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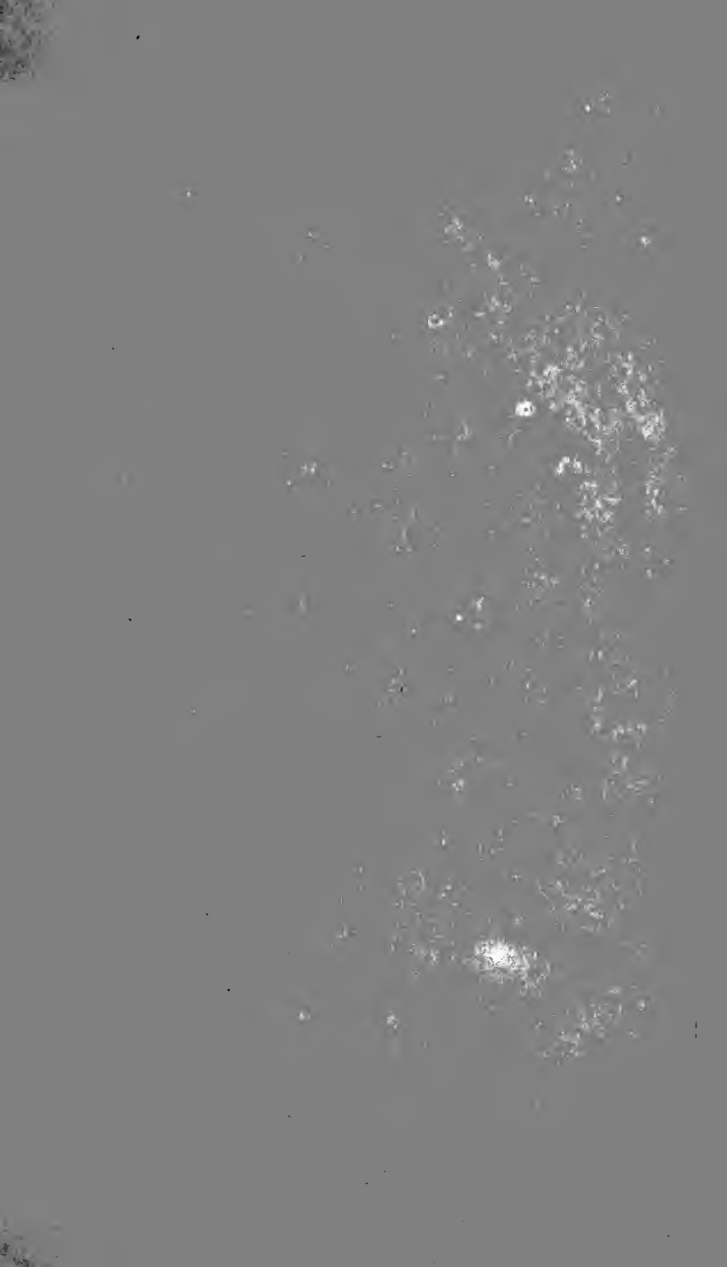
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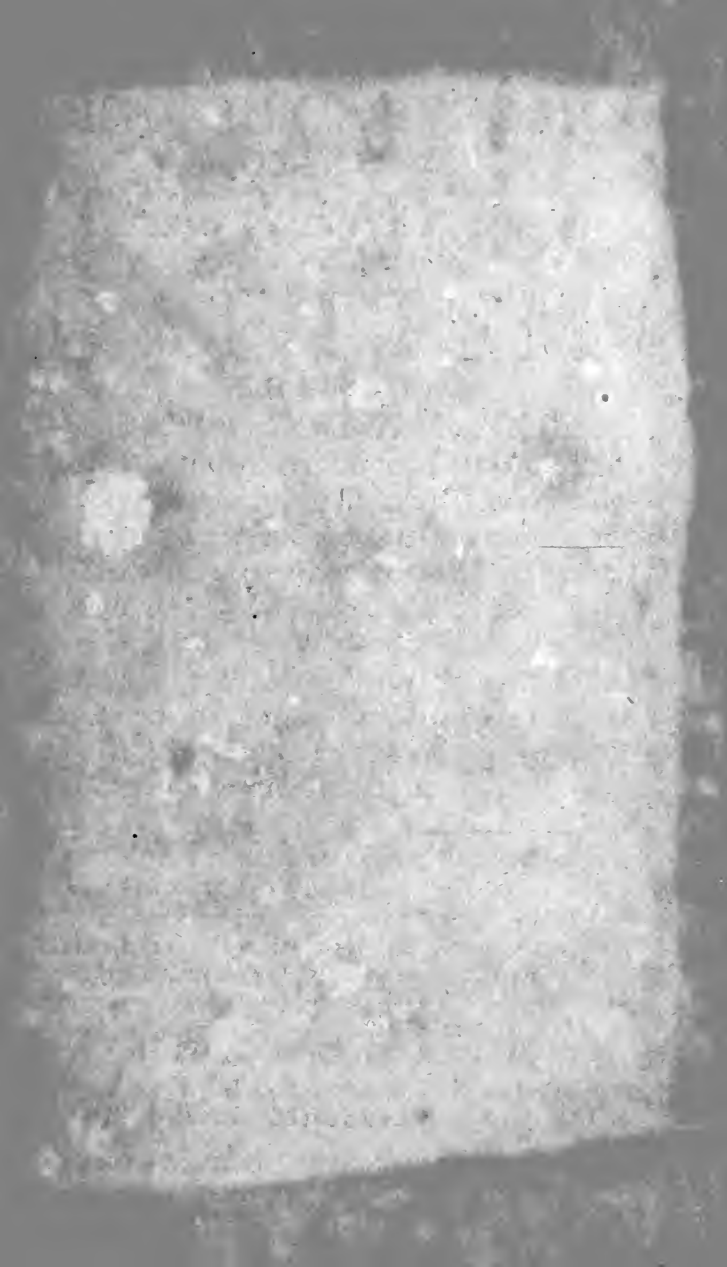
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A
PRACTICAL ESSAY
ON THE
SACRAMENT
O F
BAPTISM;

WHEREIN,

The Doctrine of that *Divine Ordinance* is opened and explained; the Controversies concerning it are stated and determined; several *Questions* of great Moment are proposed, and answered; Practical Observations from each particular Head are noticed: The *Constitution* and *Practice* of the established Church of *Scotland* vindicated; and the Christian Improvement of this valuable Privilege is pointed at.

By Mr. JOHN WARDEN Minister of the
GOSPEL at *Gargunnoch*.

Gal. iii. 27. *For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ, have put on Christ.*

E D I N B U R G H,

Printed for J. MAC E U E N, and are to be sold at
his Shop there. M D C C X X I V.

To the Honourable,
Sir James Campbell
of *Ardkinless*, Baronet.

A N D

Henry Cunninghame
of *Boquhan*, Esquire.

HERITORS of the Paroch of

G A R G U N N O C K.

This ESSAY, as a small, but
publick TESTIMONY OF
GRATITUDE, is humbly
Presented and Dedicated by

J O H N W A R D E N.

To the Honorable

Sir James Campbell

of Arbroath

and

Henry Campbell

of Dundee

Heritors of the Parish of

Arbroath

THE HERITORS OF THE PARISH OF

Arbroath

do hereby certify that

the following is a list of

JOHN WARDEN

1811



T H E

P R E F A C E

T O T H E

R E A D E R.

R E A D E R,

IT has been justly, and very much regretted, that tho' we have many valuable Books on several important Subjects, abundance on the Sacrament of the LORD's Supper, not a few concerning Infant Baptism, and some on that Question, Whether this Ordinance is to be administred by Dipping or Sprinkling? Yet we have none which so much as propose to treat of the several Parts of this Divine Institution, much less which discourse of these in a Practical Manner; and after the most diligent

P R E F A C E.

Search I could make, both here and by my Friends at London, I never did see, nor could I hear of any, except somewhat done an Hundred Years ago, by one Mr. Attersole. This, together with the melancholy Observation, That Persons baptised seldom reflect on this great and extraordinary Privilege conferred upon them in their Infancy; and tho' Parents present their Children to the Most High, and in the most solemn Manner engage to bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord, yet as soon as they make, so soon do they forget and break these their most sacred Vows. These Thoughts, I say, gave Rise to my Inclinations towards the following Essay.

But tho' it is not now so very fashionable, yet I may be a little more particular, and inform thee, That so soon as my small Essay on the Sacrament of the LORD'S Supper, was published some Years ago, some of my best Friends earnestly wished I would do something in a Practical Way on Baptism also. And in Obedience to their Desire, I set myself, so far as my Ministerial Work could allow, to read on that Subject;
but

P R E F A C E.

but I had scarce bestow'd some Months that Way, when such a Number of Difficulties so presented themselves to my View, that I despaired to make any Thing tolerable of it, and for a Twelve Month, entirely laid it aside, and earnestly wished it in another Hand: But my Friends renewing their Importunity, I again resumed it, and after Three Years made the first Draught; which no sooner I had done, than I put it in the Hands of several Persons of more than ordinary Learning and Abilities, and of my very reverend and worthy Brethren, that it should be for ever buried in Silence or see the Light, as they should judge of it. By this Method, it came to pass, that for the Space of other three Years it was scarce three Weeks in my Custody. By all which thou mayest see, that if it is not well done, it has not been rashly done.

It is here I should give thee and my self the Pleasure of publishing the Names of my kind and generous Revisers; but seeing I want their Allowance, I cannot but make this publick Acknowledgment of their Condescension, Honesty and

P R E F A C E.

Christianity, in their frank and faithful informing me wherein they thought I was wrong or defective, and in giving their friendly Assistance to me in rectifying the First, and making up the Last; so that I was led into a more clear and full Understanding of some Things; and had just Occasion given me for a quite different Turn of Thoughts as to others.

Yet, after I have done my utmost, I cannot expect, That this Essay will please every Reader; for Things in print must stand or fall, according to their own Worth, or the Reader's Fancy. And as I do not look to escape Censure more than better Writers whose Books I am not worthy to bear; so, I shall not be so uncharitable, as to suppose any of my Readers to be of the proud and carping Disposition, who squeeze every Expression, and heavily censure an unguarded Sentence, or what they think a weak, and not so well connected Argument.

I pretend not to Sublimeness of Thought, nor Elegancy of Stile, but write in my own coarse and country Way, to People
of

P R E F A C E.

of my own Size, to whom perhaps the following Essay will not be unacceptable: Much less do I presume to publish this for the Information of the Learned; for, to such Masters of Knowledge, with the greatest Satisfaction, I shall always profess my self a Scholar; and shall, I hope, never be ashamed, publickly to retract, what, upon Conviction, they shall judge wrong, or amiss. And if the following Essay shall provoke any such to do better upon this Subject, as easily they may, I have then one great Part of my Design in writing it.

If I have differed from others, I hope it is with Modesty and Charity; nor shall I grudge them the same Liberty of differing from me, when they find I have not Argument on my Side sufficient to support me.

My Congregational Work of the Ministry, which I could not allow my self to neglect, occasioned a discontinued Way of writing, which, together with one and the same Inference following naturally from the several Subjects treated of, are the true Causes whence some Things are repeated; which, it is hoped,

P R E F A C E.

ped, will be readily pardoned, and the rather, because this will not be altogether useless.

I never proposed worldly Gain by Printing this, nor have I made any by it; for I desire to reckon, That as I have been solemnly set apart to the Work of the Gospel, so any Measure of Gifts God hath given me, and any Pains I have been or can be at, are his Church's due. And if it shall please him to bless this Essay, to the promoting of true Religion in its Life and Power, the Edification of his People, the Advancement of his Kingdom, and shewing forth of his Glory, I have all my Desire. And seeing this my Intention is so very just and allowable, I cannot but hope, That with good Men, it will be an Excuse for the Meanness of my Performance, and in some Measure secure me from the Fear of rash and uncharitable Censure.

Gargunnoek, Febru-
ary 17th, 1724.

THE



T H E C O N T E N T S.



	Page
I. T H E Introduction, containing some brief Account of our Christian Doctrine, and of Sacraments in general	E
II. Chap. I. Of the Nature of Baptism	13
Sect. I. Of the Author and Causes of Baptism	19
Sect. II. Of the Signs in Baptism	30
Sect. III. Of the Things signified	36
Sect. IV. In whose Name Persons are baptised	46
Sect. V. Of the Ends and Uses of Baptism	55
Sect. VI. Of our Engagement to be the Lord's by Baptism	63
Chap. II. Of the Objects of Baptism	70
Sect. I. Who are not to be baptised, and who are	71
Sect. II. Of Infant Baptism, where several Questions of Moment are proposed	79
Sect. III. Of Parents Duties	110
Sect. IV. Of Sponsors, God-fathers, God-mothers, &c.	125
Sect. V. Of the Duties of the Congregation when Baptism is administred	135
Chap. III. Of the Necessity of Baptism	138
Sect. I.	

CONTENTS.

	Page
Sect. I. That Baptism is necessary, and how far so	139
Sect. II. That Baptism is not absolutely necessary	144
Chap. IV. Of the Administrators and Administration of Baptism	155
Sect. I. Of the Administrators of Baptism, where some Questions of Import are proposed, and Presbyterian Administrations are vindicated	156
Sect. II. Of the Administration of Baptism	184
Article I. Of what is previous to Baptism	<i>ibid.</i>
II. Of the Action of Administration, where the Practice of <i>Dipping</i> is considered	187
III. Of <i>Exorcism</i> in Baptism	196
IV. Of <i>Oil, Salt</i> and <i>Spittle</i> in Baptism	201
V. Of baptising with the <i>Sign of the Cross</i>	204
VI. Of Naming the Person baptised	209
VII. Of taking Engagements of Parents, &c.	211
VIII. Of private Baptism	219
IX. With what Frame of Mind it is to be gone about	230
X. Of Rebaptising	235
Chap. V. Of the Efficacy of Baptism	236
Sect. I. Of the Extent of the Efficacy of Baptism; where is considered	237
I. If the Efficacy of this extends to all the Baptised	238
II. How far Blessings signified are actually bestowed on those to whom it is efficacious	246
Sect. II. Whence the Efficacy of Baptism is	253
Chap. VI. Of our Improvement of Baptism	260
Nota, That the proper Practical Inferences are made from each particular Head.	



A
PRACTICAL ESSAY
ON THE
SACRAMENT
OF
BAPTISM.

The Introduction.



S the Works of Creation declare JEHOVAH's eternal Power and Godhead (*a*); so his Providences drop Marrow and Fatness on the Sons of Men (*b*): But especially, the Institutions of his Worship and Ordinances proclaim his manifold Wisdom, his astonishing Condescension, his sovereign, rich and free Grace, his irresistible
A Power,

(*a*) Rom. 1. 20. (*b*) Acts 14. 17. Acts 17. 28.

A Practical Essay on

Power, the unchangeable Purposes of his Love, and the unsearchable Riches of *Jesus Christ* (c). And as God fully and clearly revealeth these by his *Word*; so he, in the most conspicuous and Heart-engaging Manner, manifests them by his *Sacraments* (d); not only by that of his *Supper*, but also by this of *Baptism*: Of which, before I say any Thing particularly, it is necessary that we understand the following Truths, by which we may have a more distinct Apprehension of what may be said on this divine and awful Ordinance.

Man's
State by
Nature.

First, That all *Adam's* Posterity, descending from him by ordinary Generation, are, by Nature, in a State of Guilt, and unspeakable Misery (e): being, together with him, as their federal Head and Representative, guilty of the Violation of the *Covenant of Works* (f); and consequently Sinners before God, fallen from their original Pinnacle and Height of Happiness, deprived of original Righteousness and Holiness, of the Image and Favour of God, of Access to him, and Communion with him (g); now corrupted as to the whole Man (h), dark and ignorant (i), dead (k), obstinate (l), alienated from God and all that is truly and spiritually good (m), wholly inclined to Evil (n), going on in a Course of Sin (o), and running headlong to everlasting Damnation (p); poor and destitute (q), under the Wrath and Curse of God (r), the Dominion of Sin, the Tyranny of Satan, liable to all the Miseries

(c) Mark 6. 12. Luke 9. 60. Luke 24. 47. Acts 17. 18. Rom. 10. 8. Eph. 2. 17. Eph. 3. 8. (d) 1 Cor. 11. V. 23. to 28. Gal. 3. 27. (e) Ezek. 16. 6. (f) Rom. 3. 23. Rom. 5. 12, 19. (g) Gen. 3. 24. (h) Gen. 6. 5. Eph. 4. 22. (i) Eph. 4. 18. 1 Cor. 2. 14. (k) Eph. 2. 1. 2 Cor. 5. 14. (l) Jo. 5. 40. Psalm 81. 10. (m) Zech. 7. 11. Job 21. 24. Col. 1. 21. (n) Jer. 17. 9. Eccl. 8. 11. (o) Eph. 2. 1, 2. Col. 3. 7. 1 Pet. 4. 3. (p) Rom. 6. 23. (q) Eph. 2. 12. Rev. 3. 17. (r) Eph. 2. 3. Gal. 3. 9, 10.

series of this Life, to Death itself, and to the Pains of Hell for ever (*f*).

2dly, As all Men, by Nature, are thus wretched, and in the most deplorable Condition; so they are altogether unable to save or help themselves: For, they can never satisfy the infinite Justice that they have offended; they cannot now give that perfect Obedience, required by the *Law-Covenant*, which they have transgressed; they cannot recover the Image of God, nor that Friendship and Communion with him, and Access to him, which they are now deprived of; they cannot redeem nor repair the precious Soul they have ruined and lost; they cannot free themselves from the Tyranny of Satan, under which they now are brought; nor from the Power and Dominion that their indwelling Lusts now have over them; and so can never, in their own Persons, have a Righteousness answering the Law, on which they might found a Title to Life. And much less can they, or any meer Creature in their Room, so undergo the Wrath and Curse of the Great Judge, as to atone his Justice, and free themselves from everlasting Damnation (*t*). Yea, Men are now, by Nature, so alienated from God, and every Thing spiritually good, so fixed and peremptory in a Course of Rebellion against Heaven, that as they want the Power to comply with any Proposal made for their Relief, so they have an utter Aversion therefrom, and are stated Enemies thereto (*u*).

His Inability to help himself.

And in a Suitableness to the Purpose in View, we may, from what hath been said, observe, what great Objects of Pity and Compassion our poor Infants are, they being *conceived in Sin,*

A 2

and

(*f*) Rom. 8. 7. Rom. 6. 17. Rom. 2. 25. Eph. 2. 2, 3. Rom. 5. 17, 18, 21. (*t*) Micah 6. 6, 7. Hos. 13. 9. Rom. 3. 20. Rom. 5. 6. Rom. 8. 3. 2 Cor. 3. 5. (*u*) Rom. 8. 7. John 1. 11. Jer. 2. 25. Zech. 7. 11. Luke 19. 14. Acts 13. 45.

A Practical Essay on

and brought forth in Iniquity; destitute of every Thing that is truly and spiritually good; *by Nature Children of Wrath*. Exposed to Thousands of Miseries in this World, and in the World to come, to the eternal Vengeance of a holy and just God. O then! How ought Parents and all others concerned in them, to be so deeply affected and afflicted with the miserable Condition of their dear Infants, as to shew all imaginable Compassion towards them, by bringing them early to *the Blood of Sprinkling*, and that Redeemer who alone can save them; to that God, and his well-ordered Covenant, who, as he has promised us to be a God to Believers, so also to their Seed after them: And to that holy Spirit, who alone can sanctify and cleanse them. How quickly should they *present them before the Lord*, and with the greatest Cheerfulness devote them to him! And, how fervently and frequently should they pray for them, and, as soon as decently may be, have the Seal of the Covenant of Grace administrated unto them!

Man's Recovery.

3dly, All Mankind, descending from *Adam* by ordinary Generation, being now Sinners, lost and undone, incapable to help themselves, and no Eye to pity them; the Sovereign *Jehovah* displays infinite Wisdom, matchless Grace, and boundless Love, by *laying Help upon one that is mighty*, even upon his own eternally begotten Son; who from Eternity was true God, coessential and coequal with his Father (w), and yet became true Man, and so was, and still is both God and Man in one Person (x); who, in the Fulness of Time, as the only Saviour, Head, Surety, Representative and Redeemer of Elect Sinners, fulfilled

(w) Psalm 89. 19. Isaiah 42. 1. to V. 21. Isaiah 53. 6: 1 John 4. 9, 10. John 3. 16. John 1. 1. Acts 20. 28. John 10. 30. Heb: 1. 2, 3, 6. 1 John 3. 16. Zech. 13. 7. 1 John 5. 20. (x) John 1. 14. Luke 24. 39. Gal. 4. 4, 5.

filled, in their Room and Stead, the Whole of *the broken Covenant of Works*, by giving Obedience to the Precepts of it, in doing all the Father commanded him; and by satisfying the Threatnings of it, in suffering that Chastisement, Curse and Punishment the Father laid upon him, and which was due to them because of their Transgressions (y). By which, as in their Room, he gave complete Satisfaction to all, that either the *Law-Covenant*, or *Justice of God*, could require of them, in Order to their Salvation: So hereby *be put an End to Sin, made Reconciliation for Iniquity, and brought in everlasting Righteousness* (z), purchased to elect Sinners, and to them only, a complete Deliverance from the Curse of the Law, and Wrath of God, from Sin, Satan, the World, Death, and the Sting of it (a). By this also he procured a Restoration of every Thing necessary to the eternal and complete Happiness of his People, to the Favour and Image of God, of Access unto God, and Communion with him; so as that he becomes a God unto the poor, but now believing Sinner, his reconciled Father, and Portion for ever (b). In him the naked, destitute, weak and disobedient Sinner, but made willing in a Day of his Power, has a complete and perfect Righteousness; which being imputed to him, in a Way of Grace, comes to be justified in the Sight of God the Judge of all the Earth; and thereby has a sure and inviolable Title to the promised Life (c). Our glorious Redeemer hath also purchased for all his

A 3

Seed,

(y) Gal. 3. 13. Rom. 5. 18, 19. Rom: 8. 3, 4. (z) Gal: 4: 4, 5, 6. Isaiah 53, 5. Dan: 9. 24. John 19. 30. 1 John 3. 8. (a) Gal: 3. 13. Titus 2. 14. Gal. 1. 4. 1 Thess: 1. 10. John 3. 16. Job 33, 24. (b) Eph. 5: 25, 26. Eph: 7: 22. 18. Rom: 5: 2. Col: 1: 20, 21. 2 Cor: 5: 19. Heb: 7: 22. with Heb: 8: 10. (c) Isaiah 45: 24. Philip: 3: 7, 8, 9. Rom: 3: 21, 22. Rom: 4: 6. Rom: 5: 1. Rom: 5. 17, 18. Rom: 3, 24. Rom: 4. 25. Rom. 5. 9. John 3. 16, 36.

Seed Adoption, or their being admitted into his Father's Family, that they may be *Heirs of God*, and *Joint-heirs with himself* (e); that they may make Progress in Sanctification, grow in Grace, live to God, and finally persevere in the Ways of God (f). He hath also obtained for them an eternal Redemption and everlasting Glory; when they shall be brought to the full Possession of the purchased Inheritance; have eternal Purity, Victory, Liberty, Joy, Pleasures and Satisfaction, in the full Enjoyment of God for evermore (g). And in Order to the effectual Application of this Redemption, Salvation and Happiness, he hath also purchased the divine Spirit, in all his Offices, Grace, and gracious Operations, to be communicated to his Seed, in God's own Method and Time, and by Means of his Appointment (h). And all these *Christ* did and suffered, purchased and procured, in an exact Conformity to the eternal Counsels of the glorious Trinity, and the particular Concert or Transaction betwixt God the Father and himself his eternal Son, concerning the Redemption and Salvation of perishing but elect Sinners (i).

Inferences
from this.

From what hath been now offered, we may learn the unspeakable Value of immortal Souls, the high and infinite Price that was paid for these, the matchless and boundless Love of *Christ*. And seeing *Christ* hath thus purchased and paid for all, then surely these Blessings, thus purchased, cannot be convey'd to Sinners, but in a Way of the purest and freest Grace.

As

(e) John 1. 12. Rom. 8. 16, 17. (f) Eph. 2. 21. 1 Per. 2. 29. 2 Cor. 5. 14, 15. Gal. 2. 20. John 10. 28. (g) Heb. 5. 9. 1 John 3. 2, 3. 1 Theff. 4. 17. 1 Cor. 15. 54, 55, 56, 57. 1 Cor. 13. 12. (h) John 16. 7, 8, 9. Eph. 4. 8. Rom. 8. 9. 1 Cor. 2. 4. 12. 2 Cor. 4. 13. Rom. 8. 16, 26, 27. Ezek. 36. 27. Zech. 12. 10. Gal. 3. 2. (i) Zech. 6. 13. Isaiah 53. 10, 11. John 6. 37. John 10. 26, 27. Rom. 11. 7. Eph. 1. 3, 4, 5.

As also, we may hence observe the exact Suitableness of the Remedy to the Sinners Malady, and of purchased Mercies to his Miseries; and what great Encouragement Parents have, to bring their Children to the Lord *Jesus Christ*, and to his complete Obedience, perfect Satisfaction and Righteousness; for, tho' our Babes come miserable into the World, altogether incapable to do any Thing for their own Relief or Happiness; yet here, in *Christ* is all that's necessary to their complete Redemption and Salvation; and all this in a Way of free, sovereign, and rich Grace. With what Joy then, may Parents bring their Infants hither, seeing it is to a *Saviour* who died for such; who in the Days of his Flesh *took them in his Arms and blessed them*; and now when he's ascended into Heaven, will not and does not reject them! Seeing it is to a *God in Christ reconciling the World to himself*; who hath extended his Covenant of Grace to them, and so promises to be their God; and to *an holy and divine Spirit*; who, in his own Time and Way, effectually renews and sanctifies them, as well as those who are come to riper Age.

4thly, Redemption and Salvation being now purchased, GOD, according to his eternal Purpose, and the Promise of his *Covenant of Grace*, doth apply these, or put his People in Possession of them, by Means of his Appointment, according to their Capacity, and the effectual Operation of his Holy Spirit; so as they come to be savingly and actually brought into Covenant, and have all the Blessings thereof convey'd and secured to them, to the Praise of the Glory of his Grace (k). And God being willing to give the Heirs of Salvation the fullest Security imagina-

The Application and Security of this Salvation.

A 4 ble,

(k) Rom. 8. 30. 1 Cor. 1. 30. John 6. 37. Ephes. 1. 3, to 12. Ephes. 4. 11, 12, 13.

A Practical Essay on

ble, and to shew the Immutability of his Counsel, it hath pleased him to confirm the same, *First*, By his Oath, whereby he pledges his glorious and infinite Perfections, for the Accomplishment of his Promise (*l*). *2dly*, By the Indwelling of his Holy Spirit; working in his People, and witnessing to them their Interest in Christ, their Title to this purchased Redemption, and Right to all the Promises of the well ordered and everlasting *Covenant*; and that upon Scripture Evidence (*m*). And, *3dly*, God doth visibly and externally seal all the above-named Blessings, by his Gospel Sacraments, as instituted visible Signs and Pledges thereof (*n*).

Inferences from this.

From this we may be informed, of the surprising Care that an infinitely gracious God hath, not only of the Salvation, but also of the Comfort of his People. For, as he hath found out an eternal Happiness for them, and in the most immutable Manner secured this to them, so he freely gives them all these Things; by which, they may come to a personal and subjective Certainty of this; that so they may have *strong Consolation, who have fled for Refuge to lay Hold upon the Hope set before them*. And as if this was too little, how doth he also provide for their Comfort, as to the eternal Happiness of their tender infants; in that, as he promises to be *their God*, so to be the *God of their Seed after them*; and by his Oath, his Spirit, and Sacraments, graciously sealeth and ratifieth the same to them; so that they may have good Hope through Grace, as to the Salvation of their Children, yet still, in the most submissive and holy Manner, adoring and stooping to divine Sovereignty.

5thly,

(*l*) Heb. 4. 13, to 18. (*m*) Titus 3. 5, 6. Rom. 8. 15, 16. Eph. 1. 13. Eph. 4. 30. (*n*) Rom. 4. 11. Coloss. 2. 11. Rom. 6. 4. 1 Pet. 3. 21. Matth. 26. 26, 27. 1 Cor. 11. 24, to 29. 2 Cor. 5. 17. Philip. 3. 3. Matth. 5. 9. 1 John 3. 10, 14. 1 John 5. 2.

5thly, We would know, That a Sacrament is an Holy Ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein, by sensible Signs, Christ, and the Benefits of the new Covenant, are represented, sealed and applied to Believers. As to which, these few Things may be briefly noticed;

A Sacrament what.

First, That God alone is he, who doth institute, or hath Power and Authority to appoint Sacraments. For, 1st, He only can and does appoint all Kinds, Parts and Acts of his own Worship: He only is the supream Lawgiver, and none but himself, and those to whom he reveals his Will, can understand what that Service is, which shall be well pleasing and acceptable to him (o). 2dly, God only can give and does bestow, the rich Grace, and gracious Blessings, signified by Sacraments (p). And, 3dly, Because he only can and does Place such a Connection betwixt the Signs, and the Blessings or Things signified, as that Things signified are really represented, applied and sealed by these Signs. And so a sure Foundation laid, for the Faith of his People, in the Use of them (q).

God only appoints Sacraments.

From this it is evident, That the Five Bastard Popish Sacraments, viz. Confirmation, Ordination, Penance, Marriage, and Extream Unction, are really no Sacraments, seeing they want the Appointment and Institution of God: And the Boldness or Presumption of Men cannot but be justly condemned, who dare of themselves to appoint Signs, and annex thereto Things spiritual, as signified thereby; or, who take upon them to appoint Worship which the Great God hath not commanded; or to alter or add to what he hath instituted: For this is more than what Angels

Inferences from this.

(o) Jer. 19. 5. Matth. 15. 9. Matth. 28. 19. 1 Cor. 11. 23. Isaiah 1. 12. Eph. 5. 10. (p) Jer. 31. 33, 34. Heb. 8. 10, 11, 12. Ezek. 36. 25, 26, 27, 28. Mark 2. 7. (q) Rom. 14. 23. Heb. 11. 6. Rom. 14. 5. Isaiah 8. 20.

A Practical Essay on

Angels can do, much less has God given such illimited Power to the Sons of Men. But,

Secondly, We may Notice, That the immediate Author of Sacraments, is, in a peculiar Manner, the Lord Jesus Christ. To whom, as the Saviour of the Body, the alone Head and King of his Church, all Power in Heaven and Earth is given of the Father (r).

Matter of
a Sacra-
ment
what,

Thirdly, We may here observe, That the Matter of Sacraments is either, *1st*, Sacramental Elements and Actions, which are the Signs, and these are external, sensible, and applied to the Body. Or, *2dly*, The Things signified, applied and sealed, and these are all the Blessings of the Covenant of Grace in its new Dispensation, in our Lord Jesus Christ, and with him. Now these are internal and spiritual, and especially applied to the Soul.

Designs
of Sacra-
ments
what.

Fourthly, We may further take Notice, That the Ends and special Design of Sacraments, are, *1st*, To represent, set forth, and keep up the Remembrance of the infinite Grace and Love of God in Christ to lost Sinners; and the Remembrance of our Lord and Saviour till he come again. To be *Memorials* of his Glorious Person, his Offices, Doing, Sufferings and Dying; of his great and incomparable Love to poor Sinners; his compleat Purchase of everlasting Salvation for them; and, his Willingness that they should Share and Partake of this (s). *2dly*, To ratify, seal and confirm to the Partaker, his Interest in the Lord Jesus Christ, his Satisfaction, Merit, Righteousness and Mediation, and in God's Covenant of Grace, with all the Blessings thereof (t). *3dly*, To be an external visible Token of our being solemnly devoted to the Lord; and a perpe-

(r) Matth. 28. 18, 19. Heb. 2. 17. Heb. 3. 2. (s) 1 Pet. 5. 21. Coloff. 2. 11, 12. 1 Cor. 11. 24, to 28. (t) Rom. 4. 11. Rom. 6. 3, 4. 1 Cor. 11. 24, to 28.

perpetual Obligation upon us, to be his People, his only, and wholly, and of our holy and active Profession of his Name, his Truths and Way (u). But concerning Sacraments in general, more may be seen in my *Practical Essay on the Lord's Supper*, Chap. I. Sect. I. & II. Tho' it was proper that this much should be repeated here.

And hence we may infer, what enriching Ordinances *Sacraments* are, seeing Christ and all the Benefits of the new Covenant are represented, applied and sealed thereby. Such surely is that unspeakable Glory and Happiness which is wrapped up in them, that the Man whose Eyes the Lord hath opened, cannot but give them the Preference to all the vain Honours and Treasures of the World, which unthinking Mortals so much adore, and so earnestly pursue after. But, *2dly*, We may here also observe the Pity, Compassion and Goodness of God to us, in condescending so low to our Weakness and Infirmary, Dulness and Stupidity, as by visible Things, which do commonly most affect us; to assure us, and so confirm and strengthen our Faith, as to our Title to, and Interest in all the saving Blessings of his Covenant: And, in his making Use of such visible and solemn Institutions, inviolably to engage and bind us to himself, and divorce us from all other Lovers, and to set us at Liberty from all His and our Enemies: Which Liberty is, by Baptism, made over and sealed to all who are given to Christ by the Father, and shall, in the Lord's good and appointed Time, be applied to them, and they put in Possession thereof: And by the Supper, this Grace is solemnly ratified, and more and more increased to Believers.

Inferen-
ces from
this.

Fifthly, As to the Objects of Sacraments, or those to whom they are to be administered, these are Objects of Sacraments who.

(u) Rom. 6. 4, 5, 6, 7. Matth. 28. 19. Gal. 3. 25. 1 Cor. 11. 25.

are to be determined by the Divine Institution; the different Nature of the Sacraments; and, the Pre-requisites in Persons, according to their different Capacities, in Order to their Participation thereof. But of this we shall have Occasion to speak in the next *Section*, and more afterwards in this *Essay*.

Baptism
and the
Lord's
Supper,
how di-
stingui-
shed.

But now, a *Sixth* and *Last* General Observation I make, is this, That there are only Two Gospel and New Testament Sacraments, instituted and appointed by Christ, *viz.* *Baptism*, and the *Lord's Supper*: Which Two, tho' they agree in their Author, and in this, That Christ and the Benefits of the new Covenant are represented, sealed and applied by both; yet they are distinguished, *1st*, In their outward Elements: In *Baptism*, the Element is Water; and in the *Lord's Supper*, the Elements are Bread and Wine. *2dly*, In their Sacramental Actions, in *Baptism*, these are sprinkling with, pouring on, going into, or washing with Water; but in the *Lord's Supper*, they are, taking Bread and Wine, blessing these, breaking the Bread, giving both unto Communicants, their receiving both, and eating the one and drinking the other. *3dly*, In their Objects: The Infants of such as are Members of the visible Church, may and are to be baptised; but only those, who being baptised, are capable to examine themselves, and do profess their Faith in Christ, having withal, a competent Measure of Knowledge, are to partake of the *Lord's Supper*. And, *4thly*, Those Two *New Testament Sacraments* are distinguished, as to the Frequency of their Administration, to one and the same Person. *Baptism* is to be but once administered, because it is a Sign and Seal of our Ingrafting into Christ, of our Regeneration and new Birth, and being received within the Bond of God's Covenant. But the *Lord's Supper* may,

and

and is to be frequently administrated; because it is for our spiritual Nourishment and Growth in Grace: It is *Baptism*, or the first of these, that is the Subject of the following ESSAY.



C H A P. I.

Of the Nature of BAPTISM.

THE Words BAPTISE and BAPTISM are Originally Greek. *Βαπτίζω, Βάπτισμα,* and these from *Βάπτω,* and both *Verbs.* The Word *Baptism,* what it signifies. *Lexographers* tell us, signify, *mergo, immergo, tingo, luo, abluo, imbuo, lavo, spargo, aspergo, madefacio,* to dip, dip into, to wash, wash away, make wet, dye, sprinkle, &c. And the Learned Mr. Leigh noteth, *That it is taken largely, for any Kind of Washing, Rinsing or Cleansing, even where there is no Dipping at all.* But whereas, it is the Use and Signification of these Words in the Holy Scriptures, which alone are to be our Standard and Rule in this *Essay,* that we are specially to attend unto: For this Cause, I am not here to notice the various Uses, Senses and Significations of them in prophane Authors; but in the Entry shall observe these few Things; *First,* That as these Words are very rarely and sparingly used in Scripture, to signify the Dipping or Plunging the Body, washed all over, into Water; so it is most evident, That they are made Use of to signify such a Washing, where there was no such Dipping or Plunging: And for Proof hereof, these Scriptures are justly adduced, *Heb. x. 10.* compared with *Numb. viii. 7. Numb. xix. 18, 19, 20. Matth. xx. 23. Matth. xxvi. 23. Mark vii. 4. Luke xi. 38.* Of all which, in their
 pro-

proper Place, when I come to speak of the Manner of Administrating this Ordinance.

Secondly, We may observe, That the Words *Baptise* and *Baptism* are variously used in the *Sacred Scriptures*; as, *First*, To signify the *Doctrine* that was preached to People, and which they were taught; so some understand our Lord's Question to the *Pharisees*, *Matth. xxi. 25. The Baptism of John, whence was it? From Heaven or of Men?* That is, say they, The *Doctrine of John*, whence was it? So it is said of *Apollos*, *Acts xviii. 25.* That he only knew the *Baptism of John*; that is, The *Doctrine of John*. But surely, while the Learned explain these Scriptures of *John's Doctrine*, we are not to understand this as exclusive of, but as necessarily including his *Baptism by Water*. *2dly*, These Words are taken for great Sufferings and Afflictions. So *Luke xii. 50. I have a Baptism to be baptised with*, saith our Lord, *and how am I straitned till it be accomplished.* That is, He had the great and heavy Part of his Sufferings yet to endure. Thus also he asked the Children of *Zebedee*, *Matth. xx. 22. Are ye able to drink of the Cup that I shall drink of? And, to be baptised with the Baptism I am baptised with?* That is, Are ye able to suffer with me and for me, and as I have done and shall do? And indeed, the Scriptures frequently intend and mean Afflictions, by the Expressions of *Flowing in of Waters*; *Waters coming into the Souls of People*; and; *their coming into the deep Waters*. *3dly*, The Words are taken for the *Baptism with the Spirit*, especially in his extraordinary Gifts and Operations. Thus, *Matth. iii. 11. John says, I indeed baptise you with Water, but he that cometh after me, is mightier than I, whose Shoes I am not worthy to bear; he shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost, and with Fire.* That is, He shall give

Baptismus
Luminis.

Baptismus
Sanguinis.

Baptismus
Flaminis.

give you the Holy Ghost, and pour out his Spirit upon you, who is of a mighty, purifying, exciting, and cleansing Virtue, as Fire; and who was therefore given by Signs of Fire; *Acts* ii. 3, 4. In the same Sense is the Word *Baptise* understood, *Acts* i. 5. To these some are pleased to add; *4thly*, Baptism of the Cloud; for, *1 Cor.* x. 2. It is said of the Children of *Israel*, *That they were all baptised unto Moses in the Cloud, and in the Sea*: That is, say some, they went down into the Sea, as those who were to be baptised, in the *New Testament* Times, sometimes did into the Water: The Cloud dropped upon them and sprinkled them, as others in these Times were baptised. And, as by these extraordinary Signs and Tokens of the Divine Favour, greater and higher Things were shadowed forth, such as, their being sprinkled with the Blood of Atonement, the sanctifying Influences of the holy Spirit, and enjoying the divine Conduct and Protection; so hereby, that People were in a very peculiar Manner; laid under the most solemn Obligations to hearken unto the Doctrine of *Moses*, and to obey and follow him, as a Leader and Commander appointed to them of God (1). But then *5thly*, The Words *Baptise* and *Baptism*, are used as signifying *washing* or *sprinkling with Water*. And first there was a superstitious Washing, so *Matth.* xv. 2. the *Pharisees washed before they did eat*. And *Mark* vii. 4. *Luke* xi. 38. *When they came from the Market they washed, or baptised*, and held the washing of Cups, or Baptism of Cups, (according to the Original) and Pots, brasen Vessels, and of Tables or Beds, as Parts of their Religion, and necessary to be performed. In all which, tho' not divinely instituted, they placed no small Measure of their sacred Services and Sanctification. *2dly*, The *New Testament*

*Baptismus
Nubis.*

*Baptismus
Fluminis.*

*Divers
Kinds
thereof.*

(1) See *Turretine de Baptismo Maris & Nubis*, Pag. 140, 141, 142; &c.

ment makes Mention of Ceremonial Washings or Baptisms, which were of divine Appointment under the *Old Testament*, but are now abrogate under the *New*. Thus *Heb. ix. 10.* The Apostle informs us, That the first Dispensation, stood in Meats, Drinks, and diverse Washings. But then 3dly, These Words are in the *New Testament*, most ordinarily understood, as signifying, *The solemn initiating Seal of God's Covenant of Grace, and all the Blessings thereof; appointed and instituted by God himself.* And so,

Baptism used among the Gentiles and Jews, before Christ. Thirdly, It deserves our Observation, That as the *Gentile Nations* used this Rite of Washing in their more Religious Performances; so the *Jews*, in later Times (1), and some think very early (2), admitted their instructed Profelytes, with their Children, by Sacrifice, Circumcision, and Baptism: But that the divine Sacrament of *Baptism* was instituted in Compliance with this Custom of the *Jews*, or with their Ceremonial Washings appointed by God himself, cannot, upon good Ground, be asserted, whatever some alledge. As it is uncertain when, or by whom this Custom of Baptising among them took Place; Yet this may be said, That Baptism being thus in Use among them, as an Initiating Rite, when it came to be practised as a Divine Ordinance, neither *Jews* nor *Gentiles* were offended thereat. And as to the *Jews*, it is noticeable, That when *John* came Baptising, and hereby solemnly received and admitted Disciples, the *Scribes* and *Pharisees* among them did not challenge him for his Bapti-

(1) See *Turret.* Vol. III. Page 428. *Frideaux* Historical Connections; Part II. Vol. II. *Jenkins* his Reasonableness of Christianity, Vol. II. Page 421. (2) Sir *John Floyer's* Essay to restore Dipping in Baptism, Page 33, to 42. *Gillespie's* Miscellany Questions, Page 216. *Heidegger* his *Corpus Theologiae Christiana* Tom. Last, Page 436. Section 22. citing *Genesis* 35. 2.

Baptising, but asked him, By what Authority he did this? So, *John* i. 25. And they asked him, and said unto him, *Why baptisest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that Prophet?* And from this *Text*, this also seems fairly deducible, That as the *Jews* looked for the *Messiah* particularly at this Time, and for *Elias*, or an Eminent Prophet, that should be a Forerunner to the *Messiah*; so they expected, That when these should come, they would solemnly admit and receive their Disciples by the Initiating Ordinance of Baptism. But if this their Expectation was founded upon these and the like Scriptures, *Isaiab* lii. 15. *Malachy* iv. 5, 6. or upon some other Tradition commonly received among them, I do not determine.

Fourthly and *Lastly*, we may observe, That *Baptism* is a *Sacrament* of the *New Testament*, Baptism, what it is. ordained by Jesus Christ, wherein he hath appointed the *Washing* with Water, *in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost* (a); to be unto the Party baptised, a Sign and Seal of his Interest in the Covenant of Grace (b), of his ingrafting into Christ (c), of Regeneration by the Spirit of Christ (d), of Remission of Sins by his Blood (e), of Adoption (f), and Resurrection unto Eternal Life (g), and whereby the Person or Parties baptised, are solemnly admitted into the visible Church (h), and enter into an open and professed Engagement to be wholly, and only the Lords, (i), (3).

And as to this Account of Baptism, it will not be improper that we notice in the Entry, what I hope will be more fully spoke of in the After-

B

part

(a) *Matth.* 28. 19. (b) *Rom.* 4. 11. (c) *Gal.* 3. 27. (d) *Eph.* 5. 26. *Titus* 3. 5. (e) *Mark* 1. 4. *Rev.* 1. 5. (f) *Gal.* 3. 26, 27. (g) *Rom.* 6. 4, 5. (h) *1 Cor.* 12. 13. (i) *Rom.* 6. 4. (3) See the Description of *Baptism*, in our *Confession*, and *Larger Catechism*.

Observes
on the De-
scription
given of
Baptism.

part of this Essay; *First*, That the Lord Jesus Christ, as he is the Author of it; so he hath appointed it to continue to the End of the World; *Matth.* xxviii. 18, 19. *2dly*, That by the Covenant, of which this Sacrament is a Sign and Seal; and the special Blessings thereof are mentioned in the Description it self; we are to understand God's everlasting, well ordered, and sure Covenant of Grace; even that Testament or Covenant mentioned, *Isaiab* lv. 3. *Jerem* xxxii. 31, 32, 33, 34. and *Heb.* viii. 10, 11, 12. All the Blessings whereof are really made over and sealed, and shall in due Time be applied to all such to whom the Grace of the Covenant belongeth, according to the sovereign Will and Eternal Counsel of God. *3dly*, We may notice, That this Ordinance of Baptism is a Sacrament of the *New Testament*, or *new Dispensation of this Covenant of Grace*; whereby it is distinguished from Circumcision, which was the Initiating Sign and Seal of the Old. *4thly*, That it is the First or Initiating Sacrament of this *New Testament*; whereby it is differenced from the *Lord's Supper*, which is the Second: *Baptism* being a Sign and Seal of our Regeneration, and being planted in Christ; but the *Lord's Supper* of our Increase in Grace, and Growing up in him. But then, *5thly*, I shall, in this *Chapter*, more especially and particularly enquire into these Things, and allow to each of them a particular *Section*. *1st*, Into the Author and Causes of *Baptism*. *2dly*, The Signs in it. *3dly*, The Things signified. *4thly*, In whose Name Persons are to be baptised. *5thly*, The Designs, or Ends, and Uses of it. And, *6thly*, The Consequences resulting from the Whole.



S E C T. I.

Of the Author, and Causes of BAPTISM.

I Am not here to Notice the various Kinds of Causes mentioned by the Learned, nor to stretch Matter for the Sake of Words, but to speak of these, as the Subject in Hand will allow.

First then, This Ordinance of Baptism is not of Men; not of their Devising, nor appointed by them: For, *First*, The Gospel, the Blessings whereof, this Sacrament applies and seals, is the *Gospel of the Blessed God*, 1 Tim. ii. 11. and so must the Seal of these Blessings be. *2dly*, As we have observed, It is GOD alone, and not Men, who can give and bestow these Blessings, and place a sure Connection betwixt the Signs and Things signified. And then, *3dly*, Because, 1 Cor. ii. 5. The Faith of the Church of God, must not stand in the Wisdom of Men, but in the Power of GOD.

Baptism is not of Men.

Secondly, The Lord Jesus Christ is the Glorious Author and Instituter of this Ordinance, who, as the Great King, only Head, Ruler and Governor of his Church, hath all Power and Authority in Heaven and Earth given unto him, that so he may ordain and appoint such Ordinances, as are for the Ingathering of his People, and Edifying of his Body, *Matth.* xxviii. 18, 19. And here these Three Things are to be observed. *1st*, That when it is said, That Jesus Christ is the Author of *Baptism*, this is not Excluding the *Father* and *Holy Spirit*, but rather Including and Comprehending these; for, 1 *John* v. 7. *The*

Christ the Author of Baptism,

yea, all the Persons of the Trinity.

A Practical Essay on

Father, the Word, and Spirit, are one. John x. 30. *Christ says, I and my Father are One.* Verse 38. *That ye may know and believe, that the Father is in me, and I in him.* And, John v. 19. *The Son can do Nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: For, what Things soever he doth, these also doth the Son likewise.* Hence, Luke iii. 2, 3. *John's Commission to baptise, is said to be from GOD.* Luke vii. 30. upon rejecting of *John's Baptism*, the *Pharisees and Lawyers* are said to *reject the Counsel of God, against themselves.* Matth. xxi. 25. *The Baptism of John is said, not to be of Men, but from Heaven.* And, Matth. iii. 16, 17. *All the Persons of the Glorious Trinity give Countenance and Testimony to John's Baptism.* Christ then, being equal to, and the same with the Father, and having Authority, as Redeemer, to appoint Ordinances, so, being truly and essentially God, he is every Way sufficient, and to the utmost, able; to give the Blessings signified by these, particularly by this of Baptism, to quicken and renew, *Eph. ii. 2, 5.* to forgive Sin, *Matth. ix. 2.* and so to bestow all other Covenant Blessings; and to Place a sure Connection betwixt the Signs, and Things signified. 2dly, We may observe, That tho' Christ did appoint this Ordinance of Baptism, yet he himself did not baptise, so it is said, *John iv. 2. That Jesus himself baptised not, but his Disciples.* And tho' it may seem too great Boldness in us to enquire into the Reasons of this, which no Doubt were infinitely wise and good; yet this may be humbly and modestly offered, That as our Lord was to baptise with the Holy Ghost; so had he personally baptised with Water? This, because of the Corruption of the Minds of Men, might have been an Occasion, to those baptised by him, to have rested upon the Deed done, as *Papists* do on their *Opus Operatum,*

Christ
did not
baptise,
and why.

ratum; and now thought, That they had nothing at all to do, or further to look to; seeing they were baptised by Christ himself. And as hereby they would have been in Hazard to have overlooked the Promise, by which the Blessings signified, are in their Application secured; so they would have been in no small Danger, to have undervalued and despised others, and reckoned themselves greater and more happy than they, who were only baptised by the Lord's sent Servants: Whereas, the Ordinance is still the same, as to all the Glorious Ends and Purposes of it, whether it is administrated by the Master himself, or his Servants commissioned by him. And from this we may take Occasion to bewail the Folly and Ignorance of some in our own Day, who speak, as if they boasted and laid too much Stress upon their being baptised by Ministers of more eminent Gifts and Graces than others: Whereby they give too much of the Glory to the Servant and Minister; which is only due to the Lord and Master, and bring themselves into the Snare of deceiving their own Souls, and despising others. Happy should we be, if Ministers were kept in their own Room, and God alone looked to and depended upon, in this and all other Ordinances of his Appointment. 3dly, We may here further Notice, That upon the first Divine Institution of this Ordinance of Baptism, it was specially and more immediately designed for the *Jews*: They, at that Time, being the only Visible Church of God, who had a Title and Right to the Seals of his Covenant. Hence our Lord says; *Matth. xv. 24.* That he was not sent; but to the lost Sheep of Israel, *i. e.* chiefly, and in the first Place to them. So, *Acts iii. 26.* Christ was raised up of God; and sent to bless them. And, *Acts xiii. 26.* The Apostles tell the *Jews*, That to them was the Word of this

Ministers not to be depended on.

Baptism designed first for the *Jews*.

A Practical Essay on

Salvation sent. And so we find, that *John came into the Land of Judea, and baptised the Jews only who came unto him.* But when the Partition Wall betwixt *Jews and Gentiles* was broken down, and one Gospel Church to be made of both, then, was the Sacrament of Baptism extended to all Nations, *Matth. xxviii. 19. Go Teach and Baptise all Nations.*

Baptism
extended
to the
Gentiles.

The Rise
and Ori-
ginal of
Baptism.

3dly, The Motive engaging to appoint, or the Fountain and Rise of appointing this Ordinance of Baptism, to which some give the Name of *Moving Cause*, is God's matchless Love, his rich Grace and Good-will to the Sons of Men. Doubtless, all the Promises of the Covenant are, by the efficacious Merit and Mediation of Christ, the unchangeable Purpose of God, and his infinite Faithfulness, made irreversibly sure to all the Seed; yet so boundless is our God's Love, so rich is his Grace, and so wondrous is his Condescension to our Infirmary and Weakness, that he is pleased to confirm and ratify these Promises, by giving visible Pledges of our Interest in them, and the certain Application of them to us: That hereby our weak Faith may be strengthened, and we more excited to all Duties of Gratitude and Thankfulness. We want many Helps to our Faith, and Excitements to our Religious and Christian Duties, and the Lord is not wanting to us in either of these, affording us all the Means that are either necessary or proper for these Ends.

Admini-
strators of
Baptism.

Fourthly, The Administrators of this Ordinance of *Baptism*, which some are pleased to call the *Instrumental Causes*, are Gospel Ministers, sent and authorized by him, to administrate this. And these are either extraordinary, as to their Commission, Qualifications, and great Work committed to them, and therefore now ceased, such as *Apostles*, *Matth. xxviii. 18. John. iv. 1, 2.* and

and *Evangelists*, *Acts* viii. 38. Or ordinary, as *Pastors*, *Teachers* or *Doctors*, *Eph.* iv. 11. to whom the Commission, *Matth.* xxviii. 19. cannot but extend, seeing the Administration of this Ordinance was to remain to the End of the World; whereas, the extraordinary Offices of *Apostles* and *Evangelists* ceased with themselves, and their laying the Foundation of the Gospel Church.

It is in this Place I shall observe, That the First who was sent to baptise was *John*, and for this Cause called *John the Baptist*, *Matth.* iii. 1. *Matth.* xi. 11. 12. *Mark* vi. 14. *Luke* vii. 20. And Baptism administrated by him, was called *the Baptism of John*, *Matth.* xxi. 25. *Acts* i. 22. Not as if he was the Author, but because he was the Minister and Administrator, having his Commission from God, and sent by him to baptise, *Luke* xiii. 2, 3, 4. *John* i. 33. for so the Apostle calls the Gospel, *his Gospel*, *Rom.* ii. 16. But sure it is, that the Apostle was not the Author, but a Preacher of this Gospel.

But for our better understanding of this Baptism of *John*, we are moreover to consider, that tho' this, and that which was afterward more expressly instituted by *Christ*, and committed to Apostles, as extraordinary Officers; and to Pastors and Teachers, as ordinary, and only Successors to the Apostles; did differ first as to the Circumstance of Time, *John* baptising into *Christ* that was to come, and then presently and publickly appearing in the World. But the Apostles and others after them, into *Christ* who was come, slain, buried, arisen, and ascended into Glory.

2dly, As to the Degree of the Revelation of the great Gospel Mystery: When *John* baptised, this was indeed breaking forth in its Glory; but when the Apostles did, it was full and clear.

3dly, They differed as to the Measure of the Spi-

John the Baptist why so called.

The Baptism of *Christ* and *John* differ as to some Things.

rit's Influences, in his Gifts and Graces; that of *John* being attended with less, this of the Apostles with a greater Degree thereof, *Matth.* iii. 11. *Mark* i. 2, 3, 4. *Luke* i. 76. yet both these Baptisms did agree, and were the same as to all Substantials and Essentials of a Gospel Sacrament. For, *First*, They have the same Author, *John* i. 33. *Matth.* xxviii. 19. *2dly*, The same Signs and significant Actions, *viz.* *Water* and *Washing* with it, *Matth.* iii. 11. *Col.* ii. 12. *3dly*, By both were the same Blessings represented, applied and sealed, *Luke* iii. 3. *Acts* ii. 38, 39. *Acts* xix. 4. *4thly*, Both were administrated in the Name of the *Lord Jesus*, *Acts* xix. 4, 5. *Acts* viii. 16. *5thly*, In the Adult, or those come to Age, the same Things were required of those who were to be baptised; *John* preached *Christ*, and Salvation by Faith in the *Lord Jesus*, *John* iii. 16, 36. and required of those who came to be baptised of him, That they should repent, change their Mind, and come to a better and more sound Judgment, as to the great Things of their Salvation. And so did the Apostles, *Acts* xvi. 30, 31. *Matth.* iii. 8. *Luke* iii. 8. *Mark* xvi. 15, 16. *Acts* ii. 38. *Acts* xiii. 24. *Acts* xv. 4. And then *6thly*, The same consequential Duties were required of those whom *John* baptised, that were demanded of them, to whom the Apostles administrated this Ordinance, *Matth.* iii. 8. *Luke* iii. 8. *Acts* ii. 40. *Col.* ii. 6, 12.

