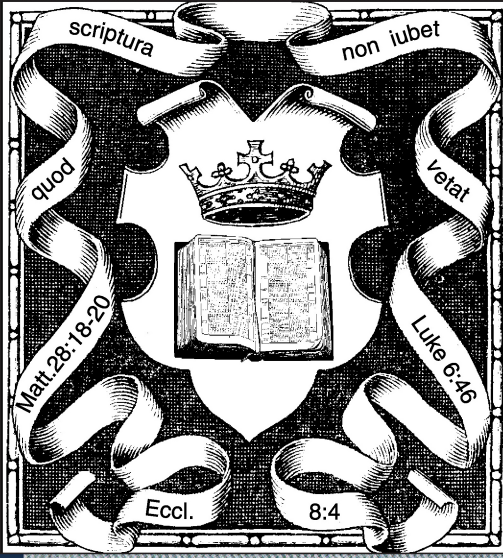


The Baptist Distinctives Series

Number 3



Paedobaptism Examined

Volume 2 of 3

Abraham Booth



Quod scriptura, non iubet vetat

The Latin translates, “What is not commanded in scripture, is forbidden:”

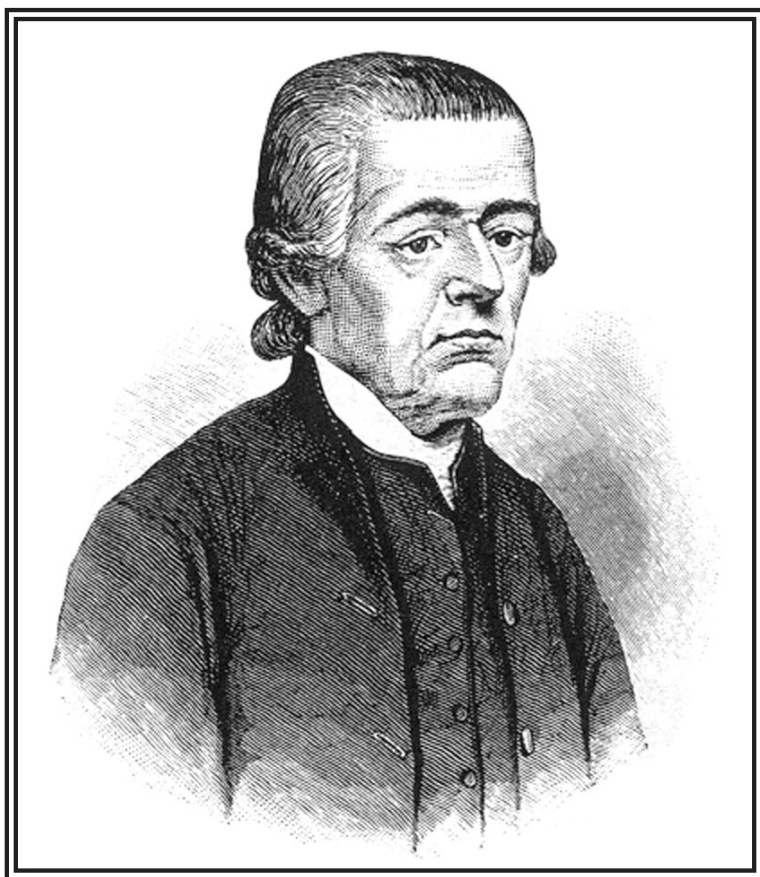
On the Cover: Baptists rejoice to hold in common with other evangelicals the main principles of the orthodox Christian faith. However, there are points of difference and these differences are significant. In fact, because these differences arise out of God’s revealed will, they are of vital importance. Hence, the barriers of separation between Baptists and others can hardly be considered a trifling matter. To suppose that Baptists are kept apart solely by their views on Baptism or the Lord’s Supper is a regrettable misunderstanding. Baptists hold views which distinguish them from Catholics, Congregationalists, Episcopalians, Lutherans, Methodists, Pentecostals, and Presbyterians, and the differences are so great as not only to justify, but to demand, the separate denominational existence of Baptists. Some people think Baptists ought not teach and emphasize their differences but as E.J. Forrester stated in 1893, “Any denomination that has views which justify its separate existence, is bound to promulgate those views. If those views are of sufficient importance to justify a separate existence, they are important enough to create a duty for their promulgation ... the very same reasons which justify the separate existence of any denomination make it the duty of that denomination to teach the distinctive doctrines upon which its separate existence rests.” If Baptists have a right to a separate denominational life, it is their duty to propagate their distinctive principles, without which their separate life cannot be justified or maintained.

Many among today’s professing Baptists have an agenda to revise the Baptist distinctives and redefine what it means to be a Baptist. Others don’t understand why it even matters. The books being reproduced in the *Baptist Distinctives Series* are republished in order that Baptists from the past may state, explain and defend the primary Baptist distinctives as they understood them. It is hoped that this Series will provide a more thorough historical perspective on what it means to be distinctively Baptist.

The Lord Jesus Christ asked, “*And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?*” (Luke 6:46). The immediate context surrounding this question explains what it means to be a true disciple of Christ. Addressing the same issue, Christ’s question is meant to show that a confession of discipleship to the Lord Jesus Christ is inconsistent and untrue if it is not accompanied with a corresponding submission to His authoritative commands. Christ’s question teaches us that a true recognition of His authority as Lord inevitably includes a submission to the authority of His Word. Hence, with this question Christ has made it forever impossible to separate His authority as King from the authority of His Word. These two principles—the authority of Christ as King and the authority of His Word—are the two most fundamental Baptist distinctives. The first gives rise to the second and out of these two all the other Baptist distinctives emanate. As F.M. Jams wrote in 1894, “Loyalty to Christ as King, manifesting itself in a constant and unswerving obedience to His will as revealed in His written Word, is the real source of all the Baptist distinctives:’ In the search for the *primary* Baptist distinctive many have settled on the Lordship of Christ as the most basic distinctive. Strangely, in doing this, some have attempted to separate Christ’s Lordship from the authority of Scripture, as if you could embrace Christ’s authority without submitting to what He commanded. However, while Christ’s Lordship and Kingly authority can be isolated and considered essentially for discussion’s sake, we see from Christ’s own words in Luke 6:46 that His Lordship is really inseparable from His Word and, with regard to real Christian discipleship, there can be no practical submission to the one without a practical submission to the other.

In the symbol above the Kingly Crown and the Open Bible represent the inseparable truths of Christ’s Kingly and Biblical authority. The Crown and Bible graphics are supplemented by three Bible verses (Ecclesiastes 8:4, Matthew 28:18-20, and Luke 6:46) that reiterate and reinforce the inextricable connection between the authority of Christ as King and the authority of His Word. The truths symbolized by these components are further emphasized by the Latin quotation - *quod scriptura, non iubet vetat*— *i.e.*, “What is not commanded in scripture, is forbidden:’ This Latin quote has been considered historically as a summary statement of the regulative principle of Scripture. Together these various symbolic components converge to exhibit the two most foundational Baptist Distinctives out of which all the other Baptist Distinctives arise. Consequently, we have chosen this composite symbol as a logo to represent the primary truths set forth in the *Baptist Distinctives Series*.

**PÆDOBAPTISM
EXAMINED**



ABRAHAM BOOTH
1734-1806

PÆDOBAPTISM EXAMINED
ON THE
PRINCIPLES, CONCESSIONS, AND REASONINGS
OF THE
MOST LEARNED PÆDOBAPTISTS.

WITH
REPLIES
TO THE
ARGUMENTS and OBJECTIONS
OF
DR. WILLIAMS AND MR. PETER EDWARDS.

BY ABRAHAM BOOTH

With a Biographical Sketch of the Author by John Franklin Jones

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOLUME 2

PRINTED FOR EBENEZER PALMER,
18 PATERNOSTER-RROW,
LONDON
MDCCCXXIX



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Thou hast given a *standard* to them that fear thee;
that it may be displayed because of the truth.

-- *Psalms 60:4*

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THE BAPTIST STANDARD BEARER, INC.

No. 1 Iron Oaks Drive
Paris, Arkansas 72855
(479) 963-3831



THE WALDENSIAN EMBLEM

lux lucet in tenebris

“The Light Shineth in the Darkness”

ISBN# 1579783740

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PART II.

CHAPTER IV.

Concerning the Modern Grounds of Pædobaptism; namely, Jewish Proselyte Baptism—External Covenant—Jewish Circumcision—Particular Passages of Scripture—and Apostolic Tradition.

SECT. 1.—*Jewish Proselyte Baptism.*

MR. T. BRADBURY.—“ I know it is said, that the Jews had a method of baptizing among them, and that our Saviour only fixed it with his disciples as he found it with his countrymen;—but the Bible itself will not allow me to think as these men do, whatever their learning is. . . . Nothing can be more apparent, than that the Jews expected that the person who brought baptism amongst them, must be either the Messiah himself, or one of his fore-runners. This was the question of the priests and Levites who came from Jerusalem to ask John, whether he was the Christ, or Elias, or that prophet. And they that were sent were of the Pharisees, a people diligent to know the law, and zealous to advance it. Therefore they ask him farther, ‘ Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not the Christ, nor Elias, nor the prophet?’ And John in his answer shows us, that though the Jews mistook in a circumstance, yet they were right in their notion. I knew him not, says he,

but that HE should be manifest to Israel, 'therefore am I come' baptizing with water. . . . The apostle, in his sermon at Antioch (though he abounded in Jewish learning) seems to say, that they never heard of any baptizing before John, (Acts xiii. 24, 25.) John first preached before Christ the baptism of repentance, to all the people of Israel; and as he fulfilled his course, he said, 'Whom think ye that I am? I am not he'. . . . From which things I conclude, that the first time that ever the church heard of baptism, was in reference to a person who was actually then among them, and after a few weeks was to be declared and shown forth to Israel. . . . To fetch it from the Jews, and especially from those traditional services that obtained in their church, is a wild imagination, and no better than seeking the living among the dead. They had *divers washings* and carnal ordinances, but our baptism was not one of them; for these were only imposed on the people *till the time of reformation*. And therefore, as they were all to be abolished, we cannot suppose that any of those *worldly elements* should be transplanted into our religion, to leave any remains of bondage upon the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Peter speaks to those that knew nothing of that ordinance, as if it were a thing entirely new among them: 'Repent and be baptized every one of you:' and it is said, 'We are baptized into Christ'. . . . Both these solemnities [baptism and the holy supper] are represented as no more than fragments of Judaism. As if there was any propriety in our Lord's telling the disciples, that 'all power was given to him both in heaven and in earth,' only to recommend a scrap of an old religion; or, as if the apostle had any need to say, he had *received that of the Lord*, which he received by *the tradition of his fathers*." Duty and Doct. of Bap. p. 55, 56, 57, 148. Necess. of Contend. for Revealed Relig. p. 50.

2. Lampe.—“ ‘And they asked him and said, Why then baptizest thou if thou be not the Christ?’—They

who think the baptism of proselytes was used before the time of John, observe; That the messengers did not move the question concerning baptism itself, as an unusual rite; but concerning the authority with which he was vested to use it among such persons as were born in covenant with God. It is, however, not only doubtful, whether that baptism be of so great antiquity; but even if we should grant that it was then in use, I do not imagine that the Pharisees here had any thought about it. . . . Altingius, Lightfoot, Carpzovius, Edzardus, and Danzius, have diligently handled this subject; but Wernsdorfius and others have examined their arguments, and shown the uncertainty of their hypothesis. Meanwhile, all the difficulties are not so removed, as to render either the one or the other hypothesis entirely eligible. That rite, perhaps, was the invention of the Pharisees, and so not the general practice of the Jews, but peculiar to that sect, who were fond of bathing." Comment. in Evang. secund. Joan. ad cap. i. 25.

3. Venema.—“Part of John’s office consisted in baptizing—an external rite, then in a particular manner appointed of God, and not used before, (John i. Matt. xxii.)” Hist. Eccles. tom. iii. secul. i. § 5.

4. Gerhardus, when speaking of John the Baptist and of his ministry, asks; “Who would have embraced that new and hitherto unusual ceremony, baptism, without sufficient previous information?” Loci Theolog. tom. iv. de Bap. § 176.

5. Beza.—“‘Why then baptizest thou?’ Hence it appears the Jews were not ignorant, that there should be some alteration in the rites of religion under the Messiah, which they might easily learn from Jerem. xxxi. John most pertinently answers, professing that he was not the author, but only the administrator of this new rite.” Annotat. ad Joan. i. 25, 26.

6. Mr. Selden.—“Maimonides informs us, ‘That a proselyte who is circumcised and not baptized, or bap-

tized and not circumcised, is by no means to be accounted a proselyte, before he be both baptized and circumcised. Nor was baptism lawful, unless performed in the presence of three men. And seeing it is a FORENSIC act (the three men, who presided in this affair, constituting a kind of court,)—therefore, baptism was not rightly administered, either on the sabbath, or on a feast day, or by night. In which times, nevertheless, if peradventure it be performed, the person so baptized is a proselyte.’ That is, the act was not invalid, though it ought not to have been done. What is added concerning the time, relates to the particular days and hours of the court session. But if fewer than three men were present at the baptism, it was accounted vain, and not esteemed an act of initiation. . . . It was never repeated, not even on the posterity of those who had been thus baptized.” *De Jure Nat. et Gent.* l. ii. c. ii. p. 139, 142. Argent. — Vid. *Leusdeni Philol. Heb. Mixt. dissert.* xxi. p. 144; and *Dr. Wall’s Hist. Inf. Bap. Introduct.* p. 50.

7. Deylingius.—“The baptism of proselytes, in our opinion, seems to have been received by the Jews after the time of John the Baptist; they being very much influenced by his authority, and greatly admiring him. Certainly it cannot be proved by any substantial testimony, that it was in use among the Jews before the time of John. There is also a great difference between the baptism of John and that of proselytes, as the latter is described in the monuments of the ancient Hebrews. For the Jewish baptism was a rite of human institution; but John the Baptist introduced his by the command of God, and substituted it in the place of circumcision. . . . The baptism of proselytes was a civil rite, pertaining only to the political court; as *Campegius Vitringa* shows, in his *Archi-Synagogus*, p. 400. But the baptism of John and of Christ, is peculiar to the Christian church, and is the mean of conferring spiritual

benefits. That was not to be continued to children; for the proselyted parents being baptized, their future offspring had no need of baptism. On the contrary, among Christians, the salutary laver is to be continued in regard to their posterity." *Observat. Sac. pars. iii. observ. xxvi. p. 197, 198.*

8. Sir Norton Knatchbull.—“What so visible affinity, I beseech you, is there between a burial and washing, that Christian baptism should be considered as deriving its original from the washings and baptisms of the Jews? If it were true that our baptism was designed to signify a washing or cleansing; or if it were true, that the Jews from the beginning admitted either their own children, or proselytes, into their church, by the administration of baptism, which has been asserted of late by some very learned men, there would, I confess, be a probable argument, that the institution of our baptism was fetched from the baptisms of the Jews; but whereas, concerning the former, the contrary has been already proved,* and concerning the latter, nothing certain appears, I think the old argument of circumcision is much more proper and more strong for the baptism of infants than this, which is *new* and uncertain: for our baptism is really the representation of a burial and a resurrection, and not of washing; as has been sufficiently proved. In regard to the argument of those persons who are inclined to derive our baptism from the Jewish washings, as there is no certainty in it, so likewise it is so far from being supported by the authority of scripture, that I can scarcely find any trace of it in the Old Testament. They would derive its origin from the word כָּבַשׁ, *to wash*, or *cleanse*, (Exod. xix. 10;) but the rabbies, if I mistake not, have the word טָבַל, for baptism, which signifies *immersion*; plainly intimating, that they owe the notion of that word to the Greeks, or rather to the Christians. For what affinity is there between

* See Vol. I. p. 151—153.

washing and immersion? for we read that some were even baptized in sand. But the thing is so uncertain, that it cannot be affirmed concerning the rabbies, that they did not disagree about it among themselves. For in that very passage which is quoted by learned men in favour of the practice, rabbi Eliezer expressly contradicts rabbi Joshua; who was the first, as far as I know, that asserted this kind of baptism among the Jews. For rabbi Eliezer, (as is affirmed by the Talmud) who was cotemporary with rabbi Joshua, if not prior to him, plainly says; *That a proselyte circumcised, and not baptized, is a true proselyte; for so we read concerning our fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who were circumcised and not baptized.* But, on the contrary, rabbi Joshua affirms, *That he who is baptized, and not circumcised, is a proselyte.* Now to which of these shall I prefer an assent? To Eliezer, who affirms what the scripture teaches? or to Joshua, who affirms what the scripture no where asserts? But the rabbies (and what wonder?) patronize the opinion of rabbi Joshua, because it made for their purpose; that is, it was for the honour of the Jewish religion, that the Christians should borrow their sacred rites from them.* But when I see persons of great learning, in these times, deriving the foundations of truth from the rabbies, I cannot but hesitate a little. ‘For whence was the Talmud sent us,’ they are the words of Buxtorf, in his *Synagoga Judaica*, ‘that we should give it so much credit as to believe, that we either ought, or can understand the Mosaic law by the help of it?’ Much less the gospel, to which the compilers of the Talmud were professed enemies. For the Talmud is called, ‘A labyrinth of errors, and the foundation of Jewish fables.’ It was

* “The Jews,” says Dr. Sherlock, “without doubt, would be glad to find in their own law, whatever appears to be excellent in the gospel, that they may show the little need there was for the gospel revelation.” *Use and Intent of Prophecy*, p. 260, edit. 2nd.

perfected and accounted authentic, five hundred years after Christ: it is not reasonable, therefore, to acquiesce in its testimony. And, which is of more force with me, Josephus himself, (to say nothing of all the fathers before the Talmud,) who was also a Jew, and cotemporary with rabbi Eliezer, who likewise professedly wrote concerning the rites, customs, and acts of the Jews, is entirely silent about this affair. To me, therefore, it is an argument next to demonstration, that two persons of such great eminence, both Jews, and cotemporary, the one should expressly deny, and the other make no mention at all of this baptism in his history. Besides, if baptism in the modern sense had been used among the Jews in ancient times, how came the Pharisees thus to address John the Baptist; ‘Why then baptizest thou, if thou art not the Christ, nor Elias, nor that prophet?’ Do they not plainly intimate, that there was no use of baptism before; and that there ought to be none, till either Christ, or Elias, or that prophet should come? How then there should be so great an affinity between our baptism and the baptisms of the Jews, that the one should be thought, by any right or pretence, to succeed the other, is, I confess, beyond my belief. But Arrian, they say, denominates a Jew, one that is *dipped*. I think, however, with his commentator, that he spake confusedly, and rather meant a Christian, than a Jew; as also, in another place, he calls the Christians, *Galileans*. And so Lubinus, on these words of Juvenal, Sat. iii. 13, 14.—

*Nunc sacri fontis nemus, et delubra locantur
Judæis;—*

by *Jews*, will have Christians to be understood; who being expelled the city by an edict of Domitian, were forced to inhabit those woods that were devoted to Pagan superstition.” Animadvers. in Lib. Nov. Test. p. 182, 183, 184.

9. J. G. Carpzovius.—“ We cannot be persuaded, that the baptism of proselytes was prior to the baptism of John and of Christ ; partly, because of the reasons produced by that very great man, Wernsdorfius ; but principally, because there is a want of sufficient witnesses, that the rite was used among the Jews of that time. For the testimonies produced are either from a following age, or of doubtful interpretation, and applied contrary to the design of their authors ; as a bare inspection of them will show. The subject being examined with accuracy, it will appear, that for an article of such weight, a rite of such great necessity, to have been involved in silence for so many ages, without any urgent reason, exceeds all probability. From what quarter soever the Jews derived it, whether from a sinful imitation of Christians, or from an erroneous and perverse interpretation of the ancient oracles, in which mention is made of baptism, or bathing ; certainly they were ignorant of it before the time of John, being contented with the Levitical purification of their bodies and of their garments, according to the divine law. Nor, in so great an obscurity relating to these things, do I determine the precise time of this rite commencing ; whether it was before the entire destruction of their city, or after ; though I am rather inclined to the latter opinion . . . But supposing, though we do not admit, that the bathing of proselytes was in use when the new dispensation commenced, yet it remains firm and certain, that the sacrament of baptism has nothing answerable to the baptism of proselytes ; nor was it derived from that rite, but was immediately appointed of God. For as John was immediately sent of God to baptize, (John i. 33 ; Luke iii. 2,) so Christ introduced the ordinance of baptism, not from that of the rabbies for the admission of proselytes ; but from the most wise counsel of God, from the bosom of the Father, (John i. 18 ; Matt. xxviii. 19.)” *Apparat. Hist. Crit. Antiq. Sac. Annotat. p. 49, 50.*

10. Joh. Reinh. Rus.—“ Though the baptism of proselytes was in use among the Jews before the time of John, yet it cannot be properly said that the baptism of John had its origin from that of the Jews.” Apud Carpzovium, *ut supra*.

11. Bœrnerus.—“ It appears from the question of those messengers that were sent by the Sanhedrim, equally as from the answer to it which John gave, that John was the very first person who administered baptism among the Jews. Because the Jews were of opinion, that *to baptize* was peculiar to the Messiah; and therefore they expected the baptism of initiation should be instituted by the Messiah himself, or at least by those who should attend his appearance; namely, Elias, or him whom they called, That prophet.” Apud Carpzovium, *ubi supra*.

12. Dr. Owen.—“ The celebrated Selden has endeavoured to prove, that Christ borrowed the rite of baptism from that which was then in use among the Jews. Others do the same. . . . Learned men teach, and confidently affirm, that a proselyte of righteousness was never made, though circumcised, without being baptized. But that any one should be made a partaker of all the privileges of that church, there was need only of circumcision, as express testimonies of the holy scripture teach; for so the law runs, (Exod. xii. 48.) Concerning the rabbinical baptism, not a tittle. But they think that this proselyte baptism took its rise from another legal appointment. . . . For before the giving of the law Jehovah spake to Moses, and said; ‘Go unto the people and sanctify them to-day and to-morrow, and let them wash their clothes,’ (Exod. xix. 10). . . . But this was the washing of their *clothes*. By clothes, they say, the *whole body* is understood. Whence does that appear? The rabbies so teach. There is no reason, however, that we should believe them, contrary to express testimonies of scripture. . . . This washing of

clothes served that single occasion only, and was a token of reverence for the divine presence in the solemn giving of the law; nor did it pertain to the stated worship of God. So that the necessity of baptizing *persons*, by a stated and solemn rite for ever, should arise from a single instance of washing *garments*, and that depending on a reason which would never more occur; concerning the observation of which no mention is made, nor is any trace found in all the Old Testament, and which is not confirmed by any divine command, appointment, or direction, seems absolutely improbable. . . . The institution of the rite of baptism is no where mentioned in the Old Testament. There is no example of it in those ancient records; nor was it ever used in the admission of proselytes while the Jewish church continued. No mention of it occurs in Philo, in Josephus, in Jesus the son of Syrach, nor in the evangelical history. This rabbinical opinion, therefore, owes its rise to the *Tanneræ*, or Ante-Mishnical doctors, after the destruction of their city. . . . The opinion of some learned men, therefore, about the transferring of a Jewish baptismal rite (which, in reality, did not then exist) by the Lord Jesus for the use of his disciples, IS DESTITUTE OF ALL PROBABILITY." Theologoumena, l. v. digress. iv. p. 425, 426, 427. On Heb. vol. i. exercit. xix. p. 272. See also his Enquiry into Orig. Nat. of Churches; p. 36, 37.

13. Dr. Jennings.—“It is a farther supposition of Godwin’s, [in his *Moses and Aaron*] that our Saviour converted this Jewish proselyte baptism into a Christian sacrament. Upon this notion, Dr. Wall hath founded an argument for baptizing children, as well as adult persons; because, when a parent was proselyted all his children were baptized, as well as all his male children circumcised. But as baptism was administered, according to the Jewish doctors, only to the children born before his proselytism, not to any born afterwards, nor to his more distant posterity, who were esteemed holy

branches, in virtue of springing from a holy root; some infer that, under the Christian dispensation, baptism is only to be administered to converts from Judaism, Mahometanism, Paganism, or some other religion, and to their descendants born before their conversion and baptism, but to none born after. Mr. Emlyn, in particular, insists upon this argument against the constant and universal obligation of infant baptism. But after all, it remains to be proved, not only that Christian baptism was instituted in the room of proselyte baptism, but that the Jews had any such baptism in our Saviour's time. The earliest accounts we have of it are in the Mishna and Gemara: the former compiled, as the Jews assert, by rabbi Juda, in the second century, though learned men in general bring it several centuries lower; the latter not till the seventh century. There is not a word of it in Philo; nor yet in Josephus, though he gives an account of the proselyting of the Idumeans by Hyrcanus. Indeed, on this occasion, he mentions only circumcision as the rite of initiation; and saith, that upon receiving this rite, and living according to the Jewish law, they, from that time, became Jews. And notwithstanding he speaks of John's baptism, yet it is under a very different notion from the proselyte baptism spoken of by the Mishnical rabbies. 'This good man,' saith he, 'did Herod kill, who exhorted the virtuous, just, and pious, to come to his baptism; for he looked upon baptism to be acceptable to God, when used, not for purging away certain offences, but for purifying the body, the soul having been before cleansed by righteousness.' So that he makes John's baptism to be of the nature of the Jewish purifications, or ceremonial washings, without having any reference to proselyte baptism; which, on this occasion, he could hardly have failed mentioning, if it had been then in use. It is alleged, however, in favour of its antiquity, That it is mentioned by Arrian, who lived in the year one hundred and fifty;

for, speaking of a philosopher's obligation to act agreeably to his character, he hath this illustration: 'If we see any one change his profession, (or become a Jew,) we do not for that reason style him a Jew, but regard him as a hypocrite. Yet, when he discovers the disposition and manners of one who is baptized, *τον βεβαμμενον*, and enlisted in that sect, then he both is, and is called a Jew.' But to this it is replied, That nothing was more common, than for the Heathens to confound the Jews and Christians.* Even Festus, who governed for some time in Judea, seems to have taken the Christians only for a sect of the Jews, (Acts xxv. 19, 20.) Suetonius speaks of an insurrection made by the Jews, *impulsore Chresto*. And it is most likely that Arrian meant Christians in the place alleged; because, in his time, many persons became proselytes to Christianity, but few or none to Judaism; the Jews, who were scattered amongst all nations, being every where oppressed and despised. Besides, if he had spoke of proselytes to Judaism, it is highly probable he would have mentioned their circumcision, for which the Heathens derided them, rather than their baptism, which was not so very foreign to some of the Heathen rites of purification. Upon the whole, it is more likely the Jews took the hint of proselyte baptism after our Saviour's time, than that he borrowed his baptism from theirs; which, whenever it came into practice, was one of those additions to the law of God, which he severely censures. . . . There wants more evidence of its being as ancient as our Saviour's time, than I apprehend can be produced, to ground any argument upon it in relation to Christian baptism." Jewish Antiquities, b. i. chap. iii. vol. i. p. 135—138.

* To confirm this idea, the reader may consult Dr. Owen's *Theologoumena*, l. i. c. ix. p. 105; Mr. Henry and Dr. Doddridge, on Acts xviii. 2; Huetii *Demonstrat. Evang. proposit. iii.*; Dr. Lardner's *Credibility*, vol. i. p. 165; Mr. Weston's *Reject. of Christ. Miracles*, p. 25, 26; Quenstedii *Antiq. Bib.* p. 920; and, Mr. Bingham's *Orig. Eccles.* b. i. chap. i. § 10.

14. Dr. Benson.—“As I am not fully satisfied about that fact, [the Jewish custom of initiating Heathen proselytes by baptism,] I would propose my difficulties, with a view to excite others to a farther enquiry into that particular. I have not, in the Old Testament, found any instance of one person’s washing another, by way of consecration, purification, or sanctification; except that of Moses’s washing Aaron and his sons, when he set them apart unto the office of priests, (Lev. viii. 6.) I cannot find that the Jews do at present practise any such thing, as that of baptizing the proselytes that go over to them, though they are said to make them wash themselves.* Where is there any intimation of such a practice among the Jews before the coming of our Lord? If any one could produce any clear testimony of that kind from the Old Testament, the Apocrypha, Josephus, or Philo, that would be of great moment. In former times, proselytes, coming over from Heathenism to the Jewish religion, used to wash themselves; which is a very different thing from baptism, or persons being washed by another. . . . I do not absolutely deny, that the Jews initiated proselytes by baptism; but I mention these difficulties and objections, with regard to that fact.” Paraphrase and Notes on Epistles of Paul, p. 641, 642, edit. 2nd.

Note. To the foregoing authors I may add several others. Mr. Alsop, for instance, in opposition to one who had asserted, that Christ made his own institutions of baptism and the Lord’s supper, as consonant to the Jewish customs as it was possible, says; “A notable instance it was of his condescension, if it was but true; but I am afraid we shall not be so happy as to see clear

* Thus Leo Modena: “If any have a mind to be made a Jew, he must first be examined strictly by three rabbins, or other persons in authority. . . . They then take and circumcise him; and as soon as he is well of his sore, he is to *wash himself* all over in water.” Hist. of Rites and Customs of the Jews, part v. chap. ii.

evidence of it.”*—Dr. Doddridge acknowledges, that the antiquity “of proselyte baptism among the Jews, is a matter of considerable debate;” though he thinks there is preponderating evidence in favour of it.†—Pfeifferus, when adverting to what a learned Englishman asserts on this disputed subject, says: “We think the comparison formed by Lightfoot, between proselyte baptism and the sacrament of initiation for Christians, should be admitted *cum magno grano salis*.”‡—Keldermannus opposes the notion of Christian baptism being derived from the proselyte bathing.§—Carpzovius informs us, that Wernsdorfius published a piece entitled, “De Baptismi Christianorum Origine mere divinâ, A. D. 1710; in which he not only denies that the baptism of proselytes was at all practised before the time of John and of Christ, but also gravely demonstrates, that the Jews, from a sinful emulation, surreptitiously took this washing of proselytes from the Christian church, after the subversion of their city and republic.”|| The same learned author tells us, that Zeltnerus, a person exceedingly well versed in Jewish antiquities, published a dissertation, entitled, *De Initiis Baptismi Initiationis Judæorum*, A. D. 1711; in which he supports the opinion of Wernsdorf, maintaining, that the baptism of proselytes was invented by the Jews in imitation of Christian baptism. He supposes it was brought into the synagogue by degrees, among other ceremonies of the Jews, who were ardently expecting the Messiah’s appearance.¶—Carpzovius adds: “The arguments of that great man, Wernsdorf, have such force, that very many of our theological writers who love pure doctrine, have adopted the same view of the subject; of whom it may be sufficient now to mention, Joh. Fetchius, Joh. Wink-

* Sober Enquiry, p. 250.

† Lectures, p. 511.

‡ Antiq. Ebr. c. i. § 5. § Biblioth. Bremens. class. iv. p. 174.

|| Appar. Historico-Crit. Antiq. Sac. Cod. et Gent. Heb. Annotat. p. 47.

¶ Ut supra.

lerus, and the learned authors of Collect. Vett. & Novor.*—Joh. Alb. Fabricius, when speaking of the rabbinical plunging, says: “Surely, it is plain that there is no certain testimony of its existence before the time of John the Baptist.”†

REFLECTIONS.

Reflect. I. By these testimonies of learned Pædobaptists, we are taught, that the Jewish proselyte baptism was rather a civil than a religious rite, No. 6, 7;—that the rabbies themselves were divided about the necessity of it, No. 8;—that its administration was confined to proselytes, and to such children as were born prior to the incorporation of their parents with the Jewish church, No. 6, 7, 13;—that the earliest accounts of this baptism are contained in the Talmuds, No. 9, 13;—that there is no evidence of such a rite being administered to proselytes in the time of our Lord, but strong presumptive proof to the contrary, No. 1, 7, 8, 11, 13;—that, supposing there was a custom of this kind, it is unreasonable to imagine that Christian baptism was derived from it; because it must be considered as totally destitute of divine authority, as a tradition of the fathers, and as very severely censured by our Lord himself, No. 9, 10, 13;—that it is absurd to imagine our divine Legislator should challenge to himself *all authority in heaven and on earth*, when going to recommend a human invention, which had been annexed to an antiquated system, No. 1;—and, therefore, that the derivation of Christian baptism from the Jews, is destitute of all probability, and a wild imagination, No. 1, 8, 9 12.

Reflection II. By the quotations produced it plainly appears, that the Baptists are not the only persons who deny that venerable antiquity of proselyte baptism for which so many plead; and that they are far from being led by mere hypothesis to reject the rabbinical rite, as

* Ut supra. † Bibliographia Antiquaria, p. 392. Hamb. 1716.

having no connection with the Christian ordinance now before us. It is worthy of remark also, that the most learned defenders of this Talmudical bathing, are greatly divided about the antiquity and origin of it. Witsius, for instance, frankly acknowledges that he knows neither its antiquity, nor whence it arose.*—Buddeus considers its commencement as entirely uncertain; but he conjectures, that it was invented by the superstitious Pharisees prior to the incarnation.†—Shickard and Meyer imagine that it was adopted by the Jews out of an aversion to the Samaritans.‡—Sir John Marsham supposes that it was begun by the Israelites, in imitation of the Egyptians, in regard to their manner of initiation into the mysteries of their goddess Isis.§—With him Dr. Spencer agrees, who thinks that the Jews received it from the neighbouring nations, that usually prepared candidates for the more sacred functions of their idolatrous religion, by a solemn ablution. So it was customary among the Egyptians, Persians, Greeks, Romans, and others, for those that were to be initiated into their mysteries, or sacred rites, to be first purified by dipping their whole body in water.||—Mr. John Hutchinson pronounces baptism a typical rite universally practised.¶—Sperling considers the baptism of ancient Heathens, before the time of Moses, as a kind of introduction to it.**—Heidegger and Lightfoot fix its commencement in the time of Jacob.††—Grotius imagines it commenced immediately after the deluge, in commemoration of the world's being purified by water.‡‡—Mr.

* Miscel. Sac. tom. ii. exercit. xv. § 55.

† Theolog. Dogmat. l. v. c. i. § 2.

‡ Apud Pfeiffer, Antiq. Ebraicæ, c. i. § 5.

§ In Dr. Gill's Dissert. on Bap. of Jewish Pros. chap. v.

|| In Encyclopæd. Britan. vol. ii. art. Baptism.

¶ Abstract of his Works, p. 272.

** In Dr. Gill, as above, chap. v. p. 91.

†† Heidegg. Corp. Theolog. tom. ii. p. 437. Lightfoot, in Poli Synops. ad Mat. iii. 6.

‡‡ Apud Polum, ut supra.

Brownsays, "Possibly this rite commenced immediately after the flood."*—Rhenferd carries it up to the time of our father Adam.†—Mr. Dorrington supposes it was "appointed by God, in the beginning;" and that "it is a rite belonging to the old religion of the world."‡—Such is the honourable origin, and such the high antiquity of the baptismal rite! What ideas these fanciful conjectures may excite in my reader, I cannot pretend to say; but they remind me of claims advanced by defenders of the monastic life, to the hoary antiquity of that practice. Some of them are contented to consider John the Baptist as the first person of the monkish order. Others, not satisfied with an idea of the institution's being so novel, fix on Elijah as the founder of that fraternity. Others, disdaining such a comparatively modern date, go back beyond the flood, and claim the illustrious Enoch as the reverend father of the whole brotherhood. Bolducius maintains that the *Nephilim*, or *giants*, mentioned in Gen. vi. 4, were monks; and that Enos, together with his dependants, were of the Carthusian order. While others, ascending to our first parents in paradise, consider Adam as a monk, and Eve as a nun; connecting the progress of monachism with that of the church.§

Still farther to show the extravagant lengths to which a rage for hypothesis has often proceeded, the following particulars of a miscellaneous kind are produced. Mr. Sale: "The Mohammedans will have it that they [the ablutions practised by them] are as ancient as Abraham, who, they say, was enjoined by God to observe them. . . . Nay, some deduce the matter higher, and

* Dict. of Bible, art. Baptism, edit. 1778.

