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# PÆDO-BAPTISM:

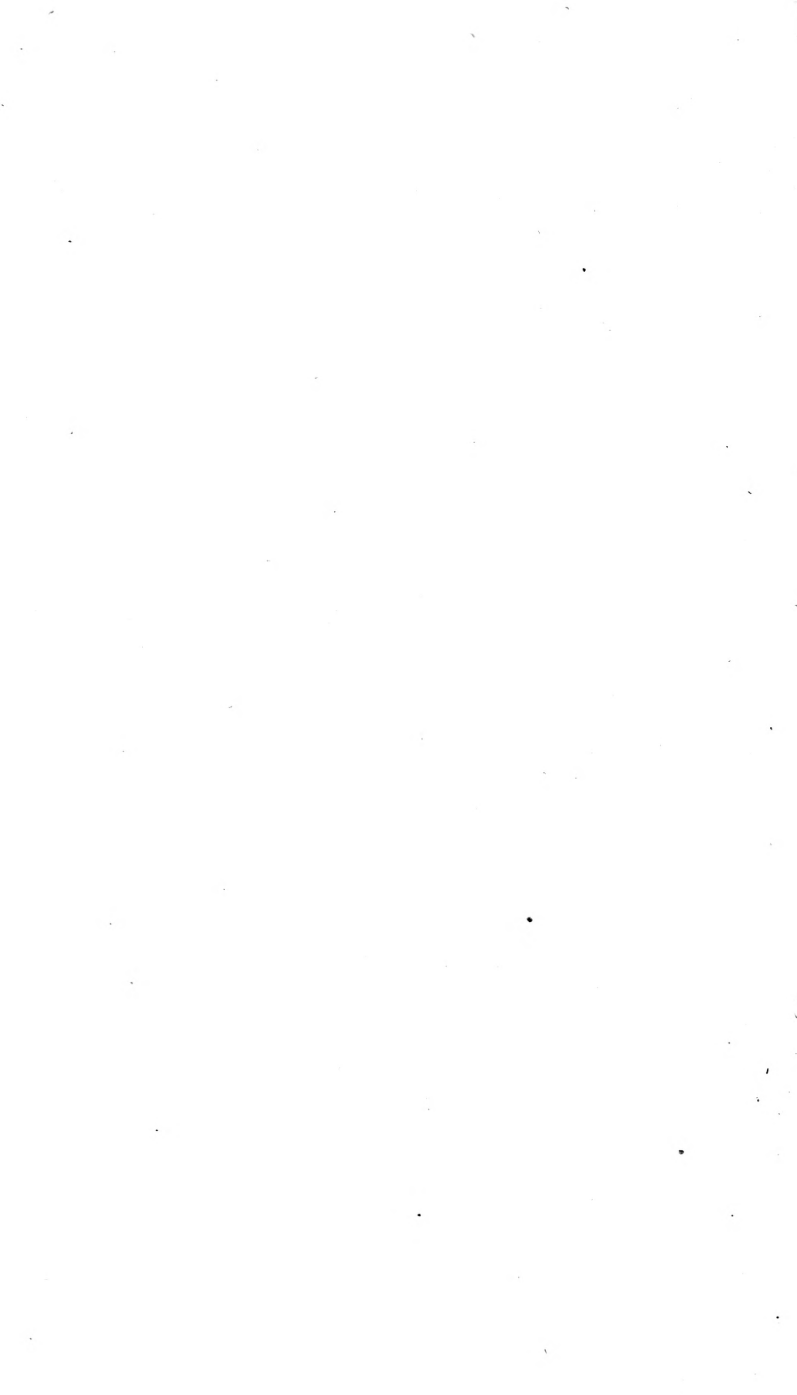
THE

SECOND PART.

OR, A

DEFENCE, &c.





# PÆDO-BAPTISM:

THE

SECOND PART.

OR, A

DEFENCE

OF THE

Authority of Infant-Baptism.

In ANSWER to the

Common OBJECTIONS against it.

*John Breckell*

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Suffer little Children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the Kingdom of GOD. *Luke xviii. 16.*

Nam Deus ut *personam* non accipit, sic nec *ætatem*, cum se omnibus ad cœlestis gratiæ consecutionem æqualitate liberatâ præbeat Patrem. *Cyprian. Ep. ad Fidum.*

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## INTRODUCTION.



ALTHOUGH the *authority* of Infant-baptism doth not formally depend upon it's *antiquity*; yet a due consideration of the latter may be subservient to the former, so far as to dispose an enquirer after truth, to examine the *Question* with more freedom and candor, than could be expected from any persons already prepossessed with a groundless notion of the *novelty* of the thing. Such a notion, built upon a few mistaken passages in some of the antient writers, seems to have laid the foundation of this whole controversy at the first, and ever since determined some conscientious people, who had a laudable zeal for the Bible, as the rule of *faith and practice*, to dispute every inch of ground with so much pertinacity, and to try all the methods of evasion to elude the force of e-  
very

very *scripture*-argument. Therefore a former attempt having been made to remove this unhappy *prejudice* by maintaining the *antiquity* of Infant-baptism [a]; we shall now endeavor to defend it's *authority* against the chief and common *objections*. — By the *authority* of Infant-baptism every *Protestant* reader will understand such ground and reason for it in the *Scriptures*, as is sufficient to justify the thing, and so render any further baptism unnecessary and superfluous, in a regular administration of gospel-ordinances, to those, who were baptized in their Infancy. The point, then, which we now propose to maintain, is *this*, viz. the *lawfulness*, or *validity* of Infant-baptism. For, though baptism, in the *general*, is a positive and plain institution of Christ; yet, as the *particular time* of administering it is nowhere precisely fixed: *when* therefore, or at what *age* persons ordinarily shall be baptized, *this*, we presume, is a circumstance left undetermined. Consequently, they may be rightly baptized at *any* age, even in their earliest infancy, and the children, so baptized,

[a] See Pædo-baptism, and Pædo-baptism defended in answer to Dr. Gill's Reply.

zed, have *lawful* and *valid* baptism: Because they are admitted to baptism according to the liberty and latitude allowed in the Gospel.—As this appears to have been the general sense of antiquity [b]; so, this view of the Question easily accounts for the different opinions, that occasionally arose in the primitive church, about the most proper and convenient time of administering baptism: Some supposing, that children ought not to be baptized before the *eighth* day, e. g. *Fidus*, an *African* bishop (though he had no doubt whether they should be baptized at all) [c]; others, that they might be baptized on *any* day after their birth, e. g. *Cyprian*, and a whole *council* of bishops [d]; and others, that their baptism might be more conveniently deferred till they were three years old, e. g. *Gregory Nazianzen* [e], and perhaps *Tertullian* [f]. However, it was the prevailing opinion, that baptism was so necessary for *all*, as that none should be suffered to die without it. And upon this ground it is no difficult task, to reconcile the two last named writers with themselves,

[b] See Blake, answer to Tombes. Sec. 2.

[c] Cyprian. Ep. ad Fidum.

[d] Ibid.

[e] Orat. 40.

[f] Lib. de Baptismo.

selves, when they advise the delay of children's baptism, and yet allow, yea required, them to be baptized in case of *danger* [ *g* ]. Thus, it appears, they supposed, that a discretionary power was left with christians, to order and determine the *time* of baptism, as they saw occasion. So that, if they did not look upon the baptism of children in their earliest infancy to be *necessary*, or *expedient*, in ordinary cases; yet they held it *lawful*, and *valid*; nor, N. B. did they ever persuade any persons to be *re baptized*, who, (or because they) had been baptized in their infancy. *Tertullian* himself says, that baptism is to be but *once* administered [ *b* ].

— It

[ *g* ] *Ubi supra*. This plainly is the meaning of that exceptive clause in *Tertullian*, *si non tam (or tamen) necesse*. The not observing with a critical exactness how the word, *necesse*, varies it's signification in this part of the sentence, hath led some persons to make *nonsense* of the passage. But, to say, " what necessity is there, except in case of " danger," (*i. e.* of death) is very intelligible.

[ *b* ] *Denuò ablui non licet. Tertullian de Pudicitia*. In the same book, he discovers it to be his opinion, that sins, committed *after* baptism, are unpardonable. Which, by the way, easily accounts for his advising the *delay* of baptism, not only in *children*, but in *virgins*, and *widows*, without supposing the baptism of any such persons to be a *novelty* in his days: and indeed there is as much reason to suppose it of the one as the other.

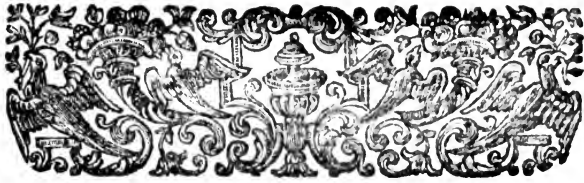
—It may possibly be alledged that, if Infant-baptism is *commanded*, it must be *necessary*; and if it is *not* commanded, it must be *unlawful*. But this *dilemma* can give us no pain; for it is a mere *sophism*. And the argument would prove too much, if any thing at all, *viz.* that *every* thing, every *circumstance* in religion must be either necessary, or unlawful. For a solution, we judge it sufficient to say, That the particular and precise *time* of baptism is not the matter of any divine precept or appointment, (though *baptism* itself is so) but a *circumstance* left undetermined in the christian *code*. Should any one apply this reasoning to the ordinance of the *Lord's Supper*, the consequence will not affect our argument, 'till the reasons for *Infant-communion* are disproved [*i*]. But the two cases do not seem to us exactly parallel: Because the nature of the solemnities is different. For in the administration of baptism the baptizer is the agent, and the party baptized is *passive*. But, in the celebration of the Lord's Supper, not only the administrator, but the recipient also  
is

[*i*] See Mr. James Peirce's Essay on this subject.

is *active*. For, as he *eats* and *drinks*, what Infants cannot digest; so, according to the very nature and design of that *commemorative* Rite, he is to exercise his *understanding*, and *memory*, in *discerning* the *Lord's body*, &c. [k] actions, which Infants cannot perform. As to the Jewish *passover*, which was also a *memorial* of another kind, if Infants partook of it (though this is matter of dispute) no argument can be urged from thence in favour of *Infant-communion*, but what will conclude more strongly for *Infant-baptism*.

[k] 1 Cor. xi. 29. See Mr. Baxter. Plain Scripture-proof. &c. P. 2. ch. 4.






# PÆDO-BAPTISM:

T H E

S E C O N D P A R T.

S E C T I O N I.

*The previous Question, concerning the perpetuity of Christian-baptism, considered.*

HOUGH *Pædo baptists* and *Antipædo-baptists* both are generally agreed, that baptism is a *standing* ordinance of Christ; yet, because some persons have raised a scruple upon this head, it is not foreign to the subject in hand, to take that matter into consideration. “ For, if baptism, that is to say, “ water-baptism be *ceased*, then surely bap-  
B “ tizing

“ tizing of Infants is unwarrantable ;” says Mr. *Barclay* [l].

It is the opinion of these people, called *Quakers*, that *water-baptism* only typified the *baptism of the Spirit*, and so, as they will have it, was superseded by it. But according to this notion (for which there is not the least foundation, in scripture, reason, or fact) *water-baptism*, which is plainly intended in the *commission* [m], ceased in the Christian church before it began, which is very absurd. For, as the Christian church did not commence till after the death &c. of Christ [n] ; so his Apostles were not to execute their commission, before they had received the *Holy Ghost*, which was the baptism of the Spirit [o]. Nor could they with any propriety baptize persons in the name of—the *Holy Ghost*, before the *Holy Ghost* was actually given. For, *this form* of baptism was a plain and public acknowledgment of that divine donation [p]. Hence that question, which St. *Paul* put to certain persons, who said “ they had not “ heard that there was a *Holy Ghost* ;” [q] “ *unto what then were ye baptized ?*” [r] Im-  
plying,

[l] Apology. Prop. 12. sub fin.

[m] Mat. xxviii. 19, 20. This must signify baptizing with *water*, not with the *Holy Ghost*.

[n] Vid. Pearson. Lect. i. in Act. Apost. Op. Posthum.

[o] See Luk. xxiv. 49. Acts i. 8. Mat. iii. 11. Acts i. 5.

[p] — in quem enim tingeret ? — in spiritum sanctum ? qui nondum a Patre descenderat in ecclesiam. *Tertullian de baptismo.*

[q] Acts xix. 2.