They are the same as to Essentials.

Objections answered.

Those who are otherwise minded, object against *John's* Baptism being the same with *Christ's* these two Things; especially, *First*, Because *John* did not baptise in the Name of the Holy Trinity. Of this more will be said in its proper Place, and at the Time it may suffice to say, How do they know he did not? Either virtually at least, or explicitly: Yea, it is very presume-

presumeable he did so baptise, seeing he was so well acquaint with this Mystery. He knew he was sent of God, That he was the Forerunner of Christ, and testified of him, and that Christ should baptise with the Holy Ghost. And *Matth. iii. 16, 17.* He heard the Father testify of the Son, he beheld the Son testified of, and saw the Holy Ghost descending from Heaven like a Dove, and lighting upon him. And if it is replied, That it is not expressly said in Scripture, that *John* did baptise in Name of the Trinity; to this the Return is very obvious, That neither is it expressly said, That the Apostles, when they baptised, made Mention of their doing this in the Name of the *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*; yet the Objection supposes, and the Objectors grant, That they kept close to the Commission given them, *Matth. xxviii. 19, 20.* But the 2d and great Objection against this, is, That *Paul* baptised certain Disciples whom he found at *Ephesus*, who had before this been baptised with *John's* Baptism, *Acts xix. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5.* which surely he would not have done, had the Baptism of *John* been the same with that of *Christ*.

Answer, According to the Variety of Interpretations of this Place of Scripture, so are the Answers to this Objection. I shall only observe, That it cannot be denied, but that some, not only of the Fathers, but also of our most eminent Protestant Divines (4), have thought, that these Disciples were indeed rebaptised by *Paul*. But these also say, That the Baptism of *John* where-with these were baptised, was not rightly or duly administrated, there being an essential Defect in it, either as to the Form of Administration, or the Persons who baptised them. But we are not tied to the Thoughts of particular Men, however otherwise

(1) See *Zanchius Miscel. Lib. 8. Pag. 571, 572.* and *Bucan. Pag. 611.*

otherwise Great and Learned. And therefore, 2dly, The Body of Protestant Divines deny, that these were rebaptised by *Paul*, and understand the 5th Verse, where it is said, *That they were baptised in the Name of the Lord Jesus*, not as the Words of *Luke* the Historian, informing us, That *Paul* did so baptise these: But as the Words of the Apostle himself, declaring, *That those who heard John preach Repentance, and Faith in the Lord Jesus, were, by John, baptised in the Name of the Lord.* And whereas these Disciples say, *Verse 2.* That they had not so much as heard whether there was any Holy Ghost; the Meaning is not, That they did not know the Existence of the Holy Spirit, of whom they could not be ignorant, seeing *John* so plainly and expressly spoke of him, *Matth. iii. 11.* Nor, as if these had been utter Strangers to the Influences of the holy Spirit, necessary to Salvation; but, that they were as yet unacquainted with the extraordinary Effusions of the Holy Ghost in his extraordinary Gifts and Operations; which in that infant and growing State of the Church did very much abound. And that they might so have the Spirit, *Paul laid his Hands on them*, *Verse 6.* Thus, the *Samaritanes* whom *Philip* baptised, *Acts viii. 12.* it is said expressly of them, *That as yet the Holy Ghost was fallen upon none of them, only they were baptised in the Name of the Lord Jesus*, *Ver. 15, 16.* which cannot be understood, as if all of them had been utterly estranged from the Graces of the Spirit, necessary to Believers as such, for, *they did believe*, *Ver. 12, 13.* but it must be understood of his extraordinary Operations. And that they might enjoy these, the Apostles laid their Hands on them, *Ver. 17.*

The Design of
Baptism.

I should now in the last Place take Notice of the Ends and Designs of Baptism, to which some are

are pleased to give the Name of *Final Cause* ; but this I reserve as the Subject of a distinct Section, and shall therefore proceed to notice some- things from what hath been said.

And *First*, We may learn therefrom God's great Goodness and rich Grace to his Church and People, in his giving from this such visible Pledges of his Love and Mercy to them. These he gave in the very Dawnings and infant State of *Christianity*, and has appointed them to remain with his Church unto the End of the World. How astonishing must his Condescension be to our Infirmary, that he not only causeth us to draw near to himself, receiveth us, and bringeth us within the Bond of his *Covenant* ; but also appoints an initiating Ordinance, solemnly declaring this our Reception, and irreversibly sealing all the Blessings of that *Covenant* to us, and us to the *Day of Redemption* ! O ! How should our Souls be filled with a grateful Sense of his unspeakable Goodness, and our Mouths with his Praises all the Day long !

Inferences.

Here the Riches of Grace.

Secondly, We may here observe a sure Foundation laid for our Faith. For, hath Christ who is God, and to whom *all Power in Heaven and Earth is given*, and he, who is the *Master of his own House*, appointed this *Sacrament of Baptism* ; then surely Ministers may administer, and others partake of it *in Faith*, being fully perswaded it is not uninstituted Worship they are employed in, but that which is ordained of God, and warranted by him.

A Foundation for our Faith.

Thirdly, We may hence learn the Awfulness and Majesty of this Ordinance, being an Institution of the *highest Lord*, who is *King of Kings*, the *Mighty God*, the *everlasting Father*, and the *Prince of Peace* ; it hath his Authority imprinted upon it ; it contains the greatest Things, it hath the most august Consequence, is designed for

The Awfulness of Baptism.

A practical Essay on

for the greatest Purposes, and brings us poor Sinners under the most solemn Obligations: So that we are not to trifle therewith, but to put an high and just Value thereupon. Hence,

'Tis to
be gone
about
with Re-
verence.

4thly, With what Reverence and holy Fear should this Ordinance be gone about by all concerned. Surely Ministers should take heed, what and how they do, when they administer an Ordinance of Heaven; those come to Age should narrowly look to themselves, seeing now they receive it; Parents should watch over their own Spirits, when they bring their Infants to it, and Spectators should attend and join with Gravity, while they behold it. Hence,

Irre-
verence of
many, la-
mentable.

Fifthly, From this we may take Occasion to bewail and lament the thoughtless, irreverent, and regardless Temper of many, who rush into this solemn Part of Divine Worship, not considering whose it is, who sees and observes them, and will surely avenge himself on those who rudely treat his own holy Institutions. Many, yea, very many, reflect not what they are going about, what the great Jehovah is calling them to; That *great Fear is due unto the Lord, in the Meetings of his Saints, and he is to be had in Reverence by all that are about him.* How deeply guilty then are many in our Generation, and how much to be lamented over, who treat this solemn Ordinance with the same Irreverence and Disrespect that they do the solemn Blessing which Ministers, in the Name of the Lord, at the Close of publick Worship, pronounce upon the Congregation: For, as then, the most Part are on Foot, and striving how to get soon out of the Place of Worship, as if they were afraid to be blessed, or indifferent about it; so here, no sooner is Baptism to be administrated, than as soon they become cold and weary; it is a Burden to them; and, without any pressing Necessity, they
haste

haste away, as if this Ordinance was not worthy of their Attendance: And if at any Time they stay until the Administration be over, O! what unbecoming Confusion is to be observed in the Time of Prayer, and Thanksgiving thereafter, as if that was none of their Business! O Men! O Christians! do you thus treat the most solemn Part of the Lord's Worship? Do you thus requite the Lord for his great Goodness? Do you thus show what you are, and act a most unbecoming Part to your holy Profession, and that holy Name by which you are called? And finally, is this all the Concern you have for your own Souls, and the Success of God's holy Ordinances? O! that Men would think and consider.

Sixthly, Has an infinitely wise and faithful God appointed this Ordinance of Baptism? then how daring and bold must those be, who think to better and amend it, whether this be by taking therefrom, or adding thereto? This surely is an Impeachment of his infinite Wisdom and Faithfulness, and Dishonouring to his Majesty; and surely the Ordinances of God are in more Danger from our Folly, lest we abuse them, than in Need of our Wisdom to better or amend them. We are not to be wiser than God, or think to make his Institutions more compleat than he has made them.

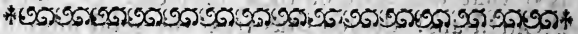
Baptism
not to be
added to.

Seventhly, We may learn from what hath been said, what Place we are to give to Ministers in this Ordinance of Baptism, and what Apprehensions we are to have of them, while they, and they only, administer the same. We are not to look upon them as Masters, who institute this Ordinance, who can give the Blessings signified thereby, and upon whom the Efficacy thereof depends; but as Servants and Ministers, who only execute their Commission, and do what their great Lord and Master commands them.

Ministers
how to be
considered
in Bap-
tism.

And

And yet, because they are such, and bear such a Part in this great and very concerning Affair, we are to esteem highly in the Lord, for their Master and their Work's Sake.



S E C T. II.

Of the Signs in Baptism.

THAT the Subject of this Section may be more distinctly understood, I shall consider the general Nature, and some of the particular Kinds of Signs. A Sign then is that, or those Things, which being first presented to the Senses, and by them conveyed to the Understanding, do offer to the Judgment and Minds of Men something else to be understood thereby. As in the Lord's Supper, Bread and Wine are Signs presented to our Senses, but the Body and Blood of Christ are the Things signified, and thereby represented to our Mind.

A Sign
what.

Various
Kinds of
Signs.

Signs, as to their Kind, are either *natural*, as the Day-breaking is a Sign of the Sun's Rising; or *arbitrary*, and that either by *Divine*, or *Human* Institution: It is of divinely instituted Signs I here speak. And these may be considered, *First*, With Respect to the Things signified. And they are first of Things that are past, and are called Rememerative. *2dly*, Of Things present, and are Demonstrative. *3dly*, Of Things to come, and are Prenunciative. Or, *4thly*, Such Things as are composed of all these three, so here: For, in this Ordinance, we are remembered of our original Guilt and Pollution, and of Christ's compleat Satisfaction; by this are pointed out to us the Value, Virtue and Efficacy of the

The Sacrament of Baptism.

31

the Blood and Spirit of Christ, to cleanse from the Guilt of Sin, and Pollution of our Natures; and by this we are assured of our standing in the Lord's Grace for Time to come, and being kept by his Power through Faith unto Salvation.

2dly, Signs are again considered as to their Use. And, *First*, They are such as specially respect the Understanding; and so they are called, Notifying. 2dly, As respect the Memory, and so they are Commemorating. 3dly, The strengthening of our Faith; and so they are Sealing and Confirming: Or, 4thly, They are of Use as to all these three; and so they are here: For, by this, the Things signified are represented, that we may discern and apprehend them: This Ordinance is of special Use to keep for ever upon the Imagination of our Hearts, our Misery in the Sight of God, and his Grace and Mercy to us; and because they apply and seal, hereby they strengthen our Faith, that we have a Right to all, and shall, in God's due Time, and appointed Method, be put in Possession of all: But how far this Right is extended, so as necessarily to infer Possession, will, I hope, be considered afterward.

The Signs in Baptism that are instituted by Christ, are principally these two. *First*, Water, and 2dly, Washing with it; these are applied to the Body, while the Things signified bear a Respect to the whole Man, especially to the Soul. And as to these, four Things may be observed.

First, That here there is washing only with Water; for so *John* Baptised, *Matt.* iii. 11. *John* i. 33. And so the Apostles practised, *Acts* viii. 36. *Acts* x. 47. Nor is this Element to be changed, either, *First*, Upon Pretence of Necessity, supposing a Company of Persons in a dry and barren Desert, where Infants are born, or those come to Age, are converted to the Faith of

The Signs
in Bap-
tism.

Water
only to be
used.

Not to
be chang-
ed.

of Christ, and yet no Water to be had, that they may be baptised; this, I say, will not allow a Change of this Element; more than Infants born in a rigid and stormy Season, at a very great Distance from the publick Place of Worship, so that they cannot carry the Infant thither, nor can the Minister repair where the Child is, will permit private Persons, whether Men or Women, to baptise. For as under the Law, the Children of *Israel* were, by the Command of God, to offer in Sacrifice, only these Beasts that were clean; so upon no Pretence of Necessity, or Want of Beasts that were clean, were they to offer up such as were unclean: Thus it is here. 'Tis true, this is their Loss; yet when the Want of a Gospel Ordinance is involuntary, and an invincible Stop put to the Enjoyment thereof; in this Case, a good and merciful God makes up by his inward Grace, what is wanting as to the external Ordinance. Nor, *2dly*, Is this Element of Water to be changed, because of the external and worldly Greatness of the Person to be baptised: For as there is but one Baptism to the whole visible Church of God; so there is no Respect of Persons with him: But *whether they be Jews or Greeks, Bond or Free, Male or Female, High or Low, Rich or Poor, all are one in Christ Jesus.* Eph. iv. 3. Gal. iii. 8. Yet, in Regard of the Things signified, it is highly proper that it be not nasty and vile, but pure and clean Water. *Heb. x. 22.*

Yet not
Water
simply
conside-
red.

Secondly, We may observe, That it is not Water simply considered; that is here the Sign, nor yet a mere washing with it; for then every washing with Water should be baptising in a Sacramental Sense: But it is Water, and washing with it in this holy Ordinance, according to Christ's Appointment, for holy Ends, that is here to be eyed. And because it is so used, therefore is it

said

said to be sanctified, consecrated, or set apart: For so under the Law, Persons and Things were said to be sanctified, consecrated, or set apart; when by the Lord's Command these were employed in his holy and instituted Worship and Service. Here then there is no inherent nor mystical Holiness (may I so call it) in the Water itself; but only a Sanctification of it in its Use, according to the Divine Appointment. Again; it is Water, and washing with it; upon which the Administrator prays for a special Blessing from Heaven, that so the Person baptized may savingly obtain all these Blessings that are represented thereby. And finally, it is a *washing with Water, in the Name of the Father, Son, and holy Ghost.* Matt. 28. 19.

Thirdly, We may notice, That there is a pleasant Likeness and Similitude betwixt the Signs, and the Thing signified: For, *First,* Water is of a cleansing Nature, and washing with it, makes clean what before was polluted and impure; so the Blood and Spirit of Christ are of a purifying Vertue, and cleanse the Sinner from the Guilt and Pollution of his Iniquity, *1 John* i. 7. *Rom.* iii. 25. *Tit.* iii. 5. *2dly,* Water is open and free to all Kinds and Degrees of Men, whether *Jew* or *Gentile*, High or Low. So are the great Things hereby pointed out, *Zech.* xii. 9, 10. *John* vii. 37, 38, 39. And then, *3dly,* As there must be an using of Water, and washing therewith, before the Advantages that result therefrom be obtained; so there must be an Application of the Blood of Christ in its Value and Efficacy, and the Operation of the Spirit of Christ, before the Blessings that result from these can be enjoyed.

Fourthly, and lastly, it may be observed, That tho' there is no physical Change of the Signs into the Thing signified, nor is any pretended,

The Similitude betwixt the Signs & Things signified.

The Relation betwixt them.

nor can any be; yet there is such a Sacramental Relation, by divine Institution, placed betwixt them: As *First*, These Signs do really declare and exhibit the Blessings signified, *Acts* xxii. 16. *2dly*, They make over these, and apply them; *1 Pet.* iii. 21. And *3dly*, Seal and ratify them; *Rom.* iv. 11. *Rom.* vi. 4. *Col.* ii. 12.

Inferences from this.

I. The Simplicity of the Gospel Worship.

And from what hath been now said, we may be informed, *First*, Of the Simplicity of the Gospel and New Testament Worship; we are now freed from that heavy Yoke of burdensome Legal Ceremonies, *which neither we nor our Fathers were able to bear, Acts* xv. 8. *Gal.* v. 1. Much more are we at Liberty from the Impositions of Men in the Things of God. For here we may observe, that our Lord uses the most simple, plain, and easy Signs, and that in a very solemn and awful Part of Worship. Nor can it be accounted for, that when we are now set free from these Things, which were once the Command of our infinitely wise Sovereign and Creator, we should be left to be imposed upon at the Discretion of the very fallible and sinful Creature.

II. Great Blessings depend not upon splendid Means.

Secondly, We may here learn, That the Lord's giving the greatest Blessings, depends not upon the Greatness and Splendour of outward Means; for nothing can be more ordinary than *Water* and *Washing* with it; nor is there any Thing more remote from all Manner of Pomp and Ceremony than this; and yet hereby the Great JEHOVAH exhibiteth, applies, and Seals the great Things of his well ordered and everlasting Covenant.

The Admissions of Men to the Lord's Institutions disproven.

Thirdly, From this, the proud and High-minded Error of these is justly condemned, who are not content with the plain Signs our Lord has appointed, and also used himself; but make Admissions of their own thereto. For 'tis observed

(6), That after the Second Century, the Primitive Church gradually declining from the Apostolick Simplicity, added to *Water* in *Baptism*, *Oil*, *Milk* and *Honey*; which Things they looked upon as indifferent, and so left them to be used or omitted, as was thought expedient; but the *Church of Rome* have moreover added to these, *Salt* and *Spittle*, and urge the Significancy and Observance thereof, as necessary to the right Administration of this Ordinance: But, as such Things were never instituted by the Lord *Jesus Christ*, nor practised by his Apostles, and therefore cannot be gone about *in Faith* of being acceptable Service; so they are against God's most solemn Prohibition, *Deut. xii. 32.* are condemned by him as *Vain-worship*, *Matth. xv. 9.* And by the Apostles, *Col. ii. 22.* *Acts xv. 10.* *Gal. v. 1.* And are wholly useles to the great Ends and Designs of this Sacrament, seeing none can make Signs, to signify, apply, and seal spiritual Blessings, but he who is *the Father of Spirits*, who can bestow these Blessings, and by his Authority place a real Connexion betwixt Signs and the Blessings signified: This only is the Prerogative of the Great *JEHOVAH*. Nor are Men to be wiser than *Christ*, who is infinitely wise, and knows best what is most meet to be used in his own Ordinance; neither is every Thing good that is old, nor is the Dignity and Decency of a Sacrament to be determined by, or esteemed according to the vain Thoughts, and luxuriant Fancies of Men, which rather profane than perfect, abuse than adorn his Ordinances; but according to the *Mind* and *Word* of the *Lord* and *Lawgiver* himself. And finally, Shall these be allow'd? Then a large Door is opened to the fruitful and restless Imaginations of Men, always to be making new

C 2

Additi-

Additions to God's Institutions, and new Impositions upon his Church.

The Meets-
ness of the
Signs of
Baptism.

Fourthly, We may further here observe the infinite *Wisdom* of God, in the Choice of meet and proper Signs, with Relation to the Things signified and designed thereby. This is evident in *Circumcision* and the *Paschal Lamb* under the *Old Testament*, and in the *LORD's Supper* and this *Ordinance of Baptism*, now under the *New Dispensation*: For, as *Water* and *Washing* therewith, do naturally lead us in to behold our natural Pollution; so they do very fitly represent our spiritual Cleansing.

The
Goodness
of God
herein.

Fifthly, and *Lastly*, We may here, with thankful Hearts, behold a surprising Instance of divine Goodness and Condescendency, in appointing such common and ordinary Things to be used as Signs in this Sacrament, to which his Church and People, in their poorest and lowest Circumstances, may have Access: For, what is more common and free than *Water*; and what more freely allowed to the rational World than *Washing* therewith? Surely, all the Ordmances of God, and this Sacrament in particular, proclaim his boundless Mercy, show forth his infinite Goodness, and declare the Riches and Freedom of his wondrous Grace to the Sons of Men.

SECTION III.

Of the Things signified by Water, and Washing with it, in Baptism.

HERE in the Entry we may observe, That it is God alone who limits the Signification and Use of all these Signs he hath appointed

to be used in his Worship and Service: For, he alone is Lord and Master in his own House; he only bestows the good Things signified: And therefore, none but God can make Signs really to apply and seal to his People, and to exhibit and represent to their spiritual Discerning and Faith, the Blessings intended and designed to be by such Signs, so represented, applied and sealed. And for this Cause, we are not to take out of divine Ordinances what God hath put into them, nor are we to put that in them which the Lord hath not furnished them with; for it is daring Arrogance in Men, dishonouring and offensive to God, injurious to the Truth, leads others into Error, and gives Enemies Occasion to speak against our holy Religion, as if it was only such as Men are pleased to make it. Now, in the *New Testament* God hath instituted his holy Sacraments, and appointed that they should exhibit, apply and seal to his People, the Grace which he intendeth and designeth to bestow thereby. In viewing then what is signified by the Signs in Baptism, we are carefully and only to attend to the *Word of God*, that by this we may know what he willeth should be declared and sealed thereby.

Here the Significancy and Use of Signs is from God.

And here I shall begin with that which is common and more general; That by *Water*, and *washing* with it in *Baptism*, is declared and signified the Admission of the Person baptised into God's Visible Church; so *Christ* is said to make Disciples, *John* iv. 1, 2. and *Acts* ii. 41. the Baptised are said to be *added unto the Church*: But as to this, there is a great Disparity betwixt *Infidels*, and *Infants of Church Members*; the First are received into the Church where they were not before; but the Last being Fœderally holy, *1 Cor.* vii. 14. they, antecedently to their Baptism, are real Members of the Church of God,

What is signified in Baptism.
I. Publick Admission into the Visible Church.

A Practical Essay on

God, and have a Right to the Privileges thereof. And so their Admission into this, is by Baptism solemnly declared, and publickly ratified.

II. U-
nion to
Christ.

Secondly, By Baptism, is signified and sealed Union to, and Communion with *Christ*: So *Rom. vi. 3, 4.* Persons are expressly said to be baptised *into Christ*, and *into his Death*. And *Gal. iii. 27.* the Apostle says, *For as many of you, as have been baptised into Christ, have put on Christ*; whereby, *being baptised into Christ*, we are not only to understand, a Being devoted to him, engaged and bound over to be like Christ, and for Christ, to make Profession of and adhere to Christ, obey, love and for ever serve him; and a Being so in Christ as the *Branch is in the Vine*, whereby we grow up in all Things in him, who is the Head; but especially a being so baptised into him, as that we are hereby so declared One with him our alone Surety, Head and Representative, as that we come to have a formal Right to, and in the Lord's due Time, are brought to enjoy all the great and saving Blessings that flow from the Value and Merit of his Undertaking, Doing, and Suffering. And so we put on Christ, not only in Point of Profession of Him, wearing his Badge; nor yet only of Likeness and Similitude to him, being conform to his Image, but specially and principally as to his complete Righteousness, hereby made over and sealed to us. It is by this we are cloathed and covered, that we may not appear naked before the awful Bar of the Great God; by this only we are absolved and acquitted, and have an everlasting Title to everlasting Life. And so,

III. Par-
don.

Thirdly, Hereby is pointed out to us the Pardon of Sin; a full, free, and final Absolution from the Guilt of these Transgressions that are past, and a sure Foundation laid for the Forgiveness of these Iniquities that are to come, being
by

by Baptism represented, made over and sealed to all those who by the Father were given to Christ, *Acts ii. 38. Repent and be baptised every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the Remission of Sins.*

Fourthly, Hereby also is signified Adoption, or the Baptised his being received into the Number, and having a Right to all the Privileges of the Sons of God: So that in all the After-dispensations of God, they are considered as his peculiar People and special Heirs; either now, or designed in God's holy and appointed Time, to be actually and formally made so. This is evident from that Connexion, *Gal. iii. 26, 27. Ye are all the Children of God, by Faith in Christ; for as many of you as have been baptised into Christ, have put on Christ.* For,

IV. Adoption.

Fifthly, By this Ordinance is signified our spiritual Birth and Regeneration; being now washed from the inherent Power and Dominion of Sin, being made conform to the Image of our heavenly Father, having the new Nature, and so made new Creatures, as that all the Powers of the Soul are so disposed, and the whole Man so framed and fashioned, as to act in a spiritual Manner, according to the *Word and Will* of God; and by his Grace made to go on from Strength to Strength, until at last they appear before God in Zion, which is above. So says the Apostle, *Rom. vi. 4. Therefore we are buried with him by Baptism into Death; that like as Christ was raised up from the Dead by the Glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in Newness of Life.* Verse 5. *For if we have been planted together in the Likeness of his Death, we shall be also in the Likeness of his Resurrection.* Verse 6. *Knowing this, that our old Man is crucified with him, that the Body of Sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve*

V. Regeneration.

Sin. And seeing all the above-named Benefits are signified and sealed by Baptism, it necessarily follows, by Virtue of that golden Chain, *Rom. viii. 30.* That hereby also must be represented to us our Resurrection at the last Day, to Life eternal, when our Bodies shall be made like unto Christ's glorious Body, and we, as to the whole Man, arrive at the heavenly *Canaan*, where we shall have the immediate, full, and uninterrupted Enjoyment of God to all Eternity.

VI. The Blood and Spirit of Christ.

Sixthly, Whereas we are Partakers of all the forementioned Blessings, as the Merit and Fruit of the Obedience and Blood of Christ, and by the inward effectual Operation of his holy Spirit applying these to us, and bringing us to the Possession of them: Therefore, what the Signs in Baptism primarily and principally signify, is, the Blood and Spirit of Christ purifying and cleansing from the Guilt and Pollution of Sin: For, as it is the Value and Merit of the Blood and Death of Christ, as the finishing Stroke of his Obedience, whereby our Sins are pardoned, and our Persons justified; so it is by the Power and Efficacy of the divine and irresistibly working Spirit of Christ, whereby indwelling Sin is subdued, and our Persons sanctified. And both these are here fitly represented, *Rom. vi. 3. 1 Cor. vi. 11. Col. ii. 12. Titus iii. 5, 6. 1 John i. 7. 1 Pet. i. 2.*

VII. The Dedication of the Person baptised to the Lord.

Seventhly, As a Consequent from the Whole, hereby is also signified and pointed out the Dedication of the Person baptised unto the Lord; and so, his coming under special and solemn Obligations to be the Lord's, and to walk worthy of him unto all well Pleasing, living a Life of Faith on the Son of God, rejoicing in him, cleaving to and abiding in him; and thus performing all the Parts of new and holy Obedience. This the Apostle asserts, *Rom. vi. 4, 6, 11.* And the Nature

Nature of the Ordinance pleads for it: For if God become our God, then surely we are his People. I do not say, that Infants baptised do explicitly, formally, and in their own Persons come under this Engagement, for this they are not capable of; but that by this Ordinance, and the great Things signified thereby, they are really and as strongly bound to be the Lord's, and his only, as if they had personally and expressly obliged themselves hereto by the most solemn and positive Promises. But of this more afterward, and how far Baptism does sayingly apply to the Persons baptised, all these Blessings signified, will I hope be considered, when I come to speak to the Efficacy of this Sacrament.

And from what hath been said, we may be informed of our natural Pollution and Impunity; for, here is an Ordinance instituted, for signifying and pointing out our Purification and Cleansing; but it is not that which is pure, but what is contaminate and defiled that needs to be washed. And all Mankind, by Nature, are abominable and unclean, because of Guilt; and polluted and vile, because of indwelling Sin; *Job. xiv. 4. Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27. Rom. v. 19.*

Inferences from this.

I. Our Natural Pollution.

Secondly, Here we may behold God's infinite Grace and Mercy: For as he hath provided a Remedy most suitable to our Malady; so he hath appointed an Ordinance, whereby we come, by his Blessing, to have this Remedy applied, and in the most solemn Manner, to have the Renewing of our Natures, Pardon of our Sins, Justification of our Persons, and the Sanctification and Salvation of the whole Man made over and sealed to us.

II. The Lord's rich Grace and Mercy.

Thirdly, Here we cannot but observe the Usefulness and Excellency of this Ordinance of Baptism. The Utility and Dignity of any Thing is to be reckoned from its Author, Contents, Uses, Ends,

III. The Usefulness and Excellency of Baptism.

Ends, Effects, and Suitableness to the Persons concerned therein. Seeing then, Baptism contains the greatest Things, signifies and points out the most valuable and sure Mercies, and all these exactly suited to our Misery and Perpetuity, surely we cannot but infer, That it is an Ordinance most excellent in it self, and in a more than ordinary Measure useful to us : And so,

IV. The Happiness of those to whom it is blessed.

Fourthly, How unspeakably happy must those be to whom this Ordinance is blessed, seeing they have all the valuable, eternal and saving Advantages that are here signified and represented, made over, and sealed unto them. Surely, *the Lines fall into pleasant Places to such; and they have a goodly Heritage*, who have Union with Christ, Pardon, Adoption, a glorious Resurrection, and an exceeding and eternal *Weight of Glory* so solemnly disposed, and so irreversibly secured to them, as is by this Ordinance.

V. It is a Sign of the whole Covenant.

Fifthly, We may here be informed, That *Baptism* is justly reckoned a Sign of the whole Covenant of Grace, seeing all the Blessings of that Covenant are hereby signified and represented; the procuring and applying Cause of these Blessings are here pointed out; the everlasting Nature of this Covenant, and the Continuance of God's People in it, are hereby declared; and then, the Duties that ly upon them as a covenanted People, are by this Ordinance proclaimed and inviolably secured, and the Freeness, Fulness and Suitableness of this Covenant, are by this published and laid open to the Sons of Men.

VI. We are to look to the Things signified.

Sixthly, Here we may further learn, where our Eyes should be principally set, and our Thoughts fixed, when we think on, partake of, or behold the Administration of this Sacrament; not upon the Signs only, neither upon the Baptised, or Person baptising, but specially and principally upon the great and valuable Things that are

are hereby signified: For, as in all the Ordinances of God, it is not the outward Sign, but the inward Grace, that is to be specially and principally considered; so it is this only, that can answer our necessitous Condition, and calamitous Circumstances, and is chiefly intended and designed.

Seventhly, Are such great Things signified by *Baptism*; then surely it is a very serious Action. It is to be remarked, That all Actions of special Import to Men, are, and have been managed, in good Earnest, with Concern and Gravity; and here is that which is of the greatest Moment; it respects the whole Man and our Eternal State; it contains and signifies the everlasting and saving Blessings of God's Covenant, is an Ordinance of God's Appointment, and of the most momentous Use: Surely then, it is not to be overly administrated, by reading or saying a few Prayers, and pronouncing a few *Words* in a careless Manner; nor is it to be received or beheld in an indifferent and unconcerned *Way*, but with Reverence, Faith and Holy Fear. But of this, more in its proper Place.

VII. It is a most serious Action.

Eighthly, Does this Ordinance signify our Union to Christ, and being ingrafted into him, then here we may observe a pleasant Ground of, and a strong and perswading Argument to Unity among baptised and professing Christians. Not an Unity in uninstituted and pretended necessary and significant Rites and Ceremonies, nor yet an Union in meer Words and Syllables; for, that is *Will-worship*, and this is *Hypocrisy*; but a being one in Faith, Love, Hope, and spiritual Endeavours; such an Unity as engages to sympathise with, aid, support, supply, pray for, forbear and forgive one another. And the Argument is strong, because, *Eph. iv. 3, 4. There is one Body, one Spirit, one Hope of our Calling, one Lord, one Faith, and one Baptism.* And, *1 Cor.*

VIII. It persuades to Unity.

xii. 13. *By one Spirit we are all baptised into one Body.* Should we not then, as Members of that one Body into which we are baptised, pity, help, and do all kind Offices one to another. Not grudging at, or bearing hard one upon another, because all the Members are not of the same Shape, nor bear the same Office, and so act not in the same Things; but, we should *Love as Brethren, being of one Mind, pitiful, and having Compassion one of another,* 1 Pet. iii. 8. Nor is there any Thing more undecent, unnatural, and frightful, than to behold Members of the same Body indifferent about one another, jarring and fighting against, and so destroying one another. But alas! Men consider not.

IX. And
to Thank-
fulness.

Ninthly, We may, from what hath been said on the Things signified by *Baptism*, be further instructed in the strongest Obligations that ly upon baptised Christians to the greatest Thankfulness. For, seeing hereby God does signify and represent the greatest Blessings, yea, make over and seal these to us, poor guilty, condemned, unholy, and lost Sinners: How then should we adore his Grace, admire his Goodness, proclaim his Mercy, with joyful Hearts, sing forth his Praise, and for ever act and live to his Glory.

Why
Christ
was bapti-
sed.

And now, *Lastly,* From what hath been said, we may take Occasion, humbly and modestly to enquire, why our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who *was holy, harmless and undefiled, and separated from Sinners,* and so had no Manner of personal Need of the good Things signified by *Baptism*, was yet pleased to be baptised, *Matth.* iii. 13, 14, 15, 16. To this the Learned Answer (8), *First,* That Christ was baptised, that hereby he might commend *Baptism* unto us, and to shew, that the Dignity of this and other Ordina-

nances,

(8) See *Spanheim. Dub. Evangelica*, Page 152, to 154, and *ibid.*, Page 522, 523, &c.

nances, does not at all depend upon the superior Excellency of the Administrator, above those to whom it is administrated; for here, the Superior is baptised by the Inferior, and the Master by the Servant. 2dly, That now when our Lord was to enter upon his Publick Ministry, and to shew himself openly unto the *World*, he might take Occasion, by the Divine Testimony that at his *Baptism* was given unto him, to convince the Multitude whence and who he was, and particularly to confirm *John* in the Faith of his divine Person and Office. 3dly, They say, Tho' Christ personally considered, had no Manner of Need of this Ordinance, yet he, as our Fœderal Head and Representative, being *made Sin for us*, 2 Cor. v. 21. Therefore, as standing in our Room, and as our Surety, Representative and Redeemer, he received this Seal of the *New Covenant* for us, whereby all the Blessings of that Covenant were sealed, ratified and secured to us in his Person. 4thly, They add, That *it behoved him in all Things to be made like unto his Brethren*, and so, in being baptised. But, 5thly, The most scriptural and plain Account of this, seems to be, That Christ, as our Redeemer, being *made of a Woman, made under the Law*, Gal. iv. 4. *It behoved him to fulfil all Righteousness*, and give the most perfect Obedience to these Institutions of the *Great Jehovah*, who sent him. And this is the Reason our Lord himself gives; for, when *John*, declined the Office of baptising him, and it may be, for the very Reason that is the Occasion of this Question, because Christ needed it not, *Matth. iii. 14.* our Lord, *Versè 15:* says, *Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all Righteousness.*



S E C T. IV.

In whose Name Persons are Baptised.

THERE is scarce any Thing that would be more gross and absurd, than to think, we can be baptised in the Name of Angels or Men. For, as no meer Creature can appoint Ordinances of this Kind, nor give the Blessings signified hereby, nor preserve Men in the Possession thereof; so, we are not to place our Faith and Trust for Salvation, in our Fellow Creatures, nor are we by *Baptism* dedicated to them, nor is the Heritage of the Lord and Creator, to become the Inheritance of the Servant and meer Creature, whether they be Creatures *in the Heavens above, or in the Earth below.*

Wherefore, our Lord and Saviour having finished the *Work* the Father gave him to do upon Earth, and being now to ascend to his Father; he who was faithful over his House in all Things, sees it meet, for the Edifying of his Mystical Body, to appoint standing Ordinances, and a standing Ministry in his Church; particularly, to ordain the Administration of *Baptism* to continue to the End of the *World*: And that his Servants, who were to administer this Ordinance, might not want Authority to do it, nor Direction in it, he therefore gives them their Commission and Instructions at once, *Matth. xxviii. 19. Go ye therefore, teach all Nations, Baptising them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* For our Understanding of which, these Things may be observed.

First,

First, That the Design and Use of a **NAME** NAME,
or NAMES, being given to Persons or Things, its Use.
 is, That thereby such Persons and Things may
 be known what they are, acknowledged as such,
 distinguished from others, and by these brought
 into our Minds. And albeit *Names* imposed by
 ignorant and unskillful Men, may come short of
 these Designs; yet this cannot be said of these
NAMES which in Scripture are attributed to
GOD, seeing he who alone is infinitely wise, and
 hath perfect Knowledge of himself, hath, by his
 deliberate Counsel, assumed these to himself.

Secondly, That **NAME**, as in Scripture it is NAME
 applied to **GOD**, is sometimes so circumstanti- of GOD
 ated and used, as by it we are to understand, in Scrip-
1st, God himself, so, *Gen. xxiv. 26. Deut. xxviii.* ture, how
58. Psalm v. 11. Psalm vii. 17. Psalm xx. 1, 7. under-
1 Kings v. 5. Isaiah xii. 4. Joel ii. 32. stood.
2dly
 The Attributes or Perfections of God, so, *Exod.*
xxxiv. 5, 6, 7, 14. *3dly*, As to point out the
 Profession, Confession, *Worship* and *Service* of
 God, so, *Micah iv. 5. Acts xxi. 13.* And, *4thly*,
 As to intimate to us, his Command, Will and
 Authority, *Deut. xviii. 19. 1 Sam. xvii. 45.*
 Hence,

Thirdly, To be Baptised in the Name of the **Father**, and of the **Son**, and of the **Holy Ghost**, is, *1st*, A being by *Baptism* brought
 and presented to the **Father**, **Son**, and **Holy**
Ghost, that so the Persons baptised may partake
 of the **Father's** Grace and Love in Christ, and
 by him be admitted into the Number of his
 Children, and solemnly received into his Family.
 That they may Share of the glorious Merit
 and Mediation of the **Son**, and have the saving
 Blessings and Advantages that flow therefrom;
 and may enjoy the gracious Influences and sancti-
 fying Operations of the *Holy Spirit*. And by
 this Deed of Presentation, they are divorced
 from

To be
 baptised in
 the Name
 of the Fa-
 ther, Son,
 and Holy
 Ghost,
 what?

from all other Lovers, renounce all other Gods, and give up with all other Methods of Salvation, but that which is by the *Father's* Grace the *Son's* Merit, and the *Spirit's* Working. 2dly, It is, a being baptised unto, Union to, and Communion with the *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*; so that they stand in the near Relation of Children to the *Father*, of Members to the *Son*, and of Temples to the *Holy Ghost*, and so come to partake of the *Divine Nature*, in the Display and Manifestation of the Divine Perfections for them; and this, graciously, seasonably, suitably and continually. 3dly, It is, to be by *Baptism* solemnly devoted, wholly given up, and for ever dedicated to the Service of, and Obedience to the *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*. So that they are to be wholly and for ever the Lord's, to be ruled by his Law, guided by his Spirit, disposed of by his Providence, and ever employed in his Service. They are now to call themselves by his Name, and not by the Name of Ministers or others, however eminent as to their Station, Gifts or Graces, they may be, 1 Cor. i. 12, 13. 4thly, It is, to be baptised unto a *Profession, Confession and Worshipping* of *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*. They are now to profess and testify before the *World*, that they believe this *Great Article* of our Christian Faith, *That there are Three Persons in the Godhead, the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and that these Three, tho' really distinct as to their Personality, yet are one Co-essential and Eternal God, equal in Power and Glory.* To these only they are to direct their religious *Worship and Adoration*, invoke and call upon them, and for ever fear, love, trust to, and depend upon the *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*. And this, when called thereto, they are to make an open, sincere and constant Confession of. And then, 5thly, It is, to be baptised by the *Will,*

Command and Authority of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. So as the whole Trinity do authorise and approve hereof, and, from astonishing Condescension, become jointly engaged, to make good (according to the Method settled in the Eternal Counsels of God) all the great and valuable Blessings of the *New Covenant*, that are signified, represented and sealed by this Ordinance of *Baptism*. For, as to ratify, seal and confirm a Person's Title to a worldly Estate, in the Name of a King or Prince, does declare, That the Royal and Princely Authority is engaged to hold and preserve that firm and sure, which is thus done in his Name, according to his *Will* and *standing Law*; so it is here.

Fourthly, We are to Notice, That as it is very proper, so it is necessary, that Persons be baptised in this very Form, or these express Words, *In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*. And that because of the Institution of our Lord Jesus Christ, *Matth. xxviii. 19.* which is very peremptory; because of the great and high Import of these *Words*; because the *Words* that were used by the Lord Jesus, in Instituting his *Supper*, are kept by the Apostle, and observed by him, *Matth. xxvi. 26, 27, 28. 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25.* And then, which may have its own Weight, because so was *Baptism* administered in the Primitive Times (1). Yet when I say, That this is necessary, it is not to be so understood, as if there was any Virtue or Efficacy in the *Words* themselves; nor dare I affirm, as some do (2), That they are so absolutely needful, as that *Baptism* is null and invalid without them: For even those Persons acknowledge, That when

This Form in *Baptising* to be kept.

Yet not absolutely necessary.

D

People

(1) *King's Enquiry, &c. Part II. Page 12. Sect. IV. (2) Taylor on Infant Baptism, Pag. 17, 18. Lucan. Pag. 618, 619. Zanch. Tom. IV. Page 491. Et Miscell. Lib. VIII. Page 570. Attersee, Pag. 196, 197.*

A Practical Essay on

People are baptised in the *Name of the Lord Jesus Christ*, it is the same upon the Matter, as if they were baptised in the *Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*; seeing, say they, here is the *Father* Anointing; the *Son* Anointed, and the *Holy Spirit*, which is the *Unction* it self.

Fifthly, It is to be observed, That tho' some of the Learned think the exprefs Naming of the Persons of the *Trinity* not absolutely necessary, in the Administration of *Baptism*, and for Proof, they adduce, *Acts* viii. 16. (1). where Mention is made of some being baptised in *the Name of the Lord Jesus*; to which may be added, *Acts* ii. 38. *Acts* xix. 5.; and tho' it cannot be denied, but the *Words* in the *Original* are the same with *Matth.* xxviii. 19. *eis τὸ ὄνομα*; nor can it be refused, but that the Primitive Church used a great Liberty, (as some say) in this Matter (2): Yet Two Things are to be carefully noticed, *1st*, That even such, positively assert, That by no Means is the Confession of the Holy Trinity to be laid aside or dispensed with in the Administration of *Baptism*; not only because of the Reasons already given, but also because of the many Adversaries to this great and precious Truth, who, from the Disuse or Neglect of this very Form of *Words*, may be ready to take Occasion against the Doctrine it self (3). *2dly*, Whereas it is not probable or likely, That the Apostles would take upon them to alter or depart from that Form so exprefsly delivered by their Glorious Master; therefore, when any are said to have been baptised in *the Name of Christ*, it is not thereby pointed out to us in what Form such were baptised, but only, the efficient and final

Yet not
to be laid
aside.

To be bap-
tised in the
Name of
Christ,
what.

(1) *Marckii Compendium*, Page 260. *Maestricht*, Page 819.
(2) *Clarkson on Liturgies*, Page 97, to 100. (3) *Essen. Comp.*
Page 656.

the Sacrament of Baptism.

final Cause of this Ordinance is thereby declared: That is, They were baptised by the Authority of Christ, unto Faith in Christ, Union to, and Communion with him, and unto a Profession and Confession of the Doctrine of our Lord Jesus (1).

Sixthly, As to the Frame or Form of Words in the Administration of *Baptism*, which do immediately precede the Mention of the *Holy Trinity* therein; as the Scripture seems to leave us at Liberty, so there was no small Variety in the First and early Ages of the Church (2). Some using the Expression, *I baptise thee in the Name, &c.* Others, *Be thou baptised in the Name.* A Third, *Let this Person, or, this Servant of Christ, be baptised in the Name, &c.* Yet, in Regard the Words in the first Person, *I baptise thee, &c.* do more evidently point out the Authority of the Person Administering this Ordinance, the Declaration whereof is not to be omitted; and more expressly declare the present Administration thereof, with the particular Application of the outward Sign, and thereby the Blessings signified to the Person baptised: For these Reasons, this Way of Expressing is much to be preferred to the other Two, which seem to respect somewhat future and to come. And as to that Form of Words others are said to have used, viz. *This Person is baptised in the Name, &c.* This seems to point out somewhat which is already past, and so very improper in this present Act of Administration.

No small Variety as to the Form of Words in the Act of Administration.

From what hath been now said, of our being baptised in the Name of the *Father*, and of the *Son*, and of the *Holy Ghost*; we may learn;

1st, That as there are Three Persons in the Godhead, so these are Three truly distinct Subsistencies, each having his proper and distinct

I. There are Three truly distinct Persons in the Trinity.

D 2

(1) *Heideger*, Pag. 443. Col. 1. Sect. 36. (2) See *Clarkson* on Liturgies, Page 94.

Personality, tho' One and the same individual Essence: For, here are Three distinct Persons distinctly named, by their Authority Instituting this Ordinance, and who, by their Grace, make it effectual to all the great Ends and Purposes for which it is appointed: And as these Three are One God, and so, one individual Essence; so here they agree in One, That poor Sinners be baptised in their Name, and by their Authority. For, it is not said in the *Names*, but in the *Name* of the *Father*, and of the *Son*, and of the *Holy Ghost*. And here we may behold astonishing Condescension, wonderful Grace, and a never failing Foundation for our Faith.

II. That
Baptism is
an awful
Ordinance

Secondly, We may hence learn the Awfulness and Majesty of this Ordinance, seeing here it is publicly and solemnly declared in whose Name, and by whose Authority this is done, even in that of the Great God, *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*. Surely this is not to be gone about in a Regardless Manner, much less is it to be sported with; but all concerned; and who are capable to understand, are to be filled with the greatest Reverence and Holy Fear.

III. The
Validity
of Baptism.

Thirdly, We may, from this, be informed of the Validity of *Baptism*, when performed by a lawfully called *Minister*. For, tho' Men administer it, yet it is in the Name, and by the Authority of the *Father*, and of the *Son*, and of the *Holy Ghost*; so that what is thus done upon Earth, is ratified in Heaven, stands good and unshaken as to all the Uses and glorious Designs for which it is appointed. Actions duely performed in the Name, and by the Authority of an earthly Prince, are by all Men held valid and good; much more are these which are done in the Name of the Great, Infallible, Unchangeable, and Omnipotent GOD.

Fourthly,

the Sacrament of Baptism.

53

Fourthly, From this we may behold the absolute Certainty, That all the great and good Things of the New Covenant shall be applied, given, and bestowed upon these to whom God is pleased to bless this Ordinance of *Baptism*. For, we are baptised in the Name of the *Father*, and of the *Son*, and of the *Holy Ghost*, which, as we have heard, imports, that all the Persons of the Glorious Trinity become engaged for the effectual Application of all these Blessings that are signified and sealed by this Ordinance. And this the Lord's People have, as an unshaken Foundation on which they are to rest, and confidently to hope.

IV. Blessings signified by *Baptism* shall be applied.

Fifthly, Here we are instructed in the strong and inviolable Obligations that are laid upon Persons baptised, to have an holy Profession and an holy Practice. They are hereby devoted and given up to the *Father*, the *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*. This great Article of our holy Religion they are always to profess and stand by; they are to call themselves only by the Name of this God, and are constantly to reckon, that henceforth they are not their own, nor are they the Servants of Men, but wholly and only the Lords, and therefore are to be like him, and for him, in Body, Soul and Spirit: In every Part of their Conversation, so behaving themselves, as becomes the Children of their Heavenly Father, the Members of Christ, and such as are Temples of the *Holy Ghost*.

V. The great Obligations this lays upon the Baptised.

Sixthly and *Lastly*, We may observe the monstrous Ingratitude, Apostasy and Perjury, the horrid Rebellion, and crying Injustice of many baptised Persons; such as those who deny the *Lord that bought them*, and impugn this great fundamental Truth, *That there are Three Persons in the Godhead, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; and, that these Three are one God, the*

VI. The aggravated Sins of many baptised Persons.

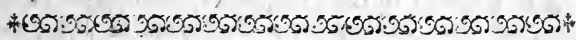
A Practical Essay on

same in Substance, equal in Power and Glory. Those, who when they are come to Age, abandon the Service of their only rightful Lord and Master, and desert the *Captain of their Salvation*, under whose Banner they were listed in the Day wherein they were baptised; who *will not come to Christ that they may have Life*; who will have none of God to rule over them; and who by no Means can be prevailed upon to yield themselves to the Influences of the *Holy Spirit*: What Monsters of Men and Women must these be, who, tho' they were baptised unto the *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, yet refuse to worship and serve this God, but either formally and explicitly, or virtually and practically, devote themselves to the Slavery of Satan, the Service of idol gods, the Vanities of the World, the *Will* of their raging and impure Lusts, and who set themselves in Opposition to these Truths, Institutions, and Persons, who have any Thing of the Image and Supercription of the *Great Jehovah* upon them! Consider, O Sinners! you were not baptised in the Name of Satan, of idol gods, of the World, or the Flesh; but in the Name of the True and Only God, *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*: To these, and these alone, you were solemnly devoted and dedicated; and what do miserable and unthinking Creatures, as you are, by this your Perjury, Perfidy, and Apostasy, but deprive your selves of your greatest and highest Privileges; renouncing that God who is your Glory, that Son of God who is the only Saviour, that Holy Ghost who alone is the Sanctifier and Leader of poor Sinners; you thereby rob the *Great Jehovah* of that which he hath a ratified and unquestionable Title to; for ever damn your own precious Souls; and, in the most frightful Manner, eternally destroy both Soul and Body. Consider, how, at the last Day, a holy and just God may

may arraign you as the most perfidious *Wretches*; how Satan may plead against you, and claim you as his own, upon this very Argument, That tho' you were not baptised in his Name, but in the Name of the most High God, yet you forsook the Lord, and gave up your selves to him. O! how shall God be justified in condemning Thousands of baptised Persons, whose Lives are but one continued Act of Perjury, Apostasy and Rebellion.

I might here Notice in the *Seventh* Place, what comfortable Improvement the Lord's People are to make of this, as an Argument against Sin, and all Manner of Temptations; as a Support under all Burdens and Grievs; as an Incitement to all commanded Duties; and, as a Foundation of their Faith, Hope and Joy; and that upon which, as a notable Argument, they can plead with God in Prayer, for their obtaining special Covenant Blessings, made over and sealed to them, by *Baptism*. But this I design more particularly to discourse of, afterward.

VII. The comfortable Improve-ment that the People of God are to make of this.



S E C T. V.

Of the Ends and Uses of BAPTISM.

SOLEMN Actions, always are for more than ordinary Purposes, and have some special and peculiar Uses. Men, when they see any Thing done with more than ordinary Solemnity, presently conclude, That something of more than ordinary Importance is intended thereby. All Nations, and Religions whatsoever, have some special Rites and Actions, for some special Designs, particularly, for *Initiation* and *Confirmation*.

And because the Church and People of God need some such Things as well as others, for the confirming of their Faith, strengthening their Hope, and the Increase of their Joy and Holiness; therefore he, who knoweth our Infirmary, hath appointed this Ordinance of *Baptism* for certain high Ends and Uses, becoming his infinite Wisdom, Holiness and Grace, and suitable to our own Circumstances. And because the intended Use of any Ordinance, is, That thereby such Effects may be brought about, as are the Ends and Designs thereof; according as the same is blessed of God, who appoints it. For this Reason, I have, in this *Section*, joined the Ends and Uses of *Baptism* together: Where we may observe,

I. It signifies and represents.

First, That *Baptism* is appointed for this End, and is of special Use, to signify and represent to us Sinners, the *Blood of Christ*, in the Virtue and Value of it, for the compleat Pardon of all our Sins, and our Deliverance from Wrath, and the Curse of the Law, *1 John* i. 7. *Gal.* iii. 13. *Rom.* vi. 3, 4, *Mark* i. 4. And to exhibit and shew forth the purifying Virtue of the Holy Spirit of Christ, in his gracious Operations; cleansing us from the inherent Pollution of Sin, renewing us in the Spirit of our Minds, and sanctifying us in the whole Man, *1 Cor.* vi. 11. *1 Cor.* xii. 13. *Titus* iii. 5. And these Things being thus represented, hereby, of Consequence, *Baptism* doth signify and shew forth all the Blessings of the *New Covenant*, as proceeding and flowing from these, *Rom.* iv. 11, 12.

II. Applies and disposes.

Secondly, As *Baptism* is to signify, so it is appointed to apply, make over, and dispoise all the Blessings of the *New Covenant* to all those to whom this Grace belongeth (1), *Acts* xxii. 16. *Col.* ii. 12. For we are baptised unto Union to, and

(1) See *Confession of Faith*, Chap. 28. Sect. 6.

and Communion with Christ, *Rom. vi. 3, 5. Gal. iii. 27.* so as we may be solemnly admitted into the Number of the Sons of God, and become Heirs according to the Promise, *Gal. iii. 26, 29.* and have a Right and Title made over to the holy Spirit, in all his gracious Operations, *1 Cor. xii. 13.* But to prevent Mistakes, we may observe, That the baptised Person his actual Possession of these Blessings thus solemnly made over and disposed to him, is not confined to the Instant of Administration; for some may, and have in a considerable Measure been possessed of these before Baptism, and others not until a considerable Time after it; so that when it is said, That Baptism applies and conferreth Covenant Blessings, the Meaning is, That in the right Use thereof, or when the same is gone about according to God's Appointment, all the Blessings of the well ordered and everlasting Covenant, are hereby solemnly made over and disposed, as by a Law-deed, or visible external Sign and Token. For, as the Heir of an Estate hath a Right thereto, and sometimes enjoyeth the Profits thereof; yet the Estate itself is afterward solemnly made over and ratified to him, by such Symbols and Rites as the Law of the Country where he lives does ordain. And tho' he has no Possession; yet having a Title by these Symbols, the Estate is made over and disposed to him. So it is here, all the Elect Seed being given to Christ, and, in what he did and suffered, represented by him, have a real (I say not a formal) Title to all the Blessings of the Covenant. And this being supposed, whether they are then in Possession of any Part of these Blessings or not; by Baptism these Blessings are made over and solemnly disposed to them, *Jer. i. 5. Luke i. 15. Acts ii. 41. Acts viii. 12, 13. Acts viii. 36, 37. Acts x. 47, 48. Acts xvi. 33.*

Thirdly,

III. It
ratifies
and seals.

Thirdly, Baptism is instituted, that hereby, as a divine Pledge, Sign and Token, the Persons Title to, and Interest in all these Blessings, according to the Tenor of the New Covenant, and the Counsel of God's own Will, may be ratified, confirmed and sealed. And as to this, we may in the General notice, That *Sealing* declareth the *Will*, and testifieth the *full Consent* of the Party that doth seal. And ordinarily in Law, so perfecteth the Grant or Donation, as no Adversary may have any just Exception against the Party's Right to whom it is sealed; and, this solemn Testimony of the Sealer's Consent, is reckoned more strongly to oblige him to see to it, that the Person whose Right is thus confirmed, be put and kept in his just and lawful Possession: So here, the baptised Person's Right to the Blessings of the Covenant is ratified, the Author of this Ordinance becomes engaged, That what is sealed shall be preserved to him, and he ascertain'd, that in God's due Time and Method, he shall be possessed of all the Privileges of the Covenant so confirmed in his Person. And thus he hath a solid Ground for his Faith, that all Things are his, and of the greatest Joy and Comfort, *Gen. xvii. 11. Rom. iv. 11, 12. Heb. vi. 17, 18. Acts ii. 38.* And altho' *Washing with Water* be a simple and ordinary Action; yet being appointed by divine Authority for this high and noble End: Therefore it is of so great Use and Benefit.

IV. By
it the Per-
son is so-
lemnly
admitted
and decla-
red a
Member
of the
Church
of God.

Fourthly, Baptism is of this Use, and for this End, That thereby the Person baptised may be solemnly and publickly admitted and declared a Member of the Church of God, *1 Cor. xii. 13. Acts ii. 47.* I do not say, That Baptism forms a Church, or makes the Person a Church Member that was not one before; for both these, I conceive, are presupposed thereto: But, that by Baptism the Person is solemnly declared and received

ceived as such. For, as Consent of People and Prince do make a King, but Coronation is a publick inaugurating into that Office, and declaring him to be so; so the Children of professing Parents, they are born Members of the Visible Church, 1 Cor. vii. 14. And the adult Infidel, when upon his being instructed, he professeth his Faith in Christ, by this his Profession, he is reckoned truly and really a Part of the Body of Christ (1); and Baptism which succeeds this, is a solemn and publick Declaration that he is such. The Custom then of some Churches, who place the Font at the Church Door, if intended as a mystical Sign of the Baptised their Entry into the Church of Christ, where they were not before, is without Ground, and an Antichristian Ceremony of Mens devising: For, Seals of the Covenant can never be applied to any but such as are supposed to be in Covenant, nor can the Privileges of the Christian Church be confirmed to any that are without the Church.

