiles, they preached the gospel to vast multitudes ; but we do not find that they baptized any adults, either men or women, except those who made a credible profession of their faith in Christ.

We have sufficient light, therefore, whether we look directly to the scriptures, or reason on the nature, use, and design of this institution, to shew us that faith is an essential pre-requisite to adult baptism ; or that this ordinance must not be administered to any but through the qualifying influence of this grace. The reason is obvious. All the promised blessings of the covenant of grace are treasured in Christ for his church and people, and flow out to them only through faith. This alone unites us to him, and gives us a gracious title to the privileges and blessings granted to believers, either for themselves or their children. The apostle addressed the multitude on the day of Pentecost, exactly in this connexion.

Pressing on them the call to repentance, faith, and baptism, by this very argument, he said, “ Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins—”

For the promise is to you, and to your children." It is plain, that there is neither force nor propriety in this, unless repentance and faith were necessary to baptism, and to the enjoyment of the blessings and privileges of the gospel church.

That which qualifies an adult person for baptism, gives him, through this ordinance, an equal right to enjoy all the privileges and blessings of the free citizens of Zion. But nothing short of faith in Christ can give an adult person, before God, and nothing short of a credible profession of it can, in the view of the church, give him a right to the enjoyment of all these blessings and privileges. Faith in Christ, therefore, must be considered as an essential qualification for adult baptism—And, upon the strictest examination, this will be found to be agreeable to the practice of the church in purest times. It also has been the sentiment and practice of the most pious and successful ministers of Christ in every age of the church—and it agrees with the confession of the faith of our church, and I believe of all the best reformed churches in the world. This discourse shall now be closed with a few remarks.

1. Baptism is a solemn institution. It is undoubtedly of equal authority and solemnity with the holy ordinance, the Lord's supper. Some seem to have loose ideas of baptism, and of the qualifications necessary for its proper subjects, who, at the same time, are very superstitious respecting the holy supper. But, according to scripture, they are both on the same foundation—both equally solemn and sacred. They have one author. They are seals of the same covenant; and they are both sacraments of the new testament, and require the

same qualifications in adult persons—in both we have to deal with a heart-searching God ; and we are to give up ourselves in covenant to him, through Jesus Christ, to be his for ever.—The sin of coming unqualified to both, is equally heinous—the profanation of either is equally dangerous.—He who comes properly qualified to baptism, ought to bless God, and come cheerfully to the Lord's supper.

2. The true church is founded on the rock Christ Jesus. Since baptism is the initiating ordinance into the church, faith in Christ is necessary to baptism in adult persons. A credible profession of this faith is the ground upon which baptism is to be administered to any adult person. Accordingly we find that when Peter professed his faith in Christ, our blessed Saviour answered, (Matt. xvi. 18.) “ And I say also unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church ; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” There may be other churches, and indeed those must be other churches, who are not built on this foundation, and make not any, or a different profession.—They may be numerous and flourishing ; but they certainly will be entirely consumed when every man's work shall be tried by fire.

3. The church of Christ ought to hold the ordinance of baptism, very dear and sacred. This not only signifies and seals to believers the inestimable blessings and privileges of the new covenant, but is the ordinance of admission into the church. Oh ! how careful should the ministers and churches of Christ be in their conduct, lest this sacred ordinance be profaned ! They should always be vigilant, lest any should prostitute it to purposes for-

eign to the sacred design of its institution. The world should know that ministers have no right, but from Christ, to administer baptism to any. Every one ought to know, that it is not a matter of favor with them, which they may bestow at pleasure, but at their peril. The word of God is their rule: and we all know, or ought to know, that when this sacred institution is misapplied and abused, it is always attended with some of the worst consequences, both to the church and to the souls of men.

4. They who despise and wilfully neglect this ordinance, cannot be christians. Though we do not hold that baptism is absolutely necessary to salvation; yet since it is a positive institution of Christ, and enjoined on his church as a standing ordinance, they who wilfully neglect it, they who despise it, are certainly chargeable with continued disobedience to him, and must be considered as destitute of the distinguishing qualifications of christians.

5. All those who are baptized are under most solemn obligations to live holy lives—they are given up to God—they are set apart for him—they ought to give up themselves wholly to God and his service, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in all manner of conversation. For them now to live in sin, and to pursue the ways of the wicked, is to deny their baptism; is to disown the God of their fathers, and to load their souls with aggravated guilt. Be persuaded then, all you of this character, to renounce your transgressions, spare your own souls, and give glory to God through Jesus Christ. Some of you have solemnly acknowledged these obligations before God and his

people ; and have sealed the covenant at the Lord's table : you ought, therefore, to love and serve him, whom you have thus acknowledged to be your God and Saviour. Consider, oh ! consider how aggravated your sins must be against such solemnities ! Can you think any obligations so sacred, so solemn, so often confirmed, as those which you are under, to forsake all the ways of sin, to live to God, and to serve him with your whole soul ?

S E R M O N III.

INFANT BAPTISM.

GAL. III. 29.

AND IF YE BE CHRIST'S, THEN ARE YE ABRAHAM'S SEED, AND HEIRS ACCORDING TO THE PROMISE.

RESPECTING the eternal council of God the Father, and the design of his grace towards our lost world, we are informed, John, iii. 16, That "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

To complete this glorious work of salvation; to redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people; to destroy Satan's kingdom, and to bring glory to God in the salvation of sinners—Jesus Christ was appointed Mediator of the New-Covenant. It pleased God, soon after the fall of man, to reveal this gracious design, and set up his church and kingdom on earth, which he has supported in every age of the world. To the members of this kingdom, God has, at different times, promised certain blessings, and granted cer-

tain privileges gradually displaying the riches of his grace and goodness, in a variety of successive dispensations. The first gracious intimation is recorded, Gen. iii. 15, where it is promised, that "The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." It pleased God more fully to reveal this glorious design to Abraham. With him he established a gracious covenant; a covenant which contained certain promises. To him he also granted certain blessings and privileges, both for his natural and spiritual seed, (Gen. xvii. 7.) Upon this I shall hereafter have occasion to speak more fully.—God thus constituted him the Father of the Faithful. He thus established his covenant, that they should not only pattern his faith, but that all his spiritual seed or children should also inherit the spiritual blessings and privileges of the covenant of promise. This the apostle, more than once or twice, expressly asserts in our context. "Know ye, therefore, that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. And the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. For ye are all the children of God by Faith in Christ Jesus."* Then he sums up the whole in our text. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." That the promise here mentioned, contained spiritual blessings and privileges; that God

* Verses, 7, 8, 9, 14, 26.

granted these to Abraham as the Father of the Faithful; that it was one of those blessings contained in this covenant of promise, that infants were to be received with their parents into the church, and have the seal of the righteousness of faith administered to them—that this blessing, or privilege of Abraham, is now come upon the Gentiles, through faith in Christ, as is asserted in the 14th verse—and that all who are Christ's, are Abraham's seed and heirs according to the promise as expressed in our text, seem to be incontestible truths. The doctrine inferred from the words of our text, in this connexion, as the subject of the ensuing discourse, is,

That believers under the gospel dispensation have a right to baptism for their infant children, or that the infants of such are to be baptized.

To illustrate and establish this doctrine, it is proposed by divine assistance to shew,

I. That God did graciously grant unto Abraham, as the father of believers, that infants should be received into the visible church with their parents.

II. That God commanded, that the seal of the righteousness of faith should be administered unto them.

III. That this great privilege is, under the gospel, confirmed and continued to believers. Or that the infant children of believers are to be baptized.

I. I am to show, That God did graciously grant unto Abraham, as the father of believers, that infants should be received into the visible church with their parents.

That the truth of this may clearly appear, several things command particular attention.

1. At a time when religion was very low in the world, and when the visible church was almost extinct, God called Abraham out from the wicked world, in order to set up his church and kingdom in his family.*

2. When God had tried and proved Abraham's faith and obedience,† he established his covenant with him as an everlasting covenant, and set up his church in Abraham's house.‡ Here we see certain commands enjoined on Abraham; certain institutions for him to observe, and certain blessings and privileges granted to him for himself, and for his seed. These blessings were to continue in the church, and to descend to his children through succeeding ages. This was an everlasting covenant. "I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee."

3. Let it be strictly observed, that the spiritual blessings contained in this covenant, were granted to Abraham as a father to the faithful. They are summed up in these emphatical words; "I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee." The Jews themselves understood it in this view, but confined the blessings, both spiritual and temporal, to Abraham's natural seed through the law. This gross mistake the apostle corrects; in the chapter containing our text, by clearly shewing, that they were designed for his spiritual seed also, through the gospel, whether Jews or Gentiles. The true state of the matter was this—The visible church at that time was almost swallowed up in a deluge of

* Gen. Chap. 12. † Chap. 15, 16. ‡ Chap. 17.

idolatry, and wickedness—but God was pleased to call forth Abraham, and begin a new dispensation of grace to his church. To display more fully his glorious design, he gave richer promises, and granted more ample privileges.

This was to be an everlasting covenant, Gen. 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 thy seed after thee.”

4. In this dispensation of his grace to his church, he expressly granted unto Abraham this great privilege, that infants should be received into the visible church with their parents; and he ordered that the sign of the covenant should be administered to every male child at eight days old. The same day, in obedience to the divine command, was Abraham circumcised, and his son Ishmael.*

Here, my brethren, was something new and glorious—Abraham, through this covenant, no doubt, saw Christ, the glorious head of all his spiritual seed, and was glad, as our blessed Saviour observes.†

Under this dispensation you see that God appointed and commanded, that infants should be received into the church with their parents. Infants, by circumcision as an initiating ordinance, were admitted into the church. Thus the apostle says, Acts, vii. 8. “And he gave him the covenant of circumcision. And so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day,” &c.

It is very evident that the church once possessed this inestimable privilege of giving up their children to God in the covenant of promise; and it is

* Genesis, xvii.

† John, viii. 56.

as evident that by the special command of God, the faithful, in the only true church, enjoyed the same through succeeding ages. They also had many precious promises for their children recorded in the sacred oracles, all which are yea and amen in Christ Jesus to believers.—Of this I shall have occasion to speak more freely in another place.

II. I propose to shew that God did command, that the seal of the righteousness of faith should be administered to infants. To prevent a difficulty from arising in your minds, I would here observe, that no sign nor seal, which is wholly legal, and respects only temporal blessings, can, with any propriety, be called a seal of the righteousness of faith. Those who believe the sacred scriptures, cannot doubt, that God commanded circumcision to be administered to infants of eight days old.*

It is commanded, that not only Abraham must circumcise his own children, but it is expressly commanded, that his seed after him must be circumcised in their generations. So strict was the command, that every uncircumcised male child was ordered to be cut off from God's people, because he had broken the covenant. Some, perhaps, may say, that this is nothing to the purpose, for circumcision was a carnal, legal, bloody ordinance. They may say, that it was a covenant of works, and could have no respect to Christian baptism. As for such, let them take heed lest they be found to oppose the apostle, and contradict the spirit of inspiration. But, my hearers, let your minds be calm and attentive. Circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith. The very same circumcision which

* Genesis, vii. 10—12—14.

God appointed, and commanded to be administered to infants, who were, by it, admitted into the covenant of promise with their parents, was a seal of the righteousness of faith.—Faith is not of works, but of grace.

Whatever ends circumcision might be supposed to answer in this, or the succeeding dispensation, yet it was here a seal of the righteousness of that faith, by which a believer is justified and saved. The apostle Paul referring expressly to this command of circumcision, and speaking of the blessedness of those whose sins are forgiven, says, Romans, iv. 9, 10, 11, 12. “Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.—How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.—And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised, that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:—and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had, being yet uncircumcised.”

Having proved to you that circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith, and having proved, that God himself commanded it to be administered to infants as a standing ordinance in his church, under the Abrahamic and Mosaic dispensations of the covenant of promise, it, therefore, must be evident to every impartial mind, that the true church

once had this grant from heaven, and that the members of the visible church did once, and for a long time enjoy this great, this interesting privilege. They did give up their infant offspring to God, and in token of this the seal of the righteousness of faith was administered to them.

These are the points which were to be established under the first and second heads of this discourse. But before I proceed to the next head, it may be necessary to answer some objections, which have been thrown in the way of the truth, and which may still be lurking in some of your minds.

It has been said, that the law given at Sinai disannulled this covenant with Abraham; that the law was four hundred and thirty years after this; and that, since it was an entire new dispensation, attended with many new ceremonies, it must have rendered the Abrahamic dispensation useless. In consequence of this remark, some have said, that all arguments drawn thence are of no weight, and tend only to confuse and deceive weak minds. All this is very plausible, indeed, and may have great weight with some; but it is easy to shew every candid mind that the assertion is false, and that the objection has no force.