[r] ibid. ver. 3.



plying, that they must have heard, that there was a *Holy Ghost*, (viz. “poured forth “ in his extraordinary gifts,”) [s] if they had received *Christian* baptism: because in the very form of *this* baptism the gift of the *Holy Ghost* was recognized by the *naming* of Him. When therefore it is afterwards said of the same persons, “*that they were baptized in the “ name of the Lord Jesus;*” [t] the plain meaning is, that they received *Christ’s* baptism, as contradistinguished from *John’s* baptism, which they had received before [u]. But, it seems reasonable to suppose, that they were baptized according to the solemn form of baptism, prescribed by Our Saviour, and referred to in the Apostle’s question aforesaid; the same form of baptism, that *Justin Martyr* also describes in his account of the primitive worship [w]. However, ’tis very evident, that the baptism of the Spirit was actually received, before water-baptism really began in the Christian church: and therefore the former could not supersede the latter, as is pretended.—Besides, did not *St. Peter* expressly order and direct those very persons themselves to be baptized with water,

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who

[s] Vid. Dr. J. Owen. Theolog. lib. 6. cap. 6. Rees. answer to Walker, p. 104.

[t] Acts xix. 5.

[u] Of the difference betwixt John’s baptism, and the baptism of Christ, see Bp. Burnet on article 27.

[w] ἐπ’ ὀνόματος γὰρ τοῦ πατρὸς κ τ λ. J. Martyr. Apol. 2.

who had received the Holy Ghost already [x] ? Nay, did he not openly appeal to the common sense and reason of all men for the justness and propriety of the thing ? “ *Can any man* (says he [y],) *forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost, as well as we ?*” Thus then, the having received the *baptism of the Spirit*, was so far from being thought any objection against the use or application of *water-baptism*, that, on the contrary, it is urged as an unanswerable argument for it, particularly in the case of certain *gentiles*, and so (to obviate that pretence) not in compliance with any *Jewish* prejudices. Therefore, water-baptism was not superseded by the baptism of the Spirit, in the course and order of gospel ministrations. For, we see, the Apostle *Peter*, (who had the honour to receive the *keys of the kingdom of heaven* [z], or of the Gospel state of the church, that he might first *open the door of faith*, both to Jews and Gentiles) admitted some persons to baptism, who were already baptized with the Holy Ghost ; as upon a former occasion also he had directed others *to be baptized*, in order that they might *receive the Holy Ghost* [a]. All which things are so clear and convincing to men of candor and sense, that it is needless

[x] Act. x. 44. 48.

[y] *ibid.* ver. 47.[z] Mat. xvi. 19.  
Act. xiv. 27.

Confer. Luk. xi. 52. Mat. xxiii. 13.

[a] Act. ii. 38.

iefs to trouble the Reader with a particular confutation of the shallow and superficial reasons, with which Mr. *Barclay* vainly endeavours to support his groundless hypothesis.

This heresy of the *Antiwater-baptists* appears to be more antient, than the *Apologist* himself supposed. For, besides the persons, “ who (as he says [b]) testified against water-baptism in the darkeſt times of popery;” *Tertullian* mentions [c] one *Quintilla*, who declared againſt it in his time.—But, there is another hypothesis, of a much later date and ſtanding, ſet up by *Socinus*, and eſpouſed by ſome others, that ſeem fond of *novelties*. (though *novelties* in religion are the worſt kind of rarities, and ſeldom attended with the beſt conſequences.) Theſe men ſuppoſe, that Chriſt took the rite of baptiſm from the *Jews*, who are ſaid to have had a cuſtom of baptizing *Proſelytes*, with their children *already* born, at their admiſſion into the *Jewiſh* church, as being *unclean* Gentiles: but their children, born *afterwards*, were not baptiz'd; becauſe they were look'd upon as *holy*, like native *Jews* themſelves. Now, upon this ground it is concluded, that though Chriſt inſtituted baptiſm, as the rite of *initiation* into his church for all *Chriſtian* *Proſelytes* and their children at the beginning; yet he did not intend it for the uſe of their poſterity,

[b] Barclay. Apol. Prop. 12. Sect. 10. [c] De baptiſmo.

rity, as a standing ordinance.—To which it may be replied, (1) In relation to *Profelyte-baptism* among the Jews ; this is a point about which the learned are not agreed, at least as to the *antiquity* of it. Not only *Pædo-baptists*, but *Antipædo-baptists* differ amongst themselves, and are divided in their opinions upon this head [*d*]. It seems therefore improper and imprudent, to lay so much stress, as to build an hypothesis upon so uncertain a foundation. (2.) Granting, there was such a practice among the Jews ; it does not certainly follow, that Christ took the Rite of baptism from them. For, the Gentiles also had their *initiatory* Rites, and forms of *Lustration*, both for children and others [*e*]. And, as the Christian religion was framed and calculated for *all nations*, in it's original constitution and design ; It seems a more rational presumption, that he would adopt his institutions to the *rites* and usages of the bulk of mankind, than to suppose that he suited them to the customs of the one, small, and despised nation of the Jews alone. But (3.) suppose, Christ did take the rite of baptism from the Jews ; it follows not, that he exactly

[*d*] Mr. *Tombes*, a learned Antipædo-baptist, contended for it. Examen. p. 89. But others on the same side of the question have strongly opposed it. See Gale's Reflections, &c. Let. 9.

[*e*] Vid. Clem. Alexand. Strom. 5. Tertullian. de baptismo. Macrob Saturnal. lib. 1. cap. 16. Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. lib. 2. cap. 25.

actly conformed to their use of baptism in *all* points [*f*]. On the contrary, it is manifest, that he varied from it in one material circumstance, *viz.* by ordering *native Jews* themselves, as well as Gentiles, to be baptized at their admission into the Christian church [*g*]. Thus, Christ clearly took away the ground of that partial distinction, which the *Jews* made in their manner of administering baptism; as mentioned before. And is it rational to think, that what he discountenanced in *them*, he would make a pattern, or precedent to his own church in the administration of baptism? Were not the *Jews* formerly an *holy people*, and the true church of God, as well as the Christians are now, under a different dispensation? If then no prerogative of *birth*, or descent, exempted the *former* from Christian baptism; what ground can there be to plead such an exemption for the posterity of the latter; Christ having plainly fixed this ordinance upon such a footing as is common to persons of all pedigrees and descents, even all the children of *Adam*? (4.) Though the after-born children of *Jewish* proselytes were not baptized, they were circumcised after the manner of the *Jews*; conformably whereunto the children of Christian parents are to be baptized  
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[*f*] See Dr. Benson's Answer to Mr. Emlyn. Essay on the public worship of Christians, chap. 5. sect. 2 edit. 2d.

[*g*] See Wall's history of Infant-baptism, Introduction, Sect. 5.

ed through all generations. For, in the order of the divine œconomy, where the Jewish circumcision ended, Christian baptism began as the sacred rite of initiation into God's (*reformed*) [b] Church: but with this Difference in the *Subjects*, that baptism is of a larger extent in its use and application: For, "in Christ Jesus *there is neither male nor female* [i]." (5.) There is not the least intimation given, that baptism was only a *temporary* institution; nor is there any ground to suppose it from the *nature* and reason of the thing, since the *moral* ends of baptism still remain [k], no less than those of the *Lord's Supper*, which is acknowledged to be a standing ordinance in the church of Christ [l]. The pretence, that baptism was only a *temporary* institution, because the commission to baptize was given by Christ to his Apostles, at the first *discipling of the nations*, is without any foundation. For the same Commission had been given to them, who were to be employed in first planting the Christian church, even supposing that *baptizing* as well as *teaching*, was to be a standing ordinance. And indeed there is the same reason to pretend, that *teaching* also was a temporary institution; because it is included in the same commission

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[b] Heb. ix. 10.

[i] Gal. iii. 28.

[k] Vid. Limborch. Theolog. Christ. lib. 5. cap. 68. Sect. 5.

[l] 1 Cor. xi. 23.—26.

on [m]: But the Apostles, who received this commission, did not understand, that the full and final execution of it was confined to themselves. For, as in the close of it Christ promised to be with them *always, even to the end of the world* [n]; (a promise which could not be verified in their own persons abstractly) so, they provided for a succession of gospel-ministers, by fixing stated pastors in every church [o]. (6.) In the most *primitive* times none were admitted to the *Lord's Supper*, but those that were baptized [p]. But, surely, the descendents of Christians were admitted to the Lord's Supper, and consequently were baptized [q]. (7.) The *novelty* of this notion is no small prejudice against it in a just and reasonable account. For, so far as we can learn, it was never heard of in the Christian world before the time of *Socinus*, that is, above 1500 years after Christ, and appears to be a fond invention of his own. Whatever it was, that swayed him into this *new* opinion, and some others after him; whether it was a desire of abolishing the doctrine of the *Trinity*, as *Dr. Wall* guessed [r]: or, some dislike to the doctrine of *original Sin*, as others may suspect; we shall not take upon us to determine.

C

mine.

[m] Mat. xxviii. 19, 20.

[n] Ibid.

[o] Act. xiv. 23.

[p] Vid. J. Martyr, apol. 2.

[q] See Wall's Answer to Emlyn, Defence, &amp;c. p. 34. and Penfon, ubi supra.

[r] Hist. of Infant-baptism, Introduction, sect. 5.

mine. But this we presume to say, that for any persons to be prejudiced against the *continuance* of baptism on any such accounts is very absurd; whether baptism, which is acknowledged an institution of Christ, hath, or hath not, any real connexion with the said doctrines. For, in the latter case, they betray great weakness; and in the former, they convict themselves of heresy.—Upon the whole then, the *authority* of baptism, and consequently of *Infant-baptism* (supposing it was practised at the beginning, which these writers allow according to their own hypothesis) as a *perpetual* and standing rite in the Christian church, apparently rests upon a sufficiently firm and solid foundation.

## S E C T I O N II.

*No just objection against Infant-baptism from the nature of the thing, but the contrary.*

**B**Y the contemptuous *names* and *epithets*, which are sometimes given to Infant-baptism, (v. g. *baby-baptism*, *childish baptism*, *childish business*, &c.) it should seem that certain persons suppose, and would insinuate, that the thing is too *ridiculous*, and absurd *in itself* to have any place in a religious institution. But why *Infant-baptism* should be more unworthy of this honour than *Infant-circumcision*,



*cision*, we cannot imagine. And yet the latter must be allowed to be a divine ordinance [s]. Will they say, (as they have sometimes unadvisedly done [t], that *Infant-*  
 C 2 *church-*

[s] Gen. xvii. 10, &c. Aët. vii. 8. N. B. It does not appear, that God appointed circumcision in compliance with any such custom amongst the nations. 'Tis true; the Pagan writers pretend that the Jews derived it from the Egyptians. (Vid. Herodot. lib. 2. Diodor. Sicul. lib. 1. Strabo, lib. 17. Celsus, in Origen, lib. 1.) And this notion is so far favoured by some modern authors, as that they suppose Circumcision was practised in Egypt before it was used in Abraham's family. (Vid. Marsham, Canon. chronic. p. 72, 207. Edit Lips J Cleric. comment. in Gen. xvii. Bp. Cumberland Sanchoniatho, p. 150.) But other learned men think with more reason that Abraham was the first person in the world that was circumcised. (Vid. Euseb. de Præp. evangelic. lib. 7. cap. 8. G. J. Voss. Hist. idolat. lib. 1. cap. 30. Huet Quærit. Alnetan. lib. 1. cap. 12. sect. 17. Bp. Patrick's Comment. in Gen. xvii. 11, &c.) For, it is easy to conceive that the Egyptians themselves might derive circumcision from one branch or other of his family. (See Revelation examined with candour) Nor is it hard to guess from what branch it was so derived, if the Egyptians circumcised their children at 14 years of age, according to the testimony of St. Ambrose, (de Abrahamo, lib. 2.) alledged by sundry authors, and not controverted by any, so far as we have seen. (Vid. Marsham. can. chronic. p. 175, &c. Bochart op. vol. III. col. 1122. Spencer de legib. Hebr. p. 59 edit. fol.) For this was near the Age, that the posterity of Ismael circumcised their children. (Vid. Joseph. J. Antiq. lib. 1. Origen. Philocalia, cap. 23.) And as they settled upon the borders of Egypt, Gen. xxv. 18. this might give them an opportunity to introduce circumcision amongst the Egyptians, especially if they were the famous Shepherds that invaded them: Vid. Joseph. cont. Apion, lib. 1) and some took them for Arabians. This hint may be of some use in chronology. But the chief design of this note is to support the dignity of circumcision, as originally from heaven; which will excuse the length of it with every curious and candid reader.

[t] See Keach. answer to Owen, p. 84. Burroughs's two discourses relating to positive institutions, p. 42.

