

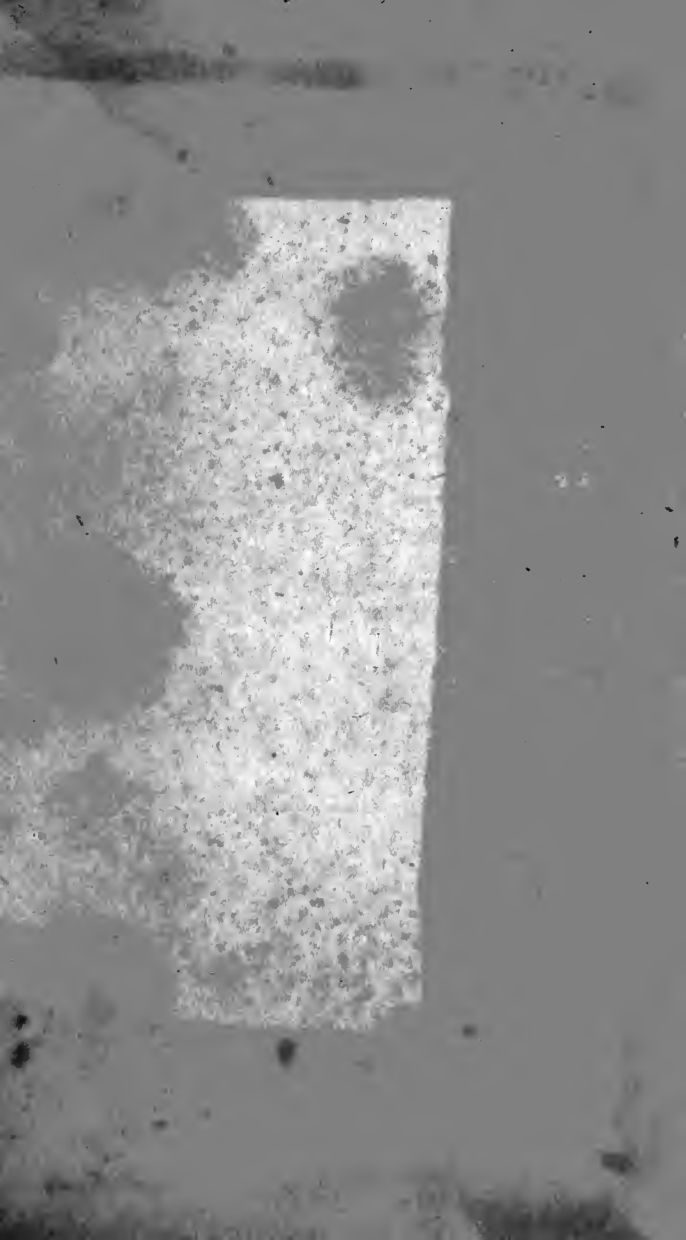
Library of the Theological Seminary,
PRINCETON, N. J.

Presented by Mr. Samuel Agnew of Philadelphia, Pa.

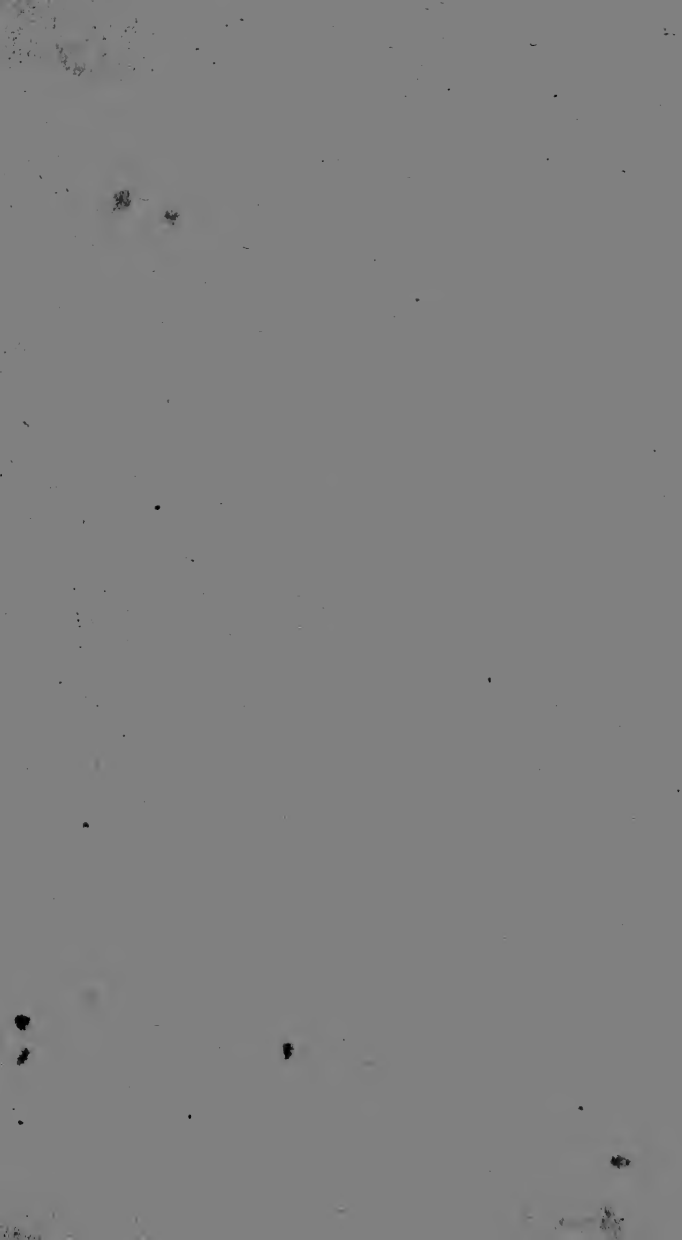
Agnew Coll. on Baptism, No.

COPY

SCB
10347
C. 1







INDICIA

BY THE

Sealings and Practice

THESE BEING THE DOCS. IN THE COURT

TO THE LAYERS OF THE

KEY SECTIONS

ROMAN, IV. II. 12

IN THE COURT OF THE COMMONS

Printed by C. Parker & Co.

1800

A

VINDICATION

OF THE

Sentiments and Practice

OF THOSE,

WHO BELIEVE IN GOD'S EVERLASTING COVENANT,

AND APPLY THE SEAL

TO THEIR INFANT OFFSPRING ;

IN

SIX SERMONS,

ON

ROMANS, iv. 11—12.

.....
By JOHN SMITH, A. M.
PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN SALEM, N. H.
.....

EXETER :

PRINTED BY C. NORRIS & Co.

.....
1812.

NEW-HAMPSHIRE DISTRICT, ss.

BE IT REMEMBERED, that on the fourth day of July, in the thirty-seventh year of the Independence of the United States of America, JOHN SMITH, A. M. Pastor of the church in Salem, New-Hampshire, hath deposited in this Office, the title of a book, the right whereof he claims as Author, in the following words, *to wit* :

“A vindication of the Sentiments and Practice of those, who believe in God’s everlasting covenant, and apply the seal to their Infant Offspring; in Six Sermons, on Romans, iv. 11—12.”

In conformity to the Act of the Congress of the United States, entitled, “an Act for the encouragement of learning by securing copies of Maps, Charts, and other Books to the Authors and Proprietors therein mentioned,” and also “an Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing copies of Maps, Charts, and other Books to the Authors and Proprietors therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to the Arts of designing, engraving, and etching Historical and other Prints.”

R. CUTTS SHANNON,
Clerk of New-Hampshire District.

A copy of Record.

Attest. R. CUTTS SHANNON, Clerk.

ADVERTISEMENT.

THE substance of the following discourses was delivered to the people of my charge. After the publication of them was contemplated, and proposals issued, I made some alterations and additions, partly in consequence of suggestions from respected friends. Moreover Mr. *Daniel Hardy*, jun. whom I requested to inspect the sermons with particular attentions, made considerable alterations, and large additions, which I thought proper to adopt. There are many more pages, than were mentioned in the proposals. The discourses are submitted to the candour of the publick, with a desire, that, through divine grace, they may be a mean of promoting the Redeemer's kingdom.

SERMON I.

ROMANS, IV. 11—12.

And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith, which he had, being yet uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also; And the father of circumcision to them, who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had, being yet uncircumcised.

FOR the salvation of lost men, Christ was constituted Mediator before the foundation of the world. After the fall, the covenant of grace was revealed, in which God offers eternal life to sinners through Christ. In pursuance of his gracious purpose, God made a covenant with Abraham, of peculiar importance to the world. For the promotion of the grand design of the Abrahamic covenant, the Sinai covenant was given. "When the fulness of time was come, God sent forth his Son," to suffer upon the cross, "that repentance and remission of sins might be preached in his name among all nations."

Thus the Holy Scriptures gradually unfold the scheme of redemption.

Abraham was called to sustain an important and *peculiar* relation to the church of God. In his family God established the church, which was to be "an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations." Separated from the rest of the world, to receive the promises, he was constituted the father of all, who should walk in the steps of his faith. To him God made peculiar promises concerning his posterity, concerning the Messiah, and concerning the church in general. He "believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness." Circumcision was a seal of that righteousness, in which Abraham became interested by faith. All believers, whether Jews, or Gentiles, are interested in the same righteousness.

The apostle Paul shows, that Abraham's circumcision was not essential to his justification, because he believed and was justified, before he received circumcision; that believing Gentiles were entitled to the blessedness of a justified state, though uncircumcised; and that Abraham was the father of all believers, whether Jews, or Gentiles.

But why is Abraham called the father of all them that believe? Not, because he was the first believer, nor because he was the first man,

that was interested in the covenant of grace. Abel, Enoch and Noah were eminent believers before Abraham's time, and were interested in the covenant of grace. But God made an everlasting covenant with Abraham, by which the church was established in his family, consisting *primarily* of his natural descendants, but *eventually* embracing believing Gentiles, and to continue to the end of the world.

Circumcision, the token of this covenant, is called by the Apostle, in our text, "*a seal of the righteousness of faith.*" The design of this covenant's being made and sealed with Abraham, was, to constitute him the father of believers. "Faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness"—"in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith, which he had, being yet uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also; and the father of circumcision to them, who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had, being yet uncircumcised."

Our text contains this important doctrine; *viz.*

God made and sealed his covenant with Abraham, that he might constitute him the fath-

er of all, whether Jews, or Gentiles, who should walk in the steps of his faith, from that time to the end of the world. To illustrate this doctrine it is proposed,

I. To explain God's covenant with Abraham, and show the design of the seal ; and

II. To show, in general, what it is to walk in the steps of the faith of Abraham ; and to make a particular application to Christian parents.

I. I am to explain God's covenant with Abraham, and show the design of the seal.

1. God's covenant with Abraham was a *gracious covenant*, and promised spiritual blessings, as well as temporal.

It does not appear to be a clear and full definition of this covenant, to say, merely, that it was the covenant of grace. This does not distinguish Abraham from saints, who lived before him. They were interested in the covenant of grace.

Faith, implying love and obedience to God, is the condition of the covenant of grace. Upon this condition, eternal life is freely offered to sinners ; and by grace they are influenced to comply. God is pleased to lay himself under covenant engagement to save all true believers. Christ is the Mediator of the covenant of grace. " Whosoever believeth in him

shall receive remission of sins"* and have everlasting life." The faith of Noah was compliance with the condition of the covenant of grace; and he "became heir of the righteousness, which is by faith."† In the same righteousness were interested all the saints, who lived before the Abrahamic covenant was made.

But God's covenant with Abraham may be considered, as a new dispensation of the covenant of grace, containing particular promises to him, and requiring of him particular duties. Though this dispensation contained promises and duties peculiar to Abraham, yet it comprehended all the spiritual blessings of the former dispensation, and the substance of all the gracious promises, which were to be realized, by the church, in all succeeding dispensations. "Now, the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great, and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."—"Unto thy seed will I

* Acts, x. 43. † Heb. xi. 7.

give this land.”* In these promises, which were made 430 years before the law was given at Sinai, the gospel was preached to Abraham. Alluding to this passage, the Apostle says, “The scripture, foreseeing, that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, in thee shall all nations be blessed.”† These promises implied, that Abraham *himself*, and *a great nation of his* lineal descendants, and finally *all nations*, should be blessed, in Christ, the Mediator between God and men; that the church should be blessed, and the enemies of the church cursed, to the latest generations. They contained the substance of all the solemn truths of the gospel. In short, it is certain, that better promises are not to be found in the Holy Scriptures, than are expressed, or implied, in God’s covenant with Abraham.

This was a gracious covenant. The blessings were freely promised. Says Paul, “If the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.”‡ The condition of this gracious covenant, as afterwards renewed to Abraham in more explicit terms, was such an observance of circumcision, as should be expressive of

* Gen. xji. 1—7. † Gal. iii. 8. ‡ Gal. iii. 18.

faith. Such a condition was consistent with the covenant's being a gracious covenant.— Says Paul, “The promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For, if they,” who “are of the law, be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of” no “effect. Because the law worketh wrath; for where there is no law, there is no transgression. Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only, which is of the law, but to that also, which is of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all.”* Abraham believed, and was circumcised; and according to the gospel, “He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.” Abraham believed, and it was imputed to him for righteousness; and circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of his faith. “With the heart,” says Paul, “man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”† It became Abraham afterwards to live in a manner correspondent to the dignified and happy state, into which he and his family were brought; and it becomes Christians

* Rom. iv. 13—16. † Rom. x. 10. Compare Acts, viii. 36—37.

to walk in a manner worthy of their high vocation.

2. The covenant made with Abraham, *secured the continuance of the church, among his natural descendants, in the line of Isaac and Jacob.*

God said to Abraham, "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.* "In Isaac shall thy seed be called"—"I will establish my covenant with him, for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him."† God said to Isaac, "I am the God of Abraham thy father; fear not, for I am with thee, and will bless thee, and multiply thy seed, for my servant Abraham's sake."‡ The same promise, essentially, was renewed to Jacob concerning his seed. "Thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth," &c.§

It appears then, that God established an everlasting covenant with the *seed* of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. But who were the *seed*, on whom the promised blessings were to be bestowed, from generation to generation? The natural seed of Jacob were, as a nation, to receive great temporal favours, and to enjoy

* Gen. xvii. 7. † Gen. xxi. 12. xvii. 19. ‡ Gen. xxvi. 24.
§ Gen. xxviii. 14.

great privileges in regard to religion.* And God showed them great mercy from generation to generation, in remembrance of the gracious covenant, which he made with Abraham, and confirmed to Isaac and to Jacob. But the promises of the covenant were to be fully realized by a spiritual seed, who should walk in the steps of Abraham's faith; a succession of pious persons; of real saints. Such persons are members of Christ; and the Apostle considers Christ and his members one, and calls them jointly the "seed" of Abraham. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many, but as of one, and to thy seed, which is Christ."†

That they were to be a spiritual seed, the promise itself makes evident. Jehovah promised to be their God. This implies all spiritual blessings. The gospel, in its most perfect dispensation, promises no greater good to believers, than to have Jehovah, or God in Christ, for their God.

Equally evident is it, that this spiritual seed were, primarily, Abraham's seed in a natural, as well as in a spiritual sense—children by lineal descent, and children of promise. St. Paul

* See Deut. x. 15. † Gal. iii. 16.

says, "I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish, that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh: who are Israelites: to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises: whose are the fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen. Not, as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel," that "are of Israel. Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they" who "are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed."* The Israelites had great privileges; and among them were a spiritual seed.

To the Israelites, as the natural seed of Jacob, *pertained* the adoption; (see Acts iii. 19, 25, 26.) and a filial spirit towards God, correspondent to that adoption, was possessed by *some* of the Israelites, in every generation.—Hence, though, in the time of the Apostle,

* Rom. ix. 2—8.

they in general were perishing in unbelief, and he had *great heaviness, and continual sorrow in his heart*, on their account; yet he sorrowed, *not, as though the word of God had taken no effect*, or as though God's promise to Abraham had failed of its accomplishment. For the promise did not imply, that all the nation of Israel should be true believers, and Abraham's spiritual seed, but, that there should be a *succession of pious persons, Israelites indeed*. What," says the Apostle, "if some did not believe? Shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?"* "Hath God cast away his people? God forbid."† *Some*, and even the great body of the Israelites, *did not believe*; but God was *true and faithful* to his promise. He had "not cast away his people, which he foreknew." There was "a remnant, according to the election of grace."

The covenant made with Abraham is to be considered, as containing not only a promise of the divine favour to all those of the natural seed of Jacob, who should walk in the steps of Abraham's faith, but also an absolute promise, that some of that seed should so walk, and be so blessed. But this absolute promise was not to be fulfilled, nor the church to be continued, without means.

* Rom. iii. 3. † Rom. xi. 1.

The promises of the covenant were not to be accomplished without the faith and obedience of Abraham. God mentions the obedience of Abraham, in offering up Isaac, as a reason, why he would fulfil the promises. "By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD; for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed, as the stars of heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies: and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed: because thou hast obeyed my voice."* The faith and obedience of Abraham were means appointed, by which God fulfilled his promises. Abraham was required to walk before God, and be perfect, to keep the covenant, to put the seal of the covenant upon his infant offspring, and to command his children and household after him. God said, "I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD, to do justice and judgment; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that, which he hath spoken of him."† God fulfilled his promise, in consequence of Abraham's doing

* Gen. xxii. 16—18. † Gen. xviii. 19.

his duty. Indeed, the promise implied, that Abraham should have grace to do his duty; it implied both the means and the end.

The faith and obedience of parents were among the appointed means of continuing the church in succeeding generations. The conduct of parents was, in no small degree, connected with the state and character of their children. Hence, though the promise was absolute, that the church should be continued in the line of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, yet no unfaithful parent could reasonably hope for spiritual blessings to descend upon his children. The covenant itself shows, that it was God's immutable counsel to communicate such degrees of grace, in every generation, as to continue a succession of pious persons. But covenant mercy was not secured to the seed of the unfaithful. The immutability of the promise, therefore, was no excuse for neglect of duty; but a motive to parental faithfulness.

In perfect conformity with the grand design of the Abrahamic covenant, the Sinai covenant was given. God assured the Israelites, that, if they would keep this covenant, he would fulfil to them the promise which he made to Abraham. "If ye hearken to these judgments, and keep and do them"—"the LORD thy

God shall keep unto thee the covenant and the mercy, which he swore unto thy fathers.”* Under the Sinai covenant, the religious instruction of the rising generation was solemnly enjoined; and, as a motive to parental faithfulness, blessings were promised for children. In the following manner did God address his ancient church. “Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons’ sons.†—Oh! that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always; that it might be well with them, and with their children forever!‡—Thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them, when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.”§ The psalmist Asaph expressly declared to the people of Israel, that God established means of

* Deut. vii. 12. † Deut. iv. 9. ‡ Deut. v. 29. § Deut. vi. 5—7.

religious instruction, in the time of their fathers, for the benefit of children. “He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children; that the generation to come might know them, even the children” who “should be born, who should arise and declare them to their children: that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God; but keep his commandments; and might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation,—that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God;”—who “kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law.”* In view of the covenant faithfulness of God, the psalmist David says, “The mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children’s children; to such as keep his covenant, and to those, that remember his commandments, to do them.”† Parents in the ancient church might hope, that, if they were faithful, God would bless them, “*and their offspring with them;*”‡ they might hope, that their serving God, would, by divine grace,

* Psalms, lxxviii. 5—10. † Psalms, ciii. 17, 18. ‡ Is. lxxv. 23.

be made a mean of their children's serving him. Accordingly, Joshua says, "As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD."* And Solomon says, "Train up a child in the way he should go; and, when he is old, he will not depart from it."†

From this view of God's covenant with Abraham, it appears, that the Israelites had peculiar advantages, and that their children might derive great benefit from circumcision, or from the gracious covenant, which was ratified by circumcision. To this question, "What advantage, then, hath the Jew? or what profit is there of circumcision?" the Apostle answers, "Much every way; chiefly, because" "unto them were committed the oracles of God."‡ The Jews enjoyed divine revelation, containing promises of covenant mercy for them and for their children. To them pertained the *covenants*, and the *promises*; and all the precious means of continuing the church among their descendants, from generation to generation.

3. The covenant made with Abraham, *secured to his seed the possession of the land of Canaan.*

Canaan, *as a type of the heavenly land*, was an important blessing promised in the

* Joshua, xxiv. 12. † Prov. xxii. 6. ‡ Rom. iii. 1, 2.

covenant. When God ratified the everlasting covenant with Abraham, he said, "I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the *land of Canaan*, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God."* The seed, to whom God promised the land of Canaan, was the same, as the seed, to whom he promised to be a God; a pious seed among Abraham's natural descendants. Hence David said, "O ye seed of Israel his servant, ye children of Jacob his chosen ones. He is the LORD our God; his judgments are in all the earth. Be ye mindful always of his covenant, the word, which he commanded to a thousand generations; even the covenant, which he made with Abraham, and of his oath unto Isaac, and hath confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant; saying, Unto thee I will give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance."†

Many of the Israelites were not suffered to enter into Canaan, on account of their unbelief. The promise, that the little ones, the children of those, who were men of war, when they went out of Egypt, should enter the land, may be considered as an absolute promise; but as a

* Gen. xvii. 8. † I. Chron. xvi. 13—18.

promise not implying, that all, who should enter Canaan, would be pious. The covenant made with Abraham may be considered, as containing an absolute promise, that “a great nation” of his natural seed should enter that land, without implying, that they would all have true faith.* Moses, near the end of the fortieth year of the journeyings of the Israelites, said, “Ye have been rebellious against the LORD from the day that I knew you.”† What is here said of the character of the Israelites, not only serves to illustrate what the apostle Paul taught the Roman and Galatian Christians, that the inheritance, which God gave to Abraham and his seed, he gave by a gracious promise, but also makes it appear probable, that some, if not many, who entered Canaan, were not, at the time of their entering it, true believers. The instructions and admonitions, which Moses gave the people, show, that circumcision in the flesh was not a sufficient qualification for their entering the promised land. See, particularly, Deut. x. 12—16. In the 16th verse, Moses says, “Circumcise, therefore, the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiff necked.” (Indeed, many entered Canaan, before they were circumcised in the flesh.)‡ But

* See Deut. ix. 4—6. † Deut. ix. 24. ‡ See Joshua, v. 3. 7.

it may have been the case, that, after all the instructions, counsels, and warnings, which Moses gave the people in the land of Moab, and after the covenant transactions, which there took place, some, if not many, entered Canaan, who were not true believers. However, if any, or ever so many, entered Canaan without true faith, they had not, *as to their own character, a covenant right* to the promised land. Those, who had, *as to their own character, a title* to that land, according to the gracious covenant made with Abraham, had a covenant title to the heavenly happiness, of which Canaan was a type. In the promise of Canaan to the patriarchs, was implied the promise of an eternal inheritance. Encouraged by this promise, they “looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.”* They did not receive the end of their faith in the enjoyment of the earthly Canaan; but “they desired a better country, that is, an heavenly.”†

To Christians the sabbath is a type of heavenly rest. “There remaineth,” saith the apostle, “a rest to the people of God.”‡ This word *rest* (or sabbatism) probably intimates a day of holy rest, weekly, in the present world, while

* Heb. xi. 10.

† Heb. xi. 16.

‡ Heb. iv. 9.

it signifies an everlasting day of rest in heaven. But many enjoy the external privileges of the christian sabbath, who will not enter into heaven. And many of Abraham's natural descendants dwelt in the earthly Canaan, who, on account of unbelief, were unqualified to enter into the heavenly.

4. God engaged, in his covenant with Abraham, to make him the *father of believers of all nations*.

“He brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: And he said unto him, so shall thy seed be.”*—“As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be the father of many nations”—a father of many nations have I made thee.”† It is certain, that God designed more by these promises, than that Abraham should be the natural father of many nations. He designed, that Abraham should be the *father of believers of all nations*; the father of a spiritual seed, who were to be collected out of every nation, including all, whether Jews or Gentiles, who should believe, from that time to the end of the world.

* Gen. xv. 5.

† Gen. xvii. 4, 5.

But how are believing Gentiles the children of Abraham? since, by nature, they “were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world.”* They are the children of Abraham by union to Christ, who is emphatically *the seed of Abraham*. The whole body of Christians, consisting of Jews and Gentiles, is that “seed,” which was to serve Christ, and to “be accounted to the LORD for a generation.”† To the churches of Galatia, consisting partly, if not chiefly, of Gentile converts, the apostle writes thus: “Know ye therefore, that they “who” are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.”—“Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.”—“If ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”‡ For the promise was to Abraham and his seed. Believing Gentiles, as well as believing Jews, were predestinated by God to the adoption of children to himself through his dear Son, Jesus Christ,§ to whom they are by faith united. “And if children,” says Paul, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.”||

* Eph. ii. 12.

† Ps. xxii. 30.

‡ Gal. iii. 7. 26. 29.

§ Eph. i. 5.

|| Rom. viii. 17.

Believing Gentiles belong to the same church, that was established in the family of Abraham. They “are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.”* It was implied in God’s covenant with Abraham, and afterwards “revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.”†

A multitude, which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues,” will, at the last day, be acknowledged, as the children of Abraham. God said to his ancient church, “Behold, I will lift up my hand to the *Gentiles*, and set up my standard to the people; and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.”—‡ Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitation; spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes. For thou shalt break forth on the right hand and on the left; and thy seed shall inherit the *Gentiles*.”§, Arise, and shine; for thy light is come, and the glory

* Eph. ii. 19. † Eph. iii. 5, 6. ‡ Is. xlix. 22. § Is. liv. 2, 3.

of the LORD is risen upon thee.”—“The *Gentiles* shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.—The abundance of the sea shall be converted unto thee, the forces of the *Gentiles* shall come unto thee.”* These promises imply a general accession of the *Gentiles* to the church of God—a full accomplishment of the promise made to Abraham, and renewed to Jacob in Bethel.

“Thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south: and in thee, and in thy seed, shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”† Jesus says, “They shall come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and shall sit down”—“with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob”—“in the kingdom of God.”‡

5. The everlasting covenant, which God made with Abraham, *is distinct from the Sinai covenant, and comprizes the blessings of the new covenant, which, in the book of Jeremiah, and in the epistle to the Hebrews, is contrasted with the Sinai covenant.*

Concerning the Sinai covenant, Moses said to the children of Israel, “The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with

* Is. lx. 1. 3. 5. † Gen. xxviii. 14. ‡ Luke, xiii. 29.

us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day.”* God confirmed the everlasting covenant with Abraham in Christ, or towards Christ, (*eis Christon*) that is, with special reference to Christ, as the seed, by way of eminence, 430 years before the Sinai covenant was given; and, as the apostle Paul tells us, the covenant made with Abraham was not disannulled by the law, or Sinai covenant. The Sinai covenant was added to the Abrahamic, “because of transgressions, till the” glorious seed should come, to whom the promise was made.” It was designed as a “school-master, to bring” the Israelites “to Christ.”† It was to “wax old,” and, having done its office, to “vanish away.” But the everlasting covenant, made with Abraham, contains a summary of all gospel blessings, and is never to be abolished. This covenant was established *primarily*, with believers in the natural line of Abraham, but, *eventually*, with believing Gentiles also, who are called the seed of Abraham. So long as there shall be a church in this world, Abraham will have a seed on the earth, and this covenant will be established with them.

The Abrahamic covenant will be remembered by God, even when “the fulness of the

* Deut. v. 3.

† See Gal. iii. 17—25.

Gentiles" shall have "come in". "For," says the apostle, "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."* This is the covenant spoken of in Ps. cv. "He hath remembered his covenant forever, the word which he commanded to a thousand generations," that is, "forever." Compare Ex. iii. 15. and Is. lx. 15.

The covenant, the blessings of which are enjoyed by Christians, is called the *new* covenant, in distinction from the Sinai covenant. Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant, that I made with their fathers, in the day, when I took them by the hand, to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the LORD. For this is the covenant, that I will make with the house of Israel. After those days, saith the LORD, I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, know the LORD: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest: for

* Rom. xi. 25—29.

I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that he saith, a new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away.”* The covenant, that God made with the Israelites, when he brought them out of Egypt, was the Sinai covenant.

The Sinai covenant consisted of the ten commandments, (see Deut. iv. 13.) which were given by Jehovah to the Israelites, while they were under the conduct of Moses, and which were written by God on tables of stone; of those moral, judicial, and ceremonial precepts, which God delivered to Moses, to be communicated to the people, and which were written by Moses in a book; and of promises to the obedient, and threatenings against the disobedient.† This whole covenant, *as a covenant*, has ceased to be in force. “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” “The law was given by Moses; but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.” Though Christ came not

† In certain places, God promises, by Moses, to show mercy to the penitent, in remembrance of his covenant with Abraham; but these promises are not to be considered, strictly speaking, as a part of the Sinai covenant.

* Heb. viii. 8—13.

to destroy, but to fulfil the law, and the prophets, who were sent to call back the revolted people to the law, and to predict the glories of the gospel dispensation ; yet, under the gospel dispensation, men are not required to practise any part of the law, except what is of a moral nature. In what manner our Saviour fulfilled (or completed) the moral part of the law, we learn, in some measure, from his sermon on the mountain. And those parts of the law, which were *a shadow of good things to come*, and served to separate the Israelites from other nations, were fulfilled, when those good things came through Jesus Christ, and the middle wall of partition between Jews and Gentiles was broken down. Jesus, the Lamb of God, was the antitype of all the Levitical sacrifices, and, by his death, took away “the sin of the world.” Jesus has made in himself of two “one new man,” “making peace ;” and reconciled Jews and Gentiles “unto God, in one body, by the cross.”*

The Levitical priesthood, (compare Num. xxv. 13. and Heb. vii. 12.) and all the ceremonies of the law, were “everlasting” in this sense, that they continued from generation to generation, till they had answered their full in-

*Ephe. ii. 14—16.

tent, and were superseded by those better things, which they typified. The spiritual worship of the gospel dispensation, or of the kingdom (or reign) of heaven, is often, both in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and in those of the New, represented in a way of allusion to the Levitical service. See, particularly, Is. lxvi. 21. Zech. xiv. 16, 20, 21. and Rev. viii. 3.

With respect to each other, the Sinai covenant is called the *first*, and the new covenant the *second*. The new covenant is called a *better covenant, established upon better promises*. Jesus, the mediator of the new testament, or covenant, whose blood is called *the blood of the everlasting covenant*, is the *surety of a better testament*, and the *mediator of a better covenant*, than that, of which, in a certain sense, Moses was mediator, and which was “dedicated” not without blood. “For this cause” Jesus “is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressors that were under the first testament, they” who “are called, might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.”* The new testament has *better sacrifices*, than the Sinai covenant, and brings in a *better hope*.

* Heb. ix. 15.

In the Sinai covenant, God promised blessings to the obedient; but in the new covenant, he promises the Holy Spirit, to sanctify the heart. The Israelites kept not the Sinai covenant; and God regarded them not. They promised obedience; but many of their hearts were impenitent. "They remembered, that God was their rock, and the high God their Redeemer. Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouths, and they lied unto him with their tongues."* But the promises of the new covenant secure to those, by whom they are realized, a *new heart* and a *new spirit*. God says, "I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart"† The Sinai covenant required holiness, and promised the favour of God to the obedient. It was, therefore, a good covenant, established upon good promises. But the new covenant secures to all, in whom it takes effect, holy obedience, and eternal life. It is, therefore, a better covenant, established upon better promises. To have the laws of God written in the heart "with the Spirit of the living God," is a greater favour, than to have his laws graven by him on

* Ps. lxxviii. 35, 36. † Jere. xxiv. 7.

tables of stone. In the Sinai covenant, God said, "Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse: a blessing, if ye will obey the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you this day; and a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the LORD your God."* As this covenant cursed the disobedient, and contained no promise of the Holy Spirit to renew the heart, it was, to the rebellious Israelites, *the ministration of death and condemnation*. As the new covenant secures to those, with whom it is made, spiritual life, and the righteousness of faith, it is the ministration of the Spirit and of righteousness. "If the ministration of condemnation" was glorious, "much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory."† Says Paul to the Galatians, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us:"—that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."‡

The Sinai covenant answered the end, for which it was given; but, as to grace and efficacy, it was not sufficient for salvation. See Rom. viii. 3, 4. Israel could not attain to a

* Deut. xi. 26—28. † II. Cor. iii. 7—9. ‡ Gal. iii. 13, 14.

justifying righteousness, while they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law."* In this sense, the Sinai covenant was not *faultless*. In respect to efficacy for the salvation of those, who were under it, it was not without defect; it could not take away the depravity of their hearts, nor remove their guilt. *They were in fault.* "For, finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah."†

It appears, then, that the *everlasting covenant*, established with Abraham, is distinct from the Sinai covenant. Blending these two covenants has been the occasion of much misconception concerning the duty and privileges of the Christian church. Hence has arisen the notion, that the Abrahamic covenant was abolished, at the same time with the Jewish ritual; and that the end of the Levitical institutions was the end of the ancient church.