Fifthly, Baptism is ordained of God, that by it those who are baptised may be solemnly bound and engaged to the Performance of all these holy and Christian Duties that are commanded them of God, and follow upon these great and high Privileges, which are, by this Ordinance, made over and sealed to them, *Rom.* vi. 3, 4, 6, 11. *John* viii. 31. *1 Pet.* iii. 20, 21. We are so wavering and inconstant, that we need many Ties, and to be in the most solemn Manner obliged to an holy Profession and holy Practice. And Baptism is an open and visible Badge, whereby we solemnly protest and declare, before God, Angels and Men, That we are now associate with the Church of God, are Members of Christ; that

V. It is a Bond and Engagement to Christian Duties.

(1) See *Sydenham* on infant Baptism, Pag. 166. to 174. *Rutherford's* Divine Right of Presbytery, Pag. 212. to 220. *apud finem Libri.*

A practical Essay on

that we have given up our Names to him, to be wholly his, and only for him: And therefore will fight under his Banner, and, all our Life long, profess the Faith, and adhere to the Doctrine and Worship of one God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

VI. It is a visible Difference betwixt the People of God and others. *Sixtly* and Lastly, God hath appointed Baptism in his Church, that by this a visible Difference may be put betwixt his People and the rest of the World. *They are not of the World*, but chosen out of it, and by many Things they are distinguished from it; particularly, that they have the Oracles of God committed to them, and solemn sealing Ordinances, whereof they are Partakers, fixed among them, *Gen. xvii. 11. Gen. xxxiv. 14. Matth. xxviii. 19. John iv. 1.*

Inferences from this. And from this, of the Ends and Uses of Baptism, we may learn, *First*, The Lord's great Condescension to our Weakness and Infirmary: We, while in this State of Mortality and Imperfection, are much led by Sense; and it hath pleased him, in Condescension to the Condition and Frailty of human Nature, to appoint visible Signs and Pledges of that which is invisible; and by our Senses, to give all the Assurance they are capable to convey unto our Minds, that all the Promises of all spiritual saving Blessings, shall as certainly be fulfilled to us, as the outward Signs are applied to and duly received by us. O! what a grateful and Heart-warming Consideration of this should Gospel Ministers, Christian Parents, and all concerned have.

II The Lord alone bestows and seals Covenant Blessings. *Secondly*, That it is not Men, but God alone, who bestows and seals Covenant Blessings: For here, the Covenant and Blessings thereof are only his; he alone gives Authority to such external Things and Actions, as constitutes them in the Nature of true Signs and real Seals; and then it is God only who appoints them for such great Ends

Ends and high Uses, as have been already mentioned. Surely, in all Approaches we make of this Kind, we are humbly to acknowledge God, with Reverence to behold him, and, in an holy and sincere Manner, to place our Confidence and Hope only in him.

Thirdly, That Baptism is an Ordinance of great Concern and Importance to the Sons of Men; seeing it is of the greatest Use, and for the highest Ends as to them; all the Blessings of the New Covenant, and their everlasting Salvation and Happiness, being by this Ordinance signified, applied and sealed. And for this Reason it is not to be slighted, causelessly delayed, or carelessly and with Indifference performed, *Acts* ii. 38, 41. *Acts* viii. 37, 38. *Acts* xvi. 33. Sealing and confirming a Person's Title to an Earthly Estate has been always reckoned an Affair of very great Moment, not to be trifled in, but carefully and timeously gone about: How much more should that which is a divinely appointed Sign and Seal of our everlasting Inheritance?

Fourthly, We may hence further learn, what it is that Christian Parents should have in their Eye, and propose to themselves, when they bring their Children to Baptism. They are not to ask this Ordinance for their Infants, only because it is Custom, and fashionable; nor merely, that they may be admitted to Visible Church Communion and Membership; nor only to have a Name given them; nor, as some ignorantly speak, that they *may be made Christians*; tho' alas! these are the only Designs that many Professors, to the great Scandal and Dishonour of our holy Religion, have, in bringing their Children to this Ordinance. But hither they are to carry them, that they may be presented before the Lord as now upon a Throne of Grace, and devoted to him, have all the Blessings of the well-ordered Covenant

III. It is of great Importance to the Sons of Men.

IV. What Parents should propose to themselves.

Covenant

Covenant of Grace made over and sealed to them, be solemnly and publickly declared Members of the Visible Body of Christ, and in the most inviolable Manner, for ever bound over to his Service.

V. The
Unity of
the True
Church.

Fifthly, From the Ends and Uses of Baptism, we may be also instructed in the Unity of the true Church of God: For this is appointed, that we may all be *baptised into one Body*, Gal. iii. 27. and *into one Spirit*, 1 Cor. xii. 13, and so, we all have *one Lord* and *one Baptism*, Eph. iv. 5. How then should baptised Persons look upon one another as Brethren, as Children of the same Family, Heirs of the same Inheritance, and engaged in the same Service; sincerely using their united Endeavours to preserve the same divine Truths, keep pure the same divine Worship, and promote the Interests of their common Lord: Not Stumbling but Edifying, not Oppressing but Encouraging, and *not falling out by the Way, but forbearing and forgiving one another in the Lord*.

VI. The
Necessity
of our be-
ing oblig-
ed to ho-
ly Duties.

Sixthly, We may learn, That there is a Necessity that we the *Sons of Adam* be brought under special and solemn Obligations, to the Performance of holy, religious and Christian Duties: For, here we may observe, That an infinitely wise God, who in all his Institutions never proposes any Designs but what are most just and most necessary, hath appointed Baptism for this End amongst others; that thereby we may, in the most solemn Manner, be bound over and engaged to the constant, universal, and sincere Discharge of all the commanded Duties of a covenanted People. And indeed, the Necessity of Holiness, in Order to our future Happiness, our natural and strong Corruptions, with our many and violent Temptations, call for this.

Seventhly,

Seventhly, We may here be informed, how VII. How Papists abuse it. frightfully *Papists* abuse this holy and solemn Ordinance; while they use this, which is appointed of God for holy and spiritual Designs, to superstitious and political Purposes; such as, *Healing of Cattle, Consecrating of Bells, and Instruments of War, &c.* Of which more in its proper Place.



S E C T. VI.

Of the Consequent resulting from all these; or, Our Engagement to be the LORD's.

TO Discourse fully of this, would require more Room than can be well allowed here: I shall therefore, but very briefly point at some Things which are more especially to be observed.

And *First*, We may observe what is included in our *Engagement to be the LORD's*, as this is here circumstantiated. And *1st*, This is evidently implied in it, That being now baptised, the Lord hath a Title to, a Covenant sealed Right and Interest in us; That we are now in a very special Manner his; his People, his Inheritance, his Subjects and Servants; his in all that we are, Body, Soul and Spirit; and in all we enjoy, whether these be Gifts, Graces, or external and worldly Possessions, *Jer. xxxi. 33. 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.* *2^{dly}*, That we are now in the most solemn Manner to be *only his, and not another's*, *Hoseah iii. 2, 3.* We are no more Satans, for we are bought and redeemed from him, and our Liberation publickly avouched, declared and sealed,

What our Engagement to be the Lord's includes.

ed, *Acts* xxvi. 18. 1 *John* iii. 8. No more the *World's*, for we are chosen, and to look upon our selves as *redeemed out of the World*, *John* xvii. 14, 16. Nor are we any more to be *the Servants of Sin*; for our old Man is crucified with Christ, and buried with him in Baptism, *Rom.* vi. 4, 6. Wherefore, as in the Primitive Times, those who were come to Age, did at their Baptism, publicly and personally declare *their renouncing the Devil and his Slavery, the World and its Vanity, and Sin and its Drudgery*; so upon the Matter, and according to the Nature of this Ordinance, do every baptised Person to this Day. And 3dly, This includes our coming under the most special Obligations to perform, through his Grace, all these *Duties*, that we, as his peculiar People, owe to him as our new covenanted Lord. As 1st, Hereby we are engaged to be like him, or *holy as he is holy*, *Matth* xi. 28, 29, 30. 1 *Pet.* i. 14, 15, 16. 2dly, To be for him; for his Interests and Concerns in the *World*. These we are continually to own, adhere to and contend for, *Rom.* xiv. 8, 2. *Cor.* v. 15. 3dly, To obey him, and with the whole Heart, by Faith in himself, to keep all his Commandments, *Deut.* xxvi. 18. *Rom.* vi. 4. *Rom.* vi. 11. *Gal.* ii. 20. *Phil.* iv. 13. 4thly, To trust only in him, and depend entirely and constantly upon him for all Things, *Psal.* lxxii. 8. *Psal.* lv. 22. *Song* viii. 5. 1 *Pet.* v. 7. 5thly, To be at his *Disposal*, as to our Life, our Lot, and all our Circumstances in a *World*, 2 *Sam.* xv. 26. *Heb.* xii. 9. For we are his, and there is the best Reason for it, that he dispose of his own as seems good unto him. 6thly, Hereby we become engaged, so soon as we shall be capable, explicitly, by our own personal and voluntary Act, to accept of the Lord *Jesus Christ*, as our compleat and only Redeemer; and, in *Christ*, of *JEHOVAH'S* Covenant of Promises, and

and all the Blessings contained therein; and hereupon we give the Hand, solemnly declare, That we consent and agree to all the *Duties* of a *covenanted People*, *Jer.* iii. 4, 19. And then 7thly, In all Things, at all Times, and with the whole Heart, to own and acknowledge him *as our Lord, and our God, our Glory, and the Fountain of all our Happiness.* We are to live and die to his Glory, in Heart and Practice to adore and proclaim his glorious Perfections, and to show forth all his Praise.

Secondly, We may here observe the Connection betwixt *Baptism*, as signifying, applying and sealing all the Blessings of the *New Covenant*; and our Engagement to be the Lord's. And this is evident, if *First*, we consider, That *our being the Lord's* is a Fruit and Effect of the Death of Christ, which is signified, and the Benefits whereof are applied and sealed by *Baptism*, *Eph.* v. 25, 26. *1 Pet.* iii. 18. *Titus* ii. 14. If then we are baptised into the Death of Christ, it cannot but follow, *that we are brought unto God*, and are no more our own, but his peculiar People. 2dly, This is included in the very Nature and Tenor of the *Covenant of Grace*, of which *Baptism* is a Seal; for so it is, *Jer.* xxxi. 33. *Heb.* viii. 10. *I will put my Laws into their Mind, and write them in their Heart, and will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a People.* 3dly, So to engage and solemnly to bind us to be the Lord's, is one of the special Ends and Uses of *Baptism*, *Rom.* vi. 3, 4. And 4thly, Gratitude and Thankfulness to the Lord, for his bestowing upon us, and sealing to us the great and promised Blessings of his *Covenant*, and his Command upon our having these so bestowed and sealed, call for this, that we should be wholly and only his, *Jer.* iii. 19. *Hos.* iii. 3.

The Connection betwixt *Baptism* and our being the Lord's.

A Practical Essay on

Rom. vi. 3, 4. *1 Cor.* vi. 19, 20. *2 Cor.* vii. 1. *Psal.*
cxvi. 12, 16.

Our Engage-
ment to be the
Lord's,
what.

Thirdly, We are here to consider this Engagement to be the Lord's, as resulting from Baptism, what it is. And as in the Nature of it, this is our being given and devoted to the Lord by special Ties, whereby he hath a peculiar Title to us, and we are bound and obliged to be his : So as to the Kind and Quality of it, *First*, It is just and equitable ; for, seeing we are the Lord's by Choice, Purchase, Conquest, Donation, and he owns an Interest in us, and takes Possession of us by this visible *Law-Deed* of Baptism, can any Thing be more just, than that we be engaged hereby to be his ? *2dly*, It is publick and open before God, Angels and Men. *3dly*, It is awful and solemn, by the Invocation of the Great God, and in the Name of all the Adorable Trinity. *4thly*, It is ratified and sealed, by an Ordinance of divine Appointment and Institution. And *5thly*, This Engagement to be the Lord's, is inviolable and sure, which no created Power can infringe or loose : For, tho' Men may reject the Blessings signified by Baptism, and neglect the *Duties* that ly upon them, as baptised Persons ; yet the Engagement to embrace the First, and perform the Last, remains firm and sure.

Its Kind
and Qua-
lity.

How Bap-
tism seals
this.

Fourthly, We may now observe, how it is that Baptism doth seal this our Engagement to be the Lord's. And this it does the same Way, as the Seal of any Gift or Donation ratifies and confirms all the essential and necessary Consequences that flow therefrom. Seeing then, all who are brought under the Bond of *God's Covenant*, do thereupon come under a special Obligation to be wholly and only the Lord's, therefore this Covenant, in all the Blessings of it, being by Baptism sealed

unto us, our Engagement to be the Lord's is sealed, ratified, and confirmed hereby.

And from what hath been said on this Head, of our Engagement to be the Lord's, and this sealed by Baptism, we may notice, *First*, The many and great Obligations that ly upon us to be his. We are obliged hereto as Creatures to their Creator, as Subjects to their Prince, as Professors of an holy Religion to the Author of it; as a redeemed and enriched People to their generous Deliverer and Benefactor; as Servants to a Master; as Children to a Father; as a People in Covenant to their God; and then, as a People, who by an Institution of Heaven, have this Covenant sealed to them and in their Persons, and thereupon their Engagement to be only and for ever his.

Inferences from this.
I. The many Obligations that ly upon us to be the Lord's.

Secondly, Is our Engagement to be the Lord's externally sealed by Baptism, wherein the external Sign is applied to our Bodies; then it is our great Duty to examine and try, if by the holy Spirit this be inwardly sealed upon our Souls, 2 Cor. i. 22. Eph. i. 13. Eph. iv. 20. And if it is so, then surely we have chearfully embraced the Lord Jesus as the Lord, our only Righteousness, our complete Redeemer, and all our Salvation; and with Good-will, and sincerity of Heart, we have given our selves to him, to be saved by his Merit, sanctified by his Spirit, ruled by his Law, and disposed of by his Providence; with Gladness of Heart we have committed all our Concerns to his infinitely wise and gracious Management; and, without Reserve, consented to be wholly and only his, Isa. xlv. 4, 5. 2 Cor. viii. 5. And so, it is the Cry of our Souls, that we may have Grace sincerely to serve him acceptably; and if it may please God to make us for his Honour and Glory, in the several Stations he hath placed us in the World, we have all our De-

II. Try if this is inwardly sealed.

fire, *Psal. cxix. 5. Rom. vii. 23, 24. Rom. xiv. 8. 2 Cor. v. 15.* And hence it is, that they whose Engagement to be the Lord's is inwardly sealed, cannot allow themselves in Sin, nor dare they rebel against God as others do; *Gen. xxxix. 9.* For they have a Law in their Mind, which binds and obliges them to the Law of their God, *Rom. vii. 23.* When by Grace they serve him in a Gospel Manner, and carry like his, this is their Joy and Satisfaction; when they walk unsuitably to their Engagement, it is their Grief; and then, it is very observable, that even when Sin prevails, and Graces are low, yet they cannot endure the Thought of cancelling their Bond, changing their Lord, or having another Master; but polluted and guilty as they are, they feel an Ardency and Firmness of Soul, acknowledging him as their Lord, and consenting, yea holding by it, that they never will give the Hand to another.

Thirdly, Are they engaged to be the Lord's, then there is nothing more reasonable, than that when they come to Years of Discretion, they ratify this, by a personal and express Surrender of themselves to him. And seeing they are by Baptism devoted and given up to the Lord, surely they should *cleave to him, Deut. x. 20. Acts xi. 23.* so as not to suffer themselves to be drawn away; they are to walk with him in Friendship and Fellowship, following his Steps; they are to abide with him for many Days, to be for him, and not for another, *Hos. iii. 3.* And then they are to *abide, yea and walk in him, Col. ii. 6. John xv. 4.* Being in him, reckoned and reputed in him, covered with his Righteousness, living on him, and from him, looking to, and trusting in him, for Light, Life, Holiness, Pardon, Peace, Influences, and for Acceptance both as to Persons and Performances. That he may do all Things in them and for them, and perfect whatever concerns

III. They are to cleave to him.

cerns them; with Confidence believing, that he will prepare for, and preserve them to his heavenly Kingdom; and, like the Servant under the Law, consenting, That their *Ears be bored with an Awl to the Door-posts of his House, Exod. xxi. 6.*

Fourthly, Are we by Baptism engaged to be the Lord's, then surely we are to make a very careful and useful Improvement of this, as a strong Argument enforcing our Stedfastness in adhering to, professing and confessing the *Lord Jesus Christ*, and these precious Truths delivered by him; as an Excitement to the Exercise of all Graces and Performance of every commanded Duty; as an Answer to all Temptations from Satan, and Solicitations from the World, and our own corrupt Hearts. How are we to say to these, that we are pre-engaged to another, and therefore cannot hearken to or comply with them. That we are bound to the Most High, and therefore, as we must, so through Grace, we will obey him. And then we are specially to improve this as a Perswasive to embrace and accept of the *Lord Jesus Christ*, and of *God*, as our God in him; to devote and give up ourselves to him, to strengthen our Faith, and support our sinking Souls, under all the Difficulties and Discouragements in our Christian Race. Well may we thus Reason with ourselves: *Was I by Baptism engaged to be the Lord's, and devoted to him? Have I not then a sealed Warrant and Allowance to go in to, and accept of him; and am I not under the strongest Obligations, now when I am come to Age, to make an intire and perpetual Surrender of myself to him; and in so believing, and so consenting, have I not a sure Foundation for my Faith; that seeing I am his, and this sealed to me by Baptism, he will, according to his Promise of Grace, pity me, pardon me, sanctify, save, preserve,*

IV. The Improvement we are to make of this.

preserve, and care for me, and at last receive me into his Glory. For, did we reflect on our Baptism, not only as a commemorative Sign of what *Christ* has done, but also as declarative what he will do for his People; certainly we could not but have more frequent and pleasant Experiences of the great Advantages of that Ordinance, tho' administrated to us in our Infant State.

V. The aggravated Sin of many baptized Persons.

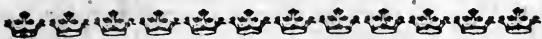
Fifthly, and Lastly, We may hence be informed of the highly aggravated Sin of many baptized Persons; who, after Baptism, become Apostates from the Truth, reject the Offers of Grace, and disobey God's holy Commands; who are corrupt in their Principles, obstinate as to their Wills, and profane as to their Practice. This surely is a crying Iniquity, being against the great divine Goodness, the richest Grace, the highest Authority, the most solemn and sealed Engagements, their own Happiness and everlasting Interest; and so against the strongest Ties and Obligations to the contrary.



C H A P. II.

Of the Objects of Baptism.

IT is of no small Moment, and hath no few Difficulties attending it, *Who these are to whom this Sacrament of Baptism is to be administrated?* Wherefore, that I may, with the more Distinctness, speak of this, I shall endeavour to consider the most material Heads that concern it, in particular and distinct Sections.



S E C T. I.

Who are not to be Baptised.

IN the First Place then, It is a plain and obvious Truth, That Baptism is to be administred to none, but to such as have Warrant to receive, and to whom Administrators have Commission and Authority to apply it. For, where there is no Warrant to receive, and no Authority to apply, it is the highest Presumption in the Baptifer and Baptised, and the Administration itself is null and void.

I. Not to such as have no Warrant to receive,

Secondly, Nor is it to be administred to any who are incapable of the Things signified and sealed thereby; because, the Ends and Designs of Baptism are, That the spiritual Blessings signified, may be made over and sealed to the Person baptised, it must then be a vain Administration, where these Ends and Designs can be in no Sense gained. Hence,

II. Not to such who are incapable of the Things signified.

Thirdly, It is not to be administred to inanimate and irrational Creatures, to whatever special and solemn Use these Creatures may be destinated and appointed by Men; for these neither need, nor can they receive the good Things signified, sealed, and applied hereby.

III. Not to inanimate or irrational Creatures.

Fourthly, Nor is this to be administred to the Dead, or any other in their Room, and for their Advantage; because, as no Man can partake of the Lord's Grace, and be saved for another; neither can he have Blessings sealed and made over to him in anothers Stead: And tho' the Laws of Men may, yet the Institutions of Heaven do not allow of Proxies, else a Man might believe, re-

IV. Not to the Dead.

pent, and engage to be the Lord's for another ; but so it is, that he who believeth not for himself shall be damned, he that repents not shall perish, and he that hath not Holiness in his own Person shall never see the Lord. Besides, the Dead are in an unchangeable State ; for, *as the Tree falls so must it ly.* 'Tis true, that some have built a being baptised in Room of the Dead, and for their Profit, on 1 Cor. xv. 29. where the

Baptised
for the
Dead,
1 Cor. xv.
29. what:

Apostle says, *Else, what shall they do who are baptised for the Dead, if the Dead rise not at all, why are they then baptised for the Dead?* But as the Reasons already assigned plead against this ; so, we can never allow ourselves to think, that the great and inspired Apostle would build the great Article of our Resurrection, upon such a vain and ridiculous Opinion ; even tho' we should suppose, which will not be granted, that this obtained in the Apostles Days. And among the great Variety of Interpretations of this very obscure Place, if we shall observe Two Things, that which seems to be the most probable and tenable Sense of it will appear to us. *First*, That by the Sacrament of Baptism the Resurrection of our Bodies at the Last Day is signified and sealed. *2dly*, That the Greek Proposition $\dot{\upsilon}\pi\epsilon\rho$ frequently in Scripture is used to point out the moving and impulsive Cause, as *Rom. xv. 9. Eph. i. 16. Phil. i. 29. 2 Thess. i. 5. 2 Cor. xii. 10. For the Dead*; then is, *because of the Dead.* And so the Meaning appears to be this, If the Dead rise not, what shall these do, who because of the Dead, or beholding the Miracles, the Constancy, Patience and Piety of those who are dead, in their holy Lives, great Hardships, frightful Sufferings, and violent Deaths ; are so convinced of the Truth of the *Christian Religion*, as that they make an open and sincere Profession of it, and thereupon are baptised ; by which Ordinance

Ordinance their Resurrection at the last Day is signified and sealed. If the Dead rise not, then these noble Professors and Confessors of the Name of *Christ* have been vastly deceived, and strangely imposed upon, in desiring and submitting to *Baptism*, whereby they believed the Resurrection of their Bodies, at the Last Day, was sealed to them. But if any desire to see more of this difficult Place of Scripture, they may consult the Learned Mr. *Edwards* his *Enquiry into Four remarkable Texts of the New Testament*, &c. Page 137, to 208.

Fifthly, The Objects of *Baptism* are the People of God, of whatever Nation, *Acts* x. 34, 35. *Gal.* iii. 28. of whatever Sex, *Acts* viii. 12. *Acts* xvi. 15. *1 Cor.* i. 16. and whatever Age, *Matth.* iii. 6. *Acts* ii. 38, 39, 41. *Acts* viii. 12, 37. *1 Cor.* vii. 14. And so it is Mankind, or the humane Race, who are the only and proper Objects of this Sacred Ordinance. Yet it is not all Men at first Instance, and without any Distinction, or due and religious Consideration. For,

Sixthly, The Question concerning *Infidels*, such as *Jews* and *Pagans*, and their Children, is more especially to be enquired into, and modestly considered. And to prevent Mistakes on this Head, it may be observed, That the Question is not, *If Infidels are to be compelled, by external Force, to submit unto the Ordinance of Baptism?* For, that our Christian and Holy Religion is not to be propagated by outward Violence, but by rational and merciful Methods; not submitted to from Fear of Persecution, but cheerfully and sincerely embraced with Understanding from inward Conviction, and Perswasion of the Judgment; is what all who truly know this Religion are unanimously agreed in. Nor are Persons to be driven, but willingly to come to *Baptism*, even so many as willingly receive the *Word* of the Gospel, are to be baptized,

It is Men, yet not all Men.

Not *Infidels*.

fed, *Acts* ii. 41. Nor, 2dly, Is the Question concerning those who were *Infidels*, but now profess their Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; for, that those may and ought to be baptised, cannot be doubted, *Acts* ii. 38, 39, 41. *Acts* viii. 36, 37, 38. Nor, 3dly, Is the Difficulty concerning the Infants of those, who, of *Infidels*, are now become professing Christians; for that those are to be baptised, even such Infants as were born before this Profession, is not disputed by any who acknowledge the Lawfulness of Infant Baptism; because, their Parents being now Members of the visible Church, and Disciples of Christ, so are their Seed, *1 Cor.* vii. 14. But the Question is concerning *Infidels* remaining in their *Infidelity*, and their Seed, or Infants. And, that such are not to be baptised, there are these Four Things, which seem very strongly to plead; 1st, Because the Promise, *I will be thy God, and the God of thy Seed*, given to *Abraham*, *Gen.* xvii. 11. and extended to the *New Testament* Church, *Rom.* iv. 11, 12, 13. And, that upon which the Apostle exhorts the *Jews* to be baptised, *Acts* ii. 38, 39. is what these are Strangers to, *Eph.* ii. 12. and consequently cannot have the Seal thereof applied to them. It is true, That the Promise, *Acts* ii. 39. is extended to *Pagans*, in the Revelation and Offer of it; but then, the Right to this Promise, so as to found a Title to *Baptism*, which is the Seal of it, is conveyed in a certain Order and Method appointed by God, for, *Acts* ii. 37. they are called to repent, and, *Acts* viii. 37. to believe, that they might be baptised; and, *Acts* ii. 39. the Promise is actually bestowed upon as many as the Lord our God should call, and their Seed. And from this Observation we may conclude, That it is not the Right that a Persons remote Predecessors had to the Promise, but which his immediate Parents have, or he himself actually,

ally, by his believing, hath, that founds his Title to *Baptism*; for, no doubt, these *Jews* to whom *Peter* preached, were of the Seed of *Abraham*, and yet, before they or their Seed could be baptised, they were called to repent, and believe the Gospel. And, in the next Place, Tho' a Christian's adopting the Infant of an *Infidel*, may give him a Title to his worldly Estate, and his engaging for the Christian Education of that Child, is, no doubt, the Infant's great Mercy; yet these Things will never constitute him that Christian's Seed, and so cannot give him a Right to the Promise, and to *Baptism*, the Seal of it: For, it is not an *Infidel* Child's falling into the Hands of a Christian, being a probable Sign of this or that, which founds his Title to this Sacrament; but his Right to the Promise, which such cannot have on the Ground alledged. And I well remember, that one Reason why many eminent and learned dissenting Ministers refused to subscribe their Assent and Consent to the *Book of Common Prayer* and *Canons*, required of them, in Order to their being received into the Established Church of *England*, was, because they alledged, That the Order for *Baptism* obliged them to baptise all Comers, even the Children of *Infidels*, if so be there were God-fathers and God-mothers to present and engage for them (1). 2dly, Because such Persons and their Children are *federally* Unclean, 1 *Cor.* vii. 14. being such as are not within the Bond of the Covenant of Grace, as to any actual visible Interest therein; and therefore, cannot have a Right to the Seals thereof. 3dly, They are not of the Church of God, but are *Aliens from the Commonwealth* of *Israel*, *Eph.* ii. 12. And so it is, that all instituted Ordinances, and particularly

Sacra-

(1) See Mr. *Calamy's* History of *Baxter's* Life, Vol. I. Page 211.

A Practical Essay on

Sacraments, are the special and distinguishing Privileges of the Church, *Rom. ix. 4. 1 Cor. xii. 28. Eph. iv. 11, 12, 13.* (2). 4thly, So our Catechisms judge (3), while these expressly assert, *That Baptism is not to be administered unto any that are out of the Visible Church, until they profess their Faith in Christ, and Obedience to him; but the Infants of such as are Members of the Visible Church, are to be baptised.* And, 5thly, To these may be added, which may have Place here, *That it was the constant Practice of the Primitive Church, in her early and first Times: For, the accurate Author of the Enquiry into the Constitution, Discipline and Worship of the Primitive Church* (4), informs us, *That Infidels were not presently admitted to Baptism, but for some Time were detained therefrom; First, That they might be catechised and instructed in the Articles of the Christian Faith. And, 2dly, That they might demonstrate the Sincerity of their Intentions, by the Change of their Lives. And when they were judged capable of Baptism, then they publicly declared their Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and renouncing the Devil, the World and the Flesh, became engaged to walk in all Duties of new Obedience.* This, indeed, respects *Infidels* who were come to Age; but if they were not admitted, how could their Children be? Or, was the Church, then, a hard hearted and unmerciful Step-mother, so that there was not any to plead upon the Promise belonging to them, because of *Noah* or some of their remote Predecessors? Or, were there none to stand Sponsors for such Infants of *Infidels* as fell into Christians Hands?

Some

(2) Confession of Faith, Chap. 23. Sect. 1, 2, 3. (3) See the Answer to that Question, in our Larger and Shorter Catechisms, *Unto whom is Baptism to be administered.* (4) Part I. Page 100, 101, 102. and Part II. Page 54, 55, 56.

Some who are of another Mind, do alledge, for Proof, *That the Children of Infidels are to be baptised;* Gen. xvii. 10, 11. Where, say they, *The Children of such were circumcised.* But, *First,* If this prove any Thing, it will prove too much; for *Abraham* had Servants bought with his Money, who were come to Age, and these were also circumcised. So that it must be said, That adult *Infidels* are to be baptised, and this, without previous Instruction, or any Profession of their Faith; but so did not the Apostles, *Acts* ii. 37, 38. *Acts* viii. 36, 37, 38. Nor did their Commission allow so much, *Matth.* xxviii. 19. And, *2dly,* It is to be noticed, That all *Abraham's* Family were instructed by him in the Knowledge of the True God, and Principles of true Religion; and so they and their Children, having a Title to this Sealing Ordinance, were to be admitted Partakers thereof. For, God says, *Gen.* xviii. 19. *I know Abraham, that he will command his Children and his Household after him, and they shall keep the Way of the Lord.* And it will be uncharitable to think, That *Abraham* the Friend of God, and Father of them that believe, did only shew so much Zeal for God, and Pity to the Souls of his Servants, as to perform this Duty, after his Household were circumcised, and not before.

An Objection answered.

And from all that hath been said in this *Section;* *First,* We may be informed of the gross Prophanation of this Ordinance of *Baptism,* which *Papists* are guilty of; while they administer this *Holy Ordinance,* which is appointed for holy and spiritual Uses, to irrational and inanimate Creatures, such as Ships, Forts, Instruments of War and Death, Ensigns, and particularly to Bells. This they do in Name of the Holy and adorable Trinity, with more Pomp and Solemnity than when they administer it to humane Souls. Give Names

Inferences from this.
I. *Papists* grossly abuse *Baptism.*

Names to them, allow only the Bishop or his Suffragan to perform it, while they permit Women to baptise Children. And attribute a special Power thereto, to drive away Devils, prevent Diseases, obtain Victories, and avert Thunder and Tempests: Nor is there any Rite omitted in their Baptising, of Bells, that is used in Baptising of reasonable Creatures.

II. The miserable Condition of *Infidels*.

Secondly, It informs us of the miserable Condition of *Infidels*: For, these are without the Pale of the Visible Church, and Strangers to the Covenants of Promise, and so have no Title to the Seals thereof: How, from a Principle of sincere and Christian Compassion, should we earnestly endeavour, and fervently pray, That God would bring them from Darkness to Light, and from Satan to Himself.

III. The Privilege of the Church.

Thirdly, From this we may observe the peculiar Privileges and great Advantages of those who are born Members of the Church of God, or in his appointed Way received thereinto: For, these enjoy the Means of eternal Salvation and everlasting Happiness, and have the Seals thereof administered unto them. How should all such, with Thankful Hearts, bless God, that their Lives are fallen into such pleasant Places? How carefully should they improve this, and diligently look to themselves, lest, by their Folly and Impiety, they stand in the Way of their own Mercy, and suspend the Administration of Gospel and Sealing Ordinances unto them and their Seed.

IV. How the Church, and particular *Christians* are to behave towards *Infidels*.

And, *Fourthly*, From this we may further Notice, how the Christian Church, and particular Members thereof, are to behave themselves towards *Infidels*, or the Children of such, who come into their Power. And this is, *First*, To instruct the Parents, and then baptise both them and their Children: Or, if it is the Infant only,

of a known Infidel, we are first to bring him to the Knowledge and Profession of Christ, so soon as he is capable of these; and then by Baptism seal him unto Christ. This, I think, every one will judge, at least, to be most safe: And I cannot but be perswaded, that all considering Christians will agree, That such cannot be excused of the greatest Cruelty, who have *Infidels* in their Power, and yet are not, yea will not be at Pains to have them instructed in the *Christian Faith*, and so be baptised; nor will they suffer others to show this *Pity* and *Charity* to immortal and perishing Souls. Certainly these Men discover, That Salvation is not much at Heart with them; they show a very indifferent Concern for the Propagation of the Knowledge of Christ; for the Glory of God, and the eternal Happiness of never dying Souls. O! what Account will such pretended Christians make at the *Great Day*? who prefer their worldly and uncertain Interest to these Things that are of everlasting Concern, and of the greatest Importance; and which, above all their own Things, every Man ought, with the greatest Diligence and Earnestness, to promote.



S E C T. II.

That Infants of Christian Parents are to be Baptised.

BY INFANTS, in the Title of this *Section*, I understand, what, in our ordinary and common Way of Speaking, we call so; such as are new born, sucking Children, not yet come to Years of Discretion, and who cannot discern the Infants,
who.
Right

A Practical Essay on

Right Hand from the Left. These, indeed, are incapable to help or do for themselves; and, in all Ages of the Church, there have not been some wanting, who have been very backward to lend them their Assistance, even in the great Affair of their everlasting Happiness, while they have refused *Baptism*, the initiating Seal of God's Covenant unto them. Of this Kind were the *Arrians* of Old, *Because*, say they, *Infants have neither Original nor Actual Sin, and so there can be no Occasion for the Administration of Baptism*. With these, the *Socinians* of late, join; not only from the same corrupt Principle with the *Arrians*, but moreover, because, they say, *That Baptism is an Ordinance not necessary to be continued in the Church; much less is it to remain in its Administration to Infants, who are ignorant of the Nature, Ends and Uses thereof*. But then the *Anabaptists*, or rather the *Antipedobaptists*, agree with the first Two, in denying *Baptism* to Infants, especially, because they think, *That it has not Divine Warrant and Institution; and Knowledge; in Order to Repenting and Believing, which Infants have not, are necessary thereto*. But then, the Body of all Christians, Christian Churches, and Divines, have been, and yet are otherwise minded.

The Ad-
versaries
to Infant
Baptism.

The Que-
stion sta-
ted.

And, that we may with some Distinctness understand, where the true State of this *Controversy* lies, it is to be observed, That the Question is not, *If Baptism, in the General, be of Divine Institution?* This our Adversaries do not deny, but as to the Object of its Administration. Nor, 2^{dly}, Is it, *If Infants are capable of the outward Sign of Washing, or Sprinkling, or having Water poured upon them?* For this cannot be refused. Nor, 3^{dly}, Is the Question concerning the Salvation and eternal Happiness of Infants; in this all are agreed. Nor, 4^{thly}, *If Baptism, as*

to the Nature of the outward Sign, be more extensive than was *Circumcision*? This cannot be denied: For, *Circumcision*, in the very Nature thereof, was only applicable to *Male Children*; but *Baptism* is that, whereof the *Females* are also capable. Nor, 5thly, Is the Question concerning Infants, of whom both Parents are *Infidels*; of this enough hath been said in the preceding *Section*. But it is, *If Baptism is to be administred, as an applying and sealing Sign of all the Blessings of the New Covenant, to Infants, whose Parents, one or both, are professing Christians, and so, Members of the Visible Church?* And as to this I shall deliver what I design, in the following Four Propositions, each whereof I shall endeavour briefly to confirm, being upon the *Affirmative* Side of the Question, in Opposition to the Adversaries above named.

Proposition I. Children are not incapable of Baptism, nor does it imply any Contradiction, or infer any Absurdity, that they be baptised. For, *First*, Under the *Old Testament*. they were circumcised at Eight Days old, *Gen. xviii. 10, 11, 12.* This was a *Seal of the Righteousness that is by Faith*, *Rom. iv. 11.* and *Baptism* is come in the Room of it, *Coloss. ii. 11, 12.* And if, under the first Dispensation, Infants were capable of the *Seal of that Righteousness that is by Faith*; what makes them incapable thereof under the Second? And here we are particularly to observe, That tho' Faith was required of those come to Age, in Order to their being baptised, yet it will not follow, That therefore the Children of such believing Parents are also to believe, before this Ordinance can be administred to them; because, *Abraham* indeed did believe, and so was circumcised, yet *Abraham's Seed* and Infants had that very *Seal of that Righteousness which was by Faith*, tho' they were not capable

Children are not incapable of Baptism.

One special Objection of the Anabaptists answered.

of actual believing. So, altho, when the new Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace took Place, those come to Age were commanded to repent and believe, in Order to their having the Seal of this Covenant, or Baptism, administered to them; yet there is no Cause to think, That Infants of such believing Parents, are also to believe before they can be baptised, more than there was; That *Abraham's* Infant Seed were to do so; unless we say, That the New Dispensation of the Covenant has less of Grace in it, and is not so mercifully extended as the Old was, which, no Man, but those who are divested of all spiritual Understanding, will assert. And this may suffice for Answer to one special Objection of the *Anabaptists*. 2dly, The Truth of the *Proposition* further appears, if we consider, That Infants are capable of the Blessings signified, *Matth. xix. 14, 15. Luke xviii. 15, 16. Mark x. 13, 14, 15, 16.* From which Places these Things may be observed; *First*, That those of whom our Lord there speaketh, were *Infants* or *Sucklings*; for for the Original Word $\beta\alpha\pi\tau\iota\sigma\mu$ properly signifies, as appears from *Luke ii. 16. 1 Peten ii. 2.* 2dly, They were such as could not come of themselves, but were *brought to him*. 3dly, Our Lord, in the most kindly Manner embraces and takes them into his Arms. 4thly, Declares, That of *such is the Kingdom of Heaven*. 5thly, *Laying his Hands* on them, he solemnly *blesseth them*. And, 6thly, He is offended with his *Disciples*, who would have hindered their Access to him. And from these, Two Things may be justly inferred; *First*, If Infants are capable of the Blessings which are greatest, then much more are they capable of the applying and sealing Signs of these Blessings which are less; especially when the Signs are of that Kind, as that they are applicable to all Nations, Ages, and Sexes. 2dly, Did

Did our infinitely wise Lord bless them who did not actually believe, yea, nor understand what was done to them; then, surely, they are not chargeable with any Absurdity who give, but they who refuse the Means conveying these Blessings, and that for this pretended Reason, because they are not instructed, and do not actually believe (1). But, 3dly, That Children are capable of Baptism, is further evident, from 1 Cor. vii. 14. where the Apostle saith, That *the unbelieving Husband is sanctified by the believing Wife, and the unbelieving Wife is sanctified by the believing Husband; else were your Children unclean, but now they are holy.* In which Scripture, by *Holiness*, we cannot understand *Legitimacy*; for surely, the Children of Parents who are both of them *Infidels*, are not *Bastards*; more than those of professing Christians. Nor, 2dly, Are we to understand it of *inherent Holiness*, for tho' Infants are certainly capable of this, yet all the Children of professing and believing Parents are not possessed of this. Wherefore, by *Holiness*, we are to understand, a *federal Holiness*, as, *Ezra ix. 2. Isaiah vi. 13.* that is, their believing Parent or Parents being so, the Infants are, according to the Tenor of God's Covenant, holy also; being now separated from the *Infidel World*, externally and visibly assumed into Covenant with God, dedicated to his Service, and for his Glory; capable of real Holiness; yea, such who are to have these external Seals of his Covenant administered to them, and to partake of all the visible Privileges of his People, and so are in his gracious Estimation *Holy*. And seeing Infants of professing Parents are thus holy, this not only proves the *Proposition*, but also gives a very strong positive Argument for *Infant Baptism*. And then,

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4thly,

(1) See *Sydenham* on Infant Baptism, Pag. 93, 99.

A practical Essay on

ably, (1) The Truth of the *Proposition* may be evinced from this, because, among Men, Infants have Charters containing their Rights to Estates, not only granted, but also sealed, as that they stand firm in Law, while in the mean Time they understand nothing of these: If then, they are capable of such Seals as are of an earthly Kind, why not of those also, which are of a spiritual Nature, seeing they need those more; and God is infinitely more gracious to his People, than Men can be to their Fellow Creatures. But now, in Regard it is not good Reasoning, to conclude from a Thing its not being absurd, that therefore it must be, or because it is possible, therefore it is true. Wherefore, a

It is probable from Scripture, that Infants were and are to be baptised.

Second *Proposition* I offer, is, *That it is very probable from Scripture, that Infants were, and so are to be, baptised.* And, *First,* If we consider, that the Privilege of Infants under the Old Dispensation was never repealed by the New, nor can the least Instance of this be given; but, under the Old Dispensation, Infants had the Seal of the *Covenant of Grace* administered unto them: And seeing this was never reversed under the New, is it not a fair and probable Argument, That it continues with them? *2dly,* If we notice, That in the Apostolick Times, whole Houses and Families were baptised at once. So was the *Household of Lydia*, *Acts xvi. 15.* So was the *Tailor's Family*, *Acts xvi. 33.* and that of *Stephanus*, *1 Cor. i. 16.* And it is very supposeable, That in all or some of these Families, there were Children, as well as those come to Age. *3dly,* Because, if Infants had not been baptised in the Apostles Times, when they were now propagating the *Doctrine of Christ*, and constituting a Gospel Church, would it not have occasi-

(1) See Dr. Hammond on Infant Baptism, Page 210.

occasioned great Murmuring and Debate? For, if we observe, what contending there was among the *Jews* about parting with Circumcision, would they not have loudly complained, That this was removed, and nothing put in its Room, and so their Children in a worse Condition than before; and could the Apostles but have heard of these Disputings, taken Notice of them, and been at Pains to have quieted the Minds of Men, as to this very momentuous Affair. But in all the Scriptures of the *New Testament*, there is not the least Hint of any Debate of this Nature; so that we may conclude, as highly probable, That the Baptising of Infants, was a known and unquestioned Truth in those Days; and, that the *Jews* and all other Church Members were in Possession of it as to their Children; and very much to their own Comfort and Satisfaction. And this is one Reason why there are so few Notices of Infant Baptism given in Scripture, because it seems to have been universally gone into, and no Difficulty or Doubt moved about it. Nor can I, in the 4th and last Place omit this, as a probable Argument for Infant Baptism, That it was the constant and universal Use of the Christian Church, in her most pure and primitive Times, as that which they openly and constantly maintained to be of Apostolick Institution and Practice (1); But this I do not insist on. Any who would be further satisfied as to this, may consult the Laborious and Learned Mr. *Wall's History of Baptism.*

But now, a *Third Proposition* with Respect to the Baptising of Infants, is, *That we have good and sufficient Scripture Ground for the baptizing of such.* And that if we consider,

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First,

Baptising of Infants warranted from Scripture.

(1) See the Enquiry into the Worship, &c. of the Primitive Church, Part II. Pag. 44, 45, 46. and *Biographia Ecclesiastica*, Vol. II. Page 592.

Arg. 1. *First*, That Scripture, *Acts* ii. 38, 39. where the Apostle exhorts these People who were pricked in their Hearts, and *cried out*, *Men and Brethren, what shall we do*, to repent, come to a better Mind, embrace the *Gospel Doctrine*, and be baptised. And the Argument he uses, is, That the *Promise was to them and to their Children, and to as many as the Lord our God should call*. Where, the Strength of the Apostle's Reasoning appears to be this, That those *Jews* who were now come to Age, should repent and be baptised, because, As then, *God should become their God, and the God of their Seed, the Promise being to them and to their Children*; so, by Baptism, they should have this Promise in the gracious Extent thereof sealed unto them; and by the same Ordinance administred unto their Children, should the great and up-making Blessing thereof be applied, solemnly made over, and sealed unto these also; even as *Abraham* had the Promise made to him, and Circumcision the Seal thereof administred to him, and his Children or Seed after him enjoyed both. As to all which, let these Things be briefly observed; *First*, That the Promise spoken of here, is the same made to *Abraham*, *Gen. xvii. 10.* of which, he, and his Infant Seed after him, received Circumcision, as a Seal. *2dly*, That this Promise is not only to the *Jews*, to whom the Apostle there speaks; but to the *Gentiles* also: For, it is *to as many as the Lord our God shall call*. And this is further confirmed from *Rom. iii. 29. Rom. iv. 11, 12, 13. Rom. xi. 17. Gal. iii. 8, 14, 29. Eph. ii. 13, 19. Heb. viii. 6, 10.* *3dly*, That this Promise is not only to repenting and believing *Jews* and *Gentiles*, but also to their Infant Seed or Children; for these had the *Old Testament* Seal of it, *Gen. xvii. 11, 12.* and the Word in the *Original* properly signifies such, *Matth. i. 26. Luke i. 31.*

57. *John* xvi. 21. And indeed, it must be, that Infants of professing Parents have this Promise belonging to them; for if they have no Interest in this, then are they excluded from having God as their God; and so from the Benefits of the Death of Christ. From all which, the Apostle's Argument enforcing Repentance, and being baptised in the Name of Christ, upon these People to whom he speaks, is plainly this, *That they should be no Losers, by Embracing the Gospel, because the same Covenant Promise which they had in Abraham, should descend to their Children, and as they, so their Infants should have the Seal of it: For, the Promise was still the same to them and their Children, only, they must first believe and be baptised, ere their Children could be considered in Covenant, and so have Baptism administered to them. And in Regard this Promise is to the Gentiles, as well as to the Jews, we Gentiles conclude the Baptising of our Infants, as well as theirs. And if what is here inferred, was not the Intent of the Apostle, in this Argument, those he speaks to being Jews, and who formerly enjoyed the Privilege of Circumcision to their Children, would rather have been stumbled than engaged, and deceived rather than enlightned, by his Way of Reasoning, there being no Expression the Jews were more accustomed to and delighted in, than that of the Promise made to Abraham and his Infant Seed, and who always had the initiating Seal of that Covenant. And doubtless, it would not have been so upright and open Dealing with these People, nor so becoming the Simplicity of the Gospel, if, while the Apostle urges them to repent and be baptised, upon this Consideration, because the Promise was to them, and to their Children, the Design was not to include Infants in the Promise,*

mise, and Baptism, but to exclude them from both;

An Ex-
ception
answered.

Nor is the Exception against this Argument of any Weight; which the Adversaries to Infant Baptism bring from *Verse 41.* where it is said, *That then they who gladly received the Word, were baptised:* Because, tho' it is said so, it will not, by a just and necessary Consequence, follow, That therefore they who were not capable so to receive the Word, were not baptised, either then or some short Time after, more than from *Mark xvi. 16.* These Men will allow to infer, That because it is there said, *That those who believe and are baptised, shall be saved;* therefore, those who are not capable to believe, and are not baptised, shall not be saved.

The Ar-
gument
further
explained.

This Exception being removed, I return to the Argument; and for further understanding of it, I shall observe these Two Things; *First,* That tho' this Covenant Promise is conveyed, by professing Parents to their Seed, yet it is not so because of the Parents Faith, as if this was taken for the Faith of the Child. For, the Foundation of *Infant Baptism* is not the Faith of the Parent imputed to the Infant, or acted in the Place of, and for the Child; much less is it the Faith of God-fathers and God-mothers (1). Nothing can be more unaccountable: For, *First,* This gives great Advantage to the Enemies to *Infant Baptism*, seeing it supposes, That the Infant to be baptised must have Faith; either in himself, which he has not, or in another. *2dly,* Because every one is saved, and lives by his own Faith, and not by that of another. *3dly,* If the Faith of the Parent be hypocritical, in this Case, the Child can reap no saving Advantage. *4thly,* Because, as is very observeable, the Children of believing

(1) See the Order for Baptism in the *Common Prayer Book*, and the *Catechism* there, anent Baptism.

believing Parents are sometimes real Strangers to the Covenant and saving Blessings of it, while those of unbelieving Parents are savingly brought into Covenant, and partake of all the Blessings thereof. Wherefore, 2dly, This Conveyance of the Right to the Promise, from the professing Parent unto the Child, is by the divine Constitution of the Covenant and the Promise thereof, which a sovereign and gracious God is pleased to extend not only to professing Parents, Members of his visible Church, but also to their Infant Seed. It is upon this Ground, that so often in Scripture the Lord calls himself, *the God, even of a backslidden and backsliding Church, and them his People*; and claims a Right and Title to their Infants and Children as his, *Gen. xvii. 10. Ezek. xvi. 20.* For, that all the Members of the *visible Church* have an external Title to the Promises of the *Covenant*, and Blessings thereof, in so far as God assumeth them to be his People; by many Things he separateth them from the rest of the World to himself, they are reputed and reckoned the Lord's, and so come to enjoy all the common and outward Privileges of a *covenanted People*, cannot be denied; because, if they have no Title they can have no Seal: Albeit the saving Right to the Promises of the *Covenant*, and saving Possession of these, be no further extended than to the Election of Grace, for whom, and whom only, *Christ* died, and purchased these Blessings. But who are thus chosen of God, is what neither Ministers who administrate Baptism, nor any other Person, can or may pry into, or determine: Yet from this of Infants, their Right to the Covenant Promise, it cannot be inferred, that therefore they may partake of the Table of the Lord, which is a Seal of this Promise as well as Baptism; because such positive Qualifications are required in those who partake of

A Practical Essay on

the *Lord's Supper*, as Children are not capable of, such as, *Self-Examination, discerning the Lord's Body, Shewing forth his Death hereby, and Doing this in Remembrance of him.*

Arg. 2.

A Second Scripture Warrant for the Baptism of Infants, we have, *Acts x. 47, 48.* where the Apostle *Peter* says, *Can any forbid Water that these should not be baptised, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we, and he commanded them to be baptised in the Name of the Lord.* From which Place of Scripture, we thus Reason for Infant Baptism; They who have received the holy Spirit are commanded to be baptised; but Infants receive the holy Spirit; For, *First*, Some have been filled with the Holy Ghost, from their Mothers Womb, *Luke i. 15*; Hence, *2dly*, They have the Blessings which are the Effects of the holy Spirit, such as Regeneration, or inward Holiness; And so, *3dly*, They are at last brought to Heaven and Glory: Which is the Consequent following upon these Blessings and Operations of the divine Spirit, who works in Infants in a Way becoming his infinite Power and Wisdom, tho' unknown to us. And if Infants have the inward Seal from God, how injuriously are they barred from the outward by Man?

The Ar-
gument
vindica-
ted.

To deny Infants the Benefit of inward Regeneration and sanctifying Grace, because, as some say, they can do no natural Acts of Understanding, is a making too bold with the Secrets of God; a speaking contrary to his Revelation in his *Word*, and an assuming too much to themselves and their own Understanding, denying a Thing to be, because they cannot tell how it is done, and saying, That Grace is not in the Soul, because they see no external Signs thereof by the Powers of the Body. For, *First*, How can they prove, that Infants do no natural Acts of Understanding? And is it not an hard Saying, That
tho'

tho' Infants are endowed with an inward, active, and spiritual Principle ; yet this Principle is wholly and entirely unactive in them. *2dly*, Is it not evident from the Scripture adduced, *That Infants have the Holy Ghost?* And can the holy Spirit of God be given unto any, but upon some special Design ? And if so, can he be unactive, and without effectual Influence in the Soul ? No, but quite otherwise, so as the End of his being given may be obtained. *3dly*, Are not Infants such as are spiritually unclean, and by Nature corrupt as well as others ? And if so, why are we not to say, that by the Grace of God, and effectual Operation of the holy Spirit, they are made pure and holy ? For, if in *Adam* they died as well as others, why will we deny that they live in Christ as others do ? And *4thly*, Are not Infants eternally saved and admitted into Glory, as well as those come to Age ? And, can any, unless he is regenerate, enter into the Kingdom of God, and without Holiness see the Lord ? And Finally, This is to limit the Creator of Spirits, the omnipotent Spirit of God, and he who works in all Things far above our Comprehension, in his active Influence upon the Souls of Elect Infants, and that because there appear none, or very slender Acts of Understanding, to the Judgment and Sense of Man.

Nor is the Argument weakned by this, That all Infants have not the Spirit and are not regenerate, more than if any should deny, that Faith comes by hearing the *Word*, because all Men who hear have not Faith ; and so say, that Preaching the Word is not an Ordinance of God, and to be dispensed to all the World, because many who hear the *Word* do not believe, and are not saved ; for they receive not the Spirit by the Hearing thereof. Medicine is not to be neglected because the Distemper is incurable in some ; we are to
 preach

preach, but it is God who giveth the Spirit as it pleaseth him: And we are to baptise, tho' he alone gives the Grace signified as he sees meet. Infants under the *Old Testament* had *Circumcision* a Seal of the Covenant Promises administered to them; but it would be bad Reasoning to infer, That because all circumcised Infants had not these Promises applied, or the good Things promised given to them: Therefore all were not to be circumcised.

An Ex-
ception
answered.

But the special Exception against the Argument is, That the Persons in the Text were such as had received the Spirit in his extraordinary and miraculous Operations. To this it may be replied, *First*, Supposing this was so, then much more are those to be baptised, who receive the Spirit in his sanctifying and saving Influences; seeing these are of more immediate Concern to the Souls of Men, and what are specially contained in the Covenant Promise, of which Baptism is a Seal. *2dly*, That by the Receiving of the Spirit we are to understand, a receiving him in his extraordinary Operations. The *46th Verse* does indeed determine us, but then, as these extraordinary Operations are not in these People to be supposed destitute of special, sanctifying and saving Influences; so it may be reasonably demanded, Was their receiving the Spirit in his extraordinary Operations, or only in his saving Influences, (common to all Believers) or both, the Ground upon which they were commanded to be baptised? If the first and last, or either of them be said, then the extraordinary Operations of the Spirit are the Foundation upon which Baptism is to be administered, and without these none can be baptised: But this would exclude the Body of all Believers since the Apostles Days; and therefore we must fix upon the Second, and so the Argument stands good. See also *Gal. iii. 2.*
where

where these *Gentiles* are said to receive the Spirit; but we are not to think, that all of them received him in his extraordinary Operations, and yet are not to doubt but all were baptised.

A Third Scripture Warrant for Infant Baptism, Arg. 3. may be taken from *Rom. xi. 17.* The Words are, *And if some of the Branches be broken off, and thou, being a wild Olive Tree, wert grafted in amongst them, and with them partakest of the Root and Fatness of the Olive Tree;* where, by breaking off of the *Jews*, cannot be understood a final breaking off from all saving Union to, and Communion with *Christ*, or the invisible Church; against this the *Apostle* speaks in the 2d and 29th Verses of this Chapter; but a breaking off from the visible Church: Whence we may thus plead for Infant Baptism, *First*, That we *Gentiles* are so grafted in, as that we partake of the Root, and the Blessings of *Abraham* are come upon us, *Gal. iii. 14, 26, 27, 29.* But these Blessings included the assuming the Infant Family into Covenant with those who were come to riper Age; so that Infants had the Seal of the Covenant administered to them. *2dly*, Our Grafting in must bear a Proportion to the *Jews* their being broken off; but they and their Children were broken off from visible Church Membership, and the Privileges thereof; therefore, we and our Infants were so grafted in: For we now partake of the Fatness of the Olive Tree; and consequently enjoy all the Privileges they had. And it is undeniable, that one special Favour they so very highly valued, was, That their Infants were taken into Covenant with themselves, and had Circumcision as a Seal of that Covenant administered to them: But if Infants under the *New Testament* are cut off from an Interest in this Covenant, and an initiating Seal thereof, how great should the Disproportion be betwixt the

Jews

Jews their Privileges and ours, their breaking off, and our grafting in.

