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A
VINDICATION

O F

Infant Baptism,

From the FOUR Chief

OBJECTIONS

Brought Against it, *Viz* :

- I. From the Natural Incapacity of Infants.
- II. From their not actually Believing.
- III. From the Want of an exprefs Command to Baptize them.
- IV. From the Want of Scripture-Precedents for it.

In a LETTER to Mr. * * * *

By JOHN TURNER, A. M.
LECTURER of CHRIST-CHURCH, LONDON.

L O N D O N :

Printed for JOHN WYAT, at the *Rose*, in *St. Paul's*
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THE HISTORY OF THE

INDIAN NATIONS

OF THE NORTH AMERICAN CONTINENT

BY JAMES OGDEN

NEW YORK: PUBLISHED BY G. & C. VAN NESTER, 1852.

TO BE HAD OF THE AUTHOR, AND OF ALL BOOKSELLERS.

A

VINDICATION

O F

Infant Baptism, &c.

S I R,

IT is now some considerable Time since you and I occasionally reviving some former Discourse, that had pass'd between us, about the Difference in our Persuasions: You desir'd to see my Arguments, and to consider them at your Leisure. I have now comply'd with that Request, but saw it necessary before I could do so, to enlarge and illustrate them a little, that they might come closer to many of those Scruples which I found sometimes alledged in these Controversies. If I give this as one Reason of my not complying sooner with your Desire, though I had other Reasons for this Delay; yet you are sensible how just an Excuse I have, in the few Minutes I can spare from the constant Engagement of my daily Business. You'll, perhaps, ask why I now send you this in Print, which I once seem'd to be averse to. But when I found you called in Mr. A— to answer my Argument from the 1 Cor. 7. 14. I apprehended the Debate might not continue between you and me alone; and therefore thought it better to submit to the Censure of the World, than to part with my Papers into private Hands, where the Design of them might be mistaken. I have carefully avoided all undue Reflections upon either Persons or Parties; hoping thereby that I should make no Man my Enemy by a candid Defence of what I firmly believe to be agreeable to the Laws of God and Christ; and being desirous whatever Difference there may be in our Persuasions; to observe strictly all Rules of Christian Charity, Love and Friendship. I'll detain you no longer in the Way of Preface, but beg you fairly to consider the following Arguments.

C H A P. I.

THE most considerable Objections that I have yet met with against the Baptism of Infants, are these Four:

I. It is pleaded, that it is an unreasonable Practice, in that Infants are not capable of knowing any Thing of the Covenant into which they are admitted by it.

II. That it is contrary to the Institution of our Saviour, which, you say, requiring Persons to be first Instructed before Baptized, thereby excludes Infants as incapable of that Antecedent Instruction.

III. That it is an unwarrantable, and unlawful Practice, in that there is no Precept, nor Command, nor Authority for it in all the Word of GOD.

IV. *and Lastly*, That there is no mention at all made of such Practice in all the NEW TESTAMENT.

Now if it be made appear, that none of these Objections have any just Force in them, this, I think, will be sufficient to vindicate the Church of *England*, in retaining this Ancient and Pious Practice.

1. The First Objection is, That it is an unreasonable Practice, in that Infants are not capable of knowing any Thing of the Covenant; The Want of which Knowledge, and the Incapacity thereupon, is thought to make their Baptism unreasonable and absurd. But if all other Objections have no more Force than this, they will admit of a very quick Dispatch.

1. In that it is not at all disagreeable to the Reason of Mankind for Infants to be bound in Covenants, to the future Performance of Conditions; which they at present know nothing at all of, nor can be capable of performing, till they come to Age. This is common among Men, and practised almost every Day. Every Will, and every Conditional Settlement of an Estate on Heirs, is a Covenant: And every Contract that a Guardian makes for a Minor, is made in that Infant's Name, and he is bound by it, and really enjoys the Benefits of it, in Expectation of a future Performance of the Conditions by him. And Baptism is only the Seal of a Covenant or Contract between God and Man: Why then should it be thought strange, or incredible, that God should thus deal with us in a Dispensation of Grace and Mercy?

2. If

2. If the Incapacity of Infants were in the Nature of Things a necessary Bar, it must be an Universal and Indispensable One, and must exclude Infants from all Covenants with God whatever, whether of Works, or of Grace; whether by the Law, or by the Gospel. For what arises absolutely from the Nature of Things, must needs be Universal, and Perpetual; and must have always the same Influence.

But that the Incapacity of Infants is not an Universal and Perpetual Bar to all Covenants, our Adversaries themselves, I hope, will grant; in that Infants were admitted into a Covenant with God under the Law. If then God admits Infants into a Covenant under the Law; he may do so under the Gospel too, if he pleases. And if God may do so, it can be neither Improper nor Unreasonable, nor in the Nature of Things Absurd. The Difference in the Conditions or Substance of the Covenant makes nothing in the Case; the one being Law, the other Gospel, the one of Works and the other of Grace, is nothing to the Purpose; because Infants are equally incapable of understanding both. And where the whole Stress lies in the Incapacity of the Subject, it must have as much Force in the One as in the Other. If it be said God may admit them but does not: This is running before-hand to a new Objection, that shall be considered in its proper place. The only Thing now in debate is, whether the Natural Incapacity of Infancy be in it self a necessary Bar; if it be, this must be alledged as an universal Obstacle to all Covenants as well as to this; we plainly see that it is not an universal Obstacle, because God hath admitted them into Covenant with him, and bound them to the Performance of Conditions by that Covenant; Therefore this Objection is of no Force, in that it does not necessarily conclude. This, indeed, some of your Persuasion seem to grant.

Mr. Keach, p. 85.

If then the Incapacity of Infants is not in the Nature of Things a Necessary and Universal Bar to all Covenants in general: I am to enquire whether there be any thing in the Christian Covenant peculiarly that excludes them from thence.

C H A P. II.

THE Second Objection is, That Infants as incapable of understanding the Covenant, and believing and repenting; are by our Saviour's Institution Prohibited and Excluded from Baptism; for, say you, the Apostles were to make Disciples by Instruction before they were to Baptize them. Matt. 28. 19. *Go, teach all Nations, and then Baptize them.*

them. And Mark 16. 15, 16. *He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved.* This, say you, is the great Charter of the Gospel, which requiring Persons that are to be baptized, to be first made Disciples by Instruction and Believing: Does in so doing, exclude all that cannot be taught and believe?

I answer, In this Commission Christ had a more peculiar Regard to the Persons to whom the Apostles were first and more immediately sent; who were, indeed, Men and Women; and therefore he mentions such Qualifications antecedent to Baptism, as in Reason and the Nature of Things were indispensably necessary, considering the State of the World at that time. Men were almost universally revolted into Idolatry, Ignorance, Superstition, Profaneness, and other great Iniquities. And with these Qualifications it was not fit they should be admitted into a Covenant of Grace and Reconciliation with God. These were therefore first to be Converted and Reclaimed, and then Baptized. And this was the great Work to which the Apostles are here Commissioned. Now, if from hence you argue, that none ought to be baptized but those only who are thus taught and made Disciples by actual Belief: I must beg leave to ask, how you reconcile your Belief of Infants Salvation with these Texts? For they as much exclude Infants from Salvation, as from Baptism. I do not ask how Infants shall be saved; for in answer to that, you will say; *Secret Things belong to God.* But I ask, how you who do believe and confess that Infants may and shall be saved, do reconcile that Opinion with these Texts, and particularly with that of St. Mark, which does by the same Consequence prove, that Infants cannot be saved as that Infants ought not to be baptized. For observe the Argument, Christ says, Matt. 28. 19. *Go make Disciples of all Nations and baptize them.* And Mark 16. 15, 16. *Preach the Gospel to every Creature, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned:* From whence you argue thus; None are to be baptized but those who are first made Disciples by believing; but Infants are not capable of believing; therefore they ought not to be Baptized. Now in the very same Manner one may argue thus, That Infants shall not be saved. *He that believeth not shall be damned;* Infants are not capable of Believing, Ergo, Infants must all be damned. This is just the same Way of Arguing without any Difference at all. How will you answer this? Will you set up for this Peice of Cruelty, that all Infants are damned? If not; you must say here as we do concerning Baptism: That these Texts are improperly and impertinently alledged in the Case of Infants; because they were never intended to extend to them. Otherwise, they will as certainly conclude against the Salvation of Infants, as against the Baptism of them, in that Faith and Repentance are as necessary to the one, as to the other.

The

The Matter then, in short, is this; Men and Women were first of all to be made Disciples by a Saving Faith; the Case of Children was a distinct Case to be considered afterwards; when their Parents had been first converted: And tho' believing was necessary in the Parents to be before their Baptism, yet this does not prove that their Infants were to be excluded from the Sacrament, because they could not actually believe.

But you'll reply, is not Faith then necessarily required of Persons to be baptized? I answer; Where the Apostles found Infidelity and Iniquity, they were necessarily to preach Faith and Repentance before they baptized. But the Scripture intimates, that the Innocence of harmless Babes (whose original Guilt is done away by Christ) and who never offended him by any actual Transgression, is as pleasing to God, and as agreeable a Qualification for the Admission into a Covenant of Grace and Mercy, and sealing that Covenant by the Sacrament of Baptism; as either the Faith of the actual Believer, or the Repentance of the Penitent. Christ has said of us all, That *unless we become as little Children*, Mat. 18. 3. that is, for their lovely Innocence, *we shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of God*. I do not argue whether he spake this with a particular Respect to the Baptism of Infants or no. I urge not that: But I speak of the Qualifications that recommend us to God's Favour and Mercy: And Christ does here declare, That their Innocence is as grateful to him, as any Man's Faith and Repentance: And for this Reason, they ought not to be excluded.