The Sinai covenant was given, not to disannul the Abrahamic, but to prepare the way for the complete accomplishment of the promises of the Abrahamic, in the bestowment of the blessings of the new covenant. The new

* Rom. ix. 31. † Heb. viii. 8.

covenant, which the Scriptures contrast with the Sinai covenant, instead of being opposed to the Abrahamic, is made with believers in fulfilment of the great mercy, which God promised to Abraham, and to his seed. "Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision, for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers; and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy."* The gospel was before preached unto Abraham: The new covenant is made with the houses of Israel and Judah; that is, with all the spiritual seed of Abraham. God promised to Abraham, that he would be a God to him and to his seed; and in the new covenant he promises to be a God to believers. According to the new covenant, believers have that righteousness, which was sealed to Abraham; and their sins and iniquities will be remembered no more.

6. God's covenant with Abraham *was sealed by the sign of circumcision.*

"God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee, in their generations. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you; Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of

* Rom. xv. 8, 9. Compare Gal. iii. 14.

your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you. And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations; he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger," who "is not of thy seed. He that is born in thy house, and he that is bought with money, must needs be circumcised: and my covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant."*

Circumcision was God's seal, ratifying his covenant. Whatever God, in his covenant with Abraham, promised, concerning him, or his seed, was ratified by circumcision. It was implied in the covenant, that God would continue a *true church*, and, consequently, that he would *circumcise*, or *renew* the hearts of some of his natural seed, from one generation to another, and, at length, renew the hearts of many of all nations. Outward circumcision was a sign, or visible representation, of spiritual circumcision, or of a renovation of heart. This appears from many figurative expressions in the Scriptures.

* Gen. xviii. 9—14.

Moses said to the children of Israel, “ the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.”* In Jeremiah it is said, “ For thus saith the LORD to the men of Judah and Jerusalem,”—“ Circumcise yourselves to the LORD, and take away the foreskins of your hearts, ye men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem; lest my fury come forth like fire, and burn, that none can quench it, because of the evil of your doings.”† The command to the Jews to circumcise their hearts, was just the same, as a command to have a new and a penitent heart. It was the same as this; “ Make you a new heart and a new spirit.”‡ Under the Jewish economy, an uncircumcised heart was an impenitent heart. By the prophet Jeremiah, God threatened to punish the house of Israel, because they were “ *uncircumcised in the heart.*”§ By the prophet Ezekiel, he charged Israel with rebellion, because they brought into his sanctuary those, who were “ *uncircumcised in heart,*” and “ *uncircumcised in flesh;*”|| “ *uncircumcised in heart;*” that is, those, whose hearts were unsanctified. Ste-

* Deut. xxx. 6. † Jer. iv. 4. ‡ Ezek. xviii. 31.

§ Jer. ix. 26. || Ezek. xliv. 7.

phen said to the impenitent Jews, “Ye stiff-necked, and *uncircumcised in heart and ears*, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.”* Though the Jews were circumcised in their flesh, yet remaining impenitent, they were considered as uncircumcised. Says the Apostle, “Circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law, but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision”—“For he is not a Jew,” that “is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he is a Jew,” who “is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.”†—For we are the circumcision,” who “worship God in the Spirit.”‡—“Ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ.”§

Though many received the outward sign of circumcision, who never had the thing signified, yet this did not alter the nature of the everlasting covenant, nor the design of the seal. Circumcision was not only a *sacramental sign* of a new heart, but, when submitted to by

* Acts vii. 51. † Rom. ii. 25—29. ‡ Phil. iii. 3. § Col. ii. 11.

Abraham, and other pious parents in Israel, was a proper *expression* of an obedient temper. It was an explicit consent to the covenant; a public confession of their faith; and a solemn dedication of themselves and their households to God.

Circumcision was *a seal of the righteousness of faith*. It sealed to Abraham this truth, that he was justified in consequence of his faith; and it sealed this general truth, that God “justifieth the ungodly” through faith. Abraham was made the father of all who should believe. All, of whatever nation, who are “of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham,” and justified in the same way. After the gospel dispensation took place, those of Abraham’s natural seed, who were, also, his spiritual children, desired “to be found in” Christ, “not having” their “own righteousness, which” was “of the law, but that, which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness, which is of God by faith;” and righteousness is imputed to all sinners, whether Jews or Gentiles, who believe in “Jesus Christ the righteous,” whom, when he “knew no sin,” God “made to be sin for” men, “that” those, who believe, “might be made the righteousness of God in him;” Jesus Christ is “the head,” whom we

are to “hold,” and “into” whom we are to “grow up”—“in all things.” It is through the merits of Jesus, the illustrious seed of Abraham, and the beloved Son of God, that righteousness was imputed to Abraham himself, and to all his spiritual seed in the ancient church, to all who *walked in the steps of his faith*.

The LORD said to Abraham, “My covenant shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant.” Though the rite of circumcision was not to be used forever, yet the covenant, of which circumcision, while it was to be practised, was to be a token in the flesh, is strictly everlasting. Moses gave the people circumcision; (not that it was of Moses, but of the fathers.) After the Sinai covenant was “added,” all, who received circumcision, were bound to keep the whole law.* When the Sinai covenant vanished away, circumcision was no longer to be observed. But circumcision, considered simply, as a token of the covenant made with Abraham, has its place amply supplied by baptism; which, on a number of accounts, as may appear in the sequel, is more happily suited to the Christian dispensation. The admission of proselytes into the

* See Acts, xv. 1, 5. & Gal. v. 3.

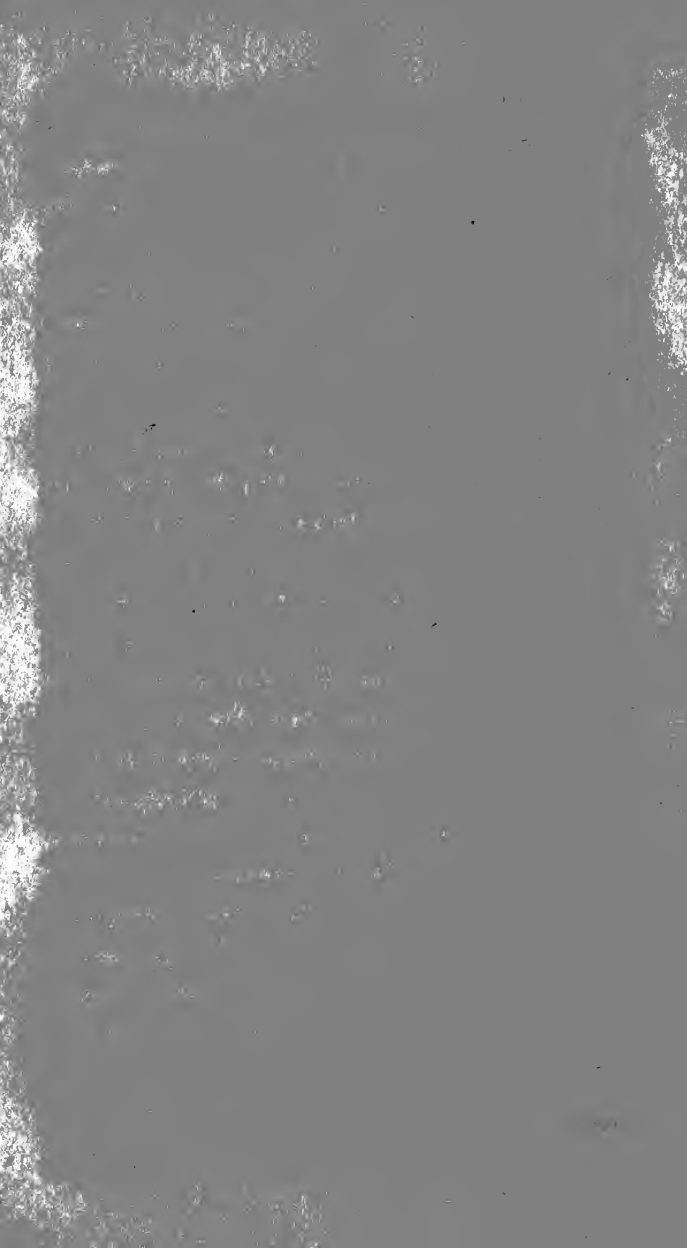
ancient church, and the circumcising of them, prefigured the preaching of the gospel to all nations, and the baptizing of them, according to the commission of Jesus to his apostles.*

* It may appear plain from the tenor of this discourse, that the covenant made with Abraham, as spoken of in Gen. xvii. which Stephen (Acts, vii.) calls the covenant of circumcision, is not so distinct from the promises made to him in Gen. xii. that the law, which did not disannul (the apostle Paul says, *ouk akuroi*, doth not disannul) these promises, was able to disannul that covenant.

But it may not be amiss to make a few remarks upon this point.

Though the apostle Paul in Gal. iii. 17. has a particular reference to the time, in which the promise, Gen. xii. 7. was made, (for the promises recorded in Gen. xii. 1—3. were made to Abraham in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Charran. (see Acts, vii. 2, 3.) yet it is to be observed, that the promises, which were made in Gen. xii. 1—3, 7. were renewed, and in some respects, more explicitly, in Gen. xvii. when God changed his name from Abram to Abraham, making him “a father of many nations;” and it is irrational to think, that the law, which did not disannul the gracious promise made to Abraham 430 years before, was able to disannul the gracious covenant, of which circumcision was appointed the token, though not 430 years, yet above 400 years before. And, when the apostle speaks of the covenant’s being “*confirmed*,” he has, perhaps, particular reference to Gen. xvii. see Gen. xvii. 7. According to the words of Stephen, God “gave” Abraham, “the covenant of circumcision;” that is, God renewed the covenant, which he had before made with him, and appointed circumcision a token of it. The apostle in the 3d chapter of Gal. taken together refers to the gracious promises *in general* made to Abraham. In the 6th verse he refers particularly to

what is recorded in Gen. xv. And though in speaking of Abraham's seed, in verse 16, he refers more particularly to Gen. xii. 7. still the land there promised to his seed, is the same land that is promised in Gen. xvii. 8. In this sermon all the gracious promises made to Abraham are considered, as composing one covenant; and this way of considering the matter is agreeable to what the apostle shows in Gal. iii. and Rom. iv. taken together. In Rom. iv. 13—22. the apostle has a more particular reference to Gen. xv. and xvii. and to the time when Abraham "was about an hundred years old." See verse 19; and compare verse 13. with Gal. iii. 18. The "everlasting possession" promised, Gen. xvii. 8. is strictly everlasting, considered in its typical import as comprizing the everlasting joy, to be inherited by those, who shall be admitted into "the holy city, new Jerusalem," when there shall be "a new heaven and a new earth."



SERMON II.

ROMANS IV. 11, 12,

And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the rightcousness of the faith, which he had, yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also; And the father of circumcision to them, who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had, being yet uncircumcised.

HAVING, in the preceding discourse, explained God's covenant with Abraham, and shown the design of the seal, I proceed,

II. To show, in general, what it is to walk in the steps of the faith of Abraham, and to make a particular application to Christian parents.

The various steps, by which Abraham manifested his faith, are distinctly marked in the holy Scriptures.

In obedience to the Divine command, he separated himself and household, from his native "country, and from" his "kindred, and

from" his "fathers house."* "By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place, which he should" afterwards "receive for an inheritance obeyed ; and he went out, not knowing whither he went."†

We may see the faith of Abraham *in the peaceable and benevolent temper which he exercised towards Lot, his brother, that is, his brothers son.*‡ He believed the promises, which God had made to him, Gen. xii. 1—3, 7. and was not anxious about their fulfilment. He lost nothing by his peaceable conduct. For, when he had given Lot his choice, where to dwell, Lot, under the direction of Divine Providence, made such a choice, that "Abraham dwelt in the land of Canaan," and the LORD confirmed to him and to his seed forever the promise of that land, promising to make his "seed, as the dust of the earth."

Trusting in God, and feeling a sympathy for Lot, Abraham pursued and conquered Chedorlaomer, and the kings that were with him. This was a pledge of the future victories of the promised seed ; and the bread and wine, which Melchizedek, in his priestly office, brought forth to Abraham, might signify the blessings of the covenant. Abraham likewise

* Gen. xii. 1. † Heb. xi. 8. ‡ Gen. xiii. 8, 9.

exercised faith, in his conduct towards Melchizedek, and towards the kings of Sodom. See Gen. xiv. "After these things the word of the Lord came unto Abraham in a vision, saying, Fear not Abram, I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward."*

Abraham believed the promise of God concerning a numerous seed. While he was yet childless, God promised him, that his seed should be as numerous as the stars of heaven. "And he believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteousness."† This promise had ultimate reference to his covenant seed, which were to consist of "many nations." Hence St. Paul says, that Abraham "against hope believed in hope, that he might be the father of many nations."‡

With faith, Abraham received the particular promise of the birth of Isaac. God said to him, "Sarah thy wife shall bear thee a son indeed; and thou shalt call his name Isaac: and I will establish my covenant with him for an everlasting covenant, and with his seed after him."§ "He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God."||

* Gen. xv. 1. † Gen. xv. 6. ‡ Rom. iv. 18.
 § Gen. xvii. 19. || Rom. iv. 20.

Abraham received the seal of the righteousness of faith for himself and household. He had faith in God's covenant, before he applied the seal; and this step was an evidence of his faith. He received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith, which he had, yet being uncircumcised."

Abraham commanded his children and household after him to keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment. The promises of the everlasting covenant were not to be fulfilled to Abraham, without his doing his duty; but in consequence of his obedience. God said to Isaac, "I will perform the oath, which I sware unto Abraham thy father; and I will make thy seed to multiply, as the stars of heaven, and will give unto thy seed all these countries; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because" "Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my commandments, my statutes, and my laws."* Thus it is written, "Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation; and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him." This promise was absolute. But in order to its accomplishment, it was necessary, that Abraham should do his duty, as a

* Gen. xxvi. 3, 4, 5.

parent and head of a family ; that he should restrain and instruct his household ; and God said, “ I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the LORD to do justice and judgment ; that the LORD may bring upon Abraham that which he hath spoken of him.”*

In obedience to the Divine command, Abraham consented to sacrifice his son Isaac upon the altar.

God said to him “ Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt offering, upon one of the mountains, which I will tell thee of.”† Obedience to this command was a peculiar manifestation of his submission and faith. “ By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac ; and he that had received the promises, offered up his only begotten son ; of whom it was said, that in Isaac shall thy seed be called : accounting, that God was able to raise him up even from the dead ; whence also he received him in a figure.”‡ In consequence of Abraham’s not withholding his only son, God solemnly confirmed his gracious promises.

* Gen. xviii. 18, 19. † Gen. xxii. 2. ‡ Heb. xi. 17—19.

Another expression of Abraham's faith is noticed in Heb. xi. 9, 10. "*By faith he sojourned in the land of a promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked for a city, which hath foundations,*" the "*builder and maker*" of which "*is God.*"

Thus Abraham believed God, and, from step to step, manifested his faith by his works. By faith he was justified, and his whole life afterward was a life of faith. "So, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise;"* that is, obtained the things, which had been promised. (The word *promise* is here used objectively; as it is in other places.† So "the promise of the Spirit"‡ means the promised Spirit.) Abraham obtained the things, which had been promised: for in consequence of his persevering faith, God has been fulfilling his gracious promises to him from age to age; he has sent into the world Jesus Christ, that unspeakable and all comprehending gift; and Abraham, when he died, entered into everlasting peace,§ with a sure title to a glorious resurrection, and the blessings of that heavenly kingdom, in which many from the different

* Heb. vi. 15. † See Heb. ix. 15, x. 36. xi. 13, 39.

‡ Gal. iii. 14. § Is. lvii. 2. Luke, xvi. 22, 25.

quarters of the earth shall sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Abraham and other ancient saints “died in faith, not having received the promises, [that is, not having received the things promised, as Christians receive them: Heb. xi. 39, 40.] but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed, that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.” They desired a “heavenly” country: “wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city.”

In the faith of Abraham and of all the ancient saints, in the faith of the apostles, and all true Christians, there is only a circumstantial difference. To the ancient, and Christian church, there is one Lord, and, essentially, one faith. Under every dispensation, saving faith embraces Christ, and unites the soul to him; it works by love, and is expressed by obedience to the Divine will.

Abraham was the covenant father of such only of his natural seed, as walked in the steps of his faith. He received the seal of the righteousness of faith; that he might be the “father of circumcision to them, who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the

steps of that faith, which he had, being yet uncircumcised." Abraham was commanded to do some things, which were not required of his natural covenant seed; but as to the substance of his faith and obedience, they were to walk in the same steps. They were to love God with all their hearts, to embrace the promise of the Messiah, to put entire confidence in the truth of whatever God revealed, and to practise all the duties, which he required.

Abraham, who was justified by faith, and died above 300 years, before "the law was given by Moses," obeyed God's "voice, and kept" his "charge," his "commandments," his "statutes, and" his "laws." Previously to the giving of the law, the LORD, by Moses, said to the children of Israel, "Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bear you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation." According to what our Saviour says, "many prophets and kings" "and righteous men" walked in the steps of Abraham's faith, desiring to see and hear, but not seeing and hearing those glo-

rious things, which Christians have the blessedness to see and hear. In the xi. of Hebrews, those *many* ancient saints are spoken of with honour, and some of their *names* are mentioned. By faith they wrought righteousness, endured bitter sufferings, obtained great victories, received signal mercies, and experienced wonderful deliverances. By faith they were animated to pursue that noble conduct, which, while some of them on account of that conduct, were exiled, as it were, from the world, showed that the world was not worthy of them. Hence we see, that, though wickedness so much abounded among those, who by circumcision were the professed people of God, there were among them *many* true saints. Even in the time of Elijah, there were “seven thousand men,” who did not worship Baal.

All the ancient saints “died in faith” [except Enoch and Elijah, who without dying were translated.] “All” of them, “having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: [the glorious things promised] God having provided some better thing for” Christians, “that” the ancient believers “should not be made perfect” “without” the believers in Jesus. Those, who are called by the gospel

of Jesus, effectually called, "receive" that "eternal inheritance,"* which was virtually promised to Abraham and his seed. They *now* receive it, in this sense, that they have a bright prospect of it in the gospel, through which life and immortality are *brought to light*, and they receive the "Holy Spirit," which was promised, and which is "the earnest of" their "inheritance."†

It was the duty of the Israelites heartily to conform themselves to the Mosaic law, after it was given. All its commands were to be obeyed with faith. The penitent and obedient walked in the steps of Abraham's faith; and righteousness was imputed to them. Thus Zacharias and Elizabeth walked, and thus they were blessed. But the circumcision of the impenitent and unbelieving became uncircumcision.

The Israelites were forbidden to mingle with the heathen nations. They were considered a holy seed; and commanded to make no covenant with those nations, among whom they dwelt, but to keep themselves distinct from the rest of the world;‡ that they might be a peculiar people, a holy nation.

* See Heb. ix. 15. † See Eph. i. 13, 14. ‡ See Deut. vii. 2. Ezra. ix. 2. and Ps. cvi. 35.

The Israelites were to apply the seal of the covenant to their infant offspring in faith. This was required of them in their generations ; and, when strangers united with them, they received the seal for themselves and their households. Thus God's covenant was sealed with his ancient church, both parents and children. Without the seal of the righteousness of faith, none might partake of the passover, nor come into the sanctuary of God.*

The Israelites were to teach their children concerning religion. It was expressly enjoined upon parents to lay up Divine commands in their own hearts, and teach them diligently to their children ; that God's law and statutes might be made known to after generations. When believing parents circumcised their children, but did not teach them the way of the Lord, and restrain them from sin, they departed from the steps of Abraham. *Some* true saints neglected parental duty to the ruin of their children. Eli was a good man, but his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not ; and this proved their ruin. But some parents in Israel were faithful, and covenant blessings descended to their children. Samuel had a pious and faith-

* Ex. xii. 48. Ezek. xliv. 7.

ful mother, who sincerely devoted him to God. Solomon had a faithful father, who trained him up in the way he should go. Timothy's mother and grand mother were persons of unfeigned faith, by whose pious care he was taught the holy Scriptures from a child.* These were remarkable instances of God's covenant faithfulness to pious parents.

It was the duty of the Jews to obey the Christian dispensation when it was introduced. Had the Jews followed the steps of Abraham, they would have gladly received Christ when he came. He said to those who rejected him, "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham."—"Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it and was glad."† Literally, *Abraham, your father, joyfully leaped, that he might see my day; and he saw it, and rejoiced.* "The just shall live by faith." In the gospel of Christ, "the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith;"‡ from the faith of the Mosaic dispensation, to the faith of

* II. Tim. i. 5. iii. 15. † John, viii. 39, 40—56.

‡ Rom. iii. 17.

the Christian dispensation. It was the duty of the Jews to obey the law of Moses. It was their duty to hearken to John the Baptist. When Christ came, it was their duty to obey him; and it was for rejecting him, that the Jews in general were deprived of their visible church privileges. "Because of unbelief they were broken off."* But some of them believed. Simeon, Anna and others, who were waiting for redemption in Israel, were true children of Abraham, and rejoiced to see Christ, when he was an infant. Others believed on him after hearing his gracious words. "As many as received him," while he abode on earth, or after his ascension, whether Jews, or Gentiles, were "Abraham's" spiritual "seed, and heirs, according to the promise." They became the children of God by adoption; being "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, [or *a man*, that is, a male, *andros*] but of God."

Like Abraham, Christians "walk by faith, not by sight." In imitation of the faith and submission of Abraham, they are to believe all, that God has revealed in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, however sublime and mysterious some of the doctrines of the

* Rom. xi. 20.

gospel may appear, and to deny themselves, take up their cross daily, and follow Jesus. They are to manifest their faith in Jesus and love to him, by keeping his commandments. Thus walking with God, they will from time to time receive cheering manifestations of the Divine favour ; Jesus and his Father will come to them, and make their abode with them. If Abraham, who lived about 1800 years, before Jesus, the glorious seed, was born, leaped with joy, that he might obtain a prospect of the Saviour's day, and when, by a lively faith, he had a clearer prospect of it, than he had before enjoyed, was glad ; how ought those Christians, who live above 1800 years since the birth of Jesus, to love the Saviour, and rejoice in his salvation ! All Christians, in every age, ought to cleave to Jesus, as their only hope, as "the LORD" their "righteousness ;" accounting "all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus" their "Lord." Desiring to "win Christ, and be found in him ;" not considering themselves, as "already perfect," as having "already attained" the great object of their wishes, but pressing towards the mark for the prize of their high vocation, "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life." They are to be imitators of those,

“who through faith and patience inherit the promises;” particularly of Abraham, who having “patiently endured,” “obtained the promise.” Christians “have need of patience;” that having “done the will of God,” they may receive that incorruptible, undefiled and unfading inheritance, which is reserved for them in heaven. Being “compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses,” it becomes them, laying aside every weight, and the sin, which so easily besets them, to “run with patience the race” set before them, “looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of” their “faith,” considering what he endured, and how he is exalted, and remembering that those only, who endure to the end, will be saved in Jesus with an everlasting salvation, and be glorified with their Lord. Under Jesus, as the Captain of their salvation, they are to “fight the good fight of faith,” taking to themselves the panoply of God, that they may be able successfully to oppose all their spiritual enemies, and trusting that they shall be more than conquerors, through him who loved them. When from time to time they obtain spiritual victories, they will be cheered with the gracious presence of the “King of righteousness,” and “King

of peace," who is a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec.

"His dearest flesh he makes" their food,"

"And bids" them "drink his richest blood."

Thus he gives them spiritual life. This he does, especially, when they enjoy the privilege of eating bread and drinking wine in solemn remembrance of their Saviour's death. Waiting upon the Lord in this ordinance, and in other ways, they "renew their strength." Abraham gave Melchisedec the tenth of all the spoils; and Christians are to ascribe all the glory of their salvation to their divine Melchisedec.

Christians are to imitate Abraham in his peaceable and affectionate conduct towards Lot. Jesus says, "Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth." "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." Christians are, as far as they can, to live peaceably with all men. Among themselves they are to endeavour to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace;" considering, that they are brethren. All men are brethren, as the children of Adam, and, in a certain sense, the offspring of God. But

Christians are brethren in a peculiar manner. It would be happy, if in controversies upon religious subjects among themselves, and with others, they would think of Abraham; and would rest satisfied, that the truth, as it is in Jesus, however it may be opposed, will ultimately prevail. Though it is proper for a Christian firmly to maintain every thing, that he is sufficiently persuaded is true, and of importance to the welfare of the church, he ought always to make a distinction between the fundamental truths of the gospel, and those things, which are not fundamental. Jude refers to fundamental truths of the gospel, when he teaches us to *contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints*. When we contend *earnestly* for the *faith*, for fundamental truths, we are to exercise meekness. In the language of Paul, the ministers of Christ are to “be gentle unto all men,”—“in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth.” But of how small importance are *some* things, in which *some* denominations of professing Christians disagree, compared with the importance of fundamental truths! Is not the disparity almost, if not quite

as great, as that between paying tithes of mint, rue, anise, and cummin, and observing the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, faith, and the love of God? These weightier matters especially, according to our Saviour, the Scribes and Pharisees ought to have done, not leaving the payment of those tithes undone. But while they paid those tithes, and *omitted* the more weighty matters, they showed their hypocrisy. Let professing Christians think of these things. By such considerations may the writer of these discourses be suitably influenced in the sequel.

The way is now prepared to make a particular application to Christian parents; and show what it is for them to walk in the steps of the faith of Abraham.

This implies, that they have that faith, which is the indispensable condition of the everlasting covenant. "They," who "are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham."* "The blessing of Abraham" comes on "them through Jesus Christ." They keep the same covenant; they belong to the same church; and, with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, they will inherit the same kingdom, prepared from the foundation of the world for all true believers. As to the substance of Abraham's faith and obedience, they are to walk in the same steps.

* Gal. iii. 7.

1. *Christian parents should detach themselves and their families from the sinful customs and pursuits of the world.*

Abraham was called to forsake the idols of his native country, and to devote himself and his family to the service of God. With faith he obeyed. Christian parents should renounce their love to the world, and devote themselves and their families to the service of God, looking for eternal happiness in heaven. Trusting in Jehovah, as their God, they should live, as strangers and pilgrims on earth, serving God, with their children, who are heirs with them of the same promise.

2. *Every Christian parent should believe, and properly consider, that the church is to be continued by the regeneration of the children of Christian parents, as one great mean.*

Abraham believed the promise, that his seed should be as numerous, as the stars of heaven. That promise is daily fulfilling, *partly*, in this way: the children of Christian parents become true believers, and *subscribe with their hands unto the LORD*.* For it is, *partly*, by regenerating the natural seed of Christian parents, that God fulfils his promise to *pour*

* Is. xliv. 1—5.

his Spirit upon Jacob's seed, and his blessing upon his offspring; which promise respected those gospel times, when the blessing of Abraham should come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, and they, with the Jews, should receive the Spirit through faith. In the church under the Mosaic dispensation there was a succession of pious parents and pious children, from generation to generation; and in that way, principally, though not wholly, the church was continued: strangers were added from time to time, as a prelude to the general accession of the Gentiles. The Christian church is not now continued *wholly* by the regeneration of the children of Christian parents. It may be enlarged by the conversion of many, who are without; yea, by the conversion of multitudes among nations not now favoured with the light of the glorious gospel. But it is justly noticed, that in revivals of religion in Christian countries, the subjects of grace are more *generally* among the children of Christian parents. Nor is this a just occasion of murmuring to any, who live under the gospel. It is the duty of unrenewed parents to repent and believe, and unite with the church. They have opportunity to enter into covenant with God, and to give up their chil-

dren to him; and, if they do their duty, *the promise is to them, and to their children.*

3. *Christian parents should dedicate their children to God in baptism; and should do it believing, that they need renewing grace, and an interest in the righteousness of faith.*

That infant baptism is a divine institution, I shall attempt to prove in the sequel. Supposing, at present, that this is granted, I would here remark, that Christian parents should have consistent views of the state of their children, when they give them up to God in baptism. Circumcision was a *sign of a new heart, and a seal of the righteousness of faith.* The command of God to Abraham, to put this seal on his infant offspring, implied, that they needed renewing grace, and an interest in that grace, by which God justifies believers.

By nature, children are the same now, as they were in the time of Abraham. Christian parents enjoy better means of knowing the state of their children. Having all the light, which the Scriptures afford, they may clearly see, that their infant offspring are in such a state of spiritual death and of condemnation, that they must be renewed, and interested in the righteousness of Christ, in order to be saved; and that, in this way, the covenant of grace provides for

their salvation. All this is signified by infant baptism. The washing of infants with water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, as a sacramental sign of renovation, and a seal of the righteousness of faith, signifies, that they need “the renewing of the Holy Ghost;” and an interest in the righteousness of Christ. Though infants have no knowledge of Christ, and are incapable of faith, yet they may be renewed by Divine grace, and, being, in covenant, connected with believing parents, they may have an interest in Christ’s righteousness. But, if parents do not believe, that their infant offspring need a new heart, and an interest in the righteousness of Christ, why should they apply to them the outward sign and seal of these blessings?

4. *Christian parents should bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord;* praying with them, and setting a pious example.*

They should imitate faithful Abraham, who commanded his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD. It is not sufficient for Christian parents to believe in their hearts, to confess Christ with their mouths, and to have their children baptized; but they

* See Eph. iv. 4.

are to train them up in the way they should go, in order to have good ground to hope, that they will be renewed and saved.

Parental faithfulness is essential to the fulfilment of the promises, and an important mean of the continuance of the church. By this it is not meant, that unfaithful parents can make void the promises, and destroy the church. For God will *cause* some parents to be faithful, and some children to be trained up in the way they should go; and by one mean and another he will *cause* the church to be continued. Thus he did in the Jewish church; thus he has done in the Christian church; and thus he will do to the latest generations. Some parents in Israel were faithful, and covenant blessings descended to their posterity; and the true church was continued, through every generation, from Abraham to the coming of the Messiah. Some Christian parents, in every age, since the incarnation of Christ have been faithful; some children have been trained up for God, renewed by his grace, and saved; and by this mean of God's appointment, among other means, the church has been continued.

By the pious instructions of Christian parents, accompanied with Divine power, serious impressions are sometimes made on the minds of

young children, and they are distinguished for early piety. But if children are not truly pious when young, a religious education is a barrier against errors, and is of peculiar advantage to all, who, at any time, become truly religious.

Christian parents should restrain their children from sinful practices. Abraham *commanded his children and household*; and for this he was approved by God. Christian parents have authority from God to *command* their children; and children are divinely commanded to obey their parents. Parents, having this authority, are, in some measure, responsible for the conduct of their families. If parents are determined not to restrain their children from fashionable vices, not to keep them from scenes of vanity, let them not pretend to give them up in baptism; lest they profane an ordinance of God, cast a stumbling block before others, and bring reproach upon Christianity.

To render effectual their instructions and restraints, and to obtain spiritual blessings from God, for themselves, and for their children, Christian parents should practice family prayer. Abraham had an altar for worship, and called on the name of the LORD. Christians are commanded to pray "always with all prayer and

supplication in the spirit." They have this gracious encouragement to social prayer, that, "if two" shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them "by God." For, where two or three are gathered together in the "name" of Jesus Christ, "there" he is "in the midst of them."* The blessings, which families, as such, need, and the blessings, which, as such, they receive, render family devotion a reasonable service. Parents, who neglect this duty, cannot maintain a suitable religious influence over their families. Religious instruction will appear unimportant, and, probably, prove ineffectual, unless connected with daily supplications to the throne of grace for the influence of the Holy Spirit.

Christian parents should set a pious example before their families. Abraham kept the way of the Lord himself, and commanded his family to walk in his steps. His precepts were enforced by his own example. If Christian parents keep the way of the Lord themselves, they may, with peculiar propriety, and probable success, command their children to do the same. But, if they teach their children to walk in the narrow way to life, and walk themselves, in the broad road, their example tends to de-

* See Mat. xviii. 19, 20.

stroy the influence of their own instruction. If children are taught, by *careless parents*, to pay serious attention to religion; by *worldly minded parents*, not to mind earthly things; by *profane parents*, not to take God's name in vain; by *scoffing parents*, not to deride religion; by *sabbath breaking parents*, not to profane God's holy day, nor neglect Divine worship; may not the children be tempted to ask their parents, Why do you not set us a pious example?