1. Though it should be granted that the Abrahamic dispensation ceased, when succeeded by the Mosaic economy; yet it will by no means follow, that the covenant of promise was made void. Neither will it follow, that any of the blessings and privileges once granted to believers, were taken away. These may stand good, and promised blessings be more clearly holden up to view, and more liberally bestowed on the church, in a new way, by the succeeding dispensation, agreeably to

the gracious design of God, more fully to display his mercy.

2. It is certain, that circumcision, as a sign of the Abrahamic covenant, and as a seal of the righteousness of faith, was continued under the Jewish dispensation; that the privileges granted to the church were continued—that many of the blessings promised to Abraham, as the father of believers, were enjoyed by the Jewish church, and that God bestowed these blessings on that people, as the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. It, therefore, must follow, that the Abrahamic covenant was not made void by the Jewish dispensation.

3. But what is more than all, we have the apostle's express declaration on this head—a declaration, which, when properly considered, must forever silence all such objectors. Gal. iii. 17. “And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law which was four hundred and thirty years after cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.” If the law, or Jewish dispensation, had made void this great promise, or privilege, it would now have been of none effect.—The blessings could not have come upon us Gentiles.

III. It is here proposed to shew, that the privilege once granted to Abraham, as the father of believers, that infants should be received into the visible church with their parents, is confirmed under the gospel, and is continued to believers. Here it would be easy to shew, that all the promises, blessings and privileges of the church, contained in every dispensation, in all their true spiritual meaning, are, under the gospel, confirmed and

continued to believers ; but we are confined, by the narrow limits of our discourse, to only one privilege. But let it be our present comfort, that this is not small.

1. Every spiritual privilege once granted to the church by its great King and Head, remains in full force until repealed. This may be thus illustrated—God once granted unto Abraham, as a father in the church, the privilege of giving up himself in covenant. This remained in force under the Jewish dispensation to all his seed, and as it is not yet repealed, remains still in force to all his spiritual children. This, I believe, will hold good with respect to all the spiritual blessings and privileges God has granted to his church in every age. Modes and shadows may be changed, but the substance still remains. It has been proved, that God did grant and confirm unto his church the privilege that infants should be received into the visible church with their parents, and that the seal of the righteousness of faith should be given unto them. This, unless it has been repealed, most certainly remains as an inheritance for believers, which they may enjoy as members of the visible church, and true children of Abraham. For to use the apostle's argument, believers are all one in Christ Jesus, and if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

If believers have now an undoubted right, by heirship, to all the privileges of the covenant of promise granted to Abraham, which are not repealed under the gospel, we may boldly assert, that if this privilege is not now repealed, the command of God is now on all true believers to give

up their infants to him in covenant; and, as a token to this, ought to have administered to them that which is now the sign of the covenant, and seal of the righteousness of faith.

But we believe, and confidently affirm, that all the spiritual blessings and privileges formerly granted to the church are now in full force.

We have particularly proved, that this privilege also was once granted, it, therefore, remains confirmed under the gospel, and continued to believers. Those who undertake to release christians from this command of God, and deny believers the inestimable pleasure of giving up their dear infant offspring to God in covenant through Jesus Christ, ought now solemnly to prove, that this privilege is made void by the gospel. The burden of proof now lies upon our brethren, the Baptists. Here we ought alway to put the laboring oar into their hands, and then let them labor since they will undertake it. But, alas! their task here is as difficult as it is unthankful.—Our blessed Saviour charges us not to think that he came to “destroy the law and the prophets.” (Matth. v. 17.) The apostle also assures us, that all the promises are yea and amen in Christ Jesus, (2 Cor. i. 20.) Agreeably to this we may be assured that Christ came to be unto his dear people all that the law typified of him—to fulfil all that the prophets foretold of him, and to bestow all the spiritual blessings promised in his word.

But let us calmly hear, and let us without prejudice examine what our brethren the Baptists say to prove that this privilege is repealed by the gospel.

1. It is said that this covenant belonged to the Jewish dispensation, which was wholly done away

by Christ, and that consequently it is now of no force.

Anf. 1. But though we allow that the Jewish dispensation is now wholly done away—though we also grant that this privilege belonged to it, yet it will not follow that this, or, indeed, any of the spiritual blessings and privileges are now repealed. We must here distinguish between a dispensation, and the blessings dispensed. The former is the way in which the latter are displayed and communicated. The Jewish dispensation was only the manner which God chose, by various laws, types and shadows to display and communicate the blessings of his covenant to the Jewish Church. It is easy to see, that one dispensation may entirely cease and give place to another, and yet all the covenant blessings and privileges of the former may be continued, and, indeed, many more added and enjoyed under the latter. This, in fact, has been the case in the church through various successive dispensations, as might very easily be shewn, were it necessary.

2. But we utterly deny that the covenant of promise containing the privilege for which we contend, ever belonged to the Jewish dispensation. We assert the reverse, that the Mosaic dispensation belonged wholly to this, and was added four hundred and thirty years after, for special reasons as the apostle says.* Since, therefore, the giving of the law did not disannul the covenant of promise, the taking of it away, certainly could not destroy the privilege for which we contend. Neither could it make void the solemn command by which it was enjoined, nor hinder the blessing of Abraham, in this respect, from coming on the Gentiles. This is

* Gal. iii. 17, 18.

most evidently the true state of the matter. When the Jewish dispensation was taken away, the covenant command and promise, with all the spiritual privileges and blessings, came under the gospel dispensation confirmed to true believers, the spiritual seed of Abraham, the true heirs according to the promise. Thus it is easy to see, how the blessing of Abraham is now come on us Gentiles.

To this it is objected that the promise of the land of Canaan is done away. Though this objection is not so very evident in every respect; yet grant it, and then the heavenly Canaan remains to the church, which was the spiritual meaning of the original promise. That circumcision is abolished by the gospel, is another objection. But notwithstanding this, the spiritual blessings signified by circumcision, remain under the gospel; and Jesus Christ fulfils it to his people by circumcising their hearts. Christ, under the gospel dispensation, has also instituted baptism, to be the sign of the covenant, and the seal of the righteousness of faith. This, therefore, is called by the apostle the circumcision of Christ. Col. ii. 11, 12. "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with him in baptism," &c.

Baptism now remains under the gospel an initiating ordinance into the church. It is now the sign of the covenant of promise, and the true seal of the righteousness of faith. From this there is not the least evidence that the command is repealed, and the granted privilege taken away; but, on the contrary, it clearly shews, that they are in full force on believers under the gospel.

S E R M O N I V.

INFANT BAPTISM.

GAL. III. 29.

AND IF YE BE CHRIST'S, THEN ARE YE ABRAHAM'S SEED, AND HEIRS ACCORDING TO THE PROMISE.

IN the preceding discourse, this doctrine was inferred from the words of our text, viz.

That believers under the gospel dispensation have a right to baptism for their infant offspring, or that the infants of such are to be baptized.

In illustrating and establishing this doctrine, we have shown,

That God did graciously grant unto Abraham, as the father of believers, that infants should be received into the visible church with their parents :

That God commanded, that the seal of the righteousness of faith should be administered to them :—And,

That this great privilege is confirmed and continued to believers under the gospel ; or that the infant children of believers are to be baptized.

On this last proposition we remarked, that every spiritual privilege once granted to the church by its great King and Head, remains in full force until repealed. That this privilege is not repealed, and that the command of God is new on all true believers to give up their infant offspring to him in covenant, to receive the sign of the covenant, and seal of the righteousness of faith.

We examined what the Baptists say, to prove that this privilege is repealed, by the gospel, viz. that this covenant belonged to the Jewish dispensation which is done away by Christ.—This reasoning we found to be inconclusive—we called you to distinguish between a dispensation and the blessings dispensed—and showed that the covenant of promise, containing the privilege for which we contend, never did belong to the Jewish dispensation, but that the latter was added four hundred and thirty years after, and when it was taken away, the covenant, command, and promise, with all their spiritual privileges and blessings, came under the gospel confirmed to true believers. Thus the blessing of Abraham is now come on the Gentiles.

We proceed to remark, that though the Jewish dispensation be abolished—though circumcision be done away, yet the grant is not repealed—the privilege remains to believers—the command is in full force, and since baptism is the circumcision of Christ, and a seal of the righteousness of faith, through the administration of this, the blessing of Abraham may now come upon the Gentiles. Some, to prove that this privilege is now repealed, and that infants are cut off from the church by the gospel, bring Matth. iii. 8, 9. “Bring forth, therefore, fruits meet for repentance: And think

not to say within yourselves, we have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." Upon this I would make the following observations.

1. The infants of believers are here either intended, or not intended. If infants are not spoken of in this place, it is nothing to the purpose, for which it is cited. But should any say, that the infants of believers are here intended, and are by this cut off from the church as well as others, it will also as certainly follow, according to verses 10—12. "That since they cannot bring forth fruit, they will also be hewn down, and cast into unquenchable fire."

2. The truth is this, adult persons only are intended by John in this address. They are trees full grown, which must bring forth good fruit, or be excluded the church by the gospel, and be hewn down, and cast into unquenchable fire.—The Pharisees and Sadducees presumed that they had a good right to baptism, merely because they were the natural seed of Abraham. But John shewed them, that under the gospel this would be of no avail to any adults, who do not bring forth good fruit. This implies what we contend for, that all who bring forth fruit meet for repentance, should, under the gospel, inherit the covenant-blessing of Father Abraham.

Others think that, what the apostle says, in his epistle to the Hebrews,* respecting God's making a new covenant and destroying the old, fully repeals the grant, command and promise for which

Hebrews, viii. 7, 8, 9.

we contend. But it will be evident to any one, at least to every impartial mind, who attentively reads this and the following chapter, that the apostle here refers only to the law given at Sinai, or the Jewish dispensation. This, we have proved, may be abolished, and the privileges which God had before granted his church, with the command by which they were enforced, remain unaffected. Whatever, in the Jewish dispensation, was designed by the old covenant, which was taken away, it could not disannul the covenant which was before confirmed in Christ, it could not so disannul it, as to make void any of the spiritual privileges and blessings. For these were before confirmed in Christ to believers.—(Gal. iii. 17.)

It also appears from this whole epistle, that the apostle was laboring to convince the Jews, that God's design in the abolition of the Sinaiic economy, containing many costly, carnal, and bloody ordinances, and a worldly sanctuary, was to make way for the gospel dispensation, a dispensation which, instead of contracting the blessings and privileges of his dear people, should establish them on a better foundation, with great additions, and should increase their spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Here certainly can be nothing like a repeal of the grant made to Abraham. It is worthy of particular notice, that in giving a view of the new covenant, the apostle makes use of the same expression which God used with Abraham. By this he doubtless intended to shew, that the privileges granted to Abraham are confirmed and continued to believers under the gospel.

But if the Abrahamic blessing respecting infants is confirmed and continued to believers under the

gospel, it is most certain that the command also comes clothed with all the weight of the vastly superior light and grace which distinguish the gospel dispensation. We may, with much greater propriety, insist, that the Baptists should point out a repeal of this command—that they should point out an express prohibition of infant-baptism in the New Testament, with much greater propriety, I say, than they can demand of us a new command for a privilege once granted to the church, a privilege always enjoyed before, and a privilege so clearly established and continued to believers under the gospel. We cannot, we dare not give up this privilege of believers without some express warrant from God. An express command from him is as necessary to nullify, as to establish a positive institution, to revoke as to grant a privilege to the church.—The Christian church thus understood it, and both circumcision and baptism were at first administered together even to the Gentiles, till circumcision was expressly prohibited by inspiration, and baptism alone established in the church, as the sign of the covenant, and seal of the righteousness of faith. But there is no prohibition of the privilege granted to the church, respecting their infant seed; it, therefore, remains to believers under the sanction of the divine command, and is sealed to them for their children in the ordinance of baptism. We have no necessity of a new command, since baptism is now the seal of the righteousness of that faith by which we become the seed of Abraham, and heirs according to the promise. We might, with the greatest propriety, rest the controversy here, for the Baptists cannot shew any prohibition of this privilege in the sacred scriptures—believe

and be baptized respects adult persons in the first instance, and their offspring through them, as is proved. If the grant is no where repealed, it is most certainly continued to believers under the gospel dispensation. But in addition to this, we think it is easy to shew, that this privilege is confirmed to believers in many places in the New Testament. We have shewn from scripture, that God did grant this privilege unto Abraham as the father of believers, and that he did command that infants should be received into the visible church with their parents, and enjoined, that the seal of the righteousness of faith be administered to them. When, therefore, we find the apostle declaring, that they who are of the faith are the children of Abraham,* that they are blessed with faithful Abraham,† that the blessing of Abraham is come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, (Gal. iii. 14.) and then declaring, in our text, that if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise; we must firmly believe that this Abrahamic privilege or blessing, as well as others, is confirmed to believers under the gospel dispensation.