*church-membership*, and consequently Infant-baptism, is too *carnal* a thing, to suit the *spiritual* nature of the Christian church? Then, according to their principles, either the church of Christ upon earth is more spiritual, pure, and perfect, in its frame and constitution, than the church in heaven; or infants are no members of the latter!—Circumcision indeed left a *mark* in the flesh of an infant, which baptism does not; and good reason there is why it should not. For, “ as circumcision  
 “ was a *mark* in *the flesh*, it appears to have  
 “ been of a political nature, and designed as  
 “ a token to mark and distinguish the *Jews*  
 “ from all other nations. But under the  
 “ gospel such a national distinction is remov-  
 “ ed, and therefore it is neither necessary,  
 “ nor proper that there should be any lasting  
 “ mark in the flesh to distinguish a peculiar  
 “ people, when the gospel is to be preached  
 “ unto all nations, &c.” Accordingly, nei-  
 ther doth *Adult-baptism* leave any mark in the  
 flesh; and yet who will censure or revile it on  
 this account?—Besides, when the *Israelites*  
 grew up; that the mark of circumcision was  
 not *natural* but artificial, and applied as  
 a religious rite, how did they know? By the  
 information of others only, confirmed by  
 their own observation in seeing infants circum-  
 cised every day. Now, the same satisfaction  
 may any Christian-man have of his own bap-  
 tism,

tism, though administered in his infancy [v].— Moreover, is baptism a *significant* rite? So was circumcision [w]. And yet a Jewish infant knew no more of its signification, than any Christian infant understands of his baptism. —Further yet; is baptism a *profession* of the *Christian* religion, or a rite of *initiation* into it? So was circumcision a rite of initiation into the Jewish religion: and yet it was administered not only to the adult, but to infants by divine appointment. If baptism be, as some represent it, an *engaging* sign; there can be no absurdity in applying it to infants: for such a sign also was circumcision [x]. Therefore the baptism of infants, considered abstractly in itself, appears noways unworthy to have a place in a religious institution.—If it be said, the same thing may be urged in behalf of *Chrism*, &c. the answer is, that it is not fair to put these things upon a *level*; for the cases are not parallel. “ In the one “ case, only the *subject* is the matter in ques- “ tion; in the other the *very things* them- “ selves [y].” The use of baptism is allowed to be a divine appointment. And when it shall be proved that the use of *Chrism*, &c. also is appointed, *v. g.* for the adult, as the  
Anti-

[v] See Hollingworth, Catechist catechized, p. 43. Wills. Answer to Danverfe, chap. 3. p. 240.

[w] Rom. ii. 28, 29. iv. 11.

[x] Gal. v. 3 See Keach, ubi supra, p. 83, 85.

[y] See Pædo-baptism, p. 52, 53.

Anti-pædo-baptists acknowledge baptism to be; then, and not before, may they argue from the one to the other.

Thus far we have reasoned the case from the *nature* of the two religious rites, *circumcision* and *baptism*, compared together; without insisting at present, *that*, or enquiring *how*, the one succeeded in the room of the other. But, laying aside this comparison, let us now take a view of Christian-baptism by itself; and see whether there is any thing in its true and proper notion, which can render it unapplicable to infants. What then is baptism as to the *subject* but an ordinance of *dedication*? as Mr. *David Rees*, an eminent anti-pædo-baptist, acknowledges [z]. This notion of *Christian-baptism* (which is the matter under consideration) naturally arises from the manner of *St. Paul's* putting that question to the factious *Corinthians*, split into different parties [a] *Were ye baptized in the name of Paul?* The same notion is confirmed by his saying [b], *I thank God that I baptized none of you; but Crispus, and Gaius, lest any should say that I had baptized in my own name.* This he said, not in disparagement of baptism, but because they had accidentally made such an ill use of it; and some amongst them had set him up for the *head of a party*. Since therefore things had fallen out so perversely; *St. Paul* was

[z] Answer to Walker, &c. p. 226.

[a] 1 Cor. i. 12, 13.

[b] Ibid. ver. 15.

was very glad, and thankful, that he had given his enemies so little handle to accuse him of *making a party* to himself, and devoted to his own interest. This he calls *baptizing* in *his own name*. And thus his words plainly represent baptism, as an ordinance of dedication. This notion of Christian-baptism he suggests also upon another occasion [c]; when he speaks of Christ “ sanctifying his church “ by the *washing of water, &c.*” For, *sanctification* commonly signifies, in scripture, a *dedication*, or consecration of persons or things to a sacred use. Thus, v. g. the altar is said to *sanctify* the gift [d]: Because the gift, by being laid upon the altar, became a sacred oblation, and so was a thing *dedicated* to God. In like manner baptized persons are properly said to be sanctified by the water of baptism, in as much as they are *dedicated* to God by this sacred and solemn rite. Now, according to this notion of baptism, and considering it as an *ordinance of dedication* [e], there is nothing in the *nature* of the thing to render the baptism of infants an *unreasonable service*, much less ridiculous and absurd; if infants are capable of being dedicated to God, which, we presume, none will deny. And in truth, what is the proper meaning and import of that solemn

[c] Eph. v. 26.

[d] Mat. xxiii. 19.

[e] This notion of baptism is fixed on, as being not only *scriptural*, but applicable to all sorts of persons, whether the descendents of Christians, or new converts.

lemn *form* of baptism prescribed by Christ [*f*], (and practised in the primitive church, as was noted before) *viz.* “ Baptizing them in the “ name of the Father, and of the Son, and “ of the Holy Ghost?” What doth this mean or signify, according to St. *Paul*’s notion of being *baptized* in the name of any one? but a solemn *dedication* of the party baptized to the service of God, under that religious institution, which God the *Father* published to the world by Christ his *Son*, and which was divinely confirmed by the *Holy Ghost*. Therefore, as baptism is a sacred rite of *dedication*, and infants are capable of being dedicated to God, there is nothing in the nature of the thing to render it improper for infants; especially if Infant baptism hath an apt tendency to answer any valuable ends and purposes of religion.

It is taken for granted, that in the nature and reason of things there is just ground for distinguishing betwixt *positive* and *moral* duties. For, even those, that would resolve *all* moral obligation into the *will* of God, add this restriction, *as determined by his moral perfections* [*g*]. Thus, they suppose *moral perfections*, and moral properties, *distinct* from the will of God, *independent* on it; what determine it, and so are not determined by it. But

[*f*] Mat. xxviii. 19.

[*g*] See Dr. Gill’s reflections on Mr. S. Chandler’s Reformation Sermon.

But then, as all divine institutions are the appointments of divine wisdom; it is most rational to think, that they are well chosen, and wisely calculated, to answer some excellent and useful ends. Therefore Christian-baptism itself, though a *positive* rite, must be supposed to have its *moral* ends and uses. Let us then modestly enquire whether baptism, as applied to infants, hath not an apparent fitness, aptitude and tendency to serve some worthy purposes of religion. Now, that it *hath* so, seems very easy to conceive in the following views, without indulging an extravagant fancy.

(1.) With respect to *God* himself; as an aptly expressive *sign* and *token*, not only of his *claim*, but of his *favour* to infants. And considering the human race, as related to a *first*, and a *second Adam*, according to *St. Paul's* account [*b*], which we cannot but prefer to any modern hypotheses; such a token and signification of the divine regards to poor infants, and of their concern with a Redeemer, appears very worthy the *Father of mercies*, who hath made the most *ample* discoveries of his love and grace to the children of men under the Christian dispensation.

(2.) With relation to *Christian parents*. Doth it not minister great comfort to them, when they see so much *notice* taken of their dear infants, living or dying, in a dispensa-

D

tion

[*b*] Rom. v. 12—19. 1 Cor. xv. 21; 22.

tion of mercy to a lapsed world? Besides, by *consenting* to their children's baptism, and *concurring* in it, they make that solemn profession of Christianity, and lay themselves under those voluntary engagements, which have a happy tendency to impress their own souls with a more lively sense of religion, and thereby excite them to act a part worthy of the Christian name and character, particularly towards their children.

(3.) In reference to their *children*, who may be benefited by their baptism. That Christ hath a  *blessing* for infants, we may assuredly conclude from his *taking them up in his arms, and blessing them*, upon a certain occasion [*i*]. And if it is rational to recommend infants to God by prayer; why is it improper, in the nature of the thing, to dedicate them to God by baptism? And why may not a divine blessing be as likely to attend the one action, as the other; though the infants themselves are equally *ignorant* of both; and can no more join in the pious recommendation, than concur in the baptismal dedication? Besides, the part, which the parents are supposed to act in this affair, hath a tendency to secure their best *affections* and regards to their children, strongly prompting them to *bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*. For after such a solemn transaction, they must look upon the young creatures,

[*i*] Mark x. 13, 16. Luke xviii. 15.



tures, as *devoted* things, as *consecrated* things, whom they themselves, by desiring their baptism, have given up to God. And therefore, (not to mention here the particular engagements which the *sponsors* enter into upon the occasion,) they can no more neglect the religious education of their children, than a person could alienate a sacred oblation from God, without being guilty of sacrilege.—To which add, as children grow up, the frequent *seeing* of other Infants baptized, hath an apt tendency to affect their tender minds, in the reflection, with the solemnity of their own baptismal dedication to God, and so inspire them with an early sense of religion, and a proper concern to act suitably to the divine destination in casting their lot under the sacred ministrations of the Gospel.

(4.) With regard to the *honour* and credit of *christianity*. It is the glory of the Gospel, that it is a full and final revelation of the grace of God. If then the grace of God at all extends to Infants; it seems very congruous and agreeable to the nature and genius of this salutary dispensation, that there should be some appointed *sign* and token of it in the christian church. And what so proper as baptism? Besides, as other religions had their sacred rites for Infants; would not the christian religion, without some thing of that kind, have appeared in

the eyes of the world an *imperfect* institution? Nay, would not christianity have been thought an *unnatural* religion, if it had caused so great a separation betwixt parents and children, as only to admit the former *into*, and excommunicate the latter *from*, the visible church of God? “ Nature, (says “ Mr. *Baxter* [k]) hath actually taught most “ people on earth, so far as I can learn, to “ repute their Infants in the same *religious* “ society with themselves, as well as in the “ same *civil* society.”—There is one *circum-*  
*stance* which may deserve some little notice, *viz.* That as the Jews *named* their children at the time of their *circumcision* [l]; so the Heathens gave names to their children at the time of their *lustration* [m]; in like manner as it is usual with christians to mention the names of their children at the time of *baptism*. This conformity of customs is somewhat remarkable, and seems to have a language, that speaks in favour of the com-  
 mon

[k] More proofs of Infants church-membership, &c. P. 112.

[l] See Luk. i. 59,—63. ii. 21.

[m] Est autem dies *lustricus*, quo infantes lustrantur, et *nomen accipiunt*. Macrob. Saturnal, lib. i. cap. 16. Marius qui nono die postquam in lucem editi fuissent, feminis vero octavo, *nomina imponerent*, nonnunquam septimo, qui dies *lustricus* nomen habet.—Ab *Atheniensibus* vero, et omni ferè *Græcia*, decimo a natali die *infanti nomen imponere* servatum est. *Alex ab. Alex. Genial. Dier. lib. 2. cap. 25.* In primo infantum baptisate imponitur nomen. *Hyde. Relig. Vet. Persarum. Cap. 28. Confer. cap. 34.*

mon practice in baptizing Infants, as a thing agreeable to the common notions and apprehensions of mankind; since there is such a general agreement in a circumstance so minute.

Upon the whole then it is manifest, that no reasonable objection lieth against Infant-baptism from the *nature* of *the thing* itself; but the contrary. For, it plainly is such a Rite as *Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans*, even all the world, would naturally approve, as a proper religious ceremony.

### S E C T I O N III.

*The Objection from want of an Example considered.*

**T**HIS is one popular plea of the Antipædo-baptists, *viz.* “ That there is “ no *instance, or example*, in Scripture, of “ baptizing Infants; but frequent mention “ is made of baptizing Believers, or the “ Adult.” To which the answer is as follows.