† In Dr. Gill, as before, chap. v. p. 63.

‡ Vindicat. of the Christ. Church in Baptiz. Inf. p. 37.

§ Hospinianus de Monachis, l. ii. c. iii. F. Fabricii Christ. Fundament. Eccles. p. 445. Vita Hospiniani, præfixa Operibus. Heidegg. Corp. Theolog. tom. ii. p. 674. Pfeifferi Dub. Vexat. cent. i. loc. xvii. xxiii.

imagine that these ceremonies were taught our first parents by the angels."*—Mr. Bate: "This is the first time [Gen. xvii.] circumcision is expressly mentioned; but that is no proof it was not an *original* rite. If the covenant of God was with Adam, this seal of the covenant, one would think, must too. Adam had the law, and therefore this seal of the righteousness which is by the law. And if Abraham had neglected it in his wanderings, so had the children of Israel in their wandering in the wilderness."†—Anonymous: "The knowledge of *tithes*, as of sacrifices, descended from Adam."‡—Dr. Durell: "The custom of setting aside the *tenth* for religious purposes is so ancient, that its origin cannot be traced. It is probable, from what we read Gen. xiv. 20, that it had its birth in the antediluvian world; perhaps even in *paradise* itself; and that the tenths are coeval, if not one and the same, with sacrifices; and no custom seems to have been more universal than that of paying them."§—Thus we are taught that Christian baptism and Mohammedan purifications, circumcision, monachism, and tithes, are all of paradisiacal origin. Admirable antiquity, indeed! Hardly exceeded by any thing that I recollect, except those marble tablets on which Jehovah inscribed his law; and they, we are assured by Jewish authors, were prepared before the creation of the world.||

Reflect. III. Various particulars recorded by the evangelists, render it improbable that the Jews had any such baptism in those times. For instance: John, the son of Zacharias, was distinguished among his countrymen by the name of THE BAPTIST, on account of his immersing proselytes to the faith he preached. This, doubtless, wears the appearance of proselyte baptism be-

* Koran, Prelim. Discourse, sect. iv. p. 139.

† Critica Heb. p. 315.

‡ In Mr. Wyeth's Switch for the

Snake, p. 407. § Heb. Text of Parall. Proph. p. 178, 179. Note.

|| See Dr. Gill on 2 Cor. iii. 3.

ing entirely a new practice; and is a presumptive evidence, that the Jews had no such custom among them in those times. "The baptism of John," says our Lord, "was it from heaven, or of men? Answer me."* Now had it been, as many of our Brethren suppose, a well-known custom before our Saviour's time to baptize proselytes, it would have been easy for those priests, and scribes, and elders, to have replied, "It was *from men*." It originated among our fathers before John was born." For supposing the venerable John to have received a divine commission to administer that institution, yet the rite itself, on the hypothesis of our opponents, was *of men*. Nay, this is maintained by some who embrace the hypothesis here opposed, as appears by the following quotation from an anonymous author, which I find in J. Cloppenburg: "The baptism of John was not at first and absolutely of divine institution."† Now this is fairly admitting the natural and necessary consequence of the principle adopted, respecting proselyte baptism. The Jews, however, not being able to assert any such thing, without exposing themselves to the charge of a notorious falsehood, were quite confounded; for there is no reason to think that they were apprehensive of being stoned, barely for speaking a well-known truth; as their proselyte baptism must have been, had it been an established practice.—Baptism is called the *counsel of God*.‡ But had it been practised in the admission of proselytes before the ministry of John commenced, it could not have been so denominated, because it would have been the device of men; for none of our Brethren, so far as I have observed, pretend to demonstrate the divine institution of this Jewish initiatory bathing.—Again: When Paul says, the Israelites "were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea," he seems very plainly to intimate, as Dr. Gale observes, that there was no other

* Mark xi. 30, 31, 32.
p. 351.

† Syntag. Select. Exercit. Theolog.

‡ Luke vii. 29, 30.

baptizing to Moses but this; else why should he call this, the *baptizing to Moses*? “It would have been much more natural to refer to that more familiar initiatory baptism which our adversaries plead for, if the apostles had known of it, than to this figurative one. And then to make this parallel to our baptism is very improper, if they had used another which resembled ours. . . . The apostle Peter makes our baptism to be the antitype of the ark, ‘in which few were saved by water’ . . . But is it not strange the sacred writers should point out these allusions, and yet never in the least hint at the ancient ceremony from whence our baptism, it is pretended, was immediately borrowed? Nothing, surely, can look more improbable.”*

As there is no appearance in the New Testament of this proselyte baptism, but strong presumptive proof to the contrary; so Dr. Gill, who was well versed in both Jewish and Christian antiquity, unites with Sir Norton Knatchbull, (No. 8,) in assuring us, That there is no mention of it in any of the fathers, for the first three or four hundred years; nor in the writings of those who flourished before the Talmuds were compiled.† The same learned author farther informs us, that the Christians of our Lord’s time, “are called by the Jews, in a way of contempt, *apostates*, that received the doctrine of baptism, and were dipped in Jordan.”‡—The following quotations from Tertullian by Mr. Barker, and his remark upon them, deserve regard. “Before the Lord’s suffering, [says the African father,] forgiveness was by faith alone; but when faith was increased—baptism was added. . . . The pool of Bethesda,—the figure of the bodily remedy represented the spiritual one:—the waters of the flood, by which the old wickedness was washed away;—the people going out of Egypt passed through the water, —a figure of baptism:—the water was healed of its

* Reflections, p. 371. 372.
 † Dr. Gill on Matt. iii. 6.

† Dr. Gill on Matt. iii. 6.

bitterness by wood:—the water which flowed out of the rock:—Christ himself was baptized. . . . The Gentiles— are initiated to some sacred rites by washing;—purify houses, temples, and whole cities by sprinkling;—and among the ancients he who was accused of murder, purged himself by water. . . . We see the aim of the devil imitating the things of God, when he uses a baptism on his worshippers.” Thus Tertullian. On which Mr. Barker observes as follows. “The fathers are fond of finding any thing like baptism among the Jews; and imagine imitations of it among the Heathens, often when the likeness was without design, as in Justin Martyr, as well as here. But though they have brought in all they can find, right or wrong, there is not a word of any supposed Jewish proselyte baptism, which would have been more similar than any of them; whence it is plain to me, they knew of no such thing; on the contrary, he [Tertullian] here speaks of baptism, as a thing which began with, and was peculiar to Christianity. The Gentile rites, in my mind, are not imitations of baptism, but of the Jewish purifications.”*

The following extracts from Dr. Gale, are worthy of notice. “Barnabas, in that Catholic epistle, (if indeed it be his,) whereof we have the greatest part still remaining in the original, though he is wholly employed about Jewish rites, &c. has not one word concerning the baptism our Pædobaptists contend for; which being the same as to externals with one of our holy sacraments, could not, had this holy man known it, have been passed by at such a time. Nay, more, in one place he applies himself to find out some preludes of our Christian baptism; and yet even there, where it would have been so natural and necessary, we meet with no footsteps of it. ‘Let us see,’ says he, ‘whether God took care to manifest any thing beforehand concerning water and the cross.’ Who would not expect here to have that bap-

* Duty and Benefits of Bap. p. 89, 90.

tism itself mentioned which was the fore-runner and type of ours, and from whence it was immediately taken, if there had been any such? . . . Justin Martyr, in his long dispute with Trypho the Jew, mentions perhaps all their other rites and their legal washings, but is utterly silent as to this initiatory baptism; and there are some passages which seem to argue he was ignorant of it.”* On a deliberate and impartial survey of the case, we may therefore safely conclude; That the Papists and Lutherans have much better evidence, with regard to antiquity, in favour of *exorcism*, than any which can be produced for the Jewish proselyte baptism. For as a learned Lutheran, when speaking of the former, says; “It is a very ancient rite, and was practised among the Jews in the time of Christ; who are said to have used it in expelling demons, (Luke xi. 19; Acts xix. 3.) . . . Exorcism also, in a very early age, began to be connected with the sacrament of baptism, as is testified by Cyprian.”†

Reflect. IV. But supposing it were incontestably proved, that the Jews had such a custom before the ministry of John commenced; it would by no means follow, that our Lord paid it any regard in the appointment of Christian baptism, and that for several reasons. For if he made that initiatory rite the model of his own appointment; and if a knowledge of the former be of great use to understand who are interested in the latter, as many Pædobaptists pretend; that information must be obtained either from what our divine Teacher says in the New Testament, or from the traditions and records of the Jews. But our Lord says not a word about any such thing, in all the apostolic writings. We find baptism repeatedly mentioned, solemnly appointed, frequently practised, and the design of it explained; but nothing at all relating to this proselyte baptism. If, therefore, we

* Reflections, p. 373, 374.

† Deylingii de Prudentiâ Pastoral. pars iii. c. iii. § 27.

obtain the useful intelligence about it, so as to help us in settling who are the subjects of our Sovereign's appointment, it must be by having recourse to the Jewish synagogue. Now is it not—let common sense determine—is it not far more probable, that Christ intended his own commission for the observance of baptism, as the *only law* of administration, and the practice of his apostles as the *only example* for his people to follow; than that he should leave either its mode or subjects, to be learned from the traditions of an apostate people, or the records of their admired but impious Talmuds? * Can it be imagined, that our Lord should appoint baptism for *all* his disciples; that he should give them a body of doctrine and a code of law in his New Testament; and after all, tacitly refer them to the writings of his enemies—those writings which are the registers of their own pride, and madness, and shame—writings too, of which perhaps a great majority of Christians never heard, nor had it in their power to read—in order to learn, *whom he intended to be baptized?* See Part II. Chap. I. Reflect. III.

Again: It is generally agreed by theological writers, if I mistake not, that Sir John Marsham and Dr. Spencer have not only erred from the truth, but greatly dishonoured the Jewish economy, by maintaining that circumcision, and various other positive rites, were adopted by Jehovah from the Egyptian *sacra*; because that hypothesis naturally tends to ennoble the Pagan superstition, and to depreciate the Mosaic system of worship, with which those borrowed rites are supposed to have been incorporated. “But who,” as Deylingius observes, “who can believe that the most holy God appointed to Abraham, for a sign of the covenant, an Egyptian rite, devised by the accursed posterity of Ham; and that he so severely enjoined it, under a capital punishment, on his own people, who were chosen for his peculium, and for the pursuit of holiness above all the nations of the

* Vide Witsii *Judeus Christianizans*, cap. iv.

earth?"*—Thus the learned Vander Waeyen: "Did it become God to borrow the greatest part of his laws from Satan?"†—Thus also the ingenious and eloquent Saurin: "It was in order to lessen the majesty of the Jewish religion, that its enemies have often asserted, that the Jews received the rites of circumcision from the Heathens. We may see several examples thereof in the philosopher Celsus, and in Julian the Apostate. The strongest demonstrations will be necessary to invalidate the notion, which the text of Moses does at first offer to our mind, and to engage a reasonable man to adopt a sentiment so disadvantageous in appearance to the Jewish religion."‡—Now if the opinion that circumcision was originally taken from an ancient heathen practice, and appointed by Jehovah for the use of his own people, be degrading to the Hebrew ritual, it cannot be for the honour of Christianity, to imagine that the first of its positive ordinances was originally a human invention, and borrowed of the superstitious Jews; the generality of whom were as hardened opposers of Jesus Christ, and as inimical to the interests of his kingdom, as any of the heathens were to the glory of Jehovah, or to the welfare of his chosen people. From various particulars recorded in the evangelical history, there is reason to think that the scribes and pharisees, and priests and elders of those times, were not much superior to the rabbies of Tiberias in a following age, of whom Dr. Lightfoot says: "Recollect, I beseech you, the names of the rabbins of Tiberias, from the first situation of the university there, to the time that it expired; and what at length do you find, but a kind of men mad with Pharis-

* *Observat. Sac.* pars ii; *observ. vi.* § 2.

† *Varia Sacra*, p. 278. *Vid.* p. 265—622.

‡ *Dissertat. upon the Old Test.* p. 136, 137, 394, 395. *Vid.* *Wit-sii Ægyptiac.* l. iii. c. vi. *Heidegg. Corp. Theol.* loc. xv. § 8, 9, 10. *Basnagii Exercitac. Hist. Crit.* p. 118, 119. *Carpzovii Introduct. ad Lib. Bib.* pars i. p. 104—113. *Lips.* 1731. *Lomeieri De Vet. Gent. Lustrat.* cap. 2.

ism, bewitching with traditions, and bewitched; blind, guileful, doting, they must pardon me if I say, magical and monstrous?—Read over the Jerusalem Talmud, and see there how R. Judah, R. Chaninah, &c. and the rest of the grand doctors among the rabbins of Tiberias behave themselves; how earnestly they do nothing; how childishly they handle serious matters; how much of sophistry, froth, poison, smoke, nothing at all there is in their disputes! ”* Now, is it likely that our divine Lord would make a ceremony which originated in the ignorance and superstition of such men, the ground or model of a Christian ordinance? *Credat Judæus appella*. With the utmost propriety, therefore, we may adopt the language of Dr. Doddridge in another case, and say; “This is so unnatural [a supposition] that rather than admit it, one would question the truth of that Jewish tradition.” † Why, then, in the name of consistency, why should Protestant authors reject with contempt the Papal traditions, while they so eagerly embrace one that is rabbinical? The treatment with which the Romish traditions meet among learned Protestants, my reader may learn from the following passage of Chamier. “That traditions should be considered as a kind of explications of the written word, how ridiculous! how foolish! how Papistical is the fiction!” ‡ —With equal propriety might the Jews have concurred with Celsus the Heathen, in representing circumcision as derived from the idolatrous Egyptians; § .as Christians compliment the unbelieving Jews by confessing, that baptism was borrowed of their superstitious forefathers.

Farther: Admitting this rabbinical rite was practised in the time of our Lord, it is, notwithstanding, highly unreasonable to consider it as a rule of adminis-

* Works, vol. ii. p. 73. Vid. Dr. Owen on Heb. vol. i. exercit. vii.

† Note on Mark xiv. 72. See his Note on Luke xv. 7.

‡ Panstrat. tom. i. l. viii. c. vi. § 13.

§ Origenes Contra Celsum, l. i. p. 17, edit. Spencer.

tering Christian baptism. For if a rule, it must be either partial or complete. That it is the latter, Pædobaptists in general do not pretend. Thus, for instance, Dr. Doddridge: "If we were to allow it to be such as the rabbies in after ages describe it, [and who knows any thing about it by any other means?] then it can never be imagined that our Lord would direct his apostles in all respects to conform themselves to it; and if not in *all*, who can say exactly in how many?"* Aye, who indeed!—It must be treated, therefore, as a partial rule; a rule, with certain limitations. How far, then, and in what respects must it be applied? To the mode, or the subjects, or the circumstances, or the effects of the ordinance? If to the *mode*; not pouring, or sprinkling, but immersion (terrifying as it is to many, and that *naked* too, as Danzius assures us)† must be constantly used: it being notorious, and allowed on all hands, that the proselyte baptism was not any thing short of plunging in water. If to the *subjects*; then it will follow, that no native Jew must be baptized—that no uncircumcised male is qualified for baptism—that it must not be administered to a child, with which the mother was pregnant at the time of her own baptism—that when a parent is baptized, not only his infant offspring, but his children that are more advanced in age, have a claim to the ordinance—that the converts from Judaism, Mohammedanism, and Paganism, but none of their future offspring, while professing Christianity, should be baptized—and that it is not necessary for any candidate to make a credible profession of that faith which is connected with salvation; for it does not appear from any thing I have observed in writers upon the subject, that such a profession was necessary to the proselyte baptism. If to the *circumstances* of administration; then

* Lectures, p. 511.

† De Bap. Proselyt. Judaic. § 36. Vid. Quenstedtii Antiq. Bib. pars i. p. 909.

it will follow, that baptism, to render it lawful, must be performed in the presence of three witnesses, who are men of eminence—that persons may baptize themselves—and that it must not be administered on the sabbath, on a supposed holy day, or in the night. If to the *effects* of the ordinance; then, as represented by the Jews, the party baptized is like a new-born infant; he receives a new soul, all his former connections are dissolved, and the obligations arising from them are annihilated; so that, without the least imputation of a criminal kind, he may contract matrimony with his own sister, his daughter, or his mother.*—Now to which of these particulars will Christian baptism apply? Or how far is the rule suggested by this Jewish custom, to be regarded in administering our Lord's appointment? That it should have *some* regard, the generality of our Brethren maintain; insisting upon it, that our divine Legislator was less explicit in what he said concerning baptism, because it was frequently practised in those times.† According to them, therefore, it is of real and great importance to know, what that Jewish ceremony was, to whom administered, with what circumstances, and with what expectations. These things, however, we cannot learn, except from the writings of the Jews themselves; and those records contain the preceding intelligence concerning these particulars. If then the proselyte bathing stand in so close a connection with Christian baptism, as our opponents maintain; and if the former be at all a direction for the administration of the latter, it must be so invariably, as far as that direction extends; be-

* See Mr. Emlyn's Previous Question; Dr. John Gale's Sermons, vol. ii. p. 218—230; Dr. Wall's Hist. Inf. Bap. Introd. § 3, 6; Dr. Gill's Dissertation on Proselyte Bap. chap. v.; Witsii Œcon. l. iv. c. xvi. § 6; Mr. Selden De Jure Nat. et Gent. l. ii. c. iv.; Mr. Tombes's Antipædobaptism, part ii. sect. xxiv.; and M. Picart's Relig. Cerem. vol. i. p. 232, 233.

† Dr. Wall, ut supra, p. 56, 57. Witsii Œcon. l. iv. c. xvi. § 42.

cause, on this principle, Jesus Christ had such a respect for that Jewish ceremony, as tacitly to remit his followers to it for a comment on his own institution.

But still we seem at a loss for that degree of regard which is due to this example of the ancient synagogue; Christ and his apostles being silent, entirely silent about it. For any thing which they have said concerning the rabbinical rite, it may be a complete rule in reference to Christian baptism, and binding in every particular. In this most respectable point of light, one learned author seems indeed to have considered it. Thus he speaks: "Very probable [it is] that the apostles made parents and *major domo's* stipulate in the name of their minors, when they baptized them, as the Jews were wont to do. . . . Nay, there is little reason to doubt, but that the Jewish being the *pattern* of the Christian baptism, the apostles and their assistants, who were Jews or Hellenists, did observe this custom of vicarious stipulation at the baptism of infants and minors, as well as *all the other particulars*, in which they resemble one another, as the picture doth the face whose picture it is."* Admirable evidence, that infant baptism and the business of gossips are both from heaven! This, according to the old proverb, is killing two birds with one stone!—In reference, however, to such of our opposers as do not agree with the dean of Worcester in this representation of the proselyte baptism, we may venture to ask; Who shall take upon him to say, Thus far the Jewish example operates; hither the rule suggested by it extends and is binding—but no farther? With what appearance of reason, or authority, do any select one particular, in preference to many others; and then argue from the Jewish to Christian baptism, with reference to that single point? Such a procedure is far from treating the proselyte bathing as a rule of understanding our Lord's commission, and of directing our conduct in compliance with

* Cases to Recover Dissenters, vol. ii. p. 468.

it; for it is only accommodating according to our own inclination a particular fact, detached from many others with which it is closely connected. Whoever believes that our Lord expressed his mind more concisely in relation to baptism, than he would have done had not this Jewish rite then existed, should certainly pay a more impartial regard to what the rabbies have said concerning their initiatory ceremony; for the conduct of our opposers in this respect, seems calculated merely to serve a purpose, and proves nothing so much, as their want of argument from divine revelation.

Our opponents have often suggested, that the proselyte plunging in the time of our Lord, superseded the necessity of an *express command* for infant baptism. But might not the Papists and Lutherans as well say, There was no need of Christ giving an express command for *exorcism*, seeing it was practised among the Jews in the time of his public ministry?—Supposing, however, that what is pretended were granted, we should still be at a loss to account for the want of a plain example. If our brethren be right, not only the penmen of the New Testament, but all the twelve apostles, all the seventy disciples, and all the apostolic ministers were Pædobaptists. Now, if those venerable men espoused the sentiment and practised the ceremony against which we here contend, the baptism of infants must have been very common among them; and yet, common as it was, on that supposition, it is not so much as once mentioned in the records of inspiration. Must we then consider that same Jewish bathing, as having rendered a *precedent* for Pædobaptism quite unnecessary, and as tacitly forbidding the sacred writers to say a word about it? Had the rabbinical baptism then existed, and had our divine Legislator, together with the apostles as publishers of his laws, paid it such a regard, we might well have wondered; nay, we might have had reason to execrate that invention of an apostate people, as being the

occasion of so much darkness attending a New Testament rite, in which the disciples of Christ are deeply interested. But while we conclude, that our gracious Lord was more concerned, when enacting the law of baptism, expressly to command the whole of what he required, than to dignify a human invention; and while we believe that the apostles, when writing under his direction, were far from omitting an important fact, because, at some time or other, the collectors of Jewish fables would supply that deficiency; we must maintain, that the want of both precept and precedent for infant baptism, is an essential defect attending the cause of our opposers. We may venture to add, that every endeavour to supply the deficiency by appealing to rabbinical customs, is a keen reflection upon the inspired historic pen, and little short of a libel on the legislative character of Jesus Christ. But yet, as Dr. Owen has justly observed, "Certain it is, that men are exceedingly apt to take up with learned conjectures out of heathen [and Jewish] writers, though pressing hard on the reputation of sacred truth."* To persons of this character Mr. Bate administers the following rebuke: "What the word of God does not warrant, breaks in upon that word. . . . If God have spoken from heaven, and be able to tell us the truth, what is it can bewitch men to wish for, or dare to trust any other guide? and how presumptuous is it in the clergy to teach any deductions of their own for religion!"† Of whatever use rabbinical authors and heathen classics may be, to elucidate words and phrases in the sacred volume, we ought never to consider what they say, as constituting any part of the *rule* by which an ordinance of divine worship should be performed; because that would be to place them on the throne of legislation.

Reflect. V. When our Dissenting Brethren admit the derivation of Christian baptism from the proselyte

* On Heb. vol. ii. exercit. x. § 12.

† Critica Heb. p. 100.

bathing, and argue upon it in favour of Pædobaptism, they adopt a principle that is big with consequences which they detest: for it is generally allowed, that the rabbinical rite, when, or by whomsoever it commenced, was *a human invention*. The device, however, according to these opponents, was of such a nature, and of such worth in the sight of God, that it obtained his acceptance; which acceptance he expressed in the most emphatical manner, by transferring it into the Christian system, and making it a part of that positive worship which must continue to the end of time. “Our Saviour *liking* the institution [of proselyte baptism,] continued the use of it, and made it the only ceremony of initiating proselytes unto the gospel;” says a dignitary of the English church.* How favourable this to that article in a certain creed which declares, That “the church *hath power to decree* rites or ceremonies!” For it is impossible to prove that the great Unchangeable is less disposed to admit of human additions to his worship now, than when he expressed his high approbation of the rite in question. From this principle, therefore, a strong probability arises, that modes and forms of worship, confessedly of human origin, may still be honoured and legitimated by the approbation of God;—so legitimated and so honoured, as to be incorporated with his own institutions. Whether our Nonconformist opposers have adverted to this consequence of their favourite principle, I cannot say; but it is plain, that some of our English Episcopalians are not insensible of its various application and great utility, in support of those forms and rites to which Dissenters have always objected. Thus, for instance, Dr. Fiddes, when speaking of the proselyte baptism: “Hence an argument may be drawn concerning a power in the church of God, even of *instituting* such rites, for the observance of which there is no clear or express foundation in scripture; provided they

* Cases to Recover Dissenters, vol. ii. p. 395.

have a proper signification in them towards promoting the spiritual life, and are not too numerous or burdensome. If no such power had been lodged in the Jewish church; if it had been a direct usurpation upon the right and power of God to claim or exercise it; it is much more probable, that our Saviour would, in this particular instance, have condemned and exploded it, than that he would have substituted a rite of initiation into the Christian society directly in imitation of it, and indeed the very same as to the material part.”* How any of our Dissenting Brethren, who adopt the principle, can avoid this consequence, I do not perceive.

When reflecting on various particulars contained in the preceding paragraphs, I am at a loss to imagine, what should be the reason of our learned opposers’ arguing against us on this topic, as they have often done, except it be that suggested by Chamier, in another case, when he says; “If the *lion’s* skin be not sufficient, you must add that of the *fox*.”† In other words, if apostles and evangelists do not afford convincing evidence of Pædobaptism, you must solicit the aid of Jewish rabbies.—Just so it is with Roman Catholics, when labouring to prove the existence of monks in the apostolic church. For being unable, as Buddeus observes, to produce any evidence of the fact from inspired writings, they betake themselves to Philo the Jew, in support of their cause.‡ They act a similar part in defence of purgatory; for, finding nothing to their purpose in the sacred canon, they have recourse to an Apocryphal author, § whose words, Bp. Stillingfleet informs us, are “the main foundation of purgatory.”||—On the whole, therefore, we may safely conclude, that if this Talmudical

* Theolog. Pract. b. ii. part ii. chap. i. p. 176, 177.

† Panstrat. tom. iv. l. vii. c. xviii. § 17.

‡ Ecclesia Apostolica, p. 776. § 2 Maccab. xii. 43, 44, 45.

|| Preserv. against Popery, title ix. p. 299. Vid. Morning Exercise against Popery, p. 818, 819.

bathing be the true basis of infant baptism, as Dr. Hammond suggests,* it has but a sandy foundation, and threatens an opprobrious fall: or, in the language of J. G. Carpzovius, respecting this argument for Pædobaptism, we may say, *Sed malè consultum esset baptismo infantum, si non alio niteretur Achille.*†

SECT. 2.—*External Covenant Relation.*

Mr. Jonathan Edwards. — “I know the distinction that is made by some, between the internal and external covenant; but I hope the divines that make this distinction would not be understood, that there are really and properly *two* covenants of grace, but only that those who profess the one only covenant of grace are of two sorts: there are those who comply with it internally and really; and others who do so only externally, that is, in profession and visibility. . . . There is also this distinction takes place concerning the covenant of grace: the one only covenant of grace is exhibited two ways; the one externally, by the preaching of the word, the other internally and spiritually, by enlightening the mind rightly to understand the word.—But the New Testament affords no more foundation for supposing two real and properly distinct covenants of grace, than it does to suppose two sorts of real Christians.” *Enquiry into Qualificat. for Full Commun.* p. 30.

2. Vitringa. — “Divines who urge Pædobaptism commonly suppose, that the covenant of grace is internal and external. They will have believers only, to be partakers of the internal covenant; but of the ex-

* See Sect. 3. No. 2, of this chap. I would here take the liberty of recommending Dr. Gill's Dissertation on the Baptism of Proselytes, as a performance which, in my opinion, is unanswerable.

† Appar. Hist. Crit. Antiq. Sac. Annotat. p. 47.

ternal, even unbelievers and reprobates, who externally give up their names to the church. To this external covenant also belongs the administration of sacraments; which are, as it were, symbols and badges, by which Christians are distinguished from heathens and profane persons. Those who are admitted to the external covenant of grace enjoy this prerogative, that both themselves and their children are holy, so that their children may be baptized; and, on the contrary, that the children of infidels ought to be excluded from baptism. Thus Essenius, thus the Dutch interpreters, and others of our reformed doctors not a few. . . . But I do not think that there is any such external covenant of grace, under the new economy, as that which learned men commonly lay for the foundation of Pædobaptism; and as this is an article of some importance, we will a little enlarge upon it.

“Now seeing the matter of every covenant which God makes with man, entirely consists in precepts and promises, I desire to be informed, by those who maintain this opinion, what God stipulates in the external covenant of grace, what he commands, what he promises, what are the conditions, and what the benefits of that external covenant about which they speak? seeing in these the whole covenant, as to the matter of it, consists. Certainly, no other precept is expressed in the records of the New Testament, in reference to this affair, than that which is briefly comprehended in those words, ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ;’ nor any other promise added to the precept of the covenant, than is included in those words, ‘And thou shalt be saved and thy house.’ When God requires faith of any man, he at the same time demands a profession of the mouth; but no other than that which is connected with the assent of the heart, and of a good conscience; which the Holy Spirit calls, ‘truth in the reins,’ that is, in the inward parts; ‘love, a new heart, a new spirit, a heart of flesh, and purity of heart’

. . . . That faith, therefore, ~~which~~ God requires, when he enters into covenant with a sinner under the new economy, hath its residence in the heart of a sinner; whence, also, it is called 'repentance:' and that profession of faith, which is made by words and actions, is not required by the Lord, except from those who really believe. For a 'confession to salvation' is not made 'with the mouth,' except when 'the heart believeth unto righteousness.' Nor can it be, that he who believes in Christ should not profess the name of Christ in his actions and course of life; that is, by being zealous of true virtue, he will signify that he belongs to Christ, because true faith exerts itself by love. Now, seeing there is no precept of the new covenant besides that of faith and repentance, we thence infer, that the covenant which God makes with miserable man under the new economy is, in this respect, internal, if you love so to speak, and spiritual.

" But because the sacraments chiefly regard the *promises* of the covenant, of which they are usually appendages and seals, it is proper to consider, whether the promises of the covenant be of the same nature with its precepts. Now all the promises of the new covenant are proposed to us in that well-known and remarkable passage, Jeremiah xxxi. 33, 34; (compare Heb. viii. 10, 11, 12; 2 Cor. vi. 8.) The same promises are repeated in Ezekiel. The apostle calls those benefits, 'righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.' Many other phrases of a similar kind, which we omit, occur in Moses and the prophets. It is doubtless very evident from this passage of Jeremiah, in which all the blessings of the new covenant are comprehended, that all the promises of the new covenant regard spiritual blessings. Writing the law on the heart; to have God for their God; a rich knowledge of divine things; forgiveness of sins, and liberty, thence arising, from every kind of slavery, are benefits of such a nature, as pertain to the

better part of man, which is capable of spiritual, of celestial, and of everlasting blessings. Hence the apostle says, that the promises of the new covenant are *more excellent* than those of the old economy, (Heb. viii. 6;) because that which is spiritual and eternal, as are the promises of the new covenant, excels that which is corporal and perishing. . . . If, therefore, neither the precepts of the new covenant, nor the promises, which on the part of God constitute the nature of the covenant, are any other than spiritual, and pertaining to spiritual blessings, I see no other covenant existing under the new economy, than that which is internal, in which none but true believers are interested, on whose minds the divine law is inscribed; that is, their spirits are excited by the Spirit of God, the love of God in Christ.

“The *sacraments* of the new covenant evince the same thing; for they are of such a nature as to seal nothing but what is spiritual, nor to be of any advantage, except in regard to those who really believe in Jesus Christ. What baptism signifies and seals, Paul declares in his Epistle to the Romans, when he elegantly says; ‘We are buried with him by baptism into death; that like as Christ was raised up from the dead to the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.’ Baptism, therefore, signifies and seals the death of the body of sin, and a resurrection from that death; which is effected, partly in this life, partly in the future resurrection, and that in virtue of the death and resurrection of Christ. This comprehends the whole nature of baptism. By eating bread and drinking wine in the Lord’s supper, is represented and sealed our communion with the death and obedience of Christ, as the cause of eternal life and joy. This it is, ‘to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of man.’ Here we meet with nothing but what is spiritual. Whence, I again prove,

that the covenant of grace is no other, after sin was expiated on the cross of Christ, than internal and spiritual; because the sacraments of that covenant signify and seal nothing but what is spiritual. The consequence of which is, that the sacraments profit none besides true believers; and that none but those who possess a sanctified mind by faith have a right to use or enjoy them. . . . If, therefore, the sacraments belong to none but true believers, and if they are of no advantage to any besides those who truly believe, what is the reason of maintaining a covenant, or the external communion of a covenant, to which pertains the administration of sacraments; seeing the administration of sacraments presupposes faith, which is the condition of the internal covenant? The whole, therefore, of this external covenant falls; all its prerogatives also fall, of whatever kind they are imagined to be; and among them also the baptism of infants, if, as is commonly thought, it must be derived from this fountain.

“ I confess, indeed, that there was an external and carnal covenant under the old economy, besides an internal and spiritual covenant, which flourished under the same dispensation. Nor do I deny, that circumcision, the passover, and the legal sacrifices, were subservient to that covenant instead of sacraments. But I would have it remembered, that the state of things was far different in those ancient, from what it is in these modern times. All merely carnal and external things in religion, as performed under the new economy, are abolished. Nothing remains there but spirit and truth. The covenant which God now makes with miserable man is merely spiritual. Nothing now is known, judged, or esteemed, *according to the flesh.*” *Observat. Sac.* l. ii. c. vi. § 13, 15—18.

3. Venema: “ That there is a twofold aspect of the covenant of grace, as also of the church of Christ our Lord, the one interior and the other exterior, I make

no doubt; but so, as that constitutes its internal form which includes its essence; and this expresses its external form or appearance, by which the covenant is showed and declared. The covenant of grace has its place in the heart, comprehends laws and blessings that are spiritual, and is confirmed by a true and living faith. This is its essential form; this is its nature; this is properly the covenant of grace; and he who thus enters into the covenant, is properly called a federate of God, or one that is in covenant with him. But seeing a man is conversant among men, and certain rites are used that publicly exhibit and seal the covenant made between God and man, hence it puts on an external appearance, by which the covenant entered into is declared and confirmed. The covenant is one and the same; but, internally made, externally showing itself: established, by faith implanted in the heart; expressed, by external works and rites. The one, is the making of the covenant; the other, a discovery of it. The former is the covenant, the latter is an external demonstration of it; and the name of a covenant properly agrees, not to this, but to that. When any one believes with the heart, he is in the covenant of grace; when he professes with the mouth, and performs external rites, he exposes to view that which is in his heart, and externally represents the covenant of grace. . . . If a person does not really believe; if the interior form of the covenant be wanting; if he merely confess with the mouth, without believing in his heart; if he use the sacraments only in an external manner, without faith and piety; he exhibits indeed the appearance of the covenant, yet the covenant itself he does not possess, nor lawfully takes, but snatches a resemblance of it. He boasts of it, not really, but feignedly; is not clothed with his own, but with a foreign garment, which, contrary to reason and right, he stole. He appears not in his own person, but falsely in one that is foreign: he does not, therefore, express the

covenant of grace, whereas he truly has it not; nor is in the covenant of grace, except feignedly and falsely.

“ From the difference between the former and the present economy, it will clearly appear, that the genius of the New Testament is abhorrent from an external covenant. The person, or character, which God before adopted, agreeing to such a covenant, exhibits to view an *external king*, as we have before seen; but the King of the church, who has fixed his throne in the heavens, who will be adored in a celestial manner, in spirit and in truth, and chiefly worshipped with the heart, has entirely laid aside that character. For his *kingdom is in the midst of us; it is not of this world; but is, as every where called, the kingdom of heaven.* It is not agreeable to this Person, to have an external people; it does not become him to be denominated *the GOD* of a nation that are disaffected to him in their hearts; by which name Jehovah was called under the Old Testament. . . . All the Israelites, as many as were born of Israel and circumcised, were, without any difference, members of the divine covenant; but we now enter into the covenant of grace, not by birth, but by faith. The name of *covenantees* is no where given to baptized persons that are destitute of faith; seeing it is not lawful even to baptize any one, if he be not really a believer, (Acts viii. 37.) For not those who say, *Lord, Lord*, but those that *perform the will of God* are called the people of Christ.