5. *Christian parents, when they give their children to God in baptism, and while they train them up in the way they should go, ought to believe, that their faith and obedience may be the means of the salvation of their children.*

The birth of Isaac may be considered, as a type of the spiritual birth of the seed of the covenant. Agar and Sarah, with their respective sons, represented the two covenants; Agar and Ishmael, the Sinai covenant; and Sarah and Isaac the everlasting covenant. Sarah, the parent of Isaac, represents the church, the parent of a spiritual seed. St. Paul says, "Jerusalem, which is above, is free, which is the mother of us all." By Jerusalem, which is above, he means the church, which has a spiritual seed according to promise. "Now we

brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise ;”* one part of the meaning of which appears to be, *We have been born of God, according to the promise, which he made to the church.* Abraham received Isaac by a special promise. He “ was strong in faith, giving glory to God.” Christian parents should have a strong faith in the promises of the everlasting covenant, concerning the spiritual birth of the seed of the faithful. They should believe, that their children, in particular, may be born of the Spirit, in consequence of their faith and obedience.

This does not imply that parents can merit salvation for their children ; nor does it imply any thing inconsistent with the doctrine of free grace. To renew and save a child is a work of God’s free grace ; but God works by means, in accomplishing his gracious purposes ; and the faith and obedience of parents are among the appointed means of his saving their children, and continuing the church. Because Christians ask, God gives them the Holy Spirit ; but it is a gracious gift. Because they pray for Zion’s prosperity, God converts sinners, and builds up the church, but it is by grace that sinners are converted, and believers are comforted, and wholly sanctified. Because Chris-

* Gal. iv. 26—28.

tian parents exercise faith, obey the voice of God, and keep his covenant, he pours his Spirit and blessing upon their children, and saves them by his grace.

In signal temporal deliverances, typifying salvation by Christ, children were saved by means of the faith and obedience of parents. "By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; " by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness, which is by faith."* This was a type of salvation by Christ; and, by Divine grace, children may be renewed, and become interested in the Saviour, in consequence of the faith and obedience of Christian parents.

The faith and obedience of parents in sprinkling the blood of the paschal lamb, were the means, appointed by God for the temporal salvation of the first born of Israel, when the first born of Egypt were slain. But the first born of Israel were saved by distinguishing mercy; and, at that awful crisis, parents did not imagine, that they had merited the favour, which God showed to their children.

The deliverance of Israel from Egypt, and their taking possession of Canaan, represented

* Heb. xi. 7.

the eternal salvation of the church. But parents did not leave their children in Egypt; they did not abandon them at the red sea, nor forsake them in the wilderness. From these dangers children were saved by the mercy of God, but by means of the faith and obedience of their parents. Like Israel, fleeing, with their little ones, towards the land of promise, Christian parents, with their children, should pursue their journey towards the heavenly Canaan.

The believing application of parents to Christ, while he was on earth, was the mean of their children's being healed of divers diseases. We have no account of his refusing to heal a child, when the parent applied to him in faith. He is the great Physician of the soul, and can heal the spiritual diseases of children, as easily as other disorders, which may distress them; and who will presume to say, that the faith and obedience of Christian parents are not means of spiritual good to their children? When some "infants" were brought to him, not, as it appears, that he might cure them of any particular disorder, but that he might "touch them"—"put his hands on them, and pray," "he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them."*

* See Luke, xviii. 15. Mat. xix. 13. and Mark, x. 16.

cause he did not heal the diseased children of such parents, as did not apply to him? What, if such parents had murmured, and said, Why does he not treat all children alike? Though we do not apply to him, must our *children* suffer on this account? If Jesus is the Saviour of the world, and has come to do good, let him show impartiality. Our children are as good as others.—Who would not have been shocked at the impropriety of such language? But is it not equally improper, for parents under the gospel, to use similar language, while they neglect their duty to their children?

6. *Christian parents ought, in a certain sense, to imitate Abraham in that submission and faith, which he exercised, when he offered Isaac upon the altar.*

They ought to exercise submission and faith respecting the temporal and eternal welfare of their dear children, and respecting the comfort they may hope to enjoy in them. When their children are sick or distressed with any calamity, they ought to exercise submission and faith respecting themselves, as afflicted, respecting the recovery and relief of their children, and respecting their children's eternal state. When their children die, at what ever age, they are to feel resigned to the will of God in respect to

themselves, from whom he has taken away the comforts, which he gave, and submission to God in respect to the condition of their children in eternity.

Christian parents are to exercise submission with regard to the salvation of their adult children, who are remaining in unbelief. It cannot be expected, that all the children of all Christian parents will be saved. We have reason to expect, O awful the thought, that against some of them the door of heavenly blessedness will be shut. When Christian parents behold their children living impenitently, they have reason to fear, that they will perish in sin. Being conscious of a neglect of parental duty, they know not, but that the impiety of their children is, in a certain sense, owing to their unfaithfulness. They should, in this view, be clothed with humility, and submit the salvation of their children to God, who will have mercy, on whom he will have mercy. If these adult children die, without manifesting repentance and faith, the parents ought to be still, and know, that the Lord is God.

But Christian parents should exercise faith in the power and grace of God. Abraham believed, that "God was able to raise up" Isaac "even from the dead;" "whence also he re-

ceived him in a figure.”* The figurative resurrection of Isaac represented the resurrection of Christ, of whom he was a remarkable type, the spiritual resurrection of all those, who are said to rise with Christ, and to be quickened together with him, and their resurrection from the grave to eternal life. If the children of Christian parents appear, when they die, to die in the Lord, the parents ought to trust in the power and grace of God, hoping that their children will obtain a resurrection to an unspeakably better life. When their children, in this mortal life, appear to be dead in sin, they ought to trust in the power and grace of God, and humbly hope, that he will quicken them to spiritual life. In this confidence and hope, they are diligently to use the proper means for the quickening of their children ; humbling themselves before God for their past deficiencies, and neglect of parental duty, imploring his forgiveness, beseeching him to enable them from this time to be faithful to their children, and to bless their endeavours to promote their salvation. However discouraging may be the prospect with regard to any child, let the parent not cease to labour for his spiritual good ;

* Heb. xi. 19.

considering, that what he says and does, may be recollected by the child, and prove a mean of his salvation, when he himself is resting in the grave, is comforted in the bosom of Abraham, and is with his Lord Jesus in the heavenly paradise.*

* Pious Samuel was the child of pious parents. So remarkable was his piety, that nothing appears, in the Scriptures, against him, from his childhood to his death. How great a grief must it have been to him, when he was old, that his sons did not walk in his steps !

7*

[The text in this image is extremely dark and illegible. It appears to be a page of printed or typed text, but the contrast is too low to transcribe. The layout suggests a standard page with multiple lines of text.]

SERMON. III.

ROMANS, iv. 11, 12.

And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith, which he had, yet being uncircumcised : that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised ; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also ; And the father of circumcision to them, who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had, being yet uncircumcised.

IN the preceding discourse it was taken for granted, that infant baptism is a Divine institution. In proof of this, I shall now offer some arguments.

Argument 1. Infant baptism may be argued from the connexion, which, according to God's covenant, subsists between believing parents and their children.

The Christian church is the ancient church continued under a new dispensation, under which it is enriched with great blessings, and enlarged by the accession of the Gentiles.

There subsists between believing parents and their children under the gospel, a connexion similar to that, which subsisted between parents and children in the ancient church, according to the covenant established by God with Abraham, when he constituted him the father of many nations. In the ancient church, circumcision, which was appointed a token of the Abrahamic covenant, and may be said to have been a seal of it, was applied to infants. Baptism has, in a certain sense, taken the place of circumcision, and may be said to be a seal of the same covenant, considered as including that new covenant, of which Jesus Christ is the Mediator. It appears proper therefore, that infants should be baptized.

The perpetuity of the covenant connexion between parents and children is exhibited in the law of Moses, in the Psalms, and in the prophets. See Deut. vii. 9. Ps. cv. 8, 9. Ezek. xxxvii. 25.

That there was to be such a connexion between parents and children *under the gospel*, appears from the following passages in Is. lxv. 23. Jer. xxxii. 38, 39. and Zech. x. 9. "They are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them." "And they shall be my people, and I will be their God. And I will give them one heart and one way, that

they may fear me forever, for the good of them, and of their children after them.” “They shall live with their children.”

Do the scriptures of the New Testament anywhere show, that the covenant connexion between believing parents and their children is dissolved by the gospel? No. Nor are they silent upon this point. They expressly favour the idea, that such a covenant connexion remains under the Christian dispensation.

That the blessings of the kingdom (or reign) of heaven were first offered to the Jews, and offered to them, as having a primary title to them, according to God's gracious and everlasting covenant with Abraham, and according to the gracious promises, which, in pursuance of that covenant, God had made to his people from time to time, is manifest from the whole tenor of the New Testament Scriptures. From these Scriptures, also, we clearly see the way, in which God proposed to extend mercy to the Gentiles. The blessings of the gospel were to be offered to them, and enjoyed by them, in consequence of the gospel's being rejected by the Jews, as a nation. Christ said to the Jews, “The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.”*

* Mat. xxi. 43.

When these words were spoken, the kingdom of God had not come; it was only at hand; and the Jews as a nation, by their awfully wicked treatment of the Son of God, failed of obtaining the blessings of the kingdom, and brought upon themselves a miserable destruction. But such was the title of the Jews to the kingdom, as children of the prophets, and of the Abrahamic covenant, on which account they are styled “children of the kingdom,”* that the kingdom is represented to be *taken from* them; as if they had come into possession of it.

If the Jews had such a title to the blessings of the gospel, as descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and as those, to whom pertained the promises,† was there not a connexion between parents and children in respect to this title? for children, as well as their parents, were in covenant with God. Some of the Jews embraced the gospel. Is it not rational to think, that the children of those believers still had a covenant connexion with their parents? But all Christians will agree, that in respect to gospel blessings, there is the same connexion between Christian Gentiles and their children, as be-

* Mat. viii. 12.

† See Rom. ix. 4.

tween Christian Jews and their children. "There is neither Jew nor Greek." "There is neither Greek, nor Jew;" "but Christ is all, and in all."

It was foretold of Christ, "He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom."* When the "good Shepherd" came and gave his "life for the sheep,"† he did not sever the lambs from his flock. Feeble believers are Christ's lambs. Are not the infants of believers, also, his lambs? How believing parents felt for their offspring, in the time of our Saviour's ministry on earth, and how he regarded little children, we may learn from the account respecting the little children, or infants, who were brought to him, that he might "touch them," or "put his hands on them, and pray."‡ A few words were said concerning this account in the preceding discourse. It will be proper here to be more particular. It appears, that these children were brought to Jesus, that they might receive spiritual benefit. The disciples rebuked those, who brought them. Jesus "was much displeased," "called" the infants "unto him," and said unto the disciples, "Suffer lit-

* Is. xl. 11. † John, x. 11. ‡ See Mat. xix. 13—15.

Mark, x. 13—16. and Luke, xviii. 15—17.

the children," or "the little children, to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God," or "the kingdom of heaven." "Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God, as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein." "And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them."* The phrase, "*the kingdom of God*," or "*of heaven*," that is *the kingdom of the God of heaven*,† appears to be used in these passages, as it is generally used, in a comprehensive sense, denoting that kingdom, which begins in this world in grace, and is to be considered, both as visible and as invisible, and which will be hereafter consummated in glory. "Of such is the kingdom of God," that is the kingdom of God belongs to such,‡ and to such only. The kingdom of God belongs only to infants, and to those who resemble infants. That the word "*such*" includes infants themselves, appears from our Saviour's giving this, as a reason, why those infants should be suffered to come

* See Gen. xlviii. 8—20. Jacob laid his hands upon the sons of Joseph, and blessed them, imploring for them the blessings of the Abrahamic covenant, and predicting their greatness, as tribes among the people of God.

† See Dan. ii. 44. ‡ See the Greek construction.

unto him, "of such is the kingdom of God," and from his treating them so affectionately, and blessing them. If the kingdom of God belongs to infants, and if under the former dispensation, that is, under "the law and the prophets," there was a connexion between parents and children, according to the Abrahamic covenant, may it not be inferred, that there is a similar connexion between parents and children under the Christian dispensation?

In view of the declaration of Jesus, "of such is the kingdom of God," let us consider his declaration in John, iii. 5. "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." This passage is evidently parallel to that in Tit. iii. 5. To "*be born of water*" is undoubtedly the same, as to have "*the washing of regeneration.*" "*The washing of regeneration*" plainly means baptism, as emblematical of the "*renewing of the Holy Ghost.*" The kingdom of God in John, iii. 5. is to be understood in the same comprehensive sense, as in the declaration, "of such is the kingdom of God." In order to enter into the kingdom of God, a person must be baptized, and must experience the renewing of the Holy Spirit. In order to enter into the kingdom of God, considered as visible in this

world, in a regular manner, a person must be baptized; as almost all Christians agree. The Greek word *tis*, in John, iii. 5. rendered *a man*, is comprehensive, it signifies, literally, *any one*, and includes infants. Since, therefore, no one can enter into the kingdom of God, unless he be baptized, and be renewed by the Holy Spirit, and since this kingdom belongs to infants, it appears proper, that they should be baptized. What infants in particular ought a minister of the gospel to baptize? When we reflect on the tenor of the Abrahamic covenant, and on the connexion which subsists between Christian parents and their children, and when we compare Gen. xviii. 19. with Eph. vi. 4. and observe, that the infants, who were brought to Jesus, were brought by persons, who had faith, it appears proper to say, that baptism is to be administered to children, when they are presented by parents professing faith, or by other professors, who are willing to consider themselves solemnly engaged to bring up the children “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”

In Eph. v. 25, 26. it is said “Christ”—“loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.” Here is doubtless a reference to baptism; and *the wash-*

ing of water appears to mean baptism, as emblematical of a spiritual purification. Those, who are capable of believing "*the word,*" and have not been baptized, ought to believe, before they receive "*the washing of water.*" But are not infants a part of that "church," which Christ "loved," and for which he "gave himself?" and ought not the infants of believers to be sacramentally sanctified and cleansed by baptism?

Our Saviour, bewailing Jerusalem, said, "How often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings; and ye would not!" Jerusalem's children comprehended parents and their offspring. Would not Jesus have gathered both?

On that day of Pentecost, of which we have an account in Acts, ii. the Christian church may be said to have been established,* and the kingdom of God in a certain sense to have come.† Did the apostles, on that wonderful day, say any thing, from which we can infer, that the

* See Acts, ii. 47. "The Lord added to the church."

† See Rom. xiv. 17. and Col. 1. 13. compared with John, vii. 39. and Luke, xvii. 20, 21.—When Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans, the kingdom of God may be said to have come with power. See Mark, ix. 1. and xiii. 30.

covenant connexion, which had subsisted for ages between parents and children, was dissolved by the Christian dispensation? To the Jews, inhabiting Jerusalem and Judea, and convened from distant regions, and to proselytes,* Peter†

* See Acts, ii. 10.

† Jesus said, (Matt. xvi. 18.) "Thou art Peter; and upon this rock I will build my church." Upon this rock; (not upon Peter himself; see Acts, iii. 12. but) upon the great truth which Peter had confessed (Matt. xvi. 16.) that Jesus is "the Christ, the Son of the living God." This truth is, in one view, the foundation of the Christian church, in distinction from the ancient church. The words, rendered "Jesus Christ," I. Cor. iii. 11. which ought to have been rendered, *Jesus the Christ*, probably mean, *Jesus is the Christ*. See Acts, xvii. 3. and xviii. 5. In another view, Jesus Christ himself is the foundation. Compare Is. xxviii. 16. with I. Pet. ii. 3, 4. The "precious corner stone," the sure foundation was to be laid "in Zion." Therefore, though the Christian church is in a certain sense new, yet it is the ancient church continued. In confessing that Jesus was the Christ, Peter confessed, that Jesus was the illustrious seed promised to Abraham, and the glorious Son of David promised in the prophets; and agreeable to what was remarked in the first discourse, it was through the merits of Christ, who was in the fulness of time to be manifested, as the Saviour of the world, that blessings were bestowed upon Abraham, and upon the ancient church. To signify what honour Simon, the son of Jonas, should have, as the master builder, that should *first* lay the foundation of the Christian church, by proclaiming, that Jesus is the Christ, seems to have been, at least a part of our Saviour's design in surnaming him Peter, or *Cephas*, (See Mark, iii. 16. and John, i. 42.) How emphatically the

said, "Repent and be baptized every one of you [*literally, Repent, and let every one of you be baptized*] in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all, that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call."

The great promise, which God made to Abraham, and renewed to Isaac and Jacob, and to their seed, and which may be considered, as including all the succeeding promises in the Bible, is thought by some to be the promise, referred to by the apostle in this passage. When God took Abraham into covenant, he made him the father of believers, the father of many nations, and promised to be a God to him, and to his seed after him in their generations. This promise certainly implied the remission of sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. It implied all the miraculous operation, and renewing, and sanctifying influence of the Holy Ghost, necessary, to continue the church, from one generation to another, to the end of the world. The Apostle proclaimed the great truth, Acts, ii. 36. According to the apostle Paul, who laid the same foundation at Corinth, "Christ crucified" was "unto the Jews a stumbling block, and unto the Greeks foolishness."

cordingly, God says in Isaiah, "I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed." "My Spirit," "and my words" "shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed's seed." "Thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles, and set up my standard to the people: and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders."* By the prophet Joel, God says, "It shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophecy; your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants, and upon the handmaids, in those days, will I pour out my Spirit."† All these promises are in perfect conformity to the original promise, made to Abraham; and the accomplishment of each one is part of the accomplishment of that great promise. Some think, that, when the apostle says, "the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call," he has particular reference to the above cited prophecy of Joel, which he had cited near the beginning of his discourse. This seems prob-

* Is. xlv. 3. and lix. 21. and xlix. 22. † Joel, ii. 28, 29.

able, especially when we take into view the agreement between the latter part of Acts, ii. 39. and the latter part of Joel, ii. 32. But that influence of the Spirit, which is promised in Joel, is to be considered, as comprising, not only what are denominated the miraculous gifts of the Spirit, but that influence, which all true Christians experience. This is sufficiently evident from the words "all flesh," and from John, vii. 37—39. That gift of the Holy Spirit, which is promised in Joel, and in the other prophets, implies the remission of sins, and is connected with salvation.* When the apostle says, "For the promise is unto *you*, and to *your children*," it is plain, that he refers more or less directly to the Abrahamic covenant. The same apostle preaching at another time, says, "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 the kindreds of the earth be blessed. Unto you, first, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities."†

The promise, Acts, ii. 39. was to the apostle's hearers, and to their children. It was, likewise, to those Jews, proselytes, and Gen-

* See Acts, ii. 38. x. 43. and ii. 21. † See Acts, iii. 25, 26.

tiles, afar off, whom the Lord would call, and to their children.* The apostle, not then understanding that mystery of the gospel, which respected the *Gentiles*,† did not know the full meaning of what he said. He spoke under Divine inspiration. If in speaking of the *children* of those, whom he addressed, he has any particular reference to what he has cited from Joel respecting “sons” and “daughters,” (see Acts, ii. 17.) it is, however, to be considered, that the promise in Joel, when it speaks of “sons” and “daughters,” coincides with the tenor of that covenant, in which blessings were promised to Abraham’s seed in their *generations*. We must think, that some of those, who, in the prophecy of Joel are called “your sons and your daughters,” made a part of the

* That by “*all that are afar off*,” are meant not only those Jews and proselytes, inhabiting distant regions, who were not present at the feast of Pentecost, but also *Gentiles*, appears from comparing the words “*all, that are afar off*,” with Joel, ii. 32. with the words “*all flesh*,” Acts, ii. 17. and Joel, ii. 28. with Is. xliii. 6. and xlix. 6, 12, 22. and lx. 4, 9. and lxvi. 19, 23. and with Eph. ii. 13, 17. and from comparing Acts, ii. 21. with Rom. x. 12, 13.

† It appears from Gal. iii. 9, 14, 29. that for believing *Gentiles* to inherit the blessing of Abraham, implies, that they receive the Spirit promised to God’s people, in pursuance of the Abrahamic covenant.

assembly addressed by the apostle, and were comprehended in the word "you," when Peter said, "For the promise is unto *you*:" for in that assembly, it must be supposed, there were "young" persons, and "old," as well as persons of a middle age.* But probably, it will not be denied that the word "children," Acts ii. 29. (*teknois*) is capable of including infants, and even children then unborn; and no sufficient reason appears for the apostle's adding these words, "and to your children," unless the idea was to be expressed, that there is a covenant connexion between parents and children in respect to the enjoyment of the blessings of the gospel. It has been suggested by some author, that the words, "and to your children," were added with reference to the imprecation made by the Jews, "His blood be on us, and on our children,"† But it was not necessary for Peter to add the words concerning children, in order to comfort the people in respect to that imprecation; for, if they themselves, notwithstanding the imprecation, had the offer of salvation, they would have naturally thought, that the *same offer* might be made to *their children*. Should it be said, that the Jews were not yet prepared to learn, that there was to be under the

* See Acts, ii. 17, 18. † Matt. xxvii. 25.

new dispensation no covenant connexion between parents and children; the question, however, remains to be answered, what was the reason of the *addition* of the words, "and to your children?" The sentence would have been complete without these words. The present reasoning from Acts, ii. 38, 39. will not be materially affected, whether we consider the *calling*, spoken of in the 39th verse, an effectual calling, (See Rom. viii. 30. and I. Cor. i. 26.) or take it in a general sense. (According to Matt. xxii. 14. persons may be called by the gospel, and so called as to seem to comply, and yet not obtain salvation.) In whatever sense "the promise" was to those, whom Peter addressed, and to their children, it was "to all" those "afar off," to whom the glad tidings of salvation were to be sent, parents and children. When parents are called, their children are called; and the more evidence there is that parents are effectually called, the greater reason there is to hope, that their children will be saved.

Let us now see, what Paul, that eminent apostle of the Gentiles,* teaches respecting the

* See Rom. xi. 13. "He," who "wrought effectually in Peter" for "the apostleship of the circumcision" wrought effectually, also, "in" Paul "toward the Gentiles." See Gal. ii. 8. in the Greek.

covenant connexion between parents and children. Writing to the Corinthian church, which consisted of both Jews and Gentiles, he says, "If any brother hath a wife, that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman" who "hath an husband that believeth not," "if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy."* The apostle styles the children of a family "*holy*," when only one of their parents is a child of Abraham by faith in Jesus Christ.

By "*unclean*" and "*holy*," the apostle does not mean illegitimate and legitimate, as some have suggested, if the words are taken in their general sense; for the terms *unclean* and *holy* are not so used in the scriptures of the New-Testament; and the believer and unbeliever, spoken of in this passage, must be supposed to have been lawfully married.

Perhaps, those, who have made the suggestion just mentioned, have not used the words

* I. Cor. vii. 12-14.

illegitimate and legitimate in their general sense, but have intended to communicate the following idea ; the apostle means *only* to let Christians know, that in such a case as he supposes, it is not wrong, but consistent with Christian holiness, for the believer to dwell, as a consort, with the unbeliever, and to have children. But, if this is *all* his meaning, could he not have expressed his idea much more clearly ? If this is *all* his meaning, was it not strange for him to apply the epithet "*holy*" to the children ? Can so strange a way of speaking be found in any other passage of the scriptures ?

Nor, by "*unclean*" and "*holy*," does the apostle mean personal internal pollution and holiness. But these terms are manifestly to be understood in that relative sense, in which the church of Israel, including children, was called *a holy people*, and *a holy seed*, in distinction from heathen nations, which were called *unclean*, as not belonging to the visible church, nor interested in the blessings of God's covenant.

The Israelites, being in this sense a *holy people*, were forbidden to inter-marry with idolatrous nations.* But in the time of Ezra, *the holy seed* had mingled themselves with the

* Deut. vii. 3-6.

people of those nations, contrary to the express prohibition of God's law ; and were commanded to put away their strange wives, and such children as were born of them.* Such wives and children were not to remain connected with the church, *the holy seed*, but were to be considered as unclean, and as having no right to the privileges of God's covenant. They were put away. To that particular case the apostle, probably, had reference, in the words under consideration. Such of the church, as had unbelieving husbands or wives, might feel a difficulty in view of the law of Moses, and of the case in Ezra's time ; and others of the church might feel a difficulty respecting their brethren or sisters in such circumstances. But the apostle informed the church, that, if either the husband or wife were a believer in Christ, and the other an unbeliever, they were not to be separated, if the unbeliever were willing to dwell with the believer, nor were their children to be accounted unclean. The unbeliever, he taught them, was so sanctified by (or in) the believer, that the husband and wife might dwell together consistently with holiness, and their children would be *holy*—relatively holy, holy in a covenant sense ; as if both of the parents were believers.

* Ezra, ix. 2. and x. 3.

Is it not proper, that children, who are thus holy, should be baptized? Might not such a believing parent hope, that the seed would be “*a godly seed?*”*

That there is a covenant connexion between Christian parents and their children, appears from the account, which Paul, in chapter xi, of his epistle to the Romans, gives of God’s dealings towards the Jews and the Gentiles. In a particular manner, the allegory, which he there uses, without being strained beyond its proper scope, greatly favours the idea of such a connexion.

Of Israel, or the ancient church, it is said in the prophets, “The Lord called thy name, a green olive-tree, fair and of goodly fruit.”† “His branches shall spread, and his beauty shall be as the olive-tree.”‡ God planted this tree, and made the Israelites “the natural branches.” In general, they were fruitless branches. God enriched the tree with the blessings of the gospel.

The generality of the Jews “the natural branches,” “because of unbelief,” “were broken off.”§ Believing Gentiles were “engrafted in among” those of the Jews, who believed,

* See Mal. ii. 15. † Jere. xi. 16. ‡ Hosea, xiv. 6.

§ Read Rom. xi. 11—29.

“and with them” partook “of the root and fatness of the olive-tree,” as enriched by the Christian dispensation. When the unbelieving Jews were broken off, their infants were broken off with them, as to having a place in the visible church. But were not the infants of believing Jews spared? Did they not remain with their parents in the olive-tree? They were natural branches, as really, as their parents; and they did not exercise that unbelief, on account of which they should be broken off.

The apostle speaks, as if the Jews were to “be grafted” “again” “into their own olive-tree.” “Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.” that is, *shall have come in*. As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for the Gentiles’ “sake: but, as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers’ sakes.”

As in general, God does not repent of his “gifts and calling;” so he does not repent of the covenant, which he made with the fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, of any of his gifts to them and their natural seed, nor of any of his promises respecting that people. He made choice of that nation for his peculiar people, and remembering the covenant, which he made with their fathers, he will gather them again in-

to the church. Will not children be gathered with their parents? Will the natural branches be stripped of their tender sprigs and buds, when they shall be grafted in again? "Israel shall blossom and bud, and fill the face of the world with fruit."* It seems proper to consider this passage, as referring not only to the time, when salvation should come to the Gentiles, but, also, to that glorious period, when the "heart" of the natural seed of Jacob "shall turn to the Lord," and "the vail shall be taken away" from their heart.† "Their children, also, shall be, as aforetime; and their congregation shall be established before" the LORD.‡ Will not their worshipping assemblies consist of parents and children, connected in covenant? If not, will their children be as "aforetime?" But, if, when the Jews shall be grafted in again, the children of Jewish believers will have a covenant-connexion with their parents, it is plain, that the children of all, who now believe, of whatever nation or kingdom, are connected with their parents in the same manner.

What is said concerning the salvation of *households* very much favours the idea of a covenant connexion between parents and children.

* Is. xxvii. 6. † See ii. Cor. iii. 15, 16. ‡ Jer. xxx. 20.

Jesus said respecting Zaccheus, a Jew, when he believed, "This day is salvation come to this house; for" as "much as he, also, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."* Does not this passage imply, that there exists between heads of families and their households, *under the gospel*, a connexion similar to that, which was formed in families by the Abrahamic covenant? Does not "*that which was lost*" include infants?

Cornelius was one of those Gentiles, who were termed proselytes of the gate, because they worshiped the true God, but remained in uncircumcision. This devout man "feared God with all his house."† An angel said to him respecting Peter, "Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved."‡ The latter part of this passage is, literally, *thou shalt be saved, and all thy house*. There may have been no one in the house too young to understand Peter's words. But, if, there were any young children, would not the angel's mode of expression naturally lead Cornelius to hope, that those *children* would be saved in the way of covenant connexion?

* Luke, xix. 9, 10. † Acts, x. 2. ‡ Acts, xi. 14.

Paul and Silas said to the trembling jailor of Philippi, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."* These words are not to be taken in the *most literal* sense. Otherwise, they would signify, that the salvation of the jailor's *house* would *certainly* follow *his* faith. But they evidently favour the idea of a covenant connexion between heads of families and their households.

The same idea is favoured by the injunction, which Paul gives to parents, (Eph. vi. 4.) concerning the education of their children. Parents may be encouraged by this injunction to hope, that, in observing it, they shall be instrumental of spiritual good to their children.

Although the covenant connexion between parents and children, which I have been endeavouring to prove, is not acknowledged by those, who deny infant baptism, yet, in order to complete the present argument, it will be necessary to illustrate what was said, when the argument was stated, at the beginning of this discourse, that baptism has, in a certain sense, taken the place of circumcision.

Jesus Christ, before his ascension, said to his apostles, "Go ye," "and teach all nations, baptizing them in [or into] the name of the

* Acts, xvi. 31.

Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”* To this passage in Matthew, the following passage in Mark is parallel. “Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He, that believeth, and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.”† “To every creature;” literally, *to all the creation*. “He that believeth;” that is, *he that believeth the gospel, which you preach*. “Teach all nations;” literally, *make all the nations disciples*; that is, *so preach the gospel in all the world, that persons among all the nations may believe, may become disciples*. “Baptizing them,” all the nations; *baptizing those persons of all nations, who believe the gospel, who become disciples.*‡ “Teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you.” The declaration, which Jesus made to his apostles, “He, that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved; but he, that believeth not,§ shall be damned,” is not applicable to infants. They are incapable of believing the gospel; and they are incapable of unbelief. Thus the commission, given to the apostles, ac-

* Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. † Mark, xvi. 15, 16. ‡ John, iv. 1, 2.
§ *Ho apistesas.*

ording to both Matthew and Mark, has nothing in it express concerning infants. But the commission respects baptism, as an important thing;* infants are capable of being baptized, and there is nothing unreasonable in the baptism of infants, in itself considered, unless there was something unreasonable in the circumcision of infants. The apostles were directed by our Lord to teach those who should become disciples, to observe all things, whatsoever he had enjoined upon *them*. In order to fulfil this part of the commission, it was necessary for the apostles to teach believers to show a tender regard towards infants. Moreover, in view of

* An unwillingness in any one of those, to whom the apostles preached, to be baptized would have shown him to be destitute of saving faith. How ready the eunuch was to be baptized by Philip, the evangelist! In any age, and any place, a person may show such a disregard to baptism, as is inconsistent with true faith. That baptism is not important, cannot be inferred from what Paul says, I Cor. i. 17. Paul had not such a particular direction to baptize, as those, who were apostles before him. But *he* baptized some persons. So important was baptism in the view of Peter, that he commanded Cornelius and his friends to be baptized, after they had received the Holy Ghost. When Christ commissioned the apostles to preach and baptize, he said, "And lo! I am with you alway, even unto *the end of the world*." So, according to Paul, the ordinance of the holy supper is to be observed, till the Lord come. These two ordinances have never become unnecessary in the church.

these words, "teach all nations, baptizing them," let us reflect on the following promises, made to Abraham; "Thou shalt be a father of many nations."* In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.† Let us also remember, that, while one nation enjoyed the oracles of God, the token of the Abrahamic covenant was applied to infants. Thus, in certain respects, the commission, given to the apostles, implicitly favours infant baptism. But it contains *nothing explicit* concerning infants. The apostles were directed to baptize *disciples*; those, who should *believe*, were to be baptized. But, in order to determine, whether the infants of those, who should believe or become disciples, and receive baptism, were to be baptized, we must attend to *the Scriptures in general*. Will any one say, if the commission given to the apostles, is *silent* respecting infants, it became the apostles, and it becomes all ministers of the gospel, to let infants alone, as to baptism? This does not follow. Though the commission, of which we are speaking, is silent respecting infants, we may find, in the volume of the Scriptures, sufficient reason to feel persuaded, that infants are to be baptized. Would

* Gen. xvii. 4. † Gen. xxii. 18.

the apostles have felt it right to treat infants, as having no place in the Christian church; when they remembered, that the great body* of those males, who had been in the visible church from the days of Abraham, were ceremonially introduced into it in the time of infancy; and when they remembered the declaration of the Lord Jesus, "Of such is the kingdom of God?" From the *mere silence* of the apostolic commission respecting infants, it cannot be inferred, that infants are not to be baptized, unless it can be inferred from the *same silence*, that they are to be *neglected in every respect*. Jesus did not let alone those infants, who were brought to him. It appears, that they were not brought to be baptized. But he did for them all that was desired. He treated them with tender affection, and gave them such a blessing, as all parents desire for their children, when with suitable feelings they present them before the Lord, to be baptized. It was declared to the apostles, "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved." What, if any one should infer from the *silence* of the apostolical commission respecting infants, that no infant will

* Not all. See Ex. iv. 24, 26. Josh. v. 2—9. Moreover, some *proselytes* had joined the church, taking "hold of" God's "covenant." See Esth. viii. 17. Is. lvi. 6. and Acts, ii. 10.

be saved? Whence do believing parents derive their hope concerning the salvation of their children, who die in infancy? From *other passages* of Scripture, and from the Scriptures in general. But those *same other passages*, and the Scriptures in general, *favour* infant baptism.