The apostle, in his epistle to the Romans, affirms very clearly, by a striking similitude, that the Gentile believers were to enjoy, at least, the spiritual privileges and blessings granted to the Jewish church, Romans, xi. 16, 17. "For if the first fruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.—And if some of the branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild olive tree, wert grafted in among them, and with them partakest of the root and fatness of the olive

* Gal.iii. 7.

† Verse 9.

tree." For whether by the root is meant Jesus Christ, or Abraham, and by the olive tree is understood the church, or the covenant, yet being grafted in by faith they partook of the root and fatness of the olive tree.—This cannot be understood of the enjoyment of any thing short of the same spiritual privileges and blessings, of which the Jews were deprived. But the Jews once enjoyed this Abrahamic privilege respecting infants, and are now deprived of it by their unbelief. If Gentile believers, under the gospel, are cut off from the privilege of having their infant offspring admitted with them into the visible church by baptism, then though they partake of the root, yet are they cut off from the fatness of the olive tree—a consequence which is both unnatural and absurd. It is evidently contrary to the apostle's design; and it greatly weakens, if not wholly destroys the force of his reasoning in this place. Our blessed Saviour very severely reprov'd those disciples who forbade that little children should be brought to him, that they might receive his blessing. On that occasion, he gave them a command, which may be considered as binding upon all his disciples. He replied, "suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for, said he, of such is the kingdom of God:" Or, in other words, such as are brought to me by faith for my blessing, belong to my church, or kingdom on earth. The order which immediately follows respecting the admission of adult members into this kingdom, seems to favor this sense of the words, (Mark, x. 14, 15.) This command also seems to be a plain confirmation of the former privilege granted to his people. Thus the apostle learned of Christ, and taught the

Corinthians, (1 Cor. vii. 14. and onward) that if either parent was a believer, the children were, by God's appointment, set apart for him, or consecrated, as the word, translated holy, often signifies in the sacred oracles. >

To bring the matter to a point—That the infant children of believers are to be baptized, is a necessary consequence of the propositions which have been already established. In whatever light we take them, either together or separately, it will clearly follow, that the infant children of believers are to be baptized. God granted unto Abraham, as the father of believers, that infants should be received into the visible church with their parents; and he also commanded that the seal of the righteousness of faith should be administered unto them. But we have proved that this great privilege is, under the gospel, confirmed and continued to believers, consequently the infants of believers, under the gospel, are to be received into the visible church with their parents, and, by the command of God, must have the seal of the righteousness of faith given to them, which is the christian circumcision or baptism.

1. God did grant unto Abraham, as the father of believers, that infants should be received into the visible church with their parents. All true believers, under the gospel, are Abraham's seed, and as his children they are the true heirs, in Christ, of this privilege, therefore, by the divine appointment, their infant children must be received into the visible church with them, and are to be circumcised with the circumcision of Christ; or, in other words, they must be baptized.

2. God commanded that the seal of the righteousness of faith should be administered to infants, who are received into the church with their parents. Circumcision was once this seal in the church, but, under the gospel, baptism is the seal of the righteousness of faith; therefore, by divine appointment, baptism must be administered to those infants, who are admitted into the church with their parents under the gospel dispensation.

3. The great privilege, that infant children should be received into the church with their parents, and have the sign of the covenant, the seal of the righteousness of faith, administered to them, is, under the gospel, confirmed and continued to believers. Hence it clearly follows, since baptism is the seal of the righteousness of faith, that when adult persons, upon their repentance and faith, are admitted into the gospel church, their infant children are to be received with them, and to be baptized. Thus the apostle Peter, on the day of Pentecost, in the application of that most successful sermon, applies the promise exactly to this purpose. He enforces on his affected audience the gospel call to repentance, faith and christian baptism, by this inestimable privilege. Acts, 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." It may not be improper here to take notice of some other passages of the sacred scriptures, which may be considered as direct proofs of infant baptism. The commission of our blessed Saviour on this

point, claims our first attention. Matt. xxviii. 19. Though it is brought by the Baptists as an objection; yet, properly considered, I think it is so far from being in their favor, that it will afford a convincing proof of our doctrine to any person free from prepossessions.

1. The apostles were commanded to go out into all the world. Till then they had been confined to the Jews, and both circumcision and baptism were administered to those who embraced the gospel, and to their infants. There was not the least hint antecedent to this, that infants were to be excluded, but much to the contrary, as has been shewn. The apostles themselves did not know that it would be lawful for them to go out to the Gentiles; much less that infants, as the Baptists assert, were to be cut off from this privilege in the gospel church. They were here commanded to teach all nations, and preach the gospel to every creature. It is probable that even the Baptists do not imagine, that this immediately respects infants, as to the external teaching and preaching of the word, they being wholly incapable of this. But it certainly does some way respect them. The words are plain—The command is express—Go teach all nations—Go preach the gospel to every creature. Surely our Saviour, who so tenderly took the dear little ones into his gracious arms, who so affectionately blessed them, I say surely he did not forget them on this most interesting occasion—Surely he was not ignorant of the tender feelings—Surely he was not a stranger to the pious breathings of the parental heart of his dear people in ages past. On this occasion, when the life of a thousand poor Ishmaelites was at stake, he had not forgotten the

burst of Abraham's fatherly heart, "Oh, that Ishmael might live before thee!" Gen. xvii. 18. Nor was the compassionate Saviour insensible to those pious parental desires of true believers towards their infant offspring through all future ages, much less can any suppose, that he excludes them from the race of intelligent creatures, to whom the apostles were to preach the gospel. We must either deny that they are part of all nations—we must also either deny that they are rational creatures, or we must suppose that they are some how included in the apostle's mission.

2. The apostles are hereby commanded, to teach (*matheteusate*) to disciple all nations, and preach the gospel to every creature. Since then it is certain, that the teaching and preaching of the gospel does some way respect infants, I confess, upon the Baptist's plan, I am utterly at a loss how to understand it, unless it be wholly to exclude them from christian baptism, from the church, and from heaven; and either to strike them out of existence all together, or to plunge them headlong into eternal damnation. But if we understand the commission in the plain and natural sense, according to the circumstances in which it was spoken, as an honest, pious Jew would take it, and as it is clear the apostles understood it, the whole matter is plain. The teaching and preaching of the gospel, were to disciple infants by baptism with their believing parents, as had been a common known custom among the Jews, when they profelyted a heathen to the true religion.

The commission was express—It was very easy to be understood by those to whom it was given—since they were well acquainted with the command

by which infants were to be received into the church with their parents—since they knew this had always been the practice—and since they had never heard any thing to the contrary drop from the blessed lips of their divine master, but much in favor of such little ones, was it possible for them to understand it in such a manner, as to exclude the infants of believers from the church and from baptism?

Upon the whole, it is with me beyond all doubt that the apostles so understood their blessed master, as fully to warrant and oblige them to receive infants into the visible church with their believing parents, and baptize them. Agreeably to this they practised, when it is said that Lydia and her household were baptized—when the jailer and all his were baptized, and when Paul baptized the house of Stephanus, &c. It thus continued, no doubt, through the apostolic age; and from the best account we have in history, infant baptism was generally, if not universally, practised in the church more than twelve hundred years, though much corrupted. Notwithstanding some have since called it in question, yet, through all this long space of time, there was no church or society of christians which denied infant baptism, except those who denied all baptism with water. We have a particular authentic history, both of the first rise and progress of this sect that denied infant baptism. It first appeared in Germany at the place called Munster, soon after the reformation from Popery.

If we grant, as the Baptists assert, that infant-baptism was neither allowed nor practised by the church in the apostolic age, it is utterly impossible that it should have been introduced in any subsequent period of the church. They, therefore,

might as well assert that it never has been practised.

Let us now candidly examine this matter.—Some confidently affirm, that this practice was first introduced into the church in the dark days of Popery. This cannot possibly be true. It is easy to shew from the most authentic writers in those times, that it was practised in the church long before; and, if I mistake not, some of the Baptist writers themselves allow that it was practised in the African church before the *dark period of Popery*. But be this as it may, it was not then first introduced into the church. If it was not the practice in the apostles' day, it must have begun in some of the succeeding ages before Popery.—It is generally allowed that it commonly prevailed through all the churches after the fourth century. Mr. Tombs, on the part of the Baptists,* expressly says, that St. Austin's authority carried it in the following ages almost without control; but St. Austin most solemnly professes, that he never heard of any in his time that opposed infant-baptism. We have only the four first centuries to examine. We are certain that the practice was first begun in one of them. Let us, therefore, go back and see if we can possibly find when it was first introduced into the church.—Our brethren, the Baptists, are, with us, equally interested in this inquiry. St. Austin, who lived in the fourth century, speaks of it as prevailing in his day; and that it was not decreed by any council, but had been ever in use. The same author, in his dispute with the Pelagians about original sin, brings infant-baptism as an unanswerable proof of original corruption. This was about

* Part I, Section 8.

A. D. 390. We also have a number of writers through the whole of this century, who speak of infant-baptism, but say nothing of its introduction. As Siricius, A. D. 384, St. Ambrose 374, Greg. Nazianzen 360, Optatus 306, the Council of Eliberius 305, and many others, mention infant-baptism as a thing in common use in the church. Thus, we see, it was not first introduced in the fourth century.*

In the third century, there are several remarkable testimonies concerning infant baptism, which make it very evident that it was not first introduced in that day. About the middle of this century Cyprian called a council of sixty six ministers or bishops on this question, "Whether infants might be baptized before they were eight days old?" This council unanimously agreed, there was no necessity for such a delay. In consequence of this, a letter, which was signed by Cyprian, was written to the churches, to notify to them the result of their deliberation.

Origen, who was born less than an hundred years after the apostles, and flourished in the beginning of this century, speaks often of infant baptism in his homilies on Original Sin, as an established practice in the church. In one place he expressly says, that the church had a traditional order from the apostles to give baptism to infants. This clearly shews, that infant baptism was then an usage in the church. Tertullian also, who lived about the same time, mentions infant baptism as no novelty in his day. He pleads for the delaying of the baptism of infants on account only of the danger

* History of Infant Baptism, part 1, chap. 7, 8, to the 22d. Dr. Forbafius Hist. Theology.

which might attend the introduction of sponsors. This can properly apply only in those cases, where parents were unbelievers, or were sick. Jacob Pamelius observes, in his Annotations on this place, that Tertullian had reference to such.*

From these observations, it is clear that infant baptism was not first introduced either in the third or fourth century. It certainly was not introduced in the fourth, because we find it in the third—neither in the third, because it is there spoken of as a common undisputed practice. Our inquiry is now reduced to the limits only of two centuries, and it is clear to me, that infant baptism must have been introduced into the christian church in one or the other. Let us now carefully examine the matter with respect to the second century, the age that immediately followed the apostles and first ministers of Jesus Christ.

All the immediate successors of the apostles must personally know, what was the practice of the apostles themselves. The churches also must know whether their infants were baptized or not. If the ministers and churches knew that infant baptism had never been practiced by the apostles, it is utterly impossible that it should then have been introduced into the church without making great disturbance. It must have met with the greatest opposition, both from the ministers and churches, of primitive zeal and purity. Were that fact, is it credible that we should not have heard something of it, when some of the writings of those Fathers have come down to us?—Two of them are frequently mentioned on this subject, but not a word that there was any controversy in the

* Dr. Forbescius' *Hist. Theology*.

church respecting infant baptism. Ireneus, who flourished about the middle of this century, was acquainted with Polycarp, St. John's disciple, and also saw and conversed with those who had seen Jesus Christ. He mentioned infant baptism as no matter of dispute. Reckoning up several sorts of persons who were born again unto God, he expressly mentioned infants among them. It is naturally supposed that he there must mean their being born of the water, or baptized, as many of the Fathers used the word in this sense, as infants could give evidence of no other regeneration.