“ If we consider the *laws* of the external covenant, under the ancient economy, and that *observance* of them which was required, a very great and excellent difference will offer itself to our view, which cuts the very sinews of such a covenant under the new economy. There was not only then a place, and that a principal one, for ceremonial laws, which now by the consent of all are vanished away; but even their moral precepts wore an external appearance, as we have before showed, which was a peculiarity of that legal and external covenant.

Such an obedience satisfied as might be performed without love, without faith, and without purity of heart; all which things are as foreign as possible from the genius of the new economy. Those religious rites which are now practised, are connected with the internal covenant of grace, as signs and seals with a covenant that is ratified by them; nor have they any other use or end: so that if any one use them, detached from the covenant itself, he is necessarily engaged in rites that are void of all virtue, and acts in direct opposition to the appointment and intention of God; seeing, in that case, they do not seal or confirm to a man the covenant of grace. . . . Our sacraments do not belong to any external covenant, as under the former dispensation, but to the internal covenant of grace; which positive institutes no one can rightly or lawfully use, besides a true believer, who is internally a covenantee. . . . Moral laws, the performance of which exhibits itself to external view, have their place only in the exercise of faith and love; for whether any one confess with the mouth, or actually perform external duties, if it be done without faith and love, he is usually branded with a charge of hypocrisy; and Christ expressly declares, that he *never knew him*, or accounted him for his own. . . . A confession of faith, without faith itself, is no where enjoined. The use of the sacraments, without union with Christ by faith, is required of no one. . . . The sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper manifestly comprehend, both a participation of good and the exercise of faith. What is intended by the union of a man with water, into which he is immersed? Is it not, in regard to God, the communion of that man with the obedience of Christ and its fruits; and, in respect of the man, his faith, by which Christ is embraced? Are not these things clearly represented before our eyes in the ordinance of baptism? He who eats bread and drinks wine in the holy supper, does he not exercise faith, by which he applies Christ to

himself? Is not union with Christ, whose body he receives under the emblem of bread, indicated and sealed to him? . . .

“ It is commonly asserted and maintained, that infants are in the covenant of grace ; if, however, you be not satisfied with a mere sound, but, as becomes a lover of truth, earnestly desire to penetrate the real meaning, you will hardly be able to extract a consistent sense from the phrase. For, either you will err from the point in hand ; or affirm things that are opposite one to another ; or betake yourself to another foundation to support this. If by the covenant of grace you understand the *external manifestation* of it, call it an external covenant, assert that infants are members of it, and therefore to be baptized, you not only speak about a nonentity, as is an external covenant, but you also wander far from the question ; for though that covenant may perhaps give an external relation to the people of God, and may allow an external holiness, yet it cannot afford salvation, nor open a way to the internal benefits of grace, which, nevertheless, the present design requires. If you extend the *internal* covenant of grace to infants, yet you will not seriously endeavour to maintain, that *all* the infants of believers are actually partakers of it ; but you will say, experience obliging you to it, that its benefits are applied only to *some* of them. But is it not plain to him who considers the matter, that these things mutually destroy one another ? The covenant you say is made, as with Abraham and his seed, so with parents and their children ; yet neither do very many children, any more than their parents, enjoy the blessings of the covenant. That they should belong to all the children of believers, and be conferred only on a few, are things which I know not how to reconcile. Either they do not belong to all, or all participate. All you say, according to our sentiment, are presumed, in a judgment of charity, to possess the blessings of grace ;

a few, in reality. All, by us, are to be accounted such, though in fact there be only a few; but, whether this distinction be sufficient for the purpose intended, let others judge.

“ If you say, the covenant of grace belongs to all, according to our *presumption*, you extricate yourself indeed from the charge of a contradiction, but you desert the whole cause. If the covenant of grace do not belong to all the children of believers, to whom of them does it pertain? To elect, regenerate, believing infants? or those that enjoy any other relation or quality? Thus, therefore, you are obliged to seek for some other foundation to support your assertion. You say, God promised to make a covenant with the infants of believers, equally as with adults. But with all, or with some? If the former, why are they not really put into the covenant? Or shall a faithful God say it, and not do it? Shall he promise it to all, and give it only to a few? seeing there is no difference between the infants themselves, all being placed in the same condition. If you prefer the latter; why, I ask, restrain it to some? . . . Nor is the promise special, but general, comprehending all the infants of believers. The proposal of the decree cannot be more general than the decree itself; for then it would not be a true, but a fallacious proposal. Besides, the promise that belongs to infants is not conditional, but absolute; suspended on no condition, for that can have no place in regard to infants. The proposal of an absolute promise cannot be general, and the application of it special. In a word, I desire to know, by what title, and on what foundation the covenant of grace is assigned to infants? Has God promised it? But the promise is general, whereas, nevertheless, few partake of it. And then, I ask, under what consideration, and why, God receives infants into the covenant? for seeing adults pass into it only by faith, what puts infants into it? Is it the absolute good pleasure of God?

It is a wonder that God should have respect only to the infants of believers; but concerning that I have treated before. Is it faith? but they are not capable of it; much less as of a condition performed from a free principle. Is it regeneration? but that is the immediate operation of God, infants being mere patients; concerning which also I have spoken before. By what title then do they belong to the covenant of grace? Is it by themselves, and in their own name, either by election, by regeneration, or by a promise? but then they would be actually partakers of the covenant; whereas, nevertheless, many infants are excluded, and very few during infancy actually anticipate any of those benefits." Dissertat. Sac. l. ii. c. ix. § 3, 11, 18; c. xi. § 4; c. xiii. § 6; l. iii. c. ii. § 2.— See Sect. 4, § ix. No. 5. of this chapter.

REFLECTIONS.

Reflect. I. As these great men and excellent authors have said so much, and with such force, against the notion of an external covenant under the new economy, I shall not enlarge upon it. It may not be improper, however, to present the reader with a few quotations from the writings of our opponents; by which it will appear how much they differ one from another, about the nature and degree of that interest which they suppose the infants of believers have in the covenant of grace; and how inconsistent they are with themselves, when endeavouring to prove the right of infants to baptism from this topic.

Mr. Joseph Whiston, when handling the subject, says: "Some conceive that the covenant is entered [into] with the seed of believers only *indefinitely*, and, answerably, that the promises appertaining to them, are to be interpreted and understood in an indefinite notion; that is, as having a respect to them as generally and collectively considered, but not made to any of them in particular.

And of those that go this way, some conceive that the covenant and promises appertain only to the *elect*, and secure to them only the future enjoyment of all the saving fruits and benefits purchased by Christ; but do not necessarily convey to, or confer upon them, any of those fruits, or benefits, for the present. . . . But others conceive, that as the covenant and promises thereof have only an indefinite respect to the seed of believers, so at least some of them have those saving benefits and blessings actually granted to, and conferred upon them; and, consequently, that they are actually regenerated, and have a full and complete union with Christ, the remission of sins, the love and favour of God, and so on. And some having these benefits and blessings actually conferred upon them in their infancy, we are to presume it may be so with each one in particular; and on that ground are to apply the token of the covenant to them universally. . . . Others conceive, that the covenant is entered [into] with the seed of believers *definitely*, and, answerably, that the promises appertaining to them are to be interpreted and understood in a definite notion; and, consequently, that as the covenant, as at first established with Abraham, did extend to Ishmael as well as to Isaac, so it is still continued to all believers, and each one of their seed in particular. And some of these that go this way conceive, that *all* the infants of believers have true grace, in particular, true faith, wrought in them, either antecedent to the application of the token of the covenant, or at the time of its application, if not by, yet in a concurrence with it. . . . Some grant, yea assert, some kind of supernatural operations of the Spirit to antecede, at least accompany, the application of the token of the covenant to them; whereby, at least, a *posse agere*, or some dispositions facilitating their saving acting of grace are wrought. But others distinguish of the covenant: it is, say they, *internum, aut*

externum, it is either internal or external. By the *internal* covenant, they seem to mean the covenant as really and truly entered [into] with the elect, ensuring to them grace and glory; by the *external* covenant, they seem to mean the covenant as visibly appearing to be made with men, whether infants or adult; when as it is not indeed really entered [into] mutually between God and them. . . . Again: Others, and sometimes the same men, distinguish of the *good* contained in and conveyed by the promises of the covenant appertaining to the seed of believers. It is, say they, either spiritual and saving, or else only external and ecclesiastical; as membership in a visible church, a right to the outward ordinances and privileges of the church, and the like. And they conceive that the covenant, as containing saving spiritual mercies, only appertains to the elect; but, as containing external ecclesiastical privileges, it appertains to all the seed of believers; hence they call it, as entered [into] with them, a covenant of *privileges*. This latter opinion, concerning the definiteness of the covenant, I take to be according to truth; though to distinguish either of the covenant, or the good contained in it, as entered [into] with or extended to infants, I see no ground, neither do I think it at all necessary. But I say, as to the nature of the covenant, I doubt not but that it is entered [into] with, and extended to the infant seed of believers definitely; and, answerably, that the promises appertaining to them, are to be interpreted and understood in a definite notion, as appertaining equally and alike to each one in particular. I speak of the covenant and promises, as entered [into] with and made to the seed of believers, merely as such. . . . They [the infant seed of believers] are put into a new covenant state; they are absolutely, for the present, removed from under the covenant of works. . . . They have, at present, true, real, and proper interest and propriety in God. As they are

his, so he is *theirs*. There is a mutual propriety and interest in each other. They have God under an ACTUAL OBLIGATION, viz. of his promise, TO IMPROVE AND EMPLOY ALL HIS ATTRIBUTES FOR THEIR GOOD, BENEFIT, AND ADVANTAGE, according, or in a way agreeable, to the true tenour of the covenant, and of the various promises of it. They have a present interest in and right to salvation; and, answerably, in case of their death, before a forfeiture be made of that their interest and right, they shall be infallibly saved.*—To such a degree do they differ among themselves and oppose one another, as represented by Mr. Whiston himself, in regard to what they consider as a principle ground of infant baptism! But we proceed.

Mr. Tombes, with reference to the different views of Pædobaptists on this part of the subject, says: “Mr. Baxter’s Plain Scripture Proof, p. 223, will have baptism seal only *the conditional promise*.—Mr. Philips’s Vind. p. 37, expresseth the sealing by *offering*.—Mr. Davenport’s Confession of Faith, p. 39, maketh the benefits of the covenant to be *offered* in the sacraments, but to be *exhibited* only to true believers.—Mr. Cotton’s Grounds of Bap. p. 70. The covenant of grace doth not give them saving grace at all, but only *offereth* it, and seals what it offereth.—Dr. Homes, that the *administration* of the covenant of grace, belongs to believers’ children, though not the efficacy.—Dr. Twisse, that infants are in the covenant of grace in the *judgment of charity*, and that baptism seals regeneration, and so on, not conferred, but *to be* conferred.—Dr. Thomas Goodwin, that they are to be judged in the covenant of grace *by parcels*, though not in the lump.”†—To which I will add, Bp. Prideaux asserts, that infants “have the faith of the covenant, though not

* Primitive Doct. of Inf. Bap. revived, p. 100—103, 151, 152.

† Antipædobaptism, part iii. p. 226.

the faith of covenantees.”*—Mr. Dorrington insists, that “although the parents be admitted into the new covenant, the children born of them are not born within that covenant; but are, as all others, born in a state of rebellion and misery.”† With whom, in her catechism, the church of England seems to agree.

As the most learned and sensible Pædobaptists differ very widely from one another in reference to this affair, so it is not uncommon for the same author to be manifestly inconsistent with himself. Of this, if I mistake not, we have a remarkable instance in Mr. Henry’s Treatise on Baptism. In one place he says, “The gospel contains not only a doctrine, but a covenant; and *by baptism* we are BROUGHT INTO that covenant.”‡ In other places he insists, that “baptism is a seal of the covenant of grace, and therefore belongs to those who ARE in that covenant, (at least by profession,) and to NONE OTHER. . . . The infants of believing parents ARE in covenant with God, and *therefore* have a right to the initiating seal of that covenant. When I say, they are in covenant with God, understand me of the external administration of the covenant of grace, not of that which is internal.”§—The conduct of Mr. Henry is quite similar in regard to church-membership. For in one place he tells us, that “baptism is an ordinance of Christ, *whereby* the person baptized is *solemnly* ADMITTED a member of the visible church;” yet in the same treatise he assures us, that baptism “is an ordinance of the visible church, and pertains, therefore, to those that ARE *visible members* of the church. . . . Their covenant right and their *church-membership*, entitleth them to baptism. . . . Baptism doth not *give* the title, but *recognize* it, and complete that church-membership

* Fascicul. Controvers. p. 290.

† Vindicat. of the Church in Baptizing Inf. p. 44.

‡ Page 40.

§ P. 66, 79.

which before was imperfect.”*—He acts the same part over again, in respect of discipleship, as the reader may plainly perceive by comparing the two following arguments. “If it be the will and command of the Lord Jesus that all nations should be *discipled* BY BAPTISM, and children, though a part of all nations, are not excepted, then children are to be *discipled* BY BAPTISM If the infants of believing parents ARE *disciples*, they are to be baptized; but they ARE *disciples*, and therefore to be baptized.”†—How happily do these expressions, *baptism* and *the covenant*, *baptism* and *disciples*, *baptism* and *members of the visible church*, play into the hands of each other! They are of so pliable a temper, of such admirable force, and of such various application, that by a prudent management of them the same conclusion may be inferred from contrary premises. Are you desirous of proving, for instance, that the infants of believers are *not* in the covenant, are *not* disciples, are *not* members of the visible church; and, therefore, that they ought to be baptized, in order to an interest in those prerogatives and honours? Or, are you inclined to load the Baptists with the opprobrious charge of leaving their infants to the *uncovenanted mercies* of God, and in the *state of heathens*? Do but arrange the forementioned words in a certain manner, and you demonstrate each particular. If, on the contrary, you reverse that order, they will equally prove with surprising facility and force, that those very infants *are* in the covenant, that they *are* disciples, that they *are* members of the visible church; and, therefore, should be baptized. So that you see, though the mediums of your arguments be really opposite, yet the conclusion is quite the same, and just such as you desire. That is, the infants of believers should be baptized, because they are *not* in the covenant, and because they *are* in the covenant.

* Page 25, 66, 107.

† P. 114, 109.

Thus the worthy author inadvertently realizes that sarcastic reflection of a profane poet:

“ And, as he is dispos'd, can prove it
Below the moon, or else above it.”

Now, as Mr. Henry was an author of solid learning and of great parts; as the Treatise in which these and other things of the same nature are found, appears to have been composed by him when age, observation, and study had matured his judgment; and as there is reason to think that the editor, who greatly abridged the work, selected his best arguments in vindication of the point in hand; I leave the reader to judge, whether we may not safely conclude, that a consistent and plausible defence of infant baptism is no easy task.

The difficulty of being consistent when defending infant baptism will farther appear by observing; That though it is common for our opposers to maintain, either that infants of a certain description are born members of the church, and therefore to be baptized, or that they should be baptized to give them that membership; yet, when Pædobaptism is out of sight, their definitions and descriptions of a gospel church forbid our considering infants as members of it, either before or after their baptism. That my reader may judge for himself respecting this matter, I will present him with a few extracts from public formulas of doctrine, and from the writings of individuals. Thus, for instance, The Confession of Helvetia: “ A church, that is, a company of the faithful, called and gathered out of the world; a communion, I say, of all saints, that is, of them who do truly know, and rightly worship and serve the true God in Jesus Christ the Saviour;” and so on.—Confession of Basil: “ We believe a holy Christian church, that is, a communion of saints, a gathering together of the faithful in spirit, which is holy and the spouse of Christ; wherein all they are citizens who do truly confess that Jesus is

the Christ, the Lamb that taketh away the sins of the world, and do show forth that faith by the works of love.”——Confession of the French Churches: “The church is a company of the faithful, who agree together in following the word of God, and in embracing pure religion.”——Confession of Belgium: “We believe and confess that there is one catholic or universal church, which is the true congregation or company of all faithful Christians, who do look for their whole salvation from Christ alone.”——Confession of Augsburg: “To speak properly, the church of Christ is a congregation of the members of Christ, that is, of the saints, who do truly believe and rightly obey Christ.”——Confession of Saxony: “The visible church, in this life, is a company of those who do embrace the gospel of Christ, and use the sacraments aright.”——Confession of Sueveland: “The church or congregation of Christ—is the fellowship and company of those who addict themselves to Christ, and do altogether trust and rest in his protection These only, if we will speak properly, are called the church of Christ, and the communion of saints.”*——Church of England: “The visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly administered, according to Christ’s ordinance, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same.”† Thus the public formulas.

The following quotations from the writings of individuals are to the same effect.—Mr. Claude: “We ought to know very well what a true church visible is: for we ought not to imagine that all those persons who compose that visible society, should be that true church. None but those true believers, I would say, those who join to their external profession of Christianity a true

* Harmony of Confess. sect. x. p. 306—334.

† Articles of Relig. No. xix.

and sincere piety, are really the church of Jesus Christ.*

—Anonymous: “The word *ἐκκλησια*, *church*, is *απο του εκκαλειν*, *to evocate*, or call out; because, as saith Musculus, in Rom. i. 7, *The church is a number called out from the rest*. . . . Every true, visible, particular church of Christ [is] a select company of people, called and separated from the world and the false worship thereof, by the Spirit and word of God, and joined together in the fellowship of the gospel, by their own free and voluntary consent, giving up themselves to Christ and one another, according to the will of God.” †—

Mastricht: “A church is no other than a congregation of men, efficaciously called or converted to Jesus Christ.” ‡

—Walæus: “In the holy scripture, a church is an assembly of those men, who are called out of the world to communion with Christ and to eternal salvation, by the preaching of the word and the efficacy of the Holy Spirit. . . . The invisible church is called catholic, and includes all true believers, who are known to God through the whole world. . . . A visible church is a congregation of those who publicly profess Christ and his doctrine.” §

—Roell: “By the term church in the New Testament is understood, the multitude of all those that were chosen in Christ, redeemed by his blood, efficaciously called by the word and Spirit, and who by the obedience of faith subject themselves to God and Christ.” ||—

Mr. Leigh: “The church is a society of men, not as men,—but as believers. . . . The church is either particular, namely, a company of the faithful which is contained in some particular place; or universal, which consists of all that every where call upon the name of God.” ¶

—Mr. John Cotton: “The church is a mystical body, whereof Christ is the head; the members and saints called

* Defence of Reformation, part i. p. 69.

† Jerubbaal, p. 82, 422.

‡ Theolog. i. vii. c. i. § 5.

§ Enchirid. Relig. p. 213, 214, 215.

|| Exegesis Epist. ad

Coloss. in cap. i. 18.

¶ Bod. Div. p. 450.

out of the world, and united together into one congregation, by a holy covenant, to worship the Lord, and to edify one another in all his holy ordinances.”*——Mr. Arch. Hall: “The church is a society of believing and holy persons, whom God hath called by the gospel out of all mankind, to the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ.”†——Mr. Wilson: “*Church*, a company of men, selected, gathered, and called out of the world by the doctrine of the gospel, to know and worship the true God in Christ, according to his word. This is the visible church.”‡——Vitranga: “The term church, in the New Testament, chiefly denotes a multitude of God’s people, an assembly of believers.”§——Dr. Chauncy: “The foundation part of a visible church is the credible profession of faith and holiness. . . . It is men and women, not doctrine, that are the matter of a church; and these professing the faith, and practising holiness. The members of churches are always called, in the New Testament, *saints, faithful, believers*: they were such that were added to the churches. Neither is every believer so, as such, but as a *professing* believer.”||——Dr. Cotton Mather: “A church, as the Greek name for it allows us to think, is to consist of a people *called out* from the ways of sin, by the powerful and effectual work of God upon their souls. Regeneration is the thing without which a title to the sacraments is not to be pretended. Real regeneration is the thing which, before God, renders men capable of claiming sacraments; and visible and expressed regeneration is that which, before men, enables us to make such a claim.”¶¶ Similar quotations might be greatly multiplied; but I forbear, and shall only observe, that these testimonies will not

* True Constitution of a Particular Church, p. 1.

† Gospel Church, p. 15.

‡ Christ. Dict. article, Church.

§ De Synag. Vet. l. i. pars i. c. ii. p. 97.

|| Preface to Dr. Owen’s True Nat. of a Gospel Church.

¶¶ In Mr. Backus’ Church Hist. of N. Eng. vol. ii. p. 1, 2. See Sect. 3, Reflect. ii. of this Chap.

permit us to consider infants, either before or after baptism, as members of a gospel church.

Some Pædobaptists, it must be acknowledged, when defining a particular church of Christ, cautiously include infants of a certain description. Thus, for example, Mr. W. Bennet asks and answers; "What is a particular church of Christ? It is a distinct society of saints and faithful brethren in Christ, *with their infant offspring;*" and so on. But whether his immediately following interrogation and reply be quite consistent with such membership of infants, may be justly queried. For thus he proceeds: "What persons are *proper to become* members of a Christian church? Those who are called by the grace of God to the acknowledgment of the truth which is after godliness, who make a credible profession of their faith in Christ, and are unfeignedly disposed to walk in all holy subjection to his authority." In another place, he thus interrogates and replies: "In what light are the children of church-members to be considered? Such children are to be considered as externally holy, separated to the Lord, and subjects of his visible kingdom, with their parents, from their birth; and they are to be acknowledged as such by baptism in their infancy."*

Does Mr. Bennet, then, or do any of our Congregational brethren, consider the privileges here mentioned, as peculiar to the children of church-members? If so, why do they baptize the infants of others? If not, why these restrictive expressions, "the children of church-members?" Nay, after all they have said respecting the infants of real believers having a title to baptism, exclusive of those children whose parents are both of them unconverted, it may be justly questioned, whether the generality of them do not depart from their own rule, and baptize many whose parents they do not con-

* Concise View of Wörship and Order of Churches, quest. 31, 32, 57.

sider as partakers of regenerating grace. Remarkably to this purpose are the following words of Mr. Blake: "I can scarce meet with a minister that says, (and I have put the question to many of the most eminent that I know,) that he baptizeth any infant upon this ground of hope, *That the parent is regenerate*; but still with earnest vehemence professeth the contrary."*—According to Mr. Bennet, those are the only proper persons for membership in a particular church, who make "a credible profession of faith;" and yet the infants of communicants in such Christian society constitute a considerable part of it, though they cannot make either a credible or an incredible profession of faith. But where in the New Testament, are we informed of members in a Christian church, who neither did nor could profess faith in the Son of God?—If the "infant offspring of church members" be "the *subjects*" of our Lord's "visible kingdom" from their birth, they must be so in virtue of carnal descent; just as the children of Englishmen are born subjects of the British crown: and if so, they are *born*, they are *by nature* Christians, and not *children of wrath even as others*. But as an ancient writer says, *Christiani fiunt, non nascuntur*; and his assertion has been justly approved for a long course of ages, by those who understood what real Christianity is. Besides, the observation of a Nonconformist Pædobaptist, which is contained in the following words, will here apply: "Nor, indeed, do I know, how upon their principles they can preach the doctrine of conversion, when they reckon and account all those to whom they preach to be *church-members*; i. e. such as are converted already; for of such only is the kingdom of heaven, or gospel church-state, (John iii.)"† If our author deny these consequences, he must prove that a person may be a true subject of our Lord's visible kingdom, without being a real Christian; which, I think, will be hard to effect.

* Covenant Sealed, p. 129.

† Jerubbaal, p. 321.

Again: This representation of the subjects of Zion's King, converts the gospel church into a secular kingdom, in opposition to that capital saying, "My kingdom is not of this world." MESSIAH *the Prince* is a spiritual sovereign; and as such, if he do not reign in the understanding, the conscience, and the heart of any given character, he reigns not at all in respect of such character. His genuine subjects, therefore, must be possessed of spiritual qualities or holy dispositions. Now as all mankind are born in a state of apostasy, and as the grand feature in the face of human depravity is disaffection to God, those holy dispositions cannot be derived from carnal descent. Hence the necessity of being "born again"—of being "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God,"* to constitute a subject of our Lord's kingdom. Over whomsoever Christ exercises his dominion as a spiritual monarch, he reigns in his understanding, by the light of divine truth; in his conscience, by the force of divine authority; and in his heart, by the constraining influence of divine love. Knowledge of our Lord's will, subjection to his authority, and an approbation of his government, must all unite in a real subject of that spiritual kingdom about which we speak; for where these are entirely wanting, the government of Christ is merely that of providence, not that of grace.—That the children of Jews under the former economy were *born* members of the church, is readily granted; but that was one of those various particulars which, as Dr. Coxe observes, belonged to "the *national* and *typical* church-state of that people; which state, by the gospel is dissolved, and is so inconsistent with the ministration thereof, that the position of the one necessarily infers the abolition of the other; and, therefore, this right and privilege of the Jews, which was in the very foundation of their national church-state, as separated from the Gentiles, cannot be transferred into,

* Vid. Lamp. Comment. in John i. 13.

because it will not comport with, the gospel dispensation. Besides, it is evident throughout the whole gospel, that right of membership in the Jewish church could never give to any, either infant or adult, a like right of membership in the gospel church; nor was there ever any one received thereinto, *eo nomine*, because he had such a right according to the state of the old covenant: and there is good reason to conclude that the carnal seed of believers can derive no higher privilege from the covenant of circumcision than the carnal seed of Abraham obtained thereby. And if it could not bring the one into the gospel church, nor give them a right to baptism, without—repentance and faith, it can by no means do so for the other, though we should suppose them concerned in it, as indeed they are not.”*

Farther: If all the children of church-members are to be acknowledged as the subjects of our Lord’s visible kingdom from their birth, and as constituting a part of this or that Christian society to which their parents belong, in what light must we view their future solemn reception into the same particular church, if ever they be so received? Must we consider it merely as a recognition of hereditary right? or of a title to communion on some other ground? If the former, why require a “credible profession of faith?” They were *born* subjects of the Messiah’s visible kingdom; in other words, members of that particular church. Nay, why talk of *receiving* them as members, seeing they never were otherwise from their birth? If the latter, they must have, either a double title to the same membership, or a separate claim to two kinds of membership, or they must have incurred a forfeiture. Neither the first nor the second of these, I think, will be maintained; but the last, perhaps, may be defended. We will suppose, then, that these freeborn subjects of our Lord’s visible kingdom have forfeited their original title to church-membership.

* Discourse on the Covenants, p. 159, 160.

We ask, at what age, and by what means? Jewish children, under the ancient theocracy, being *born* subjects of that peculiar kingdom, did not lose their claim to the honours and emoluments of a church-state, except through the want of circumcision, or the commission of some enormous crime by which they forfeited their lives. As their title to church-membership commenced without any pretence to regeneration, either in regard to themselves or to their parents, so the exercise of church-communion was continued, independent of real holiness. What then, in the case of children under the gospel dispensation, can be the reason of such forfeiture? Is it because they do not make a credible profession of repentance and faith? but they did not obtain their original title upon that ground; for it devolved to them by carnal descent. Now as they were born subjects, and as they cannot give less evidence of repentance and faith when grown up, than they did when their membership commenced, why should they be treated as aliens, or as rebels, because they do not make a credible profession of those things? While, therefore, our opposers argue from church-membership under the law, to a similarity of privilege under the gospel, they depart from their own rule, and greatly restrict the privileges of children, which is the very thing they charge upon us.—Our Independent Brethren demand a profession of faith as well as we; but here it seems the difference lies. They, in the ordinary course of things, baptize *first*—baptize infants, because they *are* members of some church to which their parents belong; and then, long after the membership of those infants was acknowledged by their being baptized, a profession of faith is required of them, that they may *commence* members! Whereas, we insist upon that profession *prior* to membership, and *prior* to baptism. Now, whether the New Testament speak of professing faith, previous to baptism, or subsequent to it, I leave the reader to judge.

The church-membership of infants, indeed, seems to be nothing more than a pedestal for Pædobaptism; because, in regard to other things, they are treated in these parts of the world as if they were not members.

Reflect. II. As the sentiments of Pædobaptists about that interest in the covenant which the children of believers are supposed to have, are greatly diversified, and at an irreconcilable variance one with another; so it appears, that this interest is either of such great importance as to secure their eternal salvation, unless we renounce the doctrine of perseverance, or of so trifling a nature, as to leave them (the single article of baptism excepted) on a level with the offspring of unbelievers, who enjoy the means of religious improvement. According to Mr. J. Whiston, God must cancel the obligation under which he lies to promote their happiness, if they be not finally saved: but where then is the immutability of Jehovah's covenant? Where the perseverance of those who are truly interested in it, on supposition that any of them perish for ever? To talk of their forfeiting their share in that divine covenant, when they grow up, is plainly to renounce the doctrine of perseverance. On the other hand, if, with Dr. Homes and others, we consider the offspring of believers as interested, not in the efficacy, but in the *administration* of the covenant; or if, with Dr. Twisse, we view them as in the covenant only by *a judgment of charity*; where is that mighty difference between the state and prerogatives of such infants, and those of children in common, who are brought up where the means of religious instruction are enjoyed? For what is the external administration of the covenant, but the benign conduct of Providence in affording a written revelation, a gospel ministry, and other means of spiritual information? all which are frequently possessed by the children of unbelievers, and by the unbelieving parents themselves, to a great degree. Consequently, if a claim to baptism be

the natural result of an interest in the external administration of the covenant, all, whether children or adults, who are indulged by a kind Providence with means adapted to their spiritual welfare, should be baptized.—As to *a judgment of charity*, will our Brethren affirm, that the children of believers are the only infantile objects on whom it should operate? Is that favourable estimation to be withheld, entirely withheld, from all the children of ungodly parents? Do not scripture and observation show, that many of these were included from their earliest infancy in the everlasting covenant? Or will they affirm, that all the infants of all believers are interested in God's peculiar favour? They will not, they dare not assert any such thing; because the oracles of heaven, and the observation of ages, forbid the thought. Thus Mr. Baxter: “The most holy, skilful, diligent parents that ever I knew, who have taken pains with their children, day and night, by fair means and foul, have yet had wicked children.”* It seems, therefore, as if that interest in the covenant for which they so earnestly plead, were calculated merely to provide for the baptism of a particular description of infants; which, indeed, would make an essential difference between the children of believers and those of ungodly parents, were the benefits connected with baptism by the Council of Trent, by the Greek church, by the Lutheran churches, by our English establishment, by Mr. Henry, and by a thousand others, but fairly proved from the divine records.

Reflect. III. But supposing it were clearly evinced, that all the children of believers are interested in the covenant of grace, it would not certainly follow that they are entitled to baptism: for baptism, being a branch of positive worship, depends entirely on the sovereign will of its Author; which will, revealed in positive precepts, or by apostolic examples, is the only

* Plain Scrip. Proof, p. 314.

rule of its administration. Mr. Baxter has justly observed, that “even in Abraham’s time [circumcision was not made] necessary to all [the] church, but only to Abraham’s family. Shem and his family, who were then living, were not so much as commanded to be circumcised. Not Melchizedech, nor any of the subjects over whom he was king, or any of that church to whom he was priest.”* It plainly appears, therefore, that as a positive divine command made it necessary for multitudes to be circumcised, who had no interest in the covenant of grace; so, at the commencement of circumcision, many were interested in that benign constitution who were under no obligation to be circumcised, nor had any claim to the distinguishing mark: so far is it from being a fact, that an interest in the new covenant, and a title to positive institutes, may be inferred the one from the other.† This being the case, we may safely conclude, that all reasoning from *data* of a moral kind, and the supposed fitness of things, or from the natural relation of children to parents, is wide of the mark. As baptism is not a duty naturally resulting from our relation to God, as reasonable creatures, for then it would be incumbent on every one to be baptized; as our obligation to regard it does not arise from any moral or civil relation, in which we necessarily stand to our fellow-creatures, for then the same consequence would inevitably follow; and as this duty does not originate in the natural relation between parents and children, for then all parents, whoever they be, would lie under an obligation to have their infants baptized: so it is altogether vain to search for the proper subjects of baptism, except in the appointment of Christ, and in apostolic practice, these being the only rule and law of its administration. Now it appears, from a preceding chapter, that the

* Plain Scrip. Proof, p. 311.

† See Dr. Coxe’s Discourse on the Covenants, chap. vii.

scripture contains neither precept nor precedent for infant baptism; and, consequently, it is practised without a divine warrant.

Besides, were it allowable to reason from covenant interest, to the enjoyment of a positive rite, Abraham and his posterity might, with other nations in following times, have circumcised their females in some way or other.* On that principle they might have argued thus: "Circumcision is a sign of the covenant into which God has graciously entered on our behalf. That covenant extends its benign influence equally to both sexes; nor can it be justly supposed, that the sign of this federal constitution should be entirely withheld from any of the covenantees. But our females are such; and, consequently, entitled either to circumcision, or to something similar. Nor is it of any avail to object, that they are not *expressly* mentioned in the order given for the administration of that appointment. God has made us reasonable creatures; and he requires that we should use our intellectual powers upon the nature, the appli-

* Of this many learned authors have spoken. Thus, for example, Gerhardus: "Some have observed, that females are naturally incapable of circumcision. But something analogous might have taken place, as the example of Ethiopian Christians proves, who at this day circumcise both males and females." He tells us, however, "that God spared the whole female sex, or excepted them from the pain of circumcision, for the sake of one virgin Mary, of whom Christ was to be born." *Loc. Theolog. de Circumcis. § 14.*—Saurin thus: "None but the males underwent this ceremony: this was one of the differences between the circumcision of the Jews, and that of the Egyptians, among whom the females were circumcised, *resectione nymphes, quæ pars in Australium præsertim mulieribus, ita excrescit ut ferro sit resecanda.*" *Dissertations, dissert. xv. p. 142.*—Thus Ambrosius, the Latin father, as quoted by Witsius: "*Ægyptii quarto decimo anno circumcidunt mares. Fæminæ apud eos eodem anno circumciduntur. Quod eo scil. anno incipiet flagrare passio virilis, et fœminarum menstrua sumunt exordia.*" *Judæus Christianizans, Prolegom. p. 14. Ultraject. 1661. Vid. J. G. Carpzovii Appar. Hist. Crit. Antiq. Sac. Annotat. p. 602, 603.*

cation, and the design of all his institutions. Now, as nothing is more clear than that the covenant, of which circumcision is a seal, comprehends our female children; and as nothing is more weak than to imagine, that any should be interested in the benefits of this divine constitution, and yet be utterly forbidden the sign of that interest; the want of an express direction is a trifling objection and worthy of no regard." Perfectly agreeable to this way of reasoning is the language of Mr. Henry, when he says; "Consequences from scripture are good proofs, [in reference to positive institutions.] The scriptures were written for rational creatures. And is not scripture reasoning the sense and meaning of scripture? If the premises be plain scripture truths, and granted, they are unworthy to be disputed with who deny the conclusion."*—Hence it appears, that a little reasoning on the covenant made with Abraham, and a few deductions from the nature and fitness of things, would have inferred the right of Jewish females to circumcision, in a manner similar to that by which our Brethren endeavour to authenticate the baptism of infants.

Reflect. IV. As our opponents in general agree to denominate baptism and the Lord's supper seals of the covenant; so, while they infer the title of infants to baptism, from their interest in that covenant, consistency requires, that both those supposed seals should be applied to them. What reason is there to be assigned, why the confident language of Witsius will not apply to infant communion as well as to infant baptism? "Doubtless," he says, "nothing hinders us from conferring the sign and seal of the covenant upon those whom we should acknowledge as covenantees."† It certainly wears a very awkward appearance, to insist upon infants being interested in a covenant that has two seals for its

* Treatise on Bap. p. 78.