Arg. 4. A Fourth and last Scripture Ground I offer for Infant Baptism is, *Col. ii. 11, 12.* The Words are, *In whom also ye are circumcised, with the Circumcision made without Hands; in putting off the Body of Sins of the Flesh, by the Circumcision of Christ, buried with him in Baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him, &c.* And here it may be observed, That as there is an Agreement betwixt Baptism and Circumcision, *Rom. vi. 3, 4, 5, 6.* so from this Scripture may be justly inferred, That Baptism is come in Room of Circumcision, as an initiating Seal of God's Covenant; not only to those of Age, but also to Infants: For, the Intent of the Apostle, is to bring the *Colossians* off from the *Ceremonial Law*, and particularly from *Circumcision*, which was that to which the *Jews* did most tenaciously adhere, and now endeavoured to urge the Observance of upon the *Gentile Churches*; and for this End he shows them, that they were *complete in Christ*, Verse 10. All Blessings being in him, and all Ordinances appointed by him that were necessary, or they could wish, in Order to their Happiness and Comfort; for in him they had the Thing signified by Circumcision, being *sanctified in him*, and so *having put off the Body of the Sins of the Flesh*, Verse 11. And whereas they might have objected, That the Sign should always accompany the Thing signified, and that they were not now so *complete in Christ*, as *Abraham* and his Seed were; for, besides the inward Grace, they and their Infant Seed had an outward Sign and Seal to confirm and ratify this Grace to them. And indeed, if their Infants had not been taken into Covenant with God, and been denied an initiating Seal thereof, this would have been a very strong Argument, that they were

not now so compleat, as those under the *first Dispensation* were. But any Thought of this Kind the Apostle obviates, by shewing them, That now they had *Baptism*, which was every Way as useful as *Circumcision* was, with this Addition, That Baptism did take in the Resurrection of Christ, which could not be so clearly and distinctly represented by *Circumcision*: So that now they were no Losers, but Gainers by *Christ* and the *New Testament Dispensation*; for it was only a Change of the Sign, but still they had the same Blessings and Grace confirmed and sealed thereby. But if their Infants had been denied an Interest in the Covenant, and refused an initiating Seal thereof, how would the Objections of *Judaizing Christians* been satisfiably answered, or their Clamours silenced? For they had it still to object, That their Privileges were not now so extensive as before, in Regard, that then their Infants had the Promise belonging to them, and *Circumcision*, a Seal thereof, administered to them; but now they were deprived of both. Wherefore, the Apostle's Reasoning here cannot but take in *Baptism*, extending as to the Objects of it, equally with *Circumcision*: So that all Cavils upon this Ground were for ever removed, with this peculiar Advantage on the Side of *Baptism*, That whereas *Circumcision*, in the Nature of the Sign, was only applicable to Male Children; *Baptism*, which was come in the Room thereof, was such whereof the Females were capable also.

To all that hath been said for Infant *Baptism*, may be added, *Fifthly*, The just but very harsh, cruel and unsufferable Consequences that follow upon the Denial of this, and among many such, I only name these few, *First*, That then the Condition of the Lord's People under the *New Testament Dispensation*, and since *Christ* came, is worse

Arg. 5.

worse than that of the Old, and before his Appearance to the *World*: For, by the Old, Children of professing Parents were, according to the divine Constitution of the Covenant, assumed with their Parents into Covenant, and had the Seal thereof administered unto them; but now, according to the Doctrine of our Adversaries, they must be denied both; in Contradiction to, and entirely inconsistent with these Scriptures, *Deut. iv. 37. Deut. xxx. 6. Psalm lxxix. 36. Is. lix. 20, 21. Rom. v. 14, 15, 20. Heb. vii. 19. Heb. vii. 22. Heb. viii. 6. Heb. xi. 40. Heb. xiii. 22, 23, 24.* 2dly, From this very cruel Doctrine to poor Infants, it will follow, That now, under the *New Testament*, the Lord hath revoked a very great Privilege and Mercy they had under the Old: For then they were circumcised, and had this as a Seal of the Covenant of Grace, *Gen. xvii. 10. Rom. iv. 11.* But now, Circumcision has no more Place in the Church of God; nor will our Adversaries allow another initiating Seal whereof Children are capable, to be come in its Room. And then, 3dly, By denying Infant Baptism, and their Interest in the Covenant as the Foundation thereof, they shut the Infants of such Parents as are of the Household of Faith, out of their Father's House; leave them in the same Condition with the Children of Infidels; contrary to those Scriptures just now adduced, they make the Times of the Law incomparably more full of Grace, than those of the Gospel; exceedingly confine the rich Grace of the new Covenant, which God has so graciously extended, by excluding our Infants from the Covenant, they leave these hopeless, and us comfortless; and then, they make the *Jews* exceeding Losers by the Coming of Christ, even those *Jews* who believe in him; and lay a very great Hinderance in the Way of the Conversion of others; who may thus plead

plead, That while they remain in the *Jewish* Religion, not only themselves, but also their Infant Seed are in Covenant, and have an initiating Seal thereof; but by embracing *Christianity* their Children must be excluded from both: And therefore, they will think it better to remain where they are.

I have hitherto endeavoured to obviate the Objections, which *Antipedobaptists* bring against the baptising of Infants, so far as the Matter treated of gave Occasion; so that now I shall only notice these Two, which are the main Strength of all that these People say against it.

The *First* great Objection they bring against this is, That such Dispositions are required of those who are to be baptised, whereof Children are not at all capable, as *Matth. xxviii. 19.* They are first to be Taught. *Acts ii. 37.* They are to Repent. And *Acts viii. 12, 37.* They are to hear the *Word*, and to believe.

Objections
against In-
fant Bap-
tism an-
swered.

For Answer to this, *First*, If without Restriction our Adversaries Reason from the Order of the Words, that is, because Teaching is named before Baptising, and so are Repenting and Believing; therefore all Persons *whosoever* must be first Taught, Repent and Believe, ere they can be Baptised: This they will observe to be a bad Way of Arguing. For, *Rom. x. 9.* Confessing with the Mouth is placed before Believing with the Heart, *Mark i. 4.* *John* is said to have baptised in the Wilderness, and preached the Baptism of Repentance. And *Eph. v. 26.* *Washing* with *Water* is named before the *Word*. So *Heb. viii. 10.* God promises to be a God unto his People, which, in the Order of the Words, is placed before the Promise of their knowing the Lord, *Ver. 11.* But will it from these Scriptures follow, that *Confession* goes before *Believing*, *Baptising* those come to Age before *Preaching* to them, and

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telling

telling them what *Baptism* is, *Sanctification* before the *Word* in those come to Age; or, that a People are savingly brought into Covenant with God, before they have the Knowledge of God. 2dly, To Reason from what is required of Persons come to Age, unto Infants that are of Nonage, is a very fallacious Way of Disputing. For, as Schoolmen use to say, It is Reasoning, *A dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter*. The Consequence of such a Way of Arguing will be very gross, I shall but instance this in a few Things. *Abraham* believed, and had the Knowledge of God's Covenant, and then obtained *Circumcision*, as a Seal thereof: But was *Isaac* also to believe and know, when at Eight Days Old he had the same Seal administred to him. *John* iii. 36. It is said, *He that believeth not shall not see Life, but the Wrath of God abideth on him*. And *Mark* xvi. 16. *He that believeth not shall be damned*. But must all our Infants dying in Infancy eternally perish, because they are not capable to believe? And 1 *Thess.* iii. 10. it is said, *They who will not work, neither shall they eat*: But must our Infants starve, because they cannot labour with their Hands? But then 3dly, and more directly we would observe, That the Church of God being formerly confined to the *Jews*; now our Lord extends it to *all Nations*, and gives his Disciples Commission, That in Order to the constituting of this *New Testament Church*, these should be first taught and made Disciples, and then be baptised. In Obedience whereunto, the *Disciples* preach the Gospel to *every Creature*, command them to repent and believe the Gospel, preach *Christ*, and Salvation by him; and upon their coming to a better Mind, and embracing the *Lord Jesus*, they were assumed into the Covenant, and so baptised. But then we subsume,
That

That according to the Tenor of the *Covenant of Grace*, the Promise is not only to the *Believer*, but also to *his Seed*, *Acts* ii. 37, 38. *If the Root be holy, so also are the Branches*; God claims an Interest in them, *Rom.* xi. 16. *1 Cor.* vii. 14. *Ezek.* xvi. 20. And therefore, seeing they are in Covenant with God, justly have they Baptism administered to them as a Seal thereof; even as *Abraham* had the Seal of the Covenant following his Faith, but his Son enjoyed this before any actual Exercise of Judgment or Understanding. For, tho' it is meet, that he who is of full grown Age, and a Stranger to the Covenant, understand the Nature of it, and God's appointed Method of bringing Sinners thereinto, and so profess his Faith in *Christ*, and his Compliance with the whole Device of Salvation, before he can have the Seal of the Covenant administered unto him; yet an Infant begotten by him needeth not so; who, by Right of Inheritance, and according to the Form of the Promise, is, even from his Mother's Womb, contained in the Covenant (6). But then 4thly, There is a Twofold Disposition of Persons that are to be baptised, according to their different Circumstances and Condition; *First*, That which I may call *absolute* and *intrinsic*, whereby the Subject comes to have a Capacity of doing and receiving something, which before it had not; albeit this Disposition proceeds from some extrinsic Cause, and shows itself in some outward Acts, to Men who are concerned to know this: This, as it includes Knowledge, Repentance and Faith, and is expressed by Declarations, Desires and Purposes, made known to others; so it was necessary in those who were *Aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel*, were

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come

(6) See *Calvin's Institutions*, Lib. 4. Chap. 15. Sect.

come to Years, and desired Baptism. But 2^{dly}, There is a Disposition, which in the Nature of it is *relative* and *extrinsick*, which arises from the Relation to some other Person, or some Act of theirs; while in the mean Time there is no inward Change made upon the Mind. And thus, some Titles of Honour descend from Parents to Children, and Rights to Inheritances are settled on them and sealed to them, tho' there is no Change of Mind, neither do they know nor understand the Privilege secured to them; and this, according to the Nature of God's Covenant, is sufficient, that the Infant be capable or disposed to receive Baptism; for, as under the Law, if a Proselyte desired *Circumcision the Seal of the Covenant*, he was first to be disposed and prepared for this, by Knowledge, Repentance and Faith, at least, by a Profession of these: But in the Infants of such, there was no other previous Dispositions requisite than their paternal Privileges, as being now in their Father and with him, in Covenant with God, and having an external and visible Right to the Privileges thereof. And thus it is here as to Baptism.

A *Second Objection* they have against baptizing of Infants is, Because, say they, in Scripture there is neither Precept nor Example for it.

For Answer to this, which seems to be the great Argument that *Antipedobaptists* mostly insist on; we may observe, *First*, That when Truths are fairly deduced from Principles that are in an express and positive Manner laid down in Scripture, no Man does question the Verity of the Consequence inferred, more than he does the Truth of the Principle from which it is deduced. Thus, seeing the Scripture says, *That we shall all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ; and that he who believeth shall be saved;* can any Man doubt the Truth of the following

Propo-

Propositions, *That then this, or that particular Person must appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ; and if they believe, they shall be saved:* Altho' there is no exprefs Mention of such Persons in Scripture their Appearing, or Salvation. For, so in another Case our Saviour Reasons, *Matth. xxii. 31, 32.* 2dly, Where have these Men exprefs Precept or Command to baptise Females, or exprefs Example to administer the *Lord's Supper* to them? And yet they scruple neither of these. Where, again, have they either Precept or Example for the Baptism of Kings, Emperors, or Nobles? But is this denied, or can it be refused, unless we give the open Affront to the Reason of Mankind. But 3dly. Have we not an exprefs Command, That *Abraham's Infant Seed* should be circumcised? *Gen. xvii. 7.* And do not Believers now under the *New Testament* succeed to the Privileges of *Abraham*, as being his Children? *Gal. iii. 7.* Did not our Lord command his *Disciples* to baptise all Nations who were made his *Disciples*? And are not the Children of believing Parents the *Disciples of our Lord*, as being taken into Covenant with their Parents? And was not the Command of Baptism, *Acts ii. 38, 39.* founded upon this, because the *Promise was to them and to their Seed*? And finally, Do we not frequently read, of *whole Families being baptised at once*; wherein it is more than probable, there were Infants, as well as those come to Age. And shall we not be contented with a general Precept including *Childrens Baptism*, when the great Lawgiver made no Exception to the contrary, but in the Days of his Flesh manifested the Riches of his Grace toward them, and blessed them. But then Lastly, We may justly say, That there was no Necessity that our Lord should give his *Disciples* any exprefs or peculiar

liar Command concerning baptising Infants, but included them in the General ; because the Apostles were so well acquainted with Childrens solemn Reception into Church Privileges, and having these sealed to them, (Children being circumcised under the Law, and there being a general Command to *baptise all Nations*) that they could not reasonably make any Question about it ; knowing moreover, that the Grace of God and his Covenant were not more restricted under the *New Testament* than under the *Old* ; but contrariwise, were more diffused and extended : And therefore, a more difficult Question might have been concerning the baptising of Women, there being neither any Analogy from *Circumcision*, nor particular Precept to induce them thereto ; but that they knew the general Precept was Authority sufficient, without specifying Particulars.

Inferences
from this.

I. The
Error of
Anabap-
tists.

From all that hath been said on the Head of *Infant Baptism*, we may infer, *First*, The Error of *Anabaptists*, or rather of *Antipedobaptists*, who are such Enemies to their own Comfort, and contrary to the Word of God, deal so uncharitably with Children, as that they deny to Infants of *Christian* professing Parents the Privilege of *Baptism* ; for such deny the Privilege to Children which *Christ* hath allow'd them ; keep those from *Christ* he invites to come unto him ; refuse them the Mean of applying and sealing these Blessings which *Christ* bestows on them ; exclude those out of the Covenant and the Kingdom of *Christ*, whom he declares to be of it ; reject them whom *Christ* embraces ; take away a very strong Argument obliging to Holiness, which he hath given ; shut that Door against Infants which *Christ* hath left open ; deprive Parents of the Comfort *Christ* hath vouchsafed them ; rob the Church of *Christ* of the Privileges she possesses ; and

and endeavour to overturn the Gospel Foundation of *Baptism*, that they may lay one of their own; yea plead their and our Infants into a State of Alienation and Estrangement from God.

Secondly, We may hence learn a Difference betwixt the Children of Infidels and those of Christian Parents; or of those who are without the Church, and *Aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel*, and such as are Members of it. The last are to be baptised, as having a Right and Title thereto; but the First are not, seeing they are

II. A Difference betwixt the Children of Infidels and these of Christian Parents.

Strangers to the Covenant of Promises, of which *Baptism* is a Seal, *Eph. ii. 12.* It is true, that some particular Consideration is to be had of the *Jews*, who because of God's once assuming them to be a *peculiar People to himself above all other People*, because of the Covenant he so solemnly and frequently entred into with them, and specially because of his Designs of Grace towards them founded on that Covenant, *Rom. xi. 1, 2, 11, 16, 25, 26, 31.* They may be therefore said to have a remote or fundamental Title to the Covenant or Blessings thereof; yet as to such an immediate and formal Right to Covenant Blessings as lays a Foundation for the Administration of the Seal of it, they have none; for they are now broken off, *Rom. xi. 17.* No more his Church and People, so as to plead the Advantages that belong to such, *until they profess their Faith in Christ, and Obedience to him, Acts ii. 38, 39.*

Thirdly, From this we may observe the Condition that Infants, even of Christian Parents, are in by Nature; That they are Sinners, guilty, impure and unholy. It is for this Cause that they are washed, and have the Value, Virtue, and Efficacy of the Blood of Christ, with the gracious Operations of the Spirit of Christ by Baptism; made over and sealed unto them; that so their

III. The Condition of Infants by Nature.

Sins may be pardoned, their Persons accepted, their Natures sanctified, and the whole Man saved, *Psal. li. 5. Rom. v. 19. Rom. vi. 3. Acts ii. 38, 39. Col. ii. 11, 12.* Was this but duly considered, with what holy Thoughtfulness, and serious Concern, would Parents bring their Children to Baptism, and Ministers administer it to them.

IV. The Riches of the Lord's Grace.

Fourthly, Here we may behold the unsearchable Riches of God's Grace, and the merciful Extent of his Covenant; for the Promise is not only to *Believers*, but also to *their Seed*; nor does God receive Believers themselves only, and blesteth them with faithful *Abraham*, but their *Infants* also. And such is the exceeding Riches of his Grace, that immediately upon their Entry into the World, he grants, that all *the sure Mercies of David*, or Blessings of his everlasting Covenant, be sealed and confirmed to them, by this Ordinance of his own Institution. O! How ought we to admire his Condescension, to adore his Mercy, to proclaim the Riches of his Grace, and for ever to show forth his Praise!

V. It should engage and encourage those that come to Age.

Fifthly, Hence those who are come to Age may see a strong Argument and Motive, to determine their Souls to a Compliance with the Gospel Method of Salvation, and an Engagement of themselves to all the Duties of Holiness, with a great Encouragement to both: For no sooner do we come to Years of Discretion, but we may with the greatest Pleasure reflect, how it pleased God, in our Infancy, to make us Partakers of an Ordinance of his Appointment, whereby all the Blessings of his Covenant were made over and sealed unto us: How, then, we were devoted and given up to him in Jesus Christ, and how solemnly we were brought to *Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant*, and to *the Blood of Sprinkling*; and therefore, may now, with holy

holy and humble Confidence, take hold of Christ and this Covenant in him, with particular Application to our selves; and should now stir up our own Souls to an Accepting of the Lord Jesus, and of God as our God in him; to yield our selves to the Lord, so as we may henceforth be only his, and for him, and so to lay Obligations on our selves, to behave in the World as it becomes the Children of the most High, walking worthy of him, unto all well pleasing. But our little reviewing of our *Infant Baptism*, is one special Reason why our Faith is so weak, our Obligations to Holiness so ineffectual, our Progress therein so small, and our Comfort so lamentably low.

Sixthly, This also gives great Comfort to Christian Parents, and is a special Ground of Comfort, in the Case of their Children dying in Infancy or Nonage. 'Tis now, that with a great Deal of Tranquility of Mind, they may behold the *Covenant Promise*, made not only to *them*, but also to their *Seed*: How may they, with Gladness of Heart, reflect, that their now sick and dying Child had God's own Seal of this Promise administered to him; with inward Joy review the Conscientious and Christian Part they acted, when they presented such a Child to Baptism; and with great Satisfaction plead the Tenor of the *Covenant of Grace*, and Seal thereof, in Favour of their Infant; importunately, and with holy Confidence wrestle with God for them, and with Serenity of Mind hope the best of them; leaving secret Things to him to whom alone they belong.

Seventhly, Here we have a special Foundation laid, whereupon the Duties of Christian Parents toward their Children, are necessarily built. But this is of such Moment and Extent, that I shall give it a *Section* by it self, when once I have noticed

VI. It gives Comfort to Parents.

VII. Parents Duties.

tic'd the Answers that may be given to a few Questions.

Quest. 1.
Concer-
ning Found-
lings.

Question 1. Are Exposed Children, or Foundlings, to be baptised?

Answer, Whereas the Right to Baptism is founded upon the Infant's Title to the *Promises of the Covenant*, and their Interest in it (for where there is no Interest in the Covenant, there can be no Sealing of it) Therefore, the Consideration how far such Infants are in *the Covenant of Grace*, so as to have a Right to the solemn Investiture in the Blessings of it, is of special Use to determine us in the Solution of this and other Questions on this Head. But because it is not easily decided, how far Infants exposed, or the Children of prophane, idolatrous or excommunicate Parents, have a Right to the *Covenant of Grace*, I shall therefore leave the particular Enquiry of this, to such as are of greater Abilities, have more Time, and better Opportunities, for Matters of this Kind, than I have. And as to the *Question* just now propos'd, that which makes it more difficult, is, when Children are exposed in a Country where professed Infidels, *Jews, Pagans and Mahometans* live together with professing Christians; in which Case, the Parents of the Child so exposed are to be sought for; if they are found, the Difficulty will be over; but if they cannot be found, and the Number of such Infidels be greater, or equal to that of Christians, in this Case, it may be better to forbear, than administer Baptism to such a Child, lest an holy Ordinance of God be prophaned: But where the Body of a People are professed Christians, in this Case, Judgment is to pass upon the most favourable and charitable Side, and so the *Foundling* to be reckon'd a Member of the Visible Church, and come of Christian Parents, and therefore, say the Generality, it is to be

be baptised. Tho' some are of Opinion, That 'tis as good, in such a Case, to delay Baptism, till the Child arrive at the Years of Discretion, and make solemn Profession of its own Faith.

Quest. 2. *Are the Children of the Prophane and Ignorant, and Infants begotten in Fornication or Adultery, to be baptised?*

Quest. 2.
Concerning the
Infants
begot in
Unclean-
ness.

Ans. So far as I know, all agree, that they are; because such Infants were, under the *Old Testament Dispensation*, circumcised; nor are we to think, that every Defect, and unsuitable Behaviour to our holy Profession, as Christians, does Place the visible Members of the Church, in the Condition of *Strangers to the Covenants of Promise, and Aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel*; yet because the Church of Christ is holy, and the Communion of Saints of a quite different Nature from the Society of the Prophane, therefore, say some, in well constituted Churches, the Baptism of such Infants is to be delayed, until the Parents be, by their Repentance, reconciled to the Church (1).

Quest. 3. *Is Baptism to be administrated to the Children of Hereticks and Papists?*

Quest. 3.
Concerning the
Children
of Hereticks-
and Pa-
pists.

Ans. As to *Hereticks* who deny the fundamental Truths of our holy Religion, maintain such Principles as are everive of the Foundation, and destroy the Nature of God's *Covenant of Grace*, how such have so much as a visible, external Interest in this Covenant, and Right to the Seals of it, is hard to be understood; and where the Parent's Title is null, how the Right of the Infant can stand, I do not comprehend: And surely, where there is no Title, there can be no appending of a Seal. I know, that against this, and other Assertions of this Kind (where Baptism is denied

(1) See *Calamy's History*, Vol. I. Page 247. *Heideggeri Corpus Tocologiae*, Vol. II. Page 452. Sect. 56. *Rutherford's Due Right of Presbyteries*, *mibi* Page 261. *apud finem Libri*.

denied to the Infant, because of the Parents their Sin) it is commonly objected, that, in such Cases, *the Children are made to suffer for the Parents Fault*. But to this, the Answer seems plain, That there is no Absurdity in saying so, as to visible, external Church Privileges. For, did not the Children of *Korah* suffer for the Crime of their Parents? In civil Cases, when Parents forfeit their Title to an Estate, or otherwise denude themselves thereof, no Charter can pass in Favours of their Children, as such: And do we not see, that the Infants of *Jews* and *Pagans* do so suffer, while Baptism is denied to them, until, when they come to Age, they profess their Faith in Christ, and Obedience to him. And this Consideration should be a powerful Argument to restrain Parents from every Thing that has the least Tendency to cut them off from the *Communion of Saints*; seeing hereby they not only destroy themselves, but their Children also. But to return; as to *the Children of Papists*, Protestant Divines seem to be agreed, That Baptism is not to be denied them; and that, *First*, Because their Parents had this Ordinance, in all the Essentials thereof, administered to them, tho' miserably corrupted with the Additions of Men. *2dly*, Because the Children of immediate Parents who were Idolaters, were, under the *Old Testament*, circumcised; and God calls them his Children, *Ezek. xvi. 20*. Yea, such idolatrous Persons, *his People*, and exhorts them to *return unto him, the Lord their God*; importing, that as yet, they were not intirely cut off from all Title to God, and from all external Right to the external Privileges of his People.

Quest. 4.
Concerning the
Infants of
excommunicate Pa-
rents.

But a *Fourth* and last *Question* that is commonly proposed on this Head of the qualified Subjects of Baptism, is, *Concerning the Children of excommunicate Parents*.

Ans.

Ans. First, If only one of the Parents be excommunicate, in this Case there is no Difficulty; for, no Doubt, the Children of such are to be baptised, according to 1 Cor. vii. 14. But, 2dly, There are some very *Great Divines*, who say, That even upon Supposition, that both Parents are laid under this dreadful Sentence, yet the Children of such are to be baptised (1). First, Because, say they, excommunicate Persons are not wholly cut off from the Church of God, nor altogether excluded the Covenant Promise; neither are they in all Respects to be unto us as *Heathens* and *Publicans*; else, upon their Relaxation and Readmission into the Church, why are they not rebaptised. 2dly, Because the Seed of God may remain in such, 3dly, They are excommunicate, not for their utter Undoing, but *for the Destruction of the Flesh, that the Spirit may be saved in the Day of the Lord*, 1 Cor. v. 5. And, 4thly, They are still to be reckoned Members of the Church, say these; tho', for the present, rotten ones, and so are *not to be counted as Enemies*, but *admonished as Brethren*. But then, 3dly, Other very Learned Persons (2), are not so positive as to this; but much doubt, if such Infants are to be baptised: Nor are there very good Reasons wanting for such Hesitation; when it is considered, That excommunicate Persons are excluded the Society of the Faithful, denied the Privilege of sealing Ordinances, and, in some Respects at least, dealt with as *Heathen Men and Publicans*; and tho' their fundamental Title to the Covenant Promises may stand, yet their visible Right to these, is now suspended: Upon all which, it is more than difficult to explain, how

(1) See Heidegger, Vol. II. Pag. 452. Sect. 56. Zanch. Tom. IV. Page 439. and *Epistolarum* Lib. I. Page 411. *Antersol* on the Sacraments. Page 222. *Rushersford's Due Right*, *mibē* Page 121, 122, 258, to 257. (2) *Ejcn. Comp.* Page 669. *Maestricht*, Page 320. Sect. 13.

A Practical Essay on

how Parents are excluded the Church, and yet their Infant Seed be formally and properly in it; how Parents are denied the Seals of the Covenant, and yet their Infants have these administered to them; how they are dealt with as *Heathens* and *Publicans*, when Baptism is administered to their Children, equally, with those of the most sound and faithful Members; and how, when the Parents Right is, by such a Sentence, suspended, yet that of their Infants shall stand good, so as they shall have the Seal thereof.

Upon the Whole, this may be justly said, That surely all that come in a Minister's Way, or are brought to them by others, are not to be baptised, without a due Consideration of their Right to this Ordinance: For, as has been once and again said, where there is no Right to the Covenant, there can be no warrantable Administration of the Seals of it; and certainly a very remarkable Distinction is to be made betwixt Children of Infidels, and those of Believers. Nor are any who take upon them the Office of the Ministry, to act so contrary to the *Nature* and *Doctrine* of *Baptism*, as violently to force the Infants of Infidel Parents from them, that they may be baptised (3).



S E C T. III.

Of the Duties of Christian Parents.

THE *Promises* of the *Covenant of Grace*, not only belonging to *Christian Parents*, but also to *their Seed*; and these being, according to the Tenor of that *Covenant*, conveyed by Parents

Parents
Duties.

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(3) See *Heidegger*, Vol. II. Page 452. Sect. 56.

to Children, whereof *Baptism* is a Seal; the Interest that God claims in such Children, by Virtue of his *Covenant*; the near Relation that is betwixt Parents and Children, with that natural and strong Affection which Parents are to have for them, together with the express Command of the GREAT JEHOVAH; all these lay special Obligations upon Christian Parents, to solemn and special Duties, with Respect to this Ordinance of *Baptism*, as it is administrated to their Infant Seed. Which may be considered, *1st*, Either as previous to *Baptism*; or, *2dly*, When they are presenting their Children to it, and are to have this administrated to them; or, *3dly*, Such as natively follow thereupon.

Previous to the Administration of Baptism to Children, *First*, It is the *Duty* of *Christian Parents*, seriously and thankfully to reflect on the Goodness of God to them, in giving them a Child, *Psalms* cxxvii. 5. which is sometimes attended with such peculiar Circumstances, as makes it a very great and double Mercy. They are also to consider the Loving Kindness of God to their Infant, not only in preserving the Babe in the Mother's Belly, and bringing it safely forth into the World, but especially in this, that the *Lord* promises to be a God unto their Child, as well as to themselves, *Gen.* xvii. 10. He commands *their little Ones* to be brought to him, that he may bless them; and appoints an Ordinance for the solemn Application, and for Sealing of all the Blessings of the *Covenant* unto them, *Luke* xviii. 16. *Mark* x. 16, 17. *Gen.* xvii. 11. And then, they are seriously to bethink themselves, what it is that God requires of them; and, what they are now to do, when their Child or Children are to have this Seal of the *Covenant* administrated to them. *2dly*, They are to examine themselves of their Knowledge of the Principles

I. Previous to Baptism.

of

of our Holy and Christian Religion; of the *Duties* of Parents to Children; what special Obligations they are now to come under; and what awful Vows of God they are to take upon them. In a particular Manner, they are to enquire into their own Interest in Christ; their Relation to God, as their God; and Right to the Blessings of his Covenant: This they and others are to be taken up about, at all Times, but especially on this Occasion: For, as this is a very proper Mean to compose their own Minds, and bring them to a Frame suitable to their present Work; and, as a Christian Parent's Sense and Hope, upon Scripture Evidence, that he himself is in a *Gracious State*, does notably encourage him to bring his Infant, and that with holy Confidence, to receive the Seal of God's Covenant, *Gen. xvii. 10, 11.* so it is now, and at this Time, that Parents are to make a solemn Profession of their own Faith, and come under awful Obligations, to perform all Parental, Christian Duties to their Children: But where Sloath is indulged, where Thoughtfulness is laid aside, and Ignorance prevails, how can Parents make this Profession, and come under these Obligations, *in Faith, with Distinctness of Judgment, and a good Conscience?* Hence it is very expedient, that Parents attend their Minister, before they bring their Children to this Ordinance, that these and the like *Duties* may be inculcated upon them; and when Parents are found weak in Knowledge, they should be first engaged to give all Diligence for attaining the Knowledge of divine Truths, and their own Duty; and, to lay Obligations upon them to act in a Suitableness with Respect to their Children: For *ignorant Engagements*, and a *superficial Nod* given to a Minister, make but very comfortless Work. *3dly*, When Parents are to bring their Children to Baptism, they are to renew their solemn

solemn and sincere Acceptance of the *Gospel Offer*, and their *Engagement to be the Lord's*. God renewed Covenant with *Abraham*, when he instituted the initiating Seal of Circumcision, *Gen. xvii. 10, 11.* and so should every Christian Parent do with his God; for now a special Opportunity is put in his Hand for this End. Now he has a *Duty* to perform that requires it: And this, if duly managed, hath a peculiar Tendency, to remove *Doubtings*, and strengthen Faith, as to their own special *Interest in the Covenant*; so as now they may have more holy Confidence to bring their new born Babes to the same God, the same Covenant, and the appointed Seal of it.

4thly, Previous unto Parents having Baptism administered unto their Children, they are, with Joy and Satisfaction of Soul, in a solemn and particular Manner, to dedicate and give them up to Christ and all the glorious Trinity; that they may be only, compleatly, and for ever redeemed by the Merits of our Lord *Jesus*; saved by the Grace of the Great God, and sanctified by the Influences of the Holy Spirit; that they may be governed by his Law, disposed of in the World by his wise and merciful Providence, and ever employ'd in his Service, and to his Glory, *Gen. xvii. 18. 1 Sam. i. 28.* And upon this Occasion, Parents are to extend this their religious Concern to their Wives in Child-bed, and their other Children whom God has given them; and to look upon all these as devoted Things, not to be alienated to other gods, but sacred to the Service and Honour of the true God.

5thly, They are to excite their own Souls, to a spiritual and suitable Frame, answerable to the solemn Approach they are now making to God, and the weighty Affair they have now in Hand. Here they are to endeavour after Soul affecting Impressions of the natural Misery of their dear Infants,

and the Riches of God's Grace in Christ to them; to know that they have no less than the eternal State of their Children, to be taken up about; that in this they have not to do with Men only, but with the Great God; that it is not outward Profession, but inward Disposition of Heart and Soul, that is specially to be attended to; that much of their After-comfort depends upon their present Management; and, that one Day they must make a solemn Account how they behave on this Occasion. Upon all which Accounts, How should Parents endeavour to have themselves suitably prepared for so great a Work; not only by trying themselves as to their State, and renewing their Acceptance of God and Christ, but by looking to the Lord, and reasoning with their own Souls, press after a composed, gracious and lively Temper of Mind? What great Preparations do some Parents make, in attiring their own and their Childrens Bodies; for the Entertaining of their Friends; and making a Show before the World; and shall they not be at Pains, that they may have the Soul adorned; that they may, in a becoming Manner, draw nigh to God, have themselves and their Children accepted of him, and blessed by him, and so have his Testimony and Approbation, which is infinitely greater than that of Men. *6thly*, When Parents are to bring their Children to Baptism, they ought to be much engaged in fervent Prayer to God, for themselves, their Wives, their Children; and particularly, for such as are now to be baptised, that God would, in Christ, accept of them; admit them into his Family; bestow the sure Mercies of his Covenant on them; and signally bless the Ordinance of Baptism to them; so as it may gain all its gracious Ends, and have all the merciful Effects on them, for which he hath appointed it. It is God alone that gives Efficacy to his own Institutions, *1 Cor.*

iii. 6, 7. and to him only should we pray for a Blessing on them. *7thly*, and *Lastly*, All these above-mentioned Duties, are to be gone about, not in a superficial Manner, but that Parents may conscientiously endeavour after these, they are to separate themselves from the World, and Things of it, and in a solemn and stated Way to set some considerable Time apart for these Duties, and that in secret; that so they may commune with their God, and their own Hearts, as now they ought. And well would it be with many Parents, if that Time was thus employed as it becomes Christians, which too many, on these Occasions, trifle away and mispend, to other, if not to quite contrary Purposes. And would Men make Conscience of these, they would not be so sudden and hasty in pushing on the Baptism of their Children, as the unthinking Custom of some is.

Secondly, There are some special Duties required of Parents, when they are presenting their Children to Baptism, as the Seal of God's Covenant. And, *First*, They are to endeavour to have their Souls solemnly impressed, that in this Ordinance they have to do with the *Eternal and Great GOD*, and are now about a most weighty and important Business: Here they are to be deeply affected with the Grace and Love of an holy and Covenant keeping God; that they are now engaged in an Affair that concerns the everlasting Happiness of their dear Infants; and, that herein they are to act a most solemn and religious Part: And therefore, are to take special Heed to themselves, how they behave, *Psalms* v. 7, *Psalms* lxxxix 7. *Eccl.* v. 1. *2dly*, Whereas Parents are now making a solemn Profession before the World, That they themselves are the Lord's; and are now presenting their Children to the Lord, that he may bless them, and they

II. When this Ordinance is administered.

may have the Seal of his Covenant administered to them: And whereas they are now publickly devoting their Infants to him, that they may be saved by *Christ's* Righteousness, *Jehovah's* rich Grace, sanctified by his *Spirit*, ruled by his *Law*, disposed of by his *Providence*, ever employed in his *Service*, and to his *Glory*, and at last be brought to his *Heavenly Kingdom*. Seeing, I say, Parents are making such a Profession as this, as they would not dishonour God, and prejudge themselves, *Psalms* xi. 4, 5. *Isa.* xxix. 13. they are, with an holy Temper of Mind, to act, as in the Sight of God; and as having to do with him in what they thus so solemnly profess before Men; with Joy and Sincerity dedicating their Children, avouching the Lord to be their God, and taking his Vows upon them. It is in this, that the great, tho' alas! much neglected Duty of Parents lies, when they bring their Children to Baptism. 3dly, Parents are to join with the Administrator, in Prayer to God, both before and after the Administration of this Ordinance; knowing, that the Efficacy of it is only from him; and, that it is the *Blessing of the Lord which alone maketh rich*.

III. Parents Duties that follow upon Baptism being administered to their Children.

But now, *Thirdly*, There are some special Duties required of Christian Parents, as natively following upon Baptism being administered to their Children. And here I am not to act the *Physician*, in advising them as to their Bodies; which, no doubt, are to be, in a peculiar Manner, cared for by Parents (1). Nor am I to take upon me the Province of an Instructor, with Respect to their civil Behaviour, humane Literature, and, in due Time, putting them to Employments, suitable to their Capacities, Inclinations and Stations; for, there is no Question, but these are Duties, which do, in a special Manner, ly upon

(1) See Mr. *Lock* on Education.

upon all Parents whatsoever, as they are Men, as they are Members of a civil Society, and as they are Christians (1); there being scarce any Thing which more exposes our Children to Temptations and abominable Vices, to Contempt, Poverty, and Misery in the World, to become a Dishonour to Religion, Useless in, and a Burden to Society, and a Grief to Parents, than *Ignorance* and *Idleness*. These, I say, I am not so much to notice, but specially to consider the Duties of Christian Parents toward their Christian and baptised Infants, with Respect to their better Part, and their eternal Happiness. And, *1st*, Parents are now to look upon their Children as the Lord's, as solemnly devoted to him, and his Heritage; in which he hath a special Interest, of whom he may dispose as seems good to him, and by whom he is to serve and glorify himself, *Psalms* cxxvii. 3. *Ezek.* xvi. 21. This one Consideration, if duly attended to, could not but be a strong Argument with Parents, engaging them to nurse them for God, to commit them intirely to God, and submit to his Disposal of them in the World. *2dly*, Parents are to rejoice in this Mercy, that now their Children are assumed into God's Family, have the Seal of his *Covenant of Grace* administered unto them, and are now, in the most solemn Way, given up to the *Conduct* and *Disposal* of an infinitely gracious, faithful, omnipotent, wise and unchangeable GOD. O! with what Quiet and Satisfaction of Soul may the believing Parents rest here, when their Children are at a *Distance* from them, or they come by *Death* to be taken away from their Children. *3dly*, They are, with *Care* and *Diligence*, to teach them the Truths and Ways of God, *Gen.* xviii. 19. *Deut.* vi. 6, 7, 11. *Prov.* xxii. 6. to have

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(2) The Lady's Library, Vol. II. And, the Supplement to the Morning Exercises, Sermon 17.

A Practical Essay on

right and gracious Principles early planted in their Souls; to *bring them up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord*, Eph. vi. 4. and always to have it as their great Aim, that their Children may, in Heart and Practice, be conformable to God's holy Will; be to his Glory; and employed in his Service; and at last brought to the full Enjoyment of him in Heaven, where they *shall be ever with the Lord*. Hence, *athly*, When their Children are come to Years of *Discretion*, Parents are to inform them of the Nature of Baptism, of the great and valuable Privileges they had thereby, of the solemn Obligations laid upon them, and that result therefrom; to lay before them, their Sin and Misery by Nature; their actual Transgressions with the *Desert* thereof; the peremptory and absolute Need they have of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the only Saviour of lost Sinners; and of God's rich and free Grace in Christ, to such guilty and miserable Creatures. They are to show them what Christ hath done, suffered and purchased for such as they are; to lay before them the Method of coming to the actual Possession of these Blessings and Privileges; the Access they have to them; their Misery, if they neglect; and, their Happiness upon their embracing of this great Salvation. And thus, with an Eye to God, for his Spirit of Power, Parents are to endeavour to gain the personal, exprefs and sincere Consent of their Children, to the Gospel Method of Salvation by Christ; to prevail with them to embrace a compleat Saviour, and lay hold upon a *Covenant of Promises* in him; to engage them to a personal *Dedication* of themselves to God, and so to come under solemn Ties to *walk worthy of the Lord, as dear Children*, Gen. xviii. 19. And for these Ends, the Christian Parent is to prepare and dispose his own Mind, to set some convenient

Time

Time apart, to carry his Child into secret, and, as before the Lord, to be distinct, serious with him in this Matter, and to do this in the most engaging Manner, and continue at this *Duty* from one Season to another, until it shall please God to bless his Endeavours. Nor is this necessary and comfortable *Duty* to be laid aside, when once the Parent has, as he thinks, gained of his Child the just now mentioned *Consent*, but is to be repeated as often as Occasion offers. As, when our Children are to make their first Approach to the Table of the Lord; when they are to go from us, whether it be in Order to their Education, or Settlement in some Employment; when they are to change their State of Life in the World, and leave our Families; when we observe them to be either distressed in their own Mind, or like to turn slothful, and under a *Decay* as to the Performance of *Duties*, Exercise of Graces, and Holiness of Practice: And Finally, as Christian Observation cannot fail to suggest to the religious Parent, what are the proper Occasions for this Work; so, the more frequently it is done, our dear Children shall have the greater *Benefit*, and we the more *Comfort*. 5thly, Parents are to give good and religious Example to their Children, of Diligence and Sincerity, Holiness and Purity, Righteousness and Sobriety, at all Times, in all *Duties*, and in all Points of their Behaviour, 2 *Tim.* i. 5. & iii. 15.: For it is a true, as well as an old Saying, *That Children walk more by Example than Precept*. 6thly, They are to correct and *chastise their Children*, *Prov.* xxii. 15. and xxiii. 13. and xxix. 15. *Eph.* vi. 4. and here much holy Fortitude and Wisdom is required; that it be not for every childish Weakness and Imperfection; that Parents correct not in Passion, but wait till their Spirits are calm and composed; that they be not provoking to their Children,

dren, excessive and cruel in their Corrections; that they never fail to join Counsel and Admonition, Conviction and Warning with the Rod; and, that they ever look and pray to God, that he may bless it. And then, 7thly, Parents are often to pray with, to pray for, comfort and encourage their Children in God's Way, and in every Thing that is good, 1 Tim. v. 8. 2 Cor. xii. 14. for this has a natural Tendency to give Freedom and Sweetness to the young and budding Spirit; to make their Obedience cheerful, give Life to their Endeavours, and Progress in their Studies, whatever these be: Whereas, a narrow, sower, reserved and churlish Behaviour towards our Children, seldom ever fail to produce the contrary Effects. And because Children, in their tender Years, and those of the Female Kind, even after they are come to Age, are commonly more about the Hand of the Mother, while the Father is necessarily called abroad; for this Reason, very much of what has been said, does, in a special Manner, ly to the Mother's Share: And the Experience of every Day, shows, how much is owing to their religious and virtuous Care of their Children, their holy Example, fervent and frequent Prayers, their prudent and wise Admonitions, their early and seasonable Instructions, and the sober, yet engaging, Expressions of their Affections to them.

Inferences from this I. Baptizing our Children is a weighty Affair.

From what hath been now said on Parents Duties we may learn, *First*, That Parents bringing their Children to Baptism, is not such an indifferent Affair as many, and alas! too many take it to be: For the Ordinance itself is divine, solemn, and awful; and the Duties to be performed by Parents, are spiritual, weighty and necessary; 'tis here that Parents make a most solemn and near Approach to God; they now present their Children to his Grace, and bring them to
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the Lord *Jesus*, that they may share of his Merit and Purchase; they publickly profess their own Faith, openly devote and dedicate their Children to him, they bring their Children, that they may have all these valuable Mercies sealed to them; and they are now themselves to come under the most solemn Obligations and Vows to God, and that in the Presence of all his People, calling them to Witness against them, if they shall prove treacherous or perfidious. And are not all these the most solemn Transactions that Persons can be concerned in? How unaccountable then, unsuitable, and stumbling is the Behaviour of many Parents on such Occasions, whose only Care is to have the Thing done, or the outward Action of *Baptism* performed; to adorn the outward Man, to invite, provide for, and entertain their Neighbours or Gossips, while they have no such Thing in View as God requires, and the Nature of the Ordinance calls for.

Secondly, Hence we may observe, the gross Ignorance and Error of many Parents, who think they have done what is sufficient if they are careful of their Wives in Child-bed, and allow what is proper for them; if they perform the more common Things necessary to the baptising of their Children, if they provide for their Infants, or lay up some worldly Portion for them, and especially, if they learn them to Read, and when they come to Age put them to Employments; while in the mean Time they are not at all concerned about their Children's Souls, never make it their Endeavour to commend *Christ* and *Salvation* to them; never make it their Care to season their tender Minds with holy Principles; to pray with them, for them, and give an Example of true Piety to them. Surely, such Parents who neglect these, tho' they perform what

II. The Error of many Parents.

is

is more ordinary, they are but taken up about the Shadow, while they neglect the Substance.

III. Pa-
rents Du-
ties are
many and
great.

Thirdly, From what hath been said it must be evident, that the Duties incumbent on Parents toward their *Christian Infants*, are both many and great; being of the highest Consequence and greatest Necessity; such as Respect immortal and never dying Souls, and a continuing and never ending Eternity. Duties that are commanded by the great and sovereign Lord; such, as Parents Concern for the Glory of God, and Credit of Religion, their Interest in their Children, and Relation to them, with that tender Affection and Love they bear them, and their own Comfort and future Peace, do jointly call and plead for. And then they are of that Kind, that if conscientiously performed, cannot fail to be of the greatest Advantage both to *Church* and *State*: For if Parents acted their Part, what pleasant Plants should we see grow up in all the Corners of our Land? What dutiful Subjects should we observe? What desirable, just and edifying Neighbours should we behold? And what holy Members of the Church should every Day be presented to our View? For it is observed by some (3), that most commonly Persons do receive the Beginnings of Religion in their Youth, and that by the Pains, Care, and Example of Parents, yea whole Societies have given this as their Experience.

IV. The
aggrava-
ted Sin of
many Pa-
rents.

Fourthly, It is from this we may be informed, of the highly aggravated and God-provoking Sin of many Parents, who have no Thought, and less Care about the Salvation of their baptised Children: Look to it, O Parents, if you only feed your *Children*, what less do you to your *Ox* or your *Ass*? If you only cloath and give Employ-
ments

(3) See Mr. Baxter on Infant Baptism, Pag. 133.

ments to them, what do you more than *Turks* and *Infidels*? And if you only lay up Riches for them in your Coffers, but endeavour not to have spiritual Knowledge and saving Grace in their Hearts, what do you hereby, but make them prepared Subjects for Vice, Instruments for Satan, Scandals to Religion, Burdens to Society, a Disgrace to your Families, an Occasion of Shame and Sorrow to your selves, and Heirs of Hell and Wrath? And Lastly, Where will you, who are negligent Parents, appear, and what will you answer; who by your Examples that are unholy, your Allowances that are unbecoming, and your Commands that are sinful, ruin your Children; and, by discouraging them in the Ways of God, are fearfully cruel to the Fruit of your own Body? O! How Speechless will you stand before the Bar of the Great God, and how doubly will you be punished by the just Judge! Yea, how may you expect to be eternally accused and railed upon by your tormented Infants, whom you have destroyed by your sinful Neglect, unjust Commands, and unholy Examples! Hence one says (4), *How many Thousand Children hereafter, will throw the very Coals of Hell at their Parents, and say, Ah! bloody Fathers, bloody Mothers have you been to us, because of our Baptism! You dedicated us to God when we were Children, we lived with you Ten, Twenty Years, but you never told us of it, but let us run into those Sins which have brought us into these Flames: You brought us under a solemn Vow and Covenant to God in our Baptism, but never told us what you vowed and engaged for us; we never heard a Word from you of our Baptismal Vows; if we had, we should probably not have*
violated

(4) See Dr. Collinges his *Improveableness of Water Baptism*, Page 37.

violated them, as we have done: Bloody damning Parents have you been to us. Hence,

V. The Great Mercy of conscientious Parents.

Fifthly, How great is the Mercy of such Children as are blessed with truly religious and conscientious Parents, and how unspeakably great are the Obligations that ly upon Children to such! How should these Children with joyful Hearts bless the Lord, that ever they were born of such Parents, who had it at Heart to have them *born again*; that ever they were planted in such Families, whose Business it was to have them planted in *Christ*; and that they were under such Management and Conduct, as had a Tendency to make them meet for, and lead them in the Way to Glory! Believe it, O Children, who have such Advantages, that if they shall be neglected or despised by you, of all Men you will be most inexcuseable; your Condemnation will be just, and your Torments more intolerable than these who have not had such merciful Opportunities. Have it therefore as your first and greatest Care, to improve this Goodness of God to you; honour, obey, be thankful to, bless and pray for such Parents; receive their Instructions, embrace their Proposals, obey their Commands, comply with the religious Admonitions, follow their holy Example, highly esteem and value their Persons; and when they come to be laid in their Graves, let their Memory be favourable, and their very Dust dear to you.

VI. Ministers their Duty.

And now, *Sixthly*, From what hath been said of Parents Duties, we may notice how very much it concerns Ministers, upon all Occasions, especially before and at the Administration of Baptism, to instruct Parents in their Duty to Children; to impress them with the absolute Necessity of these, and by the strongest Motives to engage them to an exact and faithful Discharge thereof; For, beside the Advantages already named, if this was obtained,

obtained, Ministers would have a far more easy and comfortable Work of it, than commonly they have.



S E C T. IV.

Of Sponsors, Sureties, Godfathers and Godmothers, in Baptism.

THE intelligent Reader cannot but observe, That the Title of this Section gives Occasion to discourse of several Things, which the Nature of this Essay, and the wished for Brevity, cannot admit of. What then I design to offer on this Head, shall be in the following Propositions:

First, That no Sponsors or Sureties whatsoever are absolutely necessary and essential to *Baptism*; as if without these it was not to be administered to *Infants* of *Christian Parents*; because, such Children are already and really in Covenant with God, so as to have an external and visible Title to the Promises thereof: And upon this Foundation have a Right to the Seal of it, which they cannot be debarred from, for want of those whom God hath not made necessary thereto. For, antecedent to Baptism, such Infants are under both a natural and foederal Obligation to all these Duties that result from Baptism; and by the Nature of this Ordinance itself, they come under a superadded Tie to these; for, if now God is their God, and all the other Promises and Privileges of the *New Covenant* be sealed to them, then of Consequence, and by the very Nature of the Thing, they become obliged to all the Duties of a covenanted People.

Sponsor not absolutely necessary.

Secondly,

Sureties
how con-
sidered.

Secondly, We may observe, That Sureties in the Case in Hand, may be considered in a Three-fold Respect; Either, *First*, As *Sureties for the Child*, which, in the proper Notion of the Word, is their coming under a special Obligation, That in case the Child should fail in the Performance of these Duties that ly upon him, he shall perform these for him. This certainly cannot take Place here, because no Creature can believe, repent, or give new Obedience for another, or become the Lord's in another's Room. *2dly*, They may be considered as Sureties for the Parent; and this again is, when Persons do engage to see to the Christian Education of the Child, in case of the Parents their Absence, Death, or Neglect of this so necessary Duty. And as to this, there needs not any Question to be made; yea, was it in Use and Practice even when Parents are alive and present, it might be reckoned of no small Advantage to the *Church*; providing always, that the primary Obligation be laid upon the Parent; and that such Sureties be only admitted who are not incapable by Reason of Infancy or Ignorance, nor unworthy because of Scandal and Prophaneness; but such who know their Duty, and, in Charity, may be presumed will make Conscience of it. But then, *3dly*, Sureties may be considered in an improper and abusive Sense, and they are those who take Obligations upon themselves, for the Good and Advantage, Means of Instruction and Christian Education of the Child. In this Case, the Word *Surety* is taken in a very improper Sense: For here, the Person contracting takes the Obligation intirely upon himself, and so becomes rather the principal Creditor than Surety: And as to this, these Three Things may be further considered; *First*, That God in his Word has laid Obligations of this Kind, specially and primarily upon the

the Infant's immediate Parents. These are they whom God hath commanded to teach, instruct and admonish them, to bring them up in the *Nurture and Admonition of the Lord*; so that it must be no less than an inverting the Order which God hath instituted, when Parents are, by a Law and without Exception, laid aside, but others, and those mere Strangers too, put in their Room. But *2dly*, In case of the Death, Sickness, or Absence of the immediate Parents, the next in Kin are to do this Work, and take upon them these Obligations; and that because of the near and natural Relation they stand in to them, which necessarily lays an antecedent Obligation upon them to such *Christian Performances*. And if it so falls out, that none such can be had, then those are to be made Choice of, who are Persons of known Integrity, Knowledge, and Sobriety; and of whom there is Ground to hope, that they will make Conscience to perform these Vows they come under, and willingly offer themselves hereto. Nor need we contend whether this be confirmed from *Isaiab viii. 2.* and *Luke vii. 58, 59.* or not. But *3dly*, If Parents are not, and others who may be received cannot be found, in this Case, the *Church* becomes a common Parent to such an Infant; and that because of her Interest in all the Members of that *Christian Society*, and Concern she ought to have for God's Glory, the Preservation and Advancement of true Religion. And this is what does, in a more special Manner, ly upon the Governours of the Society and Congregation where such an Infant is brought forth (1).

Thirdly, It is here to be noticed, That if by *Godfathers* and *Godmothers*, *Sponsors* and *Sureties*, Godfathers &c. in what Sense not to be approved.

(1) See *Bucani Loci Com.* Pag. 640. *Asterfol* on Baptism, Pag. 244, 245, 246.

ties, we understand such as do, in the Room and Stead of the *Child*, profess their Belief of the Gospel-Doctrine, and Faith in the *Lord Jesus Christ*, renounce the *Devil*, the *World*, and the *Flesh*, and engage to all the Duties of *Holiness*; so that hereupon the *Child* is baptised (2). This cannot be approven of; and that, *First*, Because there is neither Scripture Command, nor Example for it, and therefore it cannot be *done in Faith*. *2dly*, Because it is *Parents* only, by whom Children have a Right to Baptism conveyed unto them; it is by the professed Faith of one or both Parents, that Children are reputed sanctified and holy; the Promise of the *Covenant*, of which *Baptism* is a Seal, is not to Strangers, or any whom they shall present and engage for, but to the *Parent* and *his Seed*: Parents only, by the Laws of God and Nature, have a Power to dispose of their Children, to present and devote them to God; and, by the Word of God, the Obligation is laid upon them to educate their Children, and bring them up in the *Nurture and Admonition of the Lord*, Eph. vi. 4. So that to substitute others in their Room, is to overturn that comely Order which God has laid down in his Word. It is to lay aside those whom God hath appointed, and place others in their Stead. *3dly*, Because it supposes actual Faith and Repentance, as necessary, in Order to the Baptism of Infants born of Christian Parents; which, because the Infant can neither perform nor profess, therefore the Profession of those by another, and a Stranger too, is taken for his; but as this gives great Advantage to the Enemies of Infant Baptism, and as it is contrary to the Doctrine

(2) See the Order for Baptism in the Service Book. See also in the Catechism there, the Answer to that Question, what is required of Persons to be baptised, and to the Question following.

trine of Protestant Divines on this Head; so, Can the Faith of another unite to Christ? Can the Feet of another lead to Christ? Or, can the Tongue of another so promise for us to the great God, and the Righteousness of a mere and sinful Creature be so imputed to another, as that thereupon the Blessings of God's Covenant may be conveyed and sealed to him? And is there the least Ground, either from Scripture or Reason, for such a Thought? 'Tis true indeed, that Tutors and Guardians may so transact for their Pupils, as thereby to obtain for them a sealed Title to a temporal Estate: But then, as these Pupils or Minors may, according to Law, afterward revoke what their Tutors have done, which cannot take Place here, and of which by and by; so, it cannot be said, that the Great God hath so bound himself, that the Mysteries of the Christian Religion shall be transacted in Compliance with, and in Proportion to civil Laws among Men; and that the Blessings of his Covenant are derived upon others after the same Manner that Men have seen meet to convey the temporal and perishing Things of this World. But then, 4^{thly}, This professed Faith of Godfathers and Godmothers does either bring the Infant into Covenant with God, or not; if it does not, how then can it bring them to the Seal of the Covenant? And if it does, seeing that Covenant is everlasting, how comes the learned Dr. Hammond (1) to say, That if Infants when they are come to full Age, think not fit to perform what was stipulated by their Proxies, they shall reap no Benefit by that Covenant. If it is said, as the same learned Person says (2), *That the Child is baptised, not because of the Faith of the Proxies being imputed to him, but upon Presumption,*

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(1) See his Discourse on Infant Baptism, Pag. 289, 290.
 mini 121no. (2) Ibid. 299.

that he will in Time to come, by the Assistance of his Sureties, believe. Then, First, Why is it, that Godfathers do so expressly say, in the Name of the Child, and that too in the present Time, and not that to come, *I do believe, &c.* 2dly, What becomes of the Answers to the already cited Questions in the Service-book, in the first whereof, Faith and Repentance are required of Persons *to be baptised*, and not *after they are baptised*; and in the Second, where these are said *to have been promised*, by the Sureties, *at Baptism*. And we are told, that in the *Catechism*, which was in Use in King James VI. Time, they are said to have been *performed by the Sureties* (1). 3dly, What Scripture-Ground can be advanced, for administrating Seals of the *Covenant* to Persons, only upon Presumption, that in Time to come they shall have the Qualifications necessary to the Participation of these: Yea, Reason it self, at first View, contradicts this. And 4thly, If Infants are baptised upon this Presumption, That they themselves will afterwards believe, must we not also presume, that they shall live? Or, If they die, is Baptism of no Use to them? And then, why does this Author and others say, *That Children come to Baptism with borrowed Feet and borrowed Tongues?* Again, it is said, as another learned Writer does (2), *That the Sureties in the Church of England do not promise the Things required themselves, neither indeed do they promise that the Child shall do them; but it is the Child that promiseth these Things by them.* And so they make the Sureties, the Godfather and Godmother, but *Ministri obligationis contrahendæ*, or those by whom such Obligations are derived upon

(1) See the Dialogue betwixt the Countryman and the Curate, from Page 20, to 26. (2) See Bishop Hopkins on Baptism, 8vo. Page 24.

on the Child. But as the Places cited in the Service-book do plainly contradict this, and as what hath been said doth strongly plead against it; so, *First*, May it not be justly enquired *quo jure*, by what Law or Warrant do mere Strangers take upon them such an Office with Respect to the Child? Surely it cannot be by the Laws or Constitutions of Men, for those cannot establish valid Conveyances in the Things of God; and as sure it is, that it is not by the Law of God, by which alone it should be, seeing it is concerning the Covenant of God. But *2dly*, Representatives who convey *Onera*, or Obligations on another, are such as must have Right to do so, and also convey *Commoda*, or Privileges upon them. But, as has been observed, it is Parents only, and not Strangers, who have a Power to dispose of their Children; who, by the Tenor of the *Covenant* and *Command* of God, can bring them under such special Obligations; and by whom their Title to the *Covenant Blessings* is derived. And it is surely Presumption for others to intermeddle, when it is the peculiar Privilege of Parents to present and dedicate their Children to God; much more is it so, to set them aside and make them stand by. A *5th Reason* that may be advanced against the Use of Godfathers and Godmothers, in the Sense mentioned, is, because it obliges those to Impossibilities; for it makes them promise that for another which they cannot do for themselves, and which no mere Creature can make, or cause another to do; while these Sureties are made to promise, *That the Child shall renounce the Devil, believe, and be holy* (1). And thus it brings such Proxies into a Snare, gives melancholly Occasions for Disquiet of Conscience, stumbles, offends and grieves others: For

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which

(1) See the Answer to the third Question in the Catechism in the Service-book.

which Cause, some thinking and learned Persons say, That this of Godfathers and Godmothers being a mere Ceremony and Circumstance, is rather to be laid aside than continued, because of the Hazard of Perjury ; it being a very unprofitable Custom, of promising by others, who never can probably take Care of any such solemn Promise, nor do practise the Things they profess (1).