These words of Christ to his apostles, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," are considered by some, as implying, that faith ought to go before baptism. It is granted, that faith ought to precede baptism, in all cases, in which the passage just quoted is literally applicable. But this passage, though in its spirit it is applicable to mankind in general, is not literally applicable to infants; nor to all adults; but only to those persons, whose duty it is to believe, and who at the same time have *need* of baptism. Abraham believed in the LORD before he was circumcised; but Isaac and Jacob were circumcised, before they believed. When proselytes joined the ancient church, they professed faith before they were circumcised, but their infants were circumcised with them. The mode of expression, "He, that believeth and is baptized," agrees with the circumstance, that the christian church was about to be es-

established, and the gospel to be preached to those, who after believing would, of course, *need* Christian baptism.*

Accordingly, those, who gladly received Peter's words, were baptized; the Samaritans, who believed Philip's preaching, were baptized; the Etheopian eunuch, also; and many of the Corinthians, hearing Paul, believed and were baptized. That the words of Christ respecting faith and baptism, in Mark, xvi. 16. had a more particular reference to the *first believers*,

* It is highly probable, if not certain, that of the twelve apostles, (that is, the eleven and Matthias) *every one* had been baptized either by the son of Zacharias, or by some person, whom that figurative Elias had baptized; and we may consider John, iii. 5. as having been fulfilled, even as to baptism, in *all* the apostles. Compare Acts, i. 21—26. with Matt. iii. 5, 6, 11. Luke, iii. 21. and vii. 29, 30. and John, iv. 1, 2. It was no more necessary, we may say, for the *apostles*, who administered *Christian* baptism, to receive *this* baptism themselves, than it was for John the baptist to be himself baptized. But it is probable, that many of those, who received Christian baptism on the day of Pentecost, had been baptized by John. The apostle Peter said, *Let every one of you be baptized*. Whether Appollos ever received Christian baptism, or not, Paul baptized the twelve disciples, whom he found at Ephesus, though they had been baptized unto [or *into*] John's baptism; possibly, however, not by John himself. But these things afford no argument for the repetition of *Christian* baptism.

is manifest from the two next verses, where our Lord told the apostles, what “signs” should follow those, who believe. But with respect to all times and places, adult persons to whom the gospel is preached, *who have not been baptized*, ought to be baptized *after believing*. But, if it appears from the Scriptures in general, that the infants of believers ought to be baptized, no Christian will think, that those persons, who have been baptized in infancy, as the children of believers, ought to be baptized *after believing*. The phrase, *Believe and be baptized*, is often repeated by one person and another; and possibly some think, that there is such a text of Scripture, or, at least *something* in Scripture, amounting to a *command* to *all* persons, *to be baptized, after they believe, or after they first profess* faith.* But there is no such text, *nor any thing amounting* to such a command.

* *First profess faith.* So far those, who deny infant baptism, are willing to depart from the *literal* meaning of Mark xvi. 16. There is perhaps no Christian in the world, who will go so far, as to say, that it is the duty of *every individual* to be baptized, after he believes. On the other hand, those, who infer from the verse in Mark, just mentioned, that *no persons* ought to be baptized before they believe, or profess faith, either must *take it for granted*, that infant baptism is wrong, or must infer, that it is wrong, from the *mere* silence of that verse respecting infants.

That baptism has, in a certain sense, taken the place of circumcision, appears from the following considerations.

(1). Circumcision was a mark, by which the ancient church was distinguished.

Other nations were termed *uncircumcised*. Baptism, as a kind of mark, distinguishes the Christian church. This is manifest from the apostolic commission, to which we have been attending, from Eph. v. 25, 26. from Gal. iii. 27—29. and from other passages. The passage in the epistle to the Galatians runs thus. “For as many of you, as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female : for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And, if ye” are “Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise ;” heirs according to the promise, since the promise was to Abraham and his seed, and heirs to the blessings promised, which blessings imply an “eternal inheritance.” This passage plainly shews, that baptism is a distinguishing mark of the Christian church ; and it clearly indicates, that baptism has, in a certain sense, taken the place of circumcision. Two important ideas conveyed are these. Once the Jews were circumcis-

ed; now people of different nations are baptized. Once males were circumcised; now males and females are baptized. In Acts viii. 12. it is said, "They were baptized, both men and women."

Circumcision was a *permanent* mark in the flesh. In this respect baptism differs from it, and is suited to the peculiar spirituality of the Christian dispensation. But baptism is a kind of mark of the church; by which persons are visibly set apart for the service of God.

(2). The emblematical signification of circumcision, was *in some respects similar* to that of baptism. Baptism emblematically signifies that purification, which consists in regeneration, or the renewing of the Holy Spirit, and the remission of sins. That baptism is an emblem of the renewing of the Holy Spirit, appears from Tit. iii. 5. That it is an emblem of the remission of sins, appears from Acts xxii. 16. compared with Rev. i. 5.* That it is an emblem of both appears from Acts i. 5. and ii. 39. These two blessings are contained in the new covenant. In Heb. viii. 10, 11. regeneration is promised; and in verse 12, the remission of sins. Since these two blessings are bestowed

* "Be baptized, and wash away thy sins." "Washed us from our sins in his own blood."

upon believers in consequence of the death and resurrection of Christ, there is in baptism a particular reference to his death and resurrection. See Rom. iii. 24—26. and iv. 24, 25. and v. 9, 10. and vi. 3—11. Eph. i. 7, 19, 20. Col. i. 14. and ii. 12, 13. and iii. 1—11. I. Pet. iii. 21. Compare Rom. x. 9. with Acts viii. 32—37. Circumcision was a *seal* of the righteousness of “faith;” which righteousness includes the remission of sins. See Rom. iv. 6, 7. Though circumcision was not strictly emblematical of this righteousness, that is, of justification, though it was not strictly *emblematical* of the remission of sins, yet it may probably be considered as a remote emblem of the shedding of that precious *blood*, which cleanses believers from all sin. But circumcision was *strictly emblematical* of *regeneration*; though it was a less striking emblem of it, than baptism. When an infant was circumcised, one thing implied, and emblematically signified, was, that he needed a *change of nature*. Circumcision was emblematical of that renovation of heart, which all the pious in the ancient church experienced; (See Acts vii. 51. Rom. ii. 28, 29.) and remotely of that renewing of the Holy Spirit, which all Christians experience. (See John vii. 39.) This may appear from what was said in the *first*

discourse. But it will be proper to make some further remarks upon this point. We read in Deut. xxx. 6. "And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." This passage appears applicable chiefly to *gospel times*, and not only much favours the idea of a covenant connexion between Christian parents and their children, but when compared with Tit. iii. 5. shows, that circumcision had in some degree, the same emblematical signification, as the apostle Paul attributes to baptism. From Col. ii. 11. it appears that circumcision was *emblematical* of "putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, for Paul speaks of this "putting off," as a *spiritual circumcision*. But is not baptism, evidently emblematical of the same "putting off? See Col. iii. 9, 10: Eph. iv. 22—24. and I. Pet. iii. 21. The apostle Paul says to the Philippians, "Beware of the concision." That is, *Beware of such Jewish professors and teachers, as would constrain Gentile Christians "to be circumcised;"* (See Gal. vi. 12.) and, *as far as their influence in this respect extends, mangle the church.* "For we are the circumcision," who "worship God in

the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." See Philipp. iii. 2, 3. The apostle, when he says, "we are the circumcision," uses two figures. By a metonymy, the Jews were called *the circumcision*. (See Gal. ii. 9.) By adding a metaphor, the apostle calls *true Christians* the circumcision. He evidently considers circumcision, as a sign and emblem of the character and state of true Christians. But baptism is a sign and emblem of this character and state.*

(3). Circumcision, (according to the *first discourse*) may be said to have been a seal of the Abrahamic covenant. It may be said to have sealed that covenant to those, to whom it was applied. As a divinely appointed token of the covenant, it encouraged their hope of the favour of God, and at the same time reminded them of their obligations to him. When Abraham was circumcised, he virtually expressed his hope in God, and his desire to "walk before him" and be "perfect." Any one, who had been cir-

* How strange it is, that Dr. *Jenkins* should represent the apostle Paul, as giving, in Philipp. iii. 2. the reproachful name of *concision* to *circumcision itself*; since in the next verse, by the figurative use of the word *circumcision*, the apostle speaks so honourably of *circumcision itself*, considered as a badge of the ancient church.

cumcised in infancy, when he reflected upon his being a circumcised man, must, if he had suitable feelings, have been encouraged to hope for the blessings of the covenant, and impressed with his obligations to love and serve God, as his God. When the law was “added” at Sinai, circumcision, which was required, also, in the law, bound the Israelites to observe the law. After this, circumcision at once sealed the Abrahamic covenant and the Sinai covenant. In other words, circumcision was a seal of the Abrahamic covenant, with the Sinai covenant added. In due time the Sinai covenant gave place to the new covenant. Baptism may be said to be a seal at once of the Abrahamic covenant and of the new covenant. In other words, baptism may be said to be a seal of the Abrahamic covenant, with the new covenant added. Baptism is *emblematical* of the blessings of the new covenant, in which God promises Israel and Judah, that he will be to them a God, and that they shall be to him a people; a promise corresponding with the tenor of the Abrahamic covenant. Baptism is, therefore, a token of the new covenant, as added to the Abrahamic. And since baptism is manifestly designed to encourage those, who are baptized, in hoping for the blessings promised, the bless-

ings, of which baptism is an emblem, and to engage them to be the Lord's and live henceforth not to themselves, but to him, who died for them, and rose again, it may be said to be a *seal* of that "perpetual covenant," "in" which they "join" themselves "to the LORD;" a seal of the new covenant, as added to the Abrahamic, or of the Abrahamic covenant, with the new covenant added. When Gentiles "subscribe with their hands unto the LORD," they "*surname*" themselves "by the name of *Israel*," and thus become, through Jesus Christ, a part of that body, with whom the new covenant is made.

That baptism may be said to be a seal of the Abrahamic covenant, considered as including the new covenant, further appears from Gal. iii. 27—29. before cited. If those who have received Christian baptism, with suitable feelings, have "put on Christ," it may with propriety be said, that, when a person is baptized, he at once solemnly professes a desire to be the Lord's and receives a sacred *token* of the favour of God through Christ.* He professes a desire

* According to Dr. *Doddridge*, Mr. *Locke* makes a remark of the following kind. When persons "put on Christ," they are so covered with Christ, as a garment, that God, looking

to be “joined unto the Lord,”* to have the God of Abraham, and the Father of Jesus Christ for his God and Father, to be one of Abraham’s seed, and an heir; a partaker of the eternal inheritance, an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ. He expresses a hope of an interest in the Abrahamic covenant, a hope of obtaining the blessings of the new covenant, a hope, that God will be his God. When a person is baptized, with such views and feelings, he receives a *token*, by which he is encouraged in hoping, that he shall have an interest in the Abrahamic covenant, and in all the promises made in pursuance of it, “all” which “are yea and amen in” Christ;† particularly in that comprehensive promise, which is called the new covenant; and that he shall receive all those blessings, of which baptism is emblematical. When a person, who has been baptized in infancy, reflects on his baptism with suitable feelings, he must feel, at once encouraged by his baptism, as a solemn token, in hoping for an

upon them, sees, as it were, nothing, but Christ; and “all” Christians, being so covered with Christ, are viewed, as *one person*, and are said to be “one in Christ Jesus.”

* See I. Cor. vi. 17.

† See II. Cor. i. 20. and vi. 16—18. and vii. 1.

interest in the Divine covenant and promises, and bound by the same solemn token, to love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ. When a person in the ancient church was circumcised, he was devoted to Jehovah, to the God of Abraham, to the God of Isaac, and to the God of Jacob. God has been manifested “in the flesh.” Jesus, the son of God, has appeared to redeem those, who were under the law, and to “be for salvation unto the ends of the earth.” The Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world ;” and Jesus, having been highly exalted, “and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost,” has begun to “pour out” the “Spirit upon all flesh.” Persons are to be baptized “into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

Thus it appears, that baptism, *in a certain sense*, has taken the place of circumcision. It has not taken its place in all respects. On a number of accounts, as was intimated in the *first discourse*, baptism is more happily suited to the peculiar nature of that dispensation, through which life and immortality have been brought to light, that dispensation, which is the ministration of righteousness, and of the Spirit. The difference between circumcision and baptism corresponds with the difference between

the Jewish dispensation and the Christian dispensation. The difference between the two ordinances may be further illustrated by the following remarks.

One design of circumcision was to distinguish the Israelites from other *nations*. It was the pleasure of the only wise God, the Most High over all the earth, that the seed of Jacob should be to him a peculiar people. *Circumcision* was well adapted to discriminate *natural descent*. But *Baptism* is to be administered to *all nations*, and happily signifies, that Jews and Gentiles, all mankind need the *forgiveness of sins and sanctification*.

Baptism, as an *emblem*, is well adapted to the Christian dispensation. Though circumcision was an emblem of *a change of nature*, yet the Israelites gloried in their *natural descent*, as the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. But baptism very clearly holds up to view, that those who are "the children of the flesh" "are not the children of God." When an infant, a few days old, is baptized, it is signified to all the spectators, that this child is spiritually unclean, and "must be born again." How forcibly are we reminded, that, "except" we "be converted and become as little chil-

dren" we "shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."

Infants were, according to express command, to be circumcised on the eighth day from their birth. But a number of things might be said, to show, that it is not necessary, either to defer baptism till the eighth day, or always to administer it so soon.

Females were *incapable* of receiving circumcision. But they were interested in the Abrahamic covenant, and obliged to observe the Mosaic law. They were members of the church, as really as the males. See Ezek. xvi. 20, 21, where God calls both males and females his children. See, also, Luke xiii. 16. We may consider the covenant, as sealed to the females by the circumcision of the males. In other words, if all the males, properly belonging to a household, were circumcised, we may consider the covenant as sealed to all the *persons*, who properly belonged to it, whether male or female. But females are *capable* of being baptized; and baptism is to be administered to them, as well as to the males. In this respect baptism is happily suited to the nature of the Christian dispensation which removes a number of distinctions between the sexes, made in the law of Moses, and restores things to the

state in which they were at the beginning.”
See Matth. xix. 8.*

Moreover, though circumcision itself was not that bondage, which the Israelites were unable to bear, (See Acts xv. 10,) but only in-

*In proportion as Christianity prevails, it improves the condition of the female sex, who in every age and nation have experienced such cruel treatment from the men. The law of Moses made provision for the happiness of females. The gospel of Christ proceeds further, and aims to bring every woman to be such to her husband, as Eve was to Adam in the garden of Eden. But let no person understand what the apostle Paul says, “There is neither male nor female,” with such latitude, as is plainly repugnant to certain distinctions, which the same apostle has made. Let no one, from that general declaration, infer, for instance, that it is right for a *woman* to do in the church *every thing*, which it is right for a man to do; for this would be in the face of the apostle’s *particular exceptions*. See I. Cor. xiv. 34, 37. I. Tim. ii. 8---12. The apostle takes things from the beginning, and shows, that according to the original formation of *man* and *woman*, the woman ought to be, in a certain sense, subject to the man, though, in another sense, they are equal. See I. Cor. xi. 7---12. and I. Tim. ii. 13. See how the apostle describes the duties of husbands and wives in Eph. v. 22—33. The Greek word rendered *men*, in I. Tim. ii. 8. is such, as cannot include females. We need not however know any thing about Greek, in order to understand, that according to the doctrine of Paul, as well as that of Peter, there is a distinction between what is proper for a *man*, and what is proper for a *woman*. “But,” says Paul, “if any” one is “ignorant, let him be ignorant.”

troductory to it, after the *law* was given, (Gal. v. 1, 3.) yet circumcision itself was attended with *some* pain and trouble. But baptism is an easy thing, and, in this respect, suited to the Christian dispensation, which requires *nothing hard*.* There is no such difference between circumcision and baptism, as takes away the force of the present *argument*.

There appears to be nothing in the *nature* of *baptism*, to render it improper to be administered to infants. When baptism is administered to *any person*, it signifies his *need* of the remission of sins and the renewing of the Holy Spirit. Infants *need* the remission of sins and the renewing of the Holy Spirit; and it is no more impossible for them to exercise faith, than it was impossible for Isaac, when eight days old, or any infant in the ancient church, to exercise that faith, which Abraham had, in uncircumcision.

It has been asked, how can baptism be said to have taken the place of circumcision, since circumcision was practised in the time of the apostles, among the *Christian* Jews? Baptism, according to what has been remarked, has not

* We are not, however, so to understand what Peter says, Acts xv. 10. as to make it contradict what the Psalmist says, "I esteem *all* thy precepts concerning all things [that is, altogether] to be right."

taken the place of circumcision *in all respects* ; particularly, of circumcision, as sealing the Sinai covenant. This covenant was not at once to “vanish away.” If the Christians among the Jews had considered circumcision unnecessary, as a token of the *Abrahamic* covenant, they would have considered it necessary, as required in the *law of Moses*, and as a seal of the *Sinai* covenant. This question, however, may be answered, by another question ; how can king Solomon be said to have *succeeded* king David, since solomon began to reign before his father’s death?

It has been said, that, if baptism has taken the place of circumcision, it is *nothing* ; because the apostle Paul says, “Circumcision is nothing.” I. Cor. vii. 19. If the person who thus speaks, desires to know the apostle’s *meaning* in this place, let him read the whole verse, and the preceding verse, and compare these two verses with Gal. iii. 28. and v. 6. and vi. 12—16. and Col. iii. 11. But was not circumcision something, before baptism took its place? What does this same apostle say upon this point? What profit is there of circumcision? “Much every way ; chiefly, because” “unto them [the Israelites] were committed the oracles of God. For, what, if some

did not believe, shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?" make it a vain thing to trust in God? See Rom. iii. 1—3.

It may be asked, though *believing* Gentiles are, *spiritually*, Abraham's seed, what interest have *their natural seed* in the covenant of grace? The same interest, (according to what has been already remarked) as the *natural seed* of those Jews, who believed the gospel. Furthermore, let it be considered, that the *children* of those *proselytes*, who, in the time of the ancient church, heartily took hold of God's covenant, had the same interest in the covenant, as the *children* of those of Abraham's *natural seed*, who walked in the steps of his faith.

From what has been said concerning circumcision and baptism, it appears, that no parent has a right to have his children baptized, *merely*, because he himself was baptized in his infancy. If his children were baptized upon this principle, they would be baptized, not upon his account, but upon the account of his parents, or of some person, upon whose account he himself was baptized. When a parent among the Israelites was truly pious, was circumcised in heart, and felt disposed faithfully to do his duty to his children, he might with

propriety hope, that his *immediate* offspring would be blessed, and of course have *some* hope respecting *their* children. The like may be said with regard to Christian parents. It was not necessary, that circumcision should be performed by a priest or Levite. Parents themselves had liberty to circumcise their own children. It was the *duty* of a parent, when he had a child circumcised, to take this step with the same *faith*, with which Abraham had taken it. When a minister of the gospel is requested to *baptize* a child, it is improper for him to do it, *merely* because he is requested by a parent, who was himself baptized in infancy. It is manifestly improper to baptize the child, unless it would be proper for him, according to Mark xvi. 16. to baptize the parent himself, if he needed and desired baptism, and unless the parent appears to be disposed to bring up the child in a manner corresponding with baptism. As the kingdom of God belongs only to little children, and those, who resemble little children, to such only baptism belongs. But in a christian country a man's requesting a minister of the gospel to baptize his child, *may give* little evidence of his having that faith, with which salvation is connected, and of his

resembling a little child; whereas those, who brought little children to Jesus for his blessing, by that very thing, gave considerable evidence, that they had faith, and that they had themselves become, in a degree, like little children.

Argument 2. Infant baptism is, in some measure, favoured by the accounts of the baptism of the households of Lydia, the jailor and Stephanas. See Acts xvi. 14, 15, 31—34. and I. Cor. i. 16. These accounts, when candidly considered, will be allowed by persons of all denominations, to favour infant baptism, *in a greater or less degree.*

We do not *know*, that there was *one young child* in either of the three households. But is it not *probable*, that there were some *young children*, in the three households, collectively considered? There is nothing in the above accounts, nor in any other passage of Scripture, contrary to such a supposition.

What is said, I. Cor. xvi. 15. in commendation of the house of Stephanas, does not show, that at the time, when this epistle was written, *every individual* in the house had addicted himself to the charitable work of ministering to the saints. If this was not the case, still the house, as a house, might truly be said to have addicted themselves to that service. Much less does

the passage show, that, at the time, when Paul baptized the household, which is supposed to have been a considerable number of years before the date of this epistle, there was *no individual* in the house too young to exercise "faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints."

When it is said respecting the jailor, Acts xvi. 34. that he rejoiced, believing in God with all his house," it is rather uncertain, whether the Greek adverb, rendered "with all his house," was intended, grammatically speaking, to express a circumstance of the verb, rendered, "rejoiced," or of the participle rendered, "believing;" nor is this material. If all the jailor's house believed, who were *capable* of believing, he may be truly said to have believed in God "With all his house." We are not *obliged* to understand any thing more by what is said of the house of Crispus, Acts xviii. 8. though there the Greek phraseology is different; nor by what is said of the nobleman's house, John iv. 53. But the most literal rendering of the passage in Acts xvi. 34. is *rejoiced, through (or with) all his house, (panoiki) having believed in God.* It appears probable, that the adverb was intended to go, in construction, with the verb, and give us a more lively idea of that joy, which filled the jailor's heart, and filled his habitation. It

was a joyful time to the jailor, and a joyful time to Paul and Silas. The jailor rejoiced *through his house*. From Acts xvi. 32. it is manifest that some of the house, besides the jailor himself, were capable of believing; and if all of "his," who were capable of believing, partook of the "like precious faith," he had reason to consider salvation, as having come to his house in a glorious manner. It cannot be inferred from the 32d verse, that *every one* of the jailor's household was capable of faith. But, if any should suppose, that *every one* of the jailor's household was capable of faith, and did believe, still the account of the baptism of his believing household, would add force to the remarks before made upon the 31st verse, and, favouring the idea of that covenant connexion, which seems to be there exhibited, would, in this way, favour infant baptism. Should any say, that it can no more be inferred from the 33d verse, that *every one* of the jailor's household was *baptized*, than it can be inferred from the 32d verse, that *every one was capable of believing*, it is a sufficient answer, that, as has been before remarked, there is *no absurdity in baptizing infants*, unless there was an absurdity in *circumcising* infants.

The account of the baptism of Lydia and her household still more favours infant baptism. It is said, that the “ Lord opened ” her “ heart ; ” and we do not *know*, but that *all her household* believed *with* her. But we have *no account*, that *any one* of the house besides her believed. If it be supposed, that any of *the brethren*, spoken of in the 40th verse, *belonged* to Lydia’s house, it will be only a *conjecture* ; and to suppose, that they *all* belonged to her house, would be an *unreasonable* conjecture.*

The arguments from the preceding accounts of household baptism, will appear to have the greater weight, when we consider, that we have no account in the Scripture, of the baptism of *any person in particular*, who is represented as the *head of a family*, without having reason to think, that the family were baptized. It is true, that we have but few accounts of the baptism of *particular heads of families*, or of any *particular persons*.

The apostle Paul says, I. Cor. i. 14. “ I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius.” Since we have ample reason from Acts xviii. 8. to think, that *all the house of Crispus* were baptized, † we have considerable reason to think,

* See Acts xvi. 9, 10, 12, 17, 18. Philippi. i. 1, 5.

† They might be baptized by Silas, on Timotheus ; see verse 5.

that the family of *Gaius* were baptized; for he seems to have had a family; see Rom. xvi. 23.

When the gospel comes to the head of a family, is not this its language? "Come thou, and all thy house into the ark."* "By faith Noah"—"prepared an ark to the saving of his house.†" He and his household were "saved," says Peter, "by water." "The like figure whereunto, even baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answering of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."‡ We are not saved by mere baptism, we must have that spiritual purification, and that union to Christ, which are signified by baptism. Noah's house were saved from the deluge by sovereign mercy; they were saved by water, and in consequence of his faith and obedience. If the children of Christian parents be saved from endless ruin, it will be by sovereign grace; they will be saved by that renewing of the Holy Ghost, which is signified by baptism; and they may be saved in consequence of the faith and obedience of their parents, who, having been baptized themselves, devote *them* to God in the same ordinance.

* Gen. vii. 1. † Heb. xi. 7. ‡ I. Pet. iii. 20, 21.

Argument 3. Infant baptism is favoured by the silence of the Jews, on this subject, in the time of the apostles.

If the Jews had understood by the doctrine and practice of the apostles, that under the Christian dispensation there was to be no covenant connexion between parents and children, would they have never offered an *objection* against the gospel *on this ground*? But we have no account in the Scriptures, that they ever offered *such* an objection.

In the time of St. Paul's ministry, there were "many thousands," of believing Jews, at Jerusalem, "all zealous of the law," and of their ancient custom of circumcising their children. So tenacious were they of this custom, that they were much dissatisfied with Paul, because they had been informed, that he had taught the Jews "to forsake Moses' saying, that they ought not to circumcise their children."* The time had not yet come for the believing Jews to cease from the observance of the ceremonial part of the law of Moses. It had seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to the apostles and elders and all the church at Jerusalem, Acts xv. not to require believing Gentiles to be circumcised, and

* Acts, xxi. 20.

observe the Mosaic ritual.* But, while the believing Jews were “zealous of the law,” at the time of which we speak, we must not think, that they considered their children as connected with them merely in regard to the *Sinai covenant* ;† they, doubtless, considered their children, as connected with them, also, in regard to the Abrahamic covenant, and in regard to the blessings of the gospel. They were not yet, it appears, fully enlightened respecting the *new covenant*. They did not yet clearly see, how the old Sinai covenant was vanishing away. But so far as they understood the new covenant, they, doubtless, thought, that, since their children were connected with them in the Sinia covenant, and bound to observe it, (See Deut. xxix. 10—13.) they were connected with them in respect to the blessings of that new covenant, (See Jer. xxxi. 31—34. and Heb. viii. 8—12.) which was making with the house of Israel ; which took nothing away, but gave exceedingly

* At the same time, the believing Gentiles were cautioned against a sin prevalent among those, who knew not God, and directed to abstain from a few things, which were forbidden in the law of Moses, and, which might be peculiarly offensive to the Jews, among whom they dwelt ; as Moses was read in the synagogues in every city.

† See Rom. ix. 4, 5.

great mercies, which did not exclude infants, but bestowed blessings upon "the least," and upon "the greatest;" especially, since it was not with infants of a few days, that God found "fault;" and since from that same book of Jeremiah, it appeared, that there was to be a covenant connexion between parents and children in respect to the blessings of the gospel. (See Jer. xxxii. 39.) Moreover, since the whole congregation of Israel, parents and children, had been, in a certain sense, baptized, unto Moses in the cloud and in the Red sea, (See I. Cor. x. 2.) and had received a kind of baptism at the dedication of the Sinai covenant, (See Heb. ix. 18—20.) must they not have thought it proper, that Christian baptism should be administered to infants; at least, if they understood the nature of this baptism, as signifying that regeneration, of which even infants have need? Though they were not fully enlightened in regard to the mystery of the gospel, they were so far enlightened, as to consider believing Gentiles, entitled, without circumcision, to a participation of the blessings of the new covenant. The admission of Gentiles into the church does not militate against the idea of a covenant connexion between Christian parents and their children. The admission of Gentiles

into the church did not lessen the privileges of believing Jews ; nor did those Jews consider their privileges lessened. The conversion of the Gentiles caused great joy. Would not the believing Jews, therefore, have thought strange, if they had understood by the doctrine and practice of the apostles, that there was no covenant connexion between parents and children in respect to the blessings of the gospel ? What, if those Jews, who, before the result of the council at Jerusalem, were earnest to have the believing Gentiles circumcised after the manner of Moses, had been answered in such a way, as this ? *You wish to have them and their children circumcised and required to keep the law of Moses. What propriety would there be in circumcising their children, as they must do, if they circumcise themselves ? For there is no kind of covenant connexion between believing Gentiles and their children, nor indeed between believing Jews and their children.* How would such doctrine have affected those Jews, who rejected the gospel, and, after the Gentiles were called into the church, were the more prejudiced against the gospel, on that account ?*

* The Greek of Rom. xi. 30, 31. ought, perhaps to have been rendered thus. *For, as ye formerly disbelieved God, but now have obtained mercy through their unbelief ; so also, they have now disbelieved your mercy, that they, also, may obtain mercy.*

The present argument from the *silence* of the Jews, whether believers or unbelievers, in respect to infant baptism, will have the greater weight, when we consider, that the Jews, in or about the apostles time, baptized those who became proselytes to the Jewish religion, both parents and children. Whether this custom of baptizing proselytes was introduced, before or after Christian baptism was instituted, learned men are not agreed; nor is it material to the *present argument*, at what particular time the custom was introduced. It seems to be the opinion of *all*, that it was a custom *in* or *about* the times of the apostles, when a man became a proselyte to the Jewish religion, to baptize him and his household, before the males were circumcised. This custom shows us, what ideas those Jews, who practised it, had of the uncleanness of Gentile children as connected with their parents, and of the covenant connexion between those Gentiles, who took hold of God's covenant, and their children.

Argument 4. It appears plain from history, that infant baptism has been practised by the church in general, from the apostolic age to the present time.

It was not disputed for eleven hundred years. *Dr. Wall*, in his history of infant baptism, says,

“For the first four hundred years, there appears only one man, Tartullian, who advised the delay of infant baptism in some cases, and one Gregory, who did *perhaps* practise such delay in the case of his own children; but no society of men so thinking or so practising, or any one saying it was unlawful to baptize infants. So, in the next seven hundred years, there was not so much as a man to be found, who either spoke or practised any such delay, but all to the contrary. And, when about the year 1130, one sect among the Waldenses or Albigenses, declared against the baptizing of infants, *as incapable of salvation*, the main body of that people rejected that opinion, and those of them, who held that opinion, quickly dwindled away and disappeared; there being no more persons heard of, holding that tenet, until the rising of the German anti-pedo baptists in the year 1522.”

As infant baptism appears to have been the uninterrupted practice of the church, till a period between fourteen and fifteen hundred years distant from the times of the apostles, it is the less strange, that there is but little to be found on the subject, in the writings of the ancients. They were not called to defend the practice, for none disputed it. In their writings on other subjects, they sometimes had occasion to

mention infant baptism, as the universal practice of the church.

Justin Martyr, who wrote about forty years after the apostles, mentions persons then living, sixty, or seventy years old, "who were made disciples to Christ in their childhood." These persons were made disciples in the time of the apostles. Because the apostles were directed to baptize those, whom they made disciples, Justin appears to consider baptized *children*, as disciples.

Irenæus, who wrote about sixty years after the apostles, speaks of "infants, little ones, and youths," being regenerated unto God, evidently using the word regeneration so as to include baptism. This was what the ancients generally understood by being "born of the water," and "by the washing of regeneration."

Origen, who lived about a hundred years after the apostles, declared infant baptism to have been the constant practice of the church. He says, "The church had a tradition or command from the apostles to give baptism to infants." He brought the practice of baptizing infants to prove, that they needed "forgiveness and mercy." "Infants," says he, "are baptized for the remission of sins."