The Truth of what I now maintain, I think, is sufficiently prov'd from the very Nature of this Sacrament. Baptism, as I understand it, is a Seal for the Confirmation of that Covenant which God has made with Mankind in *Jesus Christ*; and that Covenant is on God's Part a free Promise, and Engagement to grant Mercy, and Salvation through the Blood of Christ, to All, whose actual Sins do not render them incapable of, and exclude them from it. From whence I argue thus; Those that are not in a State of actual Sin, are capable of being admitted into this Covenant, and thereby entitled to the Promises; for nothing but Sin made us at first obnoxious to Death, and nothing but the Guilt of Sin can exclude us from eternal Life: And those that are capable of being admitted into the Covenant, and entitled to the Promises, are capable of that Sacrament which is the Seal of it. This, I think, is a good Conclusion. Infants therefore, tho' by Nature born in Sin, yet being reconcil'd to God, I don't say by Baptism, but by the Blood of *Jesus Christ*, are capable of Admission into the Covenant by Baptism, which is the Seal of it, tho' they do not actually believe. For this Reason it is,
that..

that the Church of *England* has so judiciously declar'd, That *Infants baptiz'd, and dying before they commit any actual Transgression, are undoubtedly saved.* For, dying in a State of Reconciliation, and having the Promises of God confirm'd by this Seal: They are safe, having not by any actual Violation of the Covenant forfeited the Claim. This I cannot but think a reasonable Way of Arguing from the Nature of this Sacrament and Covenant: And if it be, these Texts do not exclude Infants, either directly, or by Consequence.

And, methinks, it favours of Rashness and Inconsideration, to think, that because God has required Faith, and Repentance of Men in a State of Sin, and under the Power of abominable Lusts; and consequently, altogether unfit to be admitted into Covenant till they abjure their Idolatry, and abandon their Vices: That therefore innocent Babes who never offended shall not be admitted through want of the same Qualifications. The different Circumstances, and Conditions of the Persons, is a sufficient Proof that the same Qualifications are not necessarily required in both. But I foresee some Objections which I will briefly consider, and then proceed.

1. It is pleaded, that Capacity gives no Right; you may have a Capacity to be a Justice of Peace, but must have a Commission before you ought to act as such. And tho' the Innocence of Babes be thus acceptable to God, and he does for Christ's sake save them, yet this will not at all countenance their being baptiz'd; because it is no where commanded. I answer, That if this be all, then the Case is changed, and the Objection is not that Infants are excluded, but that their Baptism is no where commanded. I was only now to prove, that nothing in the Nature of this Sacrament does necessarily exclude them. Infants being in a State of Reconciliation and Favour, does, I think, sufficiently prove that: How far a particular Command is necessary to be added to this Capacity, is another Question that shall be consider'd in its place.

2. I may possibly be asked, how I reconcile this Doctrine to our *Church-Catechism*, which teaches, that *Faith and Repentance are required of Persons to be Baptiz'd?* Indeed, I think, the Answer is easie; for the Catechism speaks ~~it~~ indefinitely, without any respect to Adults or Infants, as Christ has done in *Mat. 28.* and declares what in general are the Conditions of the Covenant, and consequently not of this Sacrament only, but of our Salvation also: And these are Faith, and Repentance, which every one that enters into this Covenant, when they come to Age, are obliged to. But it no where declares, that actual Faith, and actual Repentance are universally necessary to all Persons

sons whatever, that shall be admitted to this Sacrament. No, it declares the Contrary; that tho' Infants, *by reason of their tender Age, cannot perform* these Conditions; yet they are baptized, not upon *their Sureties Faith, or believing by Proxy*: But upon the Expectation grounded on their Engagement, that the Children shall be taught and exhorted to perform them afterwards. And this, I think, is agreeable to what I have here maintained.

3. It may possibly be objected, That if this Doctrine be true, it will from hence follow, that the Infant-Children of *Turks, Jews, and Pagans* may be as capable of Baptism, as the Children of Believers; because they are innocent as well as others, and have their original Guilt as well expiated by the Blood of Christ. I answer, Infants as to Covenants, and Privileges are reputed in the same Estate, and Right with their Parents, and that because being under their Tuition its presumed they will have the same Principles and Persuasion. And therefore, as the Children of Unbelievers on this account may in some Sense be said to be Partakers of their Parents Infidelity; as they are like to be brought up in it: For this Reason they are denied Baptism. Otherwise they are capable, and may be admitted wherever there is sufficient Satisfaction given to the Church; that they shall be educated in the Christian Religion. And the Reason why they are not admitted now, is only on this Account, because it would be preposterous to admit Children into a Religion which they were never likely to be instructed, and educated in afterwards. But, I say, could the Church be assur'd, that they would be instructed, and educated in that Faith; they also might be baptized, and nothing in our Saviour's Commission necessarily excludes them.

4. *and Lastly*, If it be objected, That this Doctrine makes the Baptism of Infants unnecessary, in that if they were in a State of Reconciliation and Favour before Baptism; they can profit nothing by being baptized. I answer, I did not undertake to prove that the Baptism of Infants was absolutely necessary to their Salvation; but that it is lawful, and not at all disagreeable to Christ's Institution; and therefore no just Cause of the Separation from the Communion of our Church; which is all that I now contend for.

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C H A P. III.

THE Third Objection is, That it is an Unwarrantable, and Unlawful Practice to baptize Infants, because there is, you say, no Precept, nor Command, nor Authority for it in all the Word of God: And this is the Sheet-Anchor on which you lay the greatest Stress. For when we can demonstrate by God's own Authority, and Example, that the natural Incapacity of Infants is no necessary Bar to exclude them from the Seal of the Covenant; you reply, all this is nothing, because there was an express and positive Command for Circumcising Infants, but there is none at all for Baptizing them; and when we argue that Faith and Repentance are made as necessary to Salvation as they are to Baptism; and consequently do no more exclude Infants from this Sacrament than from Salvation; you plead, that tho' they are capable and within the Covenant of Grace, yet they ought not to be Baptized, because it is not Commanded. In Christianity nothing is to be done without the express Authority of God's Word.

And here you load us with heavy Charges of pretending to take the Word of God for our only Rule of Faith and Manners, and yet to keep Unscriptural Ordinances, and do that which the whole Word of God speaks not one Word of from the Beginning to the End. So that *we of the Church of England are guilty of adding to the Divine Laws of God in the most weighty Matters of Christianity without his Authority: Teaching for Doctrine the Commandments of Men.* This is a severe Charge, of which if we were indeed guilty, it must needs be heavy upon us at the last Great Day. And that we may be the better prepared then, let it be considered fairly what we have to alledge in our Defence now.

First, This Argument may easily be turned upon you; the Baptism of Infants, you say, is no Gospel-Ordinance; 'tis not Commanded, and therefore it is unlawful. I reply, 'tis no where forbidden, and therefore it is not unlawful.

And this Argument of no Prohibition is of more than ordinary Force here; in that God all along in both the former Covenants of *Abraham* and *Moses* having commanded Infants to be admitted, and sealed by the Sacrament, which was ordained for the Confirmation thereof: When he changed the Ordinance, and instituted Baptism to be the Seal of his Covenant, it was then proper to have declared, if Infants that were fit Subjects to receive the Seal of it before, should now be excluded.

For

For his having given no exprefs Prohibition, goes a great way to vindicate the Lawfulness of this Practice; in that it seems to show his Pleasure, that they should be continued to have the Seal of the Covenant as they had had before. For if ever Prohibition was to be expected, to declare a Thing unlawful; it was to the Abolishing a Practice that had been so long established, and received; I mean the admitting Infants into Covenant with him.

2. But *Secondly*, We have the Authority of God for this Practice in two Respects. 1. The Authority of his own Example. 2. Of his Command in his revealed Word and Laws.

1. We have the Authority of God's Example for our Warrant in this Practice; and as Mr. *Keach*, I remember, confesses, *Page 35, 36*, that an Apostolical Practice, or a Gospel-Precedent is of equal Authority with a Gospel-Precept: So, I hope, it will be allowed that a Divine Precedent, from the Example of God, is of the same Authority also, when the Nature of Things, and the Circumstances are alike.

But before I explain this Argument, I cannot but observe to you by that little I have seen in these Controversies, that the naming of such an Argument will raise some Mens Wonder, who being quicker to wrangle about Words than to weigh the Reason of Things; will break out into Exclamations, and say; *Prove Baptism of Infants from the Example of God! Did Christ ever baptize an Infant? Is there one Syllable of such a Practice in all Sacred Writ? This must be the Old Thred-bare Argument from the Analogy between Baptism and Circumcision. Infants under the Law, or before it were Circumcised, Ergo, they may be Baptized, and what a Non-sequitur is this?*

But, *Sir*, after all that Raillery and Disdain with which this Argument is treated; which has, indeed, been often urged, and as often laughed at; yet I must confess, I cannot despise it, but am perswaded that there is great Force in it, if it be stated well, and set in a true Light.

I do not then insist that one was a Type of the other, nor argue from a bare Analogy, as to Jewish Church Membership, or the like, but my Argument is this; Baptism is now the Seal of the Covenant which was once sealed by Circumcision; Infants were by God's own Command admitted then, *Ergo*, Infants may be admitted now: Or thus, God did admit Infants into a Covenant of Grace and Salvation, thro' Jesus Christ, and upon the Conditions of Faith and Obedience in that Covenant made with *Abraham*, and confirmed by the Seal of Circumcision; Baptism of Infants does but admit them into the same Covenant upon the same Conditions; and as a Seal confirms that Covenant to them: *Ergo*, in Baptizing Infants we act by God's own Authority and Example; for we do

no more in baptizing them than by God's own Ordinance was done in Circumcising them. The Rite, indeed, is changed, it was Circumcising; it is now Baptism: What then? The Use of both these Rites is still the same; the One is a Seal of the Covenant of God, and so is the Other a Seal of the same Covenant. And so after all the pretended *Non-sequiturs* in this Argument from Circumcision to Baptism; when the Use or main Design of both these Rites, or Sacraments shall appear to be the same, the Argument will have Force, and the Change of the external Ordinances cannot lessen it.