Inferences from this.
I. That some are not so charitable as they give out.

And from what has been said of *Sureties, Sponsors, Godfathers, and Godmothers*, we may learn, *First*, That the Orthodoxy, Orderliness, and Charity of a certain Set of People in the World, is not so great as is pretended : For by their Doctrine concerning *Godfathers and Godmothers*, the true Foundation of Infant Baptism is overturned, and a very insufficient one put in its Room. For Infants, being the Children of professing and visible Members of the Church of God, have a Right to Baptism ; but being presented by Godfathers and Godmothers, as if a Profession of their Faith could profit the Child, in whom they have no Interest ; so hereby the Parents Right to present their Children to God, to have the Seal of his *Covenant* administered to them, and their Right to devote them to the most High is justled out, and others put in their Stead. By this also insufficient Sureties must be received, who cannot be supposed capable of performing such Engagements, and who probably will never think on the Christian Education of the Infant ; because in many Cases it is impracticable. The Infants of Atheists, Pagans, and the worst of Infidels, are to have the Seal of the *Covenant* administered to them, tho' they have no such Title to the *Covenant* as warrants such an Administration,

(1) Nathaniel Taylor his Vindication of Infant Baptism, Page 94. And Sir John Floyer his Essay to restore Dipping in Baptism, Page 55.

tion, if so be they are brought to the Font by *Godfathers* and *Godmothers*: And then, tho' this is but an Institution of Men, not necessary or essential to this Ordinance, yet the Children of believing and holy Parents must be denied their Privilege, if it is wanting; they must, upon this very Score, according to the Doctrine of the most of these People, be left to uncovenanted Mercy, be in their Burial ranked with the Excommunicate: And tho' *Christ* said of them, *Forbid them not*, yet they will hinder, unless there is a Compliance with their own Impositions; for, by the *Canon* of the *Church of England*, the Ministers are obliged, in exprefs Words, to baptise in the Form prescribed, and no other; and the *Rubrick* declares, *That there shall be for every Male Child to be baptised two Godfathers and one Godmother; and for every Female, two Godmothers and one Godfather.* So that all who would officiate, according to the Canons and Rules of that *Church*, they must deny Baptism to the Children of the most eminently Religious, that have not Godfathers and Godmothers, even tho' the Parent be ready to do his own Part, professing his Faith, dedicating his Child to the Lord, and promising a religious Education; yet the Child must be deprived of his Privilege, robbed of a very great Good and Advantage, which by the Law of the Great God he hath a Right to, and by no Means must be baptised whether he shall be saved or damned; and that for the Want of a human, unnecessary, if not corrupt Invention.

Secondly, From this, Occasion may be taken to give Warning to all such, who in Case of Parents Absence, Sicknes or Death, do engage for the *Christian Education* of Infants at their Baptism, that such would take heed to themselves what they do, and be neither formal, indifferent, nor rash, intaking the Oath and Vow of God upon

II. Warn-
ing to
Parents.

them; but know, that they swear to the Most High; that he will call them to an Account how they fulfil such Promises, and will by no Means hold the Perjured or Perfidious guiltless: And therefore, all such are in the most conscientious Manner to remember, that *the Vows of God are upon them*, to perform them to the Lord, ever to pray for such a Child; and, so far as they have Access, to see to his Christian Education; to reprove, admonish, and exhort him as there shall be Occasion: For thus shall such a *Sponsor* honour the Lord, advance Religion, do Good to the precious and never-dying Soul of the Infant, yea, to the whole Man; and according to God's Promise, he shall hereby entail Blessings upon his own Seed after him, and have the Testimony of a good Conscience, and Peace in his own Mind.

III. Advice to Ministers.

Thirdly, This also speaks to the Ministers of the Gospel, that seeing Hypocrisy and meer outward Ceremony in the Things and Oath of God is most frightful; and Perjury is a Sin of the most crying and dangerous Nature: Therefore, when Need so requires, that others than Parents shall take such Engagements upon them, the utmost Care be had, that such only be admitted and allowed as are knowing, sober, and professing Christians, of whom they have good Ground to hope that they will make Conscience of such Vows, and, by the Grace of God, will perform them: For, rather than God be mocked, poor Sinners openly perjured, and the Infant defrauded, 'tis more eligible that the Child be simply presented by any who are not scandalous, and so baptised without taking any such Engagements: For in this Case, as was above hinted, the Education of such a Child is devolved upon the Church; and the Rulers thereof, especially, are, as it becomes those who are set for the Salvation of

of Souls, to see thereto. But when such Sureties can be had as has been just now named, and have engaged for the Christian Education of the Child, in this Event it is not to be questioned but Ministers ought, and will remind those of their Vows, enquire into their Managements and Performance; and, as Occasion shall require, warn, rebuke, admonish, exhort and encourage them.



S E C T. V.

Of the Duties of the Congregation, when Baptism is Administrated.

I F we consider with what an indifferent Eye, and with how little Concern, the Generality of Professors look upon this Ordinance; there is greater Necessity for offering some Thoughts upon this, than at first is apprehended: For, do not many, in great Haste, and with the most unbecoming Irreverence, yea Irreligion too, get out from the Publick Place of Worship, when this Ordinance is to be administrated; and of those who stay, have we not too good Cause to fear, that the most Part are more taken up to know whose the Child is, to notice External as to Persons and Administration, and observe how the Child is named, than they are to attend unto the Life and Substance of this Ordinance, or what Duties it directly calls them to, and gives them special Occasion for. I shall therefore, upon these, offer and propose what follows, as special *Duties*, if so be, we will act the Part of sincere and lively Christians.

They are not then to be idle Spectators : But, *First*, They are to contemplate the rich Grace and Mercy of God in Christ Jesus unto poor lost and undone Sinners, in his providing a suitable Relief for guilty and unholy Creatures ; extending this Remedy, not only unto those who are come to Age, but also to Infants in their Nonage ; and, by an Ordinance of his own Appointment, solemnly making over and sealing these great and saving Blessings to the Baptised ; and hereupon assuming them, in a publick Manner, into his Family ; and bringing them under early and inviolable Obligations to be wholly, only, and for ever his (6). *2dly*, Spectators are, hereupon, to reflect on their own great and valuable Privilege, that thus they were mercifully dealt with, signally blessed, publickly devoted to the Lord, and solemnly bound to be the Lord's, for him alone, and not for another. *3dly*, Hence there is here Occasion given them, to review the great, early, and awful Obligations, that by the Goodness and Mercy, the Prerogative and Authority of God, were laid upon them ; to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ ; to lay hold upon God's *Covenant* ; to dedicate themselves to him, and serve him acceptably all the Days of their Lives, with Reverence and Holy Fear. *4thly*, Here they have an Argument offered them, to repent and be afflicted for their own unsuitable Behaviour, under such great Mercies, and notwithstanding of such great Obligations. It is now that their Obstinacy and Unbelief in refusing the Gospel Offer, their Neglects of, and *Defects* in commanded *Duties*, and their Sins and Iniquities, notwithstanding of the most solemn and divine Prohibitions, should fill the Soul with deep Humility, Gospel-contrition and Soul-concern, how to be recovered.

(6) See the Directory for Baptism, annexed to the Confession of Faith.

covered. Hence, *5thly*, They are to take this Occasion, sincerely to repeat their Acceptance of Christ, their *Consent* to God's *Covenant*, and to renew their Engagements to be the Lord's: For this Ordinance they are now beholding, is a strong Motive to this, and their *Duty* and former Backslidings loudly call for it. So, it is reported of a certain *Christian*, that for many Years he never saw Baptism administered to others, but he endeavoured thus, in particular, to act and be employed for himself. *6thly*, It is the special and direct Duty of the Congregation, with Joy and Thankfulness to receive, and consent, that, according to the Tenor of the *Covenant of Grace*, the Person to be baptised be now received into their *Christian* and *Holy Society*; that he or she may partake of the same Privileges, share of the same Blessings with them, and be the Object of their common and religious Care, Love and Sympathy, as it becometh Saints, and Members of the Mystical Body of Christ. And hence, *7thly*, It is the *Christian Duty* of all Beholders, sincerely to join in Prayer with the Minister, both before and after the Administration of this Ordinance; that it may be so blessed of God to the Party baptised, as to answer all the valuable Uses, and glorious Ends thereof. It is for this Reason, amongst others, that Baptism is publickly administered; for the joint and fervent Prayer of God's People availeth much: Besides that, our *Desires* to see the Glory of God advanced, the Body of Christ edified, precious and immortal Souls saved, with that Love and Good-will which we owe to the *Christian Infant*, and the engaging Party or Parent, do in the strongest Manner urge this upon us. *8thly* and *Lastly*, In the whole of this, Spectators and all concerned are to have the outward Behaviour composed and grave; and the Mind spiritual, engaged, and attentive;

tentive; for the Work we now go about is an awful Ordinance of Heaven, it is of the greatest Consequence, and now it is, that the holy and all-seeing Eye of a Great God is specially upon us. With what Reverence then should the *Congregation* look on and behold this!

A Reflection on the whole.

And if Professors of our Holy Religion were conscientiously endeavouring the Performance of these Duties, what a blessed Mean would this be in God's Hand, to increase true Religion and Piety, Love and Christian Unity, inward Peace and Joy, with the greatest Happiness and Prosperity! How should the Lord be hereby glorified, our selves strengthened and comforted, the Body of Christ edified, and the Face of our decayed Church look fresh and beautiful! But alas! Into what a degenerate Age and Dregs of Time are we fallen! Wherein, with the most Part, *Christianity* is but an empty Name and Show; Frequency occasions Formality, whereas, it should engage to the most devout and thankful Piety; yea, reasonable Men do not Reason, and Godliness in the Extent, Power and Life of it, is under a visible and lamentable Decay. May the Lord hasten the Day when his Spirit shall be poured out upon all Ranks.



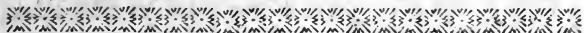
C H A P. III.

Of the Necessity of BAPTISM.

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NO sooner does GOD sow the good Seed in his Field, than Satan casteth in his Tares. Nor has the Enemy of Truth and our Salvation ceased, in all Ages of the Church, to trouble her, ever, now and then, carrying

rying Persons to most unwarrantable Extreams. Thus, in the Matter before us, the *Socinians* and *Quakers* deny, that Baptism is at all necessary, no, not so much as by Precept, but that the Use of it may be, yea, say some of these, ought to be laid aside. And we are told, that some *Heretics*, of Old, condemned it with a *Curse*; with whom the *Anabaptists* go no small Length. On the other Hand, the *Papists*, and with them some rigid *Lutherans*, do assert the absolute Necessity of this Ordinance, so as no Salvation can warrantably be expected without it; and with them, some Protestants do too far agree, while they say, That the Unbaptised are, in their Burial, to be treated as the Excommunicate; and, as to their Eternal State, left to uncovenanted Mercy. In Opposition to these, I shall first endeavour to show, That Baptism is necessary, and how far it is so. 2dly, That it is not absolutely needful, as if no Salvation can be had, or is to be looked for without it.



S E C T. I.

That Baptism is necessary, and how far it is so.

First, **T**HEN we say, That Baptism is so necessary, as that it is to be continued a standing Ordinance in the Church of God. This is evident, if we consider Divine Authority, or our Lord's positive and peremptory Command to all his Ministers, to administer this Ordinance, and consequently, to all his People, to partake of it. This was his solemn Charge

Charge, when he was about to leave the World, and go to his Father, *Mat. xxviii. 19. Go, teach all nations, baptising them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Ghost.* Nor is this to be limited to newly taught and converted Infidels, but to be extended to *all Nations*; neither was it a temporary Command, only to continue until a Church was formed; but it is to continue while there is a Church, and standing Ministry in the World: And so much is plainly intimated in the Promise, *ver. 20. And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the End of the World.* 2dly, It is so necessary, that Ministers of Christ are diligently and carefully to administer this. So was *John the Baptist* very much imployed, and the Apostles and others, who were ordained to the Work of the Ministry: Tho' they had not this as their principal or main Work, *1 Cor. i. 17.* yet they were always taken up in it, as their constant and necessary Business, as we may observe from *Acts ii. Acts viii. Acts x. Acts xxii 16. Acts xvi. 1 Cor. i. 14, 16.* 3dly, If we consider the Ends and Uses of Baptism, as these respect us, it is so necessary, that by God's Blessing therewith, the Person baptised reaps very great and peculiar Advantage thereby. We are guilty, unholy, weak, poor, naked and exposed Sinners; and Baptism is that, whereby our Union to Christ, and partaking of the Virtue of his Death and Resurrection, for Justification, Sanctification, Perseverance and Glory, are signified, made over, and sealed to us. Seeing then, that our Lord hath, in so great Mercy and Grace, appointed this Ordinance, to ratify and confirm our Right to Covenant Blessings, which we stand so much in need of, surely it is necessary that we use it; nor can we think that infinite Wisdom should appoint such a sacred and solemn Institution,
and

and yet leave it to the Pleasure of Men to use or disuse as they list. *4thly*, It is so necessary, as that it is not to be causelessly delayed. And for this, the Nature of the Ordinance, the Command of our Lord Jesus, and the Practice of those recorded in the Word of God, do all strongly plead; and if we look into *Acts* ii. 38, 39. *Acts* viii. 12, 13, 14, 36, 37, 38. *Acts* ix. 18. *Acts* x. 47, 48. *Acts* xvi. 15, 33. *Acts* xviii. 8. *Acts* xxii. 17. We will find, that the Persons there mentioned, were all quickly baptised upon their professing themselves Disciples, tho' some would think, that sometimes the Numbers were so great, and the professed Conversion of others so sudden, that their Baptism might have been delayed for a Season: But this was not the Way of God; altho' to Men it may seem to point at the Purity of a Church. *5thly*, Baptism is so necessary, as that the rejecting of it is a very great and aggravated Sin: It is said, *Luke* vii. 30. That *the Lawyers and Pharisees, they rejected the Counsel of God against themselves, being not baptised of John*. Where we may observe, that it was their great Duty to have hearkened to *John's* Doctrine, and so to have been baptised of him, and that hereby they were rendered most inexcusable, because they rejected both. Yea, *6thly*, So necessary is Baptism, as that the Contempt of it is no less than Damning; because, to slight and undervalue it, is to trample upon the Divine Authority appointing it; to despise the Obedience, Death and Resurrection of our Lord and Saviour, which are represented by it; to set Light by the Persons of the Glorious Trinity, in whose Name it is administered; and to disregard all the great and saving Blessings of the Covenant of Grace, which are hereby sealed, and solemnly ratified: So, *Gen.* xvii. 14. the Despiser

spiser of Circumcision is said to *have broken the Lord's Covenant.*

Inferences from this.

The Error of some in the primitive Times.

From what has been said of the Necessity of Baptism, we may learn, *First*, The Error of that Practice, which not a little prevailed in the primitive Times, when some delayed their being baptised, till they were upon their Death-beds; because they reckoned, That as they were to be baptised but once; so they could not have the Pardon of Sin made over and sealed to them, by any other instituted Ordinance: And being tinctured (as some say) with the *Novatian Error*, which was, *That no Place for Repentance was to be allowed to the baptised, if, after Baptism they should fall away*: Therefore, they would not be baptised too soon, lest they should sin after Baptism, and consequently be damned. But as this Delay cannot be approv'd, and the pretended Reasons of it are weak and groundless; so the same may be said of a Custom which prevailed some Centuries after Christ, when they did not baptise their *Catechumens* (or such as were to be instructed and prepared for Baptism) but at some special Seasons of the Year, particularly *Easter* and *Pentecost*. They did indeed by this openly declare their Faith, *That Baptism was not absolutely necessary to Salvation; else those who were to be baptised, would not have so long put off the Participation, and the Church Guides the Administration, thereof.* Yet, so to confine an Ordinance of God at their Pleasure, to delay Favours to immortal Souls, when God presently allows them, and to make Distinctions of Days, Months and Years, which God has not made, and to put Holiness upon Seasons, which he hath not hallowed; favour much more of the Cunning and Cruelty of the Serpent, than the Simplicity and Innocence of the Dove.

Clinick Baptism, the pretended Reasons for it.

Secondly,

Secondly, From what hath been said of the Necessity of Baptism, we may observe the Fault of some Parents, who delay the Baptism of their Children, upon no other Account, but because they have not Time to prepare for entertaining and feasting their Friends, or for worldly Pomp and Show; by which they give their Pride and Vanity the Preference to their Childrens Interest, and their own Duty: And this is not a little aggravated by their fixing on the Lord's Day, to display their Magnificence, and make publick Entertainments, which are commonly attended with bad Consequences, Diversions from necessary and spiritual Exercises being inevitable, Excess in eating and drinking, Mirth and Jolity too ordinary, and a serious Christian Tempèr but rarely kept on such Occasions.

² The great Fault of many Parents.

Thirdly, from this we may see the Duty of the unbaptised, and who are come to Age, to have this Ordinance of Baptism, which is so necessary, administrated to themselves; of Parents to ask it for their Children; and of Ministers to administer it to the proper Objects thereof, so soon as lawfully and decently it may be done: For it is an Ordinance of the God of Heaven; the Author of it, who is infinitely wise, has appointed it for very great and noble Purposes; he is gracious, ready to receive all that either come, or are brought to him. The Apostles, and others mentioned in the new Testament, never put off this Ordinance when there was just Occasion for it; in which Circumstances, the Contempt and Neglect of it is highly dangerous: Yet special Care is to be taken, that Pretence of Necessity and Duty, give not an Occasion to Precipitancy and Formality; that this be not improven to dispen-
pence with Parents their preparatory Duty; give not an Handle to Papists for their absolute Necessity of this Ordinance; nor an Allowance to some

³ Duty of Parents and others.

to administer it, to whom God, who is absolute Master of his own House, infinitely gracious to his own People, and, beyond Expression, careful of every Thing that is for their Advantage or Comfort, never granted such Power and Authority.

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S E C T. II.

That Baptism is not absolutely necessary.

Absolute
Necessity, what.

BY absolute Necessity, in the Title of this Section, is understood, *Baptism its being so necessary, as that there is no Salvation without it, but those who die unbaptised, are excluded the Kingdom of Heaven.* So say the Council of Trent, *Sess. 7. Can. 4 and 5.* Or, *It is so necessary, that none are saved without it, upon the ordinary covenanted Gospel Terms of Salvation.* So say some Protestants (1). In Opposition to this, the Body of Protestant Divines and Churches do, with our Confession of Faith, assert, *That tho' it be a great Sin to contemn or neglect this Ordinance,* (of which we have heard in the preceding Section) *yet Grace and Salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it, as no Person can be regenerate or saved without it.* Confession of Faith, Chap. 28. Sect. 5. And this will appear evident, if we shall consider, *First,* That previous to, and without Baptism, Persons may have all Things necessary to Salvation; and if so; then certainly they must be saved; they have the Spirit of Grace, *Acts x. 45, 47.* they have
the

Argu-
ments a-
gainst it.

(1) See the Practice and Doctrine of Presbyterians about Baptism Examined, P. 7.

the Righteousness of *Christ* reckoned and imputed to them, *Rom.* iv. 11. compared with *Col.* ii. 11, 12. And before Baptism they have both their Persons and Performances accepted in the Sight of God, *Acts* x. 2, 4, 22, 31. And as to Infants, God declares his Love to them, *Rom.* ix. 11. *Christ* died for them, *Heb.* ii. 14. They are filled with the Holy Ghost, *Luke* i. 15. and blessed by the Lord *Jesus*, *Mark* x. 16. But will any venture to affirm, That Persons may have *Christ* dying for them, the Spirit of *Christ* dwelling in them, the Righteousness of *Christ* imputed to them, their Natures sanctified, their Persons blessed, both these and their Performances accepted, and yet eternally perish, if they are not baptised? When he who is Truth itself has solemnly declared, *That of such is the Kingdom of Heaven*, has promised to them eternal Life, *John* iii. 16, 36. yea sworn by himself that they shall be savingly and eternally blessed, *Heb.* vi. 17, 18. 2dly, Baptism is not absolutely necessary, if we observe, that some have been actually saved without it; so was the Thief upon the Cross, *Luke* xxiii. 43. 3dly, From our Lord's own express Words, *Mark* xvi. 16. *He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.* Where we are to notice, That tho' our Lord says, *He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved*; yet he says not, *He that is not baptised shall be damned*, but only he that believeth not; tho' the Opposition required he should have said so, had Baptism been of absolute Necessity to Salvation. 4thly, The Nature, Uses and Ends of Sacraments evidently plead against the absolute Necessity of them, and consequently of Baptism: For, Sacraments are not Causes, nor what give the Right to Covenant Blessings, but declarative Signs and Seals thereof; necessarily supposing the Person's

Title to these and Interest in them, and this as flowing from, and founded upon the Covenant Promise. If then Persons have a Right to, and Interest in Covenant Privileges previous to Baptism, shall we say, that all this is null and void, if they want the external Sign and Seal of it, which is not appointed to make Covenant Promises, or the Persons Right thereto surer, (for the Merit and Mediation of *Christ*, the Promise, Oath, Faithfulness, and Unchangeableness of God, do for ever secure these to all the Seed) but is a superadded Instance and Act of God's Grace and Mercy to us, who, because of our Weakness and Infirmary, was pleased to ordain this and the other Seal of his Covenant, to strengthen and confirm our Faith, or to make it stronger, (and not his Covenant surer) that all the Covenant Privileges are ours, and shall certainly be made good to us. So that we may conclude, that because Baptism is a declarative Sign, and an appointed Seal of Covenant Blessings, for the confirming of our Faith, therefore it is necessary; yet because it is only such, for this Reason, it is not absolutely needful. 5thly, The Truth of the Proposition we now plead for, will further appear, if we notice, that under the Law, by Divine Appointment, Circumcision was not to be administered until the Eighth Day from the Infant's Birth; And did all the Children perish who died before that Time? Or, were all those who died in the Wilderness, being uncircumcised, when it was then so long omitted, *Jesh. v. 5.* for ever excluded the Kingdom of God? If they were not, how then can we think, that under the *New Testament* and *Gospel* Dispensation, the Circumstances of those who have not Access to Baptism, (which is now come in Room of Circumcision) or of Infants, whose Blame it is not that they want it, are worse than of those who lived

lived under the old and *Mosaick* Administration? Is the Grace, Mercy, Pity, and Compassion of God, more narrowed and confined since *Christ* came, and good Tidings are every where preached, than it was before he did appear, and when the News of Salvation were neither so far extended, nor so clearly revealed? And, is this the Accomplishment of the glorious Promises and high Encomiums given to New Testament Times; that whereas, under the Old Testament, God shewed Mercy to the Infant who died uncircumcised, yet now under the New, he must be certainly damned, or left to uncovenanted Mercy, if he die unbaptised? While in the mean Time, the Crime of neglecting or contemning this, cannot be imputed to the innocent Babe, nor to the Christian Parent. *6thly*, If Baptism is absolutely necessary to Salvation, then it is in the Power of Men to destroy Souls, contrary to *Matth. x. 28.* and to throw those out of God's Covenant, and leave them to uncertain, because uncovenanted, Mercy, whom yet God himself has solemnly declared to be in it. For in this Case, an unbelieving and wicked Parent, if he shall not bring his Child to Baptism, might for ever destroy it; an unfaithful and negligent Minister might eternally ruin it, and an unskilful and impious Midwife may seclude the poor Infant from the Kingdom of God. And so the Salvation that is of God shall be at the Disposal of Men, the Covenant of God made void by them, and the Keys of Hell and the second Death put into their Hands. *7thly* and lastly, If this Doctrine of the absolute Necessity of Baptism take Place, how many Ten Thousands of Children who die in their Mothers Belly, or in the Birth, and leave the World as soon as they come into it, shall be for ever lost; and that, tho' no Crime or Neglect as to this Ordinance of Baptism can be imputed.

to them, or any other concerned in them? And how can this but fill the Souls of Parents with the most perplexing Doubts and Fears, torturing Grief and Sorrow, yea with Despair itself; and possess the Breasts of Christian Relations, Friends and Neighbours, with Amazement and Dread? So that these *Protestants* who make a great Outcry for Charity, and very unjustly accuse some of their Protestant Brethren for want of it, do, by joining with *Papists* in this Doctrine of the absolute Necessity of Baptism, preach the most uncharitable and comfortless Doctrine that can be; for, seeing by this, unbaptised Children are left to uncovenanted Mercy, and another Method and Way of Salvation than what is contained in the Gospel; and seeing the gracious Tenor of the Covenant, and the revealed Will of God in his Word, are the only Grounds that *Christians* have for their Faith and Hope, what imaginable Foundation of Hope or Comfort can Parents or others have, as to the future well-being of deceased unbaptised Infants? Can they hope where there is no Promise? And seeing, *Eph. ii. 12.* those who are Strangers to the Covenant of Promise, are also without Christ, and without God in the World, they must be hopeless and comfortless, and in the outmost Despair. And it would be the Advantage of the Promoters of this Doctrine to consider, how, in this, they contradict the Judgment of *Protestant Churches*, and the Body of Orthodox Divines (1); yea, even the most famous of the Church of *England* (2).

Those who are for the absolute Necessity of Baptism, adduce *Gen. xvii. 14.* where it is said,
That

(1) See the Doctrine and Practice of the Church of Scotland anent Baptism vindicated, from Page 26, to 36, where we have a large Catalogue of such. (2) See Dr. *Atterfol* on Baptism, Pag. 203, 204. Dr. *Hammond* on Infant-Baptism &c. 12mo. Pag. 231, 232, 300. Dr. *Festly* his *Dipper dipt*, Pag. 40, 41.

That the uncircumcised Manchild, whose Flesh of his Foreskin is not circumcised, that Soul shall be cut off from his People, he hath broken my Covenant. Objections answered. But this cannot be understood of Infants, whose Fault it could not be that they were deprived of Circumcision, and who could not be circumcised before the Eighth Day; neither were they, in an active Sense, capable of keeping God's Covenant, and so could not be said, for want of Circumcision, to break it; nor was it the Infant, but *Moses*, whom the Lord sought to slay in the Inn for Neglect of Circumcision, *Exod.* iv. 24, 25, 26. We must therefore understand this of such as were come to Age, and who either neglected or contemned this Ordinance, and are therefore said to break the Lord's Covenant. But the main Arguments for the absolute Necessity of this Ordinance are these Two.

First, They plead from *John* iii. 5. where our Lord says to *Nicodemus*, *That except a Man be born of the Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* But *First*, It may be safely and upon good Ground answered, That Baptism is not at all understood here, but that by *Water* and the *Spirit*, we are to understand one and the same Thing with Regeneration and the new Birth, the last being the Cause, and the first the Similitude and Example; that is, That a Man must be born again by the Spirit, who cleanses and purifies the Soul as Water does the Body. For, *First*, In Scripture, the Efficacy of the Spirit is designed by *Water*, and that at the same Time when the holy Spirit is expressly mentioned, so *Isa.* xlv. 3. *Ezek.* xxxvi. 25, 26, 27. Nor is it unusual in Scripture to express one and the same Thing by two Words, the one respecting the Cause, and the other the Manner how that Cause produces the Effect, so *Matth.* iii. 11. it is said of our Saviour, *That he should baptise with the*

Holy Ghost and with Fire; but will any be so unreasonable as to infer from this, *Baptism with Fire*, as we are told some ancient Hereticks did (1). 2dly, If we observe the following 6th, 7th, and 8th Verses, where our Lord fully explains himself on this Head, we will find, That he has not the least Hint of Baptism; which surely he would not have omitted, had this been intended and designed by him. And then 3dly, Because, *Versè 10.* our Lord reproves *Nicodemus* for his Ignorance of this; now, it could not be for his Ignorance of Regeneration by Baptism, (for, even according to those who plead for the absolute Necessity of it, Baptism was not yet given by our Lord to his Apostles, as one of his great and last Commands) but for his Ignorance of the Nature and Necessity of Regeneration itself, which as a Ruler he should, and as a Member of the Church of God he might have known, from *Psal. xv. Psal. li. 10. Isal. xlv. 3. Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26, 27.* and many other Places. 4thly, *Papists*, we must observe, say two Things, *First*, That only then Baptism became absolutely necessary, when our Lord had given his last Command to his Disciples to *Teach and Baptise, Matth. xxviii. 19.* But if so, then there can be no Pleading from this Scripture, which was delivered a considerable Time before that. And *Secondly*, They say, That the Vow of Baptism, Contrition, and Martyrdom make up the Defect of it; and if it is thus, then surely they cannot alledge the absolute and indispensable Necessity of this Administration, in order to everlasting Happiness and eternal Salvation. But 2dly, Supposing, that, by *Water*, we are to understand *Baptism*, will it therefore follow, that it is of the same absolute and universal Necessity with the *Holy Spirit*, in Order to Regeneration and Salvation? For, *2 Thess. iii. 10.* it is with equal Positiveness there said,

(1) See *Bucani Loci, Com. Pag. 648.*

said, That if any would not work neither should he eat, but will any hence conclude, that Infants and many others who do not work, must therefore not be allowed to eat? Hence it is, that a very learned Divine of our Neighbouring Church, tho' he pleads for the Necessity of Baptism from this Text, yet denies, that the absolute Necessity thereof will follow herefrom; but declares, that Infants who die unbaptised are saved, as being comprised in the Covenant, *Gen. xvii. 7. Acts ii. 39.* and being holy, *1 Cor. vii. 14.* (1).

A Second Argument which some of late make use of, and lay great Stress upon (2), for the absolute Necessity of Baptism, is, That Men must have the Spirit and Remission of Sins in Order to Salvation, but Baptism is the only instituted Gospel Mean in Order to these, and therefore Baptism is absolutely necessary to Salvation. But if it is made evident, that Persons have the Spirit and Remission of Sins, previous to, and without Baptism, then the Subsumption or second Proposition is positively false, and so their Argument falls. Thus we find, that *Cornelius* and his Family or Company, had the Spirit before they were baptised, *Acts x. 47.* and many had saving Faith before Baptism, these, *Acts ii.* they gladly received the Word, *Verse 41.* and were hereupon baptised. The *Samaritanes*, *Acts viii. 12.* they believed, and then were baptised; so did the *Eunuch*, *Acts viii. 37.* the *Jaylor*, *Acts xvi. 31, &c.* the Ruler of the Synagogue, and many of the *Corinthians*, *Acts xviii. 8.* and *Acts xvi. 14.* *Lydia's Heart was opened*, and then she was baptised. Upon all which Instances we may observe, *First*, That Faith always supposes the saving and regenerating Operation of the Divine Spirit

K 4

Spirit

(1) See *Dr. Featly*, his *Dipper dipt.* Page 10. (2) See the Doctrine and Practice of the Presbyterians about Baptism examined, Page 70.

Spirit, for it is reckoned amongst his Fruits, *Gal. v. 22.* and it must be so, seeing, *Rom. viii. 7. the Carnal Mind is Enmity against God.* 2dly, That where-ever this Faith is, that Person, according to the Lord's faithful Promise, obtains Remission of Sins, and a Title to eternal Life, *Acts x. 42. Acts xiii. 39. Rom. iii. 28. John iii. 15, 16, 18, 36.* And 3dly, We are to notice, that this divine Spirit and saving Faith, are obtained by other instituted Means than Baptism; for, the Spirit he is received *by the hearing of Faith,* or the Gospel, *Gal. iii. 2. Acts x. 44.* so Faith also comes by hearing this, *Rom. x. 17.* And from these three Observations, this Argument naturally and with unanswerable Force proceeds, That if by Hearing the Gospel People receive the Spirit, have saving Faith, and thereupon have Remission of Sins, and all these previous to Baptism; then surely Baptism is not the only instituted Mean in Order to these; but the first is true from the just now mentioned Proofs: And so must the last be. That Baptism does declare and seal, ratify and confirm the Remission of Sin, none of us deny; but that it is the only instituted Mean in Order to this, is most groundlessly asserted. For even as to Infants, the Doing and Dying, the Blood and Suffering, the Righteousness and Merit of our Lord *Jesus Christ,* is the only procuring Cause of their Salvation, their Remission, Regeneration, and being brought to Glory. And the Nature and Tenor of God's Covenant comprehending not only the believing Parent, but also his Seed, is that whereby they come to have a Right to these Blessings, and so to possess them; and then, as was already observed, the Uses and Ends of Sacraments are not that Persons may obtain, or have a Title to, and Interest in Covenant Mercies; for this, they and all Seals of that Kind, do suppose; but they are

are, openly to declare this Right, seal, ratify, and confirm it, and the Person's just Possession of it accordingly.

From what hath been offered against the absolute Necessity of Baptism, we may observe, *First*, That there is no just Occasion for raising any Clamour, or making Complaint against a Church's making Regulations, as to Time and Place, for the more orderly and decent Administration of this Ordinance; providing always, that such Constitutions be consistent with our *Duty* to God, lay not a Stumbling block nor Occasion of Offence before others; be suitable, and not contrary to the Ends and Uses of this Sacrament, and agreeable to that Charity we owe to Persons who are to be baptised, and others concerned in them; and be not urged, under Pretence of Necessity, and necessary Terms of Communion; nor loaded with such Penalties as the Nature of the Thing will not allow of. For this is a Power, which all Societies, as such, have, as to these Administrations proper thereto. But if Baptism was of absolute Necessity, there could be no Place for these: And seeing it is not so, there is no Cause to complain of them, if so be they are duely limited.

Inferences from this.

I. A Church may make Regulations.

Secondly, It is from this we may notice the Error of such, who, upon Pretence of the absolute Necessity of this Ordinance, give Power to such to administrate it, whom our Lord does not allow so much as to speak in his Church. But of this more in the next Chapter.

II. The Error of some.

Thirdly, They who maintain, that *Baptism* is the only institute Mean of Regeneration and Remission of Sins, may take Occasion from this, to consider how inconsistently they speak with their own professed Principles: For, in the *Catechism* contained in the Service Book, Faith and Repentance are expressly required of those who

III. How inconsistent others are with their own Principles.

are

are to be baptised (8). But as these necessarily suppose the regenerating Spirit; so they certainly infer the Remission of Sins: And consequently, that Baptism is not what they pretend it to be, but, that previous thereto, the Person may be regenerated and pardoned.

IV. The Cruelty of some to unbaptised Infants.

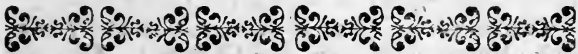
Fourthly, That those are surely guilty of great Cruelty to unbaptised Infants, and treat them most unjustly, who not only deny them what they reckon Christian Burial, but place them with the Excommunicate and Self-murderers; and this by publick Order and Command (9). Is not this a punishing the Innocent in the most severe Manner; a writing those down in the blackest Catalogue whom yet God writes in his *Book of Life*; a reckoning them vile and abominable whom the Scripture accounts holy, and the Lord does regenerate and sanctify; and so, a casting them out of the *Church and Covenant* of God, when he declares they are in it; and excluding them from the Kingdom of Heaven, while a Gracious God declares it belongs to them, and receives them into it? And from this it is, that the superstitious Custom, which in too many Places prevails, hath its Rise; which will not allow the Bodies of unbaptised Infants to be interred, but at the Foot of Church-walls, or so; as if they were *unhallowed Things*, whom yet the Spirit of the Lord declares to be holy, *1 Cor. vii. 14.* and gives Occasion to that superstitious and ridiculous Fancy, as if it was unlucky or dangerous to our Bodies, if at any Time we should step over the Graves of such.

V. It is not to be done all of a sudden.

Fifthly, If Baptism is not of absolute Necessity to Salvation, why then is it that some make more Haste than is warrantable, and will, all of

(8) See the Answer to the Question, *What is required of Persons to be baptised?* (9) See the first Rubrick in the Service Book, and the Order for Burial of the Dead.

a sudden, have their Children baptised? Not allowing Time either to themselves or others, for that Christian Preparation, which the Nature and Solemnity of such an awful Ordinance and Administration calls for: That it is not to be causelessly delayed, was before asserted; but, that it should be with Precipitance, and without Thought and holy Preparation administered, can never be justified.



C H A P. IV.

Of Administrators, and Administration of Baptism.

THE Matter of this Chapter is of very great Import; concerning these there have been many *Disputes*, both of old and of late: And it cannot but be of special Concern to us, that we be particularly informed who are the Persons that, by *Divine Authority*, may administer Baptism, and how it is to be gone about. Wherefore, that I may offer somewhat thereupon, I shall endeavour, *First*, To consider who are the Administrators of this Ordinance. And, *2dly*, The Administration.

SECT.

S E C T. I.

Of the Administrators of Baptism.

ALL Administrations necessarily suppose an Administrator; but the Question is, *Who it is that may lawfully perform this holy and solemn Part of the Service of God?* In Answer to which, I offer the following Conclusions.

Conclusion I. That it cannot be done by Infidels, Idiots, Mad-men, nor Children. For, the last Three are intirely incapable of such an Office, and altogether unmeet for such a Performance; tho' we are told, That of old some sustained Baptism as valid, tho' administrate by Children (1). And as to Infidels, whether they be *Jews, Mahometans, or Pagans*, seeing they are without the Church, and open Enemies to our *Christian Doctrine*, surely they can never validly administer an initiating Seal of the great Things which this our holy Religion contains.

Conclusion II. Neither is this Ordinance to be administrate by such as have no Call to the Office of the Ministry, whether these be Men or Women, Magistrates or more private Persons: This Conclusion is in Opposition to *Papists, Socinians* and *Anabaptists*, who admit Baptism by private Hands (2), as we are informed many of old did (3). And of late some plead, That Baptism by Laymen was ordinarily sustained and admitted by the Church of *England*, yea, when it was performed by the Midwife (4); but in no Case

(1) See *Bucani Loc. Com.* Page 616. Quest. 177. (2) See *Gillespy's Miscellan.* Page 86. (3) *Calvin Instit. Lib. 4. Chap. 15. Sect. 20.* (4) The Judgment of the Church of *England*, in the Case of Lay-baptism, Part 1st and 2d. *Calamy's History of Baxter's Life*, Vol. I. Page 198.

Case is this to be allowed. For, *First*, The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven are not given to any who list, but to Persons specially appointed, and for that Purpose separate and set apart from others, *Matth. xvi. 18, 19.* *2dly*, God hath inflicted most severe Punishments upon Persons not appointed to the Office of the Ministry, because of their usurping it, and presuming to do the Work proper thereto, *Numb. xvi. 31. 2 Chron. xxvi. 21.* *3dly*, Women are forbid publickly to teach, or so much as to speak in the Church, *1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35. 1 Tim. ii. 12.* *4thly*, This Allowance of Lay-persons to baptise, is built upon a very unsound Foundation, *viz.* The absolute Necessity of Baptism, in Order to Salvation; and indeed it is natural for one Error to beget and make Way for another. And, *5thly*, Should this be allowed, it will bring Anarchy and Confusion into the Church of God; take away the *Distinction* betwixt the Shepherd and the Flock; betwixt Ministers and those ministred unto, contrary to *1 Cor. xii. 29, 30.* It will deprive the Ordinance of its Solemnity, expose it to the Contempt and Ridicule of the Prophane, and to the Fancy and Discretion of the Ignorant; and so open a Door for the Administration of it to such as have no Title to it, and in such a Manner as it should not be. *Finally*, There is not the least Instance of this in all the *New Testament*, either of God's allowing it, or the Saints of God, who were not Ministers, their practising it. And the Learned inform us, That it was first brought in by *Marcion* the Heretick (5), and that upon very bad and unallowable Grounds.

Nor will the Grounds some offer for this, bear Objections the Weight of the Conclusion they build upon answered. them.

(5) See *Bucani Loci Com.* Pag. 612, 613. *Spanhemii Disp. Miscel. Theol. Pars Prima*, Page 350.

them. For, *First*, The rash and singular Practice of an enraged Woman, *Exod. iv. from Verse 24.* as it will not justify the Fact, so neither can it be made an Example. And tho' the Angel was pleased, when *Moses* Son was circumcised by *Zipporah* his Wife, yet this will not infer, That he approved of her doing it, nor of the Manner wherein she did it. For, as these People, *2 Kings xvii.* were delivered from the destroying Lyons, upon their adding somewhat of the Worship of the True God to their own idolatrous Practices; yet it will not hence follow, that God approved of such an unbecoming and unhallowed Mixture: And so it is here. But, *2dly*, Supposing that the *Deed*, when done, was sustained, yet we are to observe, That at this Time, the Administration of this initiating Ordinance was not confined and appropriate to peculiar Persons and Offices, as afterwards it was, and Baptism now is. And then, *3dly*, If this Argument prove any Thing, it will be too much, for *Zipporah* did this before the Face of *Moses* the *Great Prophet* sent of GOD; but those who contend for Laicks, their baptising, will by no Means allow it, if so be a lawful Minister is present. Neither is the Instance of *Philip* of any more Weight: For as he did baptise, *Acts viii. 38.* so he was not only a Deacon, but also an Evangelist, *Acts xxi. 8.* And as to that of *Ananias*, *Acts ix.* his baptising *Paul*, there is no perswading Argument that he was only a private Person, but very probable Ground to judge, that he was a Teacher and Preacher, and it may be, at this Time, Pastor to the Church in *Damascus*. And tho' we should suppose with our Adversaries, that he was only a Laick, yet it is to be noticed, that what he now did, he had the Divine, tho' extraordinary, Call thereto, *Verse 10.* which in the Case before us, is not, and cannot be pretended. And so,

A Third *Conclusion* I offer, is, That this Sacrament of Baptism may only be dispensed by a Minister of the Gospel, lawfully called and ordained unto the Work of the Ministry (c). As to which, we are carefully to distinguish betwixt a real and true, tho' *incomplete* Call to the Ministry, whereby Ordinances administered by such are valid; and a real, true, and *complete* Call, according to the Word of God: For, the first may not only be, but frequently is, where the last is not: Seeing, to this it is requisite (7), that the Person be tried and approved by the proper Judges, as to his Life and suitable Qualifications for the Work of the Gospel; that he be nominate and chosen by the Church, those particularly to whom he is to be ordained a Pastor and Overseer, *Acts* vi. 3, 5. *Acts* xiv. 23. *Acts* i. 23, 24, 26. And, that he be solemnly set apart to this great Work, by Fasting and Prayer, with the laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery, *Acts* xiii. 3. *Acts* xiv. 23. *1 Tim.* iv. 14. *1 Tim.* v. 22. Which Things, when had, cannot but give great Peace to the Minister, and special Encouragement to the People, to receive Ordinances from his Hands: Yet all of them are not to be reckoned so absolutely necessary to the *Being* of a Minister, as that, if any of them be wanting, Ordinances dispensed by such are null and void: For, so far as I know, the Learned are agreed, That Imposition of Hands is not essential, absolutely requisite, and indispensibly necessary to the very Being of the Ministerial Office (8). And that there may be some special, and sometimes invincible Defects in a Person's Call

It is only to be done by a lawful Minister.

Observes upon this.

(6) See *Confession of Faith*, Chap. 27. Sect. 4. and Chap. 28. Sect. 2. (7) See the Assembly's *Directory for Ordination*.

(8) See the Answer to some Prelatical Pamphlets, by the late Laborious, Learned and Eminent Mr. Forrester, Page 159, 251, to 273. *Gillespy's Miscellan.* Pag. 108, 62, 63, 64.

Call to the Ministry, and unwarrantable Additions to his Ordination thereto, where yet the Essentials remain. And on this Head I cannot but give a particular Room to the Words of the learned, pious, and famous Mr. Rutherford, who says (9), *For, that the Calling of a Minister be valid, and his Ministerial Acts not null, it is sufficient, that the Governing Church give him a Calling, either by themselves, their express Call, their Silence or tacite Consent, or their Approbation, communicating with him in his Ministry, or by these to whom the Church hath resigned her Power, or by these who stand in the Place of the Church, &c. The Members of the Church, in the mean Time, not opposing, but consenting to this.* The judicious Reader will very soon know how to make Application of these Words, and I only add, That it cannot be refused, but that the Church of God, or some Part thereof, may at some Times be in such Circumstances, as that the ordinary Way of Calling and Ordination to the Work of the Ministry cannot be observed, in which Case, to deny them a Gospel Ministry and Gospel Ordinances, will go very near wholly to Unchurch them.

Argu-
ments to
prove it.

But I return to the Proposition laid down, which was, That this Gospel Ordinance may be dispensed by none but a real and true Gospel Minister: For, *First*, To these only, Christ the Great Master of Assemblies, Head and only King of his Church, hath given Commission, *Matth* iii. 11. with *John* i. 33. *Matth.* xxviii. 19. *2dly*, Those to whom Christ hath given Authority to preach the Word, to these only he hath given Power to administrate the Sacraments; but the first is only given to Ministers of the Gospel, *Matth.* xxviii. 19. Nor are we, upon any Pre-
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(9) See Rutherford's Divine Right of Presbyteries, *mibi*. Page 237.

tence of Necessity, to depart from Christ's Institution, by separating what he hath joined together. 3dly, Those only who are called according to Christ's Appointment, and, by his Allowance, are Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the Mysteries of God, 2 *Cor.* iv. 1. who only can dispense Gospel Ordinances; the Steward must be appointed to his Work by the Master, *Luke* xii. 42. Nor may every Member of a Family take this Office upon him, *Jer.* xiv. 14. 1 *Tim.* iv. 14. *Heb.* v. 4. 4thly, Appending of Seals by private and uncommissionated Persons, is not allowed in worldly Things; the Judge will not sustain it; and the Usurper will be punished for his Presumption: How much less can this be sustained in the Things of God, and such as concern our greatest Interest, *to wit*, our eternal and everlasting Happiness. And shall an earthly Prince take Care to prevent the Confusions that may arise from the first; and will not an infinitely wise Lord, who is the Saviour of the Body of the Church, and by his own Blood purchased and redeemed it, give such Laws as shall hinder these Disorders which cannot but flow from the last? And, 5thly, In all the *New Testament*, there is neither Precept nor Example of any administering this Ordinance, but a Minister of the Gospel, lawfully called to the Work thereof. And to act in the solemn Parts of God's Worship while we have neither of these, is to act in a faithless, bold, presuming, unwarranted and unacceptable Manner.

I should now proceed to make some Inferences from this, and would, for several Reasons, omit the following *Questions*, and *Answers* to them, was it not, that it would add very much to the Lameness and Imperfection of this *Essay*, and the Reader's Disappointment, should nothing be said thereto. And any Thing, that by the

A Practical Essay on

Assistance I have from others, I am to offer, I hope, shall be delivered with that Modesty and Sober-mindedness, which are very becoming in discoursing of Points so nice, and of so great Difficulty.

Concerning Baptism by Heretical Ministers.

Question 1. *Concerning Baptism administered by Heretical Ministers?*

As to this, the Dispute was very hot in the Primitive Times, betwixt *Cyprian* in *Carthage*, and *Stephen* in *Rome*, with their several Followers, wherein, both Sides seem to have gone to Extreams; the first positively denying the Validity of Baptism, if administrated by *Hereticks*, without Distinction of one from another: And the last as peremptorily asserting the Validity of it, whoever the *Heretick* was, and whatever Heresy he maintained. But what is commonly offered upon this, is, That there are some secret, others open and professed *Hereticks*. The first profess the true Faith, keep the Essentials of Administration, baptising in the Name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, One true God, the same in Substance, equal in Power and Glory, tho' truly distinct as to their Personality. When Ministers so profess and so act, albeit they secretly harbour and nourish Heresy in their Breasts, yet the Validity of Baptism administered by them, is not denied; because, the Validity of an Ordinance is not to be taken from the secret Thoughts and reserved Judgments of Men, but from the Institution of Christ, according to which Baptism is now supposed to be administered. Again, as to professed and open *Hereticks*, there are some who maintain Errors which are fundamental and everfive of the Gospel of Christ, such as *Arrians*, *Samosatenians*, *Sabellians*, and *Socinians*, who deny the Ever-blessed and Glorious Trinity of Persons, in Unity of Divine Essence, as also the Lord our Saviour,

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in his Person, Natures, Undertaking, and the whole of our Redemption purchased by him. But then there are other erroneous Ministers, who holding the Foundation, retain all the Essentials in the Administration of Baptism, tho' they build Hay and Stubble thereupon. As to the last, their Administration is sustained valid, because it has the Essentials: But as to the first, it is judged null and void, as if it had never been, because it wants these: And so these Persons pretended to be baptised by them, are to be re-baptised, or rather baptised according to the Institution of Christ; in regard that hitherto they have not been baptised at all (1).

Question 2. *Concerning Popish Baptism, and that which is administrated by others who have various Corruptions in their Ordination, and Additions of Men in their Administration?*

Concerning Popish Baptism, &c.

Answer, Protestant Divines hold Baptism administrated by such to be true and valid Baptism, tho' miserably corrupted and adulterated. And that for these two Reasons especially; *First,* Because there may be a true, tho' very corrupt Ministry; for, we are carefully to distinguish betwixt that which is Divine and Christian in their Ordination, and essential thereto; and that which is Human, Antichristian, and accidental therein. In the *Romish,* and other Churches, the Lord hath had, and it may be charitably presumed, yet hath his hidden ones. There the Administrators, according to the Nature of the divine Institution, are called to preach the Word of God and these pure Doctrines contained therein, and to administer Sacraments according to his Command; so that from the Nature of the Office there can be no necessary Submission to the corrupt Instruments by whom it is

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(1) See *Tower's* on Baptism, Page 273, to 286. *Tures.* Vol. III. Page 442, 443.

conveyed, nor yet to the Additions, the bad Designs and unhallowed Ends that these may have therein; but to the necessary and scriptural Duties flowing from the divine Institution of the Office, and proper thereto. Many of our Reformers had their Baptism and Ordination from them, and both were true; yet from the Nature of these, they were under no Manner of Obligation to approve of, or comply with the vain Additions and unholy Designs the Administrators had in either of them; but, according to the divine Constitution, they had it as their Care to act up to the divine and instituted Designs of both. But more of this afterward. *2dly*, Because even amongst Papists, the Essentials of Baptism are kept, tho', as was said, miserably corrupted by their own unwarrantable Inventions; for here are both Form and Matter which are of divine Appointment: And so it is, that the Validity of Baptism depends upon the divine Institution, which the corrupt Designs and unscriptural Additions of Men cannot make void or null. Nor where the Essentials of Baptism are retained, are Persons baptised unto Men, or the vain Opinions of Administrators, but unto the *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, and the *Lord Jesus Christ*, the only *Saviour* of the World, and that according to his own Appointment (1).

Question 3: *Are we then, either for ourselves or others, to seek Baptism from such corrupt Administrators?*

Answer, We are not to ask Baptism of those, who, tho' they retain the Essentials of Baptism, and so the Ordinance is valid; yet either grossly err in Matters of Doctrine and Worship, or require our Submission to their unwritten Additions.

(1) See, amongst others, *Calvin Instit.* Fol. 269. Sect. 16. *Zanchius*, Tom. 4tus. page 441. *Rutherford's Divine Right*, &c. page 237. to 240. *Jus Divinum Minist. Evang.* pag. 122, 123.

Are we
to seek
Baptism
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ons to Baptism, as a necessary Condition of our having it administred, either to ourselves, or others we ask it for: Because this would be a keeping Communion with them we are called to keep at the outmost Distance from; it is a tacite approving of their Errors, an endangering of our own Souls, an encouraging of such to continue their Corruptions, and remain in their Perverseness and Obstinacy, and a most uncharitable Stumbling of others, *Gal. i. 8. 2 Cor. vi. 14, 15, 16. 1 John v. 23. Rom. xiv. 10, 15, 21. 1 Cor. viii. 11, 13.* (1) And doubtless, those are a great deal more to be excused, who lived under gross Popish and superstitious Darknes, than we can be, upon whom such clear Gospel-light is now risen; nor is it the Want, but Contempt or sinful Neglect of Baptism, that condemneth: Neither of which can take Place where this Administration cannot be obtained, unless we become the Servants of Men, defile our own Conscience, and by our Sin do what in us lies to destroy those for whom *Christ* died.

Question 4. *Concerning Baptism administred by those who are deposed from the Office of the Ministry?*

Concerning Baptism by deposed Ministers.