Justin Martyr, who is supposed to have been born about thirty years after the death of our blessed Saviour, in his Apology, written in the year 140, mentions persons who were discipled to Christ in infancy. He also speaks of baptisms being to us instead of circumcision. Ignatius lived in the end of the first century. He conversed with the apostles, and suffered martyrdom under Trajan, A. D. 107.* But from none of these have we a word respecting the first rise of infant baptism in their day. Since we have now pursued our inquiry back to the first century without success, I would just make one remark here on the whole. If infant baptism is such a gross error and corruption—if its introduction destroys the very being of the church, it is utterly incredible, if not impossible, that the practice of it could have obtained, either in the second, third, or fourth centuries, without its rise and progress being mentioned, or even that there were ever such heretics in the world. This remark obtains great weight when we consider that St. Austin, in the close of

* Dr. Forbæus' Hist. Theology.

the fourth century, wrote a book, giving a particular account of all sects that were, or ever had been in the church—(he enumerates eighty-eight with their several tenets.)—And when we find, in the writings of the Fathers, an account of all the particular errors, and smallest departures from the faith and practice once established in the church, we are reduced to this dilemma, either that infant baptism was introduced into the church in the first century by the apostles themselves, or that it never has been practised in any age of the world.—The latter is contrary to known fact. The former is the truth, and it is the very doctrine proposed to be illustrated and established by this discourse. I shall now conclude with a few remarks.

1. We have both scripture command and example, for receiving infants of believers into the visible church with their parents, and for administering to them the seal of the righteousness of faith. This command and this example from Abraham the father of the faithful, evidently run through the whole of the Old and New Testaments. When Christ came and fulfilled the law and the prophets, he confirmed the covenant of promise, he enlarged it with greater privileges, and he continued it to believers under the glorious gospel, as examples of infant baptism. We also have the evident practice of all the churches of Christ in ages of the greatest zeal and purity. Those who deny that there is either command or example for this practice, ought first to point out from authentic history, a church or society of christians, within twelve hundred years of the apostles, who did not practise infant baptism.

2. Those who deny infant baptism have no just ground for breaking off from all the churches of Christ on this account; and much less for esteeming themselves the only true church in the world. For though they hold this to be an error, yet it is not such as to subvert the foundation, nor indeed has it always been their sentiments, as appears by a confession of the faith of a hundred churches of their communion.* Awful have been the consequences of this separation, and, perhaps, nothing tarnished the glory of the reformation from Popery more than the conduct of its first founders. Those, therefore, who, in the present day would break off from other churches of Christ and join this separate communion, ought first well to consider the nature of the action, lest they be involved in the awful guilt of many generations. On the whole, it is high time that all party zeal was banished from the church of Christ, and that all denominations were united in the common cause. The day of the Lord is at hand. In the mean time, let us give up ourselves and all ours to God and to his disposal—let us take hold of the covenant through Jesus Christ, and thankfully enjoy the privileges—let us plead the promises for ourselves and our children—and finally, let us wait patiently for his coming and kingdom, who will then reveal his righteous judgment, and reward every man according to his works.

S E R M O N V.

BELIEVERS AND THEIR OFFSPRING IN COVENANT WITH GOD.

ACTS, II. 39.

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.

IN the former part of this chapter, we have an account of that wonderful out-pouring of the Holy Ghost upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost. In the context we have Peter's solemn address to the mixed multitude, collected together on that occasion, in which the apostle proves to them that Jesus Christ, whom they had taken, and by wicked hands crucified and slain, was the Son of God, the true Messiah and Saviour of the world. And he solemnly testifies that God had raised him from the dead, and had exalted *him* at his right hand, whose blood they had impiously imprecated on themselves, and on their children. Under a sense of this guilt they were pricked to

the heart, and, under awful apprehensions of the divine wrath, in agonies of distress they cried out, men, brethren, what *shall* we do? The apostle then called them to repent of their sins—to embrace the gospel, and to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, as the only way to escape the divine wrath, which was coming on that wicked generation, and as the only way to enjoy the blessings and privileges of the gospel dispensation. This call they enforced by the weighty argument in our text. “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.”

It is generally supposed that this declaration respects both Jews and Gentiles. The promise is to you, and to your children. This respects those who were of the Jewish religion. The promise is to them who are afar off, when God shall call them, and to their children. This is supposed to have reference to the Gentiles, who should also be gathered into the church by the gospel, and should then enjoy the blessings and privileges of the covenant of promise with God’s people.

We have seen in the preceding discourse, that all who believe are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise; and that, by divine appointment, the infant children of such are to be received with their parents, and to be baptized. But it has been asked, what advantage is this to parents, or to their children? To give an answer to this question shall be the subject of my present discourse. I shall, therefore, now endeavor, by divine assistance, to shew,

I. What the covenant of promise contains for believing parents with respect to themselves.

II. What it contains for them with respect to their children.

III. Shew how parents may have an interest in this covenant, and enjoy its peculiar blessings and privileges for themselves, and for their children.

1. Under this head I do not propose to speak of those blessings which are common to believers in general, but only of those which are peculiar to them as parents. It is highly reasonable to suppose, that as they have a peculiar trust and charge, they also should have special assistance, and particular blessings and privileges. The apostle says, they are blessed with faithful Abraham. Believing parents being heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, have not only their sins forgiven; they have not only God for their God, for their father and portion—they have not only Jesus Christ for their Saviour, the Holy Spirit for their Sanctifier; but, in the first place, they also have the great privilege, that their infant children should be considered as in covenant with them. That this is a great privilege, every parental feeling is ready to acknowledge. It was before proved and illustrated, that under every dispensation of the covenant, this has been granted to believing parents, as God said to Abraham, the father of believers, “I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee.”

It must certainly be considered as a great favor to the parent, that the great and good God should thus graciously mention their infant offspring in the covenant with them. By this he doubtless intended to shew his condescending grace and mercy to his people, that they might be encouraged in the faithful discharge of their important trust.

2. The covenant of promise, as has been proved in the former discourse, contains, for believing parents, the privilege of giving up their children to God in baptism, through Jesus Christ.—This is a great favor in every respect, but especially, that by faith believers may thus bring their infants to the compassionate Saviour for his blessing—the Saviour who is ever present in his ordinances. When thus given to him, they may always with freedom, in their prayers, bring them to the throne of free covenant-grace and mercy; they may, with hope, commit them to God's fatherly care; and they may, by faith, take hold of the covenant of his own appointment, and plead its blessings for them, as for their own souls.

3. Another privilege this promise contains for parents is, that their children, in their infant and most helpless state, may be, with them, members of the church. They may here consider them, in a peculiar sense, not their own, but the children of the household of faith. They may consider them the Lord's property, and that they are to be brought up for him. These reflections will not only strengthen all their obligations, but also greatly sweeten all their care and labor. They afford, to believing parents, a sovereign balm for all their wounds, and a sweet cordial for all their fears respecting their dear infant-children. How wonderful are the condescending grace and goodness of God to his dear people! But how vile the ingratitude and unbelief of the human heart!

4. This promise contains, for believing parents, all needed wisdom and grace to bring their offspring up for God, while he continues them under their care. How often do parents find their

strength fail in trying circumstances respecting them even in their infant-state? But what a blessing have they in the covenant! Here is strength and assistance; and, indeed, they never fail of obtaining a recruit when they come here by faith. In the riper years of their children how often do they find that they lack both wisdom and grace to give them instruction, to restrain them from evil practices, and to bring them up for God? But here is both grace and wisdom in store. Here they may come freely by faith, and obtain mercy, wisdom and grace to help in every time of need. God says, in the covenant of promise, I will be a God to thee, O believing parent! The promise is to thee in the character of a parent, and contains every blessing and grace necessary for the education of your children, who are devoted to his service. These blessings are treasured up in Christ to be communicated to all those parents who come to God for them by faith—by that faith which takes hold of the covenant—which works by love, and is productive of new obedience. Ignorant and unbelieving parents may think lightly of all these blessings, but they must certainly be exceeding precious to him who has been made sensible what it is to be without God in the world—to him who is sensible what it is to have a covenant-God and father through Jesus Christ, and to him who knows what it is by faith to plead the precious promises for his own soul.—How supporting to the tender, faithful, parental heart, when ready to sink under a view of the many evils which are thickly scattered in the vale of tears, through which their dear child must pass! How supporting, I say, are these covenant-blessings, especially when parents can take hold of the cove-

nant, and, by faith, obtain grace to instruct, warn, and guard their children, and thus cheerfully commit them to the holy keeping and disposal of a heavenly father.

5. In this promise there is abundant mercy to make their prayers, instructions and corrections effectual. Here is not only grace to make them faithful, but mercy to render them successful.—Pious parents, when they consider the total depravity of the human heart—when they see that the imagination of the thoughts of the heart is evil, and only evil continually, and when, upon a small trial, they perceive the obstinacy of their children, then they are exceedingly apt to be discouraged. But the promise contains grace sovereign and powerful enough to subdue the most stubborn will, and to break the hardest heart.—Here is mercy sufficient to make the weak, but faithful and persevering endeavors of pious parents successful, on the most finished piece of human corruption.—God says, “I know Abraham, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they *shall* keep the way of the Lord—Gen. xviii. 19. Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he *will* not depart from it”—PROV. xxii.

6. The Lord himself answers for the event. To this source fainting believers ought always to look. Faithful Parents, who have given their children to God in covenant, may undoubtedly depend on the all-sufficient mercy of a covenant-keeping God. Is this no advantage to parents? Is there no peculiar blessing for them who have given up themselves and their children to God in covenant? Is there no suitable encouragement—no particular assistance for them in this covenant, which is so well

ordered in all things and sure?—But here let me observe, that as these covenant- blessings are spiritual—the spiritual person only can enjoy them. They are so little attended to, and understood, and so little believed even by pious people in the present day, that we need not wonder they have so little apparent effect; and especially when so few parents take hold of the covenant truly by faith, and are active and diligent in the use of all those means by which God communicates the covenanted- blessings to his people.

Sixthly, and lastly—Should it please God to take away the infants of believers by death, the promise gives them full liberty, by faith, to commit, through Jesus Christ, their infants, as their own souls, into their heavenly Father's hands.—To this great privilege they are undoubted heirs, as children of Abraham. No favor, perhaps, could be more grateful to the feelings, no blessing more suitable to the desires, and no privilege could more exactly correspond, than this, with the wishes of a pious parent, in such an affecting situation. O parent! behold the grace and condescending goodness of a covenant-God and Father.

II. I am to shew, what are the promises and blessings contained in this covenant, for believing parents, respecting their children.

First—In their infant and most helpless state, they are admitted into Christ's family on earth—This is no small privilege. How great would you think the favor to your children, to be taken into the family of an earthly king? But the church is the household of faith, the family of the king of kings. Here are the richest promises, and greatest blessings, and here is a foundation for the most

fanguine expectations. In this situation they are interested in all the public prayers for the welfare of the church, and they ought to be always remembered in the private and secret petitions of all God's people.

Secondly—The God of Abraham is their God—The promise is to believing parents, and to their children. “I will be a God to thee and to thy seed.” This is certainly an inestimable blessing of the covenant, which believers have for their infants. God, therefore, will preserve them through the dangers of their infant state, or will take them to himself. All this is doubtless implied in his being their God. For if believers are, by the divine command, to give their infants to God, and they in obedience, do give them up to him as he hath appointed, will he not accept them? He certainly will, and through Jesus Christ, he doubtless becomes their God in life, agreeably to the tenor of the gracious covenant. But to such as die in an infant state, he is forever a God and portion. Thus only can this be an everlasting covenant respecting such, and in this view alone his mercy to them endureth forever. Those, therefore, who believe that the promise contains any thing respecting the infants of believers, who die in their infant state, can hardly doubt of its securing to them the saving blessings of the covenant in the eternal world. What blessings are here for the dying infants of believers? blessings infinitely rich—infinitely free!—This is not a new sentiment—It was holden, and firmly believed by the most zealous and pious ancient fathers in the church.

Should these infants, on the contrary, live and advance to the state of childhood, there are still

great blessings for them in this gracious covenant.

First—That grace, promised to believing parents to make them faithful, has some special reference to children in this state. If believing parents have grace to be faithful, this is a great blessing, not to parents only, but also in a very special manner to their children: It gives them the advantage of their faithful pious instruction.

Secondly—Believing parents, respecting their children in this state, have the promise of the blessing to attend faithful instruction and discipline. Prov. xxii. 6—xxiii. 13, 14—xx. 7. “Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he *will not* depart from it—Withhold not correction from the child; for if thou beatest him with a rod, he *shall not* die—Thou shalt beat him with the rod, and *shall deliver* his soul from hell. The just man walketh in his integrity; *his children are blessed* after him.” What precious promises! What unspeakable blessings for their children! If God graciously grants his blessing to attend the faithful care of pious parents, this will certainly make it effectual, and lay a glorious foundation for their children’s *usefulness* here, and for their eternal felicity in the world to come. This has often been the case, and it is more than probable always will be the case, where parents take hold of the covenant, and are perseveringly faithful in their instruction and discipline towards their children, agreeably to the following passages of sacred scripture.—“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 to thy seed after thee. For I know him, that he will command his

children, and his household after him, and they *shall* keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment, *that* the Lord *may bring* upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him"—Gen. xvii. 7. and xviii. 19. "So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the spirit through faith"—Gal. iii. 9—14. "For I the Lord love judgment, I hate robbery for burnt offering; and *I will* direct their work in truth, and *I will* make an everlasting covenant with them; and *their seed shall be known* among the Gentiles, and *their offspring* among the people: all that see *them shall* acknowledge *them*, that *they are* the seed which the Lord hath blessed. *They shall not labor in vain*, nor bring forth for trouble: for *they are* the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and *their offspring with them*." Isaiah lxi. 8, 9. and lxxv. 23.