(1.) *Believers*, or Adult persons were of course to be baptized at the first administration of baptism, as a rite of the *christian* church; supposing, that Infants also were to be, and actually were admitted to baptism. For, as circumcision was introduced into *Abraham's* family upon the ground of his

his *faith* [n]: so christian-baptism could not be regularly introduced into any families without being first administered to their believing heads and governors; at the time of the first institution and administration of these different rites respectively. Therefore how numerous soever the *examples* of Believers, or Adult-baptism, are in the history of the *first* planting of the christian church, when christian-baptism was a *new* thing; this is no disproof at all of Infant-baptism in those days, (though it may look very plausible in the eyes of the vulgar, and is apt enough to impose upon their weak understandings from a partial view of things, and not attending to all the circumstances of the case). For, those examples of Adult-baptism had been as numerous, as they are, for the reason aforesaid, even upon the supposition, that Infants also were baptized at that time; and so can be no proof of the contrary. And though some people would lay so much stress upon that circumstance, as if it was little less than demonstration; it should be considered, that not *one* of all those instances relates to persons, whose parents were *christians*, or members of the christian church, at the time of their birth. Consequently their being baptized at Adult-age is no argument, that the Infants of baptized christians were not baptized themselves. But  
of

[n] See Pædo-baptism, p. 1.

of all the examples of Adult-baptism recorded in the New Testament, none is commonly produced with greater pomp, nor yet any one urged with more impertinency, than that of the *Eunuch* [c]. As if the baptizing not only of a *new*, but a *childless* convert, an Eunuch, was any proof that the Infants of christian converts and believers were not baptized in those days!

(2.) The Scripture speaks of *whole households* being baptized together [p]. Therefore the children, Infants and others, were baptized along with the rest, if any such were in those families; and the contrary cannot be proved. But, we are told by a dignified writer [q], “ They ought not to put it upon us to prove the *negative*, to prove that there were none, this is unfair.” Well, we will then be so fair, as only to put it upon them to prove, if they can, this *affirmative*, viz. That all the members of those baptized households were Adult - persons. And *this* we may demand, without any unfairness, from them, who lay the whole stress of their argument upon it; and therefore ought not to take the thing for granted without proof; such *plain* proof, as they are wont to insist upon themselves. In these baptized households it is *possible*, there might be

[c] Act. viii. 27—39.

[p] Act. xvi. 15, 34. xviii. 8, &c.

[q] Dr. Gill. Divine Right of Infant-baptism examined, &c. p. 83.

be *some* Infants, or young children; and therefore no man can be certain of the contrary. Nay, more; it seems highly *probable*, as to some of these families; as well as in the families of the *Shechemites*, when all their *males* were circumcised [r], and consequently their male-Infants; although Infants are expressly named in neither case. For it is observable, that in some of the instances referred to, the whole house is said to *believe* [s]. But in others, nothing is said, or hinted, that the whole house believed, but that the head of the family *believing*, they were *all baptized* [t]. This distinction deserves some attention in an argument, formed upon plain scripture language. For, as it is very supposable, that there might be young children and *minors* in some families, and none but *grown* persons in others; so, if there was not this difference in those baptized households; let them, that say so, account for the different manner of expression, used by the sacred Historian in speaking of them. Will they affirm, that *all* the members, *e. g.* of *Lydia's* family were Adult-*persons*, and believers; though the history is *silent* about it? Let them judge then of the force of their own argument from the *silence* of Scripture concerning the baptism  
of

[r] Gen. xxxiv. 22—24.

[s] Act. xvi. 34. xviii. 8.

[t] Act. xvi. 15.

of Infants, particularly in the instances under consideration. Have not we as much right to assert *this* fact, as they can have to maintain the other, without any *express* mention of it in Scripture [v]? But, it is urged [w], “As for *Lydia*, it is not certain, “in what state of life she was, &c.” Now, if so, (to join issue here) then she might be a *wife*, or a *widow*, and she might have *children*, yea *little children*. Nor is it rational to think, that she would have *kept house*, as she did, at *Philippi* [x], where she had her family with her [y]; and leave her children at *Thyatira*, from whence she came; but not as a travelling pedlar to sell her purple at the fair, which is all fiction; for, could she not be a *seller of purple*, and yet a *shop-keeper*, as she plainly was an *house-keeper*? It is said indeed, that she was a *woman of Thyatira*. But, to argue and conclude from hence, “that *this* city, and not *Philippi*, “was now the place of her usual residence, “and staid abode;” This way of reasoning, which many have used [z], is *false criticism*. For, persons are said in *Scripture* to be of *such*, or *such* a place, to denote the place where they were *born*, or *brought up*,

[v] See Walker's modest Plea, &c. ch. 30. §. 27.

[w] Dr. Gill. ubi supra.

[x] Act. xvi. 15.

[y] Ibid.

[z] See Keach, answer to Burkit, p. 125. Stennet, answer to Ruffen, p. 31. Rees, answer to Walker, p. 35, &c.

the place from whence they came, and to which they originally belonged; though they had removed their habitation from thence, and settled in some other town or country. Thus *e. g.* *Mnason*, an old Disciple, is said to be of *Cyprus*; and yet he lived, and kept house at *Jerusalem* [a]. And thus again (to mention a most illustrious instance) our blessed Saviour himself is commonly called *Jesus of Nazareth*; (the very inscription upon his cross [b]!) though, leaving *Nazareth*, where he had been brought up [c], he came and dwelt at *Capernaum* [d]. Therefore, laying all circumstances together, there is not the least ground to conclude any other, but that *Philippi* was the place of her settled habitation, at the time of *Lydia's* embracing the Christian faith in that city; in consequence of which not only she herself, but her household also was *baptized*, though not a syllable is said of her household *believing*. As she is called a *worshipper of God* [e], she appears to have been a *devout Gentile*; and, knowing it to be the custom of the Jewish church to receive Profelytes together with their children, this easily accounts for it, that she desired her household might be baptized with herself, and had her desire granted. After all, though we insist upon

[a] Act. xxi. 16. Vid. Knatchbull. in loc.

[b] Joh. xix. 19.

[c] Luk. iv. 16.

[d] Mat. iv. 13.

[e] Act. xvi. 14.



upon it, that there is no evidence, and justly demand a proof, that *all* the members of her family were Adult-persons, or believers; yet, that there were *none* such besides herself, we neither presume to say, nor are obliged by our argument to maintain.

(3.) There are some texts of Scripture, that seem to prove, directly or consequential-ly, that Infants were baptized in the Apostles days. St. *Paul* was blamed for “teaching “ the *Jews*, which were among the *Gentiles*, “ that they ought not to *circumcise* their chil- “ dren” [f]. And would he not have been blamed still more, if he had not ordered their children to be *baptized*, but left them entire-ly destitute of any thing to supply the room of circumcision? As “circumcision ceased to “ be an ordinance of God *at* the death of “ Christ,” according to Mr. *Rees* [g]; So, *Christian* baptism (that is, baptism as admi-nistered in the Christian church, which com-menced *after* the death of Christ) succeeded the *Jewish* circumcision in the order of the divine oeconomy. And it is matter of special observation, that *one* main ground of St. *Paul*’s opposing the *continuance* of circumcision was the *sufficiency* of baptism without it. For, speaking of Christ, he tells the *Colossians* [h], “ *And ye are complete in him, which is the “ head of all principality and power. In*  
E 2
“ whom

[f] Act. xxi. 21. [g] Answer to Walker, p. 70.

[h] Coloss. ii. 10,—12.

“ whom also ye are circumcised with the cir-  
 “ cumcision made without hands, in putting off  
 “ the body of the sins of the flesh by the circum-  
 “ cision of Christ: Buried with him in bap-  
 “ tism, &c.” In these words, *He is the*  
*head of all principality and power*, there is a  
 plain allusion, or at least an apt corresponden-  
 cy to that declaration of Christ, which he  
 made at the very time, when he instituted the  
 ordinance of Christian-baptism [i]: “ *All pow-*  
 “ *er is given unto me in heaven, and in earth.*”  
 And thus, the Apostle’s discourse implies, that  
 since Christ by the fulness of his authority did  
 not appoint *circumcision*, but *baptism* to be used  
 in his church; therefore, by having the *lat-*  
*ter* Christians were *complete*, without the *for-*  
*mer*. It is plain then, that St. Paul opposed  
 the continuance of circumcision upon *this*  
 ground and foundation, *viz.* That baptism  
 was *sufficient* without it, as was hinted before;  
 and so rendered it unnecessary for the disciples  
 of Christ to be *circumcised after the manner*  
*of Moses* [k]. Therefore those, whom St.  
 Paul was not for having *circumcised*, were  
*baptized*. But, it is said, he was not for hav-  
 ing the *children* of the convert *Jews* among  
 the *Gentiles* circumcised: Therefore such  
 children (and by parity of reason others also)  
 were baptized; and baptized in their *infancy*:  
 Otherwise, they had nothing to supply the  
 want of circumcision, nothing to render it  
 superfluous

[i] Mat. xxviii. 18.

[k] Acts xv. 1.

superfluous to them, or to make *them complete* without it, according to his own argument. —Again. In order to persuade *Christian* men and women to cohabit with their *unbelieving* husbands and wives, the Apostle makes use of this argument [l]; “ *For, the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean, but now are they holy.*” “ An invincible argument (says a worthy man [m], for *Pædo-baptism.*” And such probably it would appear *upon sight* to any one, that viewed it with an unprejudiced eye. For, what can be more natural, than the learned *Knatchbull's* account of this passage? “ *Else, unless one of the parents were a believer, your children were unclean, that is, remain heathen, as the children of that parent, that was κλήτος ἅγιος, called a saint, or reputed a believer, were reputed saints, and holy also, and consequently admitted to the participation of baptism, as the son of a profelyte was capable of circumcision, &c. [n].*” Thus, their children were *holy* not merely in a *civil*, but in an *ecclesiastical* sense; and if by this *term* the Apostle had meant the same with *legitimate*, he might have used a more proper word to express

[l] 1 Cor. vii. 14.

[m] Increase Mather. Discourse concerning the subject of baptism. p. 18.

[n] Sir N. Knatchbull in loc. confer. Dr. Hammond. Quære 4. sec. 31 — 37.

press that Idea [o]. Indeed by understanding this holiness of believers children to denote their *legitimacy*, the *Antipædo-baptists* involve themselves in inextricable difficulties; as sundry writers have shewed [p]. As for that *Rabbinical* phrase of a *woman's sanctifying herself to a man*, to signify her *becoming his wife* [q]; this is not parallel to the Apostle's expression, when he speaks of an unbeliever being sanctified *by* (or *in*) the believer. For, he plainly intends such a sanctification, as doth not result from the relation betwixt husband and wife *as such*; but only as the *one* is a believer, and so the *instrument* of sanctifying the other, to the end of producing an *holy seed*. Besides, if the word, *sanctified*, here signifies the being *espoused* or *married*; St. Paul told them nothing, but what they knew before. For, this is the very case supposed in calling them *husband* and *wife*; and so they could have no doubt about it, nor therefore could they question the *legitimacy* of their issue. On the other hand, if they were satisfied of the *legitimacy* of their children (as the *form* of the Apostle's argument would imply, according to this construction of his words) how could they doubt, or want to be resolved about (the *civil*) lawfulness of their own marriage or cohabitation? In short; if

[o] See Whitby in loc.

[p] See Marshall's Answer to Tombes, p. 145, &c. Blake's ditto. chap. 7. Wills. Answer to Danverie, P. 2. 162, &c. Dr. Featley's Dippers dipped, p. 36, 57.

[q] See Dr. Gill. comment. in loc.

if the marriage-union, whereby *twain became one flesh*, be supposed the *remote* ground of this *sanctification*, the Apostle speaks of; yet the *proximate* cause, and the formal reason of it manifestly is, *one* of the parties being a *christian believer*. For, if *lawful wedlock* were all that is intended by it; the *believer* might as well have been said to be sanctified *by the unbeliever*, as *vice versa*; as hath been often alledged, but to no purpose, for the conviction of those good men, who having once imbibed a false notion of the *novelty* of Infant-baptism, think themselves obliged (as they certainly are, so long as that *is* their notion) to strain any text to any sense, and to *embrace* any interpretation, however forced and unnatural, rather than admit such a construction, as militates with their own preconceived opinion. But to us, who labour under no such *prejudice*, and can with an unbiaſſed mind attend to the current sense, and the native force of scripture-language, the words of St. *Paul* before us appear to imply the *church-membership*, and consequently the *baptism* of believers children so strongly, as that we are entirely satisfied with *this* proof of the *fact*, without further enquiry [r].