In the Prosecution therefore of this Argument, I have Two Things which you will challenge me to prove.

1. That Circumcision, when enjoyed *Abraham*, was ordained to be the Seal of that Covenant which God made with him.

2. That the Covenant with *Abraham* was the same with ours, that is a Covenant of Grace and Salvation through Jesus Christ, and upon the Conditions of Faith and Obedience.

And if these Propositions be found true, the Consequence, I think, will be so clear as to want no Proof.

First, That Circumcision, when enjoyed *Abraham*, was ordained to be the Seal of that Covenant which God made with him. And this, I think, is very plain, both from the Original Institution of Circumcision in the Old Law, and the Explanations of it in the New: As to the Old Testament, God having made some Trial of *Abraham*, by calling him out of his own Country, and having found him readily observant in all that he commanded him; declares, *Gen. 17. 2.* that he will now establish a Covenant with him: *I will make my Covenant between me and thee, and thou shalt be a Father of many Nations, Ver. 4.* And again, *Ver. 7.* *I will establish my Covenant between me and thee, and thy Seed after thee, in their Generations, for an everlasting Covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy Seed after thee.* And as every Contract among Men must have its Sanction; and Establishment; so here, God declares after what Manner this Covenant should be confirmed, *Ver. 10.* *This is my Covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy Seed after thee; every Man-Child among you shall be Circumcised:* Which Words do not make Circumcision the Substance of the Covenant, but only the Manner of Establishing, and Confirming it; as appears from the following Verse: And ye shall circumcise the Flesh of your Fore-skin, and it shall be a Token, or Sign of Covenant between me and you. And again, *Ver. 13.* *My Covenant shall be in your Flesh, for an everlasting Covenant,* that is, a Token or Pledge in your

Bishop Patrick, in
Lect.

Flesh of an everlasting Covenant: For, as a Reverend Father of our own says, 'It was not a meer Mark where-
' by

' by they should be known to be *Abraham's Seed*, and distinguish-
 ' ed from other Nations; but they were hereby made the Chil-
 ' dren of the Covenant, and intitled to the Blessings of it; and Cir-
 ' cumcision was the Seal of it. And this is farther evident from the
 New Testament; for *St. Paul* in his Controversie with the *Jews*, about
 Justification; instances in *Abraham*, whom he declares to be justified
 not for his being circumcised, but for the Faith he had before it; *Rom. 4.*
11. He received the Sign of Circumcision, a Seal, or Pledge of the Righte-
ousness of that Faith which he had yet being uncircumcised; a Seal of that
 Covenant by which God receives him as Righteous for his Faith. And
 thus *St. Peter*, *Acts 7. 8. He gave him the Covenant of Circumcision*, that
 is, he gave him the Covenant which he sealed, and confirmed by Cir-
 cumcision; which is both a usual, and very intelligible way of speak-
 ing: So also *St. Paul*, *Gal. 3. 15. Brethren, I speak after the Manner of*
Men, if it be but a Man's Covenant, yet if it be confirmed, no Man disan-
nulleth, or addeth thereto. And again, *Ver. 17. he speaks of the Covenant*
that was confirmed before of God in Christ, plainly alluding to this Cove-
 nant with *Abraham*, which was Sealed, and had its Confirmation by
 Circumcision.

2. The Second Observation was, that this Covenant with *Abraham*,
 of which Circumcision was the Seal, is the same Covenant with that
 which we Christians are now admitted into with God, by Christ.
Mr. Keach, I remember, disowns this; and contrary to what I now
 maintain, offers this Argument, *p. 47. That Covenant that was made to*
separate the natural Seed of Abraham from all other Nations of the World,
and made sure unto them: the Earthly Promise of the Land of Canaan; could
not be a Covenant of Grace which concerns the Infant-Seed of Believers under
the Gospel.

He who often finds Fault with other Peoples Logic, should take spe-
 cial Care of his own: Here was one little, but material Word omitted
 in this first Proposition: It should have run thus, *That Covenant which*
was made only to separate, &c. The want of that *only* spoils the Conse-
 quence. It might be made thus to separate *Abraham's Seed*, and it
 might be made to other Ends too: And so it might be a Covenant of
 Grace, notwithstanding God intended by it that Distinction of his Peo-
 ple also.

To prove then that the Covenant; besides the Promises it contained
 of a Land of *Canaan*, and a numerous Seed, was also a Covenant of
 Grace and Mercy, and Salvation in *Jesus Christ*, and consequently the
 same Covenant with ours: Be pleased, *Sir*, to consider,

1. That the Covenant was made on the same general Conditions.
2. That it contained the same general Promises.
3. That

3. That both were founded on the same Consideration, and had regard to the same Mediator *Jesus Christ*.

1. That this Covenant which God made with *Abraham* was founded on the very same Conditions, on which that is established, which we Christians make with God in *Christ*; the Sum of what the Gospel of *Christ* requires, in order to the Salvation of our Souls, is only a firm Faith and sincere Obedience: And if this be so, the Agreement in this respect is very exact; God having required Faith and Obedience by the Covenant which he made with *Abraham*, as strictly, and as indispensably, as he has done by *Christ*.

As to Faith, the Case is so very plain, and so universally acknowledged on all sides, that I shall need to say but little upon it: The Faith of *Abraham* was so eminently renown'd, and so illustrious a Pattern to all succeeding Ages, that to the everlasting Memory of it, he is distinguished by that signal Character, the *Father of the Faithful*; and all Christians in the World are called his Children, as *we walk in the Steps of that Faith*, Rom. 4. 12. And that this Faith was the Condition of *Abraham's* being received into Covenant, is evident not only from the Old Testament, which says, *Gen. 15. 6. That he believed in the Lord, and it was accounted to him for Righteousness*; but also from the New, in which *St. Paul* convinces the *Jewish Converts*, that the Works of the Law were not the Conditions of Justification and Salvation; because *Abraham himself was justified by Faith*, Rom. 4. 2, to 11. And that his Posterity were bound to this general Faith, is plain in *St. Paul's* Vindication of his Orthodoxy, on the very Account of his Believing *all that is written in the Law, and in the Prophets*, Acts 24. 14. And as Faith was one part of *Abraham's* Covenant, so Obedience was another: And this appears plainly by that Injunction which God gave him at the very same time that he was establishing his Covenant with him, *Gen. 17. 12. The Lord appear'd unto Abraham, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God, walk before me, and be thou perfect*: Which Words the *Jews* themselves look upon to be so much a Command of Universal Obedience, as from thence to conclude, that in Circumcision they all covenanted to have no other God but him. [See *Bishop Patrick*.]

2. As *Abraham's* Covenant is the same with ours in its Conditions, so it is in its Promises too. The Two great Blessings of the Gospel are Justification here, and eternal Life hereafter: As to the first of these, that *Abraham* was *Justified by his Faith*, and that consequently Justification is one of the great Benefits and Blessings of the Covenant God made with him, is so plainly and expressly asserted in the Gospel, that it is needless to go about to prove it.

And

And that eternal Life in the World to come was promised to *Abraham* and his Posterity by Christ, as well as it is to us, appears from hence, that the Land of *Canaan* has always been looked on as a Type and Figure of Heaven; and that not only by us in these latter Ages of the World, but is so esteemed by *St. Paul* himself, *Heb.* 3. 1. And from the Account which the New Testament gives of the Spiritual Meaning and Design of the Old, when God declares to *Abraham*, That he would be his God, *Gen.* 17. 7. and to *Isaac*, *Gen.* 26. 3. and to *Jacob*, *Gen.* 28. 13; That he intended hereby to reward their Faith and Obedience with the Kingdom of Heaven, is evident from the Words of Christ; who from these Promises proves the Certainty of such a future State to the *Jews*, among whom it was controverted, *Mat.* 22. 31, 32. And *St. Paul* tells us, that *Abraham* and the Patriarchs expected such a Recompence to be couched under those Temporal Promises, *Heb.* 11. 13. where he says, *These all died in Faith, not having actually received the Promises, that is, the Blessings promised, while they were on Earth; but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were Strangers and Pilgrims on Earth, and desired, or looked for a better Country; that is to say, an heavenly.* And what can be a better Proof that this was a Covenant of Grace, than to find the chief Blessings of the Gospel here promised by God, and believed and expected by the Patriarchs, on the very Conditions of the Gospel? But;

3. *Lastly*, Both these are founded on the same Consideration, and equally have respect to the same Mediator Jesus Christ. And for the Confirmation of this, we all know, that the Promises which God made to *Abraham*, saying, *In thy Seed shall all the Nations of the Earth be blessed;* are truly and really fulfilled only in Jesus Christ. And as the Holy Spirit of God has taught us this, so Christ tells us, that *Abraham* himself understood it so: For discoursing with the *Jews*, about him, he said, *John* 8. 56. *Your Father Abraham rejoiced, and desired to see my Day, and he saw it, and was glad,* (i. e.) he was solicitous more perfectly to understand the Substance of these Promises, and he did understand them to be intended of me, and was delighted in the Contemplation.