Thirdly—In this state the children of believers, in covenant, are also under the care, watch, and discipline of the church. This also is no small privilege. And where the church is faithful, it most certainly is a very great blessing; not only as a powerful incitement to faithfulness in parents, but also as it adds great weight to their parental instruction and discipline.

In this age, human nature is capable of the most deep and lasting impressions. The foundation of a future life of virtue or vice, and consequently of happiness or misery, is much oftener laid in childhood than is generally imagined.—In this age, therefore, to have our children under the care, watch, and discipline of the church—under the

faithful instruction of pious parents, attended with divine assistance and blessing, must be considered, by every serious and enlightened mind, as advantages unspeakably great—as privileges most important and precious.

Fourthly—In childhood also they have a special interest in the prayers of the church and people of God. As members with their parents, they are included in all the prayers which are made for the church throughout the whole world. How great an advantage this may be none can tell. When we consider, that God is pleased to bestow the greatest blessings in answer to the prayers of his dear people; and when we consider, that the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous availeth much, James, v. 16. we must consider this is no small privilege.

In adult age there are still peculiar privileges and blessings for the children of believers, unless they have cut themselves off by their wickedness, or have been excluded by the discipline of the church.

Though the ax is now laid at the root of the tree, and every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit must finally be hewn down; and though something more is required of them, as adults, that they may enjoy all the privileges of the church, yet they are still under the care and discipline of the church. This is undoubtedly a great privilege, and if properly and faithfully exercised over such by the church, may actually be to them, under divine influence, one of the greatest blessings. They are under the bonds of the covenant—the sacred ties are still upon them to be the Lord's—the way of sin is more hedged up from such, and the way

to final destruction more barred. These are no small advantages.—Such still have a special interest in the prayers of the church and people of God, which may, and will prevail, unless obstinately rejected and despised. They must be under great advantages for eternal life. Thus lifted up to heaven, in point of privilege, if they perish, they must dissolve every sacred tie—break through every barrier ; they must burst asunder every band, and obstinately plunge themselves headlong into remediless destruction. These, my brethren, are some of the inestimable blessings and privileges of the covenant of promise, in which believing parents, for themselves, and for their children, are interested. Surely they cannot be considered either few, or small, by any serious mind ; on the contrary, I am persuaded that, what advantage is the covenant of promise ? and what profit is their in baptism ? would never have been questions had ministers always been faithful in dispensing the privilege, and had parents and churches discharged their respective obligations.

It is, indeed, a melancholy truth, that in the present day, the visibility of the peculiar blessings of the covenant of promise have almost disappeared. To this, perhaps, more than to any thing else, it may be attributed, that so many parents, who hold to the covenant, are so easy in the neglect of baptism for their children ; and also, that so many wholly deny infant baptism. Had the administration of infant baptism never been corrupted—had the church kept up the primitive discipline over both parents and children ; and especially, had parents always been faithful to their children, according to the covenant, we have the greatest assur-

ance, that all the peculiar covenant blessings would have been enjoyed by believers and their children. The world would then have known that these are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them.

III. I am now to shew how parents may be interested in the covenant of promise, and enjoy the peculiar blessings and privileges of it, for themselves, and their children.

Two things here are the subject of inquiry—

1. How parents may be interested in the covenant of promise. 2. How they may enjoy the peculiar blessings and privileges of the covenant respecting themselves and their children, under the gospel dispensation.

With respect to the first, it is clear from what has been said, that parents must be true believers in order to be interested in the covenant; or in scripture language, they must be Christ's, and consequently Abraham's seed, to be heirs according to the promise. The apostle says expressly, "if any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his." Romans, viii. 9.—Therefore he is not interested in the covenant of promise, and can have no right to its privileges.

But how parents, under the gospel, may enjoy all the peculiar blessings and privileges of such, for themselves, and for their children, must now have a more particular discussion.

Some, through ignorance and unbelief, reject and despise them. Many acknowledge the covenant, and have their children baptized, and yet do not appear to enjoy any of its spiritual blessings: and some, who are interested in the covenant, and appear really to give up their children to God in

baptism, yet seem to lose the parental blessing. Parents need all these promises and blessings—they are treasured up in Christ for them—they are clearly proposed, and freely offered to them, in the covenant of promise. But O how affecting! how distressing must it be to miss of them, whatever may be the cause!

To illustrate this matter, I would suggest a few things.—Parents, I beseech you, give your most serious attention—look to God for his blessing, and may the Father of light give you understanding. To give yourselves and your children to God, and to his church, in covenant, through Jesus Christ, is necessary, in order to have an interest in the covenant.—Covenant blessings are given in a covenant way.

First—To insure the enjoyment of these blessings, parents must believe, and take hold of the covenant. Not to believe is, perhaps, in God's view, to reject the covenant—not to take hold of it, and depend upon it, is probably to slight the covenant with all its blessings. This, perhaps, may be the very reason, why so few parents enjoy these peculiar parental blessings. It is highly reasonable, and it is agreeable to the analogy of faith, to suppose, that when God makes gracious proposals to parents, and they believe them, take hold and depend upon them, as proposed, that the blessings are sure, and the enjoyment certain.

Secondly—Let parents go to God as to a father, through Christ, and ask these covenant blessings—let this be a continual fervent prayer. It is reasonable, and, in some respects, it seems necessary to the very enjoyment of them, that parents should ask these blessings of their heavenly Father. “Ask,”

says the blessed Saviour, "and ye shall receive." The apostle James says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering."

—If parents, therefore, are so ignorant of the covenant, and so faithless respecting its blessings, that they do not ask for them, it is no wonder that they fail of their enjoyment.

Thirdly—Let parents be faithful to the covenant respecting their children, in training them up in the way they should go, and in bringing them up for God, agreeably to his will. This is of the last importance, and seems to be a condition of the enjoyment of covenant blessings respecting their children. Parents, who are not faithful in this, do break the covenant. They make light of the promise, and thus lose the blessing. But, on the other hand, those parents, who are faithful, and bring up their children for God, agreeably to the tenor of the covenant, may depend on the enjoyment of the blessings in their fullest extent, with regard both to themselves and their children, and with regard to time and eternity. Should any say, that this is carrying the matter too far, and that, by proving too much, we overset the whole, and prove nothing. Should any say, that the faithfulness necessary to obtain this, is wholly unattainable in this imperfect state. I answer, that the objection is very plausible, and probably, with some, has more weight than merit. But let us try its weight in a similar case. According to scripture the Christian must be faithful in order to enjoy the covenant blessing for his own soul. For the unfaithful will doubtless be shut out.—But how is this? Can a be-

liever in this imperfect state be so faithful with respect to the covenant, as to ensure for himself the promised blessings for time and eternity? And why not in the case before us? especially as we have no reason to suppose, that here a greater perfection of faithfulness is required.

IMPROVEMENT.—1. We learn the duty of parents, under the gospel, respecting their children. This is, in general, to secure the covenant blessings for them, by giving them to God in baptism, and bringing them up for him in the gospel way. To this, parents, the gospel invites you in our text: “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.” The church says come—ministers call upon you to become heirs according to the covenant of promise—to be faithful, and insure the peculiar, parental blessings for yourselves and for your dear offspring. But to be more particular—it is your duty, when your children are thus given up to God, to consider them his, and to take the most tender care of them for him in their infant state. You ought to pray for them, and particularly by faith to take hold of the covenant, and ask for them, and for yourselves, the peculiar parental blessings. When they are capable of instruction, you are bound, by the most solemn ties, carefully and perseveringly to teach them the will of God, their heavenly Father. You are to continue in prayer both with, and for them.—It is your duty constantly to set before them good examples in all godliness and holiness. It is your duty, as parents, to restrain them from wicked ways—from wicked company, and from all dangerous and corrupting practices, however fashionable.—When

necessary, you ought to use the rod of paternal correction, always remembering that there is in it a promised blessing. It is also your duty to call, if necessary, upon the church for assistance to restrain and govern your children according to the scriptures. In all things you must look to God for his blessing.

2. The duty of children, especially of those who are given up to God—It is their duty to be the Lord's. But to be more particular—It is your duty, O ye little ones! the dear lambs of the flock—it is your duty to obey your parents in the Lord. God has put you under their care, and given them authority over you. You are bound to receive their instruction—to hearken to their counsel—to yield to their restraints, and obey their commands agreeably to his will. You are to be obedient to the calls and instructions of your minister—of your Christian friends, and of the church, always remembering your solemn obligations. It is your duty to renounce all the sinful pleasures and vanities of this world—the lust of the flesh, and the cause of the devil. You are under the most sacred obligations to give up yourselves to God, through Jesus Christ, to join the cause and people of God, and to devote yourselves to his interest and service for ever and ever.

I shall now conclude with a short address to parents and to children.

First—Let me speak a few words to those professing parents, who deny the covenant, and infant baptism.—Let me, my brethren, most solemnly beseech you impartially and candidly to examine the sacred scriptures on this subject.—With all meekness let me entreat you to attend, without prejudice,

to what has been now offered to your consideration. You may be assured it comes from a friendly heart—a heart that ardently wishes well to you, and to your dear children, that you may have a large share in the peculiar parental blessings of the covenant of promise. Consider, if you err in this matter, what an affecting loss you must sustain, both as to yourselves and your dear offspring. Consider what encouragement, assistance and comfort you are deprived of as parents—what covenant-privileges and blessings for your dear little ones are lost for ever!—These you, as parents, ought to have received by faith, according to the covenant of promise, and secured to them for time and eternity. Be cordially willing to receive the truth, and may the Lord give you understanding, and to his name be all the glory.

Secondly—Let me address those who have given up themselves and their children to God in covenant. You, my dear brethren, are interested in this gracious covenant—here are treasures of good things—here are precious promises for you, and for your children. But can you be satisfied with the bare right without the enjoyment of the blessings? If you can, you are doubtless of those who have a name to live but are dead.—Ye drowsy parents, let me beseech you to awake! Consider what a price is put into your hands, and consider how much depends on your faithfulness! Do your dear little ones look to you for temporal blessings under God? Does your daily labor supply their wants?—In the covenant of promise God has made more ample provision for their precious souls. He has given you much greater encouragement to labor, that you may obtain for them the meat which en-

dureth to eternal life. The unfaithful parent is, in this respect, cruel like the ostrich.—But I would hope better things of you : Be faithful to the souls of your dear children, that you and they may enjoy the peculiar blessings of the covenant of promise, and be truly the seed of the blessed of the Lord.

Thirdly—To parents who have not given up themselves to God, nor their children in baptism.—You have heard of the covenant of promise, proposed to you freely, through Jesus Christ, with all its blessings ; yet, alas ! you neglect to comply. Can you be easy in this situation ? Here are parental blessings—but where are your parental feelings ? Tremble lest your children perish with you. It is true, they are not beyond the reach of uncovenanted mercy. But what will become of you, a faithless parent ?—Never, never be easy in this awful situation—“ Repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ ; 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.”

Fourthly—To those children who have, from their infancy, been given up to God in baptism.—You, my dear children, have been set apart, in a peculiar manner, for God, who has been pleased to distinguish you from others in the covenant of promise. He has put you under great advantages to know, to love, to serve him, and to be happy for ever : He has graciously hedged up from you the path of vice, and barred the broad way to destruction—and he has opened before you the path of virtue, and smoothed for you the narrow way of life and eternal happiness. My dear children, I now beseech you, know the God of your fathers : He is the best of beings—He is a good God—his

favor is life, and blessed are they whom he blesteth : Let it be your first thing to seek the Lord— You have the greatest encouragement. If you seek him early, you shall find him. Remember you are under the strongest obligations to be his. Receive, I beseech you, the instructions and admonitions of those who are over you in the Lord—of those who earnestly pray for, and steadily seek your everlasting welfare:—Cheerfully obey your parents in the Lord ;—you know not how often they bend their knees at the throne of grace, in agonies of prayer, for you. Remember—oh ! do remember, as you grow up, that the ax is laid at the root of the tree. If, therefore, you do not bring forth good fruit you must certainly be cut down, and cast into everlasting fire. *But* if, after all, you grow up in wickedness, how great must be your guilt, and how aggravated all your sins ?—Should any of you thus go on in sin with the wicked, and finally perish, certainly, in the day of judgment, it will be more tolerable for the children of Sodom and Gomorrah than for you.