## (4.) The

[r] By the *holiness* of believer's children some think the Apostle meant their *baptism* itself. *Tertullian* glossing upon his words understands, a holiness by the *prerogative* of birth, and by the *discipline* of institution. He represents the children  
of

(4.) The most sanguine opposers of Infant-baptism are called upon to produce an *example* from *Scripture* of their *own* practice in waving the baptism of *believers children*, 'till they are of age; or a single instance of any such children being baptized at riper years upon a personal profession of their own faith. If they can produce such an example; why have they never yet done it? And if they cannot; then they must be obliged either to grant themselves, that the children of believers were not baptized at all, and so yield the point to the *Socinians*, or take it for granted that they were baptized some time, though the *Scripture* is *silent* about it. Now, if they suppose the *silence of scripture* to be no disproof of their *own* way; with what consistency can they argue from the silence of *Scripture* against *our* way? And with what prudence can they insist upon an argument, which, if it had a better foundation than it really hath, may be so easily retorted upon them? Possibly, some  
 injudicious

of *believers* as *candidates for holiness by birth*; and made *holy by baptism*, as he explains himself afterwards, saying, "He (viz. *St. Paul*) remembered our Lord's definition, *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of God*; that is, he shall not be *holy*." This baptismal holiness plainly is what he refers to by the *discipline of institution*, which he opposes to the *superstitious rites* used about the children of *heathens*; in like manner as he makes the children of *believers* *candidates for holiness by birth*, by way of contrast to the children of *Infidels*, whom he titles *candidates of demons*, to which they were early dedicated, lib. de animâ, cap. 39.

injudicious people may imagine, that the adult-  
 persons, baptized by the Apostles, were *denied*  
 baptism in their infancy; otherwise they  
 had been baptized before. But, they widely  
 mistake the cases: for, in the *infancy* of those  
 persons, their parents were not *Christians*, that  
 is, members of the *Christian church*; but *Jews*  
 or *beathens*. The *Christian church* was not  
*then* in being, nor consequently was baptism,  
 as a *Christian ordinance*, administered at that  
 time.—Here, by the way, one may justly  
 wonder what a certain *anonymous* writer (for  
*some* such have appeared on the other side of  
 the question, it is likely without *being ashamed*  
*of their name or cause*) had in his head, when  
 he asked that wise question; “ If any might  
 “ be baptized in infancy, why not *Christ* him-  
 “ self, whose example was to be a pattern to  
 “ his followers, even to the end of the  
 “ world [s]?” Alas! when *Christ* was born,  
*John Baptist*, his immediate forerunner, and  
 the person appointed to administer baptism to  
 the *Jews* (not to *Christians*) was himself but  
*six months* old [t]. How then could *Christ*,  
 according to that dispensation, have been bap-  
 tized in his infancy; unless an infant was to  
 be his baptizer? But it is certain, that (as he  
 was baptized *without a confession*, so) he was  
*circumcised* in his infancy [v]; and in this  
 F . view,

[s] Plain account of the sacred ordinance of baptism, p. 52.  
 confer. Keach Answer to Owen, p. 232.

[t] Luke i. 36.

[v] Luke ii, 21.

view, *mutatis mutandis*; his example may be considered as a pattern to his followers. Besides, *John's* baptism was only *preparatory*, not *initiatory*: for, if Christ himself “ did “ not set up in his own days on earth a visible church, discipline, and worship distinct from the *Jewish*,” as *Mr. Tombes* confesseth [w]; much less did *John* enter persons into any *new church-relation*. And tho’ “ he was the greatest of prophets; yet he, “ that is the least in the kingdom of heaven “ is greater than he [x].” Therefore, if it should be allowed that *John* baptized none but adult persons; this is nothing to the present purpose, nor any way affects our argument; especially, when the opposers of Infant-baptism reason in such a manner from his administration, as would equally exclude infants from *baptism* and *salvation*. An absurdity, that sticks so close to their hypothesis, as that they can scarce avoid falling into it almost upon all occasions [y].—But to proceed. It is said of the *Samaritans* [z], “ 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.”<sup>1</sup> Now, as *this* was the *first planting* of the Christian church in *Samaria*, that *believers*, both *men* and *women*, were  
baptized,

[w] Examen. p. 88.

[x] Mat. xi. 11.

[y] See Dr. Gill's comment, in Mat. iii. 9.

[z] Act. viii. 12.



baptized, was a thing of course, and what must have happened, even supposing that their children also were baptized. But therefore neither *this*, nor any other instance of the like nature, can be any disproof of Infant-baptism; as is commonly pretended by its opposers. For, as these men and women were not born of *Christian* parents themselves; so, nothing at all being said of their children, whether they were, or were not then, or ever after baptized; no conclusion can be drawn from the history to prove the *negative*; because, it says not, that *none* but men and women, or that men and women *only*, were baptized. Besides, these terms, *men* and *women*, may chiefly denote here *males*, and *females*, without respect of age [*a*]. “ And “ there was a more special reason for men- “ tioning the baptism of *females*, than of “ *children*, as *circumcision* had been limited “ to the *males* under the former dispensati- “ on [*b*].” In short; neither *this*, nor any other passage of Scripture, exhibits any *instance* or *example* of the practice followed by those, who deny baptism to believers children ’till they are of age, and capable to make a profession of their faith. Thus, their own objection returns home upon themselves.

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S E C-

[*a*] Vid. Levit. xiii. 29—38. Num. v. 2, 3.

[*b*] See Blake. answer to Blackwood, p. 28. Huffey. answer to Tombes, p. 5.

## SECTION IV.

*The Objection from the want of a Command considered.*

**I**T is further objected against Infant-baptism that, There is no command for it in *Scripture*. Now, to this it is replied,

(1.) There was no *occasion* for a particular and express command to baptize Infants, even supposing, that *they* also, as well as others, were to be baptized; but a *general* command to baptize was a sufficient rule of direction, to introduce and authorise this practice. For, the Apostles of Christ, to whom the great commission of *discipling*, or profelyting, all nations by baptizing them, &c. was immediately given, were members of the Jewish church and nation, and so must have been well acquainted with the Jewish *rites* and customs. Now (not to insist upon what many learned men have said of a custom among the Jews to *baptize* the children of *Gentile* profelytes together with their parents) it is certain that the profelytes, of *righteousness*, and their children were *circumcised* after the manner of the *Jews* [c]; a custom, which the *judaizing* christians were for maintaining in the christian church [d]. This matter, perhaps, is not considered with

[c] Vid. Corn. Tacit. hist. lib. 5. [d] Act. xv. 1.

with proper attention. Those that would *distinguish* away the right and title of believers children to the *Abrahamic*, or Gospel-covenant [e], both *sign* and *thing*, alledge, that they are in no sense the seed of *Abraham*; not his *natural* seed; because not lineally descended from him: nor his *spiritual* seed; because they want *faith*, though their believing parents, like *Abraham*, have it. But, in what *class*, will they rank the *Jewish* profelytes? if in either, doubtless, in that of his *spiritual* seed; to whom therefore the spiritual part of the covenant belonged. And yet circumcision was applied to the *children* of those believers, as well as to themselves. And thus, the Apostles had a plain rule of direction to proceed by in administering baptism to *christian* profelytes and their children, when *this* ordinance, as the rite of initiation, came in the room of circumcision. For, had Christ commanded his Apostles to go and *profelyte* all nations by *circumcising* them, &c. What could they have understood by such a command, without any other explication; but that parents and their children were both a like to be received into the christian church by circumcision, according to the usage of the Jewish church? In like manner, when *circumcision* was laid aside, and that *wall of partition* removed [f], as the very order to  
disciple

[e] See Gal. iii. 17.

[f] Eph. ii. 14, 15.

*disciple all nations* [g] implied ; when, upon the abolition of this initiatory rite, *baptism* was appointed as the rite of initiation in the christian church ; the Apostles would naturally, and even necessarily conclude, that parents and their children were to be equally received into the christian church by baptism ; especially having been told before with respect to *Infants* themselves, that *of such is the kingdom of heaven* [b]. Therefore, a *general* command to baptize, which is not denied, was sufficient to direct, and authorise the practice of baptizing *Infants*. Consequently, there was no occasion for a particular and express command to baptize *them*, even supposing that *Infants*, as well as others, were to be baptized. So that the want of such a command is weakly urged as an objection against *Infant-baptism* : especially, if it be considered on the other hand ;

(2.) There was a real necessity for a *plain*, and *express prohibition* of *Infant-baptism*, at the repeal of *Infant-circumcision*, if *Infants* were not to be baptized : but no such *prohibition* appears, nor can be produced. This is a matter of the utmost consequence in the present debate ; and, as our writers think, is the very *hinge*, on which the controversy turns.

[g] Mat. xxviii. 19.

[b] Mat. xix. 14. Luk. xviii. 15, 16. “ —The literal meaning of *these words* is, that little children may be admitted into the dispensation of the Messiah, and by consequence may be baptized.” Bp. Burnet, on Artic. 27.

turns. For why? Children, infants and others, had been admitted to the *initiatory* rite before, at the reception of profelytes into the church of God under the *Jewish* dispensation; as hath been already observed. If then, at the *time of reformation* [i] under the Gospel, when the church of God was new-modelled, so great an alteration was intended in it's constitution, as that Infants should be wholly *excommunicated*, like *aliens* and *strangers*, without any sacrament or *sign* of salvation; had *this* been the case, there was a plain necessity for a positive and express *prohibition* of their baptism. But, we say it again, no such prohibition can be found. Here the Scripture is profoundly silent, where one might rationally have expected it to speak clearly out; if Infant-baptism had not been agreeable to the mind of *Christ*, and as suitable to the nature of the Christian-institution, as Infant-circumcision was to the Jewish dispensation! Says the great *Stillingfleet* [k], “ It is an evidence, “ that Infants are not to be excluded from “ baptism, because there is no divine law, “ which doth *prohibit* their admission into “ the church by it; for, this is the *negative* “ of a law; and if it had been *Christ's* intention to have excluded *any* from admission into the church, who were ad-  
“ mitted

[i] Heb. ix. 10.

[k] Irenicum, p. 7, 8. Edit. 2d.

"mitted before, as *Infants* were, there must  
 "have been some *positive* law, whereby  
 "such an intention of Christ should have  
 "been expressed: For, nothing can make  
 "that unlawful, which was a duty before,  
 "but a direct and express *prohibition* from  
 "the legislator himself, who alone hath  
 "power to rescind, as well as to make  
 "laws. And therefore Antipedo-baptists  
 "must, instead of requiring a positive com-  
 "mand for baptizing Infants, themselves  
 "produce an *express prohibition* excluding  
 "them, &c. [1]" To all which add; when  
 Christ, upon a certain occasion, spake so  
 favourably of Infants, and children *in arms*,  
 as to declare publickly, that *of such is the*  
*kingdom of God* [m]; it had been highly pro-  
 per, in order to prevent any mistake upon  
 this head, to *forbid* the baptism of Infants,  
 if Infants were not to have been baptized in  
 his church. Therefore, the remark, which  
 hath been made upon *that* case by some  
 noted writers on the other side [n], may  
 be strongly retorted *thus*; "Christ's intire-  
 "silence about the *exclusion* of Infants from  
 "baptism at this time, when he had such  
 "an opportunity of speaking of it to his  
 "disciples,

[1] See this point well argued by Mr. Baxter. Plain Scripture-proof of Infants church-membership, &c. P. 1. ch. 5, &c.

[m] Mark x. Luk. xviii. ubi supra.

[n] Dr. Gill. Comment in Mat. xix. 14. Rees, answer to Walker, p. 86.

“ disciples, had it been his will, hath no  
 “ favourable aspect on such a practice.”  
 But, if the *silence* of Christ upon that oc-  
 casion discountenances such a practice ; how  
 much more his *speech*? when he said, “ *Suf-*  
 “ *fer little children to come unto me [o], and*  
 “ *forbid them not : for of such is the kingdom*  
 “ *of heaven :*” ‘ that kingdom, which *q. d.*  
 ‘ you are all expecting under the *Messiah*,  
 ‘ pursuant to the antient prophecies [*p*], and  
 ‘ into which kingdom baptism is to be the  
 ‘ solemn rite of admission [*q*].’

(3.) After all ; we seem to have a plain  
*command* for baptizing *children*, without any  
 limitation of *age*. And this command oc-  
 curs, where one might naturally expect it,  
*viz.* at the *first opening* of the *Christian* dis-  
 pensation on the day of Pentecost by St.  
*Peter* ; who upon that great and solemn oc-  
 casion delivered, in the audience of a vast  
 assembly, the following words, amongst  
 others [*r*]. “ Repent, and be baptized, *every*  
 “ *one of you*, in the name of *Jesus Christ*, for  
 “ the remission of Sins, and ye shall receive  
 “ 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 is observable

[o] Ἐλθεῖν πρὸς με, i. e. is to be *profelyted* to me. See  
 Joh. iii. 26. And Walker’s modest plea, p. 13,---15.

[p] Daniel ii. 44. vii. 13, 14, &c.