† Miscell. Sac. tom. ii. exercit. xix. § 5.

ratification, and yet maintain that they have no right at all to one of those seals. What, shall persons be lawfully interested in a covenant that is big with blessings to the covenantees, and yet be entitled to a bare moiety of those very seals which confirm it, and are the signs of interest in it ! This, apparently, savours much of paradox.—Nor is this appearance of inconsistency lessened, but rather increased, by considering the infants of believers as interested only in the external administration of the covenant. For baptism and the holy supper being equally external rites, equally external seals of the covenant, and equally parts of its external administration, it seems yet more paradoxical for any to maintain, that the title of infants to one of those seals is perfectly valid, while they have neither part nor lot in the other.

The reasoning of our opposers on this branch of the subject is very remarkable. First they labour to prove, that the infants of godly persons are in the covenant of grace, together with their parents. An exalted privilege this, it must be allowed. Many of them, notwithstanding, when they explain their meaning freely, declare it is only the external administration of that covenant which they intend. This very much sinks the former idea. For that is like proclaiming those infants heirs of the kingdom, and ascertaining their enjoyment of it ; while this exhibits the glorious object, but leaves it quite uncertain whether they shall ever have a heart so much as to seek it. The former is like the sun in his meridian blaze ; the latter like a glow-worm, just visible at midnight. One secures their final salvation ; the other may be an innocent occasion of their aggravated ruin.

Our Brethren tell us, however, that this external administration has two seals annexed to it by our sovereign Lord. Surely, then, as the grand privilege of being in the covenant is already reduced to an interest in the external administration of it, this administration itself

will be left entire for the use of these distinguished infants. But even this cannot be granted. For though these two supposed seals most certainly belong to that external administration of which they speak, yet the highly favoured infants must not, at any rate, have more than one of them. After all, therefore, their prerogative above the children of Heathens amounts only to this; They are interested in an external administration of the covenant—an administration too that is but half confirmed, as having but one of its two seals appended to it. They may indeed, if they die in their infancy, be completely saved; yet not in virtue of the forementioned interest, for that ascertains no spiritual blessing, but by divine grace, through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ; and so may the dying infants of Heathens. They may, also, when grown to years of understanding, have the covenant internally administered to them, by the divine Spirit producing repentance, faith, and holy obedience in their hearts and lives; but neither is this peculiar to them, for whoever believes in Jesus Christ shall be saved.

Reflect. V. It is worthy of consideration, whether this doctrine concerning the federal interest of infants be not calculated to harden their consciences, and to flush them with false hopes, when grown to years of reflection. This tendency it apparently has, whether that interest be considered as their title to baptism, or their baptism as the mean of that interest; for in both cases the piety of their parents is the grand principle on which the reasoning proceeds. We will suppose a number of children growing up in life, whose parents are pious persons; we will farther suppose Mr. Whiston to address them in the words before quoted, only using the second person plural instead of the third.—“Ye, my dear young friends,” he will say, “and I rejoice in the thought, YE are put into a new covenant state; YE are absolutely, for the present, removed from under the covenant of

works. . . . Ye have true, real, and proper interest and propriety in God. As ye are his, so he is YOURS. There is a mutual propriety and interest in each other. YE have God UNDER AN ACTUAL OBLIGATION, VIZ. of his promise to improve and employ ALL HIS ATTRIBUTES for your good, benefit, and advantage, according, or in a way agreeable, to the true tenour of the covenant, and of the various promises of it. YOU have a present interest in and right to salvation; and, answerably, in case of your death before a forfeiture be made of that interest and right, you shall be infallibly saved."

We will suppose the same circle of young persons addressed by their parents on the principles inculcated, and according to the plan of prayer suggested by Mr. Henry, when speaking to such parents. That well-known author says; "Look upon their baptism, and you will see upon what grounds you go in praying for them. You pray for them, as IN COVENANT WITH GOD, INTERESTED IN THE PROMISES, SEALED TO BE THE LORD'S; and those are good pleas in prayer, to be used for the confirmation of your faith. Pray that God would treat them *as his*; tell him, and humbly INSIST upon it, that they ARE HIS; whom you gave to him, and of whom he accepted: and will he not take care of his own?"*

Now, if this be the language of reverence, of devotion, and of propriety, when parents are addressing God on the behalf of their children, it cannot be improper for the same parents often and earnestly to urge on the

* Treatise on Bap. p. 241, 242. The following observation of Dr. Owen is worthy of notice, though the principle of it is inimical to this direction of Mr. Henry. "Whereas we may and ought to represent unto God, in our supplications, our faith, or what it is that we believe. . . . I much question, whether some men can find in their hearts to pray over and plead before him all the arguments and distinctions they make use of;—or enter into judgment with him upon the conclusions they make from them." Doct. of Justification, Introduction.

minds, and to fix in the memories of their growing offspring, a conviction of their interest in the covenant, of their claim on the promises, and of their being sealed as Jehovah's peculiar property. Nor can it be doubted, if this conduct be right, but the prayers of the children, when they grow up, should be an echo to those of their parents for them. Yes, on the principles of Messrs. Whiston and Henry, they may boldly say; "Lord, *we* are in covenant with thee, *we* are interested in thy promises, *we* are sealed to be thine; we pray thee, therefore, to treat us as thy own. We farther make free to tell thee, and humbly *INSIST* upon it, that we *ARE* THINE; for we were given to thee, and accepted by thee: and wilt thou not take care of thy own? Divine fidelity forbids the painful thought of our ever being abandoned by thee." Thus the children of religious parents are taught, as soon as they can pray at all, to lift up their heads in the presence of God, and to address him, with the modern Jews, as follows: "*We* are thy people, the children of thy covenant."* They are implicitly directed to copy, with a confident front, an ancient example of prayer that Luke has recorded—an example which, though imitated by many, is avowed by few. For the purport of their language is; "We thank thee, O God, that *WE* are not as the children of other men, who are not interested in thy covenant, have no share in thy promises, nor any right in thy confirming seal. We contemplate with peculiar pleasure, the vast difference there is between us and the offspring of our profligate neighbour Publicanus." Now as these are the genuine consequences of Mr. Henry's dictates on the subject before us, I may venture an appeal to the impartial reader; Whether such sentiments imbibed by the children of godly parents, be not adapted to harden their consciences in an unregenerate state, and to render them easy, under a vain supposition of their being the

* In Dr. Gill's Exposit. of Rom. ix. 8.

favourites of heaven from their earliest infancy? For if, as Dr. Owen observes, "the father of lies himself could hardly have invented a more pernicious opinion," than that which connects regeneration with baptism, this, which unites the grand idea of interest in the covenant, the promises, and the sacred seal, with carnal descent from believing parents, cannot be innocent.

Were Mr. Henry now living, some faithful friend, perhaps, might whisper in his ear the following admonition: "Surely, Sir, you teach religious parents to treat the GREAT SUPREME in a very FAMILIAR manner! as if you had been witness to a written agreement between Him and them, and of their having received an earnest from Him, of what he engaged under his own hand and seal to do for their children. Besides, you seem to have entirely forgotten a salutary caution which, on another occasion, you have given to the seed of believers. Among your many excellent practical notes on the scripture, these, which I remember, deserve regard. 'It doth not follow, that because they are the seed of Abraham, therefore they must needs be the children of God—though it is common for people thus to stretch the meaning of God's promise, to bolster themselves up in a vain hope. . . . It is the common fault and folly of those that have pious parentage and education, to trust to it, and boast of it, as if it would atone for the want of real holiness. They were *Abraham's seed*; but what would that avail them, when we find one in hell that could call Abraham father? Saving benefits are not like common privileges, conveyed by entail to us and our issue; nor can a title to heaven be made by descent; neither may we claim as heirs at law, by making out our pedigree.'* Pardon me, Sir, if I take the freedom to intimate, that upon reading your directions to believing parents, in regard to the grounds of devotional addresses for their baptized infants, the prayer which Pelagius is reported to have

* Exposit. on Rom. ix. 6, 7; John viii. 33. See also on John i. 13.

taught a widow came fresh to remembrance. That ancient Briton, as you perhaps may recollect, advised his female disciple thus to address the Omniscient: ‘Thou knowest, O Lord, how holy, and pure, and clean, from all wickedness, and iniquity, and rapine, these hands are, which I now lift up to thee; like as the lips with which I offer supplications to thee to have mercy upon me, are pure, and clean, and free from all falsehood.’* Forgive my suspicions, dear Sir, if I cannot but apprehend, that there is too great a likeness between the grounds of your parental prayers, and those of this widow, as taught by Pelagius. The reasons of expecting an answer in both cases are, not sovereign mercy and atoning blood; these lie open to a publican, when praying for himself or his offspring—these lie open to the vilest wretch upon earth, if he possess a disposition to pray;—but a supposed and an immense difference between the state and character of certain infants in one case, of a widow in the other, compared with those of children and of adults in common.”—The following extract from Dr. Willet shall conclude this branch of the subject: “Infants neither have faith in themselves, nor yet are profited or furthered to their salvation by the faith of others. . . . Infants are not justified, nor relieved or helped forward towards their salvation, by the faith of their parents or godfathers, when they are baptized; for the scripture saith, ‘The just shall live by faith;’ that is, by his own faith, not the faith of another.”†

SECT. 3.—*Jewish Circumcision.*

Dr. Willet.—“Arguments drawn from types and figures conclude not, unless they be types ordained of God to such use; neither are the sacraments of the gospel to be squared out according to the pattern of the

* In Dr. Owen, on the Holy Spirit, b. iii. chap. v. p. 266.

† Synopsis Papismi, p. 574.

ceremonies of the law. We also deny, that the ceremonies and rites of the law (as, the paschal lamb, manna, and the rest) are figures and types of our sacraments; but both their sacraments and ours are figures and representations of Christ." *Synopsis Papismi*, p. 643.

2. Dr. Hammond.—“By all this [account of the Jewish proselyte baptism] it appears, how little needful it will be to defend the baptism of Christian infants from the law of circumcising infants among the Jews, the foundation being far more fitly laid in that other of Jewish baptism, a ceremony of initiation for all, especially for proselytes, as well as that: and whereas that of circumcision belonged only to one, this other being common to both sexes, &c. . . . Baptism is no more spiritual circumcision, than circumcision is spiritual baptism.” *Works*, vol. i. p. 474, 483.

3. Turretinus.—“Circumcision represented, not baptism, but the grace of regeneration, which likewise is sealed by baptism. The paschal lamb represented, not the sacred supper, but Christ himself exhibited in the supper. The baptism of the ancient Israelites in the cloud and in the sea, was a sacrament, not of our baptism, but of the thing signified by it; like as the rock and the water flowing from it signified, not the holy supper, but Christ himself, as Paul explains it, 1 Cor. x. 3, 4.” *Disput. de Bap. Nubis et Maris*, § 17.

4. Dr. Clarke.—“By analogy, drawn from the rite of circumcision, it has for very many ages been the general practice in the Christian church, to receive infants by baptism into the obligations of faith and obedience to the gospel, and to make profession for them, which they are to believe and obey. Whether this analogy be rightly drawn or not, and be a sufficient and adequate foundation for what has been built upon it, is a controversy.”* *Sermons*, vol. i. serm. xxxviii. p. 241. Fol.

* Mr. Baxter, in a similar case, thus: “I will not stand now upon the question, Whether such arguments from mere analogy

5. Lord Brooke.—“ To those that hold we may go no farther than scripture for doctrine or discipline, it may be very easy to err in this point now in hand, [i. e. infant baptism;] since the scripture seems not to have clearly determined this particular. The analogy which baptism now hath with circumcision in the old law, is a fine rhetorical argument to illustrate a point well proved before; but I somewhat doubt whether it be proof enough for that which some would prove by it; since, besides the vast difference in the ordinances, the persons to be circumcised are stated by a positive law, so express, that it leaves no place for scruple. But it is far otherwise in baptism; where all the designation of persons fit to be partakers, for aught I know, is only, *SUCH AS BELIEVE*: for this is the qualification that, with exactest search, I find the scripture requires in persons to be baptized; and this it seems to require in all such persons. Now, how infants can be properly said to believe, I am not yet fully resolved.” Discourse of Episcopacy, sect. ii. chap. vii. p. 97.

6. Mr. Ball.—“ In whatsoever they [circumcision and baptism] agree or differ, we must look to the institution, and neither stretch it wider nor draw it narrower than the Lord hath made it: for he is the institutor of the sacraments, according to his own good pleasure; and it is our part to learn of him, both to whom, how, and for what end the sacraments are to be administered; how they agree, and wherein they differ. In all which, we must affirm nothing but what God hath taught us, and as he hath taught us.” In Mr. Tombes’s Examen. p. 2, 3.

7. Dr. Priestley.—“ It was natural for the apostles and other Jews, on the institution of baptism, to apply it to infants as well as to adults, as a token of the profession of Christianity by the master of the family only; and this they would do without considering it as a sub-

will hold. . . Mr. Blake confesseth it very dangerous to argue from mere analogy.” Disputat. of Right to Sacram. p. 189, 303.

stitute for circumcision, and succeeding in the place of it, which it is never said to do in the scriptures, though some have been led, by some circumstances of resemblance in the two rites, to imagine that this was the case." *Hist. of Corrup. of Christ.* vol. ii. p. 71.

8. Limborch.—“Baptism [it is asserted] came in the room of circumcision; and since the latter was administered to infants, the former ought to be administered to them likewise. *Answ.* Taking this for granted, yet it will by no means follow, that all the circumstances prescribed in circumcision, should likewise be observed in baptism. For, first, infant baptism is no where so expressly commanded as circumcision is. Secondly, it would from thence follow that infants should be baptized on the eighth day precisely, or else they would be cut off from the people of God. Thirdly, nay, they should be baptized as soon as they are born; for since there is no day prefixed for infant baptism, and it may be administered to infants immediately upon their birth without any prejudice, and children may die as soon as they are born, no reason can be assigned why it should be put off even for one day. Fourthly, and lastly; if this consequence were of any force, I might with parity of reason infer, that since the males were only [males only were] circumcised, therefore now it is unlawful for the females to be baptized; which (as any one may perceive) being very absurd, it is plain that, with respect to the outward circumstances, the case of circumcision and baptism is not in all things the same.” *Complete Syst. Div.* book v. chap. xxii. sect. ii.

9. Dr. Erskine.—“That it [baptism] came in the place of circumcision I allow, in so far as circumcision was a seal to real saints of the righteousness of faith; not in so far as it sealed external privileges to all the Jews, and was a badge of distinction between them and other nations. Baptism has none of these properties, which rendered circumcision a fit sign and seal of an external

covenant. Circumcision impressed an abiding mark; was the characteristic of Judaism; belonged to all Jews, however differing in opinion or practice; and those born of a Jew, even when come to age, were entitled to it: whereas baptism impresses no abiding mark. A profession and suitable practice, not baptism, is the characteristic of Christianity. And persons come to age, have no just title to baptism, till they believe and repent; and therefore are not baptized, unless their opinions and practices appear agreeable to the gospel; their credible profession, and not their descent, founding their outward claim to that privilege. The proof of this is extremely obvious. John's baptism was termed the baptism *of repentance*, and baptism *to repentance*; because he required of all, whom he admitted to baptism, a profession of repentance, and exhorted them to such a conduct as would demonstrate their repentance genuine. Peter demanded repentance of his hearers, in order to baptism; and only they that 'gladly received his word were baptized.' And Philip acquaints the eunuch, 'if thou believe with thy whole heart, thou mayest' be baptized. Well, therefore, does Paul join together the washing of water and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, as things which should never be separated. And for the same reason, Peter informs us, that baptism is of no avail unless attended with 'the answer of a good conscience;' i. e. a sincere and cordial acceptance of the offers of the gospel. (Acts xix. 4; Matt. iii. 6, 8, 11; Acts ii. 38, 41, and viii. 37; Tit. iii. 5; 1 Pet. iii. 21.)" Theolog. Dissert. p. 78, 79, 80.

10. Chamierus.—“Circumcision was not a figure of baptism, nor the passover of the Lord's supper. . . . From the law to the gospel there is no necessary conclusion, except the propriety and force of the consequence appear on other grounds.” Panstrat. tom. i. l. iii. c. i. § 4; l. ix. c. 10. § 43.

11. Dr. Ames.—“It is asserted by Bellarmine, with-

out any reason, that circumcision was a figure of baptism. A sacrament is not the sign of a visible sacrament, but of invisible grace." Bellarminus *Enervatus*, tom. iii. l. i. c. iv. § 13.

12. Mr. James Owen.—“No argument can be drawn from the ceremonial law to the gospel, because we are not under the obligation of that law.” *Hist. of Images and of Image Worship*, p. 107.

13. Cattenburgh.—“Though, apparently, there is a great similitude between circumcision and baptism, yet it does not thence follow that this came in the place of that; because, on the same principle, a person might argue, that bread and wine in the sacred supper succeeded in the place of manna, and of water from the rock. Is it to be believed, on supposition of this assertion concerning baptism being admitted, that John the Baptist in his preaching would not have signified something of this kind; and that our Lord himself would not have taught his disciples concerning such an appointment? We may add, when so sharp a controversy was agitated about circumcision, (Acts xv.) not so much as a title occurs relating to such a succession; which nevertheless, on that occasion, ought principally to have been mentioned. Farther: Besides the difference of circumstances mentioned by the learned Limborch, and that most evident argument, *none but male children were circumcised, therefore they only are to be baptized*; others add, circumcision was performed by a knife, but baptism is administered in water. The circumcision of infants was urged by the Lord with such great rigour, that Moses himself was threatened with destruction for its neglect, (Exod. iv. 24;) and, fathers neglecting that rite, it was lawful for mothers to circumcise their sons, (Exod. iv. 25;) which the reformed prohibit to women, or do not permit, in regard to baptism. Circumcision was not performed in the name of any one, as baptism is ‘in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of

the Holy Spirit.' Circumcision was performed upon one member only; whereas in baptism the whole body is ordered to be immersed. Principally, circumcision was a discriminating mark of the Jews from other nations; whereas baptism tends to unite all nations in one body. (Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15, 16; 1 Cor. xii. 13.)" Spicileg. Theolog. l. iv. c. lxiv. sect. ii. § 22.

14. Venema.—“What shall we say to circumcision? Shall we deny that baptism succeeded in its place? I will not do it, because it is a received hypothesis, and, rightly understood, has nothing inconsistent with truth. But what then? Must I therefore allow, or does it then follow, that the design and the end of baptism and of circumcision were the same? Certainly, by no means: for according to the different nature of the economies, there ought to be a different aspect of the sacraments, and a different end. . . . Circumcision, according to a twofold covenant, internal and external, which then existed, had likewise a twofold aspect, spiritual and carnal. The former referred to the internal covenant of grace; the latter to a legal, typical, and external covenant. That was concerned in sealing *the righteousness of faith*, as the apostle asserts; this in the external prerogatives of Judaism, and in confirming external benefits. That was peculiar to the believing Israelites; this was common to the whole people. This might as well have subsisted by itself, separate from that, as the legal covenant have stood by itself, without the covenant of grace. This twofold and different aspect of circumcision being supposed and admitted, the whole question will be: Whether baptism answer to both, or only to one of those different appearances? Whether it succeeded to circumcision absolutely and in all respects, or in a restricted sense, and in some only? Which controversy cannot be determined, but from a comparison of both economies, a contemplation on the nature of each sacrament, and indeed the clear doctrine of scripture. For

should you urge the word *succession*, as if that which succeeds another must in all respects supply its place, you stumble in a twofold manner:—because every thing which is like another, has not necessarily a perfect likeness, as a thousand examples teach; he is the successor of one who succeeds to part of his office; it is one thing to succeed, another to do it perfectly;—and because you urge a word that is not found in scripture; for the scriptures no where affirm that baptism holds the place of circumcision. Nor from that place of Paul, Col. ii. 11, 12, can any thing else be inferred, than that the two sacraments answer one another; for it is not there asserted in express words;—the apostle simply asserts in those words, that baptism answers to *spiritual* circumcision.

“ The question requires reasons of a different kind, by which it may be determined: and seeing I perceive none produced for a perfect similitude, it is my intention to establish an imperfect likeness, in order to make it appear that baptism succeeded circumcision, not according to an external, but only an internal and mystical consideration. The genius of the new economy affords the first and the clearest reason; seeing a sacrament of it cannot be foreign from its nature. Now that is spiritual, and abhorrent of an external covenant, as I have endeavoured to demonstrate; wherefore it answers only to the spiritual part of the old economy. Whence it is evident, if I mistake not, that a sacrament of the new covenant agrees to circumcision, so far as it pertains to a spiritual and internal covenant: not according to its external use, by which it confirmed a literal covenant; for such a covenant does not now exist.

“ Again: Baptism cannot rightly agree to the external and literal design of circumcision, unless at the same time it also agree in those things that are connected with its external appearance; and they are these. It was a permanent sign; it was a characteristic mark

of Judaism. Birth itself gave a right to it, even in adults. It therefore belonged to the whole people; nor was it capable of being erased by any opinions or conduct, provided the foundations of Judaism were not subverted by them. These things agree to circumcision, considered simply as an external sign; all which are otherwise now in regard to baptism. Baptism is not a permanent mark: it is not a distinguishing character of real Christianity; for that consists in a confession of faith, and a life agreeable to it; by no means in baptism, to which such an idea no way agrees, except so far as it is an external confession and signification of our unfeigned faith. Farther: Not birth, but a confession of faith, transfers to adults the sacred immersion. They are dipped, not because they were born of Christian parents; but because they profess faith. Finally: Not men of every opinion, sect, and course of life are immersed in the sacred font, but those who evidence a sound faith and a virtuous conduct. Which difference, in this respect sufficiently remarkable, evinces difference and a great dissimilitude between the two sacraments. I omit other circumstances of disagreement, because they were marks of such a kind as were peculiar to circumcision as an external sign, and do not so properly come under consideration here.

“I would have it particularly observed, that circumcision, so far as it was an external sign, sealed to the Israelites their carnal descent from Abraham, and therefore their title to the possession of terrestrial benefits. For seeing the promises were made to Abraham and his posterity, God affixed a sign of that kind, *membro genitali*, that it might appear to all by this mark alone, that they drew their origin from Abraham, and were the heirs of terrestrial blessings; which is the true and first design of literal circumcision. This also is the reason, why the promise of a long life in the land of Canaan, was annexed to the precept concerning the

honour that is due to parents. Hence also the reason is to be sought, for their wearing this mark, *genitali membro*; namely, that a numerous offspring, and the benefits connected with their very nativity, might be strongly represented. What now in this respect has baptism in common with circumcision? Nothing at all: whence the difference between baptism and circumcision, as an external sign, most plainly appears.

“Once more: Circumcision, according to its external aspect, was a typical sacrament, by which future spiritual benefits were exhibited to view; so that the circumcised Israelite himself constituted a part of the type. But baptism is only a sign of the covenant, by which the blessings of a present covenant are exhibited and sealed to the covenantees; which things are very widely different. Besides, baptism exhibits in a pledge those very spiritual benefits which circumcision typically expressed. Baptism then succeeds in the place of circumcision, according to its mystical signification, sealing the good things represented by it. It is not, therefore, an external sign, like circumcision; but a mystical one, agreeable to its mystical end. To which I may add, if baptism succeeded circumcision as a type, then a type came in the place of a type, which is very absurd.

“I will briefly explain what is to be inferred from Col. ii. 11, 12, concerning the succession of baptism in the place of circumcision. No direct mention is there made of succession; for two things may agree in a certain respect, without one supplying the place of the other, and being for that reason appointed to do it. The *deluge* and *baptism*, so answer one another in spiritual signification, that Peter calls this the ANTITYPE of that; yet it never came into the mind of any one hence to infer, that baptism came in the place of the deluge. But seeing circumcision was an ordinary sacrament of the Old, as baptism is of the New Testament, and they excellently answer one another in their spiritual design,

hence I admit, that the one may be said to occupy the place of the other. Circumcision, as a type of spiritual circumcision, having obtained its fulfilment under the new economy, the former must give place to the latter, as the shadow to the body. And as there are a sign and a seal of the same blessing in baptism, hence it succeeds circumcision in regard to spiritual signification; not as a type, an external and carnal sign, to a type; but as a pledge of what is represented and present, to a type of the same thing as future, and to be performed. The type being vanished away, the seal is appointed; the same spiritual object was the end of both, but they did not lead to it in the same way. The idea of succession, therefore, is to be admitted, not in respect of the manner, but of the spiritual object; as is manifest from what has been said. But, farther, circumcision was a seal of righteousness and of sanctification, which were then dispensed to the fathers by anticipation; in which sense it is far more accurately said, that baptism came in its place, as each of them is a seal of the same thing. Seeing, then, that the whole agreement between circumcision and baptism, and the succession of one to the other, must be sought in their spiritual object, in whatever way you may understand it, to settle the external aspect and end of baptism, a comparison of it with circumcision avails nothing at all." *Dissertat. Sacræ*, l. ii. c. xv. § 6, 7, 8, 9, 11.—*Vid.* l. ii. c. iv. § 11. See also *Sect. 2. No. 2*, of this chapter.

REFLECTIONS.

Reflect. I. It appears by these quotations from Pædobaptists, That there are various and great disparities between baptism and circumcision, No. 8, 9, 12, 14;—that supposing the analogy between them were ever so great, it would still be our duty to regard the institution of baptism, and take it as it is; because that analogy could not be produced by way of proof, but

only as an illustration of what is already proved by other mediums, No. 5, 6;—that circumcision did not represent baptism; nor does the scripture any where teach us that the latter succeeded to the place of the former, No. 3, 7, 11, 12, 14;—that, admitting baptism to have come in the place of circumcision, it would not follow that the design of each was the same, No. 14;—that we must not accommodate the positive appointments of the New, to those of the Old Testament, the two dispensations being so very different, No. 1, 11, 14;—and that the Jewish proselyte baptism, already considered, is a much better foundation for Pædobaptism than circumcision, No. 2.—Such is the testimony which these respectable authors bear. Nor are the passages produced to be considered in the light of mere authorities; for most of these writers, especially Cattenburgh and Venema, support their opinion by argument; which, whether it be conclusive, and whether in our favour, the reader will judge.

I will now subjoin an attestation or two from our impartial friends, the Quakers.

Robert Barclay.—“What ground from scripture or reason can our adversaries bring us to evince, that one shadow or figure should point to another shadow or figure, and not to the substance? And yet they make the figure of circumcision to point to water baptism, and the paschal lamb to bread and wine. But was it ever known that one figure was the antitype of the other? especially seeing Protestants make not these their antitypes to have any more virtue and efficacy than the type had.” Apology, proposit. xiii. § 9.

William Penn.—“That which perhaps misled the doctors of the declining church first into this practice, [infant baptism] being at the distance of some hundreds of years from the apostolic times, might be the supposition that water baptism came in the place of circumcision; and that being to children, so might water baptism

too. But they forgot (among other things which, even before that time, crept into the church, without precept or evangelical example) that repentance was not made a condition to circumcision, as it was to water baptism." Defence of Gospel Truths, p. 83.

Reflect. II. That the title of infants to baptism cannot be justly inferred from the obsolete rite of circumcision, will further appear if the following things be duly considered. Baptism is an appointment purely religious, and intended for purposes entirely spiritual; but circumcision, besides the spiritual instruction suggested by it, was a sign of carnal descent, a mark of national distinction, and a token of interest in those temporal blessings that were promised to Abraham.* This po-

* Dr. Erskine says: "When God promised the land of Canaan to Abraham and his seed, circumcision was instituted, for this among other purposes, to show that descent from Abraham was the foundation of his posterity's right to those blessings." Theolog. Dissert. p. 9.—Witsius, thus: "Circumcision was the sign of a covenant which God undoubtedly made with Abraham and his family only, exclusive of other nations, and a seal of those benefits which he intended to be peculiar to Abraham's posterity; and therefore, according to divine appointment, it was used to distinguish the seed of Abraham from the nations of the world. Whence the sons of Jacob thought it unworthy the dignity of their family, that their sister should be given in marriage to one that was uncircumcised," (Gen. xxxiv. 14.)—Thus Tacitus: "*Circumcidere genitalia instituere, ut diversitate noscantur.*" *Ægyptiaca*, l. iii. c. vi. § 5.—Another learned foreigner, thus: "Circumcision had a regard to the inheritance of Canaan; for no uncircumcised person could enjoy it." *Biblioth. Bremens. class. iv. p. 171.*—Hence Wagenseilius concludes, that circumcision was to be in force, "as long as the posterity of Abraham should possess the land of Canaan." *Apud Carpzov. Appar. Hist. Crit. Antiq. Sac. annotat. p. 605.*—Carpzovius thus: "The covenant of circumcision is very closely connected with the promise of multiplying Abraham's posterity, of bestowing on them a large country and very great honours; and it was a mark of difference by which they might be distinguished from other nations. Whence it followed, that the Jewish republic being abolished, and the land of Canaan lost, this covenant expired at the same time. Nay, it by no means agreed to the times of the Messiah, in which, according to the predictions

litical aspect of that ancient ceremony seems to have been the reason why its performance on the sabbath could not be justified, except by the law of institution requiring its administration precisely on the eighth day,* and so it was the opinion of Jewish rabbies, that circumcision *drove away* the sabbath.† But baptism being a branch of divine worship, to be performed with the utmost solemnity, and for purposes merely religious, the administration of it is perfectly suitable to God's holy day. Is it natural, then, is it logical for any to infer, that because male infants were circumcised, partly with political views, and by the express order of Jehovah, that both male and female infants ought now to be baptized, for ends entirely spiritual, and without an express command?

Again: The Israelites were a national church. To be an obedient subject of their civil government, and a complete member in their church-state, were the same thing; because, by treating Jehovah as their political sovereign, they avowed him as the true God. Agreeably to which, under that economy, Jehovah acknowledged all those for his people, and himself as their God, who performed an external obedience to his commands, even though in their hearts disaffected to him.‡ To this

of the prophets, the distinction between the natural descendants of Abraham and other nations being removed, both became one people under the Messiah, and afterward were to have all things common.' Ibid. Vid. Quenstedii Antiq. Bib. p. 274; Pascal's Thoughts on Relig. chap. xviii.; and Chambers's Cyclopædia, article, Circumcision.—Mr. Picart is of opinion, that circumcision was "accounted conducive and necessary to cleanliness, as well as health." Relig. Cerem. vol. i. p. 233.—Some of the Jewish rabbies, and of the schoolmen, have supposed, that circumcision was intended to restrain the power of concupiscence; but of these things we find no intimation in scripture, that I perceive. Vid. Schœtgenii Hor. Heb. p. 1163. Gerhardi, Loc. Theolog. tom. iv. De Circumcis. § 11.

* John. v. 9, and vii. 22, 23.

† See Grotius and Dr. Gill, on John vii. 22, 23.

‡ See Judges viii. 23; 1 Sam. viii. 6, 7, and xii. 12; 1 Chron.

ecclesiastico-political constitution circumcision was adapted. In pursuance of which, not only male infants, but also adults, if descended from Abraham, and not circumcised when young, were entitled to the distinguishing mark. This right they enjoyed independent of sanctifying grace, either in themselves or in their parents; and even detached from every idea of a pretension to it, in the one or the other. Nay, the domestics of Abraham, whether born in his house, or bought with his money; whether in a carnal or in a regenerate state, were as fully entitled to this rite as their venerable master. In proof of these things, we need no other evidence than the institution itself.—But in regard to baptism, and the connection in which it stands, all things are otherwise. The Hebrew theocracy has long ceased to exist. That national Jewish church is utterly dissolved. The charter also by which the chosen tribes were incorporated, has entirely spent its force, and is become for ever obsolete.

It must indeed be allowed, that ever since Constantine ascended the throne of the empire, national churches have greatly prevailed; as being perfectly well suited to a kind of political Christianity which then came into fashion, and is yet in great repute. Nor are those constitutions likely to fail, while the policy of sovereign princes, and the pride of aspiring prelates can support them; but not having a divine charter, and being established by human laws, they are, notwithstanding the real piety of many who belong to such establishments, merely secular kingdoms. It is necessary, therefore, that each of them should have a visible head, either civil or ecclesiastical, either prince or pontiff; whose creed shall be the standard of sacred truth to all the subjects of his dominions. It is necessary also, that each of these ecclesias-

xxviii. 5, and xxix. 23; 2 Chron. ix. 8. Vid. Heidegg. Corp. Theol. tom. i. p. 701, 702, 703; Dr. Jennings's Jewish Antiq. vol. i. p. 21—30; Mr. Arch. Hall's Gospel Worship, vol. ii. p. 394; and Dr. Doddridge's Note on Heb. ix. 9.

cal principalities should have a code of laws for its government, very different in many respects from the sacred canons of the New Testament; for the divine Author of that ancient book, not having directed Christian communities to be formed on this plan, has not provided for their various exigencies. Now to the continuance and support of these ecclesiastical corporations, infant baptism is well adapted;* whereas it is plain, if the church of Christ be congregational, consisting only of such persons as are called by the gospel, and make a credible profession of repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, that it neither needs nor admits of such a support.

It is of capital importance in this, as in many other theological subjects, to keep in our eye the great difference between the Jewish and the Christian church. Of this Pædobaptists themselves are aware, in reference to other cases. "Some," says Dr. Owen, "when they hear that the covenant of grace was always one and the same, of the same nature and efficacy under both Testaments; that the way of salvation by Christ was always one and the same; are ready to think that there was no such great difference between their state [that of the ancient Jews] and ours, as is pretended. But—those who see, who understand not, how excellent and glorious those privileges are, which are added unto the covenant of grace, as to the administration of it by the introduction and establishment of the new covenant, are utterly unacquainted with the nature of spiritual and heavenly things."†—Relative to this difference are the following extracts. Dr. Jennings: "The Jewish church was—a

* Dr. Wall seems to think it a peculiar honour and a great advantage to his cause, "That all the *national* churches in the world are Pædobaptists," Hist. Inf. Bap. part ii. chap. viii. That Pædobaptism is quite agreeable to the idea of national churches, is readily allowed; but that such establishments have any warrant in the New Testament has never yet been proved.

† On Hebrews, vol. iii. p. 242.

divine establishment; and all persons born in the land of Israel, and of Jewish parents, being considered as members of it, were therefore bound to conform to its rites and worship. . . . But is there a divine establishment of any national church under the gospel dispensation? If the New Testament gives us no other idea of the churches of Christ, but their being voluntary societies, uniting under the laws of Christ for public worship, and other purposes of religion, then is no man *born* a member of any church.”*—Dr. Owen: “The institutions of the law—were in their nature *carnal*, as our apostle declares, Heb. vii. 16; ix. 10. The subject of them all, the means of their celebration were *carnal things*, beneath those pure spiritual acts of the mind and soul, which are of a more noble nature. . . . And as they were carnal, so they might be exactly performed by men of carnal minds, and were so for the most part. . . . Regeneration is expressly required in the Gospel, to give a right and privilege unto an entrance into the church or kingdom of Christ; whereby that kingdom of his is distinguished from all other kingdoms in and of the world, unto an interest wherein never any such thing was required. . . . Neither the church nor its privileges [being] continued and preserved, as of old, by *carnal generation*.”†—Dr. Whitby: “No man is, indeed, a member of Christ’s kingdom who is not truly regenerate.”‡—Mr. Arch. Hall: “The church is a spiritual society. . . . Her ordinances and services are spiritual. This constitutes a grand and lasting distinction between the New Testament church, and the church-state of the Jews, whose ordinances were beggarly, and their worship carnal and shadowy.”§ Must we, then, look to a carnal and beggarly rite, under a local and very imperfect dispensation,

* Jewish Antiq. vol. ii. p. 62, 63.

† On Heb. vii. 11. Nature of a Gospel Church, p. 3, 17.

‡ Note on John iii. 3.

§ Gospel Church, p. 18.

for direction in the administration of a positive Institute under the new and spiritual economy? Far be it!