Answer, If such a Sentence be given against those *clave errante*, *i. e.* either by Persons not having Authority, or for Causes that are not just Ground for such a Censure, or in an unjust and palpably injurious Method, contrary to the Lord's Word, and the Rules of common Equity; in this Case, such Sentences are from the very Beginning null and void, and the Ministry of such stands firm in all its Parts, and to all Purposes; for, Censures of this Kind are not valid, purely because they are inflicted by Churchmen, but in Regard they are pronounced upon Scripture,

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(1) *Turet. Vol. 3. pag. 457. Bucani Loc. com. pag. 614.*
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ture Grounds, and are proceeded in, in a Scripture Manner, and by Divine Warrant and Authority. And if this Proposition now laid down is not allowed, then shall it be in the Power of corrupt Churchmen to deprive the Flock of God of faithful Shepherds, and the sincerer Part of the Ministry, and that because of their Integrity and Soundness in the Faith of the Gospel: And were not some of our most eminent Reformers not only deposed, but also excommunicate by the Popish Party; notwithstanding whereof, and other Sentences past against them, they went on in their Ministry, and were signally and extraordinarily countenanced of God therein. Yet, may not, this be proposed, That even when a Sentence does so pass, if so be the Church, who gives it out, are otherwise found both in Doctrine, Administrations and Government; should not a Spirit of Humility and Self-denial, with a Regard to the publick Peace and Quiet of that Church, so far prevail, as to oblige the Person so censured to forbear, at least for some Time, the Exercise of his Ministry; and in an orderly Way address the proper Judicatories, and with Meekness and brotherly Love desire a Communing with them, as it becomes the Servants of one Lord and Master. And if he should not forbear the Exercise of his Ministry, it will be a very hard Saying, if any should affirm, That his Administrations are invalid. But if such a Censure is inflicted *clave non errante*, i. e. by Persons having just Authority, upon just Grounds, and in an equitable Method; in this Case the Question is more difficult: For on the one Hand, some of very great Learning say (1), That the Minister sinneth should he exercise his Office, because he acts disorderly, and contemns that Authority he ought to obey; yet Ordinances admi-

(1) See *Rutherford his Examen Arminianismi*, pag. 55, 56.

administred by him are valid, in Regard, that by Deposition the Minister is only deprived of, and forbid the Exercise of his Ministry, while the habitual Power and Authority remains with him; and therefore, upon his Repentance, and the taking off of that Sentence, he is not re-ordained, but reponed to the Exercise of his Ministry, which by such a Sentence he was deprived of, and forbid. And tho', say they, it was *by* the Church he had Authority from the Lord *Jesus* to dispense Gospel Ordinances, yet the Church cannot again take it away; only, may warrantably put a Stop to the Exercise of it: Even as *by* a Minister of the Gospel Persons are baptised in the Name of the Lord; and yet in the Case of Excommunication their Baptism is not reckoned null, nor are they judged unbaptised, but still accounted Members of the Church, tho' rotten ones, and, for the Time, suspended from the Privileges thereof: And therefore, upon their Relaxation from that Sentence, they are not rebaptised, but only the Sentence and Restraint taken off. And so here, on the other Hand, may it not be said, That if the Church hath Power to deprive a Person of the Exercise of the Ministry, and seeing his dispensing of Gospel Ordinances is exercising this Office, how can such an one *lawfully* exercise the same, or how can such Administrations be valid? For, if a Person whose Office it is to append Seals to worldly Rights, should, after just Suspension or Deposition from that Office, presume to exercise the same, surely no Judge would sustain it valid in Law; especially, when it was made known to the Person whose Deeds were thus sealed, that the Sealer was deposed or suspended from his Office. And may not some think, that so may the Church determine here? But this Point I leave to better Hands, and more learned Heads,

A Practical Essay on

and wish to see it clearly and distinctly determined; and shall only add, That Church Judicatories are to be very cautious, unbyassed and deliberate in passing such Sentences; those on whom they are inflicted should not rashly, far less in Pride and Contempt, refuse Submission to them; and all the Members of that Church ought, with the outmost Care and Impartiality, narrowly to examine and inform themselves, as to the Justice or Injustice of such a Censure, ere they receive any Gospel Ordinances from such; and where there is so much as a Probability of the Equity of that Sentence, surely Forbearance is by very far the safest Choice, and Tenderness on all Hands is most becoming the Gospel. But whereas, every Man's Ways seem right in his own Eyes, and Contempt of Sentences of this Kind, tho' duly inflicted, is too common, there seems no Remedy in this Case left to the Church, but Patience, a steady looking to the Lord, a diligent instructing and faithful Warning of those under her Charge, and an Endeavouring, so far as they have Access and is proper for them, to convince and recover such as so go astray, and lead others into Bypaths with them.

Inferences
from this.
I. The
Error of
Lay-Bap-
tism.

And now, from what hath been said of the Administrators of Baptism, we may learn, *First*, The Error of those who allow private Persons, or Men who are not invested with the Ministerial Office, yea, in Cases of Necessity, Women also, to administrate this solemn and awful Ordinance: For such are doubly guilty, while they act not only without Scripture Warrant, but contrary to the most express Prohibitions thereof, confine eternal Salvation to the external Administration, invert the Order that God has settled in his own House, and bring these Confusions thereinto, which he hath solemnly discharged. How well should it be with Churches, did the Word of
God

God in all Administrations determine them; were the Institutions of Heaven punctually observed by them; did the Fear, Aw, and Dread of being found unfaithful or presumptuous possess them; and did an holy Zeal for all God's Ordinances, sweetly influence the whole of their Decisions.

Secondly, We cannot but justly infer the Validity of Presbyterian Ordination and Administrations, particularly this of Baptism; for, Ministers of this Perswasion have all that is necessary to a *true and complete Call* to the Work of the Ministry; they are orderly elected, duly tried and approven, as to their Qualifications; and by an Assembly of senior Pastors, are solemnly ordain'd and set apart to the Work of the Ministry, with Fasting, Prayer, and Imposition of Hands. And yet a Set of High flying Men, of flaming Spirits, who but of late Years had their Hands tied up from persecuting their dissenting Brethren, and had nothing wherewith to charge them but Calumny and Clamour, now of late erect their Batteries on another Fort, and doom to eternal Silence the Administrations of these (some of whom have for many Years had the Blessing of Heaven attending them) and that for want of Diocesan Episcopal Ordination: The loud and common Cry, not only in our neighbouring Church, but of many of the Prelatical Party in this Northern Part of the World, is, That dissenting and Presbyterian Ministers are no Ministers at all, but meer Laymen and Usurpers; That all their Administrations are void and null; they have no Power and Authority to preach, or exercise Discipline in the Church, and no Commission to administer *Baptism* or the *Lord's Supper*; and all this, because they are not ordained by the Imposition of the Hands of a Diocesan Bishop. It is surprizing, with what

II. Presbyterian Ordination and Baptism vindicated.

an Air of Assurance, the Vulgar are told in publick Discourses and private Conversations, *That they who have no other Baptism but from the Hands of a Presbyterian Minister, are still unbaptised; That they are no Christians, but a Sort of Pagans and Heathens, to be left to uncovenanted Mercy.* And when such Notions are so frequently and confidently buzz'd into their Ears, we need not wonder, if some poor, weak, ignorant and credulous People take the Alarm, and turning bigotted, like their new Teachers, have been filled with Fears and Scruples about their Christianity; and, as the surest Way to dispel and remove them, have besought certain Curates to baptise them into the only right Way: And these Curates pretending Compassion, have, upon an Opportunity offered, rebaptised them, and thereby conjured down the restless Spirit of Fear, Terror and Consternation, which they themselves had industriously raised. The wish'd for Brevity of this Essay does not allow much to be said on this Head, or to these Men: I shall therefore here, only briefly and in some few Hints, show, That to deny the Validity of Presbyterian Ordination and Administrations, is unreasonable, inconsistent and uncharitable.

I. To deny Presbyterian Ordination, &c. is unreasonable. *First*, I say this is very unreasonable; for, *First*, Is it reasonable to make the State of Christianity the Being of a Christian Church, and Persons Interest in the Covenant of Grace to depend upon an Office, I mean that of a Diocesan Bishop; which *First*, not many Years ago, was declared to depend upon the Will of Men: For then, all know, that the Frame of the Prelatical Church in this Land was declared, and that by the most publick Law constituting it, *to flow from the King's Will and Pleasure, and its Government to be ambulatory and alterable as he saw fit.* 2dly, And more particularly, upon an Office which

which the Maintainers and Promoters of, are not agreed what it is; some making it a meer Presidency; some placing it in a Negative, so that without the Bishop no Act of Jurisdiction is to be performed;—and others in this, That *he* hath sole Power of Jurisdiction and Ordination. And this last, those Men whom we have here to deal with do assert. But then, are they agreed as to his Original? While some say it is only *Jure Ecclesiastico*, or by the Constitution of the Church, and her constant primitive Practice; and others, that it is *Jure Divino*, or founded upon the Word of God. And finally, They are not yet one as to the Object of this Office; for it is either, *First*, All the Souls in the Diocess, so that the Bishop is the prime Pastor; and if thus, How does he engage to Impossibilities, to feed the Flock, and watch for Hundreds of Thousands of Souls, as one that must give an Account. Nor does this Work allow of a Substitute, unless they can also find one who can, and will answer for them at the Bar of the Great God. Or, *2dly*, The Pastors who do teach and administrate Gospel Ordinances are the Object of Episcopal Government; and if so, then, *First*, A Bishop, as such, can never pretend to be Successor to the Apostles, whose principal Commission was to *Teach and Baptise*, *Matth.* xxviii. 19. and whose great Business was, to *give themselves continually to Prayer, and the Ministry of the Word*, *Acts* vi. 4. And *2dly*, In this Case, *be that labours in Word and Doctrine*, is by the Spirit of God preferred to him whose Office it is to *Rule*, even tho' *he rule well*, *1 Tim.* v. 17. And can we reasonably think, that a Church's being Christian shall depend upon an Office, which the Maintainers of are so uncertain about, and who, in disputing about it, do so rend and tear it in Pieces? Or, is it supposeable, that our
glorious

glorious Redeemer, who *purchased his Church with his own Blood*, and his Apostles, whose peculiar Office it was to lay the Foundation of a Gospel Church, should not have given a distinct Account of, or Directions about an Office essential to the very Being of Christianity? But no such Thing is to be found in the whole New Testament Revelation.

II. Because Presbyters only were ordain'd as the Apostles continuing Successors. *Secondly*, It is unreasonable to deny Presbyterian Ordination, if we consider, that the Apostles ordain'd preaching Presbyters, and these only as their Successors, to remain and continue to the End of the World. The Consequent is Self-evident, because, if Presbyters were the only Successors of the Apostles to remain to the End of the *World*, then surely they were to ordain others; else a standing Ministry was to expire with them: So that the Antecedent only is to be confirmed, which the following Instances do, *Acts* xiv. 23. *They ordained Elders, not Diocesan Prelates, in every City.* *Acts* xvi. 12. They come to *Philippi*, and there they ordain *preaching Elders or Bishops*, *Phil.* i. 1. *Titus* i. 5. The great Apostle of the *Gentiles* puts *Titus* in Mind, *That for this Cause he left him at Crete, that he should ordain Elders in every City,* *Acts* xvii. from Verse 1. to 15. They come to *Thessalonica*, where there is a Church planted by their Ministry; but there, preaching Presbyters only are ordain'd and settled, *1 Thess.* v. 12, 13. *Acts* xviii. from Verse 1. to 5. They come to *Corinth*, but there also, you shall find the *Rulers* of that Church acting in Parity of Power, and that in the most solemn and awful Part of Ecclesiastick Discipline, *1 Cor.* v. 4, 5, 11, 12, 13. And, *Finally*, at *Ephesus*, there, *Elders* only are ordain'd; to whom alone the Oversight of that Church and Flock of God is committed, *Acts* xx. 17, 20, 25, 27, 28. where it is most observable, that the

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the Apostle now taking his Farewell of them, and to see their Face no more, tells them, *He had not shunned to declare unto them the whole Counsel of God.* Can it then be supposed, that had there been a *Prelate* set over them, or had *Timothy* (as some say) been to return, that, as their *Bishop*, he might preside among them, that the Apostle would have committed the intire Oversight of that Church to *Presbyters*, and that in *Timothy's* Presence; and that he *who kept back nothing from them, but had declared to them the whole Counsel of God,* should now, at his final parting with them, not have mentioned their *Bishop*, on whose Being, according to the Opinion of these Men, the Existence of a Gospel Church depended? And as to such, who say, that all these *Presbyters* were *Bishops* in the Prelatick Sense; there needs no other Return be made to them, but seeing there were *Elders in every City*, and that in the Infancy of Christianity, when Professors were not many, then there is for ever an End put to *Diocesan Prelacy*; for here, in the Scriptures pointed at, there are more *Bishops* than one, in one City, and some of these Cities none of the biggest.

Thirdly, If, in Scripture, the Power of Jurisdiction and Ordination belong to *Presbyters*, then it must be unreasonable to deny Presbyterian Ordination: But the Truth of this is most evident, if we consider, *First*, What was committed to them. And, *2dly*, What was practised by them. For the *First*, can any Thing be more plain, than that the *Oversight* of the Church is committed to them, and they are *Overseers*, *Acts xx. 17, 28.* They are to *rule and watch over them, as those who must give an Account, Heb. xiii. 7. & xvii. 24.* and *1 Pet. v. 1, 2.* They are to *feed the Flock of God.* Now, can any, in Reason, think, That it would have been

III. Power of Jurisdiction and Ordination belongs to *Presbyters.*

a watchful Oversight over them, a careful Feeding of them, and a so Ruling them, as Men who were to give an Account, had they, after their Decease, left them neglected, and a Prey to grievous Wolves, whom the Apostle foretells them were to enter in, so as they might have starved for Want of the Nourishment of their Souls, and become a meer *Anarchy*, having none to rule over them, had they not ordained a standing Gospel Ministry to succeed to themselves? And yet this they could not have done, if they were denied Power and Authority to ordain. But, 2dly, That Presbyters have Power of Jurisdiction and Ordination, does appear, if we observe what was practised by them: Their solemn and awful Commission being by the special Intimation and Direction of the Holy Ghost, *Acts* xx. 28. doubtless, they practised accordingly. I shall but instance in some few, which I think are plain and undeniable. The first is, *Acts* xv. 4. where Elders or Presbyters are with the Apostles receiving the Report of the Gospel Success among the *Gentiles*. *Verse* 6. They meet with them to decide in a very momentuous Affair; which necessarily implies, that they had a Power of Jurisdiction. *Verse* 22. They join in the Decision. And *Verse* 23. Letters are written in their Name. And, *Acts* xiii. 1, 2, 3. certain Prophets and Teachers, not Prelates, do separate and send forth Paul and Barnabas for the Work whereunto the Holy Ghost had called them: And this they do by the Imposition of Hands, Fasting, and Prayer. And if this was not an Act of Jurisdiction, what can be one? And then, 1 *Tim.* iv. 14. Timothy is thus exhorted, *Neglect not the Gift that is in thee, which was given thee by Prophecy, with the Laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery*. Where it will be sufficient to observe, First, That here is a Gift or Office to
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which *Timothy* is ordained, *Eph. iii. 8.* 2dly; Here is a *Presbytery* or College of *Presbyters* (see *Luke xxii. 66.* *Acts xxii. 5.*) convened to ordain him, which they do in a most solemn Manner, by *Imposition of Hands*; which they would not have done, nor ought to have done, had there not been an inherent Power in *Presbyters*; as such, to ordain. Can we imagine that they performed this *Work* without Direction, without Commission, or were guilty of Usurpation? And then, 3dly, The great Apostle of the *Gentiles* testifies that this Gift was given, and this Office conferred, by *Laying on of the Hands of the Presbytery*; and can we have a more authentick Voucher? Nor is it of any *Weight* what is said against this. Say they, What do you know but the Apostle was with them at this *Work*? Answer, First, Where the Scripture is silent, so must we be, else we shall make sad *Work* in *Doctrine* and *Worship*, as well as Government; and make the Scriptures themselves but a very uncertain and indifferent Rule. But, 2dly, Let us suppose the Apostle was there, and which some alledge, from *2 Tim. i. 6.* this will not at all weaken, but more confirm our Argument, seeing this was done in the Presence, and in a joint Manner with the Apostle, who, no Doubt, would not have allowed it, but rather have reprov'd them, had there been any Thing presumptive or irregular in it, and had they wanted an inherent Power to perform such a very solemn Action.

Fourthly, It is unreasonable to deny Presbyterian Ordination, and their Administrations; because, if Ordination by Bishops be valid, and the Administrations by those so ordained be good, then, according to Scripture, so must that of Presbyters be. But the First is what our Adversaries assert; and the Second is evident from this

IV. In
Scripture.
Bishop and
Presbyter
are one.

Consideration, That, in Scripture, *Bishop* and *Presbyters* are one and the same, both as to Name and Office, as is undeniable from *Acts* xx. 17, and 28. *Titus* i. 5, 7. But this Argument has been so convincingly proven by many accurate and able Hands, that I shall not insist on it, but proceed, when once I have taken Notice of one Objection. And it is,

An Ob-
jection an-
swered.

How can *Presbyters* have Power to ordain, who can have no more Power than the Ordainers gave them? But, say they, Bishops who ordained them, never gave them Power of Jurisdiction and Ordination; and therefore, seeing they have it not themselves, they can never confer it upon others.

Answer. This is the very Objection which *Papists* adduce against the Ordination of *Protestants*, and the Validity of their Administrations. How, say they, can you *Hereticks* have more Power than was given you; which was only to uphold the *Papal Hierarchy*; to extirpate the *Northern Heresy*, or *Protestant Religion*; to observe the *Trental Articles*; to pray *Souls out of Purgatory*; and to say *Mass in Order to this*, &c. These were the Things that were intended by the Ordainer, and not that you should preach down these, pretend to reform the World, and set up *Schismatical Meetings of your own*. Now, *First*, How will the *Prelatical Party* answer this Objection of the *Papists*, if their own Argument against us, *Presbyterians*, be good? But, *2dly*, We say, with all *Protestants*, That the Nature and Extent of an Office is not to be measured by the Intention of the Conveyer, but the *Will* of the Lawgiver appointing it. And if the corrupt Mean or Instrument by whom it is conveyed does confine, limit or appoint it to quite contrary Ends than those for which it was at first instituted, in so far, he is pre-

presumptive and doubly guilty, acts without Law, without *Warrant*, and with a bad Conscience. For which Reasons, the Person ordained is not to take his Rules from the corrupt Intention and unhallowed Limitation of the Instrument conveying it, but from the Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Fountain of all Church Power, the only Head and King of his Church, and from his Law revealed in his *Word*; declaring the Nature of the Office of a preaching Presbyter, shewing its Extent, and pointing out the Holy Ends and Designs which all are to have in the Exercise thereof. Nor is it in the Name of the Conveyers that they act, but in the Name of *Christ*; nor to them are they to make their Account, but to the *Lord Jesus*, and to him alone. And, for this Cause, they are so to exercise their Office, not as the presuming Conveyer requires, but as he the great Judge and Lawgiver commands.

But, *Secondly*, This denying the Validity of Presbyterian Ordination and Administrations is inconsistent, both with the other Principles and Practices of these Men. For, in their known Judgment, no Man can be lawfully consecrated a *Bishop*, unless he is first lawfully ordain'd a Presbyter; and much less can any Man be ordain'd to the Office of a Presbyter or Deacon, who never was lawfully baptised. Now, upon these, I shall but propose a few Questions to them, If so be Ordination by *Presbyters* be null and void, is it not known to all Men, that when Mr. *Spotswood*, Mr. *Lambe*, and Mr. *Hamilton*, were consecrated (as they call it) to the Episcopal Office, by some Bishops at *London*, that their Office as Presbyters was sustained valid; nor were they, nor would they be re-ordained thereto (8); But so it is, that their Ordination

To deny the Validity of Presbyterian Ordination is inconsistent.

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(8) See *Spotswood's History*, Page 514. *Calderwood's History*, Page 747.

as Presbyters was by Presbyters; and if this was as null as if it had never been, how then could they be made Bishops? And, how could they ordain other Presbyters, or give to others what they never had themselves? And thus, the Ordination of a goodly Number of Prelatick Preachers, and all their Administrations, should be void and null. But again, Have not many been *confirmed*, who had no other Baptism but that by Presbyterians? And, can any be confirmed, who are not supposed to have been regenerate by *Water* and the *Holy Ghost* (9)? Have they not had Christian Burial (as they call it) but shall Baptism be good at one's Death, and yet be null all the Days of a Man's Life? But to come nearer Home, Was Presbyterian Ordination, and Gospel Ordinances administered by Presbyters, null and void, betwixt the Years 1638 and 1660? If so, let them give an open and plain Answer. How many such were, and yet are admitted to the Lord's Supper by them? How many such were Episcopally ordained to the *Work* of the Ministry? And, how near Six hundred Ministers who had Presbyterian Ordination only, were assumed into Episcopal Communion, without Re-ordination? *What!* shall Men be admitted to the Table of the Lord, and ordained to the *Work* of the Ministry, who were never lawfully baptised, but are as *Heathens* and *Pagans*; not in Covenant with God, nor reckoned so, but to be left to uncovenanted Mercy? One Question more, Was King *Charles I.* a *Martyr*, or not? I am very sure, that if these Mens *Way of Talking* hold, he was not; for, if he was no Christian, but an uncovenanted Person, then a *Martyr* he could not be; But, according to them, a Christian he was not, because he was baptised in *Scotland* by a *Presbyterian*

(9) See the *Prayer* at Confirmation, with the *Questions* proposed

terian Minister: And if he was no *Martyr*, and no *Christian*, what Abundance of brave Labour, and how many curious, eloquent, elaborate Harangues have the Episcopal Clergy lost for these many Years, on the 30. of *January*. And, Finally, What will they say of the Learned and Famous *University of Oxford*, who, in their Letter to the *Presbyterian Church of Geneva*, *February 5th, 1706*, call their Ministers, *Worthy Pastors*, and *Dear Brethren in Christ*; and express their very high Esteem of them, and Affection to them. Will our fiery Zealots rank that University, as they have done some very Learned, Reverend and Renowned *Prelates*, among the Number of *false Brethren*.

I can apprehend no Return that can be made to these few *Queries*, but either they must allow *Lay Baptism* to be valid, or else grant, that Baptism administered by *Presbyterian Ministers* is good. If they say the last, which according to plain Scripture and sound Reason they should say, then we have what we ask, and the Dispute is at an End. But if the first be gone in with, then what becomes of the lawful Pastor, which according to them and us both, is essential to Administrations of that Kind? But then, seeing they will have *Presbyterian Ministers*, and other *Dissenters* from the Episcopal Church, to be no other than Lay-men, why is not Baptism administered by them valid also. But,

Thirdly, This *Doctrine* of denying the Validity of *Presbyterian Ordination and Administrations*, is most *uncharitable*: For, *First*, Hereby they cast out from the Society of the Faithful, from the Church of Christ, and from all Christian People, the most Part of all the Protestant Churches in the *World*; such as the *established Church of Scotland*, *Dissenters in England and Ireland*; as also the *Churches of God*, who

It is most uncharitable; for, I. It Unchurches a great Part of the Protestant World.

are not *Episcopal*, in *New England*, *Holland*, *Geneva*, the *Palatinate*, and *Bremen*, with the Protestant Churches in *Germany* and *Hungary*, &c. And is it not a strange *Doctrine*, that represents the *Purest and best Reformed Churches in the World*, to be no better, yea, and no other than *Unbaptised Pagans* or *Heathens*? What is this, but to cut off from the Body of Christ, vast Numbers, nay, the greatest Number of its most eminent Members; many of whom have done and suffered exceedingly more for Christ, Christianity, Religion, and the Reformation, than ever these were or shall be capable of, who so uncharitably treat them, and so heavily censure them. And indeed, the *Way* to Christianity must be very narrow, if it is confined to the Communion of any one particular Church; but more narrow, yea, and less safe too, if it is only to be found in these of the Prelatick Perswasion.

II.
Without
Ground
perplexes
the Reli-
gious.

Secondly, Whereas Charity obligeth us to be kind one to another, comforting the Minds, and strengthening the Bonds of one another in the *Way* of Christianity; yet, how do these Men show the greatest Disaffection by their fiery and misguided Zeal; discourage the Hearts, and weaken the Hands of their Fellow-Christians, by buzzing into their Ears their unsound and unchristian Principles; telling them, that notwithstanding of all they have professed, of all that by Grace they have been helped to act, and of all they have felt and attained to, according to the glorious Gospel, yet they are still unbaptised; no Christians, not in Covenant; and have nothing upon Scripture Ground to hope for, but are left to uncovenanted Mercy; labouring thereby to fill the Minds of true Believers with groundless Scruples, Fears and Jealousies. Is this Charity? Or, is it not rather to act like an *Accuser of the Brethren*?

thren? May God pity Men of such unchristian Principles, and throughly convince them, that they know not what Manner of Spirits they are of.

Thirdly, Hereby the Hands of Protestants are weakned, and those of the Papists are strengthened: For, what do they say less than Papists do, both of Protestant Ministers and People, while they deny their Ministers to be truly so, and declare, that People who own them as Ministers, and submit to them in the Lord, are no Christians. Can these Men do more to revive and propagate the Interest of Antichrist, than by Unchurching many Protestant Churches at once, and ranking them with the Excommunicate. Hence, it has been observed by some, That the Romish, and some of our British Priests of the new Stamp, are like Two Mill-stones set a going by a Spirit of Fury and Cruelty, which grind to Powder, not only our Reformers, but Multitudes of our reformed Churches. For, the First represents them to the World as Hereticks, and the last as unbaptised Pagans and Heathens. Is this the Catholick Charity that some value themselves so much upon, and boast so much of? But it may be we mistake them; for it is not Christ's Holy Catholick Church, that is, The whole Congregation of Christian People throughout the whole World, and especially the Churches of England, Scotland and Ireland, that their Charity is to be extended unto, and for whom they are to pray, as the Fifty fifth Canon of the Church of England directs, but the Catholick Church of Rome, and others, only, who are of the same Episcopal Mould: For, these have true Ministers, and true Administration of Sacraments, whilst all other Protestant Churches have neither of these; and so, according to them, can be no Christian People.

III. Encourages Papists and discourages Protestants.

Their
grand Re-
ply answer-
red.

I know, That the common Return they give to Arguments of this Kind, is, *That they are not at all concerned what the Consequentes be, if their Proposition is good*: But as we are to judge of the Goodness or Badness of their Position from what has been said; so they may please consider, That tho' from a true Proposition such Consequences may follow, as we cannot explain, nor, to the Satisfaction of others, account for; yet no Consequence can be truly deduced from a true Position, which is evidently absurd, and manifestly overthrows the Position it self, as these above-mentioned plainly do. This only I shall further notice, That whereas these Men we now reason with make a common Outcry, That, of all Men, Presbyterians are the most uncharitable; we must now leave it to all the *Christian World* to judge, which of the Two, they or we, are so. We do acknowledge all Protestant Churches to be true Churches, and reckon our selves obliged to pray for them, tho' in several Things they differ from us, which Things we cannot comply with, but must disapprove of and lament as Corruptions. But these will acknowledge none to be true, yea, not to be Christian Churches, but the Church of *Rome*, and some few others that are of a Prelatical Stamp with themselves. Nor can Presbyterians understand why these People make *Christianity* depend upon Baptism; for we think, That Baptism supposeth Men Christians, else they have no Right to Baptism the Seal of Christianity; all Seals, in their Nature, supposing the Thing that is sealed. And if our Children are born in Covenant, and are holy, and if these come to Age, we read of in Scripture, who before they were baptised, were renewed, repented, and believed, were not Christians, we do not understand what will make any so. Baptism solemnly declares

declares and seals them up to Christianity, but was never intended to make them so. But it is Time that I now proceed to a

Third Inference from what hath been said on the Head of Administrators of Baptism: And it is, That hence we may learn to whom Parents are to carry their Children, that they may be baptised, and of whom those come to Age, who yet want this Privilege, are to ask it: And this is to a Minister of the Gospel, and of him, who is lawfully called and authorised to administer this. When Men want to have a Seal appended to their Rights of temporal and perishing Possessions, they address themselves to such as, by Law, are empowered to do this; much more should they do so in this Affair of Baptism, which being of everlasting Concern, is surely of infinitely greater Moment. And it is without Doubt, that the nearer a Minister comes to the Scripture Pattern and Rule, as to his Ordination to the Office of the Ministry; and Administration of this Ordinance, the greater Freedom and Comfort may Persons have to desire it for others, and receive it for themselves. Nor are we to be indifferent and unconcerned about this, as too many be. But then,

Fourthly, Are Ministers of the Gospel the only allowable Persons to dispense this Ordinance of Baptism? Surely they ought to be both willing and ready to do this, in a Suitableness to the Solemnity of the Action, and the Rules of Decency and Order. He that hath an Office committed to him, is not to grudge the punctual and faithful Discharge thereof, lest he be arraigned, by the great Master, as a slothful and faithless Servant, and punished accordingly: And of all Men, none ought to be more active in their *Work*, than Gospel Ministers. Ordinances to be dispensed by them are of Divine Instituti-

Inference III.

Of whom we are to ask Baptism.

IV. Ministers Duty.

on; the Souls of People committed to their Care are of greater Value than a whole World; and therefore their Charge cannot but be great and awful; so that a more than ordinary Diligence cannot but be required at their Hands. And Thrice happy is that Servant, *whom his Lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing.*



S E C T. II.

Of the Administration of Baptism.

HAVING spoke of the Administrators of *Baptism*, it is meet that we next speak of the Administration it self. And here several Things offer themselves to our Consideration; such as, what is previously necessary thereto, the Action it self, the Manner of performing this, with the Circumstances of this solemn and religious Performance. Of all which I shall discourse separately, and with as much Brevity as the Nature of Things will allow.

I. Of what is previous to Baptism.

I. Here I perswade myself that it will be granted by all Christians, That it is highly expedient and becoming, that Parents prepare themselves for such a solemn religious Duty; That Ministers compose their own Spirits in order to the due Administration of such an awful Ordinance; and that Spectators study a Frame of Spirit suitable thereunto: For, as has been already observed, all have their several Parts to act in this great and concerning Affair. And for this Cause, it appears very reasonable, that some

some brief Narration of the Author, Institution, Nature, Ends and Uses of Baptism, should precede the Administration itself; this being of special Use to instruct, convince, confirm, excite and engage the Minds of all; by which also the Foundation is declared upon which Parents present their Children that they may be baptised, others come to it, and Ministers go about the Work of Administration, in Faith and full Assurance, that as they act in divine Things, so by divine Warrant and Appointment: And may therefore look for the divine Blessing to this holy and divine Institution. But what I more especially have in View, as previous to Baptism, is, the Minister's praying to God, in the Name of *Christ*, for his Blessing upon it; That all the saving Designs and Effects thereof may take Place, to the eternal Advantage of the Person or Persons to be baptised. This was reckoned so necessary in the primitive Times, that it was looked upon as an essential Part of the Administration (1). And tho' I cannot plead express Scripture Command or Example for so doing, yet that it is most just and reasonable will appear, *First*, If we consider that our common Food, Meat and Drink, which we use for the Nourishment of our Bodies, are said, *1 Tim. iv. 5. to be sanctified by the Word and Prayer, i. e.* not only are they lawful as to their Use, but ordain'd for the Support and Preservation of our frail Bodies, as to their Effect; and thus, by the *Word* appointing our Food for that End, and *Prayer* as the Mean whereby the Design is obtain'd. And if we are to pray to God for his Blessing on common Things, which are only for the Body, how much more should we plead for this on a divine Ordinance, which is appointed for the eternal

II. A Blessing is to be prayed for.

(1) See *King's Enquiry into the Constitution of the primitive Church*, Part II. pag. 71, 72.

eternal Advantage of the Soul. *2dly*, Because our blessed Redeemer, and his Apostles after his Example, did pray for the heavenly Blessing and Influence to attend the Ministration of the *Supper*; and if so, then by a Parity of Reason we are to plead this to accompany the Administration of *Baptism*: For if *that* be for our growing up in *Christ*, *this* does signify our ingrafting into him. *3dly*, Because the Efficacy of all Ordinances depends only upon God, and flows from him, *1 Cor.* iii. 6. Should he not therefore be sincerely looked to for this? *4thly*, And specially, Because he has promised his gracious and efficacious Presence to be with his Ministers in their Administration of this Ordinance, *Matth.* xxviii. 19. And should it not, in the most earnest, humble and believing Way be sought; as we see, *Ezek.* xxxvi. 25, 26, 27. compared with Verse 37.

Observes
for better
understand-
ing of
this.

But for our further understanding this, we may observe, *First*, That it may be modestly conjectured, that the Reason why we have no express Command for this, nor Instance of it in the *New Testament*, is, because this of acknowledging God by Prayer, when his People were about the Administration of a solemn and divine Ordinance, was an Action so plainly necessary and obvious, that it was not supposeable that any Dispute would be moved about it. *2dly*, That as this is the *peculiar Work* of the Administrator, so it is the special Duty of the Congregation, in the most solemn, sincere and fervent Manner, to join with him therein: For Zeal to the Glory of God, edifying the Body of *Christ*, and the eternal Happiness and Salvation of others, do all necessarily oblige hereto. But alas! the Action being frequent, it is to be fear'd, that this *Christian Duty* is performed seldom and very slightly. *3dly*, It is to be observed, That by *Prayer*

at *Baptism* there is no peculiar Sanctity or Holiness put into the *Water*, far less any Virtue or Energy given to the Remains of, to *work Wonders*, or *heal Diseases*. That it is relatively holy, in regard it is now used in an holy Ordinance, and for holy Ends, is certain; but when the Use ceases, and the Relation is dissolved, this Holiness is at an End too; and any other or greater Degree of Holiness than this cannot be apprehended, nor was it ever designed. Hence, the Practice of some, in pouring out the *Water* on the Church-floor, (holy Ground, as they reckon) after the Administration is over, cannot be well vindicated from a considerable Measure of Ignorance and Superstition.

And from what hath been said, we may learn, *First*, How unbecomingly they act, who rush on this solemn Ordinance, not duly considering whose and what it is; nor conscientiously endeavouring to have their own Souls prepared therefore. These People, whoever they be, show no small Disrespect to the Author, and Disregard of the Matter, and proclaim to the *World* their Indifferency as to the Effect of this Ordinance. But of this more afterward. *Secondly*, It informs us of the Error of some, who presume upon the Administration of this Sacrament, not looking to God, and addressing the Throne of Grace for his Blessing; for if we are in all our *Ways* to acknowledge him; how much more in these of such an awful Nature and vast Concern to us. And when this Acknowledgment is deliberately neglected, how may the Religion of such be very justly suspected?

Inferences from this.
I. The Error of the Precipitant.

II. Of the Irreligious.

II. Of the Action of Administration.

There are several Things which come under this Title, but I shall begin with that which is of

of more special Consideration, and discourse of others as they come in Order.

Anent dipping in Baptism.

The Question stated.

We have above endeavoured to vindicate the Validity of *Presbyterian Ordination and Administrations*, against the vain and unchurching Principles of the rigid *Prelatists*; and now we are obliged, as are also *Prelatists* and others with us, to defend the Lawfulness and Validity of our performing this Ordinance, by sprinkling or pouring a little *Water* upon the Person to be baptised, against the *Anabaptists*, who maintain the absolute Necessity of dipping or immersing the whole Body into the *Water*. And as to this, it may be observed, *First*, That it is not to be questioned, but that the Word *Baptise*, in *Greek* *Βαπτίζω*, does sometimes, yea commonly in prophane Authors, signify, to dip, immerge, plunge, or put the whole Body under *Water*. But if this be the real and true Signification of this Word, as used in this *Sacrament*, is what will not be so easily gone into. Nor, *2dly*, Are we to dispute the Lawfulness of baptising by *Immersion*; this is universally granted: But the Question is, If it be so absolutely necessary, as that these are not to be reckoned baptised who were not dipt? Nor *3dly*, Is the Question, Whether *Immersion* was practised by the Ancients? Yea, it may be handed down by them to very late Times (1). For it is unanimously agreed, That a Trine Immersion, or dipping the Person into the *Water*, was a very ancient Practice. This they did once at naming the *Father*, a second Time at naming the *Son*, and a third at mentioning the *Holy Ghost*, to denote their Belief of, and being baptised into the Faith of the *Holy Trinity* (2). But this was afterward justly laid aside, as void of

(1) See Mr. Wall's History of Baptism, Vol. II. pag. 359, 495. (2) History *ut supra*, pag. 360. Zanchius, Tom. 4. pag. 406.

of Scripture Foundation, and giving too much Liberty to human Inventions in the Things of God, by appointing significant Ceremonies in his *Worship* and *Service*. The Proposition then is this, *That dipping of the Person into the Water is not necessary; but Baptism is rightly administered, by pouring or sprinkling Water upon the Person* (1). And for Proof of this Proposition, I cannot indeed use some Arguments that are commonly adduced; such as, That *Immersion* endangers the Life of the Infant; and that it is not so becoming that Modesty that should be among *Christians*: For, if we consider the Practice of the *Greek Church*, which extends itself to Nations whose Climate is colder than our own, and the Administration of the Sacrament of *Circumcision*, there will appear to be little Weight in these Arguments. And as to the last, some tell us (2), That among the Ancients, when a Woman was to be baptised, the *Priests* kept at a Distance, until Women had undressed her, and put her in the *Water* to the Head; then the *Priest* came, and putting her Head under the *Water*, used the Form of Baptism, and then left her to be covered by the Women with a white Garment. But I shall, for Proof of the above Proposition, offer these two Arguments.

The Truth asserted.

First, If the Scripture has left us at Liberty as to this, and there be neither express *Precept* nor *Example* for Dipping, then it is not absolutely necessary: But the First is true. As to *Precept*, nothing can be alledged but the original Institution, *Matth. xxviii. 19. Go Teach and Baptise*, which last Word, say *Anabaptists*, always signifies to *immerge* or *dip* the whole Person into the *Water*. But if it can be shown, that this Word *Baptise* has other Significations in the

Arg. I.

New

(1) See Confession of Faith, Chap. 28. Sect. 3. (2) Mr. *W. l.*'s History of Baptism, Vol. II. pag. 380.

New Testament, particularly *Washing* in the General, *sprinkling* or *pouring on* of *Water*, then no such Consequence can be inferred from the Signification of the *Word*, as will conclude the Invalidity of these Administrations which are not by *Immersion*; But so it is, as we see from *Matth. xx. 23.* where our *Lord* mentioneth his *Baptism*, which all understand his *pouring out* or *shedding* his *Blood* for the *Sins* of the *World*, and not that he was *dipt* into it, but *sprinkled* with it. So *Mark vii. 4.* it is said of the *Pharisees*, That *when they come from the Market, except they wash they eat not*, where *Washing* (or *Baptising*, as the *Greek* has it) is not to be understood of dipping their whole Bodies into *Water*, but as may be inferred from the Context, of washing their Hands; at least, it is very much controverted by Historians if this was the Practice of the *Jews* (1); so *Luke vii. 38.* the *Pharisees* wondred that our *Lord* had not first *washed* before *Dinner*, or *baptised*; which we can scarce understand of dipping his whole Body into the *Water*. But then, *Mark vii. 4.* we have Mention of their *washing of Beds*, at the same Time that their washing when they come from Market is expressed; but whatever Sense we take the *Greek Word* in, whether what they sat on when they did eat, or set their Meat upon, it is not to be supposed that they dipt them wholly into *Water*, but sprinkled them, as their ordinary Way of Lustration was: For, *Dipping* would very soon have made them both unfavoury and useles. Again, *1 Cor. x. 2.* the *Israelites* are said to be *baptised in the Cloud and in the Sea*; but sure they were not dipt into either, or so immersed therein, as to be wholly wetted therewith. So likewise, *Heb. ix. 10.* we have Mention made of *divers Washings* or *Baptisms*,

(1) See Mr. Wall's History of Baptism, Vol. II. pag. 300.

Baptisms, but no Man ever understood these of so putting all these Things into *Water*, or whatever else, as that they were wholly immersed therein. See *Numb.* xix. 20; *Lev.* iv. 17. *Lev.* xiv. 16. *Lev.* xvi. 14, 15. *Numb.* viii. 7. *Numb.* xix. 18, 19. *Exod.* xxiv. 8. Thus we may be convinced, that there is no Precept for *Dipping*.

And there is as little clear Example as Precept in Scripture for this Practice; tho' it is here that the great Stress by many is laid; and they urge, *First*, *John's* baptising in *Jordan*; *Matth.* iii. 6, 16: but from this it cannot be *certainly* inferred, that therefore he dipt them over Head and Ears in it; for might he not have baptised them in *Jordan*, and yet neither they nor he gone into the *Water* further than to their Ancles or Knees. And we must consider, that in the Infancy of the Gospel they had not these Accommodations for baptising as in a settled Church; and therefore, they baptised where they had Conveniency of *Water*, which in that dry Region was not every where to be had. The same Answer is given unto his baptising in *Aenon* near *Salim*, because there was *much* or *many Waters* there; for if we consider the Multitudes that came unto him, the Disadvantage they were under as to Places of Conveniency for putting or preserving *Water*, with the Dryness of the Country, it needs be no Manner of Surprise that he baptised where *Water* might be easily had. And tho' there were many *Waters* there, yet will any say, that it necessarily follows, that all that were baptised there were dipt? Of no greater Weight is what they urge from *Philip's* baptising the *Eunuch*, *Acts* viii. 38: where it is said, *That they went both down into the Water.* For, not to insist, *First*, on what some Travellers and others tell us, that as *Aenon*, so this Place where

Arguments for
Dipping answered.

the *Eunuch* was baptised, was only a Fountain springing forth at the Foot of the Mountain. Nor 2dly, Upon the Greek Word *Κατέβηκεν*, which may well refer unto their descending from the Chariot. Nor 3dly, That the Word *Descend* does commonly in the *New Testament* denote only going from one Place to another, as *Acts* x. 20. *Acts* xiv. 25. *Acts* xvii. 15. Nor 4thly, That the Greek Proposition *εἰς* here rendered *into*, does frequently signify no more than *ad*, or *to*, of which many Instances may be given. Nor 5thly, That it is said that *Philip* descended into the *Water*, as well as the *Eunuch* did: So that if any Thing be inferred from this, it must be, that *Philip* was wholly dipt under *Water* too. I say, not to insist on any of these, the Answer is, 'Tis true they went both down *to*, or *into the Water*; but will it therefore follow, that *Philip* immersed the *Eunuch* when he baptised him? For certainly both might have gone *into the Water*, and nothing like what is alledged be performed. Nor does the Place cited inform us what was done more than this, That the *Eunuch* was baptised. But the great Argument they use, is from *Rom.* vi. 4, 5, and *Col.* ii. 12. where we are said to be *buried with Christ by Baptism into Death*; and Verse 5. *to be planted together in the Likeness of his Death*. Now, say they, and others with them, this is an Allusion unto the Manner of Baptism in these Times, which was by *Dipping*, and as it were *burying* the Person under *Water*. But if we will allow ourselves coolly to consider that Scripture, it can never be interpreted to the Purpose for which it is adduced; for, being *buried with Christ in Baptism* does not point out the Manner of its Administration, but the blessed Consequences and Effects of it. And for evincing of this let us briefly observe, That in the Beginning of the Chapter the *Apostle* anticipates

pates an Objection against our Justification by the Righteousness of *Christ* alone, graciously imputed to them who believe. The Objection is, *Shall Men then sin that Grace may abound?* This the Apostle with Abhorrence rejects, and withal shows, that it was impossible this could ever take Place in a justified Person, because, Verse 2. they *were dead to Sin*; and this he proves, Verse 3. seeing *so many as were baptised into Jesus Christ, were baptised into his Death*; i. e. *Christ*, as the federal Head and Representative of his People, having died to deliver them from the direful Consequences of the violated Covenant of *Works*, all that were baptised into him, or into Union to him and Communion with him, were baptised so into his Death, so as to partake of all the great and glorious Effects thereof; not only for the Justification of their Persons, but also for the Sanctification of their Natures, signified, made over, and sealed to them thereby. And in Regard that *Baptism* was the visible Sign of our Union to *Christ*, and Communion with him, therefore, by *Baptism* they are said not only to be dead Men to Sin, but also to be buried with him; and therefore, as *Christ* was raised by the Glory of the Father, even so we should. N. B. Not come out of the *Water* in Conformity to his Resurrection, but walk in *Newness of Life*. And from this he reasons, Verse 5. That *if we have been planted together in the Likeness of Christ's Death*, or by Virtue of our Union to *Christ* sealed by *Baptism*, made dead to Sin as *Christ* died for Sin; *then we shall also be in the Likeness of his Resurrection*, or live a new, holy, and spiritual Life. And this he goes on to confirm in the following Verses. And if it is still alledged, That the Sign should bear some Proportion to the Thing signified, then, *First*, We must not only be buried with *Christ*,

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but

but indeed so. And Rom. vi. 7, 8. *We must be dead indeed with Christ.* Gal. ii. 20. *Crucified with him,* and Col. ii. 11. *Circumcised in him.* And that because Baptism signifies and seals up to us the glorious Fruits of the Cross, Death and Burial of our Lord *Jesus.* And 2dly, This Way of Reasoning pleads more strongly for Baptism; by sprinkling and pouring on of *Water*; for, in such Metaphorical Terms the Blessings, Fruits and Effects of Baptism are expressed, as *Isa. lii. 15. Ezek. xxxvi. 24. Zech. xii. 10. Heb. x. 22. Heb. xii. 24. 1 Pet. i. 2.* And now, the last Refuge is, That Baptism by Immersion was the Practice of the primitive Church. But *First,* It is very unsafe to reason from this, if we consider what gross and dreadful Errors those fell into, and that in the Space of 100 Years after *Christ* (1). And 2dly, Tho' 'tis true, yet the primitive Times never urged this, nor asserted it to be of absolute Necessity to the Validity and Being of the Administration and Ordinance, but allowed it by Sprinkling; especially in the Cases of the Want of *Water*, Haste, Sickness of the Person to be baptised, or Weakness. Which destroys what it is brought for, I mean the absolute Necessity of *Immersion* (2).

Arg. II. But a Second Argument against the Necessity of *Immersion* is, because it is very probable, that this Ordinance was administrate in the Apostles Times by *sprinkling* or *pouring* on of *Water*. For it is not supposeable, that those mentioned, *Acts ii. 41.* and who were to the Number of *Three thousand*, did go with the Apostles unto the Pool of *Bethesda, Siloam,* or the Brook *Cedron*, and were all dip't over Head and Ears in *Water*; but rather; that they were *sprinkled*:

Nor

(1) See Mr. *Wal's* History of Baptism, Vol. I. pag. 404. and onward. (2) See that History, Vol. II. pag. 351, 352, 360. *King's* Enquiry, &c. pag. 73, to 86. Sir *John Floyer* his Essay to restore *Dipping*, pag. 7, and 48.

Nor that the Apostle *Paul*, who immediately upon his receiving Sight was baptised, was *immersed*, *Acts ix. 18.* nor that those mentioned, *Acts x. 47.* had this Ordinance so administrate to them. Nor is it probable, that the *Jaylor*, *Acts xvi. 33.* had such Store of *Water* in the Night Season, as was sufficient for him and his whole Family to be dipt into, or that then they went out to some River for this Purpose; but more reasonable to think this was done by *Sprinkling*. And as to what some think, that the *Jews* had their bathing Places at all Times in their Houses. It is no hard Task to show, that this is doubtful and uncertain. But I have been too long upon this, and shall only add, That seeing the Scripture leaves us at Liberty in this Matter, there should be no Dispute about it; seeing the Validity and Efficacy of the Sacrament depends not upon the Quantity of the Element, for a little Bit of Earth is as sufficient in Law to complete a Man's Title to an Estate, as great Heaps of it. And to the whole of this, I subjoin the Reason some give why *Water* is poured upon the Face, and not on any other Part of the Body; *Because*, say they, *it is the principal Part of the Body wherein the Image of God most appears, and the Soul shines forth most eminently, in which and near to it our Senses are seated; on which all the Workings of Mens Humours and Affections leave the most visible Symptoms and Impressions; and it is observable, that the same Word in the Greek (Προσωπον) signifies both the Face and the Person, because the whole Person is represented by the Face, which we can look on, and wash naked, and not be ashamed (1).*

And from this we may briefly infer these Things, *First*, How compassionate and gracious is our God, who hath left us at Liberty, as to the Quantity of the external Element made Use of

Inferences from this.
The Lord's Compassion and Pity to us.

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(1) *Sydenham* on Infant Baptism, pag. 147.

in this solemn and sacred Ordinance of *Baptism*. He knows our Frame, that we are but Dust, and tho' in some Circumstances dipping the whole Body into *Water* is abundantly safe, and may be done, yet in other Cases it cannot be so performed, without a visible endangering the Life he has given; and being willing, that all his covenanted People should not by any such Circumstance be deprived of the Seal of his Covenant; therefore he has left this Matter so free, that all of them may at all Times enjoy it. His Mercy is high, and infinitely above the greatest Compassions of the Sons of Men.

II. The
Pride of
Men.

Secondly, We may take Occasion from this to observe, how great is that Pride that lodges in the Breasts of the Sons of Men: For, if once they come to lay down any Thing as a Principle, tho' it have no Foundation in the *Word* of God, but only built on their own Imaginations, how do they value and cry it up; insomuch, that there shall be nothing but unchurching, condemning, and invalidating Sentences, pronounced against all these and all their Administrations, who differ from them. It is a true as well as an old Saying, *That every Man has a Pope in his Breast*, and would set up for Infallibility and a supreme Judge to others; but Glory to God, that it is with him, and not our Fellow-creatures, yea nor our Fellow-christians, that we have to do. *Prelatists* are for unchurching all that are not of their Communion; *Anabaptists* for declaring Administrations of *Baptism* null, that are not by *Dipping*; but we hope, some others have not so learned *Christ*.

III. *Of Exorcism in Baptism.*

It is a plain and undeniable Evidence of the Corruption of human Nature, That Men will not

not submit to the Laws of God, by obeying them; and yet they are not satisfied with these as sufficient to regulate their Practice, but must be adding to them; appointing Ceremonies of their own Invention; adding these to the Institutions of Heaven, and stamping them with a special Significancy, as if thereby some spiritual Blessing was to be conferred. This is the Height of Arrogance, seeing, *Jam. iv. 12. There is but one Lawgiver*, and God only is that Judge, who is able to save and to destroy. And is it not the highest Presumption in the Sons of *Adam*, to prescribe Laws to the Church and Servants of the most High God? *2dly*, God is angry, that his professing People should offer him Services not of his *commanding*, but their own *inventing*, *Isa. xxix. 13. Jer. xix. 5. Jer. xxxii. 35. Matth. xv. 9.* *3dly*, These can never be performed in *Faith*, of being acceptable Services to God: For, how shall we know what is well-pleasing in his Sight, unless he reveal it; and will poor Mortals pretend to be on his Secrets? Nor *4thly*, Can we go about such human Institutions in Hope of the Mercy pretended to be signified thereby: For, as he only can annex a Benefit to an external Sign, who has Power to confer that Benefit, which none of the Children of Men can do; so our Hope and Expectation of spiritual Blessings can be founded upon nothing less than the *Divine Promise*; which, in the Case before us, is not, and cannot be alledged. Notwithstanding of all which, and more that might be added, proud and aspiring Man will still be doing, thinking to better God's Ordinances by his own Inventions; and rather than part with the last, they will refuse the first, even where God has allow'd it: Now, among the many Additions of Men to the Commandments of God, this of *Exorcism* is one.

Significancy
Ceremonies,
Reasons
against
them.

Additions
to the In-
stitution
of Bap-
tism, their
Original.

And we may observe, That a learned Person of the Church of *England* says (1), *That as to the Manner of administering Baptism, it was doubtless in the Age of the Apostles, with great Simplicity; probably without any other Formality than Prayer, and pronouncing the Words of Institution. But about the Beginning of the Third Century, (and no Doubt much sooner) Men being disgusted at the Simplicity of the Administration, began to add divers Rites, which, they thought, would more significantly shadow forth the Grace therein bestow'd: One of the most ancient whereof was, the solemn Interrogation, If they abjured the Devil, the World, and the Flesh? And, If they believed all the Articles of the Christian Faith? But hence also arose the Ceremonies of Unction, Signing with the Cross, and Imposition of Hands, as Additaments to this Sacrament, together with giving the Baptised Milk and Honey. The Flesh is anointed, said they, that the Soul may be consecrated; the Flesh is signed, that the Soul may be fortified; the Flesh is overshadowed with Imposition of Hands, that the Soul may be enlightned with the Holy Spirit; and, Milk and Honey are given, to signify, that they were to be as new born Babes. The Ancients were also wont to put a white Garment upon the Person baptised, to denote his having put off the Lusts of the Flesh, and his being cleansed from former Sins; That he had now obliged himself to maintain a Life of unspotted Innocency. And accordingly they were called (*Φωτισόμενοι*) *Enlightned*, because they professed to be the Children of *Light*, and engaged themselves never to return again to the *Works of Darknes*. This white Garment, says our Author, used to be delivered with this solemn Charge, *Reccive the white and undefiled Garment,**

(1) See *Biographia Ecclesiastica*, pag. 524, 600, to 603.

ment, and produce it without Spot before the Tribunal of the Lord Jesus Christ, that you may obtain eternal Life. Amen. They were wont to wear these Garments for the Space of a Week after they were baptised, and having then put them off, to lay them up in the Church, that they might be kept as Witnesses against them, if they should violate the baptismal Covenant. Hence the Sunday after Easter was called *Dominica in albis*, the Sunday in White, it being then, that those who were baptised on Easter put off their white Garments; as the Day of Pentecost was also called *Whitsunday*, because then at their Baptism they put them on: For Easter and Pentecost were their solemn stated Seasons for the Administration of this Ordinance. And we are also told, That in Tertulian's Days this uninstituted Ceremony of Exorcism was added to the divine Institution of Baptism (1), of which we are to say something.

In the First Place then, we may observe, That to adjure, is solemnly, as it were upon Oath, and ^{Exorcising} what. and in the Name of God, to charge and require; as we may learn from *Matth. xxvi. 23. Acts xix. 13.* 2dly, That this *Adjuring* or *Exorcising* ^{Observes} on it. supposes, that the Person to be baptised is possessed by the Devil; and therefore this Ceremony is used to cast him out, or drive him away. 3dly, That tho' this Ceremony was ancient, yet the Instances given of it, by a great and accurate Searcher into these Times and the Customs of them, seem to think, that it was only used in the Case of baptising *Hereticks* (2); and upon their renouncing *Heresy*; tho' others observe, that it was more extensive. And then some notice, that this of *Exorcising* was performed by the Person to be baptised, who putting his Hands betwixt

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those

(1) See King's Enquiry, &c. Part II. pag. 68. (2) See *ibid.* page 69.

those of the *President* or *Administrator*, renounced *Satan* and all his *Works*, with his *Authority*, *Kingdom* and *Service* (1). But 4thly, We may notice, That as it is used among the *Papists*, the Priest performs it after he hath signed the Person or Infant to be baptised with the Sign of the *Cross* on the Breast and Forehead, he then *adjures* Satan to leave the Person; and this he does in the Name of the *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*, making the Sign of the *Cross*, and blowing in the Face of the Infant at naming each Person of the Trinity.

Argu-
ments a-
gainst it.

But *First*, This Practice proceeds upon a wrong Supposition, *viz.* That the Infants of such as are Members of the Visible Church are possessed by the Devil, while *God* declares himself to be *their God*, and that the *Covenant Promise* belongs to them, *Acts* ii. 39. As also, that they are federally *holy*, *1 Cor.* vii. 14. Yea, we may safely reckon some of them sanctified before the Ordinance of Baptism is administered. If then they are not so possessed, as is alledged, to what Purpose is this solemn and pretendedly sacred Action? 2dly, *Christ* never appointed this, nor did the Apostles practise it. 3dly, Tho' it be true that all the Posterity of *Adam* are, by Nature, under the spiritual Power of Satan, and Curse of the Law, yet *Exorcism* was never appointed by God to deliver from these; for this flows from the Virtue and Value of the Death of *Christ*, and the efficacious Operation of his holy Spirit: Both which are signified and sealed by Baptism, *1 John* iii. 8. *Heb.* ii. 14. *Titus* iii. 5. *Rom.* vi. 3, 4. *Col.* ii, 12. 4thly, It is *superstitious*, seeing, tho' it wants divine Appointment, yet there is so much Virtue and spiritual Efficacy attributed thereto: Yea, it too much resembles a *Magical Incantation*, while they give such a Force

(1) See *Bucani Loci Com.* page 640.