But whether all that succeeded this Patriarch had the same particular Communication of this great Mystery, is not at all to our Purpose: 'Tis sufficient that the New Testament declares, that what Blessings were thus graciously promised in this Covenant with *Abraham* were with Reference to, and for the Sake of Jesus Christ that was to come: And this *St. Paul* has expressly affirmed, *Gal.* 3. 16, 17. *Now to Abraham and his Seed were the Promises made, he said not, to Seeds as of many, but as of One,* and

and to thy Seed which is Christ. So he goes on, *this I say that the Covenant which was confirmed before of God in Christ, &c.* Affirming, in short, all that I have here been proving, *viz.* that Circumcision was the Seal for the Confirmation of that very Covenant which God made with *Abraham* in Christ Four Hundred and Thirty Years before the Law was given. So that *Abraham* had not only the same Covenant with us, but the very same Gospel that is preached to us, was preached to *Abraham* also, Gal. 3. 8. *The Scripture fore-seeing that God would justify the Heathen through Faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham.* What Gospel was it? It was certainly the Gospel of Christ, through whom alone it was said to *Abraham*, *In thee shall all the Nations of the Earth be blessed.* And it was certainly at the Time when he established that Covenant which was confirmed of God in Christ. And all the Seed of *Abraham* that were circumcised were bound to worship the true God, and believe the general Promises of a *Messiah*; as we Christians are to believe and obey the Gospel more particularly revealed by Christ. From hence I conclude, seeing Infants at Eight Days old were circumcised and admitted into this Covenant with God, by his own Appointment and Command; this Command is a good Authority for the Baptizing of Infants, which is but a new Way of Admission into the same Covenant.

For while there is no Alteration of the Substance of the Covenant, but only of the external Ceremony of Admission, which is the Seal of it; all Things else are to continue as they were, till God shall ordain otherwise by a new Law: But when he did change the Seal from Circumcision to Baptism, he did not by any express Law forbid Infants to be admitted: Therefore by Virtue of the first Original Institution when God made this Covenant with *Abraham* by Circumcision, and commanded Infants to be admitted, we have Authority to admit them now by Baptism. For where the Covenant, and the Capacities are the same, the Reason also must be of the same Force. But to this Argument I have found it objected

- 1. That what was done in *Abraham's* Time, was in the Minority of the Church, when Things were obscurely represented, but now, that we have clear Light, and in that respect are under a better Dispensation, there is not the same Reason for admitting Infants, which there was then: All the Force of this Objection lies in the different Degrees of Revelation, that have been made to *Abraham*, and to us; and this I readily acknowledge for a great Truth: That which God intended in that Covenant with *Abraham*, was but obscurely, and in general set forth, and the Particulars both of Faith and Practice, and also of our Reward and Happiness are more fully and clearly brought to Light by Jesus Christ.

When

When therefore I assert, that our Covenant is the same with that made with *Abraham* and his Seed, I speak of Generals, not of Particulars; and my Meaning is, that Faith and Obedience were required in *Abraham's* Covenant, as well as they are from us. Not but that the particular Articles of that Faith, and the particular Duties of that Obedience too, are now more fully discovered, and set in a clearer Light. But I cannot see how this makes any Difference, either as to the Capacity, or the Right of Admission to this Sacrament; because Children being equally insensible of both, cannot be less capable of the one than of the other.

2. It is objected, that there was an express Command for the Circumcision of Infants, but there is none for baptizing them. To this I answer;

There was not the same Necessity for it: There was an absolute Necessity for commanding Infants expressly to be circumcised; because there was nothing Antecedent to that Institution, that could give Light or Knowledge to direct to it. But there was no such Necessity for an express Precept for Baptizing Infants; because this might be learnt from the Authority of God in the Antecedent Institution under *Abraham*; For they were certainly as fit Subjects of the one as of the other; because the Conditions were the same; and if as fit Subjects of the Covenant, equally to be received by the Seal of it.

This I am inclined to believe was the first Ground of Baptizing Infants among Christians. When the Apostles first began to preach the Gospel, and especially to the *Jews*; the Substance of their Preaching was, that what God had long before declared by *Abraham* and the Prophets, he had now fulfilled and accomplished by Jesus Christ. From whence they were to learn, that this Gospel was no new Thing, but what had been long declared, and prophesied in old Time: The Covenant was the same, the Religion was the same, only brought into a clearer Light by a more perfect Revelation. This was the Sum of St. *Peter's* Sermon, *Acts* 3. 18. *Those Things that God before had shewed by the Mouth of all his Prophets, that Christ should suffer, he hath so fulfilled.* And *Acts* 11. 25. *Ye are the Children of the Prophets, and of the Covenant which God made with our Fathers, saying unto Abraham, and in thy Seed shall all Nations of the Earth be blessed.* And for this Cause St. *Paul* says, *Rom.* 15. 8. *That Christ Jesus was a Minister of the Circumcision, for the Truth of God, to confirm the Promises made unto the Fathers.* And as this was the common Subject of the Apostles Preaching, so those who were hereby convinced, and prevailed on to believe, were immediately admitted into the Christian Covenant by Baptism.

Here is, indeed, no express mention made of Infants, because there was no Occasion for it: Their own Reason and Understanding were sufficient to convince them, that what God had authorized and commanded from the Beginning, was a very good Example for them to imitate. And consequently, that when Circumcision was abolished from being any longer the Seal of God's Covenant; and Baptism was instituted in its stead, there was the same Reason for baptizing Infants; that there had been for circumcising them: God's having commanded the One, was an Evidence of the Lawfulness of the Other. And what they were sufficiently instructed in by the Authority of a Divine Precept and Command, in the Old Testament, was not absolutely necessary to be repeated in the New; For to what purpose should there be a particular Revelation, to discover that which Men might be sufficiently convinc'd of without one? And yet again,

2. The Baptism of Infants is founded on God's Word, in that, tho' there be no such Precept, or Command of baptizing, in which Infants are *totidem verbis* expressed; yet there is such a Precept and Command, in which Infants are certainly included: And this I shall prove thus;

1. From St. Peter's Words, *Acts 2. 39. Repent, and be baptized, that your Sins may be blotted out, for the Promise is to you and your Children.* In which Words Children are fairly intimated, at least, to be entitled both to the Promises of the Covenant, and to the Sacrament that confirms it. I am not ignorant, that some laugh at this Argument, with a great deal of Scorn, and Derision, and think it ridiculous to mention it; because Men and Women are often call'd Children in Scripture; as the *Children of Israel* are often spoken of when Infants are not all intended, but only Men of the *Posterity of Israel*. I grant it, and yet when they have laugh'd their fill, I cannot think this Argument so ridiculous, nor so much to be despis'd: For, tho' its true, the Word Children, if that were all, might import no more than the Posterity: Yet the Promise here spoken of, is that very Covenant into which Children, I mean Infants, were commanded to be admitted. So that if the Promise which God made with *Abraham*, and his Children included Infants; this Promise made to Christians, and their Children, will by the same Authority, include Infants also; for the Promise is still the same.

2. The Precept for Baptizing is general, and does not exclude any that are capable of being admitted into Covenant with God in Christ; Infants are capable of being admitted into Covenant with God in Christ; therefore the Precept does and must include them: The first is evident from the very Words of *St. Matt. 28. Go make Disciples of all Nations, and baptize them;* which being given in general, and unlimited Terms,

Terms, and ordained by Almighty God as one of the ordinary Means of Salvation, ought to be extended to all Persons whatsoever, that are capable of Admission into the Covenant. Infants are capable of being admitted into the Covenant, and then Infants are also included in this Precept or Command. The Latter I have in great measure prov'd already in my Answer to the Two first Objections. I shall only add here, that it seems strange to me, when so many of your Perswasion allow Infants to be in the Covenant, and believe that they shall be saved, which they cannot be, but by the Merits of Christ; that yet none of them should think Infants intitled to this Sacrament. For why should not the Covenant be confirmed to all those, to whom the Promises of it belong? If indeed all Infants were said and prov'd to be in a State of Sin and inevitable Damnation, this would be a real Argument against us; for then, we should be charged with confirming the Covenant to those to whom the Promises of it do not at all belong. And this would be a Crime indeed. But if Infants may be saved by Christ, nothing of this can be alledged. But you say, that we baptize Infants that know nothing of it, and that is almost as bad; Why so? We only by this Seal confirm the Covenant to those to whom God has promised the Blessings of it. And where is the Impropriety of that? Or why is it more absurd to baptize those in the Name of Christ that know nothing at all of him, than to Redeem and Save those by Christ that know nothing at all of him?

In short, if no good Reason of Difference can be alledged from the Nature of Things, let Men wrangle never so long, it must follow, that if Infants are in the Covenant of Christ, they are also fit Subjects of Christian Baptism; and if they are fit Subjects of Christian Baptism, then the general Precept includes them; and so the Baptism of Infants is as much founded on the Authority of God's Word, as the Baptism of Men and Women.

But I am sensible, Sir, you will not acquiesce in this: No, *Baptism is a Sacrament, a Fundamental in Religion, that gives Being to a Church; in which you must have a Command, mentioning Infants expressly, totidem verbis, or it will not do; Inferences and Deductions here are not of sufficient Force.* But by the Way; What is your Second Objection, but a Deduction, that Infants not being capable of Faith, are not capable of Baptism? This is unreasonable, and very hard, when you your self must argue by Deductions and Inferences against the Baptism of Infants, not to allow us to do so for it; I appeal whether this be fair. However, fore-seeing that this my Argument would be thus withstood, I proceed to show,

1. That clear and evident Deductions from the Word of God are of equal Force with the exprefs Word of it; and that in Fundamental, as well as in other Principles of Religion: For, can we suppose, that in the Manifestation of all those Divine Truths, which are revealed in the Gospel, God would have us supersede all Use of our own Understandings in the Conclusions to be drawn, and the Consequences that follow from such Doctrines? And yet we must do this, if the Inferences and Deductions from them be not acknowledg'd of sufficient Authority to determine our Judgment; and guide our Practise. It was certainly no part of God's Design to undermine our Reason by Revelation; but to Enlighten and Improve it; to supply its Defects, by teaching us those Things which of our selves we were not able to find out; and to clear some Principles of Religion that to the Light of Reason only seem'd disputable and doubtful. But where that Light shines bright, and clear of it self, it is a Divine Lamp held forth from Heaven to direct us, and its Authority is not to be despis'd.