[q] Joh. iii. 3, 5.

[r] Act. ii. 38, 39.

“ (says a learned, and judicious friend) that  
 “ when God made his covenant, or grant of  
 “ blessings, with *Abraham*,<sup>[s]</sup> he made him,  
 “ with respect to that covenant, the *father*  
 “ *of many nations* [s], even of us, and of as  
 “ many among the nations, who should be-  
 “ lieve in Christ, who were to be justified,  
 “ or interested in the blessings of the cove-  
 “ nant; in the same manner as *Abraham*  
 “ was, namely by faith. Thus, the bles-  
 “ sing of *Abraham* came on us Gentiles  
 “ through *Jesus Christ* [t], in whom that  
 “ Covenant, or Deed of gift was establish-  
 “ ed, when made with *Abraham* [v]. And  
 “ it is certain from St. *Paul*'s reasoning in  
 “ the *third* chapter to the *Galatians*, that the  
 “ Gospel-covenant, which our Lord came  
 “ into the world to publish and explain in  
 “ it's extensive grace, was no other than  
 “ the Covenant with *Abraham*, which was  
 “ originally established in Christ. Therefore  
 “ our Lord, when he gave his full and final  
 “ commission to his Apostles [w], Go ye  
 “ and teach, or *disciple*, all nations, bap-  
 “ tizing them, &c. plainly commands them  
 “ to publish the *Abrahamic* Covenant, which  
 “ alone included *all nations*, and to baptize  
 “ according to the tenor, rule and constitu-  
 “ tion of *that*, which expressly takes in  
 “ *Abraham*

[s] Gen. xvii. 4. Rom. iv. 16, 17.

[t] Gal. iii. 14. [v] Ibid. ver. 17.

[w] Mat. xxviii. 19,



“ *Abraham* and his children in the line of  
 “ election; or which descended from him  
 “ by his son *Isaac*, or under the Gospel be-  
 “ came his children by faith in Christ [x].  
 “ And that our Lord intended baptism  
 “ should be administered according to this  
 “ particular constitution of the Covenant,  
 “ *I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after*  
 “ *thee*, (which certainly included the chil-  
 “ dren of those who should be taken into the  
 “ Covenant,) appears from what the *Holy*  
 “ *Ghost* in *St. Peter* saith, at the admini-  
 “ stration of the ordinance to the *first* chri-  
 “ stian converts [y]. *Repent, and be baptized*  
 “ *every one of you, &c. 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.*” How narrow and im-  
 “ perfect soever *St. Peter’s* notions might be  
 “ (at present) concerning the calling of the  
 “ Gentiles, or nations, it is certain, that  
 “ according to the sense of the Spirit, who  
 “ spake by him, by those *that are afar off*,  
 “ is meant the *nations* or *Gentiles*, whom  
 “ God should call into his church or king-  
 “ dom under the *Messiah*. Therefore the  
 “ *promise*, both here, and in *Joel* referred  
 “ to by *St. Peter* [z], is plainly by this cha-  
 “ racter ascertained to be the *Abrahamic*  
 “ covenant, or promise, and the Apostle in  
 G 2 “ the

[x] Gal. iii. 29.

[y] Act. ii. 38, 39.

[z] Joel. ii. 28,—32. Act. ii. 16, &amp;c.

“ the Spirit, with the greatest justness and  
 “ propriety, exhorts every one of *them*, even  
 “ *them and their children*, to be baptized, ac-  
 “ cording to the constitution of that promise  
 “ or covenant. And thus it appears, that  
 “ our Lord did commission his disciples,  
 “ both to preach and baptize according to  
 “ the constitution of the *Abrahamic* cove-  
 “ nant; because at the first solemn open-  
 “ ing of the church of God to the first  
 “ *Christian* converts, the *Holy Ghost* did di-  
 “ rect them *so* to preach, and *so* to bap-  
 “ tize.”

Now, if we view the matter in this light; one may clearly discern the meaning and connexion of St. *Peter's* words, when he saith, “ *Ye shall receive the Holy Ghost: For the promise is unto you, and to your children, &c.*” For, the gift of the *Holy Ghost* was a seal of their *adoption* into God's church and family under the christian dispensation [a], and so a plain sign or token, that the *promise* of Gospel- blessings belonged to them. And thus, because the promise was to them and to their children; therefore, as an *evidence* thereof, they should receive the *Holy Ghost*.—But this text will bear a more critical examination. Let it then be observed. (1.) In this clause, “ *Repent and be baptized every one of you.*” There is a remarkable change

[a] Rom. viii. 15. Eph. i. 13, 14.

change of *number* and *person* in the *original* [b], which literally runs thus, “ *Repent ye, and let every one of (or among) you be baptized.*” So that this command concerning baptism agrees in form with the command that was given about circumcision. *There* the command was [c], *Every male among you shall be circumcised.* And here the command is, *Let every one of, or among, you (i. e. you and all your’s without distinction of sex, or age) be baptized.* This construction of the Apostle’s words agrees to what follows. “ *For the promise is unto you, and to your children, &c.*” For, where was the pertinency or propriety of naming their *children* in the *reason* of the command, if the command itself had no immediate reference to their *children*? (though \* the command was not directed to the children, but to the parents in relation to their

[b] Μετανοήσατε, καὶ βαπτισθήτω ἕκαστος ὑμῶν.

[c] Gen. xvii. 10. Περιτμηθήσεται ὑμῶν πᾶν ἀρσενικόν. N. B. The difference of the two phrases. ὑμῶν πᾶν, and ἕκαστος ὑμῶν, is not material, as πᾶς and ἕκαστος are several times joined together. vid. 2 Chron. xxiii. 10.

\* Note: There is no impropriety in the notion of children being subjects of a positive rite, without being subjects of a positive command enjoining it, as we see in the case of circumcision. And if it became the Jews, who practised Infant-circumcision, to fulfil all righteousness; the like obligation upon Christians may very well comport with the practice of Infant-baptism. Nor can that obligation be urged, as an argument to the contrary, without taking the thing for granted, which ought to be proved, viz. that Christian-

baptism

their children, as well as to themselves; in answer to that question [*d*], *What shall we do?* Which, by the way, naturally accounts for the *varied* manner of the Apostle's expression taken notice of before). (2.) These words, "*And to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call,*" evidently refer to the *Gentiles*, or Heathens [*e*]; without excluding their children: for, it is agreeable to the scripture stile to speak of children as *called*, when the call is directly given to their parents, to those that bring them, or have the command over them [*f*]. But then, St. *Peter* himself can hardly be supposed to have any reference here to the *general calling* of the *Gentiles*: for it seems, that this mystery had not yet been revealed to him [*g*]: though the words of the prophet,

baptism is designed only for the *Adult*: a point, which cannot be proved from the nature, or *peculiar signification* of baptism, as a symbolical rite. For, circumcision had a peculiar signification, as it was a *token of the covenant*: and yet the Jewish infants knew nothing of the matter, much less could they *profess* any knowledge, or *faith*, about it; though others did in applying that rite to them. In short, if any primary ends of baptism are not answered in the baptism of infants; even *this* is no valid objection against it. For some primary ends of John's baptism were not answered in the baptism of Christ: and yet baptism was *rightly* administered to him. By this the reader may judge of the weight of Mr. Burroughs's argument. See *Two Discourses relating to positive Institutions, and the Defence*.

[*d*] Act. ii. 37.

[*e*] Eph. ii. 13, 17.

[*f*] Mat. ii. 13,—15. Luk. xviii. 16. Vid. Beza. in loc.

[*g*] See Act. Chap. 10. Pearson. lectiones in Act. Apost. p. 33.

phet, *Joel*, to which he alludes, are thought to look that way. Therefore, it is humbly offered to consideration, whether, in this last clause, the Apostle had not a direct view to those Gentile *servants*, which were incorporated into Jewish families according to the law [b]. This notion seems to be favoured by his manner of quoting the words of *Joel*, where, together with *Sons* and *Daughters*, mention is made of *Servants* and *hand-maidens* [i]: And if allowed, we have here a plain command, given at the first foundation of the christian-church, to believing parents and heads of families, to get all the *members* of their house without distinction *baptized*, in like manner as *Abraham* was commanded to have all the *males* of his house, of a certain age, *circumcised* at once [k]. Thus, the words of *St. Peter* before us, will admit of this easy paraphrase, “ Repent ye, and let every one among you  
 “ be baptized without delay, &c. For, the  
 “ promise is unto you, therefore be ye bap-  
 “ tized; and to your children, therefore let  
 “ them be baptized along with you; and to  
 “ all that are afar off, even as many as the  
 “ Lord our God shall call amongst the  
 “ Heathens, therefore let your Gentile ser-  
 “ vants also be baptized.” The words view-  
 ed in this light appear with the greatest propriety,

[b] Levit. xxv. 44.

[i] A&amp;t. ii. 17, 18.

[k] Gen. xvii. 12, 27.

priety and force; and at the same time discover the ground of the subsequent practice of the Apostles in *baptizing whole households*.

But, as some writers suppose, that the *promise* mentioned by St. Peter is the promise of the *Holy Ghost* himself; which, they think, invalidates the argument for Infant-baptism from this text: we will therefore argue the point with them upon their own supposition. Now, — “ When it is said, “ *you shall receive the Holy Ghost*, ’tis not intended, that *every* one of them, upon their baptism, should be endued with the extraordinary gifts of tongues and prophecy. — But the meaning of St. Peter is, that he should fall upon *some* of all ranks of them, according to the true purport of the words of *Joel*:” says Dr. *Whitby*. And if he had attended to the force of his own observation, the following *note* might have been spared, *viz.* “ That these words will not prove the right of Infants to receive baptism [1]. For, it follows from his own remark, that some persons might have a right to receive baptism, and yet not receive the extraordinary gifts. If Infants therefore did not receive the said gifts, which is the ground of the objection, they might nevertheless have a right to receive baptism. And, as those divine gifts were not ordinarily conferred

[1] See *Whitby*, Comment. in loc.

conferred *before* baptism; as they were a *free* donation, given to *some*, and not to others; (*e. g.* some *parents*, some *children*, &c.) and as the command for baptism is *universal*, “ Let *every one* of you be baptized;” so the reason given to enforce this command, “ for the promise is unto you, and “ to your *children*, &c.” seems plainly to prove the right of children *indefinitely*, that is, children of any *age*, and consequently Infants, to receive baptism. For, where none are excluded, all must be included, and so *vice versa*. And, as the parents could not tell, *which* of them, or of their children, should receive the *Holy Ghost*; or in what *degree* they should receive it; or at what particular *time*, whether *immediately*, upon their baptism, or some time *after* it: So, they had here an express order and direction to lay *themselves and all theirs* in the way of the promised blessing, by being baptized with the baptism of *Christ*. Had it not been high presumption in them to limit the most High by making any distinction in their children on account of *age*? especially considering the promise that was given with relation to *John Baptist*, *viz.* that he *should be filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother’s womb* [m]. Language, which, doubtless, his father, *Zacharias*, to whom it was spoken, very well understood. Seeing then the Jews

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had

[m] Luk. i. 15.

had a notion of persons being filled with the *Holy Ghost*, even from their mother's womb, they could have no ground to question their Infants right to baptism, from any suspicion, that the promise of the *Holy Ghost* did *in no wise* extend unto them, because they were Infants. Besides, though the promise of the *Holy Ghost* in it's full extent comprehended the extraordinary gifts; what necessity is there for *confining* that promise to these gifts, the *Antipædo-baptists* themselves being judges. For, when any of *them* pray over the baptized person, that *he may receive the Holy Ghost*, as some of them are supposed to do upon the foot of this very promise, surely they do not expect him to receive the *extraordinary gifts of tongues and prophecy!*

After all; it may possibly remain a difficulty with some persons, how the words of St. Peter, "Let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, can be applicable to the case of Infants." It may be said upon this occasion, *why should the innocent age make such haste to the remission of sins?* In answer to which let it be observed. (1.) As the baptism of water is a symbolical representation of *washing away sin* [n]; so, that imprecation of the Jews [o], *his Bloud be on us, and on our children* (meaning, no doubt, *all* their children, old and *young*) discovers a significant

[n] Act. xxii. 16.