Force and Power to certain *Words* and *Signs*, as if, at the pronouncing the one, and performing the other, the Devil was to be drove away. It is true, that Power to cast out Devils was given to the Apostles; but this was extraordinary, and for the Confirmation of the Truth of Christianity, until it should be sufficiently attested, and largely propagated. Nor shall I deny that it hath pleased God in his Mercy and Grace, to regard the Fasts and Prayers of his People, so as to cast out and chain up the *wicked one*, yea, that his Servants may, and have, in the Name and Authority of their glorious Master, charged or adjured the Enemy of our Salvation to Silence: But to make Signs of our own devising, and attribute a spiritual Virtue to them, and so add them to the divine Institutions, and impose them upon his *Church* and *Heritage*, is certainly an unscriptural, and a most unwarrantable Procedure.

IV. *Of Oil, Salt, and Spittle, in Baptism.*

The intended Brevity of this *Essay* will not allow Place for every Thing that may be justly said on each Head: Here then, it must suffice to say, That as the *Papists* added *Exorcism* to *Baptism*, so have they *Oil*, and anointing with it; and not contented herewith, they have also appointed, That *Salt* be put in the Mouths of the Baptised; and that their Ears and Nostrils be, moreover, anointed with *Spittle*; in all these pretending no small Significancy and Efficacy; as if thereby was pointed out, That the Hearts of the Baptised were seasoned with Grace, and their Ears opened to attend to the Doctrine of it. But *First*, As our Lord Jesus did not command these, nor did his Apostles practise them, in the Administration of this Ordinance; so divine and holy

Reasons
against it.

holy Things are not to be managed by the vain Imaginations and Inventions of Men, but according to the Command of the Great God, and Scripture Example of his Apostles, who were sent forth to constitute and propagate his Gospel Church : For, How can Men perform that in Faith, or, believing that what they do is acceptable to God, when they have not his Will and Pleasure made known to them? How can they expect the Blessing of God thereon, while they have not his Promise? And, how can these free themselves from the Charge of vain and *Will-worship*, while they *teach for Doctrines, the Commandments of Men*, Matth. xv. 9. Col. ii. 12. *2dly*, The appointed Action of Administration of this Ordinance of Baptism pleads against this : For, it is a washing with Water, and not a putting Salt in their Mouths, nor anointing with Oyl or Spittle, imposing Hands on their Heads, nor a putting Wax Tapers in their Hands. *3dly*. This is contrary to the Simplicity of the *Gospel Worship*, which is not incumbered with splendid or pompous Ceremonies, but is most plain and simple; that the Efficacy of these may not stand in the *Wisdom* of Men, but in the Power of God. By Impositions of this Kind, the Gospel Church is deprived of the Freedom and Liberty granted to her, *Gal. v. 1*. And the Condition of the New Testament Church will very soon be worse than that of the Old, should all these Things be admitted in the *Worship* of God, which Men, when they have invented, give some Significancy to, and pretend some Decency for. The *Old Testament* had Ordinances of God's Appointment, but by these Means, the *New* must have the endless and intollerable Yoke of Mens Inventions imposed upon her Neck, contrary to *Acts xv. 10*. And, *4thly*, We may reason from the Baptism *Christ* himself received, and which the *Apostles*,

or others sent by him administrated, which were intirely free from any such Rites. Neither are Men to be wiser than God, or think to better what he hath instituted; nor to value themselves so very highly, as that they will have this Ordinance administrated to them in a more pompous Manner than our Redeemer had. Surely, the greatest are not above him, nor are the civil Distinctions amongst Men to have any Room in the Ordinances of God.

It is true, some of these Things reasoned against Objections
omitted. were ancient, but all is not good that is so. And if in these and other Things we make the Practice of Antiquity our Rule, scarce shall we agree in any Thing, but we must have a vast Deal more of vain Additions to Heaven's Institutions than we yet mentioned (6), so many and so various were these. And tho' there is mention of *Oil* and *Spittle* in Scripture, yet no where are these spoke of as used in Baptism. Nor does it any Way help this Cause, while some say, That we Protestants have many Things belonging to Baptism, for which there is neither Scripture Precept, nor Example; such as, *The Child's being brought to Church on a Sermon Day; our instructing and taking Engagement of Parents and Sureties; and giving Names to Children*: For, as those are not, yea cannot be reckoned external Signs, signifying, applying and sealing any inward and saving Grace, so neither are they pretended to be Parts of this Administration, nor *absolutely* necessary thereto.

And from what hath been said, we may learn, Inferences
from this. what good Cause the Church of Christ hath to stand fast in the Liberty wherewith Christ hath made them free, and not to be again entangled with a Yoke of Bondage: For, when once Men depart from that Simplicity that is in *Christ Jesus,*

(6) See Mr. Wall's History of Baptism.

Jesus, and give Scope to their own luxuriant Inventions, there shall be no End of the Additions of Men to the Ordinances of God. Yea, so very fast shall these grow, that the Institutions of the Great and infinitely wise God will very quickly become obscured, and wholly corrupted thereby. Happy should Churches be, were they not presuming to be wise above what is written, but, with becoming Submission, ever believing that, and that only, to be best, which their Lord and Master hath appointed, and his Apostles after him practised. Scarce is there any Thing more true, or more to be lamented, than Mens extravagant Fondness of the Births of their own Brains; for when once these are brought forth, *God's Heritage* must be *lorded*, yea, *tyrannised over*, that these may be complied with; and the Children denied their Father's Allowance, unless the Additions of presumptuous Servants be received therewith. But there is yet more of this; so that we are obliged further to consider them.

V. *Of Baptising with the Sign of the Cross.*

As Papists use this Sign, so some Protestant Churches retain it in the Administration of Baptism. And as to this we may observe, 1st, That they appoint it to be done by the Administrator. The Words in the *Common-Prayer Book*, are, *The Priest shall make a Cross upon the Child's Forehead, viz. an airy Cross* (1). 2^{dly}, Even Protestants who retain it, seem to make it represent the Merits of Christ, with all the precious Fruits and Effects thereof. The 30th Canon of the Church of *England* thus expresses it, *The Holy Ghost, by the Mouth of the Apostle, did honour*

(1) See the Order for Baptism in the *Common-Prayer Book*.

honour the Name of the Cross so far, that under it be comprehended, not only Christ crucified, but the Force, Effects and Merits of his Death and Passion, with all the Comforts, Fruits and Promises which we receive or expect thereby. The Church of England hath retained still the Sign of it in Baptism, following therein the Primitive and Apostolick Churches, and accounting it a lawful outward Ceremony, and honourable Badge, whereby the Infant is dedicated to the Service of him that died on the Cross, as by the Words of the Common-Prayer Book may appear. Which Words are these, *We receive this Child into the Congregation of Christ's Flock, and do sign him with the Sign of the Cross, in Token that he shall not be ashamed to confess the Faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his Banner against Sin, the World and the Devil; and to continue Christ's faithful Servant and Soldier to his Life's End. Amen* (1). This being the Intent and Signification of this Rite, it cannot be approven of, in the Administration of Baptism: And that for these Reasons,

First, Because it is *uninstituted Worship*: That it is *Worship* cannot justly be refused, for this *Dedication* is directed to God, and so terminates in him. Hereby is owned God's Sovereignty over us, and Propriety in us; and in doing of this, we immediately address our selves to the most High, and present our Infants to him, that they may receive his Blessing, and be devoted to his Service. And then, it is *Worship* not appointed of God. Our Redeemer did not institute the Sign of the Cross to be used in Baptism, nor did his *Apostles* either enjoin nor practise it. For which Cause

Reasons
against it.

it

(1) See Calamy's History of Baxter's Life, Vol. I. Page 217. Dr. Pierce's Vindication of Dissenters, Pages 434, 435, 436, 437.

it can be nothing but *Will-worship*, owing its Original intirely to Mens Invention; and which the Great Lawgiver reckons vain, condemns and threatens, *Isa. viii. 20. Jer. vii. 31. Jer. xix. 5. Matth. xv. 9. Lev. x. 1.* And seeing it is so, it can never be gone about in *Faith*; as well-pleasing to God; nor have we sufficient Ground to look for his gracious Concurrence thereto; for it is only when his Servants do what he hath commanded them, that he hath promised to *be with them to the End of the World*, *Matth. xxviii. 19, 20.* Nor hath God, any where, said, That whatever Rite or Ceremony Men shall appoint in his *Worship*, he will graciously countenance it. This, surely, was too much to be granted to fallible and vain Man.

Secondly, To make Signs, signifying spiritual Grace, and conveying spiritual Blessings, is to place a Connection betwixt the Signs and Things signified. But this is the sole Prerogative of God; for it is he only who can confer the Grace, and bestow the Benefit. How then can Men, at their Pleasure, invent a Sign, and tell us, that hereby this and the other spiritual Blessing is represented, when they cannot fix this Connection, nor give the Blessing?

Thirdly, Whence is it, that the *Sign* of the *Cross* does represent and signify such gracious and great Things? For, *1st*, It cannot be from the Sign it self; it being absurd to imagine this. *2dly*, It is not from the Administrator or Priest making this Sign; for he cannot convey nor give the Grace signified. Nor, *3dly*, Is this from God; for he commands no such Sign, nor hath he made any Promise hereto. And it is certainly but vain Presumption, and a disappointing Hope, that hath not the Word and Promise of God for its Foundation.

Fourthly, Baptism it self, as an Ordinance of God, is sufficient to answer all these Purposes for which

which this Sign of the Cross is invented ; particularly, that the Person baptised may be solemnly and inviolably devoted to the Lord. And, if it is, why will Men add another Sign to the very same Purpose, and to be used in the Action of Administration. But if any presume to say *it* is not sufficient (which no Protestant will assert) then they must accuse a divine Ordinance of Imperfection ; and maintain, that the Institutions of God may be bettered and perfected by the Inventions or Additions of Men. It is true, that one of no mean Note (2) tells us, *That the Sign of the Cross is used in Baptism, the more effectually to declare the Intention of the Sacrament, and that it seems necessary, because of the Grossness of the Vulgar ; and is of Use to procure Respect unto that Institution whereunto it is annexed.* But, were not the Vulgar equally gross when our Lord appointed this Ordinance, with what they have been ever since ? Yea, were they not more used with Symbolical Rites ? And, was not he infinitely more concerned and careful to appoint such Signs as might sufficiently declare the Intent and Design of this Ordinance than Men can be ? And yet this never came into his Mind. Besides, does not Baptism, as being the Institution of the Great God, and calculated for such high Purposes as he hath appointed it, challenge from all his reasonable Creatures the greatest Respect and deepest Reverence ? And if these prevail not, the Inventions of Men never will.

Fifthly, To all that hath been said, I might add, That whereas in the Primitive Times, *Professors of Christianity* signed themselves with the *Sign of the Cross*, to distinguish themselves from *Pagans*, who scorned it, with every Thing relative to it ; so now we should forbear so doing, to distinguish our selves from *idolatrous Papists* ;
 who

(2) See Dr. *Towerson* on Baptism, Pag. 71, 72, 77.

who superstitiously adore it (3). And indeed it is in no small Measure hardning to *Papists*, when they observe us *Protestants* not only retaining, but so tenaciously pleading for this; as it cannot but stumble and grieve our Brethren who see no Cause for observing it. And *Finally*, The Use of *this* being imposed as that without which *Baptism* is not and cannot be obtained, tho' the Persons to be baptised have all that is necessary to make them the Disciples of Christ, is a manifest Encroachment upon the Kingly Power of our Saviour, in making new Terms of Communion which he never ordained; and turning the Keys of the Kingdom upon them whom he has commanded to be received into it.

As to the pretended Antiquity of this, we may consider what is above said of *Exorcism*, and baptising with *Oil*, *Salt*, and *Spittle*. And as to Significancy, a very ordinary Measure of Quickness, Fancy and Invention, will make those to say and signify as many spiritual Things as that of the Cross can do. Nor are there some wanting, who will tell them, That it is not so ancient as is alledged; many of these Quotations that are brought from the Fathers making no Mention of it in the Administration of Baptism (4).

A Reflection upon this.

All the Reflection I shall make upon what hath been now said, is to lament the Vanity and Pride of the Sons of Men. Their Vanity in inventing significant Ceremonies in the Things of God; and their Pride, in adhering to and defending them: What great Harm have these done in all Ages? How much precious Time have they consumed, that might have been spent to far better Purposes? What Discords and Contentions have they occasioned? What unchristian and unaccountable Persecutions have they raised? And, what

(3) See *Calamy's History*, *ut supra*, Page 218. (4) See Dr. *Pierce's Vindication of Dissenters*. from Page 437.

what great Hindrances have they been to the promoting the Doctrine, and advancing the Practice of our Holy Religion? May all the Churches of Christ seriously consider this, and watch against being *wise above what is written.*

VI. *Of naming the Person baptised.*

Of what Use this may be in civil Cases, especially when the Baptism of this and the other Person is publickly registred, is not the proper Subject of this *Essay.* And a very few Thoughts may suffice to explain all that is proper to be said on this Head.

First, Then we may know, That *naming* or *giving Names* to our Children at Baptism, or publishing the same at that Season, is not at all necessary to the Administration of this Ordinance: It being neither a necessary Adjunct thereto, nor Circumstance thereof, Baptism being compleat, rightly gone about, and valid, tho' the Person baptised is not at all named.

I. It is not necessary.

Secondly, Nor is it pretended, That this hath any mystical or spiritual Signification: Tho' indeed, the Custom that is crept in amongst us of keeping the Name of the Child a Secret until the Time of his Baptism, and then whispering it in the Minister's Ear, would almost tempt one, who is not more considering and judicious than some others, to think, that Parents had some fond Conceit, Mystery or Superstition under it.

II. Hath no Mystical Signification.

Thirdly, It is no Part of the Design and End of Baptism, That Children may thereby have Names given unto them; as alas! too many, notwithstanding of the clear Light of the Gospel, grossly and ignorantly think. How common is it to observe, that when some desire Baptism to their Child, they tell the Minister, they *will* have a Name to him, as if that was all. And, with

III. It is not the Design of Baptism.

Submission, it may be proposed, That as Ministers are, by teaching, to endeavour the convincing of People of this too common Error, so sometimes by their Practice, in forbearing to make mention of the Child's Name, they may bring them into another *Way of thinking*.

IV. It is ordinary. *Fourthly*, It would seem very likely from *Luke i. 59*. That it was ordinary with the *Jewish* Parents to give Names to their Children at Circumcision; tho', how old this was with them, and how ancient this Custom is among Christians, when their Children are baptised, I cannot tell: Yet nothing is more ordinary in all the Churches of Christ.

V. Expedient. *Fifthly*, Naming the Person baptised (except when Edification in some Cases and at some Times may require the Forbearance of it) wants not its Expedience: For, as hereby the Congregation comes to know who is the Person that is baptised, and now publickly or declaratively received into the Society of Christian Professors, so from this the Person baptised may take Occasion, at every Reflection upon his Name, seriously to remember his *Baptism*, and call to Mind God's great and singular Mercies to him, with his own Obligation to be wholly, only, and continually God's: And may be improv'd as an Argument to convince baptised Persons of their Perfidy, should they at any Time become Apostates; excite them to their Duty, when they are negligent or slow; and determine the Controversy, should any such be, if this and the other Person was baptised. This shows the Expediency of Registering the Baptism of particular Persons; with their distinguishing Designations.

VI. Names that are vain, &c. not to be given them. *Sixthly* or As it is not the Minister, but Parents, who give Names to their Children, and tho' this or that Name be, in it self, very indifferent, seeing it contributes nothing to our Happiness here,

here; or our Salvation hereafter; yet Christian Prudence should direct Christian Parents to give such Names to their Children as are not vain and offensive, prophane and impure; or such by which the Idols of the Heathens were called: Seeing the very Names of such are what should not be so far honoured, but rather forgotten by us Christians.

VII. *Of taking Engagements of Parents, or Sureties, at the Administration of Baptism, for the Christian Education of the Infant or Child to be then baptised.*

Having already said somewhat of the Duties of Christian Parents toward their Children; what I design here shall be comprehended in the following Propositions.

First, That in the Title of this Article, it is
Infants or Children, for whose Christian Education Engagements are taken of others: For, as
to Persons come to Years of Discretion, before Baptism is administred unto them, there is no Doubt but they are personally to profess their Faith in Christ, and, for themselves, to engage unto Obedience and Subjection to him in all Things, *Acts viii. 37.* Not only declaring their Belief of the Gospel Doctrine, contained in the Scriptures; and their Faith in the *Lord Jesus Christ* for all their Salvation; but also resolving and promising, in the Strength of the Lord; to walk as becomes the Children of God, the Members of Christ, and the Expectants of Glory. Hence, in the Primitive Times, Questions as to these Things were put to Persons who were to be baptised; and suitable Answers made thereunto; such as, *Dost thou believe in Jesus Christ the Son of God? Ans. I do believe. Dost thou renounce the Devil, the World, and the Flesh?*

I. This respects Infants.

Ans. I do renounce. Which Questions, some observe (5), were sometimes more, and sometimes fewer, and larger and shorter, even as their Symbols and Creeds had their Variety and Alterations. But whether the Apostle Peter had an Eye to any such Custom, while in his first *Epistle*, Chap. iii. Verse 21. he says of *Baptism*, as saving us, *That it is not the putting away of the Filth of the Flesh, but the Answer of a good Conscience towards God*, I shall not determine. It is plain, That the Apostle there shews, That it is not the external Administration or outward Profession that will save, but when Conscience sincerely speaks, as the Tongue or outward Behaviour expresses. Yet, hence it will not follow, That he points at the above-named Custom.

Engage-
ments not
essential to
Baptism.

Secondly, That taking Engagements either of Parents or Sureties, when Children are to be baptised, is no Part of the Administration of this Ordinance, tho' commonly annexed thereto. Nor can it be said to be so essential and absolutely necessary to this, as if without it there can be no Dispensation of this Sacrament: For, if there is a fit Subject of Baptism, I mean, an Infant of such as is a Member of the Visible Church, and Baptism administered by a true or lawful Minister, and according as God, in his *Word*, hath appointed it, the Action of Administration is to all Intents and Purposes valid, tho' no such Engagement be. This I mention, that we may not confound the Essentials of the Administration with these Engagements; and to prevent groundless Jealousies (should ever such a Case happen, where there were none to engage) as if for Want of this they were not truly baptised.

Thirdly,

(5) See *Clarkson* on Liturgies, Page 105. Enquiry into the Constitution of the Primitive Church, Part II. Page 54, to 66.

Thirdly, That there are special and indispensable Obligations lying upon Parents to see to the Christian Education of their Infants, is a plain and indisputable Truth; yea, such Obligations, as that no Ignorance, Carelessness, yea, nor Irreligion or Prophaness of Parents can absolve them from. The Unrighteousness of Men can never make the positive and peremptory Law of God of none Effect: The near Relation of Parents to their Children; the natural Dependency their Children have on them; the great Interest and Concern Parents have in them, with the repeated Commands of the Sovereign Lord, do all lay the most inviolable Ties upon Parents, ever to pursue after their Infants greatest Good; which can be no other, than to have them blessed here, and happy through all Eternity: And, for these Ends, *to have them brought up in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord.*

III. Parents are obliged to educate their Children.

Fourthly, Seeing Parents are thus obliged to educate their Children, there needs be no Dispute, but that when they are bringing or presenting their Infants to Baptism; it is then a very proper Season, That they, in an explicate and solemn Manner, acknowledge these Obligations, engage and promise to perform them accordingly: For, it is then, that they are offering up their Children to the Lord, that they may have the initiating Seal of his Covenant administered to them; and so be openly, wholly, and for ever devoted to his Service. It is also by Virtue of the Parent's being reckoned in Covenant with God, that the Child is reputed so, and therefore has a Right to the Seal of it. What then can be more reasonable and just, than that such Parents do come under solemn and publick Engagements, That his Care shall be to have his Child know the Covenant of his God, understand the Nature, Ends and Designs of Baptism, as a Seal of it;

IV. Baptism a proper Season for this.

and be brought up in Acquaintance with religious Duties, suitable to their baptismal Privileges and Dedication.

V. Engaged to particular Truths.

Fifthly, Whereas there can be no walking answerably to Baptismal Engagements, unless there is a Knowledge of the Doctrine of the Gospel, of Sacraments, of Baptism in particular, and of these Duties that God requires of his covenanted People; and seeing Children cannot know these, unless they are instructed: It therefore, by just and natural Consequence, follows, That Parents, or whoever are *Sureties*, be engaged to have these Children taught the Truths and Ways of God, as contained in his *Word*. Yet, in regard that great Pretences have been made of Respect to the Scriptures or Word of God, while in the mean Time such gross Errors have been maintain'd as were everfive of the great and fundamental Truths therein-contained, and destructive to these Christian Duties that necessarily follow thereupon: Therefore it is requisite, That the Church, whose Business it is to preserve the Truths of God pure, and see to the Salvation of all in her Communion, take Care, that they who engage for the Education of the *baptised*, be found in the Faith. But, how shall the Church know this, unless there is propos'd to them some summary Account of the necessary and fundamental Truths of our holy Religion, the Belief whereof the Surety shall profess, and engage to bring up the Child in the Knowledge of? And where there is just Cause to suspect the Orthodoxy of some Sponsors; the Diligence and Prudence of the Church, and especially her Guides, are to be exercised, that such may be brought to a better Mind: And in case of obstinate Continuance in Error, to be denied the Privilege of engaging (seeing the precious Soul of the Infant cannot be trusted

trusted with such) and a Sponsor found in the Faith to be fought for. Hence,

Sixthly, If a Church, whereof the Sponsor or Parent is a Member, have a *Confession of Faith*, containing Principles of Doctrine which they profess and are agreed in, where can that Church more reasonably go, than to it, as a Test of Orthodoxy or Soundness in Faith? And can any Thing be more proper, than that Parents, or rather Sponsors, be *directed* thereto? Providing always, that such a *Confession* be, as to the Matter contained therein, *according to the Word of God*. But if that *Confession* contain other Positions, which upon all Sides are acknowledged not absolutely necessary to the Being of Christianity; in this Case, it will be very hard to oblige the Parent or Sponsor's Professing every particular Article thereof, a necessary Condition of having Baptism administered to the Child: For, as this looks too like *baptising into a Party*; so it is doing what in them lies, to unchurch all others who in these lesser Matters differ from them. Hence, the Asperision in a certain Pamphlet against our Church, as if we Presbyterians would not baptise the Child of any but of those who engage to every individual Article of our *Confession* (6), is easily wiped of; by telling them, and the *World* with them, That we have no such *Canon, Statute, nor Act of Assembly* in our Church. Yet,

Seventhly, If any Parent or Sponsor willingly offer, or, of Choice, yield to it, or desire that he may give this Testimony of his Faith, and of the Principles he believes, so as to come under an Obligation to educate his Child according to such a *Confession* as was last spoke of, where can

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(6) See the Doctrine of Presbyterians anent Baptism, examined, Pag. 16, 17. and the Answer thereto, Part 1st. with the Directory for Baptism annexed to our *Confession of Faith*.

VI. Directed to a *Confession of Faith.*

the Hardship ly of taking him so engaged? Especially when such a *Confession of Faith* contains only such Truths as are more fully expressed in Scripture: In which Case, As it is his Duty to profess and believe these Truths antecedently to such an Engagement; so it is but plain Duty to come under Obligations thereto. For surely, Men not only may, but should promise whatever God commands, and He requires all his People to profess and believe, and to teach their Children after them the *Whole* of his revealed Truths. This is so plain and evident, that I cannot but have a strong Regard to what is laid down in this Position, and long for the Day, when, by the Blessing of God upon the Endeavours of his Ministers, our People may be brought up thereto, so as that they may do it with Understanding and a good Conscience. And I the more earnestly wish this, for because of the *Nonsubscribing* Times we are fallen into, when some Ministers in our neighbouring Church refuse this Test of their Orthodoxy, I mean, *subscribing a Confession of Faith*; and yet either cannot or will not show where the Error or Fault in our *Confession* lies; which they should openly and fairly do, else not blame others, if they think that there is a *Snake in the Grass*. But I must go on.

VIII.
What
Sureties to
be chosen.

Eighthly, As to Sureties who are not Parents, the Church are especially to consider the Willingness of these to come under such Engagements; for, Force is inconsistent with this; as also, their Integrity and Christian Behaviour, if they are such, as in the Judgment of Charity may be presumed, will make Conscience of those solemn and sacred Vows: For, it must be regretted, that many such, as they rashly and inconsiderately engage, so they fearfully, and with Security, forget these Engagements: And therefore, if the Case should so be, that a fit Sponsor does

does not offer himself, then the *Church, Session, or Consistory*, are to seek out and provide one; and let that Sponsor know, who cheerfully undertakes, and faithfully performs those sacred Engagements, that he does an Act of the greatest *Charity*, saves a Soul from Death, honours God, and entails Blessings not only upon himself, but on his Posterity after him. But if it should happen, that Parents are wanting, and no fit Sponsor can be had, which yet is a Case but scarcely to be supposed in a constitute Church, in this Event, As it is not to be doubted but the Infant is to be baptised; for it were Cruelty to make him suffer for what he cannot help, or deny him the Privilege God has allow'd him, for want of that which he cannot provide; so the Church and Congregation to which he belongs have the Care of his Christian Education devolved upon them; and especially the Church Guides and Representatives of that People, are with the greatest Exactness and Care to see to it. This seems to be founded upon the Nature of Society in general, whose Business it is, as a Society, to look after the Safety and Advantage of every Member of it; and more especially, that near Union that is among the Members of *Christ's mystical Body*. The Communion of Saints, Zeal for the Advancement of the Kingdom of *Christ*, and the Glory of the *Great God*, with that hearty and particular Concern that every one is to have for the Salvation of precious and immortal Souls, do all loudly cry and plead for this: And there is scarce one Duty of greater Moment, and more especially incumbent upon *Christians, Rulers or Elders* of a *Christian Church*, than this of the careful and Christian Education of poor Orphans. But

9thly, Because the Ignorance of many Parents is very great, and the Danger of ignorant Swearing is very dreadful; great Care and Tender-
ness

IX. What
to be done
when Pa-
rents are
ignorant.

ness is here required, lest the Name of God be prophaned, and the Iniquity of such Parents increased and aggravated: Therefore, as the Child is to be baptised, and not made to suffer for the Carelessness, Ignorance and Stupidity of Parents; so it is very proper that the Church provide a fit Sponsor for the Christian Education of such Children; and in the mean Time, that the Parent be solemnly inform'd of the indispenfible Obligations that ly upon him; and be taken engag'd to learn the Knowledge of the Gospel of Christ, and to call for the Help of others capable to assist him: And that Ministers have a careful Eye, both over the Parent, and the baptised Infant; and that this be frequently enquired into by Minister and Elders, at their more solemn Meetings, concerning the State of the Congregation, and the Increase of Knowledge and true Religion among them.

Inferences
from this.
I. The
crying Sin
of many.

But now, from what hath been said on this Head, of engaging for the Christian Education of baptised Infants, we may learn, *First*, The great and crying Sin of many Parents and Sponsors, who make so little Conscience of performing their Vows to God. What can these think when they reflect upon their fearful Perjury? How may Conscience accuse and condemn them, when they consider, that they were careful about their Childrens Bodies and worldly Estates, and yet were careless about their never-dying Souls; diligent to have them learned this and the other Science; but negligent as to their being taught the good Ways of the Lord, and the Gospel Method of Salvation, even tho' they had lifted up their Hands to the most High God, that they would teach them these? How may they be filled with melancholy Convictions, when they observe their Children ignorant, obstinate, disobedient, prophane, vicious and profligate, and their Consciences telling them,

them, that the Fault and Cause of this lies at their own Door? Where then will such Parents and Sponsors appear, and how will they one Day answer the Judge of the whole Earth, when they come to be arraigned because of their Perjury and Perfidy, and horrible Cruelty to poor Infants? O! that many would consider this, and be afraid.

Secondly, From this, Parents and other Sureties or Sponsors, would be excited to call up their own Souls to a holy Diligence and Activity, in training up these baptised Infants, for whose Christian Education they have engaged, in the *Knowledge of God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent*; of the Nature of Baptism, of the whole of these great Truths and Duties of our Christian and holy Religion; looking to God, and depending upon him for Success to their Christian Endeavours; using all appointed Means, whereby their young and tender Minds may be brought to a sincere Compliance with the Lord's holy and righteous Ways: For such have sworn to God, and that in the most solemn Manner; and therefore should sincerely and faithfully perform: Thus shall they in all Events have Peace, and at last make their Account with Joy, and not with Grief. And if Parents duly considered the Value of the immortal Souls of their dear Children, the vast Import of Eternity, the near Relation they have to these, and the great Trust they have committed to them, the awful and impartial Account they are one Day to make how they have performed their Duty, with these momentous Consequences that follow upon their faithful or faithless Performance of this most necessary Work, would they think it enough, as alas too many do, to turn them wholly over to a *Governor* to teach and instruct them, as they call him, or some indifferent Person; and some
Times

II. The
Duty of
Parents
and Sure-
ties.

A Practical Essay on

Times to shut them up in their Closet to talk with them about their worldly Settlements, but never discourse them about the Truths and Things of God, or Salvation of their Souls? Would they not rather, upon these Considerations, be excited to act a more careful and conscientious Part, in the performing of their Vows, and the Christian Education of their Children; and never to think, that when their Children are come to Age, and they, by the Blessing of God upon their Endeavours, have obtained their Consent to the Proposal of the Gospel; that then they are freed from any further Obligation as to them, but reckon, that their Children are to be the Objects of their Christian Care and Circumspection all the Days of their Lives? It is thus, O Christian Parents and Sponsors, that you become a signal Blessing to poor Infants, and they a special Comfort to you, when you observe them knowing, and walking in the good Ways of the Lord; and as while you are here upon Earth, God is pleased with you, and commends you in so doing, as he did *Abraham*, *Gen. xviii. 19.* So what great Quiet and Peace of Conscience shall you have at a dying Hour, and with what holy Confidence may you leave them on God's rich Grace, and sure *Word of Promise*, in the pleasant Hope, That in a few Days you and they shall meet together in Heaven, where *you shall be ever with the Lord?*

VIII. *Of private Baptism.*

That what I have to offer upon this Head, may be delivered with as much Distinctness as I am capable of, I shall, as a Foundation thereto, give the Words of our *General Assembly 1690, Act 10.* so far as it relates to the Matter now before us. In the Act now cited, after it is narrated, *That the Parties receiving Sacraments,*
are

are solemnly devoted to God, before Angels and Men; are solemnly received as Members of the Church, and do entertain Communion with her; and that by allowing the private Use of them in pretended Cases of Necessity, the superstitious Opinion is nourished, That they are necessary to Salvation, not only as commanded Duties, but as Means without which Salvation cannot be attained. Then follows, as to Baptism, these Words, *Therefore the Assembly hereby discharge the Administration of Baptism in private; that is, in any Place, or at any Time, when the Congregation is not orderly called together, to wait on the dispensing of the Word: And appoints, that this be carefully observed, when and wherever the Lord giveth his People Peace, Liberty and Opportunity for their publick Assemblies.* And now I may observe,

First, That as to those People who maintain the absolute Necessity of Baptism, and that Infants who die unbaptised are not in a salvable Condition, according to covenanted Terms, but must be left to uncovenanted Mercy. These Men must for ever give up all Administration of this Ordinance in Publick, and plead for the constant Use of it in Private, or in that very Place, and at that very Time when the Child is brought forth; because, to use their own Words, there is a *Periculum in Mora*, a great, yea a very great Danger in delaying it; seeing the Infant may die very soon after he is born, or in bringing him to Church. when no less than Salvation is at Stake, should any Circumstance or Church Constitution stand in the Way of that, which, according to them, secures it. But the Church of Scotland, and all other Protestant Churches with her, knows no such Doctrine, as *the absolute Necessity of Baptism*; and therefore,

I. Those who maintain its absolute Necessity, must also be for private Administration of it.

does

does not allow the rash and disorderly Administration thereof.

What
private
Baptism,
what not.

Secondly, We may, from the Act mentioned, observe, what it is, that, in the Judgment of this Church, is to be reckoned *private Baptism*; and and this is, when it is administered in any Place, or at any Time, when the Congregation is not orderly called to wait upon the dispensing of the *Word*: So that they do not limit the orderly Administration of this Ordinance to the publick Place where the Congregation commonly meet for publick Worship; but if the Congregation are orderly called together to wait on the dispensing of the *Word*, whether this is by *Preaching* or *Catechising*, (for by the last as well as the first is the *Word dispensed*) then may it be gone about, and is not to be accounted *private*, in whatever Place this is.

Reasons
for publick, and
against
private
Baptism.

Thirdly, Administring Baptism when and where the *Word* is dispensed is most decent, most orderly, yea just, and highly reasonable: And that, if we consider, *First*, This Ordinance, in its Nature, Ends and Uses; for hereby the Person is, in the most solemn Manner, devoted to God, before Angels and Men; received and declared a Member of the Visible Church; to have Communion with her in all her great and valuable Privileges: Should it not therefore be done in the Presence of the Church, that they may behold the regular Administration of a new Member, the Engagements made to the Laws of their Christian Society, and that all may consent to, and rejoice in the Addition that is made to their Number: And in regard, that Sacraments are Seals of these Blessings contain'd in the *Word*, for this Cause it is very proper, that it be annexed to the dispensing of the *Word*. *2dly*, Because thus to baptise when the Congregation is met together, is most for Edification, and the Advantage

tage of all concerned. It is most for the Advantage of the Persons baptised, because, in this Case, they have the joint Prayers of the whole Congregation, who with one Heart and Voice call upon the Name of the Lord, and pray to him, That he may bless his own Ordinance to the baptised, and give Grace to walk answerably to such high Privileges and solemn Obligations; and, when it is so, surely we have the greater Hope of a gracious Return. It is, in the next Place, of special Advantage to the Parent or Party engaging for the Christian Education of the Child; for besides, that these have the united Prayers of the Congregation for them, hereby also their Vow becomes more solemn, being more publick, and so cannot but make the deeper Impression upon a considering Mind: And hereby he is furnished with a very strong Argument calling for the exact Performance of his Vow, when he reflects, how that publickly before Angels and Men, he lifted up his Hand to the most High God. And then it is of particular Use to the Congregation; for now all come to be put in Mind of God's Mercies and Goodness to them, of the early and great Obligations that ly upon them to believe in the *Lord Jesus Christ*, and walk worthy of him; Parents also are remembered of the Obligations they came under, when they presented their Infants to Baptism; and so, all have the Means of being convinced of their Neglects, and excited to a more exact and diligent Performance of their several Duties. But again, *sdly*, Many Inconveniencies are hereby prevented, which may fall out in that of private Baptism; such as, the corrupt Administration of this sacred Institution, being performed by Persons who want Commission, or some essential Defect in the Performance; besides its being gone about in a very superficial and overly Manner, yea in

an erroneous and irreligious Way : All which, as the Church is specially obliged to use all Means to prevent, so they may take Place in private Baptism, but cannot do so in Publick, where a Church is otherwise pure. And then 4thly, I might add, That the constant Doctrine of the most of *Protestant Divines* and *Protestant Churches* is against the private Administration of *Sacraments*; which may be easily proven.

Christian
Charity
discovered
in the As-
sembly
Act.

Fourthly, The above-named Act discovers as great a Measure of Christian Charity and Condescension, as can reasonably or justly be desired : For besides, that it plainly excepts the Cases of *Persecution*, *Confinement*, and *Want of Opportunity*, so hereby a Remedy is provided against these Things, that some Men have been, and yet are ready to complain of, *viz.* What say they shall become of Infants, who, because of their Distance from the Place where the Congregation meets, a rigorous and severe Season, Sickness, and several other remarkable Inconveniencies, cannot be brought where the *Word* is dispensed, and the Congregation meets? The Remedy is, Let the *Congregation* be orderly called to, and the *Word* dispensed in any other Place where such Inconveniencies may be prevented, and so let the *Child* be decently and orderly baptised. Here, I am sure, there is no Manner of Hardship, unless it is, that some Men are so irreligiously great, as to disdain to have a *Church* in their House, and frown upon God's People who may come there to attend upon his *Word* and *Sacrament*. But withal we are here to observe, that tho' this seems to be a tacit Allowance, yet it is not to be drawn into Practice, where no such Inconveniency can be pretended. And of this more afterwards.

Private
Baptism
not in it-
self sinful.

Fifthly, We may further notice, That our *Church* does not, and never did assert, That private Baptism was in itself sinful, nor that all such

Admi-

Administrations are null and void: No, such a great and reverend Assembly knew better Things, and that from the Scripture Instances of the Baptism of the *Eunuch*, *Acts* viii. 3. and of the *Faylor's Family*, *Acts* xvi. 33. Nor is this the Question, but, whether Baptism in publick be more decent, orderly, and for Edification, and preventing of many Inconveniencies, than that of Private. The former they could not but assert, and I have already offer'd some Reasons for it; and more remain.

Sixthly, Whereas no human Order, Constitution or Law, can provide against all Inconveniencies, nor be such as may take Place in all Cases; nor is it needful it should: Therefore some say (1), That in case of an Infant *dying*, and the Parent *desiring* Baptism to this his Child, not from any Opinion of the absolute Necessity of it, nor yet from any *Contempt* of the Order of the Church, but from a *Reverence* to the *Divine Institution*, Respect to the divine Command, and Regard to these Blessings, whereof Baptism is a Sign and Seal, *Baptism being a divine Institution, and Baptising a commanded Duty; but the Circumstance of Time and Place determinable by the Church, it may seem hard, that a Duty enjoined by divine Authority should be omitted and neglected, when it may be performed; and that only because a Circumstance (however otherwise expedient, and to be observed for very good Reasons) through invincible Necessity cannot be observed.* Yet here it is to be carefully noticed, that even in this Case, for ordinary, there may be so much Time as that a competent Congregation may be called together, and the *Word* dispensed. But tho' this should not be found practicable, yet the Minister is carefully to watch over

What is Duty in Case of a dying Infant.

P. his

(1) See the Doctrine and Practice of the Church of Scotland vindicated, Part II. pag. 13, 14.

his own Spirit, and the Parent over his, that this awful Ordinance may not be gone about with too much Haste and unbecoming Hurry, as it may be justly feared the Manner of some is. And then, seeing the Answer now returned goes upon some Suppositions, not very common or ordinary, I, with all Submission, think, that the Question may be turned another Way, and that is, tho' a Parent cannot fail to be sorry if his Child should die before Baptism, yet he cannot accuse himself of an unnecessary Delay of this, while he only waited for an Opportunity of owning publicly his own Belief of the Gospel, of devoting his Child solemnly to God, and having him orderly received a Member of *his Church*. Here surely is no Contempt of Christ's Institution, and it is not the Want of Baptism that is damning, but the contemning of it. And if the Parent himself should be sick, and in hazard of Death, and so not in a Capacity to bring his Child to the publick Congregation, yet in this Case he is to devote his Infant to God, in the mean Time recommending to, and obtaining it of some Christian Friend, to have his Child baptised in a regular and orderly Way, and to become engaged for his Christian Education, should God call upon himself.

An Ob-
jection ob-
viated.

Seventhly, and in the last Place, I can foresee but one material Objection, which can be made against what has been now said; and it is, Seeing the Scripture has left us free as to Time and Place of Baptism, why then should Men tye us down? And seeing, in Scripture we have Instances of this being done in Private, as well as in more publick Assemblies, why should Men limit us? To this I presume it may be answered, That if Men, in an arbitrary and magisterial Way, appointed this, and that too as a necessary Term of Communion with *that Church*, here

here indeed should be very just Ground of Complaint; but while they do this upon very good Reasons, and for the Edification and Advantage of all concerned, as Parents, Infants, or others, laying no Strefs upon this, as if it had any spiritual Signification, and not rigidly imposing this, as that without which they refuse Communion with others; in this Case there is no Ground of Clamour. But 2dly, How will some Men take it, if they are told, That by *solemn Oath*, or *National Covenant*, whereby the Articles of *Perth* Assembly are abjured, they have limited and tied down themselves; and tho' an Answer of this Kind may be scornfully neglected, yet let all know, that Oaths are most solemn Pieces of Worship; That the perpetual Obligation of these upon Posterity we shall never be able to free our selves from; Perjury is dreadful, and God will not be mocked.

And now from what hath been said, *First* of all, Ministers of the Gospel may take Warning, how they open a Door to the Vanity and Pride of those they are concerned in; for, there are no Orders of a *Church*, however reasonable and just these be, that in Process of Time come to be more grossly and universally abused, than those which at first are dispensed with, for the State and Character of Persons concerned in them. This was first granted as a Privilege to *Kings Sons*, as appears by the Decretals of the *Council of Cologne*, and these of *Clement V.* where it is ordained, *That none but they should be baptised at home.* Afterward, we may suppose, it came to be allowed to Noblemen, and from them to other rich Men; and now, as every Body who affects the Name and State of Gentility, they think themselves hardly dealt with, if they be accounted in this Matter inferior to such and such of their Neighbours: And it may be, such Liberty

Inferences
from this.
Here Warning
to
Ministers,

berty hath of late been granted this Way, that we cannot but justly blush and condemn ourselves, when we consider, how those who occupied our Places before the Year 1690, were more strict and exact; and when we consider, that if Strangers were to come to some Places of our Land, (I wish I could not say the most publick) and observed who they are in our Congregations that only present their Children to Baptism, they could scarce fail to conclude, that only the Children of the Poorest were baptised; or else, that the Great and Rich were ashamed publickly to own themselves *Christians*. And here I only add, That if any will give himself the Trouble of reading the learned Mr. *Wall's* History of Baptism, especially the second Part, they cannot escape to notice, That tho' *Augustine* and others went high upon the positive Necessity of it, yet never would they allow Baptism in private Houses, except in Cases very extraordinary; wisely foreseeing, That if once a Breach was made, few could tell what Confusion it would issue in. And it may be feared, that so far has this most unwarrantable Practice spread it self, that nothing less than some solemn and publick Resolve will be a sufficient Remedy. And this may be the more expedient, if we observe how some on the other Side, are spreading the Doctrine of the absolute Necessity of Baptism in order to Salvation.

II. Ministers are frequently to be pitied.

Secondly, How very much are Ministers to be pitied, for they can scarce be justified; if we observe on the one Hand, their sincere and strong Inclination to walk exactly by the Laws of our *Church*; yet on the other Hand, how frequently do they meet with proud and humourfome People? Who, if their Children are not baptised in their own Houses, immediately a Discord with the Minister happens, his Quiet in the Congregation

gregation is broken, he is roundly told, That if he will not, they know who will. And then, if the Lady in Childbed should be as high upon this Point as the Husband, and any Inconveniency befall her, the Cry is every where made against the poor Minister, he must then consider, that there are Instances of this in Scripture, where Persons have been baptised in private; he looks over all the Inconveniencies that may follow upon a Refusal, and is obliged to comply, tho' I fear it is sometimes done with no good Grace, and many Times with a Struggle in his own Mind. O! what great Need have the House of *Levi*, as well as the Inhabitants of *Jerusalem*, of God's Pity and Pardon; and may he, for *Christ's* Sake, according to the Multitude of his Mercies, grant both to us.

Thirdly, May I not, from what has been said, humbly and yet plainly address my self to all Ranks, High and Low, in this *National Church*, and say, *My Brethren, is it right that the Faith of our Lord Jesus Christ should be had with Respect of Persons?* Is there either High or Low, Rich or Poor, but *all one in Christ Jesus?* Are Gospel Mercies bestow'd according to worldly Conditions? Will not all stand upon equal Ground before the Bar of *Christ?* Why then in the Matters of his Worship and Service will you desire to be lifted above others? Are we, *my dear and Christian Friends*, fallen into such Dregs of Time, that we are ashamed to make an open Profession of *Christianity?* Publickly to acknowledge that we and our Seed are God's, and will serve him? Or, do we think it not sufficiently great and fashionable, to acknowledge the Congregation of God's People as Members of the same Body, and so to make an open Profession of our Communion with them before the World? Let us fear that *Word*, lest it take

III. An
Address
to People.

Place as to us, *Mark* viii. 38. and that we be found Despisers of the *Church of God*, and the Authority of those, whom God, in his Goodness, has set over us. Again, what reasonable or just Pretence can these of you have, who dwell in Towns and larger Cities? There you have frequent Occasion of the publick and orderly Administration of Baptism to your Children; no Season needs hinder you from carrying them to the publick Congregation, and your Christian Friends are at Hand: So that of all People in the World, you are certainly most inexcuseable and Blame-worthy. But that I may not insist, let me in the last Place entreat you to consider, that you are to *learn of Christ, who is meek and lowly*. He, in the Days of his Flesh, tho' the *Prince of the Kings of the Earth*, as he will for ever continue to be, yet, *Mark* i. 9. he came a very considerable Way, from *Nazareth of Galilee*, to be baptised of *John* in *Jordan*; he sought no Pre-eminence above others, nor disdained, in this sacred Ordinance, to associate himself with the Vulgar, and to be baptised in the same Place, in the same Manner, and as publickly as they were. And shall we pretend to be higher than He.

IX. *With what Frame and Temper of Mind Baptism is to be gone about.*

It is certain, that every religious Duty requires a Frame suitable to the Nature of it: and Baptism being so solemn, and of so great Moment and Import, this surely calls for a Temper of Soul bearing some Proportion thereunto. And among many Things that might be offered on this Head, I name these that follow.

I. With Faith. *First*, This is to be done *in Faith*, being fully perswaded, that this is an Ordinance of God,
Rom.

Rom. xiv. 23. and Ministers, Parents, Beholders, and the baptised himself, (if come to Age) are to go about this with an Eye to God, Dependance on God, and with an holy and humble Trust in him; that he may graciously concur herewith, and give his Blessing hereto, *1 Cor. iii. 6, 7.* And hereunto they have the greatest Encouragement, considering God's own gracious and faithful Promise, *Matth. xxviii. 19.* And the Nature of the Ordinance, which is a Sign and Seal of all *the Sure Mercies of David.*

Secondly, It is to be gone about with an holy reverential Fear and Aw of God upon our own Souls, and with that deep Concern that the Import of the Duty requires; for, the Ordinance is of God, it is appointed for the highest Ends, and respects the everlasting Happiness of immortal Souls. The Eye of God is then, in a special Manner, upon us, and with him we have to do; and in all the Meetings of his People and Services they perform, great Fear is always due to so great a God, *Psal. lxxxix. 7. Heb. xii. 28.* Nor can any Thing be more unbecoming than Levity, Indifferency, Confusion and Rashness of Mind in this Affair. When the Sacrament of the *Lord's Supper* is administered, Ministers treat it with the greatest Reverence, and justly endeavour to impress People with an holy Aw and Dread, and here we shall behold a Solemnity (as it were) appearing in the Countenances of all; why then should we be so careless and overly in this other Sign of the *Blood of our Redeemer*? Is this, O *Christians!* to be managed only as something by the by? Is it what does not concern us, and wherein we are not to be equally cautious as in that of the *Supper*? Is the Administration of it only perfunctorious, and a mere Complement? Are we to spend no grave and serious Thoughts before we approach it? Are

II. With Fear.

we not to tremble, when in the Management of it? And are we only to be employ'd in feasting and entertaining our Friends when it is over, without one Word of that awful Solemnity we have been about? Is the Administration of it to be hurried over? Shall we frown and reckon it ungentle if it is otherwise? And have we, in all this, nothing to do with God, nothing to receive from God, and nothing to speak for God? May the Lord pity us, and for *Christ's* Sake pardon our fearless Approaches of this Kind.

III. With
Thankful-
ness.

Thirdly, It is to be done with *Thankfulness*, with the most grateful and Soul-engaging Sense of God's great, unsearchable, and undeserved Grace to us poor Sinners, in the highest Praises to him for *Christ* the Saviour; for his Love, his Mercy, his Pity, and that Goodwill which he shews to us in *Christ*; for his well ordered Covenant of Grace, and the Extent of it, not only to professing Believers themselves, but also to their Seed: And then, how should our Hearts be filled with the most dutiful Acknowledgments of his Condescension to our Infirmity, that he hath appointed this Ordinance, whereby all these Blessings are made over and sealed to us, *Eph. i. 3.* Here we may justly wonder, and wondering break forth into the highest Notes of Thank-giving.

IV. With
Joy.

Fourthly, It is to be managed with *Chearfulness, Joy, and Gladness of Heart*. Ministers should administer it with a *willing Mind*, *1 Pet. v. 2.* For, if the Master is so rich in his Grace, as to appoint an Ordinance, whereby the Blessings of his well order'd Covenant, and the Fruits of his Purchase, are represented, applied and sealed to us Sinners; how cheerful should the Servant be in the Ministration of it. Parents should be glad when they think they are going up to the House of the Lord, there to present

present their Infants to him, now upon a Throne of Grace, there to have saving Blessings sealed to them, and there to give an open Testimony of their Christian Faith, and that they and their Seed are Gods : For scarce had they ever a more gladdening Occasion than this. And, how should the Christian Members of the Congregation be filled with an holy and humble Joy, when they reflect on God's Goodness to themselves in their Infancy ; as also to their Seed, contemplating the Riches of his Grace to those now to be baptised, and beholding this Addition now made to the visible Body of Christ. And was there a due Sense of the great *Worth* of humane and immortal Souls, and an holy and earnest prying into the Nature, Usefulness and Excellency of this Ordinance, with an heavenly and elevated Temper of Mind, surely we could not but take the greatest Pleasure imaginable in this Ordinance ?

Fifthly, It is to be gone about with *Sincerity of Intention*. Not that the Intention of the Minister is necessary to the *Being* of the Sacrament ; for this flows from, and intirely depends upon divine Appointment : But seeing the Design of this Ordinance is, that covenanted Blessings may be sealed, and the Person baptised, solemnly devoted to God, surely the Administrators should sincerely eye this, and Parents or other Sponsors should have it singly in their View, *2 Cor. ii. 17.* for nothing can be more agreeable, than our acting up to the Design of this Institution ; nor is there any Thing more unsuitable, than doing, and we know not for what End, or performing religious Duties, when yet we either understand or reflect not, to what Purpose. 'Tis now, that Parents would consider wherefore it is they are to bring their Infants to Baptism ; and would have the great Things of this Ordinance in their Eye and View, when they do bring them ;

V. With
Sincerity
of Intention.

as it is to be hoped Ministers have, when they administer it to them.

VI. With
Compo-
sure of
Mind, and
Distinct-
ness of
Thought.

Sixthly, This is to be managed with Composure of Mind, and Distinctness of Thought. Here the Minister is to know his Work, to order his *Words*, to be exact in his Actions, and all these attended with outward Gravity, inward Concern and Spirituality, *Titus* ii. 7. Beholders are to have their Minds composed, and their Behaviour becoming the Greatness of the Administration: Now they should reflect on their not walking up to their Privilege of Baptism; renew their Acceptance of the Gospel Offer, and their Engagement to be the Lord's. And we in the Ministry should take Occasion, at the Administration of this Ordinance, in the most lively Manner, to press upon our Hearers their several Neglects and Omissions; their present Duties and Obligations; with their Privileges and Encouragements: It is thus, or in so doing, that Administrations of this Kind, by the Blessing of God, should become more universally edifying. But then, as every Thing in this Ordinance challenges this Composure of Mind, and that from all Hands, so in a particular Manner from *Parents*, or others that do present Infants and engage for them: How serious and grave should they be in professing their Faith, presenting their Child, and taking upon them Christian and suitable Engagements: These Things are of the greatest Moment, and require the outmost Attention; and nothing can be more disagreeable than that Confusion, Thoughtlessness, Vanity and Lightness of Mind, in any Degree, should take Place when we are so engaged.

VII. In
an holy
Manner.

Seventhly and *Lastly*, This is to be gone about in a holy Manner. I am far from the Opinion, That the Validity of the Administration depends upon the Holiness of the Administrator:

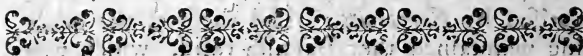
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But this is certain, That seeing the Author, Nature, Ends and Uses of this Ordinance are all pure and holy, the Administrator should not be prophane, nor the Administration unholy, *Exod. xxix. 37. Psal. xciii. 5. Isa. lii. 11.* but as his Office is holy, so should his Frame be, and his Ministring before the Lord. And how should Parents, when they bring their Children to this, *put away Iniquity far from their Dwellings,* and not only cleanse their Hands, but their Hearts, when now they are making so near an Approach to God's Altar. Is it becoming Christianity, that they should be wholly employed in entertaining their Friends, or about their worldly Affairs, when they are to have Communion in such a solemn Manner with the Great and Infinitely Holy God: For, *Holiness not only becometh his House,* but his Household and Servants, *for evermore.*

X. *Of Rebaptizing.*

There was no small Controversy concerning this, in *Cyprian's* Time, when he and those who join'd him were for rebaptizing such as had been baptised by *Hereticks*: And those on the other Side maintained that Baptism valid, which was administred in the Name of the Holy Trinity, *Father, Son and Holy Ghost*: And indeed, if Baptism is duly administred, there can be but one Administration of it, because it is a Sign and Seal of our *Regeneration*; *Titus iii. 5.* and it is only once that we are born again, *1 John iii. 9.* of our Union to Christ, *Gal. iii. 27. Rom. vi. 3, 4. Coloss. i. 12.* But if we are once joined to the Lord, we, for ever, remain in him, *John vii. 37. John x. 28. 1 Pet. i. 5.* Baptism is also that Ordinance wherein we are solemnly admitted into Covenant with God; but this Covenant is everlasting,

lasting, *Isa.* lv. iii. 2 *Sam.* xxiii. 5. *Rom.* viii. 32, 33. We are baptised into the Similitude of the Death and Resurrection of Christ, *Rom.* vi. 3; 4, 5, 9, 10. But Christ died and rose again, once only: And there is neither Command nor Example in Scripture for *rebaptising*. Neither was Circumcision, but once administrated. And as to what some object from *Acts* xix. vi. it has been already considered on the *Question* concerning the Baptism of *John*, and that of *Christ*, whether they were the same or not? But here, we are specially to notice, That it is *Anabaptists* we have to do with, who rebaptise such as were baptised in their Infancy, alledging, That as Infants are not the proper Subjects of Baptism; so this was not performed in a right Manner, seeing it was not by *dipping*: But if it has been already proven, That Infants may and should be baptised, and that Baptism administrated by sprinkling or pouring Water upon the Person is valid and sufficient; then the Foundation of this Practice is removed. And of this, the Reader, must be left to judge.



C H A P. V.

Of the Efficacy of Baptism.

THAT Baptism hath great and precious Effects, and is an Ordinance of God for carrying on the Salvation of Sinners, is not to be doubted: For as Sacraments are not empty Signs, so this not only signifies, but also applies and seals our Interest in Christ, and in God's *well ordered Covenant*; and so it is a Sign and

and Seal of our Regeneration, Union to Christ, Justification unto Life, Title to God as our God, Perseverance in the Way of the Lord, and eternal Happiness in the End, *Mark i. 4. Rom. vi. 3, 4. Rom. iv. 11. Titus iii. 5. 1 Pet. iii. 21.* But what we are here to enquire into, is, How far this Efficacy extends? And, *2dly*, Whence it is?



S E C T. I.

Of the Extent of the Efficacy of Baptism.

AS to this, there are two Things that natively offer themselves to our Consideration; - *1st*, The Extent of this, as to those who are baptised, if it is to *all*, or to some only? And, *2dly*, How far the Blessings signified and sealed, are applied to, and actually bestowed upon those, at the Time of Administration, to whom it is really and savingly efficacious; and so, what the Efficacy of this Ordinance is?

For the *First* of these, the Question is not, If all that are baptised have peculiar Benefits by Baptism? For, doubtless, they are admitted publicly, and received into the visible Church; so that they come to have a Title to these outward Privileges that are peculiar to the visible Members thereof. They are hereby *externally* received into Covenant with God; so that they are hereby distinguished from the rest of the World, and cannot be denied the other Seal of the Covenant, *viz.* the *Lord's Supper*, if so be, they have such other external Qualifications as Scripture requires. By this also they are dedicated to God, and are, by Baptism, under solemn Obli-

The Extent of the Efficacy of Baptism.