Thus for Instance, in the Institution of a Sacrament, we must expect a particular Revelation. For this being no part of natural Religion, but a Positive Ordinance, and depending on the sole Pleasure and Will of God; we can know nothing but what he shall be pleas'd to reveal. For tho' baptizing was in use among the *Jews*, as a Rite in admitting Profelytes, and by our Saviour receiv'd from them; yet it must be his Positive Decree and Command, that must make it a Sacrament to us. Had it therefore been the Authority of the Institution it self that had been in dispute: You had argu'd well, that an exprefs Precept was to be expected. But as to the Subjects of Baptism, or the Persons to be baptized, the Case is not the same, nor is there the same Reason to look for a Command mentioning Infants in exprefs Words: For, tho' the Sacrament be new, the Covenant is still the same. And therefore, we may here argue, and be particularly instructed by Parity of Reason, *viz.* that those who were admitted to the Old Covenant may be admitted to the New; because the Conditions, and the Promises are the same in both. And here Deductions and Inferences from God's Word are of sufficient Force to determine the Argument, and ought to be received in all such Cases. And the chief Thing to be respected, is not whether the Matter be Fundamental or no; but the Certainty of it, and the clear Evidence of its Truth. A certain, and evident Truth ought to be received in Things Fundamental as well as not Fundamental, let the Way of attaining the Knowledge be what it will; whether from the Light of Reason, or Revelation; or Deduction, and Inferences from it.

2. But to make this more plain I shall further show from St. *Peter's* own Example, in being determined by such Arguments in a Case equally Fundamental, that this Authority ought to be submitted to in the Case now before us. The Case I shall instance in, is, the Admission of the *Gentiles* into the Church of Christ, and baptizing them: And there, the Question once was much as it is now, *viz.* about the fit Subjects of Baptism. For some then did as firmly believe, that the *Gentiles* as polluted and unclean, were as unfit to be admitted into the Covenant with God, as others now-a-days would have Infants excluded for their Incapacities. And I would beg these Men to observe, what Methods the Holy Ghost used for the Conviction of St. *Peter*; and how he directs him by such a Train of general Instructions, as all along required the sincere and impartial Use of his Reason in the Application of them. And at last, there was no particular Command for baptizing them; all that the Holy Ghost discovered, amounted to no more than to show that the *Gentiles* were not by Almighty God excluded from the Covenant: From whence St. *Peter's* own Reason convinced him, that therefore they were to be baptized.

St. *Peter* had a Vision from Heaven, wherein there appeared, *Acts* 10. 11. *A certain Vessel descending unto him as it had been a great Sheet knit at the four Corners, and let down to the Earth: Wherein were all manner of four-footed Beasts of the Earth, and wild Beasts, and creeping Things, and Fowls of the Air. And there came a Voice to him, Rise Peter, kill and eat. And when Peter said, not so, Lord, for I have never eaten any Thing common or unclean: The Voice spake the second time, what God hath cleansed, that call not thou common. And this was done thrice, and the Vessel was received up again into Heaven.* Here is nothing in exprefs Words about the *Gentiles*, nor did St. *Peter* yet apprehend that they were concerned in the Vision: For it is said, *Ver.* 17. *That Peter doubted in himself what the Vision which he had seen should mean.*

But when the Holy Spirit gave him Warning of Three Men coming to him, and ordered him to go along with them, *doubting nothing*, and the Messengers presently came from *Cornelius* the *Centurion*, who was a *Gentile*; then he understood by Deductions of his own Reason, that the Vision referr'd to the *Gentiles*, and that God had signify'd thereby, that they, notwithstanding their reputed Uncleaness might be admitted into the Church of Christ. *Ver.* 31. *Of a Truth I perceive that God is no Respector of Persons, but in every Nation he that feareth God, &c.* Here was in all this no exprefs Command for admitting the *Gentiles*, but a Vision, from which this was to be learned by way of Inference and Deduction. And St. *Peter* convinced by this, preached *Jesus Christ* unto them; and

as he was Preaching, the *Holy Ghost* fell on all them that heard the Word, and they spake with Tongues, and magnified God, Ver. 44, 46. Here was all this while no Precept, or express Command to baptize them; but St. Peter being convinced, both by the Vision, and by the Descent of the Holy Ghost upon them, that the Covenant belonged to them: From thence concludes by way of Inference, that they therefore ought to be Baptized. Ver. 47, 48. *Can any Man forbid Water that these should be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the Name of the Lord.*

I hope it will not be disputed, but that the Admission of the *Gentiles*, is a very Fundamental Doctrin in Christianity. From this instance therefore I observe, 1. That the Inference from a Divine Revelation had with St. Peter, the Force and Authority of a Divine Law, as much as tho' it had been said *totidem verbis*, ye shall admit the *Gentiles* into the Christian Church. And therefore it was that he told his Brethren, *Acts* 11. 17. that his not complying had been withstanding the Authority of God. *Forasmuch then as God gave them the same Gift, that he did unto us, that believed in the Lord Jesus: What was I, that I could withstand God?* 2. That when we are sufficiently assured, that any Persons are capable of Admission into the Christian Covenant; this is a sufficient Authority to baptize them; without any particular express Command. The *Holy Ghost* in this Vision gave no Command for baptizing *Cornelius*, but only taught St. Peter, that the *Gentiles* were not to be excluded from the Covenant; and from thence he himself could sufficiently determine, that it was God's Will, that they should be baptized. *Who can forbid Water that these should be baptized?* And to bring this home to our Case, it is just thus that we argue for Infant Baptism. God has from the Beginning with *Abraham* taught us, that Infants are not excluded from the Covenant of *Christ*: And from thence we conclude as St. Peter did, that those who are not excluded from the Covenant, are included in the general Precept of admitting them by Baptism. And how strange is the Power of Prejudice not to be satisfy'd with that Way and Method of Conviction, which the *Holy Ghost* himself used to the great Apostle of our Saviour.

To this I have found objected; that there was express Law for Baptizing of the *Gentiles*. *Matt.* 18. *Go teach and baptize all Nations, &c.* To this I answer,

1. That tho' we, who are assured, that it was God's Purpose to call the *Gentiles*, do very well to interpret that Command for Converting and Baptizing them; yet the Apostles before this Vision of St. Peter did not apprehend this to be the Meaning of it. And a Law can have

have no Force, nor be any warrant, farther than the Purpose and Meaning of it can be understood.

In *Mat.* 24. 7. 2. The Words themselves did not necessarily and literally imply any such Meaning, that the *Gentiles* were to be admitted: For, as *Dr. Hammond* has truly observ'd, the Word *ἔθνη* did not then in common use import the *Gentiles*, always exclusive of the *Jews*; but is oft used for *the Jews, in their several Nations, and Countries*. And, indeed, had that Word in common Acceptation signify'd the *Gentiles*, I do not see how *St. Peter*, and the *other Apostles* could have been ignorant of that Doctrin. And it is possible, that on this Account God might think fit to make further Discoveries of the Calling in of the *Gentiles*, the better to instruct them what was his Purpose, and Intention in those former Words.

But, in short, what was it that moved *St. Peter* to baptize *Cornelius*? Did he do it upon the Authority of the Precept mentioned? *Mat.* 28. Its plain he did not; He did not then so understand those Words. And its observable, that in all that Affair there was not the least mention made of that fore-mention'd Precept, but it was the Vision that Convinced, and Rectify'd *St. Peter's* Judgment by the rational Inferences which he was to draw from it. And I may add that what convinced him, convinced all his Brethren too: *Acts* 11. 18. *When they heard those Things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying; then hath God also to the Gentiles granted Repentance unto Life.* And thus it still remains good, that an Argument by Deduction from Scripture or Revelation is sufficient to convince us, who are the fit Subjects of Christian Baptism; and by such an Argument we do prove, that the Baptism of infants is founded on the Authority of God's holy Word.

C H A P. III.

THE fourth and last Objection is, That there is no mention made of any such Practice among the Apostles, or the most Primitive Times. I must here observe that the State of the Question is now chang'd, from Matter of Law to Matter of Fact; and we are now only to enquire what Discoveries we can find of such a Practice in the Beginning of Christianity. As to this Objection therefore I answer,

1. That

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1. That tho' it were true, that there is no mention made in Scripture of such a Practice, yet this would not at all prove, that there was no such Thing in use; and especially, when it is found not contrary to the Laws of God. For we are no more to expect an express, clear, and distinct Account of all Apostolical Practices from the New Testament, than we are to expect a perfect History of the first Ages of the World from the Six first Chapters of *Genesis*. It was sufficient for the Apostles to acquaint us with all necessary Laws and Commands of God; and with the Practices only occasionally as it served either to illustrate or confirm those Laws when called in Question. Otherwise they were in many Particulars silent.

2. I do not affirm, that it was the constant and universal Practice from the Beginning of the Apostles Preaching to baptize Infants. For I know very well that God did not think fit to make a compleat Establishment of all Things at once, but brought Things to Perfection by degrees. As a Reverend Bishop has observed to us; there was a Time when the Christian Church consisted only of *Jewish* Converts, and we know when the *Gentiles* were first admitted: And there was a Time when Circumcision was thought necessary to be observed, and it was some Years before this was laid aside. So the Apostles according to Christ's Commission, being chiefly intent on the Conversion of those Persons that were polluted with Infidelity and Immorality; had not as yet taken the State of Infants into their Consideration. But when afterwards many Families were converted, their Condition came also to be considered. And I conjecture, that this might first be when Circumcision came to be rejected. For it is very likely, that when the *Jewish* Converts who esteemed their Infants to be admitted into Covenant by Circumcision found the Apostles declare, that Circumcision was not necessary; they then began to start the Case of Infants, who by Circumcision had that Privilege signed to them, which by the Abolition of it would seem to have been lost. But this I mention only as a Conjecture which you may take or leave, as you see fit.