The great Proprietor and Lord of the Christian church, having absolutely disclaimed a kingdom that is *of this world*, cannot acknowledge any as the subjects of his government, who do not know and revere him; who do not really confide in him, and sincerely love him. He disdains to be called *the King*, or *the God*, of any person who does not obey and worship him in spirit and in truth. Agreeably to which, when as a spiritual King he appointed baptism, it was in close connection with previous instruction, and limited (as far as appears from his own language, or from apostolic practice) to those who profess repentance for sin, faith in his blood, and subjection to his authority as Lord of conscience, without saying a word, or giving the least intimation, that the being descended from such or such parents entitles either one or another to that institution.* To infer, therefore, that baptism belongs to infants, because infants were circumcised when the church was, in the strictest sense, national—when Jehovah sustained the character of a political monarch—when the slave of an Israelite, though descended from idolatrous parents, had an equal title to the ceremony with his master's offspring—when a profession of repentance for sin, of a believing regard to the Lord Messiah, or of sincere love to God as the giver of spiritual blessings, was not required of any to qualify them for it—and, when the law of administration expressly determined, that carnal descent from Abraham invested all his male posterity with a claim on the ordinance; to infer, I say, that baptism belongs to infants, though all these things are now reversed, is a strange conclusion!

Reflect. III. That baptism did not come in the

* See Matt. iii. 7, 8, 9, and xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15, 16; Acts viii. 36, 37; 1 Pet. iii. 21.

place of circumcision, we have the strongest presumptive evidence. To what has been urged, No. 5, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, we may add; If baptism succeeded in the place of circumcision, how came it that both of them were in full force at the same time; that is, from the commencement of John's ministry to the death of Christ? If one institution succeed in the place of another, we are unavoidably led to consider that other as having vacated its place. Because, as Dr. Owen observes, "the sign of what is to come, is set aside when the thing signified is brought in;"* agreeably to that old saying, *Positio unius, est remotio alterius*. For one thing to come in the room of another, and the latter still hold its place, is an odd kind of succession.—Admitting the succession pretended, how came it that Paul circumcised Timothy, after he had been baptized? For this, on the principle here opposed, there does not appear the least reason.—But why do I mention the case of Timothy? seeing it is plain, on this hypothesis, that it was the indispensable duty of those parents who were baptized by John, and by the apostles, before the death of Christ, to have *all* their male infants both baptized and circumcised. For that the law of circumcision was then in its full vigour, none can doubt; and that infant baptism was then in its prime, our opposers insist. Those favoured infants therefore, if ever they partook of the holy supper, must, in the language of Pædobaptism, have had the covenant ratified to them by *three seals*. A singular privilege this, it must be allowed! But what becomes of baptism as the successor of circumcision?—Again; If baptism succeeded circumcision, why should not complete communion in a church-state belong to all that are baptized, as it undoubtedly did to all the circumcised Israelites; except on account of legal impurity, or of some enormous offence against the laws of Jehovah? This, however, multitudes of our opposers will by no means

* On Heb. vol. iii. p. 178.

admit. But why, in the name of consistency, why so zealous for the principle, and so abhorrent of its genuine consequence? Some of our opponents, however, have a different view of the case, and seem to admit the consequence. For Mr. Moses Mather, in opposition to the necessity of professing true faith in order to full communion, says; "This scheme makes infant baptism a mere nullity, or thing of nought. To me this conclusion appears just and unavoidable."*

Farther: Had the supposed succession been a fact, not only the apostles, but all the apostolic churches must have known it. What was the reason, then, that so many of the Jewish converts were highly disgusted at the thought of circumcision being laid aside? Why such warm endeavours to support the credit of an ancient ceremony, which they themselves must have known to be obsolete, and for this very reason, because *baptism came in its room*? Or if the fire of zeal and the force of prejudice had blinded *their* minds to so just an inference, yet, surely, the apostles and elders, when assembled at Jerusalem to settle the unhappy dispute, were not enveloped in the same injurious error. And how natural would it have been for that venerable assembly, to have given some intimation of this presumed succession, if they had known any thing of it! How natural, also, for Paul, in his controversial Epistle to the Galatians, to have said something about it! For that, in all probability, would have been the direct way to determine the dispute at once.—According to the principles of our opponents, the holy apostles and the venerable elders of those times were all Pædobaptists; but there is not the least appearance of their acting in this controversy like persons of that character. For had a convention of modern Pædobaptists occupied the place of that honourable

* In Mr. Backus's Church Hist. of New England, vol. ii. p. 268, 269.

assembly at Jerusalem, there is reason to believe that a great majority of them would have agreed in addressing the Jewish bigots to this effect: "Do not you know, Brethren, or have you forgotten, that *baptism* came in the place of circumcision, and that it is emphatically called, THE CHRISTIAN CIRCUMCISION?*" We are astonished to think that a fact so notorious, and a sentiment so common in all the churches, should be thus overlooked and practically denied by you!" But not a word like this, in any account of that dispute contained in the New Testament. Nay, it is obvious, that the primitive Jewish Christians did not consider baptism as a substitute for circumcision, or as coming in its place, because they *circumcised* their children.†

Still farther: Those who defend infant baptism, on the ground of proselyte bathing, have but a poor pretence to argument when they plead the succession of baptism to circumcision. For upon that principle baptism came in the room, not of circumcision, but of the Jewish plunging; except they could make it appear, that baptism equally succeeded, by the appointment of God, a divine institution and a human invention, which would be a strange kind of succession. Strange, indeed, as that of a prince, who at the same time should succeed to the honours of an imperial crown, and to the rags of a haughty mendicant. When our opposers argue against us from the rabbinical bathing, we are led to consider it as preparing the way for Christian baptism, like as the preaching of John announced the appearance, and introduced the ministry of Jesus Christ; but when they plead against us from circumcision, the Jewish plunging is

* Epiphanius calls it "*μεγαλη περιτομη*, the *great circumcision*; because it circumcises us from our sins." Vid. Vossii Disputat. de Bap. disp. iv. § 3. It is well observed, however, No. 2, that "baptism is no more spiritual circumcision, than circumcision is spiritual baptism."

† Acts xxi 21 See Chap. I. No. 25.

deprived of its public honours, is reduced to a private station, and the painful Abrahamic rite assumes its place. It is, I conceive, impossible to prove that these Jewish ceremonies were *both* succeeded by baptism; or, that they have an equal claim to the honour of introducing an ordinance of Jesus Christ: consequently, our opponents, if they would be consistent, must give up their argument from either the one or the other of them.

Once more: As this analogical kind of reasoning from an obsolete rite of the old economy, to an appointment of the New Testament, is inconsistent with the nature of a positive institution; and as it is a tacit confession, that evangelists and apostles afford but slender evidence in proof of the point which our Brethren wish to establish; so many of them cannot but know, that by this very method of arguing, Papists endeavour to prove the lawfulness of *women* baptizing, in cases of supposed necessity, because the wife of Moses performed the rite of circumcision upon her son;—that the church of Christ should have a *visible head*, because the Jewish church had a high priest;—that the true church must be *infallible*, because the ancient high priest, by consulting Urim on certain occasions, delivered oracles;—and that there must be *seven* sacraments, because the number seven makes a conspicuous figure in the Hebrew ritual. So Hottinger has observed, “that the whole worship of the Papists is akin to Judaism.”*—Nor do the Protestant Dissenting Pædobaptists need to be informed, that our English Episcopalians, being convinced that the New Testament knows nothing of a national church—of their hierarchy—of a strict alliance between the church and the state—of the divine right of tithes for the support of Christian ministers—of canonical habits—of instrumental music in divine worship—nor yet of their holy days—have recourse to the antiquated Jewish

* *Analecta Hist. Theol. dissert. i. § 7.*

economy in defence of these particulars. And why may not those things be defended on the ground of analogy, by Papists, or by Protestant Episcopalians, as well as infant baptism? Why should any of our Dissenting Brethren consider circumcision as the only positive appointment of the Old Testament, which is entitled to such a directive influence on Christian worship and order? What passage of scripture, or what reason, can be assigned for this pre-eminence? Had not those ancient rites the same Author? Were not their obligation and use limited to the same period? Why then should circumcision, which had more of a political nature in it than any of them, still exert its influence on our minds, above all the other branches of an antiquated system, and concur in directing us whom to baptize? Roman Catholics and English Episcopalians, are manifestly more consistent with themselves, in this respect, than those Protestant Dissenters who argue for infant baptism from infant circumcision. Those of our Brethren, however, be they Conformists or Nonconformists, who argue from the institutions of Judaism, to the positive rites of Christianity, may do well to consider, whether that principle of reasoning, if pursued, would not lead them back to the church of Rome; because there is a greater conformity to the Mosaic ritual in that communion than in any other.* If it be once granted to the doctors of the Romish communion, says Vitringa, that the order and worship of the gospel church are conformable to those of the Jewish economy, (to which the Papists always look for the chief support of their numerous errors,) they will plausibly defend the whole of their ecclesiastical polity.† Nay, as Mr. Tombes has observed, “it is the common complaint of Protestants

* See Claude's *Def. of Reformation*, part. i. p. 23, 24. *Biblioth. Brem*, class. iii. p. 823—826. *Ainsworth's Arrow against Idolatry*, p. 81, 82. *Owen's Def. of Scrip. Ordinat.* p. 48.

† *De Synag. Vet.* p. 75, 76.

and Antiprelatists, that, in imitation of the Jews, under pretence of analogy, a new-named Judaism hath been brought into the Christian church.”* If it be allowable to argue for Pædobaptism, from Jewish circumcision, why may not the Roman Catholics reason thus, in defence of their opinion concerning the mass? The Lord’s supper succeeds the passover, as baptism does the rite of circumcision. Now it is clear from those words, “Christ our passover is sacrificed for us,” that the passover was a *sacrifice*—such a sacrifice as resembled the death of Christ; and therefore it was propitiatory. Consequently, on the ground of analogy, it may be inferred, that the holy supper is a propitiatory sacrifice.—Hence it appears very necessary to be cautious of admitting analogical reasonings, from the establishment and ceremonies of ancient Judaism, to the constitution and rites of the Christian church.

As a predilection for Jewish customs was the cause of much uneasiness, and of great mischiefs in the apostolic churches; so ignorance or inadvertency, respecting that important difference which there is between the legal and the evangelical economy, between the Jewish and the Christian church, has ever since been productive of many false reasonings in the matter of religion. Thus multitudes argue: “This, that, or the other, was appointed, practised, or enjoyed under the Mosaic dispensation. There must be the same, therefore, or something similar, in the Christian church.” Or if they do not maintain the necessity, they firmly plead the lawfulness of such a coincidence between Judaism and Christianity. If we admit the liberty of arguing upon Jewish principles, a great variety of religious practices, in favour of which there is not a word in the New Testament, may be defended with much plausibility: whereas, if those practices be once deprived of that support which is derived from ancient Judaism, they make but

* Antipædobaptism, part ii. p. 17.

a poor figure. In reference to Papists and Protestant Episcopalians, I have already adverted to various things of this kind; to which I will now add a few more particulars. It is on the principles of Judaism that our opposers proceed, when they speak of children, alike legitimate, being some of them *holy*, and others *unclean*, from the time of their birth;—when they talk of an *external* covenant, as now existing, and of infants being *church-members*. Whence is it, except on the same foundation, that Christian ministers assume the character of *priests*, call the Lord's table an *altar*, and the holy supper a *sacrifice*? On what principles but those of Judaism do people plead for *sumptuous* places of worship, and the *consecration* of them; for *alternate* singing, and various *amusing ceremonies* in public devotion? Whence is it, except on principles peculiar to the ancient theocracy, that any plead for the interference of *civil magistrates* in affairs that are purely religious, and for the *persecution* of real, or of supposed heretics? These and other particulars are defended, if defended at all by scripture, on the appointments, privileges, and laws of Judaism; for the kingdom of Christ not being *of this world*, the New Testament knows nothing of them. Thus the constitution and government, the order and worship of the gospel church are degraded and corrupted, to make them agree with the Mosaic economy. As if the Christian church were in a state of minority like that of the Jews—as if the disciples of Christ were to be amused with ceremonious pomp and *carnal ordinances*, with *beggarly elements* and puerilities, as were the descendants of Abraham before *the time of reformation*.* Few mistakes in theology have, indeed, either so extensive or so pernicious an influence upon the church and worship of the New Testament, as those which tend to confound the Christian church with the Jewish synagogue.

* Gal. iv. 1—11, 21—31; Heb. viii. 6—13; ix. 9, 10.

Reflect. IV. Paul having informed us that Abraham “received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of faith,” the generality of our opposers agree in denominating baptism a *seal* of the Christian covenant. Some of them, however, coincide with us, in questioning the propriety of such language. Mr. Baxter has observed, that “some sober men, no way inclined to Anabaptism, do think that we ought not to call the sacraments *seals*, as being a thing not to be proved by the word.”*—Thus Bp. Hoadly: “The real blood of Christ, as shed for us, or in other words, his death, is the only seal of the covenant.”† Certainly, if Dr. Lightfoot’s version of Rom. iv. 11, and his observation upon it be just, there can be little reason for calling baptism a seal of the covenant, on account of circumcision being denominated a seal of righteousness. His translation of the text, and part of his remark upon it, I will here subjoin. “‘And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith, which SHOULD HEREAFTER BE in uncircumcision.’ Which *should be*, not which *had been*. Not what had been to *Abraham*, as yet uncircumcised, but which should be to *his seed* uncircumcised; that is, to Gentiles that should hereafter imitate the faith of Abraham.”‡ Which version and interpretation are quite agreeable, both to the scope of the passage and the letter of the text; for the apostle does not represent circumcision as a seal of righteousness to the Jews in common, but to Abraham in particular.

Again: The apostle shows in this context, that righteousness was imputed to Abraham prior to his being circumcised; and that he was not circumcised as the representative of his *natural* seed, but as the father of all *believers*, whether they be Jews or Gentiles. If,

* Apology against Mr. Blake, § 64, p. 118.

† In Dr. Brett’s True Scrip. Account of Sacram. p. 155.

‡ Horæ Heb. on 1 Cor. vii. 19.

therefore, circumcision was not a seal of righteousness to that renowned patriarch, with reference to his carnal descendants as such, no argument can be drawn from this passage, to prove that the infants of believers are entitled to baptism. The different state of things under the old and the new economy, and the apostle's distinction between the carnal and spiritual seed of Abraham, being duly considered, the argument, from analogy, will run thus: As, under the old covenant, circumcision belonged to all the *natural* male descendants of Abraham; so, under the new covenant, baptism belongs to all the *spiritual* seed of Abraham, who are known to be such only by a credible profession of repentance and faith. Thus the argument strongly concludes against the right of infants to baptism.—Farther: Paul informs us, that the Jews, in comparison with Gentiles, were highly favoured of Providence, and that circumcision had its advantages: but yet he assures us, that the superior condition of Abraham's posterity *chiefly* consisted in having *the oracles of God* committed to them.* It may be supposed, however, that he would not have represented a possession of those oracles as the *principal* advantage enjoyed by them, if circumcision had been a seal of interest in the covenant of grace to the Jews in common; for interest in that covenant being of such high importance, whatever seals or confirms it must, of all external advantages, be the chief. As, therefore, the apostle would not allow the principal place to circumcision among the prerogatives of Abraham's natural seed, there is reason to think, he did not consider the painful rite as indicating and confirming their title to spiritual blessings; consequently, the argument of our opposers from this passage, in favour of baptism being a seal of the covenant, is unfounded.

But supposing the baptism of Paul, for instance, had been expressly called *a seal of righteousness, or of the*

* Rom. iii. 1, 2.

covenant, we could not with truth have thence concluded, that *Pædobaptism* should be so considered; and here, as in other cases, we appeal to our opponents themselves. Thus, for example, Mr. Charnock: "God seals no more than he promises, nor in any other manner than as he promises. He promises only to faith, and therefore only seals to faith. Covenant graces, therefore, must be possessed and acted, before covenant blessings can be ratified to us."*——Mr. Bradbury: "We call these two institutions of the New Testament the seals of the covenant; but they never seal what you have not, nor can they seal any thing you did not."†——Mr. Hebden: "Was circumcision a seal of justification, or remission of sins, to such as Abraham was, or sincere believers? so is baptism now."‡——Mr. Alsop: "The Spirit unites us to Christ; then comes baptism, which looks backward as a seal of what we have received, and forward to our visible state in the church."§——Mr. Warden: "We think that baptism supposeth men Christians, else they have no right to baptism, the seal of Christianity; all seals in their nature supposing the thing that is sealed."||——Mr. Baxter: "To say, *I conditionally seal*, is to say, It shall be no seal, till the performance of the condition. . . . What divines are there that deny the sacraments to be mutual signs and seals, signifying and sealing our part as well as God's? . . . It is, indeed, their most common doctrine, that the sacrament doth presuppose remission of sin, and our faith, and that they [sacraments] are instituted to signify these as in being; though, through infancy or error, some may not have some benefits of them till after."¶——Calvin:

* Works, vol. ii. p. 781, edit. 1. † Duty and Doct. of Bap. p. 13. ‡ Baptismal Regenerat. Disproved, p. 50.
 § Antisozzo, p. 382. || In Mr. J. Edwards's Enquiry into Qualif. for Commun. Appendix, p. 13. ¶ In Mr. Blake's New Cov. Sealed, p. 334. Mr. Baxter's Disput. of Right to Sac. p. 124.

“Baptism is, as it were, the appendix of faith, and therefore posterior in order; and then, if it be administered without faith, of which it is a seal, it is both an impious and a gross profanation.” He adds, indeed, that it is foolish and wicked to oppose Pædobaptism on this ground; but we are not afraid of the severe censure.*

—Paræus: “Sacraments ought not to be administered, except in connection with conversion and faith, otherwise they would cease to be seals of righteousness. For what can they seal to those who have not faith and righteousness?”†

—Vitringa: “The sacraments of the new covenant are of such a nature as to seal nothing but what is spiritual, nor to be of any advantage, except in regard to those who really believe in Jesus Christ.”‡

—Venema: “Circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith, as the apostle affirms; but this only in respect of such Israelites as were believers.”§

Now if this reasoning be good, it is quite inconceivable how baptism can be a seal of the covenant to infants, who know nothing about the promises, the blessings, or the duties of that gracious constitution. Or if our Brethren must needs call it a seal of the covenant, we desire to be informed what spiritual blessing it ascertains, really ascertains to infants, more than to unbelieving adults, who have at any time been baptized; or than circumcision, to similar characters, under the former economy? Millions of Jews were circumcised in their infancy, and numbers of proselytes, who lived and died in rebellion against the government and grace of God.|| Simon, the sorcerer, professing faith in Jesus

* Comment. in Act. viii. 36. † Apud Gerhardum, Loci Theol. tom. iv. De Bap. § 182. Vid. Heidegg. Corp. Theol. loc. xxv. § 50. ‡ See Sect. 2, No. 2, of this chapter.

§ Dissertat. Sac. l. ii. c. iv. § 11.

|| Gerhardus, indeed, seems to have been of another opinion, for he says; “Circumcision, doubtless, was the mean by which God wrought faith in the hearts of circumcised infants; by which they were made partakers of the good things offered in the promise an-

Christ, though he had it not, was baptized by Philip; and many, doubtless, both in former and latter ages, have been baptized on a similar profession, whose conduct afterward disgraced the Christian character. Now, must we consider these, all these, as having had the covenant of grace, or the righteousness of faith, SEALED to them? Far be it! Why then should baptism be represented at every turn, and without hesitation, as a seal of the covenant when applied to infants? We are indeed of opinion, that the blood of Christ, in one view, and the Spirit of Christ, in another, are the only seals of that covenant which includes all our salvation. By the former, the covenant itself is most solemnly ratified; by the latter, our interest in it is inviolably ascertained.*

SECT. 4.—*Particular Passages of Scripture.*

§ 1.—Matt. xxviii. 19. “Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.”

Dr. Doddridge.—“I render the word *μαθητευσατε*, *proseolyte*, that it may be duly distinguished from *διδασκοντες*, *teaching*, (in the next verse,) with which our version confounds it. The former seems to import instruction in the essentials of religion, which it was necessary adult persons should know and submit to, before they could regularly be admitted to baptism; the latter may relate to those more particular admonitions in regard to Christian faith and practice, which were to be built on that foundation.” Note on the place.

2. Grotius.—“Seeing there are two kinds of teaching, one by way of introduction to the first principles, the

nexed to circumcision. . . . Circumcision was a salutary mean, by which not only the foreskin of the flesh, but also that of the heart, in infants, was taken away.” *Loci Theolog.* tom. iv. *De Sacram.* § 65.

* Matt. xxvi. 28; Heb. ix. 16, 17; Eph. i. 13, and iv. 30.

other by way of more perfect instruction; the former seems to be intended by the word *μαθητευειν*, for that is, as it were, to initiate into discipline, and is to go before baptism; the latter is intended by the word *διδασκειν*, which is here placed after baptism." In loc.

3. Dr. Hammond.—“Call all nations to discipleship; or instruct them in the faith and discipline. Testify the resurrection of Christ to all, and by preaching the gospel in all parts, gather disciples; and, having gathered them, baptize and teach them. . . . I do not believe or pretend, that that precept of Christ doth necessarily infer, (though it do as little deny,) that infants are to be baptized.” In Mr. Rees’s *Inf. Bap. no Institut. of Christ*, p. 7; and in Mr. Tombes’s *Antipædobaptism*, part ii. p. 313.

4. Mr. Baxter.—“*Go, disciple me all nations, baptizing them.* As for those that say they are discipled by baptizing, and not before baptizing, they speak not the sense of that text; nor that which is true or rational, if they mean it absolutely as so spoken: else why should one be baptized more than another? . . . This is not like some occasional historical mention of baptism, but it is the very commission of Christ to his apostles for preaching and baptizing, and purposely expresseth their several works, in their several places and order. Their first task is by teaching to make disciples, who are by Mark called believers. The second work is to baptize them, whereto is annexed the promise of their salvation. The third work is to teach them all other things, which are afterwards to be learned in the school of Christ. To contemn this order, is to renounce all rules of order; for where can we expect to find it, if not here? I profess, my conscience is fully satisfied from this text, that it is one sort of faith, even saving, that must go before baptism, and the profession whereof the minister must expect.” *Disputat. of Right to Sac.* p. 91, 149, 150.

5. Hoornbeekius.—“*Μαθητευσατε*, indeed, properly

signifies to *make a disciple*; but seeing that is not done without instruction, it is tantamount to *teach*." Socin. Confut. tom. iii. p. 325.

6. Dr. Ridgley.—“ ‘Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them,’ and so on; and in Mark xvi. 15, 16, ‘Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.’ I am sensible that some who have defended infant baptism, or rather attempted to answer an objection taken from this and such like scriptures against it, have endeavoured to prove that the Greek word signifies, *make persons disciples*; and [that] accordingly, it is a metaphor taken from the practice of a person’s being put under the care of one who is qualified to instruct him, whose disciple he is said to be, in order to his being taught by him; and therefore they suppose, that we are made disciples by baptism; and afterwards to be *taught to observe all things whatsoever Christ hath commanded*. . . . But I cannot think this sense of the word so defensible, or agreeable to the design of our Saviour, as that of our translation, viz. ‘Go TEACH all nations;’ which agrees with the words of the other evangelist, ‘Go preach the gospel to every creature.’ And besides, while we have recourse to this sense to defend infant baptism, we do not rightly consider that this cannot well be applied to adult baptism, which the apostles were first to practise; for it cannot be said concerning the Heathen, that they are first to be taken under Christ’s care by baptism, and then instructed in the doctrines of the gospel by his ministers.” Body of Div. quest. clxvi. p. 602.

7. Maccovius.—“ We assert, that our Lord enjoins two different things upon his disciples, to teach, and to baptize: for it is said, ‘He that believes, and is baptized shall be saved.’ Now, to believe, and to be baptized, are not the same thing; but after any one believes, he ought also to be baptized: wherefore, to teach the

things to be believed, is not the same as to baptize. They were commanded to be taught the former, that they might believe; then to be baptized after they believed; for so Philip said to the eunuch, when he desired baptism, 'If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest' be baptized." Loci Com. p. 823.

8. Calvin.—“Because Christ requires teaching before baptizing, and will have believers only admitted to baptism, baptism does not seem to be rightly administered, except faith precede. Under this pretence, the Anabaptists have loudly clamoured against Pædobaptism.” In Harm. Evang. Comment. ad loc.

9. Mr. Poole's Continuators.—“‘Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations.’ The Greek is *μαθητευσατε*, *make disciples* all nations; but that must be first by preaching, and instructing them in the principles of the Christian faith; and Mark expounds it, telling us our Saviour said, ‘Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature;’ that is, to every reasonable creature capable of hearing and receiving it. I cannot be of their mind, who think that persons may be baptized before they be taught: we want precedents of any such baptism in scripture; though, indeed, we find precedents of persons baptized, who had but a small degree of the knowledge of the gospel; but it should seem that they were all first taught, that ‘Jesus Christ was the Son of God,’ and were not baptized till they professed such belief, (Acts viii. 37:) and John baptized them in Jordan, ‘confessing their sins,’ (Mat. iii. 6.)” Annotat. on the place.

10. Beckmanus.—“That the word *μαθητευειν*, according to its etymology, signifies *to make disciples*, is readily allowed by all. But that is not effected without instruction; for he who, as *μαθητης*, learns from another, is rationally taught something by him. They, therefore, are disciples, who are taught and learn. . . . Hence *μαθητεω*, is to *teach* and *instruct* others. *Μαθη-*

τευσατε, therefore, in Matt. xxviii. 19, is, as Beza translates it, to *make disciples*, or to *teach*. Our adversaries, therefore, cannot thence gain any thing in defence of their cause. For how are people made the disciples of Christ? Certainly, by teaching. Hence the Syriac interpreter; *Teach all people*. Yea, Mark plainly intimates that the gospel was to be preached, or instruction communicated, to the nations; saying, ‘Go into all the world, preach the gospel to every creature;’ thus explaining το μαθητευσατε, in Matthew.” Exercitat. Theolog. exercit. xvii. p. 260.

11. Dr. Barrow.—“What the action itself enjoined is, what the manner and form thereof, is apparent by the words of our Lord’s institution: *Going forth*, saith he, *teach*, or *disciple*, *all nations*, *baptizing them*. The action is baptizing or immersing in water; the object thereof, those persons of any nation, whom his ministers can by their instruction and persuasion render disciples; that is, such as do sincerely believe the truth of his doctrine, and seriously resolve to obey his commandments.” Works, vol. i. p. 518, edit. 1722.

12. Mr. John Cotton.—“The commission which Christ gave his apostles holdeth it forth, that they were by preaching to make disciples, before they baptized them and their children, (Matt. xxviii. 19.) Now a disciple, as the meaning of the word implieth, is a scholar in Christ’s school; and, therefore, when the apostles were directed to make disciples before they did baptize them, they were not only to convert them to the faith, but also to gather them as disciples or scholars into a school of Christ.” Way of the Churches, p. 82.

13. Saurin.—“In the primitive church, instruction preceded baptism, agreeably to the order of Jesus Christ; ‘Go, teach all nations, baptizing them’ . . . Thus likewise we understand St. Peter, when he says, that the baptism which saves us, is ‘not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience.’

The answer of a good conscience, is that account which the catechumen gives of his faith and knowledge. Whence it came to pass, that the ancients usually called a baptized person, one that was *illuminated*." Serm. tom. i. p. 301, 302. Le Haye, edit. 3rd.

14. Bp. Patrick.—“*Go and teach*, or disciple, *all nations*, and so on. Where there are two teachings, the one before, the other after baptism; the first can be no more than a persuasion of them to become the disciples of Christ, and put themselves into his school, because he was the Son of God; and then, after they were baptized, follows a more accurate and full instruction of them in all the parts of their duty.” Discourse of the Lord’s Supper, p. 455,

15. Vossius.—“Respecting adults, it is required that they be taught the Christian religion and profess it, before they be baptized; for this the very institution of baptism teaches, (Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15, 16.) We are taught the same thing by the practice of John the Baptist, and of the apostles, (Matt. iii. 1, 2; Luke iii. 3; Acts ii. 38, 41.)” Disput. de Bap. disput. xii. § 3.

16. Dr. Freeman.—“*Teach all nations*, μαθητευσατε, *disciple* all nations. Now a disciple is properly one, not that has attained to the full knowledge and saving effects of the gospel, but only understands so much of it as to be willing to be admitted into the Christian church, in order to his being farther taught the one, and to have the other more thoroughly wrought in him.” Cases to recover Dissenters, vol. i. p. 235.

17. Heideggerus.—“Christ has manifestly connected the office of baptizing with the office of preaching the gospel; commanding the same persons, μαθητευειν, *to teach*, κηρυσσειν, *to preach* the gospel, and βαπτιζειν, *to baptize*, (Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 16.)” Corp. Theol. loc. xxv. § 27.

18. Episcopius.—“It is objected, that μαθητευσατε, does not properly signify *to teach*, but to make disciples.

Be it so; yet disciples could not be made except they were taught, and as far as they were taught those things that pertained to the religion of Christ; for a disciple and a teacher are correlates. Whence it is, that Mark does not use the word *μαθητευειν*, but the verb *κηρυττειν*; that is, *to preach*, or *to teach*." Responsio ad Quæst. quæst. xxxvii.

19. Dr. Owen.—“All that are discipled [to Christ] by the word, are to be taught to do and observe all his commands, (Matt. xxviii. 20). . . . This is the method of the gospel, that, first, men by the preaching of it be made disciples, or be brought unto faith in Christ Jesus; and then be taught to do and observe whatever he commands, (Matt. xxviii. 18, 19, 20.) First, to believe, and then to be added unto the church, (Acts ii. 41, 42, 46, 47.)” Nature of Gospel Church, p. 21. Enquiry into Orig. and Nat. of Churches, p. 149.

20. Turretinus.—“It cannot be said that Christ (Matt. xxviii. 19,) instituted the baptism of doctrine, and not of water, because he expressly distinguishes doctrine from baptism; saying, *Teach* and *baptize*.” Institut. loc. xix. quæst. xii. § 12.

21. Cattenburgh.—“Socinus maintains that the verb *μαθητευειν*, does not properly signify *to teach*, but *to make disciples*.—To which we oppose Matt. xiii. where *μαθητευθεις*, is rightly interpreted by the old interpreter, *doctus*; and by Beza, *edoctus*. . . . *To make disciples*, and *to baptize*, are expressly distinguished, in John iv. 1, 2.” Spicileg. Theolog. l. iv. c. lxiii. sect. i. § 6.

22. Limborch.—“They could not make disciples, unless by teaching. By that instruction, disciples were brought to the faith before they were baptized, (Mark xvi. 15, 16.)” Institut. l. v. c. lxvii. § 7.

23. Lucas Brugensis.—“*Διδασκοντες*: the evangelist uses another word in the preceding verse, where we read *μαθητευσατε*. The difference between them seems to be this, that *μαθητευειν*, signifies to teach those who

are entire strangers to the doctrine, and not under your direction, so as to make them disciples; but *διδασκειν*, means to teach those who are already become disciples, and give themselves up to your instructions. This difference very well suits the place. For Christ commanded, first to teach the nations that are strangers to God and the truth; afterward, when they have submitted themselves to the truth, to teach them those precepts and rules of life which are worthy of God and the truth. ‘The order here observed,’ says Jerome, ‘is excellent. He commands the apostles, first to teach all nations; then to dip them with the sacrament of faith; and then to show them how they should behave themselves after their faith and baptism.’ Before baptism, they are to be taught the truth of the gospel, especially matters of faith; after baptism, they are to be instructed in the Christian morals, and what concerns their practice.”* In Dr. Gale’s *Reflections*, p. 309, 310.

24. Gomarus.—“In Matt. xxviii. 19, our Lord speaks, not concerning infants, but adults, who are capable of instruction; and, indeed, concerning unbelievers, that were entire strangers to the covenant, and to the sign and sacrament of it.” *Opera Theolog.* p. 148.

25. Bp. Burnet.—“By the first preaching, or making of disciples, that must go before baptism, is to be meant the convincing the world that Jesus is the Christ, the true Messiah, anointed of God with a fullness of grace and of the Spirit without measure, and

* The teaching intended by *μαθητευσατε*, has for its object *all nations*; that designed by *διδασκοντες*, relates to *baptized disciples*, who are called out of the nations. The subject of the former, is the doctrine of salvation by Jesus Christ; that of the latter, is whatever he has commanded, or the institutions of his worship and the laws of his kingdom. By the one, disciples are made; by the other, they are instructed to keep his commands. By that, they are taught what they must believe; by this, they are informed what they should practise in consequence of believing.

sent to be the Saviour and Redeemer of the world. And when any were brought to acknowledge this, then they were to baptize them, to initiate them in his religion, by obliging them to renounce all ungodliness, as well as all secular and carnal lusts." Expos. xxxix Articles, p. 374.

26. Dr. Whitby.—“*Μαθητευειν* here, is ‘to preach the gospel to all nations,’ and to engage them to believe it, in order to their profession of that faith by baptism: as seems apparent, (1) from the parallel commission, Mark xvi. 15, ‘Go preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.’ (2) From the scripture notion of a *disciple*, that being still the same as a believer. . . . If here it should be said that I yield too much to the Antipædobaptists, by saying, that to be made disciples here is to be taught to believe in Christ; I desire any one to tell me how the apostles could *μαθητευειν*, *make a disciple* of a Heathen or unbelieving Jew, without being *μαθηται*, or *teachers* of them;* whether they were not sent to preach to those that could hear, and to teach them to whom they preached, that ‘Jesus was the Christ,’ and only to baptize them when they did believe this.” Annotat. on the place.

27. Venema. — “ ‘Go,’ says our Lord to the apostles, ‘teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.’ This is an excellent passage, and explains the whole nature of baptism. Before persons

* Mr. Tombes has observed, that “to say a person may be a scholar before he learns, serves not [the] turn, to avoid the force of this reason. For the term *scholar*, coming from *σχολη*, *leisure* or *vacation* from other exercise, may be without actual learning; but *μαθητης* is a verbal noun, from *μεμαθηται*, *hath learned*, and *disciple*, a *discendo*, from *learning*: and, therefore, as it is absurd to call one *learned*, or a *learner*, without learning, so it is absurd to call one a *disciple* without actual learning.” Antipædobaptism, part ii. p. 147.

were baptized, it was necessary for them to believe the preaching of the apostles, which faith they were to profess in baptism. For the word μαθητευειν, in the style of the New Testament, does not signify barely to admit into a school and instruction, but to admit after the doctrine is believed, and after a previous subjection to the fundamental laws of the school. Μαθητευειν τινα, is to teach a person effectually, so that he may learn, obey, and receive the doctrine by faith. It includes, therefore, ακουειν και μαθειν, to hear, to understand, and to admit for true; for μαθανειν, to learn, signifies an idea distinct from ακουσαι, to hear. (Vid. Raphelium, ad John vi. 45.) One passage (Acts xiv. 21.) shall suffice for the present. Paul and Barnabas, ευαγγελισαμενοι τε την πολιν εκεινην και μαθητευσαντες ικανους, ‘when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, returned to Lystra.’ So the Vulgate renders the words; and indeed not improperly, if you understand to teach effectually; so that they not only heard what pertained to the gospel ministry, but also by faith received it, and gave up themselves to Christ; which is μαθανειν, to learn, to approve. From which place, it is evident, that μαθητευειν requires preceding instruction, by which a person is both taught and persuaded. Our Lord refers to the same thing in the passage before us; nor is the Greek word used in a different sense, Matt. xiii. 52.—Farther: The illustrious Grotius, on the passage, has well observed, That Christ by this word properly requires την κατηχησιν, teaching the first elements of Christianity, as preceding baptism; which also was always used in the church previous to that ordinance. By which, if any one had obtained a knowledge of the truth, professed faith in Christ, and evidenced a readiness to perform all the commands of our Lord, he was baptized. The author of the Apostolical Constitutions, which bear the name of Clement, already cited by Grotius, very well expresses the sense. *It behoves you*

first to eradicate all impiety, then to implant godliness in them, and so to judge them worthy of baptism. With which Epiphanius agrees: *Teach all nations; that is, bring them over from impiety to truth;* and so on. I know indeed that there are every where many who are averse from the interpretation just given, because it seems contrary to the baptism of infants. But they fear without reason; for though Christ speaks ONLY concerning the baptism of adults, and though it may be denied that this is a precept for Pædobaptism, yet that it is therefore unlawful, or to be omitted, it by no means demonstrates. Besides, seeing infants, while destitute of reason, are considered as in their parents; in them, and by them, they both profess faith and are baptized: and so I would not here exclude infants, they being comprehended in their parents. But since they should not be admitted, except on account of their parents, instruction and faith ought certainly to precede baptism; wherefore adults make a personal profession of faith, and infants by their parents. Our Lord, therefore, without endangering the baptism of infants, might well command his disciples to *teach all nations:* for those infants that were baptized, were considered as members of their parents; because, if the parents had not been taught, none of their infants could have been baptized." Dissertat. Sac. l. ii. c. xiv. § 6.