Lastly—One word to those children who are not given up to God in covenant by baptism.—Though your parents have not given up themselves, nor you, to God in covenant, and though you have no special interest in covenant blessings and privileges, yet you are in a gospel land, and have many advantages for eternal life. You have the calls—the offers and invitation of the gospel. You are called to give up yourselves to God through Jesus Christ. There is provision enough in the uncovenanted mercy of God. The door of mercy is open. If you repent and come to Christ he will receive you, while he rejects those wicked children who,

though they are baptized, yet still go on in sin, and despise the God of their fathers. Be persuaded to seek the Lord—be not discouraged, for though you are now afar off, you may yet be brought nigh by the blood of Christ. The gospel is come to you. Now is the accepted time—now is the day of salvation. The time is short—The day of grace may be soon over, and the day of wrath may quickly be at hand. Awake—fly from the wrath to come.—Lay hold on the blessed hope now set before you. Youth is a good time—It often is the only time, and it always is the best time to make your peace with God through Jesus Christ.—Come then—O now come ! for all things are ready. The Spirit and the Bride say come : Let him that heareth say come—and whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely—May the God of mercy bless his own word, and to his name be all the glory for ever and ever—

AMEN.

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THE NATIONAL

AT WASHINGTON MAY 19 1862

OF THE

THE
S U B J E C T

OF BEING

BURIED WITH CHRIST IN BAPTISM,

ILLUSTRATED

IN A

S E R M O N,

DELIVERED AT BYFIELD, MAY 18, 1806.

BY REV. ELIJAH PARISH,

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IN THAT PLACE.

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A

S E R M O N.

COLOSSIANS, II. 12.

BURIED WITH HIM IN BAPTISM.

RELIGION is the best inheritance of man. It fills the heart with peace, and hope, and joy. Religion assists man to direct his own powers, and to govern his own passions; to see God in all events, to acquiesce in severest trials; to endure sorrows, and enjoy prosperity. The shafts of misery are broken; their poison reaches not the heart, warmed with christian love. The gathering clouds of anxiety, which obstruct every prospect of delight, are scattered by the rays, beaming from the sun of righteousness. The breast throbbing with guilt and remorse is soothed and cheered by a view of Calvary, and the Saviour bleeding on the cross. The present world assumes a new complexion, and futurity opens with undescribable splendor. The gospel appears excellent; its doctrines reasonable, and consistent; its duties practicable, and pleasant; its promises, satisfying and glorious.

The adamantine heart is dissolved by the pervading influence of the gospel ; lions and lambs are united ; and hostile spirits become friends and brothers. They are allied to angels ; they are in union with God. They are one with Christ, as he is one with the father. They are the sons of God, are entitled to thrones of glory, and enjoy heaven, while on earth. Gospel truth is the fountain of this felicity. But errors dangerous, often mingle with truth ; the effects are deplorable ; the prospect is melancholy.

Many errors incorporated with the christian system, many absurdities, which bewilder the minds of men, have their origin in figurative expressions. Giving these a literal interpretation, or supposing them to mean more than the author designed, equally diverts the reader from truth and safety. A misapplication of scripture figures has, frequently, been the occasion of opinions, absurd ; of rites, superstitious and injurious ; of doctrines, wicked and impious. The most irrational parts of the papal religion, the most ridiculous rites, adopted by fanatics, have been the offspring of figures, misunderstood.

In the text and context is a succession of figures, designed in different ways, to illustrate and enforce the same fact. Verse 11. " In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision, *made without hands*, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ." That is, in putting off the old man, you are circumcised without hands ; the work is effected by the Holy Spirit.—You are born again, which is spiritual circumcision. " Circumcision is that of the *heart*." This renewing of the Holy Spirit consists in putting off

the body of sin, in renouncing sin, and reforming the life. Or, we are "buried with him in baptism." As the burial of Jesus Christ gave evidence, that he had really died, the just for the unjust; that he had yielded himself a sacrifice for sin; so we in our spiritual circumcision or baptism, the figure now used, show ourselves to be really dead to sin, crucified in the lusts of our minds. As Christ, when buried, was dead and separated from the world; so in regeneration we become separate from sin. We are new creatures, having put off the old man. We are buried from the wicked indulgences and pursuits of the world.

The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, are, not only causes, but types and symbols to represent the death of our sins, our putting off the old man, and becoming new creatures.*

No reference is made in the text to the water of baptism, any more than to the knife of circumcision in the preceding verse. The Writer is speaking of that baptism, and of that alone, in which we "are risen with Christ, through the faith, which is the operation of God." This certainly can be nothing less than *spiritual* baptism, or regeneration; for the most violent advocate for dipping, or plunging, or burying, will not pretend, that this, necessarily, is connected with "faith;" he will allow it may be *possible* for a man to be plunged and buried in *water*, and yet not have "the faith, which is the operation of God." If he allow this, and allow this he must and will, then our text is no support of his cause. It cannot be water baptism, which is mentioned.

* See Pool's Synopsis on the text, Henry, Edwards, Cleaveland, Guise, Watts, &c.

Were not this the fact, nothing could be inferred respecting the *mode* of baptism. It would then only signify that, as Christ was buried and separated from the world; so we in baptism are buried and separated from a world of sin. The zeal for the literal construction of this figure may, perhaps, be extinguished by indulging it in other instances. St. Paul says, "I am crucified with Christ." Would any person suppose from this, that he had been led to Calvary, nailed to the cross, and pierced by the soldier's spear? Christians are said to be "circumcised in Christ." Does any one infer from this that all christians experience the bloody rite of the Jews? Or, because christians "are partakers of Christ's sufferings," are all christians, therefore, betrayed by Judas, spit upon, buffeted, and crowned with thorns? Or, because St. Paul says the Philippians were his "*crown*," were they, therefore, formed into a crown of honor, and worn as a badge of future glory? Or, because the sacrament represents the sufferings and death of Christ, are all worthy communicants crucified? Were our Baptist brethren consistent with themselves, such would be their explanation of these passages of scripture.

It immediately follows our text; "wherein also you were risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead." Wherein, or in which baptism "we are risen," actually "risen with Christ by the faith" which God gives to the new creature. You, who have this spiritual baptism, rise like Christ above the selfish motives, and sensual pursuits of a fallen world. You seek the kingdom of God; you aspire after divine good.

Persons, born again, like Jesus Christ, separate their hearts from the world, and rise to a divine life. That this is the only true construction of the text, may be inferred from a corresponding passage. Rom vi. 4. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death, that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." By spiritual baptism we partake the privileges of Christ's death. By dying to sin ourselves, as we do in the new birth, we resemble Jesus Christ in his death, who died "to make an end of sin." As Christ was raised from the grave; so we, not in water baptism, but in regeneration or spiritual baptism, are "raised" to walk in newness of life. Old things are done away; *all* things are become new. If we have experienced this spiritual baptism, we shall have the spirit of Christ. We shall be separate from the world of sin, as Christ was in the grave, and we shall like him rise to a holy, a new life. We obey a new master, seek a new way of salvation, act from new motives, to accomplish new designs; we choose new companions, experience new sorrows, and new joys. As if buried, we are separate from our former lives.

Doctrine. In regeneration we are new creatures. In attending to this, we shall show in a few particulars that christians are new creatures, and then the reasonableness of this change.

1. Christians are new creatures.

Those, who experience the change, mentioned in the text, have a new temper of heart.

Before regeneration, they sought worldly pleasure; they are now mortified to the world; they were before, lovers of the world, they are now

crucified to the world ; they before lived only for the world, they are now dead to the world ; they are “ buried ” from the world.

Once, they idolized the distinctions of life ; now they rise above those distinctions ; they are independent of those distinctions. They do not lean on them for their richest felicities. Though they do not hate the world, nor despise it, nor value it below its worth ; though with submission, they still desire its advantages, as far as they conceive, their comfort or usefulness may be promoted ; yet they are patient, they are happy without them. Once, they made haste to be rich ; they envied ; they coveted the splendid dwellings, the spacious possessions, the rich treasures of their opulent neighbors. Now they rejoice in the riches of others ; the happiness of others makes them happy.

Once, they were not contented with a good name, which is better than precious ointment ; they sought the friendship, the praise, the applause, the admiration of the world. Now they stand in their lot ; they despise not those below, nor envy those who climb.

Once, they were haters of God ; their hearts were enmity against God ; they said in their hearts, “ No God,” or they wished no God existed. They were alive, all life without a knowledge of the divine law ; but the commandment has come with power, slain their corrupt passions ; they are dead to sin. Now the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts ; they love him with their warmest affections. The almighty power of God is their strong tower of defence. The Lord reigneth ; they are safe and happy, he will do all his pleasure, make the wrath of man to praise him, and care-

fully restrain the remainder of wrath. This fills them with hope and faith.

The omniscience of God is the comfort and joy of good men. All their distresses and dangers are known to him ; the softest whisper, the most secret wish, must instantly reach his throne. This encourages them, not only to play the man for their God, knowing that his eye is constantly upon them ; but to open their hearts before him in all their wants. The mercy, the grace, and forbearance of God, oppresses pious hearts with a sense of obligation. Often with strong cries, having no adequate words, they make known their sense of divine goodness, of sparing mercy. The mercy of God, as expressed in the gospel, fills their hearts with sentiments too tender and sublime for utterance. In silent wonder and gladness they contemplate the merits of that blood, which cleanseth from all sin ; they love God ; they delight in God with all their hearts.

Instead of rolling sin as a sweet morsel under their tongues ; instead of saying to others, " stand by, I am holier than thou ;" instead of thanking God, that they are not as other men, they loathe and abhor themselves ; they feel themselves, the chief of sinners ; they judge and condemn themselves ; they repent in dust and ashes. Oh wretched men that we are, they cry, " who shall deliver us from the body of this death ? When we would do good, evil is present with us. We are more brutish than any men ; we have not the understanding of men. We will accept the punishment of our sins ; we will bear the indignation of the Lord. Wherefore should living men complain for the punishment of their sins."

Those, born again, instead of desiring Jesus Christ to depart out of their coast, view him as altogether lovely, choose him as their city of refuge, their ark of safety, their hiding place from the storm. To them Jesus Christ is precious. They give up all other hopes; they sacrifice all other dependences. Jesus Christ is the Lord, their righteousness. Their expressive language is, "Lord we believe, help thou our unbelief."

Their motives are changed. Before they had put off the old man, they were *themselves* the object of all their desires, their love, their pursuits. They had no affection, more generous; no design, more elevated; no wish, more noble, than to promote their own interest. Natural men love their own selves; they look every one on his own things. But men renewed by the Holy Ghost have the charity, which seeketh not her own. When the honor of God seemeth exposed, like the captain of Israel, they solicitously enquire of God, "What wilt thou do unto thy great name?" "I am concerned for the honor of thy name; wilt thou not protect thine own glory?" On the trembling mount of Sinai their lawgiver had expressed the same dignified sentiments. When God was threatening to "consume" his people, Moses enquires, "Wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say, for *mischief* did he bring them out to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth?" "Why should the ruin of Israel cause thy rectitude to be decried and reproached among the heathen?"

Men, born again, buried with Christ, have also a concern for the good of others, for the happiness and salvation of their enemies. The importunate,

impassioned intercessions of Abram in behalf of Sodom, express the sympathetic, benevolent solicitude of pious souls. He prays, that the people may be spared, that they may be spared for the sake of fifty righteous; he then prays they may be spared for the sake of forty and five; that they may be spared for the sake of forty, for the sake of thirty, for twenty, for ten. Abram was safe himself, his dwellings, his flocks and herds, were secure from danger; yet was he concerned, and afflicted, and distressed for his neighbors, exposed to the anger of God. Such is the spirit of renewed men. They have the spirit of Christ. He loved us and died for us, while we were enemies; so do his people love their enemies, bless those, who curse them, and do good to them, who despitefully use them, and persecute them. They pity their wicked enemies; they are concerned for their welfare; they are alarmed at their dangers. Often when they see their enemies indulging resentment, or other malignant passions, they long to cry out, like Paul to the jailor, "Do thyself no harm." Such are the feelings of pious parents, neighbors, and ministers; with bleeding hearts are they often ready to exclaim to those, who unreasonably oppose themselves, "Do thyself no harm;" "do not destroy thy precious soul."