3. Tho' we have no Declaration in express Words, that Infants were baptized in the Apostles Times; yet from one Expression of *St. Paul*, such a Practice may reasonably be concluded. He speaks so of the *Holiness* of Children, as seems not to admit of any rational Interpretation, and agreeable to the Case and Context, but by supposing that those Infants were admitted to Baptism. It is *1 Cor. 7. 14.* where giving his Judgment concerning those Christians who were married to Unbelievers,

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he persuades their Cohabitation in that Conjugal State, if it may be permitted, by this Argument. For *the unbelieving Husband is sanctified by the Wife* (i. e.) she being a Believer; and *the unbelieving Wife is sanctified by the Husband*; *else were your Children unclean, but now are they holy*. In which Words the Apostle plainly founds his Determination on this known and received Opinion, that the Children of Christian Parents, and so also if but one Parent was Christian, are holy; *Else were your Children unclean, but now are they holy*.

That Infant Children are here intended, is plain in that he speaks of such whose Holiness depended on the Sanctification of the believing Parent, which must respect Infants only, because the Holiness of adult Persons must be from their own actual Faith.

Now the Question is, what *St. Paul* means here by Holiness: He speaks of the Holiness of such Children, one of whose Parents only were Christian, and yet of such Holiness of such Children, as from thence to prove the Lawfulness of the Cohabitation of such Parents. To this End the Holiness of such Children must be evident and indisputable, or otherwise the Argument would not have Force. Now, tho' the Children both whose Parents were Christians, may be reckoned an holy Seed or Off-spring, by Designation; yet it might justly be doubted whether the Children, one of whose Parents only were Christian, were thus holy, when the Lawfulness of their Cohabitation was disputed. I ask then, how it should come to pass, that when the Lawfulness of the Cohabitation of a Christian and an Infidel was disputed; yet it should remain a known and indisputable Doctrine, that their Children were not unclean, but holy? For this the Apostle asserts, And I am persuaded, that the only proper Answer to this Question must be, That there was some known Privilege according to the Practice of the Church, at least of that Church at that time belonging to such Children; by which the Churches Opinion of their Holiness, became unquestionable. Had not this been so, *St. Paul's* Argument, instead of proving what he intended by it, might rather have brought the Opinion of their Holiness into Question. But that it seems was certain, so well known, so unquestionable, that he might safely ground his Argument upon it. And yet, methinks, there was the same Reason to dispute one as well as the other, had not some customary Privilege made the Difference, and what that Privilege was, the true Notion of Holiness will discover.

The best Notion of Holiness in general that I have yet met with, is from the Learned and Judicious *Mr. Mede*, Disc. 2. who makes it to consist in Religious *separation* and *Discrimination* from other Things; which in Opposition thereto, are called Common. I would ask then by what

other Means or Privilege the Infants of Christian Parents can be eminently discriminated from the Children of Infidel Parents; so as in the Language of the Church to be called Holy; but by being baptized? In this Interpretation, the Coherence and Purport of the Apostle's Argument is easie and plain, which otherwise is unintelligible. The Children of Gentile Parents are *common and unclean*, in St. Peter's Sense, mentioned above, *Acts* 10. 14, 15. (*i. e.*) not yet to be admitted to the Seal of the Covenant, but the Infants of Believers are holy and may be baptized. And thus also the unbelieving Husband is sanctified by the believing Wife, in that he who is an Unbeliever has his Child baptized because of the Faith of the Mother, as much as tho' both Parents were Christian.

And this is a good Argument of the Innocence of their Cohabitation: For if the Church admits the Child of an unbelieving Husband to Baptism, because the Mother is a Believer, the Cohabitation of those Parents of whom such a Child is born, cannot be thought unlawful, upon the Account of their Religion. Thus every Thing in the Words is Intelligible and Plain, and if this be a true Interpretation, here is Proof that the Baptism of Infants was in use in the Apostles Time.

But you, *Sir*, have sent me some Objections, and another Interpretation of this Place: Both which shall be considered. I shall begin with the Objections.

Object. 1. It is objected, That *there is no other Holiness here attributed to the Children, than what is ascrib'd to the unbelieving Parent; for, as the Children are said to be holy, so it is said of the unbelieving Husband, or Wife, that he, or she is sanctified, or made holy; and therefore as much ought to be baptized.*

Answ. But where's the Force of this Conclusion? You seem from hence to infer, that there is the same Holiness in both: But, why so? Are there not several Degrees or Kinds of Holiness, or Religious Discrimination? Are not all Christians holy by their Profession? In which Sense St. Paul calls them *ἀγιοι*, the *Saints or holy Ones* by way of Distinction from other Men: And are not all true Christians holy by real Sanctification of God's Spirit? And yet these are not the same. Are not all that minister at the Altar, holy in a third sense by their Office? There is then an internal, and there is an external Holiness; there is a real, actual Holiness, consisting in Faith and Obedience, by the Sanctification of the Spirit; and there is a relative Holiness, consisting in Separation by Profession, or Privilege, or Office. Here then are different Degrees of Holiness ascrib'd to different Persons, according to their several Circumstances. The Holiness of the Believer is of one Kind;
that

that of the Unbeliever of another; that of their Children of a third: And so this Objection can be of no Force in that its founded on this gross Mistake; That the Holiness is the same in all!

Object. 2. It is objected, That the Holiness, or Sanctification of the unbelieving Parent is mentioned by the Apostle as The Cause of the Childrens Holiness: *Otherwise*, (i. e.) were it not that the Unbeliever was thus sanctified, *your Children were unclean, but now are they holy*. Consequently, say you, there is a stronger Argument in this Text for baptizing the unbelieving Parent, than the Children; *Even as The Cause is more noble than the Effect*.

Answer. I answer; If it had been said *One Cause* of the Childrens Holiness it had sounded better; because *the Cause* looks as tho' it were the chief or only Cause, in which Sense the Assertion is not true: For, the Logicians have justly taught us to distinguish that there is a principal Cause, and a less principal Cause. The Holiness of the unbelieving Parent is at most but a less principal Cause of the Holiness of the Children, or a Cause *sine qua non*; *otherwise were the Children unclean, but now are they holy*. And if this be St. Paul's Meaning; yet then in this Sense, the Conclusion will fail. For, whereas it is alledged, that on this Account, the Words are a *stronger Argument for Baptizing the unbelieving Parents, than their Children, even as the Cause is more noble than the Effect*: Here lies the Weakness of this Objection; which is, indeed, a downright Fallacy; for it is not the *less principal*, but the *Principal Cause* only that is nobler than the Effect. 'Tis one of the Maxims of Logic, that the less principal Cause, *Semper est deterior effectu suo*, is always less noble than the Effect. There can then be no Force in this Conclusion, unless Men will assert, that the Holiness of the unbelieving Parent, is the Principal Cause of the Holiness of the Children, which is more than St. Paul ever said.

Object. 3. It is objected, That a Fœderal Holiness cannot be intended here, unless it be supposed, that the unbelieving Husband or Wife is in the Covenant of Grace.

Answer. But what? I have already shown, that their Holiness is not the same; the one therefore may be a Fœderal Holiness, and the other not; and, so this is a false Deduction.

Object. 4. Another Objection is, That if here he meant a Fœderal Holiness, whereby Infants are set apart from the rest of the World, as Members of Christ's Church, they ought to be admitted to the Lord's Supper also; which Ordinance is no less a Duty, and Privilege of every Member of Christ's Church than Baptism. And therefore says Mr. A—
It is well known that among the Ancients, Infants were for a time admitted

to this Sacrament, as well as to the former : But seeing none now to the Latter, why to the Former ?

He who makes this Objection, has furnish'd me with an Answer to it, and says, That *Self-examination is urged as a Bar in this.*

But if this be all, I shall not thank him for the Invention. There is another, and I am perswaded, a better Argument drawn from the different Nature and Design of these Two Sacraments. For Baptism is a Sacrament of Initiation ; the other of Confirmation. And, tho' God may, and does of his abundant Grace admit Infants into his Covenant ; yet the Renewing of this Covenant is founded on a Supposition of our Frailty ; who, more or less, do all transgress the Conditions of our Baptismal Vow, and impair our Hope. The Lord's Supper therefore was intended, the stronger to oblige Men to actual Faith and Repentance, after the Violation of their first Vow, and to administer Comfort in our Penitential Sorrows, in the Commemoration of our Saviour's Passion.

This Sacrament therefore in the very Nature of it always supposes actual Faith and Repentance, which Baptism does not. Actual Faith and Repentance are not universally necessary to Baptism, as I have proved above, but where Sin and Infidelity have gone before. For he that has never sinn'd, has nothing to repent of. And the Innocence of the Person then is a sufficient Qualification for Baptism, where there is a rational Hope, that he shall afterwards believe and obey the Gospel. But the Lord's Supper, which was design'd for the Renewing, and Confirmation of our Vow, supposes both that Vow to have been broken, and that Breach to have been repented of.

There is not therefore the same Reason for admitting Infants to the Lord's Supper as to Baptism ; because the different Nature and End of each Sacrament shows the One to be proper, and the other not. For which Cause that Custom is now left off.