Cyprian, who was constituted bishop of Carthage in Africa, in the year 248, declared decidedly in favour of infant baptism. In his time a council was called at Carthage, consisting of 66 bishops, to decide this question, *whether an infant might be baptized before he was eight days old*. It was not a question, whether infants were to be baptized, but whether their baptism should be delayed till the eighth day, according to the law of circumcision. The council unanimously agreed, “that an infant might be baptized on the second or third day, or at any time after its birth.”

Saint Ambrose, *Saint Chrysostom*, *Saint Hierome*, and *Saint Austin*, wrote, nearly at the same time, and about 280 years after the apostles; and according to their united testimony, infant baptism was then the universal practice of the church. *Ambrose* informs us, “that infant baptism was practised in his time, and in the time of the apostles.” *Chrysostom* says, “Persons may be baptized, either in their infancy, in middle age, or in old age.” *Austin* informs us, that “infant baptism is one of those practices, which were not instituted by any council, but had always been in use”—that “infants were to be baptized for the remission of sins”—that “he had *never heard or read of*

any Christian, Catholic or sectary, who held otherwise"—that "no Christian of any sort, ever denied it to be useful or necessary." *Hierome* says, "If infants be not baptized, the sin of omitting their baptism is laid to their parents charge."

Hierome and *Austin* brought the practice of baptizing infants, to prove the doctrine of original sin. *Pelagius* and *Celestius*, their antagonists, whether they felt more or less embarrassed with that argument, did not deny the duty of infant baptism. Because *Pelagius* denied original sin, some thought he must of course deny infant baptism, and actually charged him with it; but he repelled the charge, as groundless and slanderous, and says "men *slander* him, as if he denied the sacrament of baptism to infants, and did promise the kindom of heaven to any person without the redemption of Christ; and that he never heard of any, not even the most impious heretic, that would say such a thing of infants."* Since the year 1522, when a sect arose in Germany, and declared against infant baptism, the denomination of baptists has continued and considerably increased. But the

* A more particular account of what the fathers have said on this subject, may be seen in *Reeds Apology*, from which these historical quotations have been chiefly selected.

number has been, and still is, comparatively small. Professing Christians, in general, continue in the belief and practice of the important duty of giving baptism to infants.

From what has been brought into view, it appears, that infant baptism is not, as some suppose, a thing lately introduced into the church. The *denial* of infant baptism appears to be a late thing.

Let the nature of the present argument be understood. It is not meant to be suggested, that the mere practice of the church in regard to baptism, *since the apostolic age*, even if it had been more completely uniform, than it has been, to the present age, would *of itself*, be a sufficient warrant for infant baptism ; nor that we should have a sufficient warrant, if to that *practice* we should add the *opinions* of the Christian fathers, or of any uninspired men in respect to the *meaning* of Scripture. But when we consider what has been the practice of the church in regard to baptism since the days of the apostles, as far as we learn it from the writings of the Christian fathers and from history, when we consider that infant baptism was *universally* practised in the church, and practised *not as an invention of man*,

but as a Divine institution, we have, evidently, a strong argument, that infant baptism is agreeable to the doctrine and practice of the apostles.

Let no one imagine that infant baptism is one of those inventions, which were originated in the dark times of popery. Luther and Calvin, who were instrumental of so much light to the church, did not think infant baptism one of those corruptions, which it became Christians to put away.

What history tells us, and what we *conjecture* concerning a particular matter, which history brings to view, are two things. Because it appears from history, that in times of great darkness and corruption, there were Christians, who lived at a distance from the great body of professing Christians, and maintained great purity of doctrine and manners, some persons are disposed to *conjecture*, that they were baptists. But, if we learn from history, that they were remarkably pure, and yet do not learn from history, that they were baptists, *history*, in this respect favours infant baptism.

History itself so manifestly *favours* infant baptism, whatever different degrees of *force* different persons may allow to this argument, that

it seems to be almost necessary for those, who consider infant baptism wrong, to admit, that there was probably *a time*, in which the practice was universal in the church, and that the practice became universal soon after the time of the apostles.

SERMON IV.



ROMANS IV. 11, 12.

And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith, which he had, yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also; And the father of circumcision to them, who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had, being yet uncircumcised.

I PROCEED to answer certain objections against infant baptism, and against the reasoning of those, who argue in favour of it, which have not yet in these discourses, received a *formal* attention.

Objection I. God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, as it respected their natural seed, was a kind of civil contract, relating to the temporal concerns of the Hebrew Commonwealth; circumcision, and what is often called by Christians the Jewish church, were both abolished with the ritual institutions of the Sinai covenant, a new church was establish-

ed, with which the infants of believers have no connexion, and consequently these infants have no right to baptism. Although enough may appear to some persons to have been said in the preceding discourses, to obviate an objection of this import, yet, as it may still seem to others to be of considerable weight, it may be well to give a particular answer.

I will endeavour to show clearly from Scripture, that instead of its being right to call the Abrahamic covenant a civil contract, the Jewish church was truly a church, and was never to be abolished. It is not meant that the members of the Jewish church in general were *real saints*, but that true love to God, and sincere obedience, were what he required of them, and what they professed; and that some of every generation were *real saints*. It is not meant that the Jewish church was equal to the Christian church; but, that, the Christian church, is essentially the same with the preceding Jewish church, though in a certain sense it is new, being under a different and far more glorious dispensation. The Christian church is the Jewish church continued, enriched with grace and truth, and receiving Gentiles into its bosom.

(1.) Love to God and to men was required of the Jewish church.

Moses said, "Hear, O Israel; the LORD thy God is one LORD. And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."*— "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self."† "On these two commandments," says Jesus, "hang all the law and the prophets."‡ "Love," says the apostle Paul, "is the fulfilling of the law."§

(2.) *A solemn profession of true religion* was made by the Jewish church.

At Sinai all Israel promised sincere obedience. When Moses read the book of the covenant in the audience of the people, they said, "All that the LORD hath said will we do and be obedient." And Moses sprinkled them with the blood of the covenant. || They all made a public profession of true religion. Hence Moses said to them, "Thou hast avouched the LORD this day to be thy God, and to walk in his ways, and to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and to hearken unto his voice."**

* Deut. vi. 45. † Levit. xix. 18. ‡ Matt. xxii. 40. § Rom. xiii. 10. || Ex. xxiv 7. ** Deut. xxiv. 17.

The Jewish church, in the time of Joshua, in the time of Josiah, and after their return from captivity in the time of Nehemiah, publicly and solemnly renewed covenant with God; professing true love, and promising sincere obedience.

(3.) *False professors in the Jewish church* were accused of *flattering God with their mouth, and lying unto him with their tongue.*

When he afflicted them, “then they sought him: and they returned and enquired early after God: and they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God, their Redeemer. Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues: for their heart was not right with him, neither were they steadfast in his covenant.”* Their *hearts’ not being* right with God was a violation of his covenant, because his covenant required a *right heart*, and they professed to have *hearts right with him*; otherwise how were they guilty of *flattery* and *falsehood*? God’s covenant with the Jewish church manifestly required them to love and glorify him. Hence he said “to the wicked,” “what hast thou to do to declare my statutes, or that thou

* Psa. lxxxviii. 34—37.

shouldst take my covenant in thy mouth.”* He declared his abhorrence of the service of the hypocritical nation ; that their sacrifices and solemn meetings were an abomination in his sight.† Most pointedly did Christ reprove the leading and influential members of the Jewish church, for their omitting the more weighty matters of the law, judgment, mercy, faith and the love of God, for their hypocrisy and wickedness. He said, “ Wo unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites ; for ye make clean the outside of the cup, and of the platter, but within ye are full of extortion and excess.”‡

(4.) *The same blessings, essentially,* were promised to the Jewish church, as are promised to the Christian church.

The promise of blessings was not made to hypocrites ; but to true saints, who entered into covenant with all their hearts. To such Jehovah promised forgiveness of sin, righteousness, strength, and peace ; he promised to continue his loving kindness to them ; to give them grace and glory, and to withhold no good thing from those, who walk uprightly.

(5.) *The Israel of God was to continue forever.*

* Psa. i. 16.

† Is. i. 2—15.

‡ Matt. xxiii. 25.

“As for me, this is my covenant with them, saith the LORD. My Spirit that is upon thee, and my words which I have put in thy mouth, shall not depart out of thy mouth, nor out of the mouth of thy seed, nor out of the mouth of thy seed’s seed, saith the LORD, from henceforth and forever.”*—“For, as the new heavens and the new earth, which I will make, shall remain before me, saith the LORD, so shall your seed and your name remain.”†

Though these promises were given, when the church was under the Sinai covenant, yet they were given in pursuance of the everlasting covenant, which God made “with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob.” In remembrance of this covenant, he delivered his church from Egypt, and gave them the law at Sinai, for their instruction, until the coming of Christ. But all the instruction communicated to them, in the law and by the prophets, was for the purpose of accomplishing the great design of the Abrahamic covenant, and continuing the church.

The continuance of the ancient church, is evidently implied, in a number of figurative representations in the Holy Scriptures. That church is called *Zion*; the Zion of the holy One

* Is. lix. 21. † Is. lxvi. 22.

of Israel.”* “Of Zion it shall be said, this and that man was born in her; and the Highest himself shall establish her.”† *The Zion of the holy One of Israel* was not to be destroyed with the Jewish ritual. For it is written, “The LORD hath chosen Zion; he hath desired it for his habitation. This is my rest forever: here will I dwell; for I have desired it.”‡ “I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations.”§ The Christian church is called mount Sion, “the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.”||

God called his ancient church his *holy mountain*, in allusion to mount Zion, on which Jerusalem was built. He says, “The LORD will be the hope of his people, and the strength of the children of Israel. So shall ye know that I am the LORD your God dwelling in Zion, my holy mountain.”** But under the Christian dispensation, this mountain was not to be demolished, but to be highly exalted, and to be a place, to which all nations should repair. “It shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord’s house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be

*Is. lx. 14.

†Psa. lxxxvii. 5.

‡Psa. cxxxii. 13—15.

§Is. lx. 15.

||Heb. xii. 22.

**Joel iii. 16, 17.

exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it.”*

God compared the Jewish church to a “vine in a very fruitful hill,” which brought forth wild grapes.”† But it appears by the words of Christ, that God’s ancient vineyard was not to be utterly destroyed. The Jews, who wickedly withheld the fruit from the right owner, were destroyed; and the vineyard was let out to others.”‡ Gentiles are now employed as labourers in God’s vineyard.

By what Paul says of the good olive tree, it appears evident, that believing Gentiles belong to the *same church* from which the unbelieving Jews were excluded. Though the “fatness” of the good olive tree has been greatly increased by the Christian dispensation, it is the same olive tree. Believing Gentiles were “cut out of the olive tree, which is wild by nature, and grafted contrary to nature into a good olive tree.”§ It is *contrary to nature*, or different from the usual method in grafting, to take branches out of a bad tree, and graft them into a good tree. It is also *contrary to nature* for ingrafted branches to bear the same kind of fruit as the tree into which they are grafted.

* Is. ii. 2. † Is. v. 1—4. ‡ Matt. xxi. 33—41. § Rom. xi. 24.

But, however *contrary* these things are to *nature*, they have taken place, and still take place. Branches wild by nature are grafted into the good olive, and bear good fruit. "How much more" will "the natural branches be grafted" again "into their own olive tree?" The ancient good olive tree still lives, and flourishes. Before the gospel came, it bore *some* good fruit; now its branches are *more* fruitful in good words and works; and much more numerous, than before the natural branches were broken off. It will at length exceedingly flourish; will have a great multitude of branches; and will bear an abundance of good fruit, "unto the glory and praise of God."

Agreeable to this, God expressly promised to enlarge his ancient church by the accession of the Gentiles. "The children, which thou shalt have, after thou hast lost the other, shall say again in thine ears, the place is too strait for me: give place to me, that I may dwell. Then shalt thou say in thine heart, who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been? Thus saith the Lord God, behold, I will lift up my hand to the Gentiles, and set up

my standard to the people ; and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.”* “The Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.”—“The forces of the Gentiles shall come unto thee.”—The sons of strangers shall build thy walls, and their kings shall minister unto thee ; for in my wrath I smote thee, but in my favour have I had mercy on thee.”†

(6.) By the preaching of John the Baptist, it appears that the *ancient church was not to cease*, but to be continued under the Christian dispensation.

At the close of the prophecy of Malachi, the last of the Jewish prophets, about four hundred years before Christ, God said to his ancient church, “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord : And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse.” By Elijah the prophet, in this place, is meant John the Baptist. He was the immediate messenger to prepare the way for Christ, to “go be-

* Is. xlix. 20—22.

† Is. lx. 3, 5, 10.

fore him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.”* He was “a prophet—and more than a prophet.” He did more than the prophets, who went before him. He was instrumental of manifesting Jesus as the light of the world, and sacrifice for sin. He showed him to the people, saying, “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world !”† He pointed him out to the people, as the Son of God, who would baptize with the Holy Ghost. But “he, that is least in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he.”‡ At the time of John’s ministry, that state of the church, which is called the *kingdom of heaven*, had not commenced, but was at hand. He did not live to be acquainted with the death, resurrection and ascension of Christ, and to participate those spiritual blessings, which began to be poured out upon the Christian church on the day of Pentecost. He was sent to prepare the Jews to believe in Christ, by whom the new dispensation was to be introduced. But he did not teach them, that their church was to be abolished, and a new one founded, from the privileges of which, the children of believers

* Luke i. 16, 17. † John i. 29. ‡ Matt. xi. 9—11.

were to be excluded. Speaking of the church as a vineyard, he did not declare, that all the trees should be cut down, and the vineyard itself destroyed; but he said, "The axe is laid at the root of the trees; therefore every tree, which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down, and cast into the fire."* Instead of saying; that the everlasting covenant would cease, and that Abraham would no longer have a covenant seed on the earth, he declared, that "God was able of stones," or of impenitent Gentiles, "to raise up children unto Abraham."† He did not attempt to turn the hearts of parents from their children, by telling them, that the seed of believers were no longer to be the subjects of promise, nor to receive the seal of the covenant. No words, of such dreadful import, with respect to the rising generation, were spoken by John the Baptist. His doctrine was more evangelical. To turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, that parents and children might escape the curse denounced against sinners, was one important design of his ministry. *In the spirit and power of Elias*, he called upon the Jews to repent of their sins, and attend to the concerns of their own souls, and the

* Matt. iii. 10. † Matt. iii. 9.

souls of their children. He preached with success. Many of the children of Israel did he turn to the Lord their God.

(7.) *Christ did not abolish the Abrahamic covenant and the ancient church; but he confirmed "the promises made unto the fathers," and opened the way for the union of Jews and Gentiles in one Church.*

When Jesus died, "the veil of the temple was rent in twain, from the top to the bottom."* Once the Gentiles "were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world." "But now" they who formerly "were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ." For," says the apostle Paul, "he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances;" "to make in himself, of twain, one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God, in one body, by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby; and came and preached peace to you" who "were afar off, and to them that were nigh. For through him

* Matt. xxvii. 51.

we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God: and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; in whom all the building, fitly framed together, groweth into an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also are builded together, for an habitation of God through the Spirit.”* This passage shows, that the Christian Church is, in one sense, new, and, in another, the ancient church continued.

If the ancient church ended with the Jewish economy, how has the blessing of Abraham come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ? how are they by faith in Jesus Christ “Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise?” how are Gentiles, by faith in Jesus Christ, grafted into the same *olive tree*, of which the Jews were the natural branches? how is Abraham the father of all them that believe?” and why did God reveal it “unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the *same body*, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel?”†

* Eph. ii. 13—22.

† Eph. iii. 5, 6.

Let us dwell still longer upon this important point.

That what is called the Jewish church, was truly a church, appears from John i. 11. "He came unto his own, [that is, his own property, estate or house] and his own [people] received him not." (In general, they received him not.) The same thing appears from John iv. 22. which, if the Greek were rendered literally, would stand thus. *Ye worship what* (i. e. that which) *ye do not know; we worship what* (i. e. that which) *we know. For salvation is from* (or, out of) *the Jews.* Salvation began with the Jews, and was communicated *from* them to other nations.

If the Israelites had not been truly a church, before the gospel came, would Paul have spoken, as he did in Acts xxvi. 6, 7. ?—"for the hope of the promise made" by "God unto our fathers: unto which hope our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come."*

How clearly it appears, that the congregation of Israel was truly a church, from Heb. iii. 5, 6. "Moses verily was faithful in all his† house, [not his own house, but God's] as a servant,"—"but Christ, as a Son, over his own‡

* Compare Acts xxiv. 14, 15. † *autou.* ‡ *hautou.*

house; whose house are we." See verses 2—4. The Christian Church, though, in one sense, a new house, is, in another sense, the same house of God, of which Moses was a part, and in which he acted faithfully, as God's servant. A house, considered as a family, may come under new regulations, be greatly improved, and have the number of its members greatly increased, and be still the same house. Moses told the fathers, that God would raise up unto them, of their brethren, a Prophet, like him, to whom it would be their duty to hearken, and that whosoever would not hearken to this Prophet, would be destroyed from among the people. When this Prophet, the Son of God, came to his own house, the unbelieving Jews were excluded from the house, and believing Gentiles were admitted, to associate, as brethren with those Jews, who believed, and to participate the new privileges and joys, with which the house was blessed.

According to the whole tenor of the epistle to the Hebrews, in which the new covenant, in distinction from the Sinai covenant, is *more particularly* spoken of, than in any other part of the Scriptures, the Israelites were truly a church, and the Christian church is that church continued. The gospel time is called "the

time of reformation,"* because the new covenant is better than the Sinai covenant, which was vanishing away. But there is a great difference between reforming and destroying.

How can we entertain the idea, that the Israelites were not truly a church, but only a kind of civil community, when we reflect on "the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises?" when we think of the holiness of that law, which God gave them, and of the awful majesty, and solemnity, with which he gave it, of the service in the tabernacle, and temple, where he condescended to dwell in a peculiar manner, and of the words of the prophets, whom he sent to call back his sinful people to his law, to denounce threatenings against them; and also, to foretell, what glorious things he purposed graciously to do for his people in his own times? There is not a book in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, however short, except the book of Job, which does not more or less explicitly represent the *natural seed of Jacob* as the church of God; and, according to *the prophets, the seed of Jacob*, (which seed, as it was revealed after the incarnation of Christ, included those, who are not the *natural* seed of

* See Heb. ix. 10.

Jacob,) were to be the church of God forever. The Scriptures of the New Testament, in their whole tenor, recognize this truth, that the natural seed of Jacob *were* the church of God, as a fundamental principle of Christianity; and, at the same time, unfold this additional truth, as one of the glories of the gospel, that those of all nations, who believe in Jesus Christ, are *accounted* children of Abraham, and of Jacob.*

As it was through faith in Jesus Christ, that the Old Testament Scriptures were to make Timothy wise unto salvation, so, without a knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures, much of the New Testament Scriptures would be obscure. Yea, the *New Testament* itself, that is the Testament, of which Jesus is Mediator, reminds us of the *Old Testament* which was ratified at Sinai. Little do some persons consider what they say, when they speak so lightly as they do of circumcision, of the ancient church, and of the Old Testament Scriptures.

Shall we say, that an "heir" is not an heir, because, being a minor, he is under tutors and governors?" Because that mystery, which lay hidden for many generations, was at length revealed, that the Gentiles were to be fellow heirs

* See Gal. iii. 29. and vi. 16.

with the natural seed of Jacob, in respect to the blessings promised in the ancient prophets, shall the Gentiles say, that those blessings were not promised primarily to that natural seed? Because Paul, the distinguished apostle of the Gentiles, was enlightened respecting the mystery of the gospel, and saw, that the Christian dispensation far exceeds the former dispensation in glory, did he speak, as if there was *no visible church*, before the Christian church was established? By no means.

That the ancient Israelites were truly a church, is so manifest from the whole tenor of the Bible, that it is strange how any professing Christians can deny it. But do not *some* teachers among those, who deny infant baptism, act, in regard to the ancient church, or, in regard to the church in general, considered as comprising both the ancient and the Christian church, a part similar to the part acted, in regard to the Christian church, by those, whom the apostle termed "*the concision?*" They may act such a part more or less *ignorantly*; but how severe is the wound, which they give the church, when they cut off all that part of it, which existed between the time when Abraham received the sign of circumcision, and the day of

Pentecost, when Christian baptism began to be administered !

When I speak of the ancient Israelites, as a *church*, I am not disputing for a *word*. But it may be queried, whether Stephen did not apply the word *church* to the congregation of Israel.* May not the natural seed of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, be said to have been a *church*, as *called out* from the world,† to be a holy people to God, and to “enjoy in the land of Canaan, an inheritance, typical of that eternal inheritance, for which Christians, having received “the first fruits of the Spirit,” are now waiting ?

What, though the ancient church was a *nation* ? It was a nation specially favoured by the Most High, who is “the governor among the nations ;” and a nation to which he said, “O *my nation*.”‡ What nation had “statutes and judgments so righteous ?” for what nation did God do such wonderful things ?§ To what nation did God make such glorious promises ?

How greatly those err, who speak of the Israelites, as a kind of *civil* community ! Do they speak of them in this degrading manner, be-

* Acts vii. 38. † See Gen. xii. 1. and Deut. iv. 34.

‡ See Is. li. 4. and compare Ps. cvi. 4, 5. and I. Pet. ii. 9, 10. and Deut. xxxii. 21, and Rom. x. 19.

§ See Deut. iv. 6—8, 30—40. and vii. 6—10.

cause their *civil* affairs were governed by laws, which they received from God? Not only in moral things, and in sacred things, but *even in civil* things, they were to be governed by God's laws. *In all respects* they were to be a *holy people* to God.

Will it be said, that they proved a rebellious people? Though that church was not pure in respect to the conduct of its members, but the most of the time very unholy, still it was a church. When God found "fault" with the Israelites for breaking the Sinai covenant, Jer. xxxi. 32. these words, "although I was an husband unto them," show, that they were a church. Some of that church from age to age, were real saints. The eleventh chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews gives us a concise biography of eminent believers from Abraham, and even from Abel, down to the time of the gospel. When it is said, Jer. ix. 26. "All the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart," the words are not to be taken in their *most literal* sense. "What saith the answer of God unto" Elias, who lived in a time of prevailing idolatry?* In what manner did God promise in Jeremiah, to purify his church? Not by de-

* See Rom. xi. 4.

stroying the church itself, not by removing infants from the church ; but by making with the church a new covenant, far different from the Sinai covenant. In making this new covenant, he performs “the mercy promised to” the “fathers,” and remembers “his holy covenant” with Abraham.

The ancient church, was in a number of respects *typical* of the Christian church. This does not show, that it was not *itself* a real church. On the contrary, the circumstance, that, in the prophetic parts of the Old Testament Scriptures, and in the New Testament Scriptures, particularly in the last book of the Bible, the *Revelation*, which reaches to the end of time, the Christian church is figuratively represented in the way of beautiful and sublime allusion to the ancient church, greatly honours that church, and strikingly holds up the idea, that it was truly a church. When the light of that church came, and the glory of the LORD rose upon it, it became the Christian church ; which will at length appear arrayed in resplendent glory and everlasting joy.

Objection 2. If infants are to be baptized into Jesus Christ, why ought they not to partake of the Lord's supper ?

Answer. There is no absurdity in considering the infants of believers members of the church, without considering them members in full communion. The eucharist is to be celebrated in a pious remembrance of Jesus. Those, who partake of the Lord's supper are required to "examine" themselves, and to take heed, lest they eat and drink unworthily, not discerning the Lord's body. Christ himself is *our passover*, on whom we are to feed by faith, and, particularly, at the *table* of the Lord. Infants are incapable of discerning the Lord's body, and of examining themselves.

We can see reasons why it was proper, that young children should partake of the feast of the passover, which though a solemn feast, was *literally* a feast, and satisfied animal hunger, while it afforded useful instruction to the mind, bringing to remembrance the mercy of God in sparing the first born in the houses of the Israelites, at a time so terrible to the Egyptians. According to what was said in the preceding discourse, it appears proper, that infants should be devoted to God in baptism. But it appears suitable, that, before they be admitted to the Lord's supper, they should subscribe with their own hands the same dedication, which their parents subscribed *for* them; that is, should

“confess” with their mouths “the Lord Jesus,” believing in their hearts, “that God hath raised him from the dead.”

Objection 3. Infant baptism is a useless ceremony. Instances of piety are not more frequent among those who have been baptized in infancy, than among others.

Answer. “What if some” in the ancient church “did not believe?” Was it no privilege for persons to belong to that circumcised people, to which “were committed the oracles of God?”*

What if some, in Christian countries, do not heartily embrace the gospel, is it no privilege to be favoured with that blessed word of salvation, of which millions are now destitute?

* In our text the words, “*though they be not circumcised,*” have a grammatical relation to the word, “*believe;*” and the meaning of this member of the sentence is, that, if any persons, though they are not circumcised, believe, Abraham is their father. The Greek words, rendered, “*though they be not circumcised,*” literally signify, *through uncircumcision;* and convey the idea, that in ancient times, while the oracles of God were so much confined to the circumcised, those, who were not circumcised, had *a difficulty to go through,* in respect to believing. But God, in the fullness of time, removed that difficulty; and then multitudes easily believed *through uncircumcision,* that is, notwithstanding the difficulty, which circumcision had kept in the way. How God removed the difficulty attending uncircumcision, we may learn from Col. ii. 14.

Is it no privilege to enjoy that public ministration of God's word and ordinances, which many, who live in Christian lands do not enjoy? In a parish or Christian society, where the gospel is publicly ministered, and the Bible is in every house, what, if some children of pious parents prove irreligious for a time, yea, never appear to become pious? are not the children of pious parents more highly favoured, in respect to religious advantages, than the children of wicked parents in the same parish or society? What, if some persons, who profess religion, and come to the communion of the Lord's supper, afterward manifest, that they are not true Christians? is it no privilege nor duty for any to come to the table of the Lord? What, if some, who are baptized upon a profession of faith, afterward, manifest, that they have not faith, is baptism an unprofitable thing? What, if some parents, who have their children baptized, are little impressed with the importance and solemn nature of baptism, and afterward virtually retract what they have done, and instead of bringing up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," to whom they have devoted them, leave them to follow "the course of this world?" is it of no advantage to children to be baptized, and to receive

a correspondent education? What, if some parents, whom charity, on the whole, regards as true believers, are greatly deficient respecting the religious education of their children? are not all children highly favoured, whose parents, with a good degree of fidelity, “bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord?” It cannot be reasonably said, that, since the oracles of God are not now confined to one particular nation, there is no necessity for baptisms taking the place of circumcision *in any sense*. For it is manifest, that in *any place*, where the religious privileges, which are enjoyed by the families of the society in common, are ever so great, there is a greater prospect of the salvation of those children, whose parents are pious, than of those, whose parents are destitute of the fear and love of God. This will be granted both by pedobaptists and anti-pedobaptists. It follows from the necessary connexion between parents and children. Besides what the children of pious parents cannot avoid seeing in their parents, and hearing them utter, (and they see and hear different things from what other children see and hear) pious parents will *endeavour* to promote the salvation of their offspring, whose souls are evidently more entrusted to their care, than the souls of

other children, and whom they have so much better opportunity of instructing and admonishing. Moreover, all will grant, that, if there be a *covenant* connexion between Christian parents and their children under the gospel, the prospect of the salvation of these children is *still greater*. The *necessary* connexion between parents and children *favours*, (in the way of analogy) the idea of a covenant connexion between true Christians and their children.

The present objection then comes to this; that though the children of some parents are in a more happy condition, as to the prospect of their salvation, than the children of others, yet it is of no advantage to have them *baptized*. But if *infant baptism* appears to be a Divine institution, it would be wicked for any one to speak of it, as a useless ceremony, even, if he could not *perceive any good consequences*, nor in any measure *see*, how it should be useful. *We can see*, however, *how* infant baptism tends to produce good effects. The gospel requires all parents to "bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." But professing Christians are apt to be very negligent in respect to this important duty. With regard to this duty, even those parents are apt, *after all*, to be great-

ly deficient, who devote their children to God in baptism. But certainly infant baptism tends to impress the minds of parents with the importance of this duty. When a parent first dedicates a child to God in baptism, he solemnly binds himself to perform this duty; when afterward he dedicates a child, he renews his obligation; and every time he *sees* baptism administered to any child, he is solemnly reminded of his own obligation. Does not infant baptism, therefore, tend to produce happy effects in regard to what is so important to the church, and to civil society, *the religious education of children?* and will not a child be likely to receive benefit from being *told*, what a solemn thing was done for him, when he was incapable of acting for himself?

That instances of piety are not more frequently seen among those, who have been baptized in infancy, is doubtless, greatly owing to the negligence of parents, as to fulfilling their covenant vow respecting their offspring.

But it is not true, that instances of piety are not more frequent among those, who have been baptized in infancy, than among others. Experience proves the contrary. As amidst all the corruptions of God's ancient people, a suc-

cession of pious persons was continued among those, who received the seal of the covenant in their infancy; so, although many professing Christian parents are unfaithful to their children, and many baptized children irreligious and profane, yet some Christian parents are in a degree faithful; and principally among those, who have been baptized in infancy, religion has been continued from one generation to another. It is very evident, that the greater part of the professing Christians of the present day, were baptized on their parents account; and where are we to look for true Christians, unless among professors? In the late revivals of religion in New England, the hopeful subjects of renewing grace have been chiefly among those, who received baptism in their infancy, or childhood. Many, and it is presumed, the greater part of those, who now belong to the baptist churches, in New England, were baptized on their parents' account, and since they became adults, have renounced their infant baptism. How many of them, since they professed religion, have been drawn away from other churches? If such are true Christians, can they *all* say, that they have experienced no benefit from their infant baptism? can they all say, that they have received

no grace from God, as keeping covenant and mercy with their believing parents ?

Infant baptism appears to be one of the important means, which God has instituted for the salvation of sinners ; and it is liable to no objection in respect to its utility, but what is common to all Divine ordinances. The utility of baptism in general, of the Christian sabbath, of a preached gospel, and of the Lord's supper, is, by many denied. How often has it been said by the opposers of Christian doctrines and duties, that those, who are baptized, and come to the table of the Lord, who pray in their families, and attend public worship have no more religion, than others. With no less impropriety, it is said by many, that infant baptism is a useless ceremony. All such suggestions arise from profane unbelief, and are highly reproachful to the Author of all Divine institutions.

Our Saviour says, " Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones."* If, by *little ones* we are to understand principally believers, who excel in humility, or weak believers, † yet it is possible for a person to transgress the *spirit* of our Saviour's caution, by speaking contemptuously of infants, and of infant bap-

* Matt. xviii. 10. . † See Matt. xviii. 4, 6. and Rom. xiv. 1.

tism.* It may have been the case, though it does not seem probable, that the little child, whom Jesus set in the midst of his disciples, was then a believer. He was so small, that Jesus took him in his arms.† Let no one despise young children, and show, that he himself does not resemble them. Let us remember the children, who in the temple cried, “Hosanna to the Son of David.” Let us bear in mind, that God perfects praise “out of the mouths of babes and sucklings.”

When the glorious promises of the new covenant shall have been more fully accomplished, when the Jews shall have been restored to the favour of God, and the new covenant shall have been more completely made with the house of Israel, including Jews and Gentiles, *who knows*, but that *all* the children of Christian parents will receive grace to “know” the Lord,‡ in their childhood? If this shall be the case, will there not appear a propriety in their being baptized even in *infancy*? But such a change in the state of things would not alter the nature of baptism.

Objection 4. There was *an express command* to circumcise infants; but there is *no ex-*

* See Matt. xviii. 5. and Luke ix. 48. † Mark ix. 36.

‡ See Heb. viii. 11.

press command to baptize infants ; and whereas the Scriptures *expressly* speak of the baptism of women, they contain no express account, that infants are baptized.

This is the most important objection, that can be brought against infant baptism. But after what has been said in these discourses, it will, perhaps, be unnecessary to say *much* in answer to this objection.

Though the Scriptures contain no *express command* to give baptism to infants, nor any *express example* of it, yet we *may have sufficient reasons* for regarding infant baptism, as a Divine institution. If we have sufficient reason for regarding it, let us not be *too solicitous* to know, why there is no express command, nor express example.