The great object of those, born again, is to answer the purposes of their existence. They desire to honor God, to build up his cause, to promote his religion, to extend the triumphs of his gospel, to comfort and establish his people, to convince and persuade his enemies, to sanctify and save their own souls. United to God, and the cause of God, they are one with Christ; they are one themselves; they have one motive, one spirit, one faith, one character.

2. The *conduct* of those, buried with Christ, or born again, is changed.

Such are new creatures. Their internal baptism, wrought "by the operation of God," produces a visible reformation.

How different is the visible appearance of St. Paul, a messenger of the gospel, from Saul the Pharisee. Then was he furiously haling men and women to prison; then could he assist in the execution, and exult in the dying agonies of a holy martyr. Now is he ready to spend and be spent in the cause of Jesus; now all things are loss and dross, compared with the knowledge of Jesus Christ; now he could wish himself accused, that his brethren might receive this divine redeemer.

See Zacheus, while a collector of the revenue, abusing, and defrauding, and falsely accusing his fellow citizens. See this same Zacheus, exercising the faith of the gospel, sitting at the feet of Jesus, making ample restitution for all his frauds, and doing to others, as he would wish others to do to him.

See the Jailor, while a man of the world, "thrusting the disciples into the inner prison, making their feet doubly fast in the stocks," exercising the utmost rigor of the law. See the same Jailor, experiencing the change mentioned in the text, he washes the stripes of the disciples; like the good Samaritan, he pours in wine and oil, to heal their wounds; like his divine Lord he binds up the broken hearted, he opens the prison to them that were bound; he gives liberty to his captives. He spreads his table; he sets meat before them. He does them good, because they are the disciples of Jesus.

Nor does he consult "with flesh and blood;" he waits not to consult his nearest friends; he waits not to go abroad to Enon or Jordan; but *the same hour of the night*, before he spreads his generous table, he and his family are baptized.

Those, who are buried and risen with Christ, are prepared to worship God in the beauty of holiness, to do good to all men, especially to the household of faith.

Observe the man of prayer. Alone he converses with his heavenly father; in public he increases the solemnity of the congregation. At one time he whispers a feeble wish at the throne of mercy. At another time his desires kindle, his religious affections glow; his prayer is ardent, importunate, impassioned, and resistless; he cries, "I will not let thee go, unless thou blest me." Such are the salt of the earth; the light of the world.

We are secondly to show the reasonableness of this character, or of this change.

1. This change of character is reasonable, because God requires it.

He is a God of wisdom, and by him actions are weighed. In wisdom hath he made and directed all things, and in his wisdom, he hath required this change. He commands men to make them new hearts, to repent, and believe in Jesus Christ. He hath commanded men to turn their feet into the paths of his testimonies, to love the Lord God with all their hearts, to be crucified to the world, and dead to sin. He hath commanded all men to be holy in all manner of conversation, to be perfect as he is perfect. Here is sufficient evidence that the change of our hearts is a reasonable duty.

2. The change we have considered must be reasonable; because it tends to the general good.

True religion breathes glory to God, peace on earth, and good will to men. True religion is in union with all the attributes and works of God. She cordially approves the plan, formed in eternity; she labors to carry it into execution. All things were created by God and for him, to promote the honor of his majesty. Religion approves, admires, and adores the wisdom of God, and her devout prayer is, "glorify thyself, roll on thine unchangeable purposes, and do all thy pleasure." She joins in the songs of angels; she unites in the labors of God.

This change of heart is a reasonable duty, because it saves the soul from ruin; it gives peace and salvation. The wicked and all, who forget God, shall be turned into hell. The impenitent and unbelieving must have their portion in the lake, which burneth with fire and brimstone. In the day of judgment they must depart accursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. Faith, which is the operation of God, delivers the soul from this destruction, the thought of which is so distressing and overwhelming. This faith works by love, and purifies the heart; it is connected with the wisdom, which cometh down from above. The ways of wisdom are pleasant. The godly have great peace of mind. The sorrow of the world worketh death, but blessed are they who mourn with pious sorrow. Blessed are the pure in heart; they shall see God. He that believeth shall be saved.

4. The change of heart, contemplated, is reasonable, because God has furnished us with all the natural powers, needful for such a change.

God has given us a mind to know, a conscience to feel what is right and wrong, a judgment to weigh consequences, a heart to will according to our pleasure. We have all the powers and faculties, necessary to produce this new character and life. God gives us a power of choosing and refusing. He commands us to make us a new heart. We may choose the good and refuse the evil. It is, therefore, reasonable in God to say, "choose ye this day whom ye will serve; if the Lord be God, follow him." It is reasonable for him to command all men every where to repent.

REFLECTIONS.

1. We see how great a blessing is a new heart. A new heart, or that internal baptism, which is the operation of God, "is more precious than rubies." Such favored persons, like Christ, have been crucified; they are dead and "buried" to sin. They are risen with Christ to a new life. They are children of God, and heirs of his promises; they are joint heirs with Jesus Christ. Their names are in the book of life. They are called, justified, sanctified, and will be saved. They possess that pearl, which is of great price; they have chosen the good part, which shall never be taken from them.

Had they been admitted to sail on the tide of pleasure, that tide would have fallen, or they would have been wrecked on some frightful coast, tortured with the pangs of self reproach, remorse, and despair.

Had they rioted in wealth, this might have taken wing in a moment, or their hearts might have sickened at their own luxuries, and their splendors,

ceased to charm. Had reputation and honor been their portion, this, like a cloud of the morning, might have suddenly vanished from sight; but a new heart is an inheritance more permanent than the everlasting hills, a portion, more satisfying, than all the kingdoms of this world.

2. We may see the importance of literature to sound theology.

Not to mention more important reasons, the figurative expressions of scripture render philological studies necessary to every divine. Authors of all countries and ages use figures, but none are more bold than those of the sacred scriptures. The writers of these holy pages display a boldness of conception, a loftiness of fancy, unrivalled by the bards and orators of other countries. Homer, a sun among earthly luminaries, "his eye with the fine phrenzy rolling," supposes the vengeance of Jupiter will make a mountain tremble; but in the cool, dispassionate narratives of the prophets, "by the presence of the Lord," or by the distant "voice of the Lord," "the everlasting mountains are scattered, the perpetual hills bow." "Lebanon and Sirion skip like unicorns." "The islands and mountains are not found."

Illiterate men are peculiarly liable to make absurd explanations of figures; the more frequent and the more bold the figures, the more danger from illiterate teachers.

Figurative expressions often agree with the object to be illustrated only in one point. Christ is represented as a "lion," as coming like a "thief." Is he, therefore, cruel, or does he take what is not his own? Such bold figures may be perverted in a shocking and impious manner. It is, therefore,

of infinite importance to the Church of Christ, to the christian religion, to the cause of God, to the souls of men, that those, who publicly explain scripture, should be men of literature, men acquainted with language and the principles of good writing. It is hazardous ; it is presumptuous for the man, imperfectly acquainted with his mother tongue, to explain volumes, written in other languages, in other countries, in other ages, and in a different state of society, often referring to customs and manners, unknown to those illiterate teachers. Those circumstances, unavoidably, give a peculiar complexion to these writings, and call for corresponding information in those, who explain them. What then are the prospects of that denomination whose religious teachers, with few exceptions, are illiterate men, unacquainted with the structure of languages, and the rules of good writing.*

* Not the least possible unkindness is entertained against our worthy Baptist brethren. When they preach evangelical truth we are pleased ; but when they criticise languages ; when they torture scripture figures ; when they violently extort meanings, unknown to the ancient church, the truth must be told.

If any are jealous our representation is not just, we refer them to Mosheim, vol. 4. He says " The anabaptists, however divided on other subjects, were agreed in their notions of learning and philosophy, which in former times they unanimously considered, as the pests of the christian church, and as highly detrimental to the progress of true religion and virtue." In another place he says, " The general Baptists, or as they are called by some, the antipædobaptists, are for the most part persons of mean conditions, and almost totally destitute of learning and knowledge. They profess a contempt for erudition and science." We are happy in supposing the people here described are considerably improved, that their prejudices against a learned ministry are giving way to juster views. The gradual improvement of our country, the establishment of a college under their direction, the laudable emulation of some of their ministers to acquire useful science, we hope are harbingers of a brighter day, when the walls, which separate christian brethren, will be broken down. Probably the denomination have received some advantage in the course of a century or two from a few solitary congrega-

Would a prudent man so far trifle with his life as to entrust it with physicians of such character? Will he be more indifferent respecting his spiritual health, and apply to such teachers to explain to him the word of eternal life?

In the fourth century Audeus taught, that God had the shape of a *man*. His proof was, "Let us make man in our image." St. John says, "He [Christ] shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with *fire*." The Selucians and Hermians understood this literally, and maintained that material fire was necessary in the administration of baptism. Valentinus, like our Baptists, rebaptized those, who had received baptism out of his sect, and *drew them through the fire*. Heraclian, cited by Clemens Alexandrinus, says that some applied a red hot iron to the ears of the baptized. St. Paul says we are buried with Christ in baptism. This also has been understood literally; but such persons forget that to be consistent, on their plan, they should continue "buried" three days and three nights, the time Christ lay in the earth. Should any object that this would drown them, the baptist, in his way of treating figures, would have an easy answer, and readily prove that drowning was the very design of baptism. Rom. vi. 4. "We are buried with him by baptism into his death." We are not merely buried, for this is only a part, any more than sprinkling, but we are buried to death, "buried into his death." Thus he has scripture for drowning all

tional preachers joining them, who had received diplomas from some college. This must, however, be one of their minor advantages, for when was it known that the distinguished members of a party deserted? Men conscious of inferiority to their brethren, in literature and talents, have a powerful *temptation* to apostatize, and join a party, where their relative greatness will be advanced.

whom he baptizes, and precisely as much scripture for drowning, as for burying. The very same passage, might he say, which commands burying, commands drowning, commands "death."

In the present mode of plunging, the resemblance is almost entirely lost. What is the resemblance between laying a dead body in a rock, covering it with a great stone, sealing it in a solemn manner; all things continuing in this state, three days and three nights; what is the resemblance between this, and suddenly plunging a living body into water, and instantly lifting it out of the water. What possible likeness is there between a *living person* in the *water*, and a *dead body* in a *rock*. The similitude is little better than that of the blind man, who supposed the light of the sun was like the noise of a cannon. We have accordingly endeavored to show in the introduction, that the elegant scholar, the christian orator of Tarsus, had no thought of any such resemblance; his object was to show that in regeneration or spiritual baptism, which is followed "with newness of life" or a new life, "through faith which is the operation of God," we are dead and buried to sin, and raised or made alive to God, as Christ was. The evident design of the text is to illustrate the preceding verse, which speaks of spiritual circumcision made without hands. This *baptism* is that by which we are *raised with Christ*; but in water baptism we are not always raised with Christ. If men are plunged they may generally be raised from the water; but this has no necessary connexion with "rising with Christ." This baptism is also effected "through faith which is the operation of God;" but a man may be raised out of an ocean of water, every day of his life, and re-

main destitute of faith; therefore, the text has no reference to water baptism. In these remarks may be seen the importance of literature to sound divinity. Ignorance is the parent of error.

3. The excellence of the christian character shows the divine original of the christian system.

The gospel when it has due influence on the mind produces a new life, a new creature. His heart breathes a new temper, and his life is adorned with new actions. Can any fiction of men produce such an effect? Has any system of human philosophy or religion been found adequate to such a purpose? Will the sacrifices of Pagans, will the splendid fancies of Mahometans produce such a glorious change in the human mind? Let all the systems of human philosophy and religion combine and exert their united energy on one man, they never can effect such a change of character; they never can form a humble disciple of Jesus Christ. They may present us a Tully, a Socrates, or a Cato; but they never can form a Nathaniel without guile, a Joseph without resentment, nor a Daniel without ambition. All the fires of philosophy and false religion do not furnish a spark of that inextinguishable zeal, which incessantly glowed in the bosom of St. Paul.

4. Do not the excellent effects of internal baptism, and that "faith which is the operation of God," reprove many christian professors?

Ye are, my friends, crucified, and dead, and buried with Christ. Like him should you be separate from sin, holy, harmless, and undefiled. Like him should you walk with God. Yet how often do many pollute their hearts with worldly affections, their lips with worldly conversation, and their hands with

worldly conduct. How often do they descend from the elevated dignity of the christian character to be weak in virtue as other men. Instead of being crucified with Christ, they seem like Judas to be alive to worldly gain. Instead of being dead to the world, they seem almost ready to barter future glory for human applause. Descending from their high communion with God, they seek felicity in the beggarly elements of this world. By such professors Christ is wounded in the house of his friends. He knocks, he cries for entrance at the door of their hearts, his head wet with the dew, and his locks with the drops of the night. Such professors not only forsake their first love, wound their own peace, distress their own consciences, and cloud their own hopes of eternal life; but by their backsliding, the gospel is reproached, sinners are prejudiced and hardened in their sins, the people of God are afflicted and discouraged, and the holy spirit is grieved from our churches.