To all the baptised, what.

Obl-

Obligations to all the Duties of a covenanted People : And whatever other Benefits or Blessings are common to the whole visible Church, these they are Sharers of, *Rom. ix. 4. Gen. xvii. 10.* All which Advantages are great, and belong to every one duly baptised. But the Question is, concerning internal, saving and spiritual Blessings, if these are sealed to all and every one that is baptised? And here it is not to be expected, That I should recount the many different Opinions of Protestant Writers on this Head (2). It will be sufficient to name some few, which yet I would have inclined intirely to have omitted, was it not for the Sake of the more inquisitive and curious Reader, who would be ready to accuse this imperfect Performance of greater Imperfection, should I wholly omit it. Here then, besides Papists, some go a very great Length (3), one says, *That by it, all Infants are saved, if they die before actual Sin:* And with them the Church of England seem to agree (4). A Second tells us (5), *That by it the Consequences of Original Sin are removed; and, that all the Baptised are made the Members of Christ, the Children of God, and Heirs of Glory, if they do not afterward forfeit these.* A Third (6) says, *That all the Blessings of the Covenant are sealed to those that are baptised; and, If they keep themselves pure, they shall be saved.* A Fourth (7) asserts, *That God hath given his Son to die for*

Different
Opinions.

(2) See *Witzii Miscellaneorum Tom. alter*, Pag. 618, to 623, 653, 654. (3) See *Clusterback* his Explication of the English Liturgy, Pag. 35, 36. (4) See the Rubrick at the End of the Publick Office for Baptism; the Thanksgiving thereafter; and the Office for Confirmation. (5) See *Dr. Hammond's Discourse of Infant Baptism, mihi*, Pag. 233, 235, 301, 302. (6) See *Mr. Samuel Clark* his Essay on Infant Baptism, Pag. 5, 6, 7. (7) See *Dr. Towerson* on Baptism, Pag. 167, 355, 357. And *Mr. Calamy's History of Mr. Baxter's Life*, Pag. 206, to 210.

for all Mankind, and appointed Baptism to convey the Benefit of it; and, That all Infants have Regeneration by Baptism; which, in their Infant Age is sufficient for Salvation; yet, thro' Want of Education to excite it, it may be afterwards smothered. And a Fifth (8) lays it down as a Truth, That baptised Infants, who die in their Infancy, are undoubtedly saved; and, That it cannot be doubted, but that, to these Baptism is an authentick and publick Declaration, That God hath pardoned their Original Sin, and granted them a Right to eternal Life. But our Confession of Faith (9) restricts the Efficacy of Baptism to those to whom Grace belongs; and these only are the Elect and Chosen of God; and so, with the Body of Protestant Divines, we assert and maintain, That it is to the Elect of God only, that Baptism doth apply and seal the saving Benefits of the Obedience and Death of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and all the Blessings of the Covenant of Grace: So that they shall, in God's appointed Time, certainly have the Promises made good to them, and the Blessings of the Covenant bestowed upon them, and so, in the End, be eternally saved. And for confirming and better understanding this, and what may be said of the former Opinions, I offer what follows.

The Truth asserted.

First, That that *effectual Vocation*, which includes Regeneration; and *Justification*, which implies the Imputation of the Righteousness of Christ, Remission of Sin, and so a Right to eternal Life, are of no larger Extent than *Election*, as the Apostle asserts, *Rom. viii. 29, 30*. Hence it necessarily follows, That the *Elect* only are regenerate, justified and saved; and to them alone is Baptism efficacious as to these Ends. It is true indeed,

I. The Elect only are regenerate.

(8) *Pictet. Theol. Christiana*, Part 2. Page 945. (9) Chap. 26. Sect. 6.

indeed, That Baptism is not a Seal of the Decree, but of the Covenant: But then, it is also true, That the Application of special and saving Covenant Blessings, is the Execution of the eternal Purpose. Nor will it be a just Consequence from this, That therefore Ministers should baptise none but the *Elect*; because the Height and Depth of the *Decree of Predestination* forbid our curious Enquiry into the Secrets thereof. *Ministers* know not whether this or that *Infant* is *Elect*; nor is *Election* the Foundation of *Infant Baptism*, but their external visible Title to the Covenant of our God.

II. Regenerate must be saved.

Secondly, All that are regenerate, they have *Communion* with the *Lord Jesus Christ*; they are one Spirit with him; and have his Righteousness imputed to them: And if it is so, then they must certainly be saved, according to *John vi. 37. Rom. viii. 1.* and many other Scriptures. So that, to speak of the *Regeneration* of all Infants, without Distinction, unless we also maintain, That all have *Communion* with *Christ*, and so, That all baptised Infants are saved, whether they die or live, is to speak not only without, but also against Scripture.

III. Regeneration cannot be smothered.

Thirdly, *Regeneration*, being the Fruit of *Christ's Death and Obedience*, which cannot be in vain, but must have their Effect; and being the Gift of God, and Work of his Spirit, is such as must remain and continue: For, *Rom. xi. 29. The Gifts and Calling of God are without Repentance: The Seed of God remains in such,* 1 *John iii. 9. And he that hath begun a good Work in the Souls of his People, will carry it on to the Day of Christ, Philip. i. 6.* Hence therefore, to assert, That *Regeneration*, which is sufficient to *Infant Salvation*, may afterwards be smothered or wholly extinguished, is to deny, contrary to plain Scripture, and the Scheme of
Ortho-

Orthodox Divinity, the *Perseverance of the Saints*. So that they who maintain, That all Infants are by Baptism *regenerate*, must also hold, That they are *saved*, and that, tho' they live and come to Mens Age; and consequently, That none of the Visible Church can perish: Seeing, according to these Men we now reason with, they were by Baptism regenerate. But to assert the Salvation of all, and to maintain, That saving Grace may be lost, are equally antiscritural and unsound.

Fourthly, Pelagians say, That sufficient Grace is given to all Men, if so be they would use it aright. But, according to the Opinion of some already mentioned, the Stress is here laid upon another, even upon Parents, or others, their exciting it by Christian Education: And so, the Weight of Childrens Salvation is laid, not upon the Purpose of God, the Efficacy of the Obedience and Suffering of Christ, and the Unchangeableness of the Covenant of Grace, but upon Parents and others; and it is put into their Power, whether to save or destroy. Who sees not this inconsistent with Scripture, and the infinite Wisdom, Grace and Mercy of the Great God? And, Is it not obvious to daily Observation, that many religious Parents have been at all possible Pains in educating their Children, who, notwithstanding of such Education, have remained wicked, graceless and prophane? Was it Want of due Education that *Jacob* enjoyed, and *Esau* came short of the Blessing, or that God loved the *First*, but hated the *Last*?

Fifthly, It is certain from Scripture, That as to all those for whom Christ died, he not only suffered for some of their Iniquities, but for all of them. And to maintain, That by Baptism *Original Sin* is pardoned, while in the mean Time these very Persons may be damned, be-

IV: Nor
lost for
Want of
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on.

V. Christ
died for
all the Sins
of his Peo-
ple.

cause of *actual Transgressions*; is to assert, That not all, but some Sins only were laid upon *Christ*; that he died for their *Original Sin*, which he knew would be to no Purpose, seeing, notwithstanding of this, their *actual Transgressions* might for ever ruin them; and, that the Effects of *Christ's Death* are divided, one Part applied in the Removal of *Original Sin*, and the other kept back in retaining their *actual Transgressions*. Where is there Scripture for such a *Way* of thinking; nay, how contrary is it to these Places of Holy Writ? *Isa.* liii. 10, 11. *John* vi. 37. *Rom.* viii. 29, 30. 1 *John* i. 7. *Rom.* viii. 1.

VI. A particular Opinion considered,

Sixthly, While I am writing this Essay, a private Christian was pleased to write me his Thoughts as to the Extent of the Efficacy of Baptism; which, if I have not mistaken them, are, First, *The Covenant is entailed upon the Believer's Seed*, *Gen.* xvii. 8. *Acts* ii. 39. 2dly, *The Promises consequently are entailed also*, *Deut.* xxx. 6. *Isa.* xliv. 3, 4. 3dly, *Nothing but presumptuous Sin, and this continued in till Death, can nullify the Bond of that Covenant*, *Psal.* xviii. 21. *Jer.* iii. 14. *but of this Children are not capable.* 4thly, *As to the Adult there is a Limitation of the Entail, to such as keep the Covenant*, *Psal.* ciii. 18. 5thly, *There is Grace in the Covenant to secure Believers, and Grace in it relating to their Seed; and if Parents act their Part, and discharge their Duty, it will take Effect.* 6thly, *That the Reason why the Children of godly Parents are sometimes graceless, is, That Parents do not understand or believe the Entail of the Covenant, are not diligent in the Use of Means, nor have a tender Regard to the Duties of the Covenant; and marry unbelieving Wives, or match their Children to such: Thus far he.* And the Judicious Reader will soon observe, that there is no need

need that much be said to this: Yet for some very good Reasons, I offer these two Things. *1st*, That the Extent or Entail of the Covenant from *Abraham* to his Seed, upon the Account whereof they were separated from all other Nations, enjoyed many special Privileges, and God is frequently called *their God*, even in Times of their greatest Ignorance, and deepest Apostasy, is by no Divine, so far as I know, understood of a saving Title to Covenant Blessings; else all *Israel*, not only *after the Spirit*, but also *after the Flesh*, behoved to be saved. And if the Entail is not saving, what can we conclude from it; as to the certain and undoubted Salvation of Infants. *2dly*, The Author of this Plan has not duly considered, *1st*, That by it, he makes the Covenant not everlasting, but changeable. *2dly*, Nor *well ordered*; seeing, according to him, the continuing in Covenant depends upon the Parents Faith, their Diligence, and disposing of them in Marriage; yea, upon the Fancies and Inclinations of Children, in choosing *Wives* to themselves. But can the Covenant of God; of which Christ is the Surety, be established upon such slippery Foundations, and yet be *well ordered in all Things*? Nor, *3dly*, Has he noticed, That the *Covenant of Grace* has that in it self which declares its Perpetuity, and secures all in Covenant; so as they shall be saved. Let us but observe that short Transcript of this Covenant, *Jer. xxxi. 33; 34.* where God promises, That all his covenanted People *shall know him, from the least even unto the greatest: That he will put his Laws into their Minds, and write them in their Hearts: And, That he will be merciful unto their Unrighteousness, and their Sins and Iniquities he will remember no more.* And seeing it is thus; How can it be supposed, that the Infants who are so in Covenant with God as to be saved, as he says

all those of Believers are, can ever after be guilty of presumptuous Sins, and continue therein until their Lives End? Can unbecoming Marriages disanul this Covenant? And when the Lord has promised no more to remember the Sins of his covenanted People, that so Iniquity may not cast them out of his Covenant; shall the Sins and Neglects of Parents make their Interest in it, which he supposes in their Infancy to be saving, afterward to be of no Effect? Nor is the *Covenant Promise* made to the Infant Seed of Believers, but to those also who are come to Age.

VII. As
to Infants
dying in
Infancy.

Seventhly, As to Infants who are baptised, and die in their Infancy: It becomes us to think with Sobriety concerning the Efficacy of Baptism to such: Nor are we to be positive where the Scripture is so sparing. As for my own Thoughts, these few following Things I think I know, and further I will not pretend: *First*, That the *Affirmative* Side of this Question is no singular Opinion (1), for besides those cited below, Mr. Wall (2), in his *History of Baptism*, names *Clement, Tertulian, Cyprian, Ambrose, Augustine, and Chrysostome*, all maintaining, *That Infants baptised, and dying in Infancy, are certainly saved.* 2dly, That the Guilt of *Adam's* first Sin is certainly imputed to *Infants*; for even those who have *not sinned after the Similitude of Adam*, and who cannot be reckoned to have committed any actual Transgression, have Pains, Sicknes, and at last Death inflicted on them; and seeing it is just with God to inflict the temporal Part of the Punishment of *Original Sin*, shall we impeach his *Holiness* or *Justice*, if he shall see meet to bring *Infants* under the eternal and everlasting Part thereof? 3dly, That if the Guilt of the first

Adam

(1) See *Witzzius de Efficacia Baptismi*, Sect. 3, 4, 5. Mr. Wall his *History of Baptism*, Vol. II. Page 192. (2) *Wall, Lib. Cit. Pag. 455.*

Adam be thus imputed to Infants, where is there any imaginable Inconveniency to assert, That the Righteousness of the second *Adam*, with all the great and glorious Consequences thereof, is also imputed to them? *4thly*, That in Scripture there is mention of the Election of some, and Preterition of others; and this is declared concerning *Jacob* and *Esau* while they were Infants. *5thly*, I know, That God is merciful and gracious, yet dare not presume upon the Limits and Extent of this. And then, *6thly*, That Christ commanded little Children to be brought to him, that he laid his Hands on them, and blessed them, declaring, That of such was the Kingdom of Heaven. And then, *7thly*, That Charity thinketh no Evil, and that it seems most agreeable to the Gospel Doctrine, and the Gospel Spirit, to judge the best of the eternal State of all Members of the visible Church, unless somewhat that is just and reasonable determine us to the contrary. Upon the *Whole*, secret Things belong to God; nor are Men curiously to pry thereinto: Duty is ours, and in the conscientious Discharge of it we are, in an holy and submissive Manner, and yet with a due Measure of Christian Hope, to leave our Infants to the Disposal of a good and gracious God. Withal, bringing them to a gracious Redeemer, and there leaving them with a Calmness and Tranquility of Mind. To judge hard, or to be anxious above Measure, as to the Salvation of this or that particular Infant, is not at all our Province; yea, is most unbecoming, for where the Scripture has not determined, good Reason that we should be silent. Parents are, at all Times, to be concerned about the Salvation of their Infants, and more especially when they are dying; and sometimes it may please a sovereign, good, and gracious God, to give Intimations to truly religious Parents, of his accepting their Gift, re-

garding their Tears, hearing their Prayers, and so of the eternal Happiness of their expiring Children. But Intimations and Impressions of that Kind are to be entertained with holy Fear and Caution, and not to be looked for and pressed after, as common and ordinary Attainments.

The second Thing I proposed, to be here a little discoursed of, was, How far, at the Administration of Baptism, the Blessings signified and sealed thereby, are actually applied to and bestowed upon those to whom this Sacrament is in a saving Manner efficacious; and so, what the Efficacy of Baptism is.

As upon the first Part of this *Section* it was noticed, That there were not a few, and it may be too many, various Opinions even of *Protestant Divines*, so upon this the Number is fully as great (3); but because some may think, That it is more than Time I should come to an End of this *Essay*, I shall not here mention them, referring the Curious Reader to the Quotations below; for which Reason, what I think Truth, I shall humbly, and with Submission, propose in the following Propositions.

I. Sealing
supposes
Right.

First, That Baptism being a Seal of the Covenant, it therefore necessarily supposes a Title and Right to the Blessings of the Covenant: For it is a Seal, and where no Right is, there surely can be no just and valid Sealing. And this Title the Children of professing Parents have, by the Tenor of the Covenant; *Gen. xvii. 10. 1 Cor. vii. 14.* and those without the Church, by professing their Faith in Christ, and Obedience to him, *Acts ii. 36, 37.*

II. No
Salvation
without
Regenera-
tion and
Pardon.

Secondly, That without Holiness and Regeneration, Pardon and Remission, there can be no eternal Salvation. The Reason is evident, because our Lord has said, and that without distinguishing

(3) See *Wetius de Efficacia Baptismi.*

guishing the old from the young, That except a Man be born again, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God, John iii. 3, 5. and that without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord, Heb. xii. 14. nor is it possible, That any unclean Thing can enter into the new and heavenly Jerusalem, where all Things are perfectly holy. Besides, if we consider, that the Wages of Sin is Death, Rom. vi. 23. Gal. iii. 10. and that by Nature we are Children of Wrath, even as others: This puts it beyond Contradiction, That we must be pardoned before we can be saved. If so then, our Infants are saved, surely there is from Scripture a manifest Necessity that they be renewed and pardoned. Hence I cannot but notice, how very wide a late Learned Divine (4) speaks, while he says, That external Baptism is sufficient for the Salvation of Children; because, by it, they are made as holy as their State is capable of. He denies any real Habits of Grace or Sanctification to be wrought in Infants, and that Baptism was not appointed to make any real Change upon them. But this must be considered in that Author as a Shade to set off his otherwise beautiful Performances, as to the Doctrines of the Gospel. But,

Thirdly, It is, I think, a certain and indisputable Truth, That Infants are capable of Regeneration and Pardon of Sin: For, if so be they have Adam's first Sin imputed to them, and natural Corruption inherent in them, why are they not in equal Capacity to have this Guilt remitted, and their Natures sanctified? And this is evident from Luke i. 15. compared with Luke i. 6, 7. Luke iv. 1. and Acts ii. 4. Nor are we to think it strange that Infants are regenerate, tho' they cannot give external Evidences of this, more than of their being reasonable Creatures. And

III.
Infants
not incapable of
Regeneration and
Pardon.

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to

(4) See Bishop Hopkins on Baptism, Page, 47, 48.

to deny evident Truths, because we cannot comprehend them, or account for every Thing concerning them, is most absurd; for then we should scarcely consent to any one Truth in the World: For, what one Thing is there that finite Man does fully comprehend? And, how far a reasonable, spiritual, and immortal Being, such as the Soul is, may, even in Infancy of the Body, by the Influences of the holy Spirit, act in spiritual Matters, and in a pure and spiritual Manner exert its Powers, that have not a necessary Dependence on the Body (if any such Powers there be) is worthy of the Learned to consider. And here, for the Sake of the curious Reader, I shall give the Words of a very exact Divine (5), *I would very fain learn (says he) how it can be true, That Children have no internal Means of Salvation; or, that God's Spirit hath no Influence upon their Faculties? Doth the reasonable Soul of the Infant express an admirable Influence on the bodily Faculties, by a natural Instinct for its Preservation; and shall not the Creator, the Spirit of Almighty God, have much more Influence on the Soul of the Elect to save it, tho' there appear none, or very slender Acts of Understanding, to the Judgment and Sense of Men?* And then, a very late and celebrated Author (6) thus speaks, *For as none of all the Irregularities and Indispositions a System of Matter can be obnoxious to, or even in its crumbling into Dust and Atoms, can ever have any direct and proper Influence upon a Substance of so very different a Nature and Properties, as a Thinking one is, so as either to deprive it of its Powers of Thinking and Willing, or to render it incapable of an actual Exercise of these Powers:*

(5) Mr. Reading in his *Anabaptism routed*, Page 7. —

(6) Mr. Ditton on the Resurrection of Christ, Page 474. See also. Page 487.

Powers: So there is not the least Shadow or Appearance of Reason to suspect, That the Author of Nature has any Way tied the Being or Activity of a thinking Substance, to the Being or regular State and Condition of Matter; so that the former should depend upon the latter, and without it should intirely cease. But I do not presume to insist upon these Things, tho' I have always thought, that the due Distinction betwixt Matter and Spirit naturally lead us to this Way of Thinking; tho' very true it is, that others have been, and yet are of another Opinion.

A *Fourth* Proposition I offer is, That *Regeneration* is a necessary Companion of *Remission*; that is, If the Person is pardoned his Iniquity, surely in that Man is the Power and Dominion of Sin subdued, and a contrary Habit of Grace, or the Image of God implanted: For, as there can be no Pardon of Sin unless there is an Union to the *Lord Jesus Christ*; so there can be no saving Union, unless there is also a having the same renewing Spirit with the *Lord Jesus*. Hence I may justly infer, That if Infants have the Guilt of their Sin removed, (which they must have, if they are saved) they cannot but also have the Power of their Sin subdued. And to suppose Sin in its Guilt pardoned, and yet Sin in its Power to remain, is a Supposition wholly inconsistent with any tolerable Notion we can have of the Gospel.

Fifthly, As to the Efficacy of Baptism, it is properly and especially *Moral*; not consisting so much in this, That the Blessings signified are immediately bestow'd and conferred thereby, or, as if it was then only efficacious, when attended with the inward Operation of the holy Spirit? But when this divine Ordinance, by the Blessing of God, not only signifies Covenant Blessings, but

IV. That *Regeneration* always accompanies *Remission*.

V. Efficacy of Baptism, what.

but so makes over, seals and ratifies the Person's Title to these, as that infallibly they are secured to him: And he shall certainly be brought to the Possession of them, when those Blessings, which some may have previous to, or in Time of his Baptism bestowed on him, are hereby confirmed to him; and those which he yet hath not, are inviolably made so sure, as that he cannot fail, in God's due Time, to be possessed of them. For, as among Men, Seals are then reckoned efficacious, when they so confirm a Title to what is sealed, as that the Persons concerned are infallibly brought to the Possession thereof; so it is here. And hence it is evident, that Baptism, when efficacious, is not a meer Sign of great and eternal Things, but also so applies, ratifies and secures the Person's Title to those, as they cannot possibly fail to be put in Possession of them.

VI. Its
Efficacy
on all the
Elect.

Sixthly, That Baptism is so efficacious to all the Elect, as that thereby a special Right to all the Blessings of the Covenant, such as *Regeneration*, *Justification*, *complete Sanctification* and *Glory*, is so infallibly sealed, as that they shall certainly be put in Possession of these. This is the Design of the Ordinance, *Rom. vi. 4.* and no doubt, when such elect baptised Vessels are called from the World while Infants, but these Blessings are actually bestow'd upon them in their Infancy, and that at such a Time, and in such Ways as infinite Wisdom sees meet. And when they are spared to Age, these Blessings are sometimes, yea ordinarily actually conferred in the Use of co-ordinate Means with *Baptism*; by the *Word*, as the outward Mean; by *Faith*, as the Instrument; and *Repentance*, as necessary thereto and demonstrative thereof. And as to such who are not among the blessed Number of the Elect, no more can be sealed to them than an external visible Title, to external, visible, and

and common Privileges. Of which, some Hint was given in the Entry of this Section.

Seventhly, Tho' by Baptism, when efficacious, the Person's Title to all *Covenant Blessings* is inviolably secured, and he shall certainly be possessed of them; yet as to the Time when these are actually conferred, God is Sovereign, and we are to be very modest. Sometimes he is pleased to bestow these before Baptism, as was very common in those, who were not baptised but upon their Profession of Faith in *Christ*, and Obedience to him, as *Acts* ii. 37, 38, 39. *Acts* viii. 36, 37. *Acts* xvi. 31, 32, 33. Sometimes he grants these at Baptism, and sometimes after it: For, some there are who so soon as they begin to exercise their Reason, discover Principles of Religion in Acts of Faith, Love and Holiness, and no Question but they are regenerate previous to these Actings. But whether this Grace was given them before, at, or after Baptism, I humbly think none can be certain; yet, that this was confirmed and made over to them by Baptism, cannot but be sure. But then, there are some who give no Evidence of Religion, until they are some Twenty, some Thirty, and some Forty Years; and as to these we may safely say, That by Baptism such Blessings were sealed and made sure to them, tho' actually bestow'd many Years after: For, we cannot allow ourselves to suppose a Soul renewed by the Spirit of Grace in Infancy, and for many Years exerting all its Powers, and yet give no Evidence of this *Renovation*; seeing, *as the Tree is, so is its Fruit*; and according to the Disposition of the Soul, so must its Actings be, tho' still under the Influences of the divine Spirit, and according as he is pleased to breath upon his own Work in the Soul. And now, to prevent Mistakes, tho' Blessings signified are sometimes actually bestow'd at Baptism, yet

VII.
When sealed Blessings are bestowed.

we

we must not, contrary to plain Scripture, 1 *Kings* viii. 46. *Rom.* vii. from Verse 15. *James* iii. 2. 1 *John* i. 8. conclude, That all the Remains of, or inherent original Sin are then removed, and a perfect Sanctification wrought in the Soul. As we are not to think, that if Blessings are not then actually given, that Baptism is only a Seal appended to a blank Paper, or that Ministers, Parents and others are not to pray, That the baptised may be actually, and even then possessed of *Covenant Mercies*: For, as Baptism (tho' Blessings are not then actually given) is God's Seal ratifying the Person's Title to the *Covenant of Grace*, and securing his after-possessing the Benefits thereof; so Duty is still ours, tho' it becomes us to leave the Season of bestowing Blessings unto the infinite Wisdom of a faithful and gracious God (1).

VIII. The
Popish in-
delible
Charac-
ter.

And now *Eighthly*, and in the last Place, *Water* in *Baptism* does not imprint any indelible Character on the Soul, so as the Souls of the Baptised are thereby distinguished from those of others: For, besides that *Papists* themselves cannot tell what this is, whether it is in the Essence of the Soul, or respects only the Actings thereof; so this indelible Character is what Scripture teaches not, Reason perswades not, nor can any Evidence be given of it. What indelible Character had *Simon the Sorcerer*, *Julian the Apostate*, and other hypocritical Miscreants, tho' baptised? So that we must leave this, amongst other *Popish* Delusions and vain Imaginations.

S E C T.

(1) See *Confession of Faith*, Chap. 28. Sect. 6.

S E C T. II.

Whence the Efficacy of Baptism is.

THAT the Answer to this may be plain and distinct, these Three following Propositions are to be considered.

First, It is not from the *Deed done*, or Action of Administration itself; even as this is an Action of an instituted Nature, or Administration in holy Matters. For, *First*, No such Power, Virtue or Efficacy hath God put into it, nor hath he made any Ordinance to work by any inherent Energy, far less as if it was more like a *Charm*, than any Thing that could rationally be accounted for. Nothing, I am fully perswaded, is more sure, than that any natural Virtue or Power that any natural Cause has put in it, in order to its producing such and such Effects, must yet in its Agency depend upon the Influence and Concurrence of the Great God. And if a natural Cause, even when it has a suitable Object to work upon, cannot of itself produce an Effect, unless the first and independent Cause concur, how then can an external and corporeal Action, as *Washing with Water*, produce of itself, such great Effects as these of Baptism are; and which being Spiritual, are so far removed from the Influence of what is Matter or material. *2dly*, Scripture expressly denies, that the Efficacy of Baptism proceeds from the Action or Administration itself, even tho' administrated by a lawful and holy Minister, in the most orderly and holy Manner, *Matth. iii. 11. 1 Pet. iii. 21.* And *3dly*, If it was so, then certainly it would be the greatest Charity and plainest Duty in the World, for Ministers of the Gospel to travel Night and Day, and

I. Not from the Deed done.

and, without asking Questions, to baptise every Man and Woman, *Pagan* as well as *Christian*, old as well as young, yea to force and compel all to submit to this Ordinance; but this is contrary to Scripture, *Acts* ii. 37, 38. *Acts* viii. 36, 37. And whether the *Popish* Practice in *Pagan* Parts of the World, which is such as I have just now mentioned, had its Rise from this their Doctrine; or if this Doctrine was advanced to vindicate their Practice, we need not spend Time to enquire? And then 4thly, If the Efficacy of Baptism proceeded from the Administration itself, all and every one would have Covenant Blessings effectually, savingly, and irreversibly sealed to them; but this is contrary to Scripture, *Acts* viii. 21. and to constant Experience in all Ages. And as to what some say, *That all do receive the saving Grace of Baptism, but afterward may, and sometimes do totally fall away*; this is to deny the Efficacy of Christ's Death, the unchangeableness of God's Purpose, the Faithfulness of his Promises, and the everlasting Nature of his Covenant.

An Objection answered.

'Tis true indeed, that Baptism is called, *The Laver of Regeneration*, *Titus* iii. 5. and the Baptised are said to be *baptised into the Death of Christ*, *Rom.* vi. 4. and to *put on Christ*, *Gal.* iii. 27. and by all these Expressions is declared what the glorious Consequences of Baptism are; but neither these, nor any other Scripture say, That all the Baptised have such Blessings; nor, That the having of them, flows from the Action and Administration itself: For, *Rom.* i. 16. The Gospel is said to be *the Power of God unto Salvation*; but that it is so, flows not from the Action either of *Preaching* or *Reading* it; nor is it so to all, *1 Cor.* iii. 6, 7. *John* v. 40. *Isaiab* liii. 1.

Secondly;

Secondly, As the Efficacy of Baptism flows not from the Administration itself; so neither does it proceed from the Dignity nor Intention of the Administrator; as if then only it were effectual when the Minister designs it should be so, or in such an Action to administer a divine Ordinance or Institution. For, *First*, The Efficacy of the *Word* proceeds not from the Minister, *1 Cor. iii. 5; 6, 7.* How then can that of the Sacrament do? *2dly*, The greatest Ministers have only attributed to themselves the Application of the outward Sign, while, as it became them, they gave the Glory of the Efficacy thereof to God only, *John i. 26.* *3dly*, How melancholy shall the Case of such *Christians* be, who have been baptised by prophane, unholy and unthinking Ministers, such as *Judas Iscariot*, (if from *Matth. x. 5.* we may conclude he did baptise) and many others since his Day? *4thly*. If it was so, then no Man should be sure he was duly baptised, because he can never be ascertain'd of the secret and inward Intention of the Minister: And how absurd is it to think, that an infinitely wise and gracious God should appoint such a solemn Ordinance, for wise and the highest Ends to the Souls of Men; and in the mean Time, lay its Efficacy, or suffer it to depend upon such Persons, some of whom are graceless and prophane, and the best of them soon diverted; being Men of like Passions with others, and who too often may not have God's Design in this Ordinance explicitly in their Eye.

II. Not from the Intention of the Minister.

Thirdly. The Efficacy of Baptism is wholly and only from God's blessing it, and the Operation of his holy Spirit. And here, that I may not be thought to use Words without any plain determinate Meaning; by *God's blessing Baptism*, I understand his so concurring with this his own instituted Ordinance, as that hereby the Blessings

III. It is from God alone.

of

of the Covenant are not only signified and represented, but also so effectually applied, made over and sealed to the Person baptised, as that certainly and infallibly he shall be brought to the Possession of these Blessings; those (as was above hinted) he may already have, are by Baptism confirmed to him, and those he hath not, are so secured, as undoubtedly he shall, in God's good Time, be brought to the Enjoyment thereof. And by *the Operation of the Holy Spirit*, is understood his inward, efficacious and irresistible Working upon the Soul of the Baptised; so that the Person now comes to enjoy and possess these Blessings, and so to have the inward, as he has the outward Seal. And tho', to speak precisely of Actions and Administrations, whereby any Benefit is disposed or sealed to another, the true Notion of the Efficacy of such Actions and Administrations, seems to consist in such Benefits being so made over and confirmed to another by these, as that he not only lawfully may, but (as in the Case before us) undoubtedly shall be brought to the Possession thereof: Yet if any think, that to the compleating the Efficacy of Baptism, the Operation of the holy Spirit, and actual Enjoyment of Blessings sealed, is necessary; here I see no Cause to contend. And that both these are only and wholly from God, as I have asserted (1), will appear, if we consider, *First*, That God alone gives the Blessings signified and sealed, *Ezek.* xxxvi. 25, 26, 27. *Jer.* xxxii. 38, 39. *Heb.* viii. 10, 11, 12. *Luke* v. 21. And that as these are the Purchase of *Christ*, *Rom.* iii. 25: *Eph.* i. 3. *1 Cor.* i. 30. so it is from him only that all his other Ordinances have their gracious Effects, *Rom.* i. 16. *1 Cor.* iii. 6. *2dly*, God alone hath instituted this Ordinance, and therefore it is he only that hath promised to be

(1) See *Confession of Faith*, Chap. 27. Sect. 3.

be with his Ministers in the Administration of it, *Matth.* xxviii. 19. and make it so to dispoſe and ſeal, as thereby to ſecure the actual beſtowing and poſſeſſing of the Bleſſings ſignified thereby. *3dly*, The Scripture aſſerts it, *1 Cor.* xii. 13. And *4thly*, From whom elſe can it be; for (as we have already obſerved) it is neither from the Adminiſtrator, nor Action of Adminiſtration: It remains then, that it muſt be from God only. And if we obſerve, that we are in all Things depending Creatures, and that the Scripture every where proclaims the Succeſs of all our lawful Undertakings, even of thoſe who are of a far inferior Kind, and are very much within the Compaſs of our own Power, to be from God; ſhall we not judge and be convinced, that the Succeſs and Efficacy of ſuch a ſolemn and ſpiritual Ordinance as Baptiſm is, muſt be only from him, *of whom, through whom, and to whom are all Things*, and who *is God over all, bleſſed for evermore?*

And now, from all that hath been ſaid of the Efficacy of Baptiſm, we may learn theſe Things; *Inferences from this*
First, That Baptiſm is not to be contemned, *I. Baptiſm not to be contemned.*
 lightly gone about, nor indifferently adminiſtrated: For tho' the Frequency of the Adminiſtration, and the Plainneſs and Simplicity of the Elements and Actions, may make it ſeem mean, as having nothing ſplendid in it to outward Appearance; yet it is an Ordinance of the Great God, for glorious Ends and Purpoſes, and that which hath high, ſaving, and eternally up making Effects. A reverent Temper then, with an heavenly and ſpiritual Diſpoſition of Soul, is moſt neceſſary and moſt becoming in all concerned.

Secondly, We may from this be informed, *II. The external Action not to be reſted upon.*
 That we are not to idolize Baptiſm, by truſting to it, and putting it, as it were, in the Room of God;
 R God;

God; as if it of itself did save us, and we had no more to ask for the Salvation of our own, or our Childrens Souls, but as we, so they, were baptised. Baptism indeed is a special Mean, and a Sign of the great and most saving Blessings; but as Means are not always effectual, so Signs are never the Things signified. It is not then to the outward Action we are only to look, nor are we to depend upon it, but earnestly to press and pursue after the inward Grace.

III. Where we are to look for Efficacy to Baptism.

Thirdly, Hence also we may be instructed, where we are to have our Eye, that this Ordinance of Baptism may be effectual to the great Ends, and saving Purposes for which it is appointed: It is not to Men, no not to the greatest of Ministers; for these only can apply the outward Sign. Nor are we to depend upon the Action of Administration itself; for, without God, this can do nothing: But it is to God alone we are to look, and in him only we are to trust; who, as *he* hath promised, so *he* only gives the Blessing, Success, and Efficacy to all his own Institutions. How reasonable is it, that Ministers should call upon the Name of the Lord before they administrate this; and that Parents and the whole Congregation should, with Singleness and Fervency of Spirit, join with the Minister in this Address to the Most High, for his special and effectual Blessing to his own Ordinance.

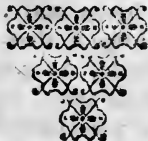
IV. This gives Comfort and Ground of Thankfulness.

Fourthly, From this Doctrine of the *Efficacy of Baptism*, those who were baptised, and now are regenerate and believe in the *Lord Jesus*, may take great Comfort, and behold the strongest Obligations laid upon them to the highest Gratitude: For, what good Reason have they now to rejoice, when from their believing, and being now in Christ, they may by a sure Connection infer, That by Baptism were made over, confirmed and sealed unto them, the saving Operations
of

of the holy Spirit, an Interest in the *Lord Jesus Christ*, and the Love and Favour of God, a Restoration to his Image, with all the other great and saving Blessings of the *Covenant of Grace*: And that now, to their unspeakable Satisfaction and Joy, they feel, that many of these Blessings are bestow'd upon them, and a sure Foundation laid for their firm Hope, that they shall be possessed of what remains, until they come to the heavenly Inheritance. How should the Souls of such be filled with Thankfulness, and their Mouths with his Praises all the Day long? How should they, with the greatest Warmness, commend him and his Grace to others; and themselves be his, for him, and to his Glory, and the Honour of his Name, chearfully spending, and being spent for the Advancement of his Interest and Kingdom; at all Times *walking worthy of that Lord, unto all Well-pleasing*, whose exceeding rich Grace was so abundant toward them, that, in their Infancy, and when they knew not what was done unto them, he, by his sacred Institution, made over and sealed unto them this great and everlasting Salvation.

And now, *Fifthly*, By this we may be taught, that Baptism is not to be carelessly laid aside, but carefully improv'd, by all that have been made Partakers of it. And this leads me to the Sixth and last *Chapter* of this *Essay*.

V. Baptism to be improv'd.



C H A P. VI.

Of our Improvement of Baptism.

Why we
should im-
prove it.

ALL the Ordinances of God are appointed for the greatest Designs, and have the highest and most noble Uses, and particularly this of *Baptism*; for which Cause, as they, so this is not to be forgotten and neglected, but, in the most religious Manner, to be carefully improved and used. It is hereby we should glorify God, honour that holy Name of *Christ* by which we are called, adorn our holy Profession, advance the Interest of our *Lord Jesus*, and promote true Religion, grow in Grace, abound more and more in Comfort, have the satisfying Testimony of our own Consciences, a Peace that passeth all Understanding in our Minds; be truly useful in our Generations, walk with God's Way; and when we come to surrender up these Spirits he hath given us, have the solid Hope of that Glory which fadeth not away. But alas! we too commonly forget and put our *Baptism* aside, as some Thing that was long since done, and is now out of Date; we consider not the Privileges we then enjoy'd, nor the Obligations we then came under. Parents do not put their Children, when they are come to Years, in Mind of these, and the Baptised themselves too seldom reflect on them: Tho' 'tis hoped, that those who watch for the Souls of People, do frequently, not only in Publick, but in Private also, as they have Opportunity, endeavour to remind all under their Charge, especially the younger Sort, of their baptismal Privileges and early Obligations; that so, by the Blessing of God, they may be brought unto a sincere, and Heart-affecting Sense thereof.

Surely

Surely, it is our commanded, necessary and profitably Duty, to improve this Ordinance of God, whereof we all have been made Partakers, sincerely, and with the whole Soul; deliberately, and with Calmness of Mind; dependently, and trusting in the Lord; diligently, and in the Use of other appointed Means; and constantly, all the Days of our Lives. And among many Improvements of this Ordinance that might be named, I but notice these that follow.

How,

For what Uses and Ends.

First, *As an Excitement to Faith*; to our believing the glorious Truths contained in the Word of God, and our steady adhering thereto. It is said of those whom Peter baptised, *That they continued stedfastly in the Apostles Doctrine, Acts ii. 41, 42.* So we being baptised into Christ and his Death, are not to be ashamed of our crucified Lord; not to deny our Christian Name, nor renounce the glorious Truths of the Gospel of Christ, upon which Truths, Mercies that are sealed by Baptism are founded: But we are openly to profess, own and testify our Belief of these, and our cleaving unto them, whatever outward Danger this our witnessing a good Confession before many Witnesses may expose us to. But this is not all, for, we are to improve our Baptism as a strong Motive to receive our Lord Jesus Christ as our only Redeemer, and to take Hold of God's Covenant of Promises for all our Salvation, *Rom. iv. 11, 12. Gal. iii. 26, 27.* We should reckon with ourselves, that being baptised into Christ, in so far we put on Christ, and that we had the Seal of God's Covenant administered unto us, whereby he becomes our God, and we in a solemn Manner are devoted to him, and become his People, and hereby come under the most solemn Ties; and now when come to Age, are under the strongest Obligations, by our personal and explicate Act and Deed, to embrace this

I. As an Excitement to Faith.

A Practical Essay on

Christ as the Lord our Saviour, and only Righteousness; to take hold of this Covenant of Grace, and in the most sincere and unreserved Manner, to give ourselves to the Lord: For thus we shall have good Cause to say, Thou art my God from my Mother's Belly. Our being so exercised in an upright, self-denied, and conscientious Manner, will be an Evidence, that by Baptism All was sealed unto us: And to do otherwise, is no less than Apostasy and Perjury at once; for it is as much as if we should say, Tho' I was in my Infancy baptised into Christ, yet now I will not come to Him, that I may have Life; I was then so happy, as to have the external visible Seal of God's becoming my God, yet now I will have none of God; and albeit I was then devoted to the most High, yet now I chuse to serve other Masters; and having loved Idols, after them I will go. Consider, all you who call your selves Christians, that the Lord hath an early Interest in you, and Title to you; and what a fearful and desperate Thing is it, that you should now deny or renounce both? How will you stand before the Bar of God, and what will your eternal State be? It is from this also, that Parents, Ministers of the Gospel, and those to whom the Education of Youth is committed, may behold what is the great, yea the one and main Thing, they should endeavour to bring a young Generation to; and this is, as soon as can be to engage them, by their own personal Consent, and with the whole Soul, to comply and fall in with God's Offer and Call in the Gospel. Here we are to begin, at this above all Things we are to aim, and this we are earnestly, by our Warnings, Reproofs, Advices, pressing Entreaties and Solicitations, our Prayers and Tears, to seek after. And then it is, that all other Things will pleasantly follow.

Secondly,

Secondly, Baptism is to be improv'd as an Argument against Sin, and for Duty. Here it is we should calmly reflect, That we were *baptised into the Death of Christ, buried with him by Baptism into Death; that like as Christ was raised from the Dead by the Glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in Newness of Life, Rom. vi. 3, 4, 11. Therefore we are likewise to reckon our selves dead indeed unto Sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. And for this Cause, we are not to allow Sin to reign in our mortal Bodies, that we should obey it in the Lusts thereof, Rom. vi. 12. Eph. v. 26, 27. Col. ii. 12.* Hence, Christian and baptised Person, thou mayest thus reason, Was not the Divinely instituted Sacrament of Baptism early administrated unto me, whereby was represented a partaking of the Virtue of the Death of Christ; a dying to Sin, and a living to Holiness; and by which I came under sacred and inviolable Ties, to renounce the Devil and his Works, the World and its Pleasures, and the Flesh with its deceitful Lusts; and to yield my self unto the Lord, as one that is alive unto God, and my Members as Instruments of Righteousness unto Holiness? Shall I then, now when I am come to Age, be guilty of the most prophane and abominable Sacrilege, alienating that from God which was devoted to him, and employing that in impure Services which was consecrated to the most sacred and holy Uses? Yea, far rather, must I not now forsake Unbelief, Ungodliness, Idolatry, Superstition, Envy, Hatred, Malice, Injustice, Murder, Pride, Ambition, Covetousness, with Adultery, Fornication, Lasciviousness, all Manner of Uncleaness, Rioting and Wantonness, Gluttony and Drunkenness, and *put on the Lord Jesus Christ, making no Provision for the Flesh, to fulfil the Lusts thereof.* To be frequent, reverent

rent and devout in all Acts of commanded *Worship*, to be holy as God is holy; to be just, charitable, and kind toward others; to have the most tender Respect to the Lord's Day; a constant Fear that I take not his holy Name in Vain; to reverence my Parents in the Lord; obey lawful Superiors; to live *soberly, righteously and godly*, to be spiritual, above all other Things seeking those that are above, and in a Word, keeping my self pure and unspotted in the *World*, and being on all Occasions sincerely employed in God's Service, for the promoting of his Interest, and shewing forth his Glory? *Acts* ii. 41, 42. *1 Cor.* vi. 19, 20. *Titus* iii. 12. *Col.* ii. 2, 3, 6, 7, 11, 12. It is thus O Christian thou shouldst act, and behave thy self as one that was baptised, honour God, save thy own Soul, and edify others. Hast thou never read or heard how the Primitive Christians behaved themselves, after they had been baptised? How bold they were in their Christian Profession, and how circumspect in their Gospel Conversation! Yea, so tender were they in their after-walk, and so sensible of the strongest Obligations Baptism laid on them against Sin, and to Duty, that, by a Mistake of that Scripture (it is said) *Heb.* vi. 4, 5, 6. They fell into the Error, That Sins committed after Baptism were unpardonable: And therefore, some put off or delayed being baptised until their last Hours, when they reckoned themselves dying, and so to be out of the Hazard of sinning. Consider with thy self, what dost thou by thine unholy Practice, but say, That Satan is the Master thou preferrest to God; the *World* is what thou valuest above Heaven, makest Sin take Place of Holiness, and choosest rather to destroy thy precious and immortal Soul, than to reform thy unchristian and vicious Practice. I remember to have somewhere read, That one of the Fathers brings in *Satan* thus

thus pleading his Claim to a prophane *World*; *These were never baptised into my Name, but thine; they were devoted early, not to my Service, but thine; I never promised them Heaven and Eternal Glory as thou didst; yet they rejected thee and thy Service, and voluntarily made Choicc of me and my Drudgery: And therefore I now claim them as my own.* Sift thy self, O baptised Man and Woman, before the Tribunal of the Great God, and think, what Trembling, Dread, Confusion and Despair should then fill thy Soul! And from this Consideration be prevailed with, while it is Time, now to hear God's Voice and live. Hence.

Thirdly, Baptism is to be improven as an Answer wherewith to repel all Temptations: We shall but flatter our selves, if we do not reckon that the great Enemy of our Salvation will set upon us, to allure and engage, and then kill and destroy us. But we are to answer all Solicitations from *Satan*, the *World*, and the *Flesh*, That we are already engaged to the Service of God, and so cannot comply with his Temptations; *That we are not our own, but are bought with a Price; and therefore must glorify God in our Bodies and Souls that are his,* 1 Cor. vi. 20. That the Lord alone is our God, and therefore him only must we serve, *Matth.* iii. 17. We are to say with *Augustine* and others, when *Satan* throws his fiery Darts at us, or more cunningly insinuates his impure Suggestions; when Sin, that remains in us, begins to beat its Parley, or sound its Alarm against us; or when the *World* seeks to intice us by its Flatteries, or fright us by its Threats; *Baptisatus sum, & credo in Christum crucifixum, I am baptised, and believe in a crucified Christ;* and therefore cannot and will not hear nor yield. Know, O baptised Christian, that, by thy Baptism, thou hast renounced
all

all Allegiance to Satan, Friendship with Sin, and Slavery or Servitude to the World ; yea, hast come under the strongest Obligations to resist and oppose these : Be not then perfidious to the Great God, but keep thy self pure. It is Death to the Soldier, if he desert to the Enemy. Watch then and stand fast ; quit thy self like a Man, and be strong. In a little Time your Warfare shall be at an End, and your Lord shall stand as the Glorious Conqueror on the Earth : *Be faithful then unto the Death, and you shall have the Crown of Life.* Christ is the Captain of your Salvation, you are come under his Banner, and should such Men as you fly.

IV. For
Comfort.

Fourthly, Improve Baptism as a sweet Topick or common Place whence thou drawest thy Comfort. Art thou disquieted because of thy Guilt and Unworthiness, and ready to think that thou dardest not come to *Christ* ? Consider, that when thou wast wallowing in thy Blood, and no Eye to pity thee, that then thou wast baptised into *Christ* ; and by this had a Title to him, that the *Pagan World* have not. Art thou cast down because of thy departing so far from God, as that thou art afraid he will not accept of thee upon thy Return ? Yet remember thy *Baptism*, that it has equal Effect with that of *Circumcision* : And, that as under the Law the Lord owned a particular Relation to the *circumcised Jews*, even when they had gone far from him, and upon this urged their Return, with a Promise also that he would receive them ; so now, under the Gospel, upon the same Foundation, he calls you to return to him in *his Christ*, with Weeping, Mourning, and Supplication, parting with thy Sin, embracing his Offer, and resting upon that Foundation he hath laid in *Zion*. And in hearing his Voice, thy Relation to God, which formerly was but visible and common, shall now become spiritual
and

and saving. Again, hast thou believed in an unseen Christ, and yet not afraid lest God hath not justified thee, and lest thou fall by the *Way* and come short of the Prize? Yet comfort thy self, that seeing thou now believest, surely, by Baptism, the Remission of thy Sin, the Conduct and Influence of the Holy Spirit, Through-bearing in this World, and eternal Glory in that to come, were made over and sealed unto thee: And therefore it shall surely be well with thee, *Gen. xvii. 10. Mark i. 4. Acts xxii. 16.*

Fifthly, Baptism should be improved as a Bond of Peace and Unity among Fellow Christians, and as a strong Motive to persuade all to seek after and preserve it. Not that we are to say and do in every Thing as others; nor that we are hereby obliged to an Unity in Modes, Ceremonies, uninstituted Worship, and unscriptural Government, as some Reason, from the Scripture I shall presently mention: But that we are to maintain a Gospel Temper of Mind toward our Fellow Christians, notwithstanding of Differences that may be in Matters of lesser Moment. And this the Apostle urgeth by the Argument, *That by one Spirit we are all baptised into one Body, 1 Cor. xii. 13.* and that there is *one Faith, one Lord, one Baptism, Eph. iv. 5.* And tho' we cannot approve, yea, nor comply with many Things that others may think just and proper, yet if they are found in the Foundation of our holy Religion, and as it becomes Christians, sincere and holy in Practice, let us consider, That they are Members of the same Body of Christ with us, Children of the same Father, Heirs of the same Inheritance, and Expectants of the same Glory. Should we not then forbear and forgive them, in Love; warn, and endeavour to reclaim and reform them; pity and pray for them; sympathise with and communicate to them; and per-
form

V. As a Bond of Peace and Unity.

form all Acts of Christian Love, Duty and Kindness toward them. A few Days will put an End to all our Disputes, and here we but know in part, but when we who believe in the Lord Jesus, and who abide in him, conscientiously endeavouring to walk as he walked, shall come to Heaven and Glory, then we shall be perfectly of one Mind, and to all Eternity exercised in the same ravishing and glorious Employment: Wherefore, seeing we are baptised Brethren, let us *not fall out by the Way*, but dwell together in Unity, and so far as we are agreed, and walk according to the same Rule.

VI. As a Remembrancer of Obligations. *Sixthly*, Baptism is to be made Use of as a Remembrancer of our Obligations to believe, to be thankful, holy, living for God, and to his Glory. The Christian has not, at all Times, the same lively Frame; nor does he move with the same quick Pace to *Emmanuel's* Land; but too often, and too commonly, he becomes dull and lifeless, cold and indifferent, and so turns away from his only and chief Good, from his God and his Glory; becomes degenerate, yea, sometimes may make alarming Steps of Defection from God's Way. In which melancholy Case, every baptised Christian should thus reflect with himself, Was I not engaged in Baptism, and by it to be God's, and his alone? To be fervent in Spirit, lively in the Exercise of all Graces, and Performance of every Part of religious Worship; to *press toward the Mark, for the Prize of my high Calling in Christ Jesus*; to cleave to God as my God, and to walk with him, and walk like him; and in all these to be steadfast and immoveable? Oh! what now have I done? Have I not forsaken God who is the Fountain of my Happiness, turned out of his Way, been cold and careless in his Service, and so forsaken my Duty, my Happiness and Glory at once? And yet,

yet, notwithstanding of all the Evils I have done, is he not calling, commanding, and by the strongest Arguments pressing me to return to him; to embrace the glorious and exalted Redeemer as my Saviour; to come and lay hold on him as my God; and so to walk in his Way, abandoning these unhallowed Paths, and destroying Measures I have too long taken? Awake then, O my Soul! why tarriest thou? Exert thy self, and discharge thy baptismal Obligations. And this is the Duty of every baptised Christian, when he beholds this Sacrament administrated to others. But having hinted at this already, I do not now insist on it.

Seventhly and *Lastly*, We should improve our Baptism, by taking Occasion therefrom, whether by reading of it, reflecting on it, or beholding it administrated to others, to examine our selves, if indeed we enjoy the great and glorious Blessings represented and signified by that Sacrament. Our own eternal Interest, our Comfort in Time, with the Thoughts how many ruin themselves by resting upon the *Deed done*, do all cry aloud to us to be thus exercised. And when the Christian is enquiring, If he is born again, planted in Christ, has an Interest in him, is justified and brought to a saving Title to God as his God, and so hath a Right to all the Promises of the Covenant, and Glory at the Close. Here let him ask himself, Can I now say, That I have with the whole Soul embraced the Lord Jesus Christ as my alone compleat Redeemer; that I have been sincerely consenting to have the Lord as my God in Christ; and so have I taken hold on his Covenant of Promises, to all which I was carried in my Infancy? And as a Proof of my Sincerity in these Things, can I say, That I *put no Confidence in the Flesh, rejoice in the Lord Jesus Christ, and worship God in the Spirit.*

VII. We should take Occasion from Baptism, to examine our selves.

rit? Do I look upon Satan as my Enemy; Sin as my Burden; the World as no Part of my eternal Happiness, but only as the Place of my Pilgrimage? Are the Commandments of the Lord my Choice; the People of God in whom I delight Conformity to God my Soul's Desire; and so do I endeavour after Holiness with the same Concern when I am most retired, as when the Eyes of all the *World* are on me? And finally, Do I desire to live, that I may be alive to God, be employed in his Service, and made an Instrument in his Hand for the Advancement of his Glory? And if upon Trial, you cannot with some Measure of Integrity assert these Things, let me, in the Lord, obtest every one who casts his Eye upon these Lines, to bethink himself of his crying Sin, and dangerous State; and while they have yet Time, while God is upon a Throne of Grace calling them, and the Door of Grace remains open, to hearken to the Lord's Voice comply with his Proposal, and embrace his infinitely gracious Offer: That they would, with Self-condemnation, parting with Sin without Delay, and with the deepest Concern, fly to the City of Refuge, embrace a Redeemer, say unto the Lord, *Thou art my God*, devote and give themselves to him, and so to make Haste and keep his Commandments. But then, if any who shall read this, can humbly yet sincerely assert, That he feels the Evidences given, in his own Soul, then I cannot more agreeably put an End to this Essay, than beseeching such, by the Mercies of God, that they would *bles the Lord who hath given them Counsel*, with Purpose of Heart cleave to the Lord Jesus Christ, and to God a their God; *walk worthy of him unto all well pleasing*; adorn their Profession by the Holiness of their Practice; have their *Conversation in Heaven*; *grow in Grace*, and increase in ever

good Gift ; commending the Lord's Grace and Way to others, aiming in all Things at his Glory, being zealous for his Truths and Interest, affectionate to his Saints and People, believing his Promises, leaning upon the *Lord Jesus Christ*, and trusting in the Most High for ever. We live in a declining Age of the World ; but O Baptised ! tho' unholy and unbelieving *Christians*, tho' your Parents have never put you in Mind of your Baptism, yet remember I have now endeavour'd it, and you must account at the Great Day how you receive : And you who have by Grace arrived at what was above pointed at, let me in the most affectionate Manner exhort you so to walk, and thus to behave yourselves, *until the Day break, and the Shadows fly away* ; when, in Heavenly Glory, you shall come to the full and everlasting Enjoyment of all these Blessings that were made over and sealed to you by *Baptism*.

F I N I S.



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I N V I

E R R A T A.

PAge 24. Line penult, for *say* read *ask*. p. 27. l. 7.
dele from this. p. 27. l. last, for *Consequence* read
Consequences. p. 28. l. 19. after *is* read *nor*. p. 38.
 l. 10. for *whereby* read *where, by*. p. 54. after *God* add
 a Comma, and then the Words *nor him*. p. 57. l. 28.
 after *Title* add a Comma, and after *Symbols* *dele* Com-
 ma. p. 65. after *Hand* add *and*. p. 99. l. 10. after
actual add *and appearing*. p. 112. l. 34. *dele to lay*,
 and after *Obligations* add *laid*. p. 114. l. 15. for *And*
 read *In*. p. 127. l. 7. for *But* read *And*. p. 167. l. 23.
 after *off*, add a Comma, and after *here* add a Punctum.
 p. 180. l. 22. for *Bonds* read *Hands*. p. 187. l. 3. after
of add *it*. p. 192. l. 1. for *Eunoch* read *Eunuch*. p. 192.
 l. 3. for *КѣреБнѣсав* read *КѣреБнѣсав*. p. 193. l. 16. *dele*
so at the End of the Line. p. 119. l. 32. for *think*
 read *intimate*. p. 112. l. 2. *a fine* for *were* read *are*.
 p. 249. l. 21. after *same* add a Comma, and l. 22. af-
 ter *renewing* add a Comma. p. 260. l. 15. for *with* read
in. p. 268. l. 12. *apud finem* *dele and*. p. 268. l. 30. for
my read *the*.

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