We may *imagine*, that it would have been happy, if the Scriptures had spoken *more fully* and particularly, in various respects, of baptism, and given *more circumstantial* accounts of the baptism of multitudes, and of individuals. But the concise manner, in which the Scriptures speak of baptism, is calculated to try the dispositions of mankind ; whether they will humbly, diligently and prayerfully endeavour to learn and do their duty respecting baptism ; and whether one Christian will be

suitably *candid* towards another, that thinks and practises differently from him in this respect. To answer the objection more directly. Let it be remembered, that there is *nothing* in the Scriptures *against* infant baptism. There is nothing *said*, from which it can be inferred, that infants *ought not* to be baptized; nor *any account of the administration* of baptism, from which it can be inferred, that infants *were not* baptized. And is there nothing in the Scriptures *in favour* of infant baptism? Is there not *much* in the Scriptures *in favour* of it? And are not the *Scripture* arguments in favour of it, *greatly confirmed by the practice of the church*, since the time of the apostles?

One reason, why it might be important to specify *men* and *women** is, (according to what was remarked in the preceding discourse) that in the ancient church *females* did not receive the token of the Abrahamic covenant. If *circumcision* never had existed, it might seem more necessary, that there should be something explicit about the baptism of infants, than about the baptism of women. From what is said in Gal. iii. 28. we may know, that the baptized persons spoken of in verse 27, included females.

* See Acts viii. 12.

But, at the same time, the 28th verse shows, (as was remarked in the preceding discourse) that baptism has, in a certain sense, taken the place of circumcision. If there never had been an express command to circumcise infants, it might have been *necessary*, that there should be an express command to baptize infants. There was a *church*, before the *Christian* church was established. Infants were certainly members of the *ancient* church, and had an interest in the gracious and everlasting covenant, which God made with Abraham.

If the infants of believers were not to be members of the Christian church, nor to have any covenant connexion with their parents, is it not *strange, that this is not expressly mentioned?* Instead of any express mention of *this*, the contrary is *expressly favoured*. If at the time, when the apostles were commissioned to publish the good news of salvation to all mankind, this gospel had been an *entirely new* thing; if it had not been predicted in the prophets, and predicted even to Abraham; if there had been *no church*; if infants had not been in the church; if baptism had not been administered by the son of Zacharias, nor by the disciples of Jesus, and if Jesus had not shown a tender affection to little children, and spoken, as if the kingdom of God belonged

to them ; then it might have been *necessary* that the apostles, when they received their commission to go into all the world, should be *expressly* directed to baptize the infants of believers. But, as things *were*, it might be plain to the apostles, that they were to treat the infants of believers, as members of the church, and baptize them.

We *know*, that if the apostles had received a commission to proselyte all nations, circumcising them, they could have had no doubt about circumcising infants.* When certain Jews thought it needful to circumcise the believing Gentiles,† there was nothing *expressed* about circumcising the *children* of those Gentiles ; but we know what was *implied*. When it was said, “ Ye must be circumcised and keep the law,” the meaning was, *Ye must be circumcised, and circumcise your children, and keep the law.*

As further answering *the present objection*, some things will be applicable, which will be offered in answering *the next objection*.

Objection 5. Infant baptism is a *tradition*, and ought not to be practised.

* Dr. Doddridge makes a remark of this import.

† Acts xv. 1, 5, 24.

Answer. Such traditions, as agree with the word of God are good, and ought to be followed. Infant baptism appears to be a tradition of this sort. Any doctrine of faith, or rule of practice, handed down from one to another, either verbally or in writing, is a tradition. St. Paul uses the term in this sense. “Brethren, stand fast and hold the *traditions*, which ye have been taught, whether by *word* or our *epistle*.”* “Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, [literally, *traditions*,] as I delivered them to you.”† “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition, which ye received of us.”‡ Whatever God has revealed, that has been handed down to us, in the Holy Scriptures, may be called, in such a sense, a tradition. But, is the religion taught by the apostles to be rejected, because it has been handed down to us by *tradition*? Must we disregard the sabbath, forsake the house of God, live without religion in our families, and leave the rising generation unbaptized, lest we should imitate the steps of our fathers?

* II. Thes. ii. 15.

† I. Cor. xi. 2.

‡ II. Thes. iii. 6.

If the dedication of children to God, in a sacred rite, by which the everlasting covenant of his grace is sealed to them is a tradition, it is a tradition, which appears to have been followed, by the saints *in general*, ever since the time of Abraham. Need Christian parents now be afraid to walk in the same steps?

It is said, Is. i. 12. "Who hath required this at your hands, to tread my courts?" God required the Israelites to tread his courts. But who required them to tread his courts *with wicked hearts*? Who required them to tread his courts, *as if this would of itself*, render them acceptable to God, while their conduct in other respects was so evil, and their "hands" were "full of blood." Accordingly, it may be said, who requires a professing Christian to tread God's courts, presenting either himself, or his child, for baptism, *as if this external performance of duty, would of itself*, secure to him or to his child, the favour of God? But God was "pleased with the *sacrifices of righteousness*, with burnt offering, and whole burnt offering." He was pleased with those of his ancient people, who observed circumcision and the ceremonies of the law with obedient hearts, and suitably regarded the more im-

portant parts of the law. He is pleased with those Christians, who perform their duty in respect to baptism with believing hearts.

It becomes Christians, in this age of the world, to be *imitators* of all those, in whatever age, who “through faith and patience” have obtained an eternal inheritance. It becomes us to be *imitators* of Paul and the other apostles, as they were imitators of Christ. It becomes us to “remember” those pious men, who in different ages have ruled the Christian church, and other pious Christians, and to *imitate* their “faith” and practice, so far as their faith and practice were agreeable to the Divine word.

Serious persons, who denominate infant baptism a *tradition*, must mean that it is a *tradition of men*, handed down from age to age, in books, in discourse, and in practice. If infant baptism is not according to Christ, but according to “the tradition of men;” (see Gal. ii. 8. if it is such a tradition as is mentioned in Mark vii. 11—13. it would be wicked to follow it. If infant baptism had been introduced into the church, even a thousand years ago, by some man, without other authority, than his own ideas in regard to the meaning of the Scriptures, and his own opinion in regard to expe-

diency; or, if a number of men had joined in this matter; if those men had appeared to have been, in some respects, ever so pious; and, if the *practice* of infant baptism had afterward become *universal* in the church; the practice of it, in the present age, would rest on a poor foundation. But the pedobaptists consider infant baptism, as having been handed down *from the apostles*.

Why do Christians, in the present age, consider the *first day* of the week, as a day to be kept holy to the Lord? Because, in addition to *a few intimations* in the Scriptures, it appears from the history of the church, that the *first day* of the week has been observed, as, in a peculiar sense, “the Lord’s day,”* ever since the time of

* Compare, in the Greek, Rev. i. 10. with I. Cor. xi. 20. See also, John xx. 19, 26. Acts xx. 7. and I. Cor. xvi. 1, 2. The commandment, “Remember the sabbath day,” is in the midst of those ten commandments, which, though addressed immediately to the Israelites, are applicable to all nations. The observance of the fourth commandment is highly important towards the observance of all the others. We may be sure, that the apostle Paul in Rom. xiv. 5, 6. refers chiefly to the mere *ceremonial* part of the Mosaic law; nor do we know, that he has *any* reference to *the weekly sabbath* of the Jews. If, “the sabbath days,” or sabbaths, in Col. ii. 16. *include the weekly sabbath of the Jews*, it may be the duty of *Christians* to keep *a weekly sabbath*. “The sabbath was made for man;” not only for the Israelites. It was instituted, at the *creation*

the apostles. Yea, how do we know, in the present age, except by *tradition, which is the first day of the week?* Let all persons who object to infant baptism as a *tradition*, take care, of man. As it pleased God to make all things in six days, and to rest on the seventh, to rest *one day in seven*, in a regular succession, may be said to be in a certain sense, according to the nature of things, and in that respect a moral duty. On *which particular day* mankind were to rest, seems to be a *positive* matter, capable of being charged by a particular manifestation of God's will. When we rest on the first day of the week, we celebrate, at once, the work of creation, and the work of redemption. The Jewish sabbath appears to have been typical of that spiritual rest, which Jesus Christ gives to believers, (a rest superior to that, which, Jesus, that is, Joshua gave to the Israelites), typical in a certain sense, of the Lord's day itself; and typical of that eternal *salvation* in the heavenly state, to which Christ will bring the people of God. While Christians are *waiting* for that eternal salvation, *they* also, need a *weekly sabbath*, which may be, in a more lively manner typical of the rest reserved. Though in this world, Christ gives them some sweet rest, (*anapausin*), yet they will not enter into God's rest (*katapausin*,) till it shall be no longer necessary for them to *work*. See, in the Greek, Matt. xi. 29. and Heb. iv. 9, 10. Accordingly, Christians esteem the Lord's day a blessed day; not only, as suspending daily labours, but as a day, on which they may more fully enjoy their spiritual rest, have peculiarly refreshing foretastes of the everlasting rest, be much animated to live daily to him, who died for them and rose again, and be enabled the better to enjoy their spiritual rest in the midst of their secular labours, and, as a day, which glorifies the Lord, and greatly promotes the enlargement of the church.

lest they *favour a principle*, which tends to overthrow the church, and Christianity itself.

There is a wide difference between “teaching” and receiving “for doctrines the commandments of men,” even when they are contrary to the Scriptures, and observing those traditions, which are agreeable to the Scriptures, and which appear to have been handed down from the apostles. Against the Christian church the gates of hell were never to prevail. Christ gave to his church apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers; “for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: till we all come in [rather into or unto] the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: that we henceforth be no more children, [in this respect, viz.] tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but, speaking the truth in love, may” “in all things” “grow up into

him," who "is the head even Christ."* Does not the *nature* of such a church seem to show, that it might not be *necessary* to have *every thing* important to the good order of the church explicitly taught in the Scriptures?

* Eph. iv. 11—15.

SERMON. V.

ROMANS iv. 11; 12.

And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith, which he had, yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also; And the father of circumcision to them, who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had, being yet uncircumcised.

SINCE those, who deny infant baptism, generally hold, that no persons are *visibly* Abraham's seed, who have not been baptized in the mode of total immersion, I shall now endeavour to show, that it is proper to baptize by sprinkling, or affusion, or in some mode, which does not imply total immersion.

1. There is no command to baptize by *immersion*. The command is to *baptize*. The Greek word is *baptizo*, rendered in English *baptize*. *Baptizo* is derived from *bapto*. It is granted, that *bapto* signifies dip, though not

invariably. In Rev. xix. 13. "*bebamenon haimati*," perhaps, ought not to have been rendered "dipped in blood," but *stained with blood*. Compare verse 15. and Is. lxiii. 1—3. But *bapto* is never used to denote the ordinance of baptism. *Batizo* is the word used, which has not, precisely the same signification with *bapto* its primitive.

According to a late judicious writer, such kind of derivatives are twice as likely to differ from their primitive words, as to agree with them, in signification. According to him, *baptizo* properly signifies to *wet, or wash, wholly or in part, with or without dipping*.* The mode of baptism, then, cannot be ascertained by the signification of the word *baptizo*; for it signifies to wash, without defining the mode. In Matt. iii. 11. we read "*baptizo humas en hudati*;" and in Mark i. 8. "*ebaptisa humas en hudati*;" but in Luke iii. 16. "*Hudati baptizo humas*," without the preposition; and in Acts i. 5. "*ebaptisen hudati*." In whatever mode John baptized, it is plain, that in the two last instances, it would be improper to render the verb *immerse*. It appears by the general

* See Sweat's Critical Investigation of the mode of Baptism.

account given of baptism in the New Testament, that it denotes *washing*; and our translators seem to have been wise in rendering *baptizo*, baptize, and *baptismos*, baptism, when either John's baptism, or Christian baptism, is spoken of. The command to baptize is not the same as the command to immerse; nor is it the same, as a command to wash by total immersion. *Baptizo*, and the verbal noun *baptismos*, sometimes, in the New Testament, pretty evidently signify *washing*, in a mode *different* from total immersion.

We have an instance of this in the washing of the Jews, when they came from the market. "The Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they [*nipsontai*] wash their hands oft, eat not." "And when they come from the market, except they [*baptisontai*] wash, they eat not."* Probably, *baptizomai* in this passage means more than washing the hands merely. The Jews, we may suppose, considered themselves more than usually defiled by being in the market. But, though *baptizomai* in this passage probably means more than washing the hands, yet it does not appear to mean total immersion. For had the Jews considered themselves so defiled by having been in the market, that it was ne-

* Mark vii. 3, 4.

cessary for them to wash their whole bodies, would they not have viewed it equally necessary to wash their clothes? The clothes of a person would have been defiled *before* the greater part of his body, and would have needed washing *more*. In certain cases, the Israelites were commanded, in the law, to wash their clothes, and bathe themselves in water.

In many cases they were required by the law to wash their clothes, without being required to wash their flesh; but in no case were persons required by the law to wash their flesh, without being expressly required to wash their clothes; except that the high priest was required to wash his flesh, when he put on those holy garments, which he wore only one day in a year, and when he put them off, after his solemn services in the sanctuary. If the Jews had felt themselves obliged by the tradition of the elders to wash their whole bodies, when the law required no such washing, would not their superstition have led them to cleanse their clothes? But are we to suppose, that the Pharisees, and *all the Jews*, every time they came from the market, before they ate, washed their clothes, and bathed themselves in water?

Another instance, in which *baptizo* signifies washing, without total immersion, we have in

the following narrative. "A certain Pharisee besought Jesus to dine with him; and he went in, and sat down to meat. And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled, that he had not first [*ebaptisthe*, been baptized] washed before dinner."* Jesus had been among a concourse of people. The Pharisee, probably, considered him defiled, much in the same manner, as if he had been in the market, and wondered, that he *was not baptized* before dinner, or washed as the Jews were, when they came from the market. But did he expect that Jesus would be immersed before dinner? If this Pharisee had water pots standing in his dining room, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, did he wonder, that Jesus was not washed by total immersion, before he sat down to dine? Does not *baptizo* in this instance, appear to signify such a washing, as the Pharisee supposed might be decently performed, at a water pot, in a dining room? It is worthy of notice, that Mark uses exactly the same Greek word, to express the baptism of Christ by John. The Pharisee marvelled, that Jesus had not first [*ebaptisthe*] been baptized; and Jesus [*ebaptisthe*] "was baptized" by "John in Jordan."

* Luke xi. 37, 38.

If *baptizo* evidently signifies a partial washing, in one case, why may it not be so taken, in the other?

It is doubtful, whether *all* those washings, which Mark calls *baptismous*,* were performed in the way of total immersion. Is it not likely, that the Jews, in their *superstitious* washings, in some measure, imitated those washings which their law *required*?† The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, speaking of the rites of the Mosaic law, says “divers washings;”‡ “*diaphorois baptismois*,” divers baptisms. The law required various washings; washings were to be performed on different occasions, and in different ways. Moses washed Aaron and his sons with water, in the presence of the congregation.§ Aaron and his sons were to wash their hands and feet at the laver, whenever they went into the tabernacle, or ministered at the altar of burnt offering.|| Aaron was to wash his flesh “in water” or “with water,” on the great day of annual atonement.¶ Though it is likely, that when Moses consecrated Aaron and his sons, he gave them a very different washing from that which they were continually to give

* See Mark vii. 4. † See Lev. vi. 28. and Numb. xix. 18.

‡ Heb. ix. 10. § Lev. viii. 3—6. || Ex. xxx. 18—21.

¶ Lev. xvi. 4, 24.

themselves, yet it is plain, that he did not immerse their whole bodies in water, nor wash their whole bodies in any mode.

We must suppose, that Aaron, on the great day of atonement, was to give himself very different washings from that, which the priests were continually to give themselves; but we do not know that he was to wash *all* his flesh. If we should suppose, that he washed *all* his flesh, it would not certainly follow, that he did it by total immersion. He was commanded to "wash his flesh in water," before he put on the holy linen garments; and he was commanded, when he put off those garments, to "leave them" in the holy place, to "wash his flesh with water in the holy place, and put on his" usual "garments." The *manner*, in which he was to wash his flesh at either of the times on that day, was not specified. It does not appear likely, that he totally immersed his body.

Water mixed with the blood of a bird, was to be sprinkled seven times upon him, who was to be cleansed from the leprosy. In the same manner was a leprous house to be sprinkled that was to be cleansed.*

* See Lev. iv. 7. 51.

Water mixed with the ashes of a heifer, was to be sprinkled upon persons and things unclean by the dead.*

At the consecration of the Levites, water of purifying was to be sprinkled upon them.†

In various instances of legal defilement, persons were to wash their clothes, and bathe their flesh in water.

In no case the law expressly required persons or things to be totally immersed in water. No things were implicitly required to be totally immersed; unless a thing cannot be "rinsed in water," "go through the water,"‡ and be washed in every part, without being all under water at once. As for persons, in no case was one person required totally to immerse another; and no person was even implicitly required ever to give himself a total immersion, unless it was impossible for a person to wash all his flesh, without being all under water at once.

It is plain, that our translators ought not to have rendered *baptismois* (in the epistle to the Hebrews) *dippings*; nor would it have been proper for them to render it *washings by dipping*. They did the best that could have been done, in rendering it *washings*. It is un-

* See Numb. xix. 9—20. and Ex. xxxi. 19—23. † Numb. viii. 3. ‡ See Lev. vi. 28. and xv. 12. and Numb. xxxi. 23.

reasonable to consider *baptismois*, in this place, as meaning *only* such washings as were performed by total immersion. It is rational to consider the *washings*, as called *divers*, not only because they were to be performed on different occasions, but, also, because they were to be performed in different ways; and it is perhaps proper to consider them, as *including* even those washings, which were performed by sprinkling. Though *baptizo* and *baptismos* seem *most applicable* to washings, in which pure water is used, yet they seem *applicable* to washings, in which water is mixed with other ingredients.

The command of Christ to his disciples, to “Go,” “and teach all nations, baptizing them in [into] the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,”* cannot be judiciously considered, as a command to *dip*, or to *wash by dipping*, unless it can first be proved, that *dipping* is essential to baptism.

But, as appears from what has been said, it cannot be inferred from the signification of the word *baptizo*, that baptism necessarily implies the dipping of any part of the body.

Much less can the command of Christ be considered as a command wholly to immerse

* Matt. xxviii. 19.

the body, or to wash the body by a total immersion.

It is *very evident* that the Baptists lay more stress upon the *mode* of baptism, than is warranted by the mere signification of the word *baptizo*. If it should be granted, that this verb *always* signifies either to dip or immerse, or to wash by dipping or immersion, it would not follow, that *total immersion* is essential to baptism; for even then, a person might be said to be baptized, if only a part of his body, if only his head, were put into water. Nor is there any command in the New Testament, to wash the whole body.

2. In the Scriptures, no instance of baptism is recorded, in which immersion plainly appears to have been the *mode*.

We read in our translation, that Jesus "was baptized of John in Jordan," and that he came "up out of the water."* In this passage when it is said, "*in Jordan*," the Greek word is *eis*. This preposition sometimes signifies *at*. One said to Jesus, "Let me first go, and bid them farewell," who "are [*eis ton oikon mou*] at my house."† When it is said, that Jesus "was baptized of John in Jordan," the

* Mark i. 9, 10. † Luke ix. 61.

translation might have properly been, *was baptized by John [eis ten Jordanen] at Jordan.* The words in Mark i. 10. rendered “*out of the water,*” ought to have been rendered, *from the water.* The Greek preposition is *apo*, which, in the New Testament, is rendered *from*, oftener, than all other ways. There followed Christ “*great multitudes of people [apo tes Galilaias] from Galilee.*”* “*If one went unto them [apo nekron] from the dead, they will repent.*”† The same preposition is used in the account of our Saviour’s baptism in Matt. iii. 16. The passage in Mark might have been well translated thus. *Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized by John at Jordan. And straight way coming up from the water, &c.—*

But, granting our translation to be most correct, that Jesus was baptized “*in Jordan,*” it does not necessarily follow, that he was baptized by immersion. Jesus said to a blind man, “*Go, wash [eis] in the pool of Siloam.*”—“*He went his way, therefore, and washed, and came seeing.*”‡ Here *eis*, which might have been translated *at*, is rendered *in*. The blind man washed in the pool. But was he immersed? It is

* Matt. iv. 25. † Luke xvi. 80. ‡ John ix. 7.

plain, that he was not. The verb *niptomai* is used; and he probably washed chiefly his eyes, which Jesus had just anointed with clay. But yet, he washed *in* the pool; and this he might do, by taking water in his hand, and putting it to his eyes, without even stepping into the water. Likewise Jesus may be said to have been baptized *in Jordan*, if he did not even step into the *edge* of the water.

It is said of the multitudes, who came to John's baptism, that they "were baptized" by "him *in Jordan*."* Here the Greek word is *en*, which properly signifies *in*, though not invariably. In the New Testament, it is sometimes rendered *at*. "Ye have a custom, that I release unto you one [*en*] at the passover."† But, admitting the proper translation of *en* to *Jordane* to be "in Jordan," John might baptize the people in Jordan, without wetting the soles of his own feet, or of the feet of those whom he baptized. If their faces only were wet with the water of Jordan, while they stood on the edge of the river, it may with as much propriety be said, that they were baptized *in* Jordan, as that the blind man washed *in* the pool.

The baptism of the eunuch by Philip has been confidently, but it is thought, injudicious-

* Matt. iii. 6.

† John xviii. 39.

ly, urged, as a plain example for immersion. We read in our Bibles, "They went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And, when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip."* The Greek words, in this passage, rendered *into*, and *out of*, are *eis* and *ek*. *Eis* sometimes signifies *to*. An instance of this we have in Christ's words to Peter. "Go thou [*eis ten thalassan*] to the sea, and cast an hook."† In John xx. 4. *eis* is necessarily rendered *to* instead of *into*; for in the next verse it is said, "yet went he not *in*." *Ek* is sometimes rendered *from*. For instance; it is said of the queen of the south, "She came [*ek*] from the uttermost parts of the earth, to hear the wisdom of Solomon."‡ The passage, therefore, respecting the baptism of the eunuch might have been properly rendered thus; *They went down both to the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up from the water, &c.*

Eis is to be rendered *into*, when the nature of the case requires it. If Philip could not have baptized the eunuch without going *into* the water, it is proper to render the Greek

* Acts viii. 38, 39. † Matt. xvi. 27. ‡ Matt. xxii. 42.

accordingly. But to say, that immersion is essential to baptism, because Philip went into the water to baptize the eunuch, when it cannot be made to appear, that he went into the water, unless it can first be proved, that immersion is essential to baptism, would be arguing incorrectly. It was necessary for Peter to go *to* the sea, but not *into* the sea, in order to cast in his hook. It was equally necessary for Philip to go *to* the water, or to have water brought to him, in order to baptize the eunuch. But, until it can be proved, that immersion is essential to baptism, there appears to have been no necessity, that Philip and the eunuch should go *into* the water. As the *same Greek word* is used in both instances, *this circumstance* affords as much evidence, that Peter went *into* the sea, before he cast his hook, as that Philip went *into* the water, before he baptized the eunuch.

With what propriety, these instances of baptism have been urged as plain examples for immersion, the reader will judge. The plausible manner, however, in which they have been represented and urged, has caused some, first, to doubt, and then to deny, the validity of their baptism. After hearing it repeatedly affirmed, that John baptised by immersion, that Christ

was immersed *in* Jordan, that Philip immersed the eunuch, and that we must be willing to follow Christ into the water; many, either not able or not disposed, to examine the subject, have believed, that total immersion is essential to baptism; and consequently have renounced the seal of God's covenant, already put upon them, and gone *down into* the water, supposing, that they were following Christ, and imitating the example of the eunuch.

It appears from what has been said, that the mode of John's baptizing cannot be inferred from the *prepositions* used in the account.

On the other hand, do not the circumstances, attending the baptism of Jesus, and of the people, who were previously baptized, favour the idea, that the mode was different from total immersion? It is reasonable to think, that Jesus was baptized in the same mode, in which the people were baptized; and that the same mode, which John used, was used by the disciples of Jesus, at the time when John was baptizing at Enon, and by the apostles after the ascension of our Saviour.

Though Jesus was baptized, undoubtedly, in the same mode, in which the multitudes were baptized, yet baptism did not signify the

same thing to him as to them. It was to them the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins; but Jesus "knew no sin." May not the baptism of Jesus be considered a ceremony, by which he was, in part, consecrated to his work, as the Messiah, the Saviour of sinners, the Lamb of God, who was to take away the sin of the world? When the Holy Spirit descended upon him, he may be said, in the language of Peter, to have been *anointed* with the Holy Ghost; anointed to the office of Prophet, Priest, and King.

Though Jesus was not to be a priest on earth, after the order of Aaron, but a priest forever, after the order of Melchisedec, yet part of what he did on earth, he may be said to have done in his priestly office; especially his offering up himself as a sacrifice, that "by his own blood" he might enter "into the holy place." May not his being baptized by John be said to answer to the washing, which Aaron and his sons received from Moses, as the first part of their consecration? The baptism of Jesus may have answered to that washing, even if it differ from that washing as to the mode. It is very plain, that the mode, in which Aaron and his sons were washed, was far different from total immersion, though it may be difficult to say

precisely, what it was. It is probable, that they were washed with water from the same laver, at which they were daily to wash their hands and feet. As the period, during, which the Priests and Levites were to officiate, began when they were thirty years old,* so Jesus was baptized, when he was about that age. When Aaron had been washed, and the holy garments had been put upon him, he was anointed. When Jesus had been baptized, he was anointed with the Holy Spirit. The anointing oil was poured upon Aaron's head. The precious ointment run down upon his beard, and went down to the skirts of his garments.†

Afterward, upon Aaron and his garments, and upon his sons and their garments, a mixture of blood and anointing oil was sprinkled. In a correspondent manner, Jesus, the High priest, was distinguished from those, who believe in him, and compose what Peter calls a royal priesthood. God gave to Jesus the Spirit not by measure. Concerning Jesus it is prophetically said, "God thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. All thy garments smell of myrrh, and aloes, and cassia.‡" To Christians the Holy Spirit is given in a

* See Numb. iv. † See Ps. cxxxiii. ‡ Ps. xlv. Compare Ex. xxx. 23—25.

measure.* They receive from Jesus grace for grace. The Holy Spirit is said to be poured out upon them, and to be shed upon them abundantly.†

That mixture of blood and oil, with which all the priests were sprinkled, may, perhaps, be considered, as typical of that remission of sins and influence of the Holy Spirit, which are signified by Christian baptism. The same things may have been typified by the mixture of blood and water used in cleansing the leprosy, and in dedicating the first testament, that is, the Sinai covenant. The same things may have been typified by the mixture of the ashes of a heifer and running water, with which the Levites were sprinkled, and with which persons unclean by the dead were sprinkled. Not only the priests but the Levites in general typified the Christian church. The Levites were dedicated to God, in the room of the first born of all the tribes; and the Christian church seems to be what is meant, in the epistle to the Hebrews, by “the general assembly and church of the first Born.”

Though John, the baptist was the son of a priest, what he did in baptizing, he did as an

* See Acts ii. 38. and v. 32. Eph. iv. 7. and I. John ii. 20.

† See Acts x. 45. and Tit. iii. 6.

extraordinary prophet. His baptism was authorized not by the law, but by the special commission which he received from heaven, "to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."* His baptism evidently differed from those washings, which the law required, in two respects (1.) John baptized with clear water; whereas the law did not require one person to apply clear water to another, in any case, except the consecration of the priests. (2.) According to the law, individuals, in various cases of defilement, were to bathe themselves; but no persons, who had not some particular defilement, were required to bathe themselves, nor to be washed by another in any mode, except the priests; whereas John baptized people in general.

As the priests at their consecration, having no particular defilement, received a washing, similar (in a degree) to that, which persons having defilement gave themselves; so Jesus, not defiled by sin, when he was about to enter on his public ministry, received the same washing, which the multitudes had previously received, "confessing their sins." Thus it became Jesus "to fulfil all righteousness," that is, to do the will of God in all respects. It was the will of God, that Jesus should be baptized, and by that cere-

* See Luke i. 5, 17. and xx. 4—6. and John i. 31, 33.

mony be sanctified to the service of God, as the Saviour of sinners. His baptism may be considered as one thing implied in that sanctification of himself, of which he speaks, John xvii. 19.

Hence it appears, that the great thing, in which Jesus is to be imitated, with regard to his being baptized, is his disposition to humble himself, and to do the will of God in all respects.

As there is no express command, nor plain example for baptizing by total immersion, this mode cannot be supported, unless by inference. It will, therefore, appear entirely without foundation, when we consider,

3. That there is no instance of baptism recorded in the Holy Scriptures, which admits of a fair inference in favour of total immersion.

From what is said of John's baptizing in the river Jordan, and at Enon, some have confidently concluded, that he baptized by total immersion.

In respect to his baptizing in Jordan I have already spoken.

He baptized "in Enon near Salim, because there was much water there."* This has been considered, and perhaps, justly, as one of the strongest arguments, that can be brought from the Scriptures in favour of immersion. But the

* John iii. 23.

Greek words, rendered *much water*, are "*hudata polla*," and literally signify *many waters*. Though they sometimes denote a great quantity of water,* probably in this place, they mean *many little rivulets*. Travellers tell us, that there are *no large* streams in Enon. It appears very unlikely, that there were *many large* streams. The many waters, into which one large stream is sometimes divided by obstructions, and which move so rapidly, as to make a great noise, would be inconvenient for immersion.

But why, it may be asked, did John first baptize at Jordan, and afterward choose a place, in which to baptize, where there were *many* waters, unless he baptized by immersion? To this it may be replied, that John preached and baptized in the open air; multitudes of people attended his ministry; the climate was warm, and water scarce; such multitudes, with the beasts, on which perhaps many rode, might have been unable to subsist, except in certain places, where there was plenty of water. If John did not baptize by immersion, there might have been, on the whole, sufficient reason for his choosing to preach and baptize in places, where water could easily be obtained.

* See Rev. i. 15. and xix. 6.

The place, where Lydia and her household were baptized, was "by a river side."* Hence some have concluded, that they were baptized by immersion. Some think that many had been immersed in this river, and that for this reason prayer was wont to be made by the river side. But Paul and Silas were the first, that preached the gospel at Philippi. After "abiding" there "certain days," "on the sabbath," they "went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made," that is, probably, where there was a *proseuche*, or house of prayer, and they "spake unto the women, that resorted thither." Here the Lord "opened" the "heart" of Lydia, and she and her household appear to have been the first, that received Christian baptism in that city. That they were baptized by immersion, cannot, with the least degree of probability, be inferred from the circumstance, that the place, where Paul and his companion sat down and spake, was by the side of a river.

According to the representation of the apostle Paul, the Israelites "were all [parents and children] baptized unto Moses in the cloud, and in the sea."† Hence some have inferred, that immersion is the proper mode of baptism.

* Acts xvi. 13. † I Cor. x. 2.

But were the children of Israel immersed in the waters of the Red Sea? Certainly, they were not. The pillar of cloud was behind, between them and the Egyptians; the waters of the sea were divided, and stood as a wall on their right hand, and on their left; and they went through the sea upon dry ground.* If they were wet, it was by sprinkling, and not by immersion. But we need not consider them as having been *literally* baptized at that time; much less need we consider the apostle, as referring to the particular *mode* of administering Christian baptism. Since the cloud was *near* them, and the water of the sea was *near* them, when the LORD was so honouring Moses, as the captain of their deliverance from their Egyptian bondage, they were, in a certain sense, baptized unto Moses.

As in our translation it is said, "in the cloud, and in the sea," the preposition *in* being repeated; so in the Greek the preposition *en* is repeated; "*en te nephele kai en te thalasse.*" Therefore, according to the apostle, the Israelites were baptized *in the cloud*, besides being baptized *in the sea*. But what took place with them respecting the cloud, that resembled immersion? On the whole, is it likely, that the apostle had any reference to the *mode* of bap-

* Ex. xiv. 19—22.

tism? Likewise when the apostle Peter speaks of a resemblance between the preservation of Noah and the other seven souls in the ark, and the salvation of believers by baptism,* can we draw any inference from the passage concerning the *mode* of baptism?