28. Mr. Samuel Palmer.—“There is nothing in the words of the institution—respecting the baptism of infants.” Answer to Dr. Priestley’s Address on the Lord’s Supper, p. 7. See also Mr. Perkins’s Works, vol. ii. p. 257. Dr. Watts’s Hymns, b. i. No. lii. Basnagii Exercitat. Hist. Crit. p. 480. Chamieri Panstrat. tom. iv. l. i. c. xvi. § 9. Walæi Enchirid. Relig. Reform. p. 219. Gerhardi Loc. Theolog. tom. iv. de Bap. § 175. Mr. John Robinson’s Religious Communion, p. 46. Mas-trich. Theolog. l. vii. c. iv. § 10. Beza, in loc. Ursini Explicat. Catech. pars. ii. quæst. 69. Paræus, in loc.

Alstedii Theolog. Polem. pars iii. p. 251. Mr. Leigh's Annotations on the place. Eras. Schmidius and Camero, in loc.

REFLECTIONS.

Reflect. I. It appears by these quotations, that this passage is of peculiar importance, in regard to the work of our Lord's ministers, No. 4, 27;—that these respectable authors agree in considering the word *μαθητευσατε* as a command to teach, in distinction from the act of baptizing, No. 1 to 27;—that the passage thus understood stands acquitted from the charge of tautology; *μαθητευσατε* relating to instruction in the first principles of Christianity, and *διδασκοντες*, to a more perfect information in the doctrines, duties, and privileges resulting from those fundamental principles, No. 1, 2, 14, 23;—that disciples here, and believers in Mark xvi. 15, 16, are the same persons, No. 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 17, 26;—that the order appointed by Christ is, first to teach, then to baptize; and that ancient ecclesiastical authors did so understand it, No. 4, 7, 23, 27;—that slighting this order is despising all rules of order, No. 4;—that a disciple cannot be made without teaching, and that it is inconsistent with the plain design of the passage to understand it otherwise, No. 5, 6, 9, 10, 26;—that we have no example in the New Testament of any one being baptized before he was taught, No. 9;—that a regard to the credit of infant baptism, rather than any thing in the term itself, has led many learned men to interpret the word *μαθητευσατε*, so as to exclude the idea of instruction, No. 6, 26, 27;—and that Christ in this passage speaks only concerning the baptism of adults, No. 3, 24, 27, 28.—Such are the concessions, and such the reasonings of Pædobaptists themselves on this important passage.

Let us now hear two or three of our impartial Friends.

George Whitehead.—“ ‘*Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John*’ . . . These who were made disciples and baptized could not be infants, because disciples or scholars.” Truth Prevalent, p. 122.

Joseph Wyeth.—“ If from the commission (Matt. xxviii. 19,) must of necessity be understood baptism with water, and that infants must be understood to be within the limits of it; it may be convenient—to show—why infants are not within the limits of 1 Cor. xi. 25, 26, and that they must not communicate of the bread and wine.” Switch for the Snake, p. 270.

Samuel Fothergill.—“ In both commissions [Matt. xxviii. 19, 20, and Mark xvi. 15, 16,] *belief* and *being taught* are previous to baptism. That infants are capable of neither is out of doubt; and if we will not subscribe to the grossest absurdities, we must allow none can believe by proxy.” Remarks on an Address, p. 12.

Reflect. II. As this instructive text is the first appointment of baptism for the use of Gentiles, and as it is the law of administration to the end of time, so it cannot but require the most submissive regard; for Jesus Christ, on this occasion, expressly claims ‘all authority in heaven and on earth.’ He plainly appears as King of Zion, and Sovereign of the world. His language here is not a mere allusion to baptism, nor an incidental use of the term, in which cases words are often applied in a laxer sense; but it is the *institution* of that ordinance, it is DIVINE LAW; and therefore the expressions contained in it must be understood in their natural and obvious meaning, except any absurdity would follow such a construction of the sacred statute. Nor if it could be proved, that *μαθητευσατε* sometimes conveys the idea of making disciples, where there is no teaching; and that *βαπτίζοντες* is occasionally used for pouring or for sprinkling, where there is no immersion; yet the dispute between us and

our Brethren would not be decided, because this question would still remain for discussion—Is making a disciple *without* instruction, in the one case, and *pouring* or *sprinkling*, in the other, the NATURAL and OBVIOUS meaning of those Greek words? Are these the senses of those terms that would naturally first occur to the mind of a wise and impartial person, on reading or hearing this law of baptism? If not, we may safely conclude, that neither of them is pertinent here; because each of these emphatical words making a capital figure in the heavenly edict, should be understood in its most plain, and common, and expressive signification; for as to any absurdity following upon it, our opponents pretend none, but what implies a begging of the question disputed.

The subsequent short extracts from archdeacon Paley, relating to human law, and the interpretation of legal terms, deserve regard. “The law,” says he, “never speaks but to *command*. . . . It is absurd to contend for any sense of words, in opposition to usage; for all senses of all words are founded upon usage, and upon nothing else. . . . When controversies arise in the interpretation of written laws, they for the most part arise upon some contingency, which the composer of the law did not foresee or think of.”* No such contingency, however, could have place respecting this law of baptism, because of the Legislator’s perfect prescience; consequently, the baptismal statute under consideration must be as completely suitable in every view to the state of the church now, as it was when first enacted, and, *cæteris paribus*, as easy to be understood and performed.—“No one,” says bishop Hoadly, “hath authority, either to make new laws for Christ’s subjects, or to impose a sense upon the old ones, which is the same thing.” †—How careful, then, should every one be, lest,

* Moral and Political Philosophy, p. 4, 158, 518, edit. 2nd.

† Nature of the Kingdom of Christ, p. 16, edit. 11th.

instead of interpreting the laws of Christ, he make new laws for his disciples! Now that the natural and usual, if not the only signification of *μαθητευσατε* is, to make disciples *by teaching*, we have the concurrent suffrage of the preceding authors, to which we appeal; and if the reader choose to see this point more largely discussed and incontestably proved, he may have recourse to Dr. Gale, in whose learned Reflections he will find Greek classics, ancient fathers, numerous Oriental and European versions of the text, modern critics, and various lexicographers, all uniting in our favour.*

Such being the obvious and natural signification of the verb *μαθητευσατε*, we may, with a little alteration, adopt the language of Dr. Sherlock in another case, and say; “When a lawgiver has declared his will and pleasure by a law, it is not fit that subjects should be allowed to guess at his mind, and dispute away an express law by some surmises and consequences, how probable soever they may appear; for at this rate a law signifies nothing, if we may guess at the will of our lawgiver without and against an express law: and yet none [or very few] of the advocates of [infant baptism]—ever had the confidence to pretend an *express law* for [baptizing infants]. . . . And though they [frequently] allege scripture to prove this by, yet they do not pretend that they are *direct* proofs, but only attempts to prove some other doctrines from scripture, from which they may prove, by some *probable consequences*, that which the scripture no where plainly teaches. . . . If this may be allowed, I know no law of God so plain and express, but a witty man may find ways to escape the obligation of it.”†—Were any one required to explain the divine mandate before us, on the perilous condition imposed by Zaleucus upon the contentious interpreters of his laws, as mentioned by Polybius; or on that of the Jews

* Lett. vii. viii.

† Preservative against Popery, title vi. p. 19, 20.

and Samaritans in Egypt, when contending about the temple, as narrated by Josephus,* he would certainly adhere more closely to the obvious and natural sense of the terms than many of our opponents do, lest he should end his life by the halter.

On the principle of reasoning here adopted, Pædo-baptists themselves proceed, when disputing on other subjects. To the numerous quotations produced in a former part of this work, relative to the sense of words,† I will here add the following extracts from Mr. Ferguson: “If men may be permitted to forsake the natural and genuine sense of words, where the matter is capable of it they may, notwithstanding their declaring themselves to believe the gospel, yet believe nothing at all of the Christian faith. . . . *We are not to forsake the genuine and natural signification of words, unless there be the highest evidence that the author did otherwise intend them*, saith the civil law. And, as Austin says, *The proper signification of words is always to be retained, unless necessity enforce us to expound them otherwise*. Every scripture expression, word, and phrase, is to be taken properly, and according to its original and immediate meaning, if nothing of absurdity, nothing repugnant to faith, or disagreeable to the common notices of mankind, arise or ensue upon such an acceptance. There is no bounding of a roving fancy, which loves to sport itself with the ideas and phantasms itself has raised, without confining ourselves within the foresaid limits What better evidence can we have of the sense of a place, than that, had an author *intended* such a meaning, he could have used no plainer expression to declare it?”‡—Thus Mr. Ferguson, when writing against the socinianizing Sherlock; thus the generality of learned

* Apud Witsium, Œcon. Fœd. l. i. c. i. § 1.

† Part I. Chap. II. Reflect. III.

‡ Interest of Reason in Relig. p. 328, 333, 334, 462.

authors, when confuting the Socinian system; and thus the Baptists, in opposition to infant sprinkling.

Reflect. III. If this law of the Lord have any regard to instruction, as a prerequisite for baptism, that instruction must be required, either of all, or only of some. To affirm the latter, there is not the least ground in this divine canon; because it makes no distinction between what is required of some, and what is demanded of others; yet this very passage is the great law of proceeding. Nor ought that hoary maxim of legal interpretation to be hastily cast aside; "We must not distinguish where the law does not distinguish." For if in expounding positive laws, distinctions and exceptions may be devised, unless a real necessity urge, we may soon accommodate any of them to almost any hypothesis. The language of Dr. Sherlock on a different occasion will here apply. "No distinctions can justify us in this case, but such as God himself makes; for otherwise it were easy to distinguish away any law of God. Human laws will admit of no distinctions but such as they make themselves; for a distinction does either confine and straiten, or enlarge the law; and he who has power to distinguish upon a law, has so far power to make it."* —A learned anonymous author thus: "Where God hath not—distinguished, we ought not to do so, unless we will open a door to evacuate all divine laws whatsoever, by arbitrary distinctions and reservations."†

It remains, then, that all must be taught, that all must become disciples, before they are baptized. Now as to the term *disciple*, let us hear our opposers. Thus Dr. Goodwin: "A disciple is not one that heareth one lesson only; but a disciple is a constant hearer, and one that taketh himself bound to take out all the lessons that he heareth, and to submit to the discipline of the

* Preservative against Popery, title vi. p. 25.

† Discourse on Worshipping the Virgin Mary and Saints, p. 19.

school.”*—Dr. Owen: “By the disciples of Christ, I intend them, and them only, who profess faith in his person and doctrine, and to hear him, or to be guided by him alone, in all things that appertain unto the worship of God, and their living unto him.”†—Zanchius: “*Discipline* is from *discendo*; and therefore, properly speaking, instruction is in a disciple, as teaching is in a doctor.”‡—Mr. Baxter: “Objection: Any one is a disciple that is willing to learn of Christ. Answer: No such matter. In an improper sense you may so call them; but not in scripture-sense, where a *disciple* and a *Christian* are all one, (Acts xi. 26.) But every one that is willing to learn of Christ is not a Christian; therefore not a disciple. A disciple of Christ is one that will take him for the great Prophet of the church, and will learn of him as of the Christ. . . . None are disciples [but] upon the account—of either saving faith, or the profession of it.”§—Mr. Wilson: A disciple is “a learner, a scholar, who submitteth himself to another to be taught any learning, (Acts xx. 30; Matt. xi. 2.) One who learneth the doctrine of Christ, that he may believe and practise it, (Acts xi. 16; Luke xiv. 16.)”||—Mr. Blake: “They [the followers of Christ] are still styled in New Testament scriptures, *believers*, from their faith that they profess; *saints*, from the holiness to which they stand engaged; *disciples*, from the doctrine which they profess to learn; and *Christians*, from him whose they are, whom they serve, and from whom they expect salvation.”¶—Were there occasion for it, quotations of this kind might be greatly multiplied; but I forbear, and shall only observe, that I do not recollect a single author who, upon any occasion, explains the term *disciple*

* Works, vol. iv. Church Order, by Way of Catechism, p. 30.

† Enquiry into Orig. Nat. of Churches, p. 120.

‡ Opera, tom. iv. p. 736.

§ Disputat. of Right to Sac.

p. 95, 183.

|| Christ. Dict. article *Disciple*.

¶ In Mr. Tombes's Antipædobaptism, part ii. p. 143.

in such a manner as to exclude the idea of being taught, except with a view to Pædobaptism. Now must not that be a bad cause, which impels wise and learned men to seek a refuge for it in such an acceptance of a capital term of divine law, as has no parallel either in scripture, or in common authors, and for which nothing can be pleaded but mere hypothesis?

Reflect. IV. The different views which learned Pædobaptists have of this capital text are very remarkable; for while professor Arnold maintains, that “the baptism of infants is either commanded here, or no where;” * professor Venema frankly acknowledges, that our Lord speaks concerning the baptism of adults only. See No. 27. Thus doctors differ. Strange, however, as it may seem, I have the singular happiness to agree with them both. Considering this text as the great law of baptism, I concur with the former in concluding, That if there be no requisition of infant baptism here, it is in vain to seek for one any where else. On the other hand, I am equally clear the latter is perfectly right, when he gives it as his opinion, that our Lord in this passage does not command the baptism of infants. My conclusion, therefore, is, that they ought not to be baptized.—But though that great man, Venema, acknowledges the want of a command for Pædobaptism, he nevertheless maintains the lawfulness of it. A little reflection, however, may serve to convince a consistent Protestant, that the baptism of infants cannot be lawful in the eye of this commission, if not required by our divine Lawgiver. For, as Mr. Alsop observes, “He that acts by commission, must have his powers authorized by his commission. Suppose a prince should issue out a commission to certain delegates to hear and determine all differences relating to the forest, and they shall intermeddle with affairs out of the purlieus, will it be thought enough to say, *These places are not excluded*

* Religio Sociniana, p. 411.

[in] *their commission?*"* — Besides, when an infant is baptized the rite is performed, not as an indifferent thing, nor yet as a civil affair: but "in the NAME of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." The administrator, therefore, expressly claims a *divine warrant* for what he does, and the whole ceremony is considered as an act of divine worship. Nay, in this light it is commonly viewed, though secularized by proxies, who engage for the child; by the representatives of proxies, who engage for them; and, by its frequent attendant, a sumptuous, noisy feast.† — If, then, the baptism of infants be not commanded, and if there be no precedent for it in the sacred code, it must fall under the censure of that query, "Who hath required this at your hands?" In this particular also, as well as in other things, we have the pleasure to find that some Pædobaptists agree with us. Cæderus, for instance, when contending with the Socinians, says; "Seeing we do not administer Pædobaptism as an indifferent thing,—if we err, it must be, not a trifling, but a very grievous error; and to be condemned as an abuse of God's most holy name, which we believe is used by us in a holy manner when we baptize infants."‡

We are sometimes told, that if our Lord had said, *Go CIRCUMCISE all nations*, every one would have admitted that infants were included. True; but why stop at infants? Would there not have been equal reason to infer, that all the male children and servants of such parents, or masters, as submitted to the painful rite, were also to be circumcised, whether they professed repentance towards God and faith in Christ, or not?

* Sober Enquiry, p. 321, edit. 1st.

† Dr. Wall, when animadverting on such conduct, says, "Very few of the company join in the prayers; but only in the feasting and carnal jollity, which is too often carried on to such excess, as is more likely to bring a curse than a blessing upon the whole undertaking." Def. Hist. Inf. Bap. p. 409.

‡ Catechesis Racoviensis Profligat. p. 557.

Or would every one have drawn the supposed conclusion, if the command had run thus: *Go, TEACH all nations, circumcising them?* * By no means; for then the administration of that appointment would have been considered as limited to such as were *taught*, because the command would have expressly varied from the original order. * What should hinder us then from drawing the same conclusion in the present case?

Reflect. V. As this law of baptism says not a word about infants, if any of them be entitled to that ordinance, it must be because the great Legislator tacitly intended they should be baptized. That supposed intention, however, not being expressed, and so not limited to any description of infants, may as well be extended to all, as to some. Why then are not all infants, whom there is an opportunity of baptizing, disciplined by a participation of the ordinance? especially as our Brethren conclude, that the New Testament economy should be considered, not as less, but as more favourable to infants than the Jewish dispensation was. Nay, why should not every adult also, that is willing, be thus disciplined? For if Christ commanded that all nations should be disciplined by baptism, as many of our opposers contend; and if infants have a claim on the ordinance, because they are part of the nations, as we have often been told; why, in the name of millions, are infants to be treated as the only proper subjects of that discipleship? Are not unbelieving adults also a part of the nations? Why should those words, *all nations*, be construed as embracing infants and smiling upon them, but as rejecting a great majority of adults with an indignant frown; while both are considered as equally ignorant of evangelical truth? Or is it a qualification essentially necessary, in a proper subject of discipleship by baptism, to be without the exercise of reason? This, indeed, seems to be the case, on the hypothesis of many

* Gen. xvii. 10—13.

who now oppose us ; but if so, that discipleship certainly has the appearance of a very irrational thing. Whether it be better on that account, I leave my reader to judge. If he should think it is, Cusanus will support him in the following manner : “ That obedience which is irrational, is the most complete and most perfect obedience ; to wit, when one obeys without the use of reason, as a beast obeys his owner.”*

I said, of *many* who now oppose us ; not of all. For, not to mention the Roman Catholics, there are some authors of note in different communions among the Reformed, who seem to have considered the text before us, as warranting the baptism of all without exception. Thus, for example, Calovius argues : “ He who commands all men to be baptized, so that none are excepted, of any age, or sex, or condition, would have infants baptized no less than adults. But Christ commands all men to be baptized ; therefore,” † and so on. — Dr. John Edwards, also, when expressing his view of the passage, says, “ This general commission takes in all particulars. ‘ Go, baptize all nations,’ is as much and as full as if Christ had said, Go, baptize all men, women, and children.” ‡ But why, in the name of consistency, why should the divine order for baptizing be considered as more extensive than that contained in the same commission for preaching ? Why must infants, on the ground of this heavenly mandate, have a share in the former, any more than in the latter ? For I presume that neither Calovius, Dr. Edwards, nor any of our present opposers, ever imitated an ancient Pædobaptist in ad-

* In Mr. Clarkson’s Pract. Div. of Papists, p. 76. The learned author shows, from the writings of Roman Catholics, that “ it is not of necessity to their sacrament of orders, that any below a bishop should have the use of reason, when he enters into orders.” Ibid. p. 78.

† Socinianis. Profligat. disp. xxiv. controv. viii. p. 878. Witteberg. 1652. Vid. Buddei Theolog. Dogmat. l. v. c. i. § 6.

‡ Theologia Reformata, vol. i. p. 568.

dressing a sermon to infants.* — A certain author thus interrogates and replies: “Is there any command in the New Testament to baptize infants? I answer, No; nor is there any command to baptize an old woman: yet if the command to baptize *all* include one, it may also include the other.” Wonderfully witty, and strongly argumentative! *If it include one, it may also include the other.* What, supposing the old woman to be taught and profess faith, while the infant is naturally incapable of both? for we deny that either the one or the other is included, detached from the idea of being *taught*. The anonymous writer adds; “Neither was there occasion for such a command. It is quite sufficient that the words of institution were to baptize *all*, without specifying the age.”† As if, because the *age* of a subject for baptism is not mentioned, no kind of qualification for it were specified; but that all of every age, and of every description, were to be baptized! — *Sufficient—quite sufficient.* — For whom? certainly, not for the apostles and the primitive church, except this author be under a gross mistake. For thus he speaks: “We may safely conclude, whatever the apostle Paul might do, who baptized households among the Gentiles, yet *the other apostles, and the church at Jerusalem, DID NOT BAPTIZE INFANTS.*”‡ As, therefore, we have no reason to think the apostles and the church at Jerusalem were backward to perform the known will of their Lord, we are warranted to infer, that they were *not aware* of his having ordered infants to be baptized; and, consequently, the words of institution were not “*quite sufficient*” for them, in regard to that particular. This writer, however, has the singular privilege of understanding the law of baptism a great deal better than they did, and therefore he acts a very different part. To him it is clear, as the meridian sun, that the institution of bap-

* Vid. Fabricii Hist. Biblioth. Fabrician. tom. i. p. 233.

† Simple Truth, p. 19.

‡ Ut Supra, p. 21.

tism includes infants, but the apostles were so unhappy as to be ignorant of it; nor, according to Anonymous, did the Jewish Christians learn the doctrine, or practise the rite of infant baptism, till the city and temple of Jerusalem were laid in ruins.* I have, indeed, long been of opinion, that Pædobaptism was not practised till after the signal overthrow of that devoted city; but I did not expect a Protestant Pædobaptist would thus have supported my sentiment. Nor dare I promise him the thanks of our opposers for so doing, even though, with regard to the commencement of Pædobaptism, among Jewish converts, being posterior to the destruction of Jerusalem, I am fully persuaded he speaks the "Simple Truth."

Once more: Whether the following argument of Mr. Henry do not imply, that persons of all ages, and of every description, are entitled to baptism, let the reader determine. "If it be the will and command of the Lord Jesus that all nations should be disciplined by baptism, and children, though a part of all nations, are not excepted, their children are to be disciplined by baptism. I say, *disciplined by baptism*, for that is plainly intended by the words of the institution, Matt. xxviii. 19; (*μαθητευσατε βαπτιζοντες*) *admit them disciples by baptizing them*, as was showed before. The command is to *disciple* them; *baptizing* them is the mode of executing that command. . . . And all nations are to be so disciplined, i. e. all consenting nations. If any communities or individuals refused, [i. e. to be disciplined by baptism,] the apostles were to shake the dust off their feet against them, as having no lot or part in the matter. And surely infants are a part of nations; and in the discipling of nations, not a dissenting part, but a consenting, by those who are the TRUSTEES of their wills. And our Lord hath not excepted them. . . . In this *magna charta*, therefore, we leave the cause of infants fully vindicated, and are willing to stand or fall by this

* See his words, Chap. I. No. 25.

commission.”*—I cannot but wonder that an author of Mr. Henry’s learning, parts, and piety, should reason after this manner, and lay such a stress upon it! In his esteem, the argument is nothing short of demonstration; while, nevertheless, if it prove any thing at all, it is, that the idea of teaching is not included in the text;—that all adults of all nations, who have no reluctance to it, should be baptized;—and, that all children are to be baptized, *volentes nolentes*, provided the TRUSTEES of *their wills* do but consent. So particular, so explicit, and so strong, is the *magna charta* of infant baptism! But what would Britons think, were their civil rights no better secured by the Great Charter of England?

“All nations are to be discipled. Infants are part of the nations: therefore,” say Mr. Henry and others, “infants must be discipled by being baptized.” As if, whenever we find any thing mentioned in the New Testament respecting “all nations,” we were obliged to consider millions of infants as immediately interested in it! But whether this be a fact, let the following examples declare. “Ye shall be hated of ALL NATIONS, *παντων εθνων*—This gospel—shall be preached—for a witness unto ALL NATIONS, *πασι τοις εθνεσι*—Made known to ALL NATIONS, *παντα τα εθνη*—My house shall be called of ALL NATIONS, the house of prayer; or, shall be called a house of prayer for ALL NATIONS, *πασι τοις*

* Treatise on Baptism, p. 114, 115, 116. The Council of Cas- sel (A. D. 1172) ordained, as we are informed by Dupin, “That all the children should be made *catechumens* at the church-door, and be *baptized* in the church.” Eccles. Hist. cent. xii. p. 214.—I have known some persons of plain common sense, who have been a little puzzled to conceive of mere infants being made *disciples* in any way. But hence it appears that, so far from its being impracticable, there are *two* methods at least of performing the work; for they may be made catechumens, or disciples, either by or without baptism. Mr. Henry and many others prefer the use of water; this council adopted a different mode of proceeding. There is reason to conclude, however, that in either way the discipleship is equally valid.

εθνεσιν—Babylon is fallen—because she made ALL NATIONS, παντα εθνη, drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication—ALL NATIONS, παντα τα εθνη—shall come and worship before thee—By thy sorceries were ALL NATIONS, παντα τα εθνη, deceived—Praise the Lord, ALL YE NATIONS, παντα τα εθνη.* Now, as in these and other passages, the terms “nations,” and “all nations,” are used without any reference to infants, the argument formed upon them by our opposers must be quite futile. “It is so frequent,” says Mr. Tombes, “to understand the term *nations* synecdochically for a *part* of nations, that I find no fewer than eighty times, and of these at least eight in Matthew’s Gospel, the word εθνη, (*nations*, or *Gentiles*,) in the New Testament, taken so as not to include infants in the speeches in which it is used.”†

One can hardly forbear to remark, in what opposite ways this capital text is interpreted, to make it agree with different hypotheses. For, while Socinus, and many of his followers, cannot discern the least vestige of baptism in water being required by the heavenly edict, Mr. Henry and others, when arguing upon it, find nothing commanded but baptism, and exclude the idea of teaching, as if it were quite foreign to the design of our Lord. The former would baptize by *teaching* only; the latter would make disciples by merely *baptizing*. I cannot help thinking, however, that it would puzzle the subtlety of a Socinus, to satisfy the demand of Christ in the term βαπτιζοντες, without the use of water; and that it would equally nonplus the ingenuity of a Henry, to fulfil the requisition of our Lord in the word μαθητευσατε, without the labour of teaching. But, in spite of the na-

* Matt. xxiv. 9, 14; Rom. xvi. 26; Mark xi. 17; Rev. xiv. 8, xv. 4; xviii. 23; Rom. xv. 11. See the Septuagint version of Psalm lxxii. 11, 17; lxxxvi. 9; cxvii. 1; cxviii. 10; Zech. xiv. 2; Mal. iii. 12; with many other places.

† Antipædobaptism, part ii. p. 129.

tural and obvious meaning of these enacting terms of divine law, the loud calls of hypotheses must be heard! For were it allowed that our great Sovereign meant what his language properly signifies, it would inevitably follow, that immersion in water is a *divine appointment*, in opposition to Socinus; and that Pædobaptism is destitute of a *magna charta*, in contradiction to Mr. Henry.

Farther: To *make disciples*, and to *baptize one or another*, are plainly represented as different actions: for *Jesus made more disciples than John*, though he *baptized not any of them with his own hands*.—Whatever discipleship our Lord meant by the word *μαθητευσατε*, or however it may be effected, it is plain that he has not given the least intimation in this text of two sorts of disciples, that are made so by different means—not a hint, about some being discipled by baptism, and others by the truth.—Mr. Owen, when vindicating the Protestant Dissenting ministry, challenges his opposers to “show where the New Testament specifies the different qualifications of bishops and presbyters.”* We also demand of Pædobaptists, where they find in the apostolic writings two sorts of real disciples, who, as such, possess different qualifications? Of disciples that are taught, we readily conceive; but of disciples naturally incapable of being taught, we have no idea; nay, we consider it as a contradiction.—Mr. Baxter has observed, that “as the whole church is *one body*, and hath *one Lord*, and *one faith*, so it hath *one common baptism*.”† Doubtless;

* Valid. of Dissent. Ministry, p. 23.

† Scripture Proof, p. 342. It may be observed, that Eph. iv. 4, 5, to which Mr. Baxter adverts, appears very unfriendly to Pædobaptism. For, in the apostolic times, those who had the *one baptism*, were considered as having the *one faith*. But what faith had infants? One faith is placed before one baptism; which intimates, that a profession of the former always preceded a reception of the latter. Those also that were considered as belonging to the *one body*, were supposed to possess the *one faith*; but infants were not imagined to possess it; they, therefore, were not considered as church-members.

but if so, there must be one common discipleship: for we may as well imagine faith and baptism to be each of them twofold, as that real discipleship is of two sorts. The discipleship intended, therefore, must be one, and effected in the same way: consequently, while our opponents maintain their interpretation of this passage, consistency requires that not only infants, but all unconverted adults who can be persuaded to it, should be disciplined by being baptized. For as this capital text knows of but one baptism, so it is acquainted with only one discipleship, and one way of obtaining it.

Many of our opposers, however, do not admire this necessary consequence of their own reasoning on the passage. They will not allow such an extent of design in the great Lord of the ordinance, either as to adults or infants. The commission for baptism, therefore, must be understood in a limited sense. This we readily grant. By what then is it limited? By the secret intention of Christ? but that cannot be a rule to us. By the language of this law? if so, it must be by the word *μαθητευσατε*; for there is no other limiting term in the text. But if understood of making disciples *by baptism*, it is entirely deprived of its limiting force, in regard to the subjects of that institution; it must, therefore, contain a requisition *to teach*—in a literal and proper sense, *to teach*. Here you have a limitation, and its implicit language is; “Thus far shall ye go in administering baptism, and no farther.” Whence it follows, that none but those who are taught should be baptized. These, for an obvious reason, cannot be infants. They must be considered, therefore, as excepted in this commission and law of administration. But if excepted, it cannot be a righteous, nor yet a reasonable service to baptize them. For, as a learned Pædo baptist, well versed in the principles of universal law, has observed; “Duty, means an action conformable to law: it is plain, [therefore,] that duty cannot be con-

ceived without a law; that he does not perform a duty, who imposes on himself what no law commands; that an action ceases to be duty, when the law, or the reason of the law ceases; and that when a law extends to certain persons only, of two persons who do the same action, the one performs his duty, and the other acts contrary to his duty.* The pertinency and force of this reasoning, induced me to lay it before the reader a second time.

Reflect. VI. Dr. Doddridge has justly observed, that “oftentimes an explication has been built upon the words of one evangelist, and many learned remarks have been made to establish it, which could not be applied without great violence to suit the parallel place in another, and presently has fallen to the ground upon comparing them together.”† This, if I mistake not, is the case here, with regard to those who interpret the passage of being *discipled by baptism*. For it is plain that *κηρυξατε το ευαγγελιον παση τη κτισει*, “preach the gospel to every creature,” in the evangelist Mark, ‡ requires the same duty as *μαθητευσατε παντα τα εθνη*, “teach all nations,” in the text before us. See No. 4, 6, 9, 10, 17, 26. Consequently, the same branch of ministerial work must be intended in both places. Preaching the gospel, however, and the administration of baptism, are different parts of that important service: yes, they are so different, that Paul opposes the one to the other, saying, “Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel.” Either, therefore, our opponents must prove, that Matt. xxviii. and Mark xvi. do not contain the same commission, and that the same duty is not required in the clauses here adduced, which will be a laborious task; or they must evince, that “preaching the gospel to every creature,” means the discipling of

* Heineccius's System of Universal Law, b. i. chap. v. § 121.

† Note on Matt. xvii. 21.

‡ Chap. xvi. 15.

every creature *by the administration of baptism* before they are taught, which is absurd; or, finally, they must give up the argument from this passage, and frankly acknowledge that it requires instruction previous to baptism. For whatever learned and plausible arguments may be used, to persuade us that their sense of *μαθητευσατε*, in Matthew, is natural and pertinent; yet, except they can prove that *κηρυξατε*, in Mark, signifies the same thing; or, that those enacting terms do not belong to the same commission, we are not likely to be convinced.—Agreeable to this is the language of Calvin, when he says; “The evangelists frequently use the terms *believers* and *disciples*, as equivalent; and especially Luke, in the Acts of the apostles. (Acts vi. 1, 2, 7; ix. 1, 10, 19, 25, 38; xi. 26, 29; xiii. 52; xiv. 20, 22, 28.”*—Chamier speaks to the same effect, when exploding the Popish implicit faith.†—Thus Mr. Collings: “How is one made a disciple but by conversion? and when is a man converted, but when he is brought to believe?”‡

“Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel,” says Paul to the Corinthian church. A declaration much to our purpose, and quite inconsistent with the idea of its being an apostolic duty, to make persons disciples by baptizing them; for, on that supposition, either Paul received a commission from his divine Lord essentially different from the words under consideration; or he failed to a great degree in the execution of it, especially among the Corinthians. Our opponents at every turn insist, that the great Lawgiver, ordered his eleven apostles to disciple all nations by *baptizing* them; while he who *laboured more abundantly than they all* tells us, that he was *not sent*, comparatively speaking, *to baptize* even those that believed. Consequently, he was

* Institut. l. iii. c. ii. § 6.

† Panstrat. tom. iii. l. xii. c. ix. § 15.

‡ In Mr. Tombes's Antipædobaptism, part ii. p. 149.

not sent to make disciples in that way for which our opposers plead, but by preaching the gospel; for that his commission authorized him to *make disciples*, is clear from the copy of it which Luke has recorded;* nor is that particular questioned by any. Nay, so far from thinking it would have been his happiness, to have made a multitude of the Corinthians disciples by baptizing them, that he *thanks God* he had baptized but very few; and this he does while claiming the honour of having been the favoured instrument of converting a great part of those that were saints in the city of Corinth.† It seems, therefore, as if Paul had not learned that easy and expeditious way of making disciples, for which our Brethren contend. I said, *easy and expeditious*; for, truly, it is one of the easiest things in the world to make a disciple of Christ, if pronouncing a short form of words, and pouring or sprinkling a few drops of water on a person, be sufficient. Paul found, however, in the ordinary course of things, that laborious preaching, ardent prayer, and a divine energy attending the word, were all necessary for such a purpose.

The world, it is well known, is inhabited by millions of such as were disciplined by baptism in their infancy; nor does my reader need information what sort of disciples the bulk of them are when grown up to maturity: but as a little anecdote which Mr. Ramsay has given us, concerning the admirable utility of this discipleship when conferred on *adults*, occurs to remembrance, it shall be here introduced. Thus then my author: "The absent owner of a plantation [in the West Indies] sent out positive standing instructions to his manager to have his *slaves* carefully instructed in the Christian religion, and baptized. . . . He [the clergyman that was employed] came to a plantation on a Sunday afternoon, and desired the manager to collect eight or ten slaves to be baptized. They were brought before him. He began to repeat the

* Acts xxvi. 17, 18.