[o] Mat. xxvii. 25.



significant propriety in the Apostle's exhorting these *Crucifiers* of Christ [*p*], to *repent themselves*, and to get both them and their children baptized for the *remission of sins*. Accordingly, Mr. *Tombes*, that learned and zealous Antipædo-baptist, supposed (*q*), that St. *Peter* might have an eye, in this place, to that horrid imprecation. (2.) Besides this consideration peculiar to the Jews, there is another ground and reason of the thing, common both to Jews and Gentiles. For, if all mankind, as descended from *Adam* by ordinary generation, are reputed *Sinners*, at least as being subject to death, the *penalty* of sin (*r*), (and as *Job* says (*s*), *who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean*) then must Infants also be considered under this character. Therefore, since Christ is the *second Adam*, and the Redeemer of a lost world; it seems no ways improper, but rather very fit and congruous, that Infants should be baptized with *Christ's* baptism for the remission of sin: in token that, "as by one  
 " man's disobedience many were made sin-  
 " ners; so by the obedience of one should  
 " many be made righteous (*t*): and that,  
 " as in *Adam* all die; so in Christ shall all  
 " be made alive (*v*)" Hence that remark of *Cyprian* (*w*), "If remission of sins be  
 " granted

[*p*] Act. ii. 36, 37. [*q*] Examen p. 60. [*r*] Rom. v. 12, &c. [*s*] Job, xiv 4. [*t*] Rom. v. 19. [*w*] 1 Corinth. xv. 22. Vid. Limborch. Theol. Ch. lib. 15. cap. 68. Sec. 23. [*v*] Ep. ad Fidum.

‘ granted to these most heinous offenders,  
 ‘ who have long ago sinned against God ;  
 ‘ and if none of them be denied access to  
 ‘ the grace of baptism ; how much less  
 ‘ reason is there for denying it to Infants ?  
 ‘ who being but *newly* born can be guilty  
 ‘ of no sin, except that being derived from  
 ‘ *Adam*, according to the flesh, their birth  
 ‘ hath communicated to them the infection  
 ‘ and punishment of his offence ; who  
 ‘ therefore are the more easily admitted  
 ‘ to the pardon of their sin, because it is  
 ‘ not so properly *their own*, as *another’s*.”

Upon the whole then, it seems very plain to us, that the words of St. *Peter* under consideration, exhibit a proper command to christian believers to get all the members of their respective families, and particularly, most expressly their *children*, together with themselves, baptized. And the true meaning of this command, like that of any other law, must be fixed by the proper signification of the *terms*, in which it is conceived and expressed, without any dependence upon what follows in the sacred history. For, if not a single person had been baptized on that occasion, this would not have *altered the sense*, or destroyed the authority of the command. However, there is nothing in the context, that in the least militates with the given sense of the Apostle’s words. For, as this was the *first* opening of the *Christian* dispensation,

penfation, and fo the first adminiftration of Christian baptifm; it was of courfe to be adminiftered firft of all to Christian believers. But this could be no impediment, it was indeed a neceffary leading ftep, to the baptizing of their *houfholds*; becaufe, no perfons could regularly have their families baptized, without being firft baptized themfelves, in confequence of their *receiving the word gladly*: according to what is faid of the firft converts [*x*]. When we read that fuch and fuch perfons *believed*, and *were added to the church* [*y*]. This language is by no means exclusive of their children: for, it is no more than what might be faid of any Jewish Profelytes, when they were received into the Jewish church, without the exclusion of their children from the rite of initiation. Thus, *e. g.* it is faid of *Achior*, “ He *believed* in God greatly, and “ circumcised the flefh of his foreskin, and “ was *joined to the houfe of Ifrael* [*z*];” that is, to the church of the Jews. We conclude therefore, that *St. Peter* hath laid down a plain command for baptizing children without *limitation* of age. And though, as *Mr. Stennet* remarks [*a*], “ there feems no neceffity to “ *reftain* the term [children] to infants:” there appears to be no reafon for limiting it fo as to *exclude* infants; which is all we contend for [*b*].

S E C

[*x*] Act. ii. 41. [*y*] προσετέθησαν. *ibid.*[*z*] προσετέθη εἰς τὸν οἶκον Ἰσραὴλ. *Judith* xiv. 10.[*a*] Answer to *Ruffen*. p. 33.[*b*] See *Cragge's* reply to *Tombes*. p. 208.

## SECTION V.

*The pretence of a virtual Prohibition examined.*

**T**HIS examination we shall begin with that *text* which perhaps is the *first*, that was ever directly alledged against the practice of baptizing infants by certain persons, who lived above a *thousand* years after Christ [c]; “ *He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; &c.* [d]” From hence it is inferred, that *all* persons must believe before they are baptized; and therefore infants are not to be baptized, because they do not believe. In answer to which argument it is replied (1.) These words were spoken by *Christ* to his *Apostles* with an immediate view to the first planting of the *Christian church*, and consequently to the first administration of *Christian baptism* to convert *Jews* and *Heathens*. For thus the words are introduced; “ *Go ye unto all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved, &c.*” Now, in this case it is plain, that adult persons of either sort (at least those, that were *sui juris*) were to be first instructed in the Christian

[c] See Dr. Allix. on the Piedmont churches, p. 143. and Wall on the Waldenses,

[d] Mark xvi. 16.

Christian faith, before they were by baptism received into the Christian church. Accordingly (2.) we grant that all persons in the same circumstances with those first converts ought to *believe* before they are baptized. Thus, *e. g.* if a *Jew*, a *Mahomedan*, or an *Indian* should *now* embrace the Christian religion, we are not against his being instructed in it, before he is baptized. For, as the thing appears to be rational in itself; so it is conformable to the practice of the Jewish church in making *Profelytes* [e]. But (3.) the *consequence* is denied with respect to *infants*. For, though the Jews instructed new *Profelytes* in the principles of their religion, before they were admitted to circumcision, (not to mention the *baptism* of *Profelytes* amongst them) yet their children also were circumcised together with themselves. In like manner, if new converts to Christianity were first instructed in it before their admission to baptism; yet, for all that, their children might be baptized along with them: and certain it is, the contrary can never be proved by such an argument, as is here alledged. For (4.) the text says not, *all* persons whatever must believe before they are baptized. On the contrary, if one might argue from the *order of words*, (which is the way the Antipædo-baptists take here) it would follow even from this passage of Scripture, that infants ought  
by

[e] See Bishop Patrick, comment. in Levit. xix. 10.

by all means to be baptized; as hath been frequently urged by the writers on our side [f]. For, if from *this* circumstance, that *believeth* is set before *baptized* in the order of words, it follows, that all persons must believe before they are baptized; by the same rule all persons must be baptized before they can be saved: because *baptized* is set before *saved* in the same order of words. Again; in the latter clause of the text it is added, “*He, that believeth not, shall be damned.*” And thus, by the words of *Christ*, believing is made as necessary at least to salvation, as it is to baptism. Therefore, the argument, from this text against the *baptism* of infants, concludes as strongly against their *salvation*; which is reducing it to a plain and shocking absurdity. Mr. *Rees* would evade all this, by asking [g], “*Why they (i. e. infants) may not be saved without baptism?*” A question little to the purpose. For, if infants may be saved at all; why will he and his friends insist upon such an argument against their baptism, as would equally conclude against their salvation?

Again; it is pretended [b] that the words of the *commission* [i], “*Go ye, and teach all nations,*”

[f] Marshall, Serm. on baptizing Inf. p. 45. Wills. answer to Danvers. p. 10. Walker. Modest Plea, &c. chap. xxiii. sec. 14.

[g] Answer to Walker, p. 36.

[b] See Gale. Reflexions, &c. Let. 7.

[i] Mat. xxviii. 19, 20.

“ *tions, baptizing them, &c.*” contain a virtual prohibition of Infant-baptism. For, say they, *teaching* is set before *baptizing*, ergo, &c. And so indeed it may seem to an *English* reader; but baptizing is set before teaching in the express order of the words according to the *original*, which ought to be rendered thus, “ Go ye, and *disciple* all nations, “ *baptizing* them in the name of the Father, “ &c. *teaching* them, &c.” Observe here (1.) The *general matter* of the commission is expressed by *discipling*; which is a comprehensive term, including both *teaching* and *baptizing*, by the confession of some of our most learned opposers [k], (2.) Then follows the *particular method* of executing this commission laid down in two directions, *viz.* by *baptizing*, and by *teaching*, agreeably to the *Greek* idiom of speech [l]. It is plain therefore, that in the express order and series of the words in the commission, teaching is not set *before*, but *after* baptizing. But, suppose the contrary were true; this would prove no more against Infant baptism, than the text in St. *Mark*, already considered; and how much *that* proves against it, is left to the judgment of common sense.

Again; St. *Paul* makes mention of *one baptism* [m]. Now, by this *one* baptism Mr. Barclay

[k] Dr. Gill. comment. in Act. ix. 1, 2.

[l] See Pædo-baptism, p. 89, &c.

[m] Eph. iv. 5. confer. 1 Cor. i. 12—15.

*Barclay* understands the *baptism of the Spirit*, in opposition to *water-baptism* [n]. On the other hand *Mr. Keach* understands it of *adult-baptism* in exclusion of *Infant-baptism* [o]. But both accounts are wide enough of the *Apostle's* meaning. *St. Paul* is there recommending *unity, peace and love* to fellow-*christians*. And so, by *one baptism*, he plainly intends one moral end and design of baptism, as it is a sacred rite of dedication to one and the same religious service, the service of one common Lord, who is the head of one spiritual society. “*One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, one body, one Spirit, one hope, one heaven:*” And what! are infants excluded from all these? God forbid.—Besides; *Christian baptism* may be *one baptism*, and yet of a *complex* nature in relation to the *subjects* of it. For, was not *circumcision* under the law *one* circumcision, as a rite of dedication, or engagement to the service of God [p]? And yet it was administered to different subjects, particularly to *adult-profelytes* and their children.

Again; *St. Paul* says [q], “*Henceforth know we no man after the flesh, &c.*” *q. d.* “*I have no regard to any one, according to the flesh, &c. for being circumcised, or a Jew* [r].” The distinction of *Jew and Gentile*

[n] *Apology*, prop. 12.

[o] *Answer to Owen*. p. 241, &c.

[p] *Gal.* v. 3.

[q] *2 Cor.* v. 16.

[r] *Mr. Locke* in loc.



Gentile was set aside under the Gospel, by the *wall of partition* being removed, and broken down [s]. Surely those persons are at a loss for arguments, who alledge this text as a disproof of Infant-baptism [t]. *Tacitus* says a much stronger thing of the *Jewish Profelytes* [v], viz. “That they were taught to “*despise* their parents, children, brethren.” And would any one conclude from hence, that no infants of Profelytes were circumcised? It is abusing the reader’s patience to take notice of such simple and trifling cavils; we shall therefore only mention one text more, which may seem to be urged with a little better grace.

St. *Peter* says [w], “*The like figure where-  
“ unto baptism doth also save us, (not the put-  
“ ting away the filth of the flesh, but the an-  
“ swer of a good conscience towards God) by  
“ the resurrection of Christ.*”—But infants cannot make this answer of a good conscience. *Ergo, &c.* To which argument it will be sufficient to reply in the words of Dr. *Whitby* [x], viz. “That St. *Paul* also says, that “*the true circumcision before God is not the  
“ outward circumcision of the flesh, but the  
“ internal circumcision of the heart and spi-  
“ rit* [y]. But will any one here argue,

I 2

“ That

[s] Rom. x. 12. Eph. ii. 14. Col. iii. 11.

[t] See Keach. ubi supra, p. 208.

[v] Corn. Tacit. hist. lib 5.

[w] 1 Pet. iii. 21.

[x] Comment. in loc.

[y] Rom. ii. 29.

“ That the Jewish infants for want of this  
 “ were not to be admitted into covenant with  
 “ God by circumcision? And yet the argu-  
 “ ment is plainly parallel: The answer of a  
 “ good conscience is required, that the bap-  
 “ tism may be salutary; therefore they only  
 “ are to be baptized, who can make this an-  
 “ swer: and the inward circumcision of the  
 “ heart is required, as the only acceptable  
 “ circumcision in the sight of God: therefore  
 “ they only are to be circumcised, who have  
 “ this inward circumcision of the heart. The  
 “ Jews did not admit profelytes to circumci-  
 “ sion without the answer of a good consci-  
 “ ence; but they admitted their infants with-  
 “ out any such thing. Why therefore may  
 “ we not allow the Christian church in the  
 “ administration of baptism, to observe the  
 “ same custom, in admitting the children of  
 “ their *Profelytes* to baptism; as they admitted  
 “ them to circumcision and baptism.”—It is  
 plain then, that there is nothing in what St.  
*Peter* says of *baptism*, which can amount to  
 a *prohibition*, or exclusion of baptizing infants  
 in the Christian church. For, St. *Paul* says  
 the same thing in effect of *circumcision*;  
 and yet, it is undeniably certain, that infants  
 were circumcised in the Jewish church.