I think then Mr. A—'s Objections against my Interpretation of this Text appear to have very little or no Force. I desire now that my Reasons against his Interpretation of *Place* may be as fairly considered, and as impartial a Judgment pass'd upon them : Which is most agreeable to the Context, and the Force of the Apostle's Argument and Design. His Interpretation is this ; *The Scope of the Apostle determines the Sanctification or Holiness of the unbelieving Husband or Wife to be no other than Marrimonial Holiness, or Chastity ; in Opposition to Uncleaness, or Fornication, (in which Sense it is taken, 1 Thefl. 4. 3, 4, 7. and consequently by the Holiness of the Children flowing from it, we may understand no other than Legitimacy, in which*
Sense

Sense we read of a godly or holy Seed, Mal. 2. 15. So that St. Paul here brings Two Arguments to prove the Marriage to be good. 1. Because the Unbeliever (*ἄπιστος*) hath been sanctified, not by, but to, or unto the Believer by being joyned in holy Matrimony; and consequently a Divorce would be contrary to the Law of Christ, unless for the Cause of Fornication. 2. (*Ab absurdo*) from the Absurdity that would follow should they separate upon the Account of Religion, thereby disowning their Marriage, and consequently bastardizing their Children; which the Apostle, supposing them unwilling to do, advises them to continue with their unbelieving Husband or Wife, notwithstanding their Differences in Religion. Thus this Text Mr. A— says is expounded by Melancthon, Camerarius, and Musculus, who also cites St. Jerome and Ambrose for it; acknowledging, that he had formerly abused it against the Anabaptists. So that it seems in this, we must consider both the Interpretation, and the Authorities produced to confirm it. As to the Argument I have these Things to offer:

1. That such a Sense is put upon these Words, as some of them are never found to have in all the Holy Scripture. For, tho' it is true, that Holiness is sometimes used for Chastity, and particularly, 1 *Theff.* 3. 3, 4, 7. in Opposition to Fornication; yet Uncleanness is never taken for Illegitimacy or Bastardy in a literal Sense, as it is here rendered by Mr. A—. As to what is alleged concerning a godly or holy Seed, Mal. 2. 15. which Mr. A— by the Authority of Calvin, and other Learned Interpreters, would understand to be Legitimacy; let those learned Interpreters be who they will; it is very plain, that they must take Legitimacy there not in a literal Sense, but Figurative, according to the usual Language of the Prophets, who often express Idolatry by Whoredom and Fornication, and call the Revolting into it the *Marrying a strange God*; and going a whoring after Idols, Ezek. 6. 9. St. Jerome and the Chaldee Paraphrase by the holy Seed, understand the Posterity of Abraham in Opposition to the Gentiles; and the former says, The Prophets Purpose here was to reprove the Jews for Marrying Wives of the Idolatrous Nations, and he grounds this Interpretation on *Ezra* 9. 2. And if this be good, the holy Seed is the People under Covenant with God in Distinction from the Gentiles.

And therefore I say again, that tho' Uncleanness is used in the New Testament for Fornication and Sensuality; yet not once for Bastardy, nor Holiness for Legitimacy. But, I think, I may say, that whenever these Words are used, and especially when they are set in Opposition one to another; Uncleanness denotes something of the vile Pollutions that were common among the Idolatrous Heathens; and Holiness, when attributed to Persons, always includes something of Distinction and Dif-

Discrimination from the Heathens, either by way of Personal Excellence, or of Privilege. And therefore,

2. It is easie to shew, that as these Words are not used for *Bastardy* and *Legitimacy* in any other place of the New Testament, so that they cannot have any such Signification here. Mr. *A*— says, That *St. Paul* here speaks of *Matrimonial Chastity* in Opposition to *Fornication*; and that his Design was to shew, that the *Marriage* was good notwithstanding their Difference in Religion; and that they were therefore under no Obligation to separate on that Account; which seems plainly to be one of the *Scruples* about their *Cohabitation* with *Infidels*; But how does it appear that the *Scruple* was, that after their Conversion to Christianity, their *Marriage* was no longer *valid* or *good*? How does this appear? Their *Scruple* was, I confess, whether or no they were to separate on Account of their Difference in Religion: But the Ground of that *Scruple* was not any Fear that their *Marriage-Contract* was *invalid*, and their *Cohabitation* to be deem'd *Fornication*; but a *Tenderness* upon Account of the *Unbelievers* being an *Infidel* and *Idolater*; left by so near an Alliance to such an one, they should seem either to run into *Danger*, or to partake of the *Pollution* and *Guilt* of *Idolatry* and *Unbelief*: This is agreeable to the *Apprehensions* which we find that the *Primitive Christians* had. An Instance of which *Justin Martyr* gives an Account of: Of a *Woman*, who upon her Conversion to Christianity finding that she could not reclaim her *Husband* from the abominable *Lewdness* of his *Heathen Life*, would be divorced from him, and tho' at the *Importunity* of her *Friends*, she continued with him somewhat longer; yet finding he grew worse, *ὅπως μὴ κοινῶς τῶν ἀδικημάτων καὶ ἀσεβημάτων γένηται μετ' αὐτῆς ἐν τῇ συζυγίᾳ, &c.* lest she should be *Partaker* of his *Iniquities* and *Impieties* by *cohabiting* with him, and being *Partner* with his *Table* and *Bed*, she gave him a *Bill of Divorce*, καὶ ἐχρίσθη, and was parted from him. This remarkable Instance shews what the *Apprehensions* of the *Primitive Christians*, as to this Matter were, and gives no small *Light* to the *Debate* now in hand.

And that such as this was, in Truth, the Case upon which *St. Paul* there treats, is farther evident from the *Coherence* of the Text with what goes before.

The Questions upon which *St. Paul* wrote were several: First, Whether *Christians* should then *Marry*, which he rather dissuades as that which would more engage them in the *Affairs* of the *World*, and make them less willing to suffer *Persecution*. This he mentions both in the *Beginning* and *End* of the *Chapter*; but then with this *Restriction*, that they

they should rather marry, than be subject to impulses of *burning Lusts*, Ver. 9.

Next to the Married; he declares, that they are bound by the Law of God, not to separate, if they can avoid it. *To the Married I command, yet not I, but the Lord; Let not, &c. Ver. 10, 11.* Then comes the Case now in hand concerning those who were Married, but not both Parties as yet converted to Christianity; and among them it was a Question whether their Difference in Religion was a just Cause of Separation. Now, I say, had the Ground of this Scruple been an Opinion, or Fear; that their Continuance in that married State had been equal to Fornication or Uncleanness: *St. Paul* who knew very well that their Difference in Religion made no such Alteration in the Case, would never have usher'd in his Determination with, *thus speak I, not the Lord*, but thus, *not I, but the Lord*, as *V. 10.* It is not credible, or morally possible, that He, who was immediately influenced by the Holy Ghost in the Execution of his Apostolic Office, should only give his Conjectural Judgment, or merely Prudential Determination, in a Question: In which both he and they were afore determined by the express Law, and Institution of God; and in which he knew himself to be so determined. *To the Married command I, and yet not I, but the Lord: Let not the Wife depart from her Husband*, Ver. 10. Especially, if the Consequence of their Separation would prove so pernicious, as to Bastardize their Children, (as *Mr. A*—supposes :) He was the more oblig'd to determine them by the Authority of God's Institution, or Law. It is, I say, incredible, that he should usher in the Determination of so important a Question, only by a Conjectural Order, that could not determine their Conscience: For, seeing it was but *St. Paul's* Order, and not God's Command, it could not determine the Good or Evil of the Thing. Had therefore the Question been, what *Mr. A*—supposes it, *St. Paul* must have determined it by God's Authority, and not by his own only; so that the very Manner of the Expression plainly proves, that the Question was only about the Danger of Cohabiting with an Infidel, and an Idolater: And if this be the Case, *Mr. A*'s Interpretation of *Holiness* by *Legitimacy* cannot be good. For Divorce in this Case can never bastardize the Children, that is only done by the Original Illegitimacy of the Marriage-Contract. And so far is *St. Paul* from asserting what *Mr. A*—affirms, that *Divorce would be unlawful*, that he, if the Unbeliever *will not cohabit*, leaves the Christian at liberty to *separate*; which he would rather have dissuaded, if a Separation had been against the Law of Christ, and made their Children Bastards.

As to the Authority of some Commentators, *Melancthon, Camerarius,* and *Musculus*, who are alledged to Countenance this Construction; What does it signifie, when it appears thus plainly to be contrary to the Use of the Phrase, and the Coherence of the Place? And that it does so, will be more plain, if we observe,

3. That Mr. *A—*'s Interpretation destroys the Force of St. *Paul's* Argument, which our Notion of Holiness confirms. Mr. *A—* says, St. *Paul* proves their Marriage good by Two Arguments: First, Because the Unbeliever *ἡγιασται*, hath been sanctified to; or unto the Believer (*i. e.*) *joyned in holy Matrimony*. If he means that, because Matrimony is an holy State, therefore their Cohabitation is lawful notwithstanding the one Party is not Christian, I can go along with him: But when he makes St. *Paul* to argue, Secondly, *Ab absurdo*, that if their Marriage and Cohabitation be lawful, therefore a Divorce would be contrary to the Law of Christ, and bastardizes their Children: Here I doubt he perverts St. *Paul's* Sense in many respects; for, as I have hinted above.

1. St. *Paul* does not say in this Case, that a Separation would be contrary to the Law of Christ. So far from it, that he does not determine it by God's Law, but by his own Opinion. *V. 12. But to the rest speak I, but not the Lord, If any Brother hath a Wife that believeth not, &c.*

2. He is so far from declaring their Separation to be a Sin, and such a Sin as Bastardizes the Children, that he only gives his Advice in case both Parties agree to Cohabit. *If she be pleased to dwell with him, V. 12. and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him, V. 13.* But if they disagree about Religion, they may part, *If the Unbelieving depart, let him depart. A Brother or Sister is not in Bondage in such Cases, V. 15.*

3. As I have prov'd, that the Question was not about the Validity of Marriage, but of the Lawfulness and Expedience of their Cohabitation: So Mr. *A—*'s Legitimacy puts such a Consequence on St. *Paul's* Assertion, as does by no means follow; for it is only the Invalidity of Marriage that Bastardizes the Children, but Divorce alone does not.

In a Word, Mr. *A—*'s Sense of St. *Paul's* Words makes St. *Paul* to contradict himself; for it makes him to declare such a Separation contrary to God's Law, and injurious to the Children, in the 14th Verse, which it is plain, that in the 15th he consents to; and which in the 12th he says, he did not determine by the Authority of God's Laws, but only by his own Authority.