From the prophetic representation given in the Psalms of Christ's being overwhelmed with sorrow, in connexion with Christ's calling his last sufferings a *baptism*, some have inferred, that, to be baptized, we must be overwhelmed in water. Says the Psalmist, "Save me, O God, for the waters are come in unto my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing: I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. I am weary of my crying, my throat is dried; mine eyes fail while I wait for my God."† In this passage the Psalmist gives a figurative description of the sufferings of Christ. Respecting the same sufferings, Christ says, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened, till it be accomplished!" Even in the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus said, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful even unto death."‡

The Psalmist's representation of those sufferings, which Christ calls a baptism, ought

* I. Pet. iii. 20, 21. † Ps. lxxix. 1-3. ‡ Luke xii. 50.

to excite in us ardent love and gratitude to our Saviour; but they do not appear to teach us the mode of water baptism. Ought the person, who is to be baptized, to have water applied in such a manner, as to "come in unto his soul," or vital parts? Ought he to be put "in deep mire, where there is no standing," or nothing to prevent him from sinking? Ought he to be cast "into deep waters," to have "the floods overflow" him? Is he to be left in a place of danger and distress? How far short the mode of baptism by immersion comes of what is literally signified by the figurative expressions of the Psalmist? The sufferings of Christ were so great, that he was, in a certain sense, literally baptized with his own tears and blood.

But our Saviour, when he calls his sufferings a baptism, does not seem to refer to the *mode* of water baptism. It is observable, that the Scriptures nowhere represent water baptism, as having any thing in it dreadful to nature. Though immersion in water has something in it terrifying to some persons, yet there is nothing in it, which is worthy to be compared with the sufferings of Christ; and though some may think, that they exercise considerable self denial in being immersed in water, and so imitating as they imagine, the example of Christ,

when he was baptized by John ; yet the great question, for the trial of our self-denying disposition, is that, which Jesus put to James and John ; “ Are ye able to drink of the cup, that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism, that I am baptized with ? ” * Paul desired to “ know ” “ the fellowship of ” Christ’s “ sufferings, being made conformable unto his death. ” †

The reason, why Jesus called his sufferings a baptism, will, perhaps, appear from the following considerations. He was made “ perfect through sufferings. ” ‡ By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. § When a person is baptized, he is by that rite consecrated to God. By a kind of baptism Aaron and his sons were consecrated priests. Moses washed them with water. By a kind of baptism, (though not pure water was used) the Levites were consecrated to their office. Those multitudes, whom John baptized, were by that rite consecrated to the service of God. They confessed their sins, and expressed a desire from that time to do the will of God. Every person, who receives Christian baptism, is by that rite dedicated to God. When Jesus was

* Matt. xx. 22. † Philipp. iii. 10. ‡ Heb. ii. 10. § Heb. ix. 12.

baptized by John, we may consider him, by that rite consecrated, in a certain sense, to the great work, for which his Father sent him into the world. Now, since by baptism a person is consecrated to God, our Saviour's sufferings were a baptism, in that, by his sufferings, he was consecrated High Priest forever. He was consecrated High Priest by his sufferings, in this sense, that it was necessary for him to die, as a sacrifice, in order to be prepared to officiate in the heavenly tabernacle, as an Intercessor for the people of God. When he had been baptized by John, and anointed with the Holy Ghost, he began his ministry, as the Saviour of that which was lost; but in order for him to be prepared to sit King on God's holy hill of Zion, to sit at God's right hand, to intercede for all, who should come to God through him, to prepare mansions for them in his Father's house, and to save them to the uttermost, it was necessary for him to experience something vastly different from that baptism, which he received from John; it was necessary for him to die a bitter death, and to be "raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father," and be "declared the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness."*

* Rom. i. 4.

As the baptism of Christ by John may be considered, as answering to the washing given to the priests at their consecration ; so the passion of Christ may be considered, as answering, at once, to the sacrifices offered at the consecration of the priests, to the sacrifices offered by the high priest, to make the annual atonement, and to the washing, which the high priest gave himself on the day of that great atonement, previously to his entering on the solemn services of the day. As the high priest gave *himself* that washing, according to the requirement of the law ; so Jesus, in obedience to his Father's will, whose law was in his heart, *voluntarily* laid down his life, that he might with his own blood appear, not in "the holy places made with hands," but in "heaven itself," and "make reconciliation for the sins of" his "people."

The following expressions of the apostle Paul have been urged by the Baptists in favour of immersion ; "*Baptized into Jesus Christ ;*" "*Baptized into his death ;*" "*Buried with him by baptism into death ;*" "*Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.*"*

* Rom. vi. 3, 4. Col. xi. 12.

These are figurative expressions, representing the union of believers to Christ, and their interest in the benefits purchased by his death, and ensured by his resurrection. They are baptized into Christ. "He is the head of the body, the church." Believers are the *body* and members of Christ. Hence, as members of his body, they are said to be *crucified, dead, buried, and risen* with him. May not the apostle be setting forth the death and destruction of sin in the soul, without suggesting, that there is any thing like a burial of the body in baptism?

These passages, in the epistles to the Romans, and to the Colossians, have been thought by some Pedobaptists, who consider sprinkling as a scriptural mode of baptism, to refer to baptism by immersion. Those Pedobaptists have supposed, that, in the times of the apostles, baptism was administered sometimes by immersion, and sometimes in a different mode. These passages, taken by themselves, may appear to favour immersion; but it seems rather unreasonable to suppose, that, in the times of the apostles, modes of baptism very different from each other were practised; and such strong arguments may be drawn from the Scriptures in favour of a mode different from immersion, that

it will not be proper to consider these particular passages, as teaching us any thing concerning the *mode* of baptism, if they will admit of a satisfactory explanation, in which the mode may not be brought into view.

From what the apostle says, in the passages under consideration, it is evident, that baptism, in whatever mode it is to be administered, has a great respect to Christ's death and resurrection. This idea of baptism is agreeable to what the apostle Peter says; "Baptism doth also now save us"—"by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."* A person, when he receives Christian baptism, professes to believe in God "manifested in the flesh," and "justified in the Spirit." He professes faith in the blood of Jesus, who "once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring" sinners "to God; being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit." He professes to "believe in him, who raised up Jesus, our Lord, from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." He professes faith of, or in,† the operation, the

* I. Pet. iii. 21. † Compare in the Greek, Col. ii. 12. with Gal. ii. 20.

powerful operation of God, who raised Jesus from the dead, and who will give all believers a glorious resurrection, that they may, in this respect, "be conformed to the image of his Son," "the first begotten" from "the dead," "the first born among many brethren." May not this help us to understand what is meant by being "baptized for the dead."* Though this phraseology seems singular, the apostle may mean no baptism different from that, which has been common to the great body of Christians.

Christian baptism, according to the general account of the ordinance in the Scriptures, is a washing. This washing, agreeable to what was said in a former discourse, is significant of a spiritual washing, which consists in regeneration, and the remission of sins.

Now baptism, as signifying each of these two things, has such a respect to the death and resurrection of Christ, that without bringing into view any particular *mode* of baptism, we may, perhaps, see a reason, why the apostle Paul, writing to the Romans, and to the Colossians, used the figurative expressions under consideration. When a person is baptized, if

* I. Cor. xv. 29.

he has that faith, which he professes, he hopes for remission of sins through the death of Jesus, who rose again; and he trusts in Jesus, and in him, who by his mighty power raised Jesus from the dead, for spiritual and eternal life. By faith he receives the remission of his sins; and by faith he is spiritually quickened with Christ, and spiritually rises with him. Further, his baptism is to him a sign of the remission of his sins, which are never to rise to his condemnation, and a sign, that he shall be quickened, that he shall receive grace to “walk in newness of life,” and shall obtain a resurrection to a glorious immortality. Moreover, as *burial* is a solemn manifestation of *death*; when the believer, who reckons himself to be “dead,” “to sin,” “to the law,” and “to the world,” “but alive,” “to God through Jesus Christ,” makes a solemn manifestation of these sentiments, by receiving baptism, he may be said figuratively to be buried with Christ, and to rise with him.

That baptism, even when it is represented, as having respect to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, is to be considered as a *washing*, appears from I. Peter iii. 21. In this verse the apostle teaches, that baptism saves

us “by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” In the same verse he teaches, that we are not saved by the *mere* “putting away of the filth of the flesh,” that is, by *mere* baptism; which evidently implies, that baptism, considered *in itself*, is a *washing*. *Burial*, in a *literal* sense, is not putting away the *filth* of the flesh, but the *body itself*. It is true, (according to what was said in a former discourse,) that baptism is emblematical of “putting off the body of the sins of the flesh”; but of this it may be emblematical, considered simply, as a *washing*, in whatever mode it is administered.

If, as I have been endeavouring to show, the Baptists have neither command, nor example, for baptizing by total immersion, nor fair inference in favour of it; it follows, that those of them, who deliver pathetic discourses upon the self-denial of going *into the water*—of following Christ *into the watery grave*, “speak a vision of *their own* hearts and not out of the mouth of the Lord.”*

4. Several instances of baptism are mentioned in the New Testament, in which it is improbable that immersion was the mode.

On the day of Pentecost, at the third hour of the day, or about nine o'clock in the morn-

* Jer. xxii. 16.

ing, the apostles were speaking with different tongues; about three thousand persons were added to the number of the disciples, and, as is generally understood, were *baptized* the same day.* Now when we consider, that the place where the assembly was held, in the city of Jerusalem, was not convenient for immersion; that some of the converts had come from a great distance, and all had come without any design of being baptized; and that we have no account of their making preparation at the time for immersion; we think it very probable, that they were baptized in a more simple mode.

It is remarkable, that what was said on that day of Pentecost, the day, when the *Christian* church was first established, favours infant baptism; and that what was *done*, favours a *mode* of baptism different from immersion.

Concerning the baptism of the eunuch, we have no evidence, that the water was sufficient for immersion. If the water was sufficient, we have no evidence, that Philip and the eunuch went into it, that they even stepped into the edge of it. Had we evidence, that they went into the water, we could not hence infer, that the eunuch was immersed. It is not probable, that he changed his clothes, nor that he was im-

* Acts ii. 41.

mersed, and in his wet clothes pursued his journey. It is probable that he was baptized by sprinkling, or affusion.

Paul was baptized, probably, not by immersion; according to the account in Acts ix. 18, 19. and xxii. 16. He was in the house of one Judas, when Ananias came to him. "He"—
 "arose, and was baptized. And, when he had received meat, he was strengthened." He had been three days blind, and without eating or drinking. It does not appear that he left the house, nor room; it was proper that he should "arise."

Concerning the baptism of Cornelius and his friends, Peter said, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost, as well as we?"* This manner of expression naturally leads us to think, that they did not leave the house to go to the water, but that water was brought into the house.

It does not look likely, that the jailor and his family, at Philippi, went abroad at dead of night to be immersed. Philippi was under the Roman government. The jailor was charged to keep Paul and Silas safely. "At midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises" to "God," in the

* Acts x. 47.

prison. Suddenly there was a great earthquake,* the prison doors were opened, the bands of all the prisoners were loosed, the jailor was alarmed. "He called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas; and brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said believe on the Lord Jesus Christ; and thou shalt be saved, and thine house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes, and was baptized, he, and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house."*

The words, "*Anagagon te autous*," rendered, "And, when he had brought them," seem literally to signify, either, *And having brought them up*, or, *And having brought them again*. The word *anagagon*, seems to imply, either, that the place, where the jailor set meat before Paul and Silas, was *higher*, than that, in which he and his household were baptized; or that, when he "took" Paul and Silas, he took them *out of the house*. But, if we consider the latter idea, as implied, we are to remember, that he took them, *to wash their stripes*.

* Acts xvi. 21—34.

5. While Jesus and his disciples were baptizing in Judea, and John was baptizing in Enon, there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purifying. Jesus was baptizing in one place, and John in another. This offended some of the Jews, and gave rise to a dispute, in which baptism was spoken of, as a purification. See John iii. 25.

But how did the Jews purify themselves? When Jesus was at the marriage, in Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine, "there were set there six water pots of stone, after the manner of the purifying of the Jews, containing two or three firkins a piece.* It seems then to have been the *manner* of the Jews to purify themselves by washing at these water pots. But are we to suppose, that it was their *manner* to immerse themselves in a water pot, containing two or three firkins. As for those two kinds of washings, which the Jews in general, were, through the influence of the tradition of the elders, accustomed to observe, one always before eating, and the other before eating when they came from the market; we are informed what the former was; a washing of hands; and from what has been before said, it appears, that the other was not a total immersion.

* John ii. 6.

6. According to the Scriptures, *sprinkling* appears to be a suitable mode of representing that spiritual purification, of which baptism is emblematical, according to Eph. v. 26. and which, in 1 Pet. iii. 21. our translators call “the answer of a good conscience towards God,” that purification, by which a person is cleansed from the *guilt* of sin, and from its *pollution*.

In the ancient church *persons* and *things* were to be *sprinkled* in various cases. Persons, in different cases, were to be sprinkled with different mixtures. Some *things* were sprinkled with blood; others, with the mixtures, with which *persons* were sprinkled.

In certain cases, persons, considered unclean, cleansed themselves by washing their clothes, or by washing their clothes and bathing their flesh. But in those cases, in which persons were to be sprinkled, and afterwards to wash their clothes and bathe their flesh, it is manifest, that what they did *for themselves*, if it can be called a part of their purification, was a very small part. When, for instance, a person was unclean by the dead, what he did in washing his clothes and bathing his flesh, though necessary to be done, was of very little importance, in comparison with what the clean per-

son did for him, in sprinkling upon him the water of separation.*

The writer of the epistle to the Hebrews, says “divers washings, and carnal ordinances;” that is, ordinances pertaining to the flesh, and appointed for the purifying of the flesh. If we take “divers washings” in a comprehensive sense, and “carnal ordinances” in a comprehensive sense, we may consider “carnal ordinances,” as including “divers washings;” and then the meaning will be *divers washings, and other carnal ordinances*. But, certainly, the ordinance of washing the clothes, and bathing the flesh, if it was an ordinance in the sense of this passage, was a *more* carnal ordinance, than the ceremonies of sprinkling. In the case of a person who was unclean by the dead; if we consider what the person did *for himself*, as a *part* of the ordinance of his purification, it was a *more* carnal part, than the sprinkling. But baptism, as performed by immersion, though it does not exactly resemble what the unclean person did for himself, yet is much more like that, than like what was done for him by the clean person. Let us keep in mind, that the law never required one person to immerse another in water. Now, when we consider the

* See Num. xix. 11—20, and Heb. ix. 13.

spirituality of the Christian dispensation, is it rational to think, that baptism was intended more to resemble the more carnal part of the legal purifications, the part which the person was to perform for himself,* than the far more important and less carnal part, which the priest was to perform for the leper, or which the clean person was to perform for the unclean ?

That the spiritual purification, of which baptism is emblematical, as far as that purification consists in the remission of sins, or in a cleansing from the *guilt* of sin, may be properly represented by *sprinkling*, is manifest from those passages in the New Testament, in which the blood of Christ is spoken of, as, in a figurative sense, sprinkled upon believers. The apostle Peter says, “sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ.” The blood of Christ is called, Heb. xii. 24. “the blood of sprinkling.” See, also Heb. ix. 14. and compare Heb. ix. 19, 20. with Matt. xxvi. 28. Therefore, when it is said, Rev. i. 5. “Washed us from our sins in his own blood,” where *lousanti* is used, we are to consider a figure as used *upon* a figure. *Louo* is capable of denoting a *total* washing; though it does not necessarily denote such a

* What the person was to perform for himself, perhaps, was typical of what II. Cor. vii. 1. requires Christians to do. So considered, it appears important.

washing. This passage appears to teach us, that, when the blood of Christ is figuratively sprinkled upon believers, they are as completely cleansed from the guilt of sin, as a person's body would be cleansed from filth, were it wholly *bathed*. The psalmist David says, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Hyssop was one of the things accompanying the blood and water, with which the people* were sprinkled at the ratification of the Sinai covenant, and the blood and water, with which lepers were to be sprinkled. See Is. i. 18. and 1 John i. 7. See, also, in the Greek, Acts xxii. 16. where a compound of *louo* is used.

That the spiritual purification of which baptism is emblematical, when that purification is considered, as a cleansing from the *pollution* of sin, or as the renewing of the Holy Spirit, may be properly represented by *sprinkling*, appears from Ezek. xxxvi. 25—27. "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within

* See Heb. ix. 19. It is, perhaps, uncertain, whether the *people themselves* (or some of the *people*, representing the whole congregation) were sprinkled, at that time, or the *twelve pillars*, as *representing* the people.

you : and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them." Respecting this passage, which was to be fulfilled in gospel times, let us attend to the following things.

(1.) Here is a reference to the sprinkling of the water of separation. (2.) In no case, under the law, *clean* water was to be sprinkled upon any person. The water of separation, in which the ashes of a heifer were mixed with water, might typify, as has been already observed, the application of the blood of Christ, which was in due time to be shed, and the influence of the Holy Spirit. The reason, why the water in this passage in Ezekiel is called *clean*, may be, that *this sprinkling* was to take place, after a complete expiation for sin should have been made by the blood of Christ. (3.) The sprinkling with clean water, in this passage, is not Christian baptism itself; for it is spoken of as what would be performed by God himself, and is a figurative representation of what God would do for his people. Yet (4.) since this sprinkling appears to be spoken of, as a figurative representation not only of the remis-

sion of sins, but also, of that renewing of the Holy Spirit, of which, according to Tit. iii. 5. baptism is emblematical, it follows, that *sprinkling* is a proper *mode* of representing this renovation, in baptism. Not only so; but (5.) It is reasonable to think, that in this passage there is *some reference* to that *ordinance*, which was in due season to be instituted, for the emblematical purification of the church. It is said, Is. lii. 15. "So shall he sprinkle many nations."

It may be objected, that, since, according to the apostle Peter, baptism, considered *in itself*, is the putting away of the filth of the flesh, it is not properly emblematical of a complete spiritual purification, unless it is so administered, as completely to take away the filth of the body. For an answer to this objection, which may possibly arise in the minds of some, the following things may serve. (1.) Baptism, as administered by immersion, is not suited *completely* to cleanse the body. (2.) In the passage, which has been cited from Ezekiel, *sprinkling* is spoken of, as emblematical of a *complete cleansing*. It is said, "From *all your filthiness*, and from *all your idols*, will I cleanse you." (3.) Water, so far as it is applied to the body, tends to cleanse it; and the application of a *little* water to the body may be *emblematical* of a

complete spiritual purification ; as the Lord's supper, in which, we eat but little bread, and drink but little wine, is *emblematical* of that spiritual feast, in respect to which we consider Jesus, as saying, " Eat, O friends ; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."

In Heb. x. 22. there appears to be a direct reference to baptism ; and the use of the word *léloumenoi*, in this place, may by some be thought inconsistent with the mode of sprinkling, in baptism. Let the following things be noted. (1.) The *washing of the body*, in this passage, may be considered, as answering to the *sprinkling of the heart from an evil conscience*, which is spoken of immediately before, and which taken in a large sense, comprehends all the purification, of which baptism is emblematical. See Heb. ix. 14. and 1 Pet. iii. 21. Moreover, it is observed, that the expression " pure water" is here used, as " clean water" in Ezekiel. (2.) The body may be washed, without being washed in every part. (3.) Though *louo* is a proper word to denote a thorough bathing, yet (as was said before) it does not *necessarily* denote a *total* washing ; much less does it necessarily imply a total *immersion*. * (4.) When a person is baptized by immersion, (ac-

* See in the Greek, Acts ix. 37. and xvi. 33. and II. Pet. ii. 22.

ording to what was before remarked) his body is not so fully washed, as it would be, if he were to bathe himself. (5.) It appears from the context of the passage under consideration, (see Heb. x. 19—22.) that the bodily washing, which the Christians received in baptism, answered in a certain sense, to the washing, which the law required the high priest to give himself prior to his engaging in the solemnities of the great day of annual atonement. As was said in the former part of this discourse, it is not likely, that the high priest, at that time, washed himself by a total immersion. (6.) On the whole, we cannot from this passage determine the *mode* of baptism; but we may consider the passage and its context, as exhibiting to us this idea; that, as the high priest, before he put on the holy linen garments, and went into the holy place with the blood of beasts, washed himself, so Christians receive a kind of bodily washing at their baptism, when by profession* they put on Christ, through whose blood they are all encouraged to enter into the most holy place, and to draw near to God.

After the remarks, which have been made upon *louo*, it will be unnecessary to say any thing respecting the use of the verbal noun *loutro* in

* See Heb. x. 23.

Tit. iii. 5. or respecting the use of the compound of *louo* in 1 Cor. vi. 11. in which the Corinthian Christians are represented, as having been washed, sanctified, and justified. The spiritual washing here spoken of, perhaps, comprehends the sanctification and justification. There may be an indirect reference to their baptism, which was emblematical of their sanctification and justification.

In Eph. v. 26, in which *loutro* is used, there appears to be a direct reference to baptism. This passage and its context seem to teach us, that the spiritual purification, which is signified by baptism, will prepare the church to be presented to Christ, as a virgin is presented to her spouse.*

Peter said to Jesus, John xiii. 9. "Lord, not my feet only, but also, my hands, and my head," Jesus replied, "He that is washed [that is, he that has been washed or bathed *holoumenos*] needeth not, save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit; [that is, needeth not afterward only to wash his feet, but is entirely clean] and ye are clean." See John xv. 3. As when a person has bathed himself, his feet are liable immediately to be defiled; so those, who have been cleansed through the word of Christ,

* See 2 Cor. xi. 2.

and sanctified by his Spirit, need afterward, in the course of their Christian walk, to receive frequently from Christ a figurative washing of the *feet*.

What would be a complete washing of the body according to the custom of one country, would not be a complete washing according to the custom of another. Whether *leloumenos*, in this passage, means a bathing of the *whole* body, is not material. When Jesus compared that spiritual purification, which his disciples had received, to the complete washing, which a man gives himself, it is not likely, that he had any reference to the baptism, which his disciples had received from John, his forerunner. If he had any reference to that baptism, still we are to consider, that that baptism, if it was administered in a mode far different from total immersion, might be *emblematical* of such a spiritual purification, as the disciples of Jesus had received. On the other hand, from what has been before said in *this discourse*, it appears unlikely, that John administered baptism in the mode of total immersion. Furthermore, if Peter had been totally immersed by John, or, if he had thought it proper, for one person totally to immerse another, in a ceremonial way, would he not have been apt, when, in his zeal, he said,

“ Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head,” to have gone further, and asked Jesus to wash his whole body ?

All the passages of Scripture have now been brought to view, which it appears important to consider, in attending to the *mode* of baptism. For in *this discourse* a *fair statement* has been intended to be given respecting the *mode* of baptism ; as in *the two preceding discourses*, a *fair statement* was intended to be given respecting the *subjects* of this ordinance.

It will be but justice to acknowledge, that ecclesiastical *history*, while it greatly favours infant baptism, seems, in some degree, to favour the *mode of immersion*. It appears, that at an early period, after the times of the apostles, immersion was *generally* practised. Let it be remembered, that at the same time infants appear to have been immersed, and infant baptism to have *universally* prevailed in the church.

That history does not favour *immersion* in so great a degree, as it favours *infant baptism*, will be manifest from these two considerations.

(1.) To administer baptism by immersion would not be *so great* a departure from the apostolical practice, if sprinkling or affusion was practised in the times of the apostles, as to baptize infants, if infants were not baptized in the

times of the apostles. The question, *to whom* is baptism to be administered, is more important, than the question, *how* is baptism to be administered. Furthermore the Christians appear soon to have felt at liberty to use their discretion, *in some measure*, as to the mode of baptism. For instance, there is an account, that in the second century, persons, when they were baptized, were immersed three times. But, perhaps, few of those, who suppose, that the apostles baptized by immersion, will suppose, that they immersed a person more than once. Now, if those can account for that *triple* immersion, who suppose that the apostles practised a *single* immersion, we may, on nearly the same principles, account for the practice of *immersion*, if we suppose, that the apostles practised *sprinkling* or *affusion*.

(2.) In the early times, though immersion was the usual mode of baptism, it appears not to have been considered essential to baptism; sprinkling or affusion was sometimes practised, and, as it appears, with general approbation; nor does it appear, but that it was practised with universal approbation. It was practised, it appears, particularly, when the person to be baptized was sick, or when certain circumstances would have rendered the administration of bap-

tism to a well person by immersion difficult. According to *Reed's Apology*, even so early, as about the middle of the second century, a number of persons were baptized by sprinkling or affusion, whose baptisms are particularly mentioned in history. According to the same author, Cyprian did not think, that those early Christians, whom he called the *ancients*, viewed immersion, as essential to baptism.

Some persons seem to have strangely represented the Christians in the early ages, as considering immersion essential to baptism, and yet occasionally administering baptism by sprinkling or affusion, because they had superstitious ideas of the importance of baptism. They might be, in some measure, superstitious respecting baptism, but, if we should even suppose, that they considered baptism, as *essential* to the *salvation* of every *individual*, still, if they had considered immersion, as *essential* to baptism, they would not have hoped, that sprinkling or affusion would prevent *any person's* perishing.

When we attend to the nature of Christianity, as laying *comparatively* little stress on external rites, and when we consider, that this religion was designed to bless all nations in all climates, to bless old and young, and people of

all conditions; is it not reasonable to think, that baptism is such a washing, as can be given even to those, who are brought low by infirmity and disease; who by this sensible sign may be assisted in "looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

SERMON VI.



ROMANS IV. 11, 12.

And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith, which he had, yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also; And the father of circumcision to them, who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had, being yet uncircumcised.

HAVING endeavoured, in the preceding discourses, to illustrate the gracious covenant, which God made with Abraham, and the design of circumcision, as its seal; to point out the duty of walking in the steps of Abraham's faith, with a particular application to Christian parents; to prove, that the infants of believers ought to be baptized; to answer some objections against infant baptism, and against the reasoning of those, who argue in favour of it; and to show, that sprinkling is a proper mode of baptism; I now proceed to some *inferences* and *reflections*.

1. We infer from this subject *the vanity of all attempts to destroy the church*, built on the everlasting covenant, which God made with Abraham, on the truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and on Jesus Christ himself.

It is the church of Christ. It was given to him "before the foundation of the world," as a recompence for his sufferings. He hath loved it "with an everlasting love." God "created all things by Jesus Christ; to the intent that now, unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose, which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."* For the sake of the church, "God executeth his decrees, in the works of creation and providence." He called Abraham, established with him a gracious covenant, continued his seed a distinct people, and reprovèd kings for their sakes; and in the fulness of time Christ came, and purchased the church with his own blood. "All" authority has been "given unto" Jesus "in heaven and in earth."† The Divine power was manifested in the salvation of the ancient church in Egypt, at the Red sea, in Babylon, and in various persecutions. The LORD said, "But thou, Israel, art my

* Eph. iii. 10, 11. † Matt. xxviii. 18.

servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, the seed of Abraham, my friend.—Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.”* In supporting the Christian church in times of great persecution, in establishing and continuing the church in this land, especially, in remarkable effusions of the Holy Spirit, in different parts of the world, God has manifested his power and grace. Thus has he performed “the mercy promised,” and remembered “his holy covenant; the oath which he sware to” “Abraham,”† and his promise and oath to his son Jesus Christ.‡

The church stands on a firm basis, even the promise and oath of Jehovah. The Divine counsel concerning the church is immutable; and “the heirs of promise” have “strong consolation.”

The *standing church*, including all, who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, is an olive tree of the planting of the Lord. At no time has it been destitute of living branches. Christians now partake of the *root* and increased *fatness* of the ancient olive. They live by faith in the promises, which supported the Jewish

* Is. xli. 8—10. † Luke i. 72, 73. ‡ See Ps. cx.

church, and the promises of the New Testament Scriptures. In vain are all boastings against this tree, or any of its living branches. Its enemies are but an ax. The ax is not able to lift up itself. Why then should it boast against the life of the tree?

The *standing church* is God's vineyard. If some of the vines are impure, bearing grapes of gall, and bitter clusters, the vineyard must not be destroyed; "for a blessing is in it." If the Owner, for a time, "take away the hedge," "and break down the wall," and "lay it waste," he will again build the wall, set up the hedge, and repair the old waste places. Though the church be greatly afflicted, though, in some instances, stated pastors be removed, the regular enjoyment of Divine ordinances interrupted, and false teachers be suffered to bring in heresies, yet God will overrule all this for good. His vineyard will not be perpetually over-run with briars and thorns; though they set themselves against him in battle, he will go through them, and burn them together."

The *standing church* is God's holy mountain, the mountain of the Lord's house. Though mountains of opposition may seem to rise high, they shall flow down at the presence of the Lord. "And it shall come to pass in the last

days, that the mountain of the LORD's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills."

The *standing church* is the spiritual Jerusalem. Its enemies say, "Rase it, rase it, even to the foundation." But it stands on an everlasting foundation. It "is mount Zion," "the city of the great king," "which cannot be removed, but abideth forever." "God is known in her palaces for a refuge."

The certain and final fall of the *standing church* is predicted by many, as they wander from village to village, professing to be teachers of religion. They tell their hearers, that stated ministers and ordinances are coming down; the standing church is falling, it is falling. One builds a wall, and lo! others daub it with untempered mortar, and say, Lo! here is a true church! Lo, here is the temple of the Lord! The enemies of truth gather around, and listen with avidity, hoping, that the time is near, when regular churches, and stated ministers, will cease. Who can but bewail their delusion and folly? What Christian can but pity their blindness, and pray, that their eyes may be opened?

The church must stand. Though it is to be afflicted, it is not to be destroyed; in vain are all attempts for this purpose. The enemies of the church are a rod in the hand of the Lord.

Let not the rod shake itself against him, that lifteth it up. It has not power to destroy, nor even to afflict without God; and he afflicts in loving kindness and tender mercy, with a view to purify the church, and establish it more and more upon the sure foundation. The Lord Jesus hath said, that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against" his "church."

2. Christians may be reminded of their *obligations* to "love one another," as brethren, by reflecting on the blessed truth, that Abraham is "the father of all" those who "believe."

Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham, is the Son of God, whom "the Father sent" "to be the Saviour of *the world*." His *name* corresponds with his mission. *Jesus*, derived from the Jewish language, signifies *Saviour*. *Christ*, derived from the Greek language, signifies *Anointed*. Jesus Christ was anointed, by God the Father, to be the Saviour, not only of the Jews, but also, of the Greeks; to be the Saviour of "all" the "nations." All, who believe in Jesus Christ, become children of Abraham, and children of God; and God sends forth into their hearts "the Spirit of his Son," "crying, Abba, Father." According to a remark of Dr. Doddridge, the Syro-Chaldaic word *Abba*, and the Greek word *Pater*, both which signify *Father*, being joined,* happily denote the union

* See Rom. viii. 15. and Gal. iv. 6.

of Jews and Gentiles in those devotions, which they address to God with a filial heart.

When Jesus expired on the cross, “the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.” Those, who believe in him, are encouraged to enter into the most holy place “by the blood of Jesus.” Jesus also broke down “the middle wall of partition,” which separated the Gentiles from the Jews. To a part of the temple Gentiles had access; on the wall of partition was an inscription of this import; *No foreigner must enter here.* But those, who once were “strangers and foreigners,” are now “fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.”

At the birth of our Saviour, “a multitude of the heavenly host” sung, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” “Oh! that” mankind “would praise the Lord” for his wonderful love in the redemption of sinners! Let “the Gentiles” “glorify God for his mercy.” “Praise the Lord, all ye Gentiles; and laud him, all ye people.”

Abraham was constituted “a father of many nations.” It was promised to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that their seed should be “as the stars of heaven,” and “as the dust of the earth.” Sarah was to be “a mother of nations;” and the relatives of Rebekah, when

they blessed her, said, "Be thou the mother of thousands of millions." The LORD said to Israel, "I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west. I will say to the north, give up; and to the south, keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth." Let Gentile Christians rejoice, and bless God, that they are reckoned among the seed of Jacob, and are adopted, with believing Jews, as "sons and daughters" of "the Lord Almighty." It was said of God's ancient people, "Ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves." How ought Gentile Christians to be affected, when they consider, that, in a certain sense, the reverse of this is *now* the case! Are not believing Gentiles now eating the riches of the Jews, and enjoying their glory? Are they not "with joy" drawing "water out of" those "wells of salvation," to which the Jews, as a nation, though perishing with thirst, have no heart to come? Are they not deriving comfort and delight from those ancient Scriptures, which when the Jews read, there is a vail upon their heart, since they will not listen to the joyful sound of the gospel, nor receive those Christian Scriptures, which cheer the souls of believers, and which at once reflect light upon the ancient Scriptures, and re-

ceive light from them? Let us rejoice in the intimation, which the apostle Paul gives, that, when “the fulness of the Gentiles” shall have “come in,”* there will be a glorious accession of the natural seed of Jacob to the Christian church. The “fulness” of the Jews will “much more” enrich the world, than their “fall.” The elder son (in the parable) had no reason to be angry, when his prodigal brother was welcomed home; for their father had “enough, and to spare;” he ought to have rejoiced greatly at his brother’s return, and kind reception. His tender father, when he went out, and “entreated him” to come into the house, said, “Son, thou art ever with me; and all that I have is thine.” Let us remember this; and “not” “boast” “against the branches” of that “good olive tree” by “the root” of which we are sustained. Let us “not” be “high minded, but fear.” At the same time, let us rejoice, that the parable of the two sons is not to be applied in the strictest sense. Though all things belong to the Jews, yet to believing Gentiles, as well as

† By “the fulness of the Gentiles,” Rom. xi. 25. perhaps, are meant the elect among the Gentiles, who shall be brought into the fold of Christ during the time of God’s long suffering towards the Gentiles, (compare Luke xxi. 24.) and prior to those awful judgments upon the nations, (see Rev. xvi. 17—21) which shall be introductory to the glorious reign of Christ spoken of in Rev. xx. 4. Ought not Christian nations to tremble?

to believing Jews, it is said, "All things are yours." The Jews had, by no means, reason to be angry, when the Gentiles were received into the house of God. For the gospel brought to the Jews an inheritance much richer, than they had been expecting for so many ages; and the Gentiles' being admitted, as their *fellow heirs*, did not diminish their inheritance, but increased it. But, what, if, while the elder son remained out of doors, loath to come in, the prodigal had begun to grow proud, and had said, that his brother never was a dutiful son, and that he himself had as good a right to their father's estate as his brother?—The elder son remains yet without the house; but will he not at length come in, cordially bid his younger brother welcome, and be glad even to have him his fellow heir?