† Compare 1 Cor. i. 14, and iv. 15.

office of baptism. When he had read as far as that part of the service where he was to sprinkle them with water, if their former name pleased him he baptized them by it; but if he thought it not fit to call a Christian by, as was his opinion of Quamina, Bungée, and the like, he gave them the first Christian name that occurred to his memory. . . . Some of the baptized would mutter, and say, *They desired not the parson to throw water in their face*; which was all they knew of the matter, and therefore were loth to suffer themselves to be so dealt with." Now this is *genuine* discipleship by baptism; for here is not the least appearance of professing faith, nor of instruction, previous to the use of water. A fine illustration this, of what our Lord meant by *μαθητευσατε!* Nor is it of any force against this method of making disciples, that these poor negroes *muttered*, and knew not what to make of the parson's conduct; nor that infants, in their own way, discover an equal degree of reluctance on similar occasions. For if it be the command of our Lord to make disciples without instruction, and merely by baptizing them, the work is done, the discipleship is effected, by barely administering the rite.—Respecting this kind of discipleship, there is, I confess, an ill-favoured sentence which immediately follows the preceding quotation; and it contains Mr. Ramsay's own remark on the fact. Thus it reads: "If merely making of them parties to a rite that they understand not, and in which they take no active or rational share, doth initiate them into Christ's church, then are they right good Christians."* But what then becomes of infant baptism, with all its attendant honours? except it can be proved, either that among professing Christians infants have more understanding than adult Africans; or that our Lord in this commission requires the former but not the latter to be baptized, though equally igno-

* Essay on Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves, p. 158, 159, 160.

rant of the rite. I find also, that Dr. Owen had no very high opinion of making adults disciples by baptism; for he speaks of some Roman Catholics, who “are drawn to mortification, as they drive Indians to baptism, or cattle to water.”*

Reflect. VII. That baptism is an ordinance of divine worship, in a performance of which the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, are adored as the true God, by the candidate as well as by the administrator, is clear from the institution before us. This appears from the qualifications required of the subject, and from the form of administration.—*From the qualifications required of the subject.* For he must be *taught*; so taught, as to make a credible profession of repentance and faith. These qualifications for an introductory positive rite of the New Testament, are perfectly suitable to the spiritual nature of the Christian economy; to the circumstances of Adam’s degenerate offspring, who have no hope, except in revealed mercy; to the whole of that holy intercourse which any of them have with God, in the present state; and to the idea of baptism, as an institution of religious worship: for Christianity is not the religion of pure, but of depraved creatures; not of meritorious persons, but of damnable sinners. The exercise of repentance towards God as an offended sovereign, and of dependence on Christ as the only mediator, must therefore make an essential part of all that spiritual worship which is performed by us in this life. By genuine repentance, a sinner declares, that the law he has broken is worthy of God, and that his offences are deserving of death. By faith, he treats the provision which grace has made as all-sufficient, as absolutely free, and gives to our Lord the honour of his name JESUS. Repentance exhibits a sinner in the act of confessing that he deserves to perish, and crying for mercy through the atonement; while faith presents him to observation as accepting relief

* Mortification of Sin, chap. vii.

at the hand of grace, and unfeignedly thankful for it. Hence it appears, that these two fruits of the Spirit must intermingle their exercise with all our devotional duties, and constitute a principal part of their spirituality. Such are the nature, the exercise, and the importance of repentance and faith, a profession of which is required previous to baptism.—Now a profession of this kind is no other than a solemn avowal of devotional principles existing in the heart of a candidate. The requisition of such previous declaration, therefore, must imply, that the reception of baptism is a solemn transaction with God; that the rite is an ordinance of divine worship; and that the subject of it should exercise devotional sentiments, profoundly adoring the great Supreme at the time of its administration. For it is absurd to suppose, that a solemn profession of possessing faith and repentance should be required as a qualification for baptism, and that there should be no obligation to exercise those graces when made a partaker of it. Baptism, therefore, is an ordinance of holy worship in respect of the subject, equally as of the administrator; nay, the former, by the very nature of the case, ought in a more particular manner, to exercise devout affections than the latter, as will be clear to every one who duly considers the matter.

From the form of administration. Baptism, by the express order of Christ, is to be administered in “the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” Solemn is the language, and sublime the ideas! so sublime, and so solemn, that the administrator must either adore or insult his Maker, when pronouncing the words and performing the rite. A convincing proof that the sacred appointment is a branch of religious worship. Nor does this unparalleled form of words refer merely to that high authority by which the administrator acts: it also regards that profession of repentance and faith upon which the candidate is baptized. This divine rubric of baptism exhibits to view the Infinite Source of all our

happiness, and the glorious **Object** of all our worship. Here the blessed God is revealed—under the Paternal name, as the object of repentance and the fountain of mercy; under the Filial character, as the immediate object of confidence for pardon, peace, and protection; and under the denomination of the Holy Spirit, as the object of dependence for illumination, sanctification, and consolation. Into the name of these Eternal Three, who “bear witness in heaven,” the disciple is baptized. To the disposal and honour of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, he makes a solemn surrender of his whole person; and from them he looks for salvation, in a way of sovereign mercy: but if so, baptism is an ordinance of holy worship, in which the true God is revealed and adored under his personal and relative characters. The subject, therefore, as well as the administrator, must exercise devout affections when the rite is performed, or else it is far from being treated according to its nature and its design. Consequently, as mere infants are neither taught, nor capable of being taught; as they neither have, nor profess to have repentance and faith; as they neither do, nor can worship the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, they are not included in this commission. For it is absurd to suppose, either that an ordinance of worship should be divinely appointed for any description of subjects, and they not be obliged to use it in a devotional manner; or that it should be intended for those who are naturally incapable of such devotion. And as the New Testament contains neither precept nor precedent for Pædobaptism, it is yet more incongruous for us to imagine, that our divine Legislator designed an institute of this kind should be almost *confined* for a course of ages to infantile subjects; which, nevertheless, the present prevailing practice implies; because comparatively very few of those who have been baptized for a long time, were capable of making any profession, or

of performing any act of worship, when the ordinance was administered.

Reflect. VIII. Were it allowable to interpret divine law upon the principle adopted and avowed by cardinal Cusanus, not only this capital text, but every other that stands in the way of prevailing practice, might soon be rendered quite compliant; rather no labour or management would be wanted: for he insists that the sense of scripture condescendingly varies according to the custom of the times.* But as this principle of interpretation was never perfectly agreeable to the generality of professed Christians, the abettors of infant sprinkling have found it necessary to adopt a different method—a method similar to that which is practised by commentators upon the Koran, as related by Mr. White. “During the first century of Mahometanism,” says he, “the followers of the prophet—found in the words and letter of the Koran a law fully adequate to the purpose of regulating all their civil affairs: but when their number was considerably increased—the institutions contained in the mere letter of their law, were probably too vague and too general to preserve the order and well-being of civil society. It was then that commentators arose, whose object it was to supply the defects, without derogating from the authority of the original law, or alienating any part of that implicit obedience to which it was entitled. With this view innumerable volumes have been composed, on the most respectable of which every decision in the Mahometan courts is founded. All of these, however, professedly derive their sole force and claim to respect, from the venerable and infallible authority of the Koran.”† This, I think, *mutatis mutandis*, will apply to the case in hand. For in the first ages of Christianity, the declarations of Christ, and the example

* See his words, Vol. I. p. 122, 123.

† Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, Notes, p. 26.

of his apostles, were quite sufficient respecting the mode and subjects of baptism: but when Pædobaptism came into fashion, the institution of Christ, and the practice of his apostles, were too vague and too general to support it. Commentators therefore arose, whose object it was to supply the defects of divine law, relating to that affair. Those deficiencies they endeavour to supply from age to age, by having recourse to the absolute necessity of baptism—the faith of sponsors, or of the church—the covenant made with Abraham—the rite of circumcision—the church-membership of Jewish infants—and the proselyte baptism. Thus Moses and Ezekiel, Talmudical rabbies and Moses Maimonides, have all been subpœnaed as witnesses to the mind of Christ, in that original positive law, “Teach all nations, baptizing them.” Yes, the friends of God, and the enemies of Christ; those who lived before the law in question was given, and those who hated the Lawgiver; are all summoned on this occasion to supply deficiencies, and to inform us what our divine Legislator meant.

The following remark of that well-known author, Mr. Chambers, when speaking of the German Baptists, will here apply. “What they chiefly supported their great doctrine on was, those words of our Saviour; ‘He that believes, and is baptized, shall be saved.’ As none but adults are capable of believing, they argued, that no others are capable of baptism; especially, as there is no passage in all the New Testament, where the baptism of infants is clearly enjoined. Calvin, and other writers against them, are pretty much embarrassed to answer this argument; and are obliged to have recourse to tradition and the practice of the primitive church.”*—Finally: As there is no doubt but the apostles knew the mind of Christ in this commission, so we may be assured they practised accordingly; and as their practice, in regard to baptism, was a comment on this command, so

* Cyclopædia, article Anabaptists.

their infallible writings must be considered as a faithful representation of that practice. As, therefore, this divine law says nothing of infant baptism, and as the records of apostolic practice are equally silent about it, we are warranted to conclude, that Pædobaptism was neither commanded by our Lord nor practised by his apostles.

§ 2.—Gen. xvii. 7. “And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.”

Dr. Twisse.—“We think that the apostle’s argument, (Rom. ix. 8,) to prove that the covenant of God with Abraham did not include all his posterity, is to be considered thus. Esau and Jacob were of Abraham’s posterity; but God did not comprehend them both in his covenant with Abraham. All the posterity of Abraham, therefore, are not included in it; and it is proved, that God did not include them both in the covenant of grace, because Esau, the elder, was not comprehended in it, but Jacob, the younger.” In Mr. Tombes’s Examen. p. 49.

2. Estius.—“From this passage Calvin infers, that because a person is the seed of Abraham, the promise which was made to Abraham belongs to him. But the answer is plain; for that promise being understood of spiritual blessings, does not belong to the carnal, but spiritual seed of Abraham, even as the apostle himself interprets it, Rom. iv. and ix. For if you understand the carnal seed, that promise will not belong to any of the Gentiles, but only to those persons that are begotten of Abraham and Isaac, according to the flesh.” Ut supra, p. 50.

3. Mr. Baxter.—“All that are baptized are Abraham’s seed, (Gal. iii. 17, 18, 19;) therefore they all profess a justifying faith. The consequence is proved, in

that none are Abraham's seed, in scripture, gospel-sense, but those *cordially*, that are true believers, and those *appearingly*, that profess true faith. This is proved, Rom. ix. 4, 6, 7, 8; iv. 11, 12, 13; so Gal. iii. 6—9, 14, 16 It is hence most undeniable, that all Abraham's true seed are justified and have a justifying faith; and all his professing seed do profess this faith." Disputat. of Right to Sacram. p. 114, 115.

4. Zanchius.—"Abraham is called the father of believers, that is, of the elect; and all the elect are called the seed of Abraham: the first of whom is Christ the head, seeing he was born of the seed of Abraham. When, therefore, God in the covenant says, 'I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed;' under that denomination, *thy seed*, Christ is first and principally understood, considered as a man, and in him all the elect." De Nat. Dei. l. iv. c. v. § 5.

5. Paræus.—"John the Baptist teaches, that the promises of God are not tied to carnal descent; but pertain only to a believing and spiritual posterity: for they are not the children of Abraham, who are of Abraham according to the flesh, but according to the spirit." In Mr. Tombes, ut supra.

6. Dr. Ames.—"There are many of the seed of Abraham, to whom the word of promise does not belong, as Ishmael, and the Ishmaelites; but if there are many of Abraham's seed to whom the word of promise does not relate, the rejection of many Jews, who are of Abraham's seed, does not render the word of promise void." Ut supra.

7. Assembly of Divines.—"Not all they who are carnally born of Abraham, by the course of nature, are the children of God, to whom the promise of grace was made, but the children of *promise*; that is, those who were born by virtue of the promise, those who by God's special grace were adopted, (as Isaac, by a special and singular promise, was begot by Abraham,)

they only are accounted for that seed mentioned in the covenant; 'I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed.'" Annotations on Rom. ix. 8.

8. Anonymous.—“ It appears, that the spiritual race of Abraham were the children of the covenant, and that when God promised to be a God to him, and his seed after him, he meant the children of his faith.” Cases to Recover Dissenters, vol. ii. p. 375.

9. Dr. Owen.—“ By the seed of Abraham, by Jacob and Israel, in many places of the prophets, not the carnal seed, at least not all the carnal seed of them is intended; but the children of the faith of Abraham, who are the inheritors of the promise.” On Heb. vol. i. exercitat. xviii. § 6.

10. Beza.—“ ‘ Children of the promise;’ namely, the seed to which that promise pertains, ‘ I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed ’—or sons, not born by the power of nature, but by the efficacy of the Holy Spirit, according to the promise of God.” Annotat. in Gal. iv. 24.

11. Mr. Williams.—“ Our author [Mr. Maurice]—takes considerable pains to maintain a favourite point, which I shall venture to pronounce a very precarious hypothesis. It is that of *hereditary grace*, if I may so express the notion, that all the children of the godly are absolutely interested in all new-covenant blessings. . . . His main argument is this; If we be Christ's, (or true believers,) then are we Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise, (Gal. iii. 29.) But the promise to Abraham was, That Jehovah would be *his* God, and the God of his *seed*, (Gen. xvii. 7.) Therefore, every believing Gentile is an heir according to that promise, and, consequently, hath as indubitable a right to its full contents as the patriarch and his seed ever had. This is the evidence. The blessings, therefore, of that ancient promise he indiscriminately appropriates to all the children of the godly, notwithstanding the most unpromising appearances, continuing to their latest breath.—But

are we justly authorized to apply a divine promise, or interpret a divine declaration, by any other rule than the most evident intention of the Holy Spirit? And can this be better ascertained than by carefully attending to that sense of the passage in question, which most unexceptionably harmonizes with the whole of revelation and the analogy of faith? But that interpretation of the Abrahamic promise, which Mr. Maurice and some others have adopted, and which considers the words in their literal, absolute, and undistinguished application, is replete with very absurd consequences. Jehovah, surely, was not the God of Abraham and his unbelieving natural descendants, in the same respects! Or was the immediate offspring of a pious Hebrew entitled to the fulness of the parents' blessing? So far from it, that we have not the least evidence from the sacred oracles of any child among the thousands of Israel, who was entitled to the righteousness of faith in virtue of the parents' piety. . . . To conceive accurately of the Abrahamic covenant, it is necessary to consider it under a threefold aspect; both as it relates to the believing patriarch himself, and his covenanted seed—'I will be the God of thy seed.' Abraham's seed, under the first aspect, intends all the heirs of grace, who receive righteousness and life after his example; 'who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' Under the second aspect, the term *seed*, evidently means the Lord Christ; to which acceptance the inspired reasoner alludes, Gal. iii. 16. Under the third aspect, the word *seed* must imply the *posterity* of Abraham in the line of Isaac and Jacob; who were distinguished from other nations by the painful rite of circumcision, in conjunction with other observances and peculiarities; and thereby served as an honoured vehicle, ceremonially consecrated, to usher in Messiah the Prince, in the fulness of time, upon the theatre of the world. In him all the fami-

lies of the earth who are the objects of redeeming love are eternally blessed. By his incarnation and atonement ALL CARNAL CONNECTIONS WERE DISSOLVED. When He, the most Holy, was anointed to make reconciliation for iniquity, and bring in everlasting righteousness, the second and third aspects of the promise were fulfilled. So fulfilled, *that no mortal could ever after consistently plead them for himself or his seed*—These considerations, I presume, are sufficient to evince, that New Testament saints have nothing more to do with the Abrahamic covenant than the Old Testament believers who lived prior to Abraham; nor, in a sense, so much: for Adam, Enoch, Noah, and so on, were not only interested in the blessings of grace and glory, but were, moreover, the progenitors of Christ by promise, only in a manner less explicit. What we, then, have to claim, or possibly can claim, in the nature of things, relative to the much talked of promise, for ourselves or children, must not be justification and eternal life as of absolute right; but having reason to conclude from other premises, that ourselves or our children are in a justified state, we may in full assurance plead all the blessings and gospel privileges connected with justification. It is lawful, doubtless, it is praiseworthy, to repose the most unbounded confidence in the divine promises, when we are furnished with proper evidence, that they were intended for our use; but without such evidence, our confidence degenerates into presumption—a presumption which, the stronger it is, becomes the more dangerous.” Notes on Mr. Maurice’s Social Relig. p. 312—317.

12. Mr. Henry.—“ It doth not follow, that because they are the seed of Abraham, therefore they must needs be the children of God; though they themselves fancied so, boasted much of, and built much upon their relation to Abraham. But it doth not follow. Grace doth not run in a blood; nor are saving benefits inseparably annexed to external church privileges; though it is com-

mon for people thus to stretch the meaning of God's promise, to bolster themselves up in a vain hope." Exposition on Rom. ix. 6, 7. See his Exposit. of John viii. 39.

13. Wolfius.—“Neither because they are the seed of Abraham.’ The apostle here, in a distinguishing manner, calls the Jews *the seed of Abraham*: not only because they sprang from his seed, but also had nothing from him, as generating, except a corrupt nature; because there is nothing spiritual and holy in seed, but it is mere nature. Hence the Jews could not derive the privileges of grace from that natural descent, seeing they were not Abraham’s spirit, but only his seed, infected with the spot of sin, or the children of the flesh.” Curæ, ad Rom. ix. 7.

14. Gerhardus.—“The seed of Abraham is twofold, carnal, and spiritual: the promise, also, contains two kinds of benefits, corporal and spiritual.” Apud F. Fabricium, Christologia, dissert. x. § 4. — See also Luther’s Comment. on Gal. iii. 7; Mr. Perkins’s Works, vol. ii. p. 242; and Vitringa, in No. 15, of § 9, of this section.

REFLECTIONS.

Reflect. I. In that capital text, which is the subject of the preceding section, baptism is both plainly mentioned and solemnly appointed; but it says not a word concerning infants: in this, however, to which our Brethren often appeal, that institution is neither expressed, nor so much as thought of by the inspired writer; yet, strange to think! it is considered by many as a passage of the greatest importance to the cause of infant baptism. Thus the learned Chamier: “Catholics account the infants of Christians, as Christians; according to the covenant, ‘I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed:’ in which promise they sweetly acquiesce.”* —Mr. Leigh, thus: “One hath *better* ground to go by

* Panstrat. tom. i. l. ix. c. x. § 50.

to administer baptism to a child of believing parents, than to men of years. A man's profession may be unsound and hypocritical; for the other, I have God's promise, 'I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed.'" Yet in the following page, he says; "Infants have an outward profession of faith in their parents, who bring them to baptism, and desire baptism for them; for the profession of faith made by the parents is to be taken also for the child."* This is very extraordinary. As if the profession of a parent, on the behalf of his child, were not as liable to a suspicion of hypocrisy, as that of a candidate for the ordinance! Had the learned author *proved* that infants of a certain description are baptized on a "better ground" than professing adults, he doubtless would have carried his point; but there, alas, the difficulty lay—a difficulty insuperable as that suggested in the following risible passage: "There was once a learned and friendly debate," says Mr. Alsop, "betwixt a mayor and his brethren. What the question was, I am not very certain; but one wiser than the rest had reduced the matter to this head; That if they could but make it out that Edward the *third* reigned before Edward the *first*, they should carry the cause."†

The conduct of our opposers in arguing from this text, may be justly considered as a manifest indication, that the New Testament contains but little, or nothing at all, in favour of infant baptism; else they would never seek a warrant for it in the time of Abraham, and in the records of Moses. A very singular procedure this for Protestants to adopt, with regard to a positive institute of the new economy! As if Jehovah had appointed infant baptism along with circumcision!—I said, *for Protestants to adopt*, because it is a frequent practice with Roman Catholics. Of this I will produce the following instances, on which Reformed authors have animadverted. Is the Popish *sacrifice of the mass* the

* Body of Div. p. 669, 670.

† Antisozzo, p. 246.

subject of controversy? Mr. Payne says, "They go back as far as Genesis for it; and it is very strange they should find it there; this will make it very primitive and ancient indeed."*—Is it *the worshipping of relics*? "It is as ancient," they say, "as the translation of Joseph's bones, (Exod. xiii. 19.)"†—Is it *the sign of the cross*? They take it "from sprinkling the lintel and posts of the doors with blood, (Exod. xii. 22.)"‡—Is it their *clerical celibacy*? Dr. Edwards tells us, that Bellarmine infers it "from the priests wearing of linen breeches, (Exod. xxviii. 42.)"§—Is it the *Papal supremacy*? They have found it, says Dr. Barrow, "in the first chapter of Genesis."||—Is it their *infallibility*? Mr. Poole tells us, that they vehemently urge Deut. xvii. 11, 12.¶—Is it the doctrine of *purgatory*? Chamier informs us, that they have recourse to Gen. iii. 24.**—Similar instances might be produced in abundance, but these may suffice. I will add one, however, from a learned and famous Lutheran, when defending the sign of the cross. For this purpose Gerhard, to whom I refer, appeals to Gen. xlvi. 14, and says; "The patriarch Jacob, laying his hands upon his grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh, cross-wise, formed, as it were, a cross; and so admonished them concerning the cross of Christ."††—Mr. Alsop, I remember, when adverting to a similar play of imagination, has the following remark: "Some such medium the poor priest used to prove, that the virgin Mary was prophesied of from the beginning of the world; because he had made a shift to read Gen. i. 10, *Congregationem aquarum vocavit MARIA*; and with the

* Preservative against Popery, title vi. p. 59. Vid. Heidegg. Corp. Theol. tom. ii. p. 666.

† Dr. Edwards On Truth and Error, p. 180. ‡ Ibid.

§ Ibid. || On the Pope's Supremacy, p. 155.

¶ Nullity of Romish Faith, p. 26.

** Panstrat. tom. iii. l. xxvi. c. v. § 2.

†† Loci Theolog. tom. iv. de Bap. § 261.

same learned skill did the rector of ——— convince his obstinate parishoners, that it was their duty to pave his chancel for him, from *PAVEANT illi, non PAVEBO ego.*”* —But, pleasantry apart, are not Protestants in general, and Protestant Dissenters in particular, on such occasions, ready to say; If the votaries of Papal power, and of detestable superstition, were not painfully convinced there is no evidence of their peculiarities in the New Testament, they would never have recourse to the Pentateuch for proof? Why then may not we conclude, that our Pædobaptist Brethren would never produce any passages from the Old Testament in favour of infant baptism, were they not keenly sensible that the apostolic writings do not furnish them with solid argument in its defence?—The following remark of Mr. Peirce, respecting the cross in baptism, will here apply: “It is a sign they had very little reason for what they [Protestant Episcopalians] did, when they could satisfy themselves to allege scriptures so little to their purpose, as that, ‘God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of Christ.’”†—But, as Dr. Watts observes, “Through the influence which our own schemes or hypotheses have upon the mind, we sometimes become so sharp-sighted, as to find these schemes in those places of scripture, where the holy writers never thought of them, nor the Holy Spirit intended them.”‡ So Cræsius laboured to prove, that the subject of Homer is the sacred history: in his *Odyssee*, the history of the patriarchs and of the Israelites to the death of Moses; and in his *Iliad*, those events which took place after the death of Moses under the conduct of Joshua, in regard to the taking of Jericho and the conquest of all Palestine. §

“Thus learned commentators view
In Homer, more than Homer knew.”

* Antisozzo, p. 304. † Vindicat. of Dissenters, part i. p. 163. ‡ Logic, part ii. chap. iii. sect. iii.

§ Bib. Bremens. class. ii. p. 385.

Though we acknowledge the inspiration, and revere the divine authority of this and all other texts produced against us, yet we absolutely reject the application of some that are pleaded in the controversy; because it is evident they have no reference at all to baptism, and especially those which are adduced from the Old Testament. The following passages, “The Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters—Wash ye, make you clean—I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean—Thou wilt cast all our sins into the depths of the sea—There shall be a fountain opened to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for uncleanness”*—are considered by ancient ecclesiastical authors, by Bellarmine, and by others, as relating to the *efficacy* of baptism; nor can we forbear thinking them as pertinent as the text before us, with regard to the *subjects* of that institution. With equal propriety does the famous Gerhard plead the following passage: “They shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon their shoulders.” “That is,” says he, “they shall bring their infants, and request that they may be planted in the church by baptism, and so become her sons and daughters; yea, the sons and daughters of God himself.”† Admirable evidence of infant baptism! who can fail of being convinced by it? We will, however, a little more particularly consider the import of Jehovah’s language to Abraham.

It appears, then, by the preceding quotations from eminent Pædobaptists, that the covenant of God with Abraham, was not such as many of our opposers represent it; that it ascertained no spiritual blessing to his carnal seed, as such; nor, considered merely as his natural descendants, were any promises made to them of a spiritual nature. But, which is of more weight than the

* Vid. Chamieri Panstrat. tom. iv. l. ii. c. iv.

† Loci Theolog. tom. iv. p. 228.

testimony of a thousand critics and commentators, the apostle Paul has placed this matter in so clear and strong a light, as to supersede all reason of doubt.* If then the natural posterity of that illustrious patriarch were not, as such, interested in the covenant of grace by virtue of that promise, “I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee;” it must be vain and presumptuous for Christian parents to imagine, that *their* children are included in the covenant, on account of the same promise.† Besides, the words under our notice, when expounded by Paul as relating to spiritual blessings, are considered as belonging to the seed of Abraham, not as a natural parent, but as the father of all believers, whether they be Jews or Gentiles.‡ Agreeable to which is the following observation of president Edwards: “It is our natural relation to Adam, and not to Abraham, which determines our native moral state; and—therefore the being natural children of Abraham, will not make us by nature holy in the sight of God, since we are the natural seed of sinful Adam.”§

Reflect. II. This distinction between the natural and spiritual seed of Abraham, the promises made, and the blessings assigned to each, so justly remarked by these authors, and so strongly confirmed by the apostle, is, nevertheless, but little regarded by our opposers, when vindicating the supposed right of infants to baptism. I will give the reader a specimen of their language and sentiments relating to this affair. Mr. Henry, for instance, when speaking to Christian parents, has the following words. “What title your children have to the ordinance [of baptism,] they have BY DESCENT from you.”||—Westminster Assembly: “The seed and pos-

* See Rom. iv. 11, 12, 13; ix. 6, 7, 8; Gal. iii. 7, 9, 29.

† See Rom. ix. 6—12.

‡ Rom. iv. 11—18; Gal. iii. 7, 16, 29.

§ Doct. of Orig. Sin, part ii. chap. iv. sect. ii. p. 342.

|| Treatise on Baptism, p. 223.

terity of the faithful, born within the church, have, by their *birth*, interest in the covenant, and right to the seal of it, and to the outward privileges of the church under the gospel, no less than the children of Abraham in the time of the Old Testament.”*—Mr. Baxter: “Parents have authority to accept the covenant for their children, and enter them in it.”†—Mr. Maurice: “In the scripture we see, that the children of the godly are to be considered in the same covenant promises of grace with their parents; that they are the Lord’s children in a distinguishing manner from the world; they are his heritage.”‡—Gerhardus: “‘I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed.’ The meaning is, I will forgive your sins, I will receive you for sons, I will give you the Holy Spirit, and, after death, I will receive you to eternal life; therefore God obliged himself, by circumcision, freely to give all these things to those that were circumcised.”§—Dr. Addington: “The promises to Abraham in the Old Testament, and those to Christians in the New, appear to engage for THE SAME *spiritual*, TEMPORAL, and *eternal* blessings. . . . They are made alike to believers, whether Jews or Gentiles, and to THEIR CHILDREN, in both Testaments.”||—Mr. Rutherford: “The children of Papists and excommunicate Protestants, which are born within our visible church, are baptized, if their forefathers have been sound in the faith.”¶—Velthuysius: “Though the parents were unholy, it suffices that the ancestors were true members of the church; for God has declared, that he will be the God of the pious to the third and fourth generation.”**—Mr. Blake: “I shall conclude in the words of Rivet. If a parent wants true faith, yet makes profession of it, and, in the external society of the

* Directory, article, Baptism.

† Plain Scrip. Proof, p. 242.

‡ Social Relig. dialogue viii.

§ Loci Theolog. tom. iv.

de Sacram. § 65.

|| Christian Minister’s Reasons, p. 100.

¶ In Mr. Tombes’s Examen, p. 55.

** Opera, tom. i. p. 801.

church, is accounted a believer, or hath been accounted heretofore under the Old Testament, the infants born of such parents are in covenant with them, and partakers of the promise, even upon this account; because the promise was received of the ancestors in behalf of the posterity that should issue from them; which the unbelief or hypocrisy of the immediate parent cannot make invalid, as long as the infant cannot imitate the unbelief or hypocrisy of the parent.”* — Mr. Rathband: “Children may be lawfully accounted within God’s covenant, if any of their ancestors, in any generation, were faithful, (Exod. xx. 5.)” † — Synod of French Protestants: “Under the name of father and mother are not only comprised the more immediate parents, but also their ancestors to a thousand generations.” — In the Synod of Rochelle it was determined, “That the parents’ fault cannot prejudice the children—nor should any scruple in the least be made about admitting such infants unto baptism; especially whenas godly persons will become sureties for their religious education.” ‡ — Cunæus: “Though the bulk of Abraham’s posterity had no knowledge or perception of the Messiah, yet celestial blessedness might be given to them for the sake of the patriarchs, who had an intellectual view of the Messiah, and received from the Deity this promise of the covenant, ‘I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed after thee.’” §

Here one cannot forbear observing, what a gradual and great advance there is, upon the idea of covenant interest in virtue of carnal descent from believing parents—a wonderful advance, in respect of privilege, of honour, and of safety. According to Mr. Henry and the Westminster Assembly, the infants of Christian

* *Vindiciæ Fœderis*, chap. xlvii. sect. iii.

† In Mr. Tombes’s *Examen*, p. 32.

‡ In Mr. Bingham’s *Works*, vol. ii. p. 777.

§ *Apud F. Fabricium, Christologia*, dissert. x. § 5.

parents are entitled to baptism by patrimonial right—a right really inheritable as an earthly estate.—Mr. Maurice and Gerhard, however, are not contented with providing for them a title to baptism, nor with allowing them a share in an external covenant; no, they boldly pronounce them interested in “the same covenant promises of grace with their parents,” and in all spiritual blessings. Yet even this, in the estimate of Dr. Addington, is too small a privilege: for he assures us, that the same promises which were made to Abraham, are made to Christians and their children; which promises “appear to engage for *the same spiritual, TEMPORAL, and eternal blessings.*” So that, if Abraham was assured by divine promise of having a numerous offspring, and of his posterity enjoying the land of Canaan, every believing parent may be ascertained of the same temporal benefits. . . . If that illustrious patriarch had spiritual and eternal blessings ensured to him, every Christian parent has an equal security, both in regard to himself and his children. Thus every believing father becomes an ABRAHAM to his offspring! An *Abraham*, did I say? nay, much more than he; for that renowned Hebrew had no spiritual blessings ascertained to his natural offspring, as such.—But perhaps you may say; All this, though admirable, is to be understood concerning the immediate offspring of pious parents; and what then must become of those infants, whose fathers and mothers are either hypocritical professors of religion, or profligate and profane? Well, I would not have you despond concerning these, for the doctrine of carnal descent will solve the gloomy query. Consider what the famous Rutherford and Velthuysius have said. They assure you, that the children of Papists, of excommunicated Protestants, and of ungodly persons in general, are entitled to baptism; provided they had but the happiness of being born in a certain district, or of having forefathers that were sound in the faith. Should you

suspect that even this is not quite so determinate as might be wished, cast your eye on the words of Messrs. Blake and Rivet. They unite in asserting, that the divine promise was received by the ancestors, on the behalf of their posterity. Nay, should a distrustful thought arise in your mind, about the probability of some infants being so very unhappy, as to have descended from ancestors that have been ungodly for many generations; yet I would not have you consider even *these* children as left to the uncovenanted mercies of God: for this admirable doctrine of carnal descent, in the skilful hands of Mr. Rathband and of a French synod, provides perfect relief in the pinching case. Yes, they assure us, that if ANY of these children's ancestors, in ANY generation, were believers, the poor infants "may be lawfully accounted in the covenant." You see, then, that if the children in your supposition were so uncommonly unhappy, as to have had no pious ancestor in the long list of Noah's descendants; yet, as they have an undoubted claim of kindred to that father of the new world, they are to be considered as in the covenant. Nay, were you to entertain a better opinion of Adam's piety than of Noah's, you are perfectly at liberty to improve their descent from him, for the same end: because, according to these doctors, the friendly force of carnal descent from godly ancestors, is not quite exhausted in less than *a thousand generations*; one third of which has not yet elapsed since the beginning of the world.* Then comes Cunæus, who crowns the whole by obviating another gloomy doubt, which

* Some assert, says Mr. Baxter, "that the children of Christians, known or presumed to be such, living or dead, may be baptized." To which he replies, "Then all the children under the Turks, whose ancestors were known Christians, may be baptized; and why not all the world, when Noah and Adam were known to be in covenant?" Disputat. of Right to Sac. p. 262, 263. See Mr. J. Cotton's Way of the Churches, p. 86, 87.

may possibly arise in your mind. You are, perhaps, ready to say; But supposing the favoured infants, thus indulged with a federal interest, should live to maturity, grow up in ignorance of Jesus Christ, and leave the world in an unconverted state; then, ah! then what must become of them? Become of them? Why, says this learned foreigner, They must be saved for the sake of their pious, though remote progenitors, who received from Jehovah the cheering promise, "I will be a God to thee, and to *THY SEED AFTER THEE.*" And though F. Fabricius was unpolite enough to censure this doctrine, as Judaism; nay, though Calovius, in a fit of the spleen we suppose, condemned it as atheistical, yet, you know, it is admirably well calculated to foster an expectation of eternal felicity in the minds of ungodly persons. There being just ground of apprehension, that many around us would hardly have charity enough to think themselves Christians, or any reason to consider themselves as in a fair way for heaven, were it not for these two happy expedients, *ancestorial piety* and *infant baptism*; Cunæus and others have kindly provided an opiate for conscience, that such persons may sleep at their ease, and pleasingly dream of doing well at the last.

In opposition, however, to such authors as talk at this marvellous rate, I will present my reader with language and sentiments of a different complexion, from three or four Pædobaptists, and from one Baptist. The first of these is Heidegger, who thus expresses himself: "The examples of all ages show, that a great part of those who descend from godly persons are condemned and rejected of God."*—Venema: "Celestial prerogatives cannot be transmitted from parents to children, nor can that idea be rendered consistent, either with the economy of grace or the justice of God. . . . No one is sanctified by the Lord, for the sake of another

* Corp. Theolog. loc. xiv. § 60.

man: not infants, in virtue of their descent from believers; for this the scripture no where affirms, nor is it consistent with reason.”*——Abp. Leighton: “That it is the parents’ faith gives the child a right to it [baptism,] is neither clear from scripture, nor any sound reason.”†——To this triumvirate, I will add that excellent author, Dr. Owen, who speaks in the following manner: “Two privileges did God grant unto Abraham, upon his separation to a special interest in the old promise and covenant. First, that according to the flesh he should be the father of the Messiah, the promised seed, who was the very life of the covenant, the fountain and cause of all the blessings contained in it. That this privilege was temporary,—the thing itself doth demonstrate. . . . Secondly; Together with this, he had also another privilege granted unto him; namely, that his faith, whereby he was personally interested in the covenant, should be the pattern of the faith of the church in all generations; and that none should ever come to be a member of it, or a sharer in its blessings, but by the same faith that he had fixed on the Seed that was in the promise, to be brought forth from him in the world. On the account of this privilege, he became the father of all them that do believe. For they that are of the faith, the same are the children of Abraham, (Gal. iii. 7; Rom. iv. 11;) as also heirs of the world, (Rom. iv. 13;) in that all that should believe throughout the world, being thereby implanted into the covenant made with him, should become his spiritual children. Answerable unto this twofold end of the separation of Abraham, there was a double seed allotted unto him. A seed according to the *flesh*, separated to the bringing forth of the Messiah, according to the flesh; and a seed according to the *promise*, that is, such as by

* Dissert. Sac. l. iii. c. i. § 11.