5. From the character of God's people we see how natural it is for them to commune together.

Characters, who are alike, always harmonize. Persons united in Jesus Christ, as necessarily have fellowship, as similar sounds are always in unison. It is the comfort and joy of christians to commune in the truths of God's word, in the duties of life, and in the institutions of religion.

It is, therefore, an object of desire, and a pursuit of life with the people of God, actually to hold communion in devout conversation, in religious services, and in all the things of God. This is one reason why they are glad to hear their friends say, "let us go up to the house of the Lord, and enquire in his holy temple."

God also commands his people to commune together, especially in the ordinance of "the supper." "This do in remembrance of me." Of what unhallowed violence then are those guilty, who separate the children of God, who say to one part of their christian brethren, "stand by, while we sit down at our father's table. This is our father's table, and we charitably believe you to be the children of our father; yet we discard you from our communion, from our society, not for want of evidence, that you are real saints; but because more water was applied to us in baptism than to you."

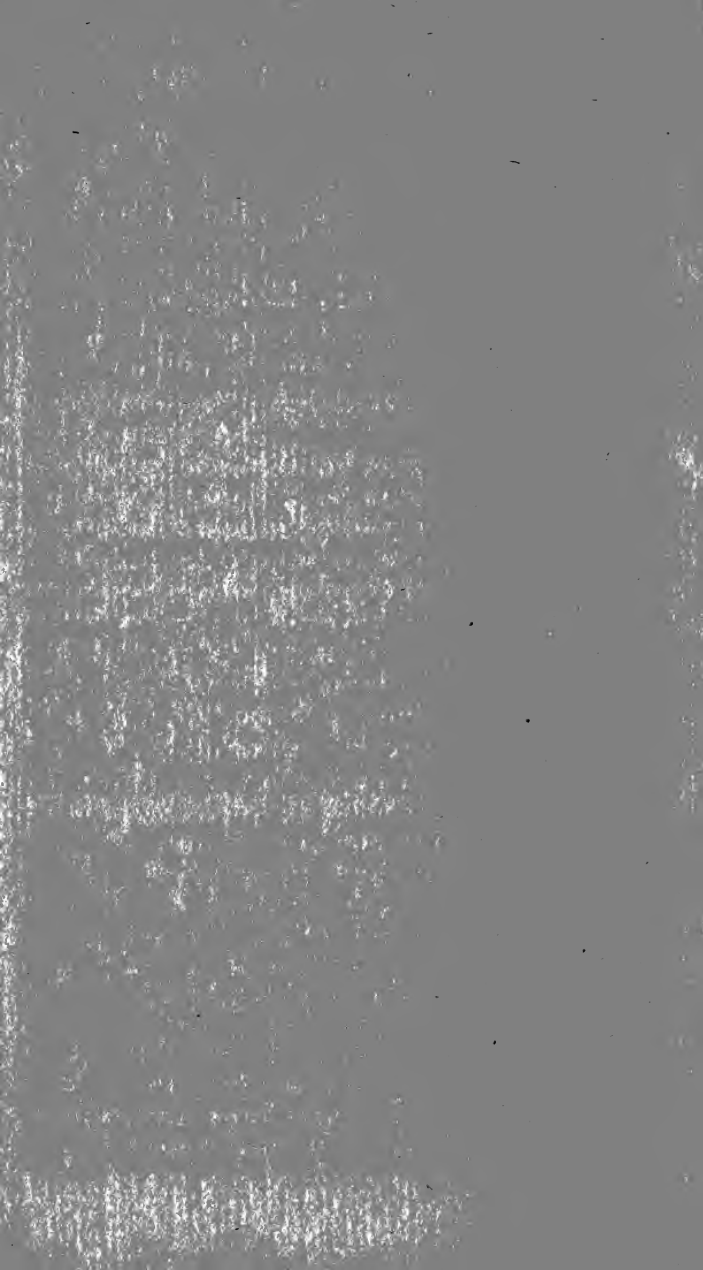
So do men make themselves believe, that a basin, a cistern, or a river, are essential circumstances in the christian character, essential to christian privileges. May not the Roman Catholic with as much reason make the sign of the cross, necessary to church communion? So often has it been proved and proved, that "baptize," that "many waters," "that going to the water," "that coming from the water" do not necessarily prove plunging, that a mind must be, peculiarly, organized to suppose, more proof is needed. To insist, therefore, on this *mode* of baptism, as necessary to christian communion, is to show a temper, which cannot be mistaken, yet need not be named.

That a mode, a ceremony, a certain quantity of water, or a certain extent of water on the body, should be considered essential to christian communion in the glimmering light of the sixteenth century, is not very strange; but that such ideas should continue to the present time, is a melancholy phenomenon in the religious world.

To separate those children from the table of their heavenly father, who are, confessedly, animated with the same faith, comforted with the same hope, and adorned with the same holy character, may seem more like the austerity of a merciless eye servant, than the brotherly kindness of a faithful steward.

The compassionate Redeemer teaches, that his children are branches of the same vine ; is it not unmerciful to tear off a part of the branches, leaving the vine, to be buffeted by the storms, and the branches to wither, and languish, and die ? The compassionate Redeemer teaches, that his children are the members of his body ; is it not cruelty and murder by “close communion” to tear off the limbs from the body ? Is it not rending Jesus Christ himself limb from limb ? Will not the bleeding, mangled, dying members of Christ, be swift witnesses against such treatment ? Is it not a violent “offence” to the “little ones” of Christ ; is it not distress and death to that sacred union, which exists among the members of Christ’s body ?

May we all, my brethren, study the things, which make for peace ; may the watchmen of Zion lift up their voice in unison, and see eye to eye ; may He, who walks in the midst of the golden candlesticks, bid the wilderness and solitary place be glad, the desert rejoice and blossom as the rose, the wolf dwell with the lamb, and the leopard with the kid, and the whole earth be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. AMEN.



THE HONOURABLE AND PIOUS

C O N F E S S I O N,

OF A TRUE PENITENT; EXEMPLIFIED IN THE
CASE OF MRS. ELIZABETH JACKSON. BE-
FORE THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, IN
WILLIAMSTOWN, VERMONT; AND THE BAP-
TIST CHURCH, IN SAID TOWN—JUNE 3, 1805.

S T A T E M E N T,

FROM REV. MR. THOMPSON.

BY request of some of my pious friends, who are cordially engaged for the promotion of religious truth, I state the following facts respecting Mrs. JACKSON; and attest the truth of her Letter, including her confession, which she sent to the Elder and Baptist Church, where she received her baptism by immersion.

Mrs. JACKSON, with her husband, are persons of decent abilities, and approved piety; they were both received into the Congregational Church, in Petersham, in Massachusetts; they, a few years ago, removed to Williamstown, in the state of Vermont, where they have since lived; and have supported a good and regular christian character. They have constantly attended divine worship, with their congregational brethren, when favoured with preaching; but at other times, especially upon week days, have attended the ministrations of the

Baptists.—In the latter part of the past winter, and in the spring following, the people's attention was much excited in religious concerns, and preaching and conferences, were frequent—especially among the baptists. Mrs. JACKSON's mind became unusually affected and solemn. At their meeting for examinations and for baptisms, she gave evidence of great anxiety of mind, by sighs and tears. Upon being asked the cause of her great distress, she replied, "I am troubled about baptism."—It is to be noted, that she had been, more than a year before this, by the conversation of a baptist, much confused in her mind, and almost persuaded to give up her infant baptism. The question was then put unto her, whether she did not feel it her privilege to go into the water, and be baptized? Her reply was, that she did not, then. But by the expressions of zeal and affection, or through the multiplicity of words, with which she was surrounded, she not only consented to the ordinance, but received it then, and was received in fellowship with the baptist brethren.

AFTER being sensible she had taken a wrong step, she requested a conference with them; that the path of her duty might be made clear, and fearing lest she should make bad worse, and thereby increase the injury she had done the cause of Christ. But, in conversation with them, she became more established, that duty called her to appear in the congregation of God's people, and exhibit her feelings and views of the nature of her past conduct. She freely presented to me the confession, and desired me to read it in public; which was done upon the first sabbath of June, 1805.

If I can judge, in such cases, she gave good evidence of godly sincerity and brokenness of heart, whenever I had opportunity of conversation with her upon the subject. She is a person of an amiable mind, as to her natural temper; and has a good understanding in the great truths of the gospel; and is far from any enthusiasm or constitutional unsteadiness of mind—but appears, in general, to deliberate well on whatever she does.

LATHROP THOMPSON.

Williamstown, June 3, 1805.

REVEREND AND BELOVED,

I, ELIZABETH JACKSON, take this early opportunity to let you, my brethren and sisters of the baptist denomination, usually meeting on the East hill, (so called) know what I have done, and my reasons for thus doing.

AFTER I had received baptism, in *your way*, and on seeing my infant child, and calling to mind my covenant vows, in giving up myself to God, and to his Congregational Church in Petersham, and in giving up my children in baptism; by each and every of these transactions, I put my own hand (in faith, I trust) to the holy seal of Baptism, which my parents first put upon me, in my infancy; and made that baptism my own, by the act of faith which I hope, God, by his gracious Spirit, gave me, a poor, undone sinner, before I visibly covenanted with my God, and his holy people.

I SAY, reflecting upon what I had done when among you, my dear christian friends, I had no rest

nor comfort, night nor day 'till I was brought to confess my sinful folly ; and loathe myself for my shameful departure from my God, and for the violation of his holy covenant, which I had trifled with and trampled upon.

WHEN I had sorrowed and wept, with brokenness of heart, in secret ; and had confessed my wicked departure from my God, by breaking his holy covenant before his people, among whom I love to worship, I found a sweet peace return to my soul, which had been a stranger to my breast, for weeks.

THE Confession I made public yesterday, I will now transcribe to you ; and wish it may be read publicly among you. I ask your forgiveness. Oh ! beloved, pray for me ! who am less than the least of all God's mercies.

My Confession now follows :—

“ IN my infancy I was dedicated to God, in baptism, by my parents : and when I had arrived to adult years, (as I humbly hope) I was brought to embrace that righteousness of faith in Christ Jesus, of which water baptism is an outward seal ; and professing, publicly, this my faith, and entering into covenant with God's people, I think I understandingly took my infant baptism, and made it my own act ; and thus acknowledged the same faith which my parents did, and of which the baptism I had already received, and in my personal dedication renewed, was an outward seal.

“ BUT, afterwards, having some suggestions offered, as though what my parents had done could not answer my duty for myself ; I was, for a time, considerably tried upon the subject.

“ BUT, without due consideration in examining for the light of the scriptures upon this important point; in a hasty and inconsiderate manner, I consented to receive that ordinance again, by immersion: in the doing of which, I humbly conceive, I have not only renounced all that my parents had done for me, in baptism; and what I had done, by receiving it as my baptism; and what I had done for my children: But, also, I have trifled with this divine institution, and have broken covenant with God, and have justly offended the great Head of the church. For which, I desire to take shame to myself; and to humble myself before God and men; and ask pardon and forgiveness.

“ To God, I earnestly pray, that he would graciously pardon this my grievous offence against him, and his holy institutions; and again lift on me, a vile sinner, the light of his countenance. I ask the forgiveness of all my christian friends, whom I have offended by this my hasty, wicked, and unjustifiable conduct.

“ By the grace of God assisting me, I engage, for the future, to be more *considerate* and *circumspect* in my walk; and to honour my holy profession, by a humble walk with God, and steadfastness in the faith and order of the gospel.

“ I sincerely ask the prayers of all God’s people, that I may be preserved from all errors, in future; and carefully adorn the doctrines and institutions of God our Saviour, in all things; and, at last, be found to divine acceptance.—AMEN.”

My christian brethren and sisters: I have no fault to charge upon you;—to myself be all the folly, shame, and guilt. I have done what I could, in public retraction, from a sincere desire that the

injury I have given Christ, in the world, may, in some measure, be wiped away ; and you and all other churches and christians, be built up an holy people, in the Lord ; and Satan rage in vain, and vent his malice to no purpose, except his confusion and utter destruction.

I WISH for the honour to subscribe myself, your sister, (though most unworthy) in the common faith of Jesus Christ, our bleeding Saviour.

ELIZABETH JACKSON.

FINIS.