But taking the Holiness of Children in our Sense, for admitting them to Baptism, it makes the Apostle's Argument strong and clear: For the Holiness of Children born in such a State, is a very good Proof, that their Cohabitation was Lawful and Innocent. 'Tis as much as if St. *Paul* had

had said; *As to the Case of those married to Unbelievers, the Practice of the Church in the Admission of the Children of such to Baptism, as well as the Children of those Parents who are both Christians shew what our Opinion is of their Cohabitation: The Unbeliever is Sanctified in this respect by the Believer; else were the Children of such common and unclean, like the Children of Infidels; but now are they holy, or in Malachi's Phrase, an holy Seed, and admitted into the Covenant of God in Christ by Baptism; as well as the Children of those Parents who are both Believers.*

I profess with Sincerity, that I cannot find out any other Sense of the Place that will agree with the Apostle's Scope and Design. And when it thus appears, that after Mens Sedulous Endeavours to evade the Testimony of this Place, their Objections are of no Force, nor can any other Construction be devised, that will well agree with the Scripture-Phrase, and be consistent with the Scope and Design of St. Paul's Determination in this Case: Methinks it adds very great Authority to my Argument, makes the Force of it much more considerable; and must be admitted as a good Proof that Infants were baptized in St. Paul's Time.

But the Thing now in Debate, being whether it was the Apostles Practice to baptize Infants: I think it will be very proper to show what early Discoveries we have of it in the Writings of the Primitive Fathers. For let Men that are Conscious of the Testimony of Antiquity against them never so much decry the Authority of the Fathers, and the Primitive Church; and tell us, that *the Mystery of Iniquity began to work in it very early*; nothing of that should derogate from their just Esteem. The Mystery of Iniquity began to work in St. Paul's Time, and yet, I hope, that does not lessen his Authority. So neither do all the Heresies, and Hæterodox Opinions of the first Ages derogate from the Authority of the Fathers. in that they proceeded from Men out of the Communion of the Church; and were opposed by the Fathers, with that Vigor, Constancy, and Zeal; which makes their Testimony, both in Doctrines and Practice, highly to be valued.

For this Reason, I say, it is remarkable how early we find plain, and undeniable Evidence of the Baptism of Infants. From the Death of St. John for some Years we have no Christian Writings extant, except a few short Epistles. In which we can no more expect a particular Account of all Apostolical Practices; than, as I said before, we can hope for a particular History of the first Ages of the World in the first Five Chapters of *Genesis*.

But one of the first of the Fathers that wrote in any considerable Bulk, was *Irenæus*; and his Evidence is very express in this Case: For he has these Words; *Ommes enim venit (viz. Christus) per semet ipsum salvare: Omnes,*

nes, inquam, qui per eum renascuntur in Deum, Infantes, & Parvulos, & Pueros, & Juvenes, & Seniores. Ideo per omnem venit aetatem, & Infantibus factus Infans, sanctificans Infantes, in Parvulis Parvulus, Sanctificans hanc ipsam habentes aetatem, Adv. Hær. lib. 2. c. 39. The Design of the Father in this Place, was to lay open the Fantastick Conceits of the *Valentinians*, who pretended that their *Aeons* were prefigured by the Years of Christ's Life before his Baptism; and that what they dreamt of the Passion of the Twelfth *Aeon*, was signified by Christ's Suffering the Twelfth Month; to support which Notion, they asserted that Christ Preached but one Year after his Baptism.

These were the Heretic's Fantastick Dreams; to confute which, *Irenæus* first shows that Christ was at *Jerusalem* Three several Passovers after his Baptism; and consequently must have Preach'd above one Year, in that he begun it upon his Baptism, and continued it to his Death.

Then he shows, that Christ pass'd thro' the several Stages of Humane Life; *Omnem aetatem sanctificans per illam qua ad ipsam erat similitudinem*, that he might sanctifie every Age by his own Likeness thereto: For, says he, he came to save all by himself; all I mean that are regenerated by him to God; Infants, Little Ones, Children, Young Men, and Old. For this Reason he pass'd thro' every Age, and to the Infants he became an Infant, sanctifying the Infants; and to the Little Ones, a Little One that he might sanctifie those of that Age. Which Words were purposely designed to declare, that the Salvation purchas'd by Christ belongs to all Ages or Years whatever, whether Infants or Old Men, who are Members of Christ's Church. *Omnes qui per eum renascuntur in Deum*; all that are

Tit. 3. 5. See Just.
Mart. Apol. 2. p. 94.
Edit. Par.

Regenerate, or born again to God by him: Which is the very Expression that *St. Paul*, and the Ancients after him, use for Baptism. And it appears here to be added, to put a Limitation to the Assertion; that what he says he means peculiarly of Christians, that have been by Baptism admitted into the Covenant. *All that are born again unto God by him; Infants, Babes, Children, &c.* nor are Infants capable of being born again unto God by Christ, any other way, that I know of, but by Baptism.

So that I do not see how it can be evaded, but that this single Evidence must be acknowledg'd a sufficient Proof, that the baptizing Infants was a Thing in Practice when *Irenæus* wrote this Book: For otherwise this Assertion could be neither pertinent, nor proper.

It may not therefore be amiss to show how early this was, and how very improbable it is, that such a Custom should so soon prevail; unless it had been received by a certain Tradition from the Apostles them-

themselves. *Irenæus* wrote this Book about *A. D. CLXXX*, which was but about *Fourscore Years* from the Death of *St. John*, who died in the *Third Year of Trajan* (i. e.) about *A. D. 100*. And *Irenæus* was so far *Cotemporary* with *Polycarp*, who was a *Disciple of the Apostles*, and convers'd with many of those who had seen *Christ*, and by them was made *Bishop of Smyrna*, in *Asia*: That he says, he had seen him, *ἔν τῃ πρώτῃ ἡμῶν ἡλικίᾳ*, when he himself was but a young Man. He must write this Book then in the very next Age after one that had been *Contemporary* with the *Apostles*. And this I think is very early.

Bishop Pearson,
Op. Posthuma.
Dis. 2. c. 14.

Iren. l. 3. c. 3.

ἐν τῇ πρώτῃ

It can hardly be supposed that any corrupt Practice should be introduc'd, but *Polycarp*; who was *Instructed by the Apostles*, and taught what he had learnt of the *Apostles*, and what the Church had delivered to him, and what alone was true, as *Irenæus* speaks of him: Would zealously have opposed it, and have had *Autority* to reject it. There is no *Probability* that any great *Innovation* should be introduc'd while a *Cotemporary* and *Disciple* of the *Apostles* was yet alive. There is then only from the Death of *Polycarp* to *Irenæus's* writing this Book, for the introducing this Practice, if it was introduced. And that, at most, is but about *Thirty Two*, or *Thirty Three Years*. For *Bishop Pearson*, who places the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* earlier than other Men, asserts, that it was *A. D. CXLVII*. And can it be thought that any great *Innovation* should be made in *Irenæus's* own Time, and he either not know it, or not reprove it? Can those who think the baptizing Infants such a *Corruption*, such a *Violation of Christ's Institution* as, they conceit, to *destroy the true Being of a Church*; to *deprive the Ministers of God of all just Power of Ministering in holy Things*; and to *make Communion with us, in our Sacraments, unlawful*: Can they, I say, imagine that those *Fathers* whose *Glory* it was to do all Things according to the *Instructions of the Apostles*; should suffer such an heinous *Innovation* to come in among them, and be received; and never make any *Complaint*, nor any *Opposition* to it? Would not *Polycarp*, who was *Instructed of the Apostles themselves*, have opposed it, had it been in his Time? And would not *Irenæus*, who says, that *only those Things are true, which the Church from the Apostles delivered*; would not he, I say, zealously have oppos'd it, had it been in his Time? When therefore we find him speaking of it as a known Practice, I appeal to all impartial Men, whether it is not *Rational* to believe that the *Fathers*, and the *Primitive Church* receiv'd it from the *Apostles* themselves.

Lib. 3. cap. 3.

Opera. Posthuma.
Dis. 2. c. 20.

You ought then, *Sir*, to be very tender in Charging all Christians from the Apostles Times for Fifteen Hundred Years together; with *not being a lawful Church, nor such, with whom one may Lawfully hold Communion in the Sacraments.* This should not be done without very good Proof. Other Errors and Corruptions that have been found fault with, and wanted Reformation; we know when, and how they were introduced. And before this is so Positively affirmed to be a corrupt Innovation, you ought to show us, about what Time, and by what Means it came to prevail; rather than decry the Authority of the Fathers that bear Witnesses to this as an Apostolical Practice.

I might confirm this from the Testimony of others, and particularly of *Tertullian* in the next Place; who altho' he seems not, I confess, to approve it, as he was in many Things particular in his Judgment; yet even in his Dislike he undeniably attests that it was then in Use. But the Testimony of Antiquity has been sufficiently insisted on by others. I shall therefore add no more, but leave it to your self to consider, and to the World to judge; whether your separating from our Communion upon the Account of a Practice so agreeable to Christ's Institution, and the Ancient Usage of the Church, be not more owing to the Prejudice of Education, than to the Force of Reason, or the just Merits of the Cause. I am

SIR, your Humble Servant.

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

P. Ag. 2. l. 30. read *enjoys*. p. 6. l. 19. r. *Capacity*. l. 34. dele *first*. p. 13. l. 28. r. *really*. p. 15. l. 1. r. *assert*. p. 16. l. 26. r. *at all*. p. 17. l. 15. dele? p. 24. l. 10. after *Wife*, add, (*i. e.*) *the Sanctimony of the Conjugal State is attested.*

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

A DISCOURSE OF FORNICATION: Shewing the Greatness of that *Sin*; and Examining the Excuses pleaded for it from the Examples of Ancient Times. To which is added, an Appendix, concerning *Concubinage*; As also a Remark on Mr. *Butler's* Explication of *Heb.* 13: 4. in his late Book on that Subject. By *John Turner*, M. A. Printed for *John Wyatt*, at the *Rose*, in *St. Paul's Church-yard*.