In relation to what Dr. *Whitby* says of the  
 Jews admitting the children of profelytes to  
 circumcision and *baptism*; he proceeds upon  
 the notion of *Profelyte-baptism* obtaining  
 amongst

amongst them. But, as learned men are not agreed in this point, we have laid little or no stress upon it; the argument from *Profelyte-circumcision* being clear and strong enough without it. However, it is pleasant enough to observe, that some authors, who very much depreciate the authority of the Jewish writers upon this head, scruple not to make use of their authority in deciding any point in their own favour, *e. g.* about the antient *mode* of baptism; concerning which we shall offer a few remarks, and so conclude this argument. Now—that the word, *baptize*, doth not *always*, or necessarily signify, *dipping the body all over*; even Dr. *Gale*, after all his pains to prove the contrary, was forced to acknowledge in as plain terms as he durst. This point hath been set in a good light by Mr. *Perronet* [z]. And Dr. *Wall* brought the matter to a fair issue in a short *dialogue* between an Antipædo-baptist, and a churchman [a]. The truth is, much of the time and labour might have been spared, which hath been spent in rummaging authors, to fix the original sense of the *Greek* words, βαπτίζω, and βαπτίζω. For the learned *Critics* know, that the *first* and *primitive*, is not always the *true* and *proper* sense of words. Because in the flux of language the signification of words alters at different times and places, and amongst different

[z] Defence of Infant-baptism, sec. 2.

[a] Defence, &c. p. 96.

different people. And as words are but arbitrary signs of *ideas*, or thoughts; *custom* is the rule to fix their current sense. Suppose then, that the words in question primarily, and originally signified to *dip*, or *immerse a body all over*; it follows not, that *this* is their real and precise meaning in the New Testament. For, in the time of Christ and his Apostles, these words, as being then parts of a *living* language, might have acquired a more lax and general signification amongst the *Hellenists*, importing to *wash*, not only by dipping, but other ways. And that this was the case in fact, appears pretty plain from sundry passages in the *Greek* writers among the *Jews*. E. g. It is said of *Nebuchadnezzar* [b], “ that his body was *wet* [c] with the dew of “ heaven.” Now, can this mean, that his body was *dipped* in the dew of heaven; and not rather that his body was wet with the dew, *falling* or *sprinkled* upon it?—Again: it is related of *Judith* [d], “ that she went “ out in the night into the valley of *Bethulia*, “ and *washed* herself [e] in (or *at* [f]) a fountain, by (or *in* [g]) the camp.” But the circumstances of the case render it very improbable, that she stripped herself, and immersed her whole body in the water.—

Again,

[b] Dan. iv. 33.

[c] Ἐβόσθη from βόσσω.

[d] Judith xii. 7.

[e] Ἐβαπτίσθητο, literally *baptized*.

[f] Ἐπὶ τῆς πηγῆς.

See Walker. Doctrine of baptisms,

chap. 3.

[g] Ἐν τῇ παρεμβολῇ.

Again, when the Apostles were baptized with the *Holy Ghost* according to Christ's promise [b]; this was not by *immersion*, but *effusion*. For, upon that occasion, St. Peter told the multitude [i], "*Christ being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, hath shed forth this [k], which ye now see and bear.*" This expression, *hath shed forth*, or *poured out*, *this* (meaning the *Holy Ghost* in its extraordinary gifts) is of more force than *Causabon's* criticism in Act. i. 5. upon which more stress is laid than it will bear, to make out something like a proper immersion in the present case. For (1.) it is not said, as he understands it, that the house was *filled with the Holy Ghost* (which would make the house *inspired*) but that the *sound*, which came from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, filled the house [l]. (2.) This sound, or *noise*, filled all the house, and not only the particular room where they were sitting. But, were all the people in the house baptized with the *Holy Ghost*, as well as the Apostles? (3.) It *so* filled all the house, as to be *heard* by all that were in it; and so great was the alarm, as that it occasioned the multitude to come together [m]. Thus then, the Apostles were  
baptized

[b] Act. i. 5.

[i] Act. ii. 33.

[k] Ἐξέχυσεν.

[l] Act. ii. 2.

[m] Ver. 6. Vid. Dan. Heinsius. Sac. Exercit in loc.

baptized with the *Holy Ghost*, not in the way of *immersion*, but of *effusion*. For, they were not *dipped* into the Holy Ghost, but the Holy Ghost was *poured out* upon them.—Once more; we read [n], that a certain Pharisee, who invited Christ to dine with him, “*marvelled that he had not first washed [o] before dinner.*” Surely, *this* washing cannot mean immersing his body all over; as there is no room here to pretend, “*that Christ was now come from market, or any court of judicature, which might render it necessary to immerse himself in water according to the superstition of the Pharisees [p].*” And yet in the original it is the very same word for *washed*, that is used in speaking of *Christ* being *baptized* by *John*. How then doth it appear, that *Christ* himself was *dipped*? Why, we are told [q], “*Christ, when he was baptized by John in the river Jordan, went up straitway out of the water, &c.*” From whence it is inferred [r], “*that since it is said, that he came out of the water, he must first have gone down into it; must have been in it, and was baptized in it; a circumstance strongly in favour of baptism by immersion, &c.*” Doth not this look wonderful plain and clear? And yet, it is all grounded upon a mistake, and the inaccuracy of

[n] Luk. ii. 38.

[o] Ἐβαπτίσθη, literally, *baptized*.[p] See Dr. Gill. *Divine Right of Infant-baptism examined, &c.* p. 96.

[q] Mat. iii. 16.

[r] Dr. Gill. comment. in loc.

of our *English* version. Let us only hear what Mr. *Henry* says upon the place; “Christ  
 “ having no sins to confess went up immedi-  
 “ ately *out of the water*; so we render it, but  
 “ not right; for, it is ἀπὸ τοῦ ὕδατος, i. e. *from*  
 “ *the water*, from the brink of the river, to  
 “ which *he went down* to be washed with wa-  
 “ ter, i. e. to have his *head*, or *face* washed;  
 “ (*John* xiii. 9) for, here is no mention of  
 “ the putting off, or putting on his cloaths,  
 “ which circumstance would not have been  
 “ omitted, if he had been baptized naked [s].”  
 If this remark on the *Greek* phrase is not quite  
 new; it was worth repeating; for it seems to  
 be a fair *Criticism*, and not any *wretched*  
*shift*, as Mr. *Rees* is pleased to call it. But  
 it is really a *wretched construction*, which  
 he and others [t] put upon the words of St.  
*Mark*,

[s] Mr. *Henry's* Exposition on Mat. iii. 16.

[t] *Rees*. answer to Walker, p. 127. Keach. answer to Owen, p. 23, 320. Plain account of the sacred ordin. of baptism, p. 31. Burroughs's two discourses on positive institutions, p. 28. This last named author says (Defence of two discourses, &c. p. 31.) “ If εἰς τὸν Ἰορδάνην does not mean *into Jordan*,—what is the meaning of εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ, when “ applied to Philip, and the Eunuch?” Why, if it mean *into the water*, this will neither determine the meaning of that other phrase, nor necessarily conclude for *dipping*. But, says he (ib. p. 26.) “ There is no accounting for such words as “ these, [going down both into the water, baptizing there, and “ then coming up out of the water.” Acts viii 38, 39.] that is, upon any other supposition, either of sprinkling or pouring. And yet, unless the word *baptize*, of itself necessarily means dipping,

*Mark* [v], when they make him say, that John baptized Christ *into Jordan* [w]. For, in the stile of *Scripture*, this would signify, that John made him a *disciple* of Jordan [x]: The proper meaning of the *Greek* phrase is *at Jordan*; expressing the place, where John was baptizing [y], by way of distinction from the place, whence Christ came to be baptized of him. It is the very same phrase, that is used by the *Greek* interpreters, where *David* tells *Solomon* [z], that *Skimei* came down to meet him

dipping, (which is denied) these mere circumstances of going down into the water, and coming up out of the water, will not prove a dipping in that case: for, was Solomon dipped, when they went down with him, ἐς τὴν Γιβὼν, *to* (or be it *into*) *Gibon*, and after anointing him in *Gibon*, came up from thence, 1 Kings, i. 38, 45. Nor will those circumstances, considered in connexion with the act of baptizing, so certainly fix it for immersion, as is conceived. For one may easily conceive, that for want of other conveniences, in that *desart* place, *Philip* might go down with the Eunuch into the water to a certain depth, that so he might the more commodiously take up water with the hand, and pour it on the Eunuch's head. "But why did *Philip* go down into the water himself, and take the Eunuch along with him? Why did he not fetch a little water, to sprinkle, or to pour upon him?" To which it is answered. Where could *Philip* have in such a place any vessel proper for the purpose? Besides, if the Eunuch was dipped, it must either be *naked*, or with his *clothes* on: neither of which seems probable in his present circumstances. After all, how will it prove, that dipping was practised in *all* cases, and particularly, that *John* in baptizing him, dipped Jesus, even supposing that *Philip* dipped the Eunuch? A supposition so precarious, as that upon a distinct view of the case, Mr. Walker says, (*Doctrine of baptisms*, chap. 14. sec. 12.) "What's all the noise of *Philip's* dipping the Eunuch come to? To nothing else but mere noise."

[v] Mark i. 9.

[w] ἐς τὴν Ἰορδάνην.

[x] See 1 Cor. x. 2. Gal. iii. 27.

[y] Joh. i. 28.

[z] 1 Kings ii. 8.



him *at Jordan* [a].—As it is only by the by that we here take notice of the *mode* of baptism ; we shall not examine all the texts, that are commonly alledged in favour of *immersion* ; but refer the reader to those treatises, which have been professedly writ upon that subject [b]. Let it suffice for the present to observe, that there is hardly a stronger passage to be found, than those words of St. Paul [c], “ We are *buried with him by baptism into death, &c.*” And yet says an ingenious writer, “ I question whether we can certainly from this passage infer the outward mode of administering baptism. For, in the next verse, our being incorporated into *Christ* by baptism is also denoted by our being *planted*, or rather *grafted together in the likeness of his death* : and *Noah’s ark*, floating upon the water, is a figure corresponding to baptism, 1. *Pet.* iii. 20, 21. But neither of these give us the same idea of the outward form, as *burying* [d].” But, suppose it were proper to preserve some analogy between the mode of *baptism*, and that of a *burial* ; it should be considered, that the

K 2

modes

[a] κατέβη—εἰς τὸν Ἰορδάνου. By this expression we see, that Christ *might go down* to Jordan, and so *come up from* Jordan after he was baptized by John *at* Jordan ; and yet never have been so much as *in* Jordan.

[b] See Plunging, a subject of bigotry, when made essential, &c. Dipping not the only Scripture and primitive mode, &c.

[c] Rom. vi. 4.

[d] Taylor in loc.

modes of burial *differ* in different countries; and so would require *different* modes of baptism to represent and express them truly. Consequently, no one particular mode could be proper in all cases. And thus the very argument, which is commonly urged for the universal propriety and even necessity of *immersion*, proves quite the contrary.—In short, from the examples already produced, (to which more might be added [*e*], the word baptism appears to have acquired in common use among the *Hellenists*, so large and general a sense, as to comprehend other modes and ways of washing, besides that of immersion. Hence *Origen* calls *pouring water upon the wood*, baptizing it [*f*]. Therefore the command to baptize seems to be only a command to *wash*, without prescribing the particular mode [*g*]. And therefore, as no one particular mode can be necessary, *exclusive* of another; so, different modes of baptism might be used from the beginning. We are not pleased to find any grave authors speak lightly of baptism by immersion: for this might be *one* mode of baptizing amongst the ancients. But yet, supposing it to be so, this

is

[*e*] See Walker. Doctrine of baptisms, chap. 4—6.

[*f*] See 1 King. xviii. 33. Wall's Defence, Appendix, p. 19.

[*g*] The Hebrew word, *Tabal*, and the Syriac, *Amad*, are observed to admit the same large construction. See Walker, ubi supra, ch. 7.

is no proof, that it was anciently the *only* mode. Let immerfion then be allowed, but not abfolutely required: it fhould neither be *defpifed* nor *idolized*, in our humble opinion. Since baptifm doth not fave by the washing, or *putting away the filth of the flefh* [b], is there not danger of *over-doing* here, by laying fo much ftrefs upon the external mode of adminiftration, as borders too near upon fuperftition? In a word, if the falutary nature of baptifm confifts not in the outward rite itfelf, how much lefs in the particular mode!

[b] 1 Pet. iii. 21.

F I N I S.

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