There was an *earnest* of this in the time of the apostles. Believing Jews "glorified God," who had "granted" "also to the Gentiles" "repentance unto life."†. The Gentiles who had been "dead," were made "alive again" by the gospel, and the restoration of the Jews to the favour of God will be as "life from the dead." Let us ardently desire, and humbly pray, that the fulness of the Gentiles may come in, and that Israel may be saved.

† See Acts xi. 18. and xv. 3. and xxi. 19, 20.

In the meantime, let all Christians, being the seed of Abraham, and the children of God, “love one another,” as brethren; “forbearing one another in love;” and “endeavouring [taking pains] to keep the unity of Spirit in the bond of peace.” “There is one body, and one Spirit, even as” believers “are called in one hope of” their “calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism.”

Ought not those, who seem to renounce the everlasting covenant, which God made with Abraham, and who at the same time claim an exclusive right of coming to the table of the Lord, to consider, whether their own *principles* do not exclude *them* from the visible church? They deny the validity of baptism, as given to infants, and as administered in the mode of sprinkling, and refuse to commune with Pedobaptists in commemorating the death of Christ. But might not we with more propriety refuse to commune with *them*; since they appear to have gone out from us, and to have made themselves, in a certain sense, “strangers from the covenants of promise?” Yet we offer to recognise them, as brethren, at the table of their Lord and ours; and we do this upon the supposition, that they do not understandingly, deliberately and absolutely renounce the everlasting covenant. We charitably believe, that some

sincere, humble Christians have received sectarian principles, in consequence of the indefatigable zeal, with which they have been propagated, and still, as to the essentials of religion, walk in the steps of the faith of Abraham.

We are willing to recognise, among the spiritual children of Abraham and of Jacob, and the children of God, some, who (to reverse what is said in Is. lxiii. 16.) *seem* to be ignorant of Abraham, and not disposed in a suitable manner to acknowledge Israel. Yea, we hope, that among the Baptists, there are worthy ministers of the gospel, and pious Christians, who regard the ancient Israelites as a church, and the Abrahamic covenant, as everlasting, and desire to be Abraham's children, and to walk in the steps of his faith, and yet do not consider the arguments, which are brought for infant baptism, as sufficiently strong. Let Pedobaptists, therefore, receive Baptists, as their brethren in the Lord.

At the same time, we cannot consistently solicit the ministerial aid of those religious teachers, who not only hold to close communion, but view it very important to destroy all other churches, and to build up their own, as being the only Christian churches.

Do not some religious teachers and professing Christians act a part *too similar* to the part acted by those, whom Paul terms the *concision*,

while they say, *Unless you be baptized according to our mode of baptizing, we cannot treat you, as members of the visible church, though we hope that you will be saved, and that you and we together shall at length "sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven."*

Do not some true Christians keep themselves separated from those, whom they themselves regard as fellow Christians, by a partition wall, having this inscription? *No person, that has not been baptized by immersion must enter here.*

Did not Jewish and Gentile Christians associate together, and feel as *one*, in the times of the apostles? Let this be seriously considered by those, who refuse to hold free communion with other Christians, while they entertain different sentiments from theirs about *baptism*.

It is to be deeply lamented, that different sentiments concerning *baptism* have produced such a *division*, as now exists in the Christian Church. Though baptism is an important thing, can any Christian be justified in *endeavouring to maintain* this division? Some Christians refuse to hold free communion with those, who entertain different sentiments from theirs respecting *baptism*, even though they regard them, as true Christians, and as having a sincere desire to do the will of the Lord concern-

ing *baptism* in particular. Let not the intelligence of *this division* reach the *Ganges*, nor the *Nile*.

“ Pray for the *peace* of Jerusalem. They shall prosper, that love thee.”

“ How good, and how pleasant it is for *brethren* to dwell together in *unity* ! It is like the precious ointment” poured upon Aaron ; the emblem of that “ one Spirit,” which is imparted to all true Christians, as composing “ one body.” See 1 Cor. xii. 13.

3. This subject teaches us, that *none, but believing parents, have a right to baptism for their children.*

Abraham had justifying *faith*, before he received the seal of the covenant for himself and household. Without *faith* parents cannot now please God, when they have baptism administered to their children. If they do not walk in the steps of Abraham’s faith, they are not spiritual children of Abraham.

Unbelieving parents do not separate themselves and their families from the sinful practices of the world, nor with their households call upon the name of the Lord. They do not trust in God’s everlasting covenant, nor really give their children up to him, when they have them baptized. They do not set a pious example, nor “ command” their “ children” after them “ to keep the way of the Lord.”

Is it not the case, with many baptized children, that they are not trained up in a manner essentially different from that in which others are? that they are not carefully taught the Holy Scriptures, instructed in the things of religion, admonished and counselled respecting their salvation and their duty, nor restrained from those fashionable amusements, which are according to the course of this world?

It is no just cause of complaint against a minister, that he is unwilling to baptize the children of those parents, who do not, in some degree, manifest faith in Christ, love to God, and a humble intention of training up their children according to the gospel. What spiritual benefit can those parents think their children would derive from baptism?

For unbelieving parents, under the influence of worldly motives, to request baptism for their children, and for ministers to gratify them in this request, is a perversion of the ordinance. This perversion has furnished the opposers of infant baptism with a specious argument, which they use too indiscriminately, and, it is to be feared, with no small success. They appeal to facts, to prove, that infant baptism is a useless ceremony. It is asked, Of what profit is infant baptism? Are baptized children more religious than others? Let ministers and churches faithfully perform their duty with regard to the *ad-*

ministration of baptism, with regard to their treatment of baptized children, and with regard to church discipline in general. Then, such parents only, as make a credible profession of faith in Christ, will receive baptism for their children; and it may be hoped, that baptized children will be brought up “in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.” Then, may it not be hoped, that all will acknowledge the parents and children of the church to be “the seed, which the LORD hath blessed?” acknowledge the parents to be “the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their offspring with them?”

Happy is that head of a family, who may be said, like Aquila, like Nymphas, and like Philemon, to have *a church in his house!* May not this be applied, with some propriety, to every pious Christian, who has a pious partner and pious children?

4. Great is the *impropriety* of *rebaptizing* those, who have been baptized in infancy.

Baptism, as applied to infants, as well as to adults, is a seal of the everlasting covenant. It is God's seal; and for a person to consider it a mere nullity, because he was not active in the application, is highly improper. God's seal is not to be set aside by man. The eternal God never breaks his covenant, nor alters the thing, that has gone out of his lips; and there can be

no just occasion for applying the initiatory seal a second time.

If parents are not sincere, when they profess faith, and when their children are baptized, the insincerity of the parents does not destroy the validity of baptism, with respect to the children. The children receive a seal of God's covenant; and, if God renews them by his grace, they realize what was signified by their baptism. They have no right to renounce the seal. They have experienced the mercy and grace of that covenant, which was sealed by their baptism; and why should they deny the utility of the seal?

5. We learn that it is *very sinful to ridicule the sprinkling of infants.*

It appears, that all Christian parents, not only have a right, but are bound, to give their infant offspring to God in baptism. It likewise appears, that *sprinkling* is a scriptural mode of baptism. To treat with *ridicule a solemn institution of Heaven*, and one so important, as respects the continuance of the church, and the spiritual interest of parents and children, is exceedingly wicked.

It is not the case with all, who oppose infant baptism, that they treat it with derision; some of them appear serious and conscientious. But there are persons, who treat infant baptism with derision, in their preaching, conversation

and writings. Others approve their sayings, and cast a sneer of contempt at the *sprinkling of infants*. This solemn institution has become a subject of derision, not only in the lips of professed infidels ; but in the lips of some, who profess to be Christians, and even teachers of religion.

Will they ridicule Abraham, for applying the seal of the covenant to his *infant offspring*? and the ancient saints, for walking in the steps of his faith, in this respect? Will they scoff at the Israelites in Egypt, for sprinkling blood on their door posts, as a mean of saving the first born? Will they ridicule the account of the apostle Paul, that the chosen tribes, both parents and children, were “baptized” “in the cloud, and in the sea?” Will they deride the apostle for saying, that the children of Israel were baptized at the Red sea, since they were not immersed? Will they deride the religion of our forefathers, who held to the sprinkling of infants? Will they deride the sacraments of the church of Christ, for ages after his ascension, because they were administered by those, who held to infant baptism? Shall such treatment of little children be ridiculed, as corresponds with the example of our Saviour, and with his words, “of such is the kingdom of heaven?” Shall the apostle Paul be ridiculed, for calling the chil-

dren of believers holy? Are Christian parents to be by such ridicule turned aside from the steps of the faith of Abraham? No. Soon will the unhallowed lips of scoffers be silenced.

Baptism is a solemn thing. If any ridicule the administration of it by immersion, which some Christians consider the proper mode, they commit great wickedness.

6. We learn, that *those parents, who have young children unbaptized, ought to give them up to God in baptism, trusting, with humble gratitude, in his everlasting covenant.*

If the *parents* have not been baptized, they are first to devote *themselves* to the Lord in that ordinance.

It is the case with many young children, that they have not received that seal of God's covenant, which their parents received in infancy. Let the parents of those children attend seriously to a subject, which so deeply concerns the spiritual and eternal interest of their dear and precious offspring.

Will you not perform for your children that office of kindness, which your parents performed for you? Have you not already too long neglected an important duty, which you owe to God, and to your children? you have been instrumental of bringing them into existence; and their early weeping and crying signified, that they had come into a world, in which "sin hath reigned unto death." They then implored your

compassion.* They still implore it. Their pains, their diseases affect your hearts. But is it enough to take care of their bodies? Can you do less for them, than to afford them the sacred *emblem* of the gift of that grace, which reigns “through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord?”

The longer you neglect this duty, the greater will be the temptation to continue in the neglect. In your serious and reflecting moments, it will be painful to think of the state of your children, while they are growing up around you, without the seal of God’s covenant. In this case, you may be in danger of entertaining contemptuous thoughts of infant baptism in general; and in danger of embracing error, to quiet your consciences. How many parents, by neglecting their duty, put themselves in the way of temptation, and then yield to its influence! While their children are babes, they neglect the dedication of them to God; this duty afterwards appears more difficult; and they are under strong temptation to hearken to such suggestions, as appear to furnish them with an excuse for their neglect, and to justify their past conduct. Perhaps, they are repeatedly told by one and another, that there is no *command* to baptize *infants*; that *believers* are the *only* suitable subjects of baptism, and immer-

* According to *Reed’s apology*, this idea was suggested by *Cyprian*, in the third century.

sion the only valid mode ; that Christ was baptized *in Jordan* ; that the eunuch went *into* the water, and came up *out* of the water ; and that we must believe, and be baptized, and leave little children to believe and be baptized for themselves, after they become adults. By such suggestions they are made to imagine, that they have neglected no duty, in refusing to give up their children to God in baptism. They become established in the opinion, that infant baptism is not a Divine institution ; and their children are trained up in an error, which they themselves embraced, as an opiate for their consciences. Is it not to be feared, that there are many such instances ?

While such parents are rendered quiet respecting their children, are they not *apt* to remain quiet respecting themselves ? If they are told, that we must *believe*, and be baptized ; how few of them appear to be in earnest about *believing* ?

Let me urge you to shun this temptation to error, by attending to immediate duty. “ Repent,” “ and believe the gospel ;” make a public profession of religion ; give up your children to God in the ordinance of his own appointment, and educate them according to his word. If you thus do, you yourselves will be heirs to the heavenly inheritance, and salvation will come to your houses. Should your child-

ren die in infancy, you may trust in the mercy and faithfulness of God, and have hope and consolation concerning them ; should their lives be continued, you may humbly and cheerfully hope, that God will pour upon them his Spirit and his blessing.

7. We learn from this subject *the importance of beginning early to give children religious instruction and admonition, and of persevering in this work.*

Parents ought to teach the religion of Christ to their children, as soon as they are capable of receiving instruction. If they themselves have embraced a religion, which they view of infinite importance, it is reasonable, that they teach it to their offspring. This, we have seen, is agreeable to the design of the everlasting covenant, is according to the express command of Jehovah to the ancient church, and is expressly required of the Christian Church.

Timothy knew the holy Scriptures of the Old Testament “from a child ;” and they were “able to make” him “wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus.” Children should be taught the Holy Scriptures, of the Old and New Testament, “nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine,” and admonished respecting their duty.

Among the helps, with which God has furnished the Christian church from time to time,

in regard to the religious education of children, parents have derived great assistance from the Westminster Assembly's Shorter Catechism.

Christian parents, you are careful to *nourish* the bodies of your children; will you not endeavour to afford them "*the nurture*" "*of the Lord,*" that they may be nourished up to everlasting life? Will you not endeavour to instil into their opening minds that instruction, which tends to promote their eternal salvation? Should you not rejoice if your children should, in some measure, like Jesus, increase, not only "in stature," but "in wisdom," "and in favour with God and man?" Kind parents are never weary, as long as they live, of giving their children that *admonition*, which may conduce to their worldly happiness? Do not be weary, as long as you live, of giving your children the "*admonition of the Lord.*" Admonish them to seek the Lord with all their hearts. Tell them of their baptism. Tell them, how ready the Lord is to be found by them, and to make them blessed forever. Admonish them from time to time of their duty, in all things. Endeavour to restrain them from sin. Do not provoke them to anger; but treat them with tenderness and affection. Teach them to respect the ministers of the gospel. Use your influence to have schools furnished with such instructors, as will be likely to promote the education of children, not on-

ly concerning literature, but, also, concerning religion.

Happy are those children, who have such a mother as Eunice. Though her husband was a Greek, she appears to have been greatly blessed in her care for Timothy's soul. Unhappy, in a greater or less degree, is that man or woman, whose partner *does not assist* in the religious education of children! Greatly to be pitied is that man or woman, whose partner obstructs that education. Very happy are children, whose parents are so happy, as Aquila and Priscilla!

Christian parents, reflect on the nature of baptism. As your children, according to the import of their baptism, are to consider themselves, not their own, but God's, who has made them, and bought them with a price, and to account themselves "dead" "unto sin," and "alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord;" so you ought to consider them, as belonging to God, and not aim to derive *sinful* delight from them, any more, than if they were dead.

It is explicitly said by some, that it is useless, and even injurious, to teach children Christian doctrines; that the minds of youth should be free from the influence of a religious education, in order to be better capable of judging impartially with regard to religion, when they become adults. Hence the catechising,

and religious instruction of children in schools, and in families, have been opposed by some, and by some laid aside. But how contrary to the Holy Scriptures is such treatment of children! Is this training up children in the way they should go? The minds of children may be compared to a field, in which some kind of seed *will be* sown. Why should the enemy be suffered first to sow tares? After the growth of the tares, will the soil be better prepared for good seed? No; experience proves the contrary. Corrupt seed, being sown in such congenial soil, will take deep root; and afterward there will be, comparatively, but little encouragement to sow good seed. Multitudes of children have been neglected by their parents, till their minds are so filled with error, that all attempts to instruct them are like sowing among thorns. The mind of a child is capable of receiving good instructions; it is a room, which may be filled with valuable treasure. The adversary claims it as his own, and endeavours to fill it with his goods; and his servants are active. But the servants of Christ should be vigilant, and take great pains to fill it with true riches.

It is evident, that teaching children the Christian *doctrines* has a tendency to influence their minds in favour of the truth; and equally evident is it, that teaching them the *duties* of

religion has a tendency to influence their minds in favour of good conduct. If it is wrong to influence their minds, in the former case, why is it not equally wrong in the latter? But must not children be taught, not to take God's name in vain, to remember the sabbath day, to honour their parents, not to murder, nor commit adultery, nor steal, nor bear false witness, nor covet, lest their minds should be so influenced in favour of good conduct, as not to be capable of judging impartially with regard to true morality, after they come to mature age?

How corrupt the principle, that *children* are not to be taught the doctrines and duties of the Christian religion! If Christian parents and ministers, in general, were to act on this principle, would not Baptist churches, as well as others, be in danger of being destroyed? Such a principle *tends* directly to root out all true religion, to destroy the churches of Christ, and to fill our towns with infidels. It *may* be the painful task of the future historian to detail its wretched effects on the civil and political state of our country. But it is the immediate and indispensable duty of the ministers of Christ to point out its more tremendous effects on the eternal state of parents and children; and to raise their warning voice, and speak "with all authority," against a principle so corrupt in its nature, and dangerous in its operation.

It may be asked, Why this solicitude about *children*? God will take care of his church.—It becomes the pious to rejoice, that God will take care of the church, whoever despise the instituted ministry of the word, and whoever neglect children; and to remember, that ministers labour in vain, unless God gives the increase, and *parents* instruct and admonish their children in vain, without his blessing. But it pleases God, in taking care of his church, to use and bless *means*. Ministers must *preach* the gospel, and *warn* and *teach* every one; and *parents* must *nourish* their *children* with religious instruction, and give them *religious admonition*.

8. Let perishing sinners *humbly* “*lay hold upon the*” *blessed* “*hope set before*” them in the gospel.

Let them with penitent hearts believe in Jesus Christ, the Lord and Saviour, who has made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness; that they may be blessed with faithful Abraham; that righteousness may be imputed to them, and that they may be heirs, according to the hope of eternal life.

Let those, who are young, be affected by this gracious encouragement: “I love” those, who “love me, and those” who “seek me early shall find me.”* Let them remember their Creator and Redeemer.

* Prov. viii. 17.

Young children, come to Christ. Since, while he dwelt on earth, he "called" to him the infants who were brought, received them affectionately, and "blessed them," he will graciously regard *you*, if you will come to the throne of grace *yourselves*.

Let those, who have long neglected the great salvation, attend to the things, which pertain to their everlasting "peace" before they be hidden from their eyes. The vilest sinner, who returns to the Lord with all his heart, will find mercy, and be abundantly pardoned.

Let old and young, while it remains an "accepted time," and a "day of salvation" take heed, lest they receive "the grace of God in vain," and incur a tremendous condemnation; a condemnation far more terrible, than those will receive, to whom *the word* of salvation has not come.

Let those, who have not yet received baptism, "arise and be baptized, and wash away" their "sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

Children and youth, whose parents have devoted them to God in baptism are under *peculiar* obligation to devote *themselves* to God, according to the signification of their baptism, and to make a public profession of religion.

Christian parents have covenanted with God concerning their children. They have bound *themselves* and their *children* to the Lord. Thus

it was in the ancient church. The children of Israel appeared before the LORD with their "little ones," and entered "into covenant with the LORD,—and into his oath," that he might establish them "for a people unto himself."* By this solemn covenant they bound *themselves* and their *children* to the LORD; and their posterity of remote succeeding generations were punished, because they forsook the covenant, which God made with their fathers.† Joshua had a right to resolve, that as for *himself* and his *house*, they would "serve the LORD." By this very reasonable resolution, he bound himself and his children to the LORD. Samuel considered himself bound to the LORD all the days of his life, by a solemn vow, which his mother made concerning him.‡ The Rechabites, in a certain case, considered themselves and their children bound forever, by the command of Jonadab their father.§

Christian parents have a right, and it is their indispensable duty, to bind their children to the Lord, in covenant; and children, as soon as capable of knowing their duty, ought, with penitent and believing hearts, to recognise their baptismal obligation, by a public profession of religion. While their hearts are impenitent and unbelieving, they reject God's covenant.

The children of Christian parents, in gener-

*Deut. xxix. 10. 11. †Deut. xxix. 25. ‡1. Sam. i. 11. §Jer. xxxv. 6.

al, have opportunity, at any time, of recognising the bonds of the covenant, and confessing Christ before men. This confession is necessary to entitle them to the external privileges of adult members of the church, in the present world; and, if they cordially confess Christ, they have a title to eternal life. He says, "Whosoever shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father," who "is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father," who "is in heaven."*

Reflect on your baptism. Think of all that God has done for you, and of all that Christ has done and suffered for you. Think of all that your parents have done for you. Dear child, "if thou be wise," thy father will "have joy of" thee, "and she" who "bare thee" will "rejoice." "Hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother."†

Let every child, who has a pious father, consider him, as thus speaking. "Let thine heart retain my words; keep my commandments, and live." "I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths."‡

Let every son, who has a pious mother, consider himself, as addressed by her in the following manner; and let every daughter accommo-

* Mat. x. 22. 23. † Prov. ix. 12. and xxiii. 24. 25. and i. 8.

‡ Prov. iv. 4. 11.

date the address to *herself*. “What, my son? and what, the son of my womb? and what the son of my vows?”* May not this address be thus paraphrased, with respect to *your case*? *What ought I to wish for you, my son, the son, whom I tenderly love, the son, whom I have devoted to God in baptism? What counsel ought I to give to you? And what ought you to wish for yourself? What will you do, to manifest your affection to me? What will you do, to please him, to whom I have devoted you?* Consider, what answer such questions deserve.

“If thou be wise, thou shalt be wise for thyself; but, if thou scornest, thou alone shalt bear it.”

Let me urge baptized children to consider their *peculiar* obligations to be the Lord's. Your parents gave you to him in your infancy, and had the seal of the everlasting covenant put upon you. They made public declaration, that they had chosen him for their God, and for the God of their children. Thus they devoted you to God in your helpless infancy, and bound you to him in a perpetual covenant, before you were capable of choosing your own Master. But you are now capable of choosing, whom you will serve; and you are under special obligations to choose the Lord for your God, to acknowledge his covenant, and to confess Christ

* Prov. xxxi. 2.

before men. While you refuse thus to do, you practically declare, that you do not approve the solemn transaction of your parents in giving you to the Lord, that you will not be his servants, and that Christ shall not reign over you. But will you thus forsake the God of your fathers, and cast off his covenant? "What iniquity have" you, or "your fathers found in" him? Why will you exclude yourselves from the blessings of the kingdom of God, and expose yourselves to endless misery? In one sense, you are now "children of the kingdom;" but if you reject God's covenant, and continue impenitent, your state will be the more wretched. You will finally prove to be such "children of the kingdom" as "shall be cast out into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Many, who have enjoyed less privileges, than you enjoy, will "come from the east, and from the west, and from the north, and from the south, and" will "sit down in the kingdom of God;" but you will be "thrust out."

9. Let those, who, having been baptized in infancy, are inclined to be baptists, reflect on what has been said, and seriously consider *the impropriety, and the evil consequences of renouncing their infant baptism*, and of disregarding, in such a sense, the everlasting covenant.

Do you hope to be saved without being in covenant with God? By what covenant do you hope for a title to heaven, if not by the everlasting covenant established with Abraham, and comprehending that covenant, of which Christ is Mediator? By virtue of the Abrahamic covenant, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, all the holy prophets, and all the ancient saints, were saved. By faith in Christ Jesus, the glorious seed of Abraham, and the beloved Son of God, the apostles and all the primitive christians became Abraham's seed, so, as to be heirs of salvation. God's promise and oath to Abraham now afford "a strong consolation" to all, "who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before" them. After serious reflection and consideration, can you think, that the everlasting covenant, made with Abraham, ceased, at the end of that economy, which was founded upon the Sinai covenant? that the seal was no longer to be applied to infants? that the apostles did not baptize the households of believing parents? and that all, who have been baptized only in their infancy, have not really received Christian baptism? Can you deliberately and conscientiously say, that all the Divine ordinances, which were administered in the church, for the space of between 1400 and 1500 years after the apostles' time, were null and void? that professing Christians were un-

baptized; that ministers were not regularly ordained, and had no right to administer ordinances; because professing Christians, for that space of time, practised infant baptism? From the reformation of which Luther was so instrumental, down to the present time, infant baptism has been *generally* practised in the church. But can you considerately say, that Christians, *in general*, since that time, have been unbaptized? that ministers in general, even all of every denomination, except the Baptists, have intruded into the sacred office? that they have had no right to administer baptism and the Lord's supper? and that the churches over which they profess to have been made overseers by the Holy Ghost, are not regular churches? All this you implicitly declare, when you renounce your infant baptism. But are you prepared thus to treat the solemn institutions of Christ, and the great interests of his church? I intreat you to pause and consider, and humbly ask wisdom of God.

Consider, what will probably be the consequence of renouncing infant baptism, and joining a Baptist church, as it respects your own enjoyment of Divine ordinances. You will, as things now unhappily are, not be suffered to commune with Christians of another denomination, nor be disposed generally to

worship with them ; and, if you do not live near a Baptist society, you will, of course, fall into a neglect of public worship.

You have noticed professing Christians, who have renounced their infant baptism, and their former religious connexions, to join with the Baptists. You have seen, with what warm expressions of kindness they were received, and treated, by their new friends ; and with what zeal they attended public worship with them for a time, though the distance was considerable. But you soon discovered an abatement of their zeal, and a gradual falling away into a neglect of Christian duties and Divine ordinances. After this change in their sentiments and conduct, did you consider them better Christians, than before ? Instances of this kind are too numerous ; and too many families are thrown into an unsettled state, as to religious worship on the sabbath. Will *you* likewise leave your own church, and throw your families into that state ?

Should you separate yourselves from the church, with which you are now connected, your families will be essentially injured. Should you join a Baptist church in a neighbouring town, you cannot constantly attend worship and ordinances there. You will be likely to form a habit of neglecting the public duties of religion ; and your example may

ruin your families. When you go out of town, to attend worship yourselves, your children must be left at home. If they sometimes attend meeting with a congregational or presbyterian church, it will be under circumstances peculiarly unfavourable to their spiritual interest; probably not without much prejudice against the preacher. They will learn to think and speak lightly of preaching in general. Their habit of neglecting public worship will increase, and become inveterate. The sabbath will be spent in a sinful manner. The evil will not terminate in your own families; but their example will influence others; and the morals of the whole neighbourhood may be corrupted. In how many instances is the sabbath profaned, religious instruction despised, and Christian duties contemned, by youth, in consequence of parents, renouncing the everlasting covenant, and infant baptism, and withdrawing themselves and their families from public worship on the Lord's day? Are you solicited to walk in such steps, and seemingly with much love, and regard for your spiritual interest? Harken not to the solicitation, till you have seriously considered the probable consequences.

Between you and the church, with which you are connected, there may be difficulties existing, on account of which you may be under peculiar temptation to withdraw. If your breth-

ren consider you as an offender, and require that Christian satisfaction, which you are unwilling to make, this may influence you to wish to leave them, and join another church. You may think, that the way, in which the Baptists sometimes admit members, presents to you a good opportunity. By them a regular dismissal and recommendation may not be required, and being confident of a kind and affectionate reception, you may be under great temptation to join a Baptist church. A different motive may influence your mind. Through covetousness, you may be unwilling to do your duty in respect to supporting the gospel, and be induced to join those, who boast of making the gospel free. Examine whether you have any such views; and consider the awful criminality and danger of acting from such motives. If you escape the discipline of the church here, you must come to trial at a higher tribunal. It is better to confess your sins now, than to have them appear unrepented of and unpardoned at the judgment day. How will you then view the small sum you may have gained by refusing to help, according to your ability, in supporting the gospel? What comfort did Judas derive from his thirty pieces of silver? Whoever through covetousness leaves any church of Christ, imitates Judas in some degree.

But, if you are conscious of being influenc-

ed by no such motives, yet, before you renounce your infant baptism, you ought seriously to consider the consequence, as it respects the peace of Christian families. The Baptists, at present, are, in general, tenacious of close communion.—This causes divisions in Christian families, and separates even the nearest Christian friends. The husband must say to his wife, or the wife to her husband, the parent to the child, or the child to the parent, the brother to the sister, or the sister to the brother, *I have renounced my infant baptism; and, unless you will do the same, I can have no more communion with you, in special ordinances. Though I believe, that you are a sincere Christian, and that we shall meet in heaven, yet I can never again commune with you at the table of the Lord.* Are you prepared thus to separate yourselves, not only from the church of Christ *in general*, but from your nearest Christian friends? But you may ask, did not Christ say, “I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law; and a man’s foes shall be they of his own household?”* Christ did say this. But he did not say, I am come to set a pious son against his pious father, a pious wife against her pious husband, a pious daughter against her pious mother; and a be-

* Mat. x. 35. 36.

liever's foes shall be they of his own believing family. Such separation in Christian families is not required, nor even allowed, but is forbidden by the gospel.

You may think, that your Christian friends ought to go with you. But they think, that it is not their duty to renounce in such a manner the everlasting covenant, which God made with Abraham and his seed, and to deny the validity of their infant baptism. Let it be very seriously considered, whether it be right for you to take such steps. Do not proceed without carefully attending to the nature of such proceedings, and to the consequences.

Can you deliberately approve the practice of close communion? Some persons, perhaps, have not known, till after they have been immersed, that this practice would be required of them; otherwise, they *might* not have consented to immersion. Lest the mention of this practice may be omitted by those, who are urging you to go into the water, it may be proper particularly to remind you, that close communion, that great evil, is a practice, which is viewed by almost all the baptists, as indispensable, according to their own principles. Here let me ask, can you deliberately embrace principles, which forbid you to commune, not only with your nearest Christian friends, but with

the greater part of Christians? Are such principles according to the word of God?

Before you renounce your infant baptism, consider another thing, which claims your serious attention. Is not such a renunciation one step towards an open denial of the Divine authority of the Holy Scriptures? It may not appear so to you; but in how many instances has it proved to be the commencement of a desperate career of infidelity! The everlasting covenant made with Abraham, the seal by which it was ratified, and the ancient church, are sometimes considered so much in the light of civil and political institutions, that unworthy views are entertained of the Scriptures of the Old Testament; these unworthy views very naturally lead to a light esteem of the New Testament Scriptures, which evidently have a close connexion with the ancient Scriptures, to a denial of the sabbath, and, at length, to a denial of Christian doctrines and duties in general, and to a public avowal of infidelity. There are not a few baptized infidels in our country, who, at first, publicly renounced what their parents did for them in their infancy, and afterward reject the whole Bible.

Though such opinions of God's ancient covenant, and of the Old Testament church, lead directly to a rejection of all Divine Revelation, and though many have followed the nat-

ural course of their own principles to this awful end ; yet not all, who renounce their infant baptism, make such shipwreck of faith. While some have hastily thrown off religious restraint, and made rapid progress in the path of skepticism and infidelity ; others seem not fully to know the tendency of their own principles, continue serious believers in Divine Revelation, and are to be regarded as sincere Christians.

As to those, who deny infant baptism, and run the greatest lengths in skepticism and infidelity, they often, upon denying infant baptism, appear at first to be engaged in religion. They frequently become ardent in their zeal, even to enthusiasm. But such zeal and enthusiasm, as are unsanctified, prepare the mind for greater hardness and stupidity. From one extreme to the other the way is natural and easy. Hence, in too many instances, a zeal, which begins with renouncing infant baptism, ends in an open rejection of the Holy Scriptures.

Consider well, what consequences may follow *your* denying the right of infants, to a place in the visible church, and relinquishing that place, which was solemnly assigned *you*, before you were able to ask it.

Review the whole subject ; and compare what has been said with the Bible, looking to God for the Holy Spirit, to lead you into the truth.

The following text is extremely faint and illegible due to the low contrast and quality of the scan. It appears to be a multi-paragraph document, possibly a letter or a report, but the individual words and sentences cannot be discerned. The text is organized into approximately 15-20 lines.