† Select Works, lett. i. p. 548.

faith should have interest in the promise, or all the elect of God . . . Multitudes afterwards were of the carnal seed of Abraham, and of the number of the people separated to bring forth the Messiah in the flesh; and yet were not of the seed according to the promise, nor interested in the spiritual blessings of the covenant, because they did not personally believe, as our apostle declares, Heb. iv. And many afterwards, who were not of the carnal seed of Abraham, nor interested in the privilege of bringing forth the Messiah in the flesh, were yet designed to be made his spiritual seed by faith, that in them he might become *heir of the world*, and all nations of the earth be blessed in him. Now it is evident, that it is the second privilege and spiritual seed, wherein the church, to whom the promises are made, is founded, and whereof it doth consist; namely, in them, who by faith are interested in the covenant of Abraham, whether they be of the carnal seed or not. And herein lay the great mistake of the Jews of old, wherein they are followed by their posterity unto this day. They thought no more was needful to interest them in the covenant of Abraham, but that they were HIS SEED according to the flesh; and they constantly pleaded the latter privilege, as the ground and reason of the former. It is true, they were the children of Abraham according to the flesh; but on that account, they can have no other privilege than Abraham had in the flesh himself: and this was, as we have showed, that he should be set apart as a special channel, through whose loins God would derive the promised seed into the world . . . The former carnal privilege of Abraham and his posterity expiring on the grounds before mentioned, the ordinances of worship, which were suited thereunto, did necessarily cease also. And this cast the Jews into great perplexities, and proved the last trial that God made of them. For whereas both these, namely, the carnal and spiritual privileges of Abraham's covenant,

had been carried on together in a mixed way for many generations, coming now to be separated, and a trial to be made who of the Jews had interest in both, who in one only; those who had only the carnal privilege of being children of Abraham according to the flesh, contended for a share on that single account in the other also, that is, in all the promises annexed to the covenant. But the foundation of their plea was taken away, and the church, unto which the promises belong, remained with them that were heirs of Abraham's faith only. . . . The church unto whom all the promises belong, are only those who are heirs of Abraham's faith; believing as he did, and thereby interested in his covenant."* Thus far the doctor; and were it not evident beyond a doubt that he approved of infant baptism, I should certainly have considered him here, as *intending* to oppose it: for, to render his reasoning consistent with various arguments commonly adduced in favour of that hypothesis, no small share of critical legerdemain is required.

I will now produce the words of an illustrious Baptist—yes, of a BAPTIST, whose judgment in this case is of more worth than that of all the doctors, professors, and archbishops in Europe. The venerable son of Zacharias, who, observing many of the Jews coming to his baptism, and well knowing their plea of interest in Abraham's covenant by virtue of carnal descent, with great solemnity said; "O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bring forth fruits meet for repentance: and think not to say within yourselves, WE HAVE ABRAHAM TO OUR FATHER; for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."† A caveat this against every similar plea, respecting a positive institution of the New Testament, to the end of time.

* Exercitat. on Epist. to Heb. vol. i. p. 55, 56, 57.

† Matt. iii. 7, 8, 9.

§ 3.—Ezekiel xvi. 20, 21. “Thou hast taken thy sons and thy daughters, whom thou hast born unto me. . . Thou hast slain my children.”

Calvin.—“ ‘Thou,’ says God, ‘hast slain thy sons and thy daughters;’ but they were also mine, for thou hast begotten them to me. Here God puts himself in the place of a father, because he had adopted that people to himself. The body of the people therefore was, as it were, a spouse or wife. Whoever thence arose, were sons; because, if the covenant of God with the people was a marriage contract, those who drew their origin from that people ought to be reckoned among his children. God, therefore, asserts that they were his sons who were so slain: like as if a husband should object to his wife, that the children common to them both were forced away for her own pleasure.” In loc.

2. Dr. Erskine.—“ The Sinai covenant was made, not only with those who came out of Egypt, but with all succeeding generations that were to spring from them. Descent from Israel gave any one a right to the benefits of this covenant; for which reason the children even of unregenerate Israelites were circumcised the eighth day, and were said to be ‘born unto God,’ (Ezek. xvi. 20.)” Theolog. Dissertat. p. 8.

3. Assembly of Divines.—“ *Whom thou:* who at their birth were mine, by virtue of my covenant, whereby the whole body of the nation was a wife to me, and the particular persons as children; wherefore thou shouldst have consecrated them to me.” Annotations on the place.

REFLECTIONS.

Reflect. I. Hence it appears quite futile to plead this passage as a proof, that the infants of Christian parents are interested in the covenant of grace, and that they are the *Lord's children* in a peculiar sense: be-

cause, as the judicious and learned Venema justly observes, the Sinai covenant is plainly represented in this chapter, under the idea of an external conjugal contract. For though it is expressly called a covenant,* yet it is manifestly distinguished from the everlasting covenant of grace;† which farther appears from its being made with the *whole people*. The *beauty* of Israel was also an external thing; seeing they placed their confidence in it, and committed whoredom because of it.‡ Having apostatized from God to detestable idolatry, they not only communicated of their good things and ornaments, bestowed upon them by the Lord, to Pagan idols, but they also sacrificed their children, that are called *Jehovah's children*, to idols.§—With reference to the same covenant between God and Israel, Jehovah speaks as follows; “I was a husband to them, saith the Lord.”|| Hence the chosen tribes in general are called the *sons* and *daughters* of the Lord, for to them “pertained the adoption.”¶ “They are denominated the “Lord’s people, a holy people to the Lord,” and the “congregation of Jehovah.”** The country possessed by them is called *Immanuel’s land*, and *the Lord’s land*: nay, their silver and gold, their aromatics and oil, are claimed by Jehovah as being *his* in a peculiar sense.†† Agreeable to this view of the ancient Israel are the apostle’s words, when speaking to unconverted Jews: “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.”‡‡ Now here we have *children of the cove-*

* Verse 8.

† Verse 60, 61, 62.

‡ See verse 15.

§ Dissertat. Sac. l. ii. c. iii. § 12.

|| Jer. xxxi. 32. Vid. Lampium, Comment. in Evang. Joan. ad cap. viii. 41.

¶ Deut. xxxii. 19; Rom. ix. 4. Vid. Hulsii Comment. in Israel. Prisc. Prærog. p. 304, 305.

** Numb. xi. 29; xxxi. 16; Deut. xiv. 2, 21; Ezek. xxiii. 4, 5, 18, 41.

†† Isa. viii. 8; Ezek. xvi. 17, 18; xxiii. 41;

Hos. ix. 3; Joel iii. 5.

‡‡ Acts iii. 12—26.

nant, who nevertheless had no title to baptism prior to a profession of repentance and faith. To infer, therefore, from this passage in Ezekiel, as Mr. Henry does in his note on the place, that “the children of [Christian] parents that are members of the visible church, are to be looked upon as *born unto God, and his children;*” is to place us under the Sinai covenant—is to confound the old, with the new economy. Consequently, every argument formed on this, or any similar text, in order to prove the right of infants to baptism, only betrays, either the weakness of the disputant, or the want of substantial evidence—that evidence, which is agreeable to the nature of a positive institution. For with equal propriety does the Council of Trent produce Ezekiel the thirty-sixth and twenty-fifth, to prove that all sin, original and actual, is pardoned through the admirable efficacy of baptism;* as any of our opposers appeal to this passage, in proof of infants being the subjects of that ordinance.

Reflect. II. If there be any propriety in producing this passage against us, it certainly proves much more than many of our opposers wish to establish. For nothing can be more plain, than that the children here mentioned were the offspring, not of regenerate and godly, but of apostate and idolatrous parents. Consequently, if this divine oracle had any relation to baptism, it would infer the right of all children to that ordinance, whose parents profess Christianity, be those parents ever so idolatrous, or ever so profligate. In this light it is understood and applied by some Pædobaptists. Thus, for example, the Leyden Professors: “We do not exclude those infants from a participation of baptism, who descend from parents of a Christian race, and [are] baptized; though their parents, by a wicked life or an impure faith, render the efficacy of the covenant sealed in baptism entirely void, with regard to themselves. . . .

* Catechism of Council of Trent, p. 166.

Because, under the new covenant, the son does not bear the iniquity of the father, and God nevertheless continues the God of such children, as himself testifies, Ezek. xvi. 20; where he calls the children of those wicked Israelites *his sons*, whom they had *brought forth to God*, though they had offered them to Moloch. Whence also he commanded the children of those Israelites, many of whom had died in their impiety, no less than the children of the godly, to be circumcised.*—Mr. Blake, thus: “Those that *bring forth children to God*, have a right, in the sight of God, to be of his household, and to be taken into it. This is plain, especially to those that know the law of servants in families, that all the children, in right, were the master’s, and had their relation to him. But those that are short of justifying faith, *bring forth children to God*, (Ezek. xvi. 20, 21.)”—To which Mr. Baxter answers: “This argument is sick of the common disease of the rest; the conclusion is a stranger to the question. *Quá tales*, they bring not forth children to God, in any church sense.”†

It is really surprising to think, that wise and godly men should send us to the seventeenth of Genesis, and the sixteenth of Ezekiel, to learn the mind of our Lord, when he said, “Teach all nations, baptizing them”—to get information who are the proper subjects of a positive ordinance peculiar to the New Testament! It is not, however, quite so strange, we freely acknowledge, as to send us to the Talmud for the same purpose; yet even that is frequently done! Mr. Baxter, I find, had abundant reason to make the following acknowledgment: “I cannot deny, but some divines have argued weakly for infant baptism, and used some unfit phrases, and brought some misapplied scriptures” in support of it. Nay, he informs us that, in his younger days, these weak arguments and misapplied texts had like to have made a Baptist of him. Thus he speaks: I was doubtful for

* Synopsis Pur. Theolog. disput. xlv. § 50.

† Disputat. of Right to Sac. p. 181.

some time, “by reason the scripture spoke so sparingly to the point; and the many weak arguments which I met with in the words and writings of some divines,—were not the least stumbling-block in my way. I resolved, therefore, silently to forbear the practice, while I farther studied the point.”* This, one would think, might have taught Mr. Baxter to have treated the Baptists with a less degree of severity than he sometimes did; but, alas, he seems on certain occasions to have quite forgotten it.†

Mr. Warren, when extolling the English *Common Prayer*, explains those words of Paul, *ποιεσθαι δεησεις*, *that prayers be made*, of composing a liturgy;‡ and with as much reason, for any thing I can perceive, as our opposers infer baptism from the text before us. For the reader’s amusement, and to show what strange applications of scripture a fondness for hypothesis will produce when real argument is wanting, I will conclude my remarks on this passage, with the reasoning of pope Innocent the Third, in favour of the Papal supremacy. His holiness, writing to the patriarch of Constantinople, says; “When our Lord appeared on the shore to his disciples then in a ship, Peter cast himself into the sea, while his companions came to land in the ship.—Now as, by the sea, the world is intended, Peter’s casting himself into the sea expresses that peculiar privilege of the pope, by which he received the whole world to govern.”§

§ 4.—Matt. xix. 14. “Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.”

Mr. Poole’s Continuators.—“We must take heed we do not found infant baptism upon the example of

* Plain Scrip. Proof, p. 7, and Preface, p. 3.

† See Vol. I. p. 233, 234, 235, 236.

‡ In Mr. Peirce’s Vindicat. of Dissent. part iii. p. 113. See 1 Tim. ii. 1. § Apud Venem. Hist. Eccles. cent. xiii. § 203.

Christ in this text, for it is certain that he did not baptize these children. Mark only saith, He took them into his arms, laid his hands on them, and blessed them. The argument for infant baptism from this text, is founded upon his words, uttered on this occasion, not upon his practice." Annotations on the place.

2. Dr. Whitby.—“ But, say the Antipædobaptists, Christ neither did baptize them, [the little children,] nor commanded the apostles to do it. Answ. That is not to be wondered at, if we consider that—Christian baptism was not yet instituted; and that the baptism then used by John and Christ’s disciples, was only the baptism of repentance, and faith in the Messiah which was for to come, (Acts xix. 4;) of both which infants were incapable.” Annotation on the place.

3. Mr. Burkitt.—“ They [the little children] were brought unto Jesus Christ: but for what end? Not to baptize them, but to bless them. . . . But, say some, Christ did neither baptize them, nor commanded his disciples so to do. Answ. That is not to be wondered at, if we consider that they had already entered into covenant with God by circumcision, and Christian baptism was not yet instituted. John’s baptism was the baptism of repentance, of which infants were incapable,” Expos. Notes on the place.

4. Dr. Doddridge.—“ I acknowledge, these words of themselves will not prove infant baptism to be an institution of Christ; but if that appears from other scriptures to be the case, (which I think most probable,) there will be proportionable reason to believe, that our Lord might here intend some reference to it.” Note on the place.

5. Anonymous.—“ Here a question starts, Did our Lord baptize these children? I answer, No; nor was baptism at that time a Christian institution; nor was circumcision abolished.” Simple Truth, p. 16, 17.— See Chap. II. No. 8.

REFLECTIONS.

Reflect. I. It appears from these authors, That the little children here mentioned were neither baptized by our Lord, nor by his apostles; that it is dangerous to the cause of Pædobaptism, to found it on the conduct of Christ as here narrated; and that infants were not baptized in those times. Dr. Doddridge, indeed, thinks it most *probable*, that the scripture in other places represents infant baptism as an institution of Christ; whence he infers a proportional probability, that our Lord intended a reference to it in these words: and Bengelius roundly asserts, that if the parents of these children had requested baptism for them, it would not have been denied.* But the conduct of our Lord's disciples, in *rebuking* those who brought the children, renders it far more likely that infants were considered as incapable of the baptism then administered; as Whitby and Burkitt observe. For is it not strange, unaccountably strange, that our Lord's most intimate friends should have been *offended* with the persons who brought those children, if it had then been customary to baptize infants? Such a practice could not have commenced, much less have been common among the followers of Jesus Christ, but these disciples must have known it; for, as *Jesus himself baptized not*, they must have been the administrators. Now had that been the case, or had they known and approved the modern grounds of Pædobaptism; such as the proselyte plunging, Jewish circumcision, the Abrahamic covenant, and the relative state of infants whose parents are believers; there is no reason to imagine they would have acted as they did in this instance.—Our opponents would fain persuade us, that these disciples were all Pædobaptists: but were any of our Pædobaptist Brethren at this day to have an opportunity, equally favourable with that of the Lord's disciples, of showing how they

* Gnomon, ad Matt. xix. 13.

stand affected to infant baptism ; they must either act a very different part, or be censured by multitudes as quite lukewarm in the cause, and perhaps fall under the foul suspicion of Antipædobaptism.

In this view of the passage our impartial friends, the Quakers, apparently acquiesce. Thus, for instance, Joseph Phipps : “ The words of our Saviour, ‘ Suffer little children to come unto me,’ afford no ground for infant baptism. He made no mention of it, much less did he recommend it as requisite to prepare them for his kingdom . . . Had he meant to adopt and establish Pædobaptism as a standing ordinance, a fairer opportunity could hardly offer, either to baptize the children himself, or command his disciples to do it ; neither of which he did, but graciously showed his acceptance of them without it ; for he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them.”*—— Samuel Fothergill, thus : “ Thy [Mr. Pilkington’s] quotation from Mark x. 14, seems to me to operate strongly against the cause it was produced to support, i. e. sprinkling infants . . . Had he [Christ] sprinkled water upon them, or dipped them therewith, or commanded any other to have done it, and declared it to be the manner of entering into his holy covenant, it would have proved something. As he did none of these things, but declared, ‘ Of such is the kingdom of heaven,’ it is a strong negative proof against the practice.”†

Reflect. II. That it is lawful for a parent, or for a minister, to recommend an infant to God in solemn *prayer*, which is a capital branch of moral worship, we readily allow ; and that the conduct of Christ on this occasion manifested his regard for little children, is beyond a doubt ; at the thought of which we are so far from being pained, that we rejoice. Yes, it is matter of joy ; because, in our view, it wears a smiling aspect

* Dissertat. on Bap. and Communion, p. 30, 31.

† Remarks on an Address, p. 12, 13.

on the final state of such as die in their infancy, and that without any restriction, in reference to carnal descent, which limitation has the appearance of a Jewish tenet.* But hence to infer, that infants are entitled to baptism any more than to the holy supper, is a conclusion wide of the mark—is making moral considerations the rule of administering positive institutions; of which there is no instance, and for which there is no reason in the word of God. Besides, how awkwardly it looks thus to argue: Christ expressed a condescending regard for little children *without* baptizing them, or saying a word about it; therefore we should manifest an affectionate care for infants *by* baptizing them! He who can fairly prove the point, or make any advances towards it from such premises, must be a wonderful proficient in the art of syllogizing.

Having just observed, that it is lawful to commend infants to God in solemn prayer, I am reminded of what Dr. Addington calls, a *presumptive* argument for infant baptism. Thus he reasons: "We seem to need such a rite as this, since the birth of a child is an event of great importance to a family; and it must appear a parent's duty,—it cannot but be a pious parent's inclination, early to devote his children to God, through Christ, expressing his fervent desires that they may partake, with himself, of the blessings of the Christian covenant. This argument appears to receive additional strength from the practice of our Baptist brethren, (many of them at least,) who, feeling the need, propriety, and usefulness of some such rite, as we suppose infant baptism to be, have invented one of *their own*, which nearly resembles it, excepting in the ceremonial part." †

* The following declaration, made by certain members of the Synod of Dort, I am far from approving. "Infantes infidelium morientes in infantia, reprobatos esse statuimus." Acta Synodi Dordrecht, pars iii. p. 91.

† Christian Minister's Reasons, P.S. to Advertisement.

There are several particulars in this quotation on which I would take the liberty of animadverting. "We seem to need such a rite" as infant baptism. Very feeble, however, is the foundation of that positive rite, which rests on what its votaries consider as a *seeming necessity*. The ancients imagined, no doubt, that sponsors, the sign of the cross, infant communion, and various other things, were needful. Nay, there is reason to think, that the devisers of unscriptural rights have generally thought their own inventions needful, either to adorn the worship of God, or to render it more edifying. *We seem to need such a rite*. So thought a Popish cardinal, respecting *extreme unction*. These are his words: "It is by no means to be believed, that divine Providence has been wanting in our going out of this militant church;" and so on. To which Dr. Clagett replies; "If, therefore, God has not instituted the sacrament of extreme unction, to convey us safely out of this world, it is to be believed that he hath been wanting to his church; but it is not to be believed that he hath been wanting, because he ought not so to be, and therefore he hath instituted that sacrament. Which arguing has not the least appearance of sense, without the help of another proposition, which gives it more than the appearance of blasphemy, That it is by no means to be believed, that God is wiser than a cardinal or a council."*—"Never admit any arguments," says Dr. Sherlock, "merely from the usefulness, conveniency, or supposed necessity of any thing, to prove that it is."†—But "the birth of a child is an event of great importance to a family." This is readily granted; yet, surely, there are other ways of acknowledging Providence in such an event, besides that of baptizing the infant. It is, we acknowledge, "a parent's duty" to give up his children

* Preservative against Popery, title vii. p. 93.

† Ibid. vol. ii. Appendix, p. 16. See Part I. Chap. I. No. 18, of this work.

to God, through Christ, by solemn prayer; and a pious parent will certainly express "his fervent desires that they may partake, with himself," of all spiritual blessings. But what has this to do with the right of his infant offspring to baptism? It is no other, there is reason to conclude, than was practised by pious patriarchs before the flood. Parental conduct of this kind is a branch of moral duty, and has nothing in it peculiar to the Christian dispensation, any more than to the patriarchal, or the Jewish economy. Besides, I take it for granted, that the worthy author himself repeatedly did all this for his children, before he baptized them.—"If God has given me a child," says Mr. Bradbury, "I shall resign it to him very often, before I do it in a solemn ordinance."* But many of the Baptists, it seems, "feeling the need, propriety, and usefulness of some such rite" as infant baptism, "have invented one of THEIR OWN, which nearly resembles it, excepting in the ceremonial part." Indeed! This, to me, I confess, is a new discovery. Let us consider, however, what that ceremony is, which we have had the honour of inventing, and which is emphatically called OUR OWN. It is, if I understand to what he refers, as follows: Being sometimes requested by the parents of a new-born child, to unite with them in addressing the Father of all mercies, we comply. On which occasion, we frequently read some portion of scripture; give a word of exhortation to the parents, respecting the education of their child; return thanks to the Giver of all good, for the recent blessings bestowed on the family; and recommend the infant to God by earnest prayer. This is all, to the best of my knowledge, which the generality of us either practise or approve on such an occasion. And now, reader, what is there in all this of a positive rite? What is there in the whole procedure that is not of a moral nature, or that would not have suited the character of a pious Jew,

* Duty and Doct. of Bap. p. 21.

before the incarnation? What is there, then, in all this that we have *invented*, or can justly be called *our own*?—This author notwithstanding insists, that it bears a great resemblance to infant baptism, “excepting in the *ceremonial* part.” But is not that an *essential* difference? We do not object against the conduct of our Pædo-baptist Brethren, because they pray with the parents; because they exhort them to a diligent performance of parental duty; nor yet, because they give up the child to God in solemn supplication, and solicit the best of blessings on its behalf; but because they perform an action upon it which is manifestly CEREMONIAL, and claim the highest authority for so doing. When, therefore, Dr. Addington represents us as performing a rite that nearly resembles infant baptism, “except in the *ceremonial* part,” it is only saying, that the two rites (if our mode of proceeding must be called a rite) nearly agree, excepting THE DIFFERENCE there is between them.

If, however, there be any Baptist ministers who take infants in their arms, give them names, pronounce a blessing upon them, and call this *dedicating* children to God; we despise their conduct as a paltry substitute for infant sprinkling, and leave them to the severest censure of our opposers: because we are of opinion, with Dr. Owen, that “all the men in the world cannot really consecrate or dedicate any thing [or person] to God, but by virtue of divine appointment;”^{*} and we are confident there never was an appointment of this nature.

§ 5.—John iii. 5. “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

Mr. Charnock.—“All the difficulty lies in that expression *of water*. Some, as the Papists, understand it of the elementary water of baptism; and from this place exclude all children, dying without baptism, from salva-

* On Heb. vol. iii. p. 125.

tion. . . . It is strange, when all agree that the birth here spoken of is spiritual and metaphorical, that the water here should be natural. None could be saved unless baptized, if this were meant of baptism. As, if these words, 'Except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you,' were meant of the supper, none could be saved unless they did partake of it. . . . Baptism was not then instituted, as a standing sacrament in the Christian church. The institution of it we find not till after Christ's resurrection, (Matt. xxviii. 19;) and it is not likely Christ would discourse to Nicodemus of the necessity of an institution that was not yet expressly appointed by him, and which he did not appoint till after his resurrection: for he discourseth of that which is of present necessity. . . . It is strange that our Saviour should speak to Nicodemus of the necessity of baptism, before he had informed him of the mysteries of the gospel, whereof it is a seal. To speak of a seal, before he speaks of that which is sealed by it, is not congruous. For the sacraments being founded upon the doctrine on which they depend, to begin by a sacrament the instruction of a man, is to begin a building by the tiles and rafters before you lay a foundation; and against the order expressed by our Saviour to the apostles, which puts teaching before baptizing, and was always practised in the primitive times, and is to this day, in all Christian churches, to the adult and grown up. . . . Those that understand it of the baptismal water, and so make that of absolute necessity, do by another assertion, accuse their own exposition of falsity: for they say, that the baptism of blood supplies the want of water—which cannot be, if the baptism of water were to be understood in this place, and so absolutely necessary. It is *water* that is expressed, and blood is not water. A martyr, dying unbaptized, must be damned, and cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven, if this place be meant of the water of baptism. It may

also be observed, that Christ, in the progress of his discourse, makes no more mention of *water*, but of the *Spirit* ('that which is born of the Spirit, is spirit;') not born of *water* and the Spirit, which had been very necessary, if water had been of an equal necessity with the Spirit to the new birth. And since Christ mentions it positively, that 'he that is born of the Spirit, is spirit;' will it be said, That if any be born of the *Spirit*, without water, he is still but *flesh*? Water, then, is to be taken mystically. . . . By water and the Spirit, are signified one and the same thing; the similitude of water showing the cleansing and regenerating virtue of the Spirit." Works, vol. ii. p. 3, 4, edit. 2nd.

2. Witsius.—“Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.’ —By *water*, the Holy Spirit, with his operations, seems to be understood. . . . The common interpretation is to be preferred; which is, that by water and the Spirit one and the same thing is meant. . . . For nothing is more common in the sacred scriptures, than for the Holy Spirit to be represented under the emblem of water. See, among other passages, Isa. xlv. 3.” Œcon. Fœd. l. iii. c. vi. § 24.

3.—Chamierus.—“Roman Catholics insist, that all theological writers have hitherto understood this passage as relating to baptism. Granted; even as they all understood that *bread*, so often mentioned in the sixth of John, as pertaining to the Lord’s supper; which, nevertheless, we consider in a different light.” Panstrat. tom. iv. l. v. c. ix. § 28, 29.

4. Heideggerus.—“By the term *water*, our Lord here does not intend baptism, because that is not the cause of regeneration;—because it is not impossible that a person may be regenerated and enter the kingdom of God without baptism; and, because, at the time when Christ spake these words, a teacher of Israel, such a one as Nicodemus was, might easily be ignorant

of it without such a fault as Christ reproves in 'Nicodemus.'" Corpus Theolog. loc. xxi. § 65. — Vid. loc. xxv. § 65. Gomarum, Opera, p. 261, 262. Turrett. Institut. loc. xix. quæst. xiii. § 19.

REFLECTIONS.

Reflect. I. By these quotations, to which a great number of others might have been added, we learn that baptism is not intended by the term *water*; because, the birth concerning which our Lord speaks is of a spiritual nature, and therefore the word *water* must not be understood in a literal sense, No. 1;—because, were baptism here designed, none could be saved without it, any more than without the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit, No. 1, 4;—because baptism is not the cause of regeneration, No. 4;—because it is not to be supposed, that our Lord would speak to Nicodemus about baptism, before he was taught the mysteries of the gospel, No. 1;—because those who understand the term *water* in a literal sense, are obliged in certain cases to depart from that interpretation, *Ibid.*;—because Christ, in the following verses, mentions being born of the Spirit, without saying any more of water, *Ibid.*;—because, had baptism been designed, there is no reason to suppose our Lord would have reproved Nicodemus as he did for his ignorance of it, No. 4;—and, therefore, the term *water* must be understood in a mystical sense, as expressing the sanctifying agency of the Holy Spirit in regeneration, No. 1, 2.—Such is the opinion of these learned authors concerning this remarkable text.

Reflect. II. Though it appears, by quotations from Pædobaptists,* that a false interpretation of this passage had much the same influence on the conduct of many, in the latter part of the third century, and in following ages, with regard to infant baptism, as a similar misunderstanding of another text had in respect of infant

* Chap. III. and V. of this Part.

communion;* and though the Roman Catholics, the Lutherans, and the church of England † avow that sense of the text which is here opposed, yet this opposition being grounded on such reasons as appear conclusive, I need not here enlarge; especially, as I have touched upon it already. ‡—It may not be amiss to observe, however, that a mistake about the meaning of these words produced the opinion of baptism being necessary to salvation; which false notion proved the fruitful parent of several strange practices, in both ancient and modern times. What, for instance, but this mistake, or something similar, could have induced any to baptize the *dead*? a practice which was forbidden by the third Council of Carthage, in the conclusion of the fourth century; § which council, in the same canon, also forbade the administration of the holy supper to any defunct. What else was the reason of *midwives* being warranted, by ecclesiastical authority, to baptize infants as soon as ever they emerged into light, if a speedy dissolution threatened? Concerning which Deylingius, a learned modern Lutheran, says; “In case of necessity, lay-men, yea, and women, rightly appointed for the business, midwives, and mothers themselves, may baptize.” ||—Nay, Mr. Bingham tells us, that “the Lutherans in all nations allow of the baptism of lay-persons, men

* John vi. 53.

† Office for Public Baptism of Infants.

‡ Chap. III. of this Part, Reflect. II.

§ Caranzæ Summa Concil. p. 92, 93. So the superstitious Jews, as J. G. Carpozovius informs us, “not only circumcised living infants, but if any one died uncircumcised before the eighth day, he was circumcised in the cemetery, over the grave, that the reproach of the præputium might be taken from him.—They also gave him a name, that when he should be restored to life, together with other Jews, in the resurrection of the dead, and every one should acknowledge his father, his mother, and his family, this infant also might be acknowledged by the parents under his name.” *Apparat. Hist. Crit. Antiq. Sac. Annotat.* p. 609.

|| *De Pastoral. Prud. pars. iii. chap. iii. § 4.* Vid. *Buddei Theol. Dogmat. I. v. c. i. § 4.*

and women, in cases of absolute necessity." He adds, "We have heard before, out of Hottinger, that the German divines of Tubing, who were Luther's disciples, and of the Augsburg confession, agreed perfectly upon this head with the Greek church. — Another eminent branch of the Reformation are the Helvetic churches, the followers of Zuinglius, whose doctrine upon this point differs but little from the Lutherans. The opinion of Zuinglius himself was altogether the same."*—In the church of England, also, for a course of time after the Reformation, it was customary with the bishops to license midwives for their office, and to authorize them, under an oath, to baptize in cases of necessity. † Though that practice is now laid aside, yet what but an unwarrantable dependence on the baptismal rite occasions a kind of *half* baptism to be so frequently practised in the church of England? The last of these particulars has been severely censured by some Pædobaptists themselves. Dr. Wishart, for example, when animadverting upon it, says; "Is a new-born child weak? Does mercy (ever to be preferred to sacrifice) forbid bringing it to the public? Why, then a minister must be got in all haste to perform a certain ceremony upon it, which they call *christening* it: what it means, they know not; but the thing must be done, not for the instruction of the parents, but to save the infant from hell! and what a cruel man must he be, who will grudge his travel for such a purpose, when a few words of his mouth and motions of his hands will do the business? Strange, that ever men, under the advantages of the light of the gospel, should have sunk into such notions of God and religion!" ‡—Mr. Bradbury thus: "I think there is a practice which pays too great a compliment to this scandalous notion [of baptism being necessary to sal-

* Works, vol. ii. p. 563, 564, 565.

† Mr. Neal's Hist. of the Puritans, vol. ii. p. 12, 13.

‡ Essay on the Necess. of a Good Life, p. 99, 100.

vation,] and that is, hurrying on the baptism of a child because it is sick; for which I can see no show of argument. . . . I rather think, a dying creature, one, of whose recovery we have no hopes, cannot be the object of baptism. That ordinance was never designed to be used among Protestants, as extreme unction is among the Papists.* To the foregoing authors I will add Mr. Peronet, who has expressed himself in the following sarcastical manner:—

“ A child is born—’tis born to die:
Make haste—perhaps its end is nigh:
Here comes the curate—well!
The hov’ring gossips round him stand;
When with his high-commissioned hand,
He saves *one half* from hell.” †

§ 6.—Acts ii. 39. “The promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call.”

Dr. Owen.—“This promise of the Spirit, is sometimes called the promise of the covenant, (Acts ii. 39,) ‘The promise is to you;’ which promise is that which Christ receiveth from his Father, verse the thirty-third; even the promise of the Holy Ghost.” Doct. of Saints’ Perseverance, 116.

2. Witsius.—“‘And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,’ (Joel ii. 28.) Concerning which promise Peter speaks, Acts ii. 39, ‘For the promise is unto you, and to your children.’” Exercitat. in Symb. exercit. xi. § 19.

3. Mr. Gataker.—“To the obtaining the promise as well repentance, as partaking of baptism, at least in this place, is exacted; so that, hence the promise of remission of sin cannot be proved to be made to infants when they are entered by baptism, unless also they repent.” In Mr. Tombes’s Antipædobap. part iii. p. 17.

* Duty and Doct. of Bap. p. 20.

† The Mitre, canto iv. p. 218.

4. Dr. Doddridge.—“ Considering that the gift of the Spirit had been mentioned just before, it seems most natural to interpret this, as a reference to that passage in Joel, which had been so largely cited above, (verse 17, *et seq.*) where God promises the effusion of the Spirit on his sons and daughters: and, accordingly, I have paraphrased the latter clause of this verse, as referring to its extraordinary gifts; and the rather, as the sanctifying influences of the Spirit must already have been received, to prepare them for entering into the church by baptism.” Note on the place.

5. Dr. Hammond.—“ If any have made use of that very unconcludent argument, [Acts ii. 39,] I have nothing to say in defence of them. I think that the practice is founded on a better basis than so; and that the word children there, is really the posterity of the Jews, and not peculiarly their infant children.” Works, vol. i. p. 490.

6. Dr. Whitby.—“ These words will not prove a right of infants to receive baptism. The promise here being that only of the Holy Ghost, mentioned verses 16, 17, 18; and so relating only to the times of the miraculous effusion of the Holy Ghost, and to those persons who by age were made capable of these extraordinary gifts.” Annotation on the place.

7. Limborch.—“ By *τεκνα*, the apostle understands, not infants, but children, or posterity; in which signification the word *τεκνα* occurs in many places of the New Testament: see, among others, John viii. 39. And here Peter also comprehends in that expression their unborn posterity. . . . Whence it appears, that the argument which is very commonly taken from this passage for the baptism of infants, is of no force, and good for nothing; because it entirely departs from the design of Peter. It is necessary, therefore, that Pædobaptism should be supported by other arguments.” Comment. in loc.

8. Venema.—“‘The promise is unto you and to your children.’ The common opinion of interpreters is, that children destitute of reason are here intended; and hence it is inferred, that the promises of grace are equally made to them, as to their parents, seeing the covenant of God is said to be made with Abraham and his seed. If this interpretation be true, no doubt can remain concerning the infants of believers being in a relative state of grace; but I fear that, more accurately examined, it cannot be defended. For the *promise* manifestly pertains, not to the blessings of grace and salvation, but to the extraordinary gift of the Holy Spirit, just before poured out upon the apostles, which is mentioned verse the thirty-eighth, and to which infants have no special right. Nor is there any doubt but the apostle had in his eye the second chapter of Joel; both because he had just cited that prophecy, verse the seventeenth, and because he takes the last words of our text from Joel ii. 32. *Sons*, therefore, as in Joel, are here the citizens of Jerusalem; *young men*, such as the apostles themselves were, and as many as should believe in Christ. ‘To you,’ he says, ‘and to your sons;’ to the old and the young, to parents and children, to Jerusalem and its inhabitants, is made the promise of pouring out the Spirit, wherefore it is your special privilege to receive Christ, and to be planted in him by baptism; that so you may be rendered actual partakers of the promise, which is not to be obtained without that condition. Interpreters, perhaps, might not have been averse to this view of the text, if they had clearly seen that the words of Peter are taken entirely from the prophecy of Joel.” Dissertat. Sac. l. iii. c. iv. § 7, 8.

REFLECTIONS.

Reflect. I. We are taught by these quotations That the promise intended is the Holy Spirit, or his

extraordinary gifts, No. 1, 2, 4, 6, 8;—that the term children, signifies posterity, No. 5, 7, 8;—that repentance, and a reception of Christ, are necessary to an enjoyment of the blessings promised, No. 3, 8;—and that the argument formed on this passage in defence of infant baptism, is very inconclusive, of no force, and good for nothing, No. 5, 6, 7.—Such is the doctrine of eminent Pædobaptists relating to this text, which is frequently produced against us with an air of confidence.

Reflect. II. But supposing it were proved, in opposition to these learned authors, that the word *children* is here to be understood of infants, and that the term *promise* refers to remission of sins, in the preceding verse, our Brethren would be far from gaining their point; because, unhappily for infant baptism, there is nothing said about the promise respecting any besides those that were then awakened, and such as “the Lord our God shall CALL.” Yes, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, whether they be parents or children, they must be *called*, before this text will permit us to view them as interested in that promise of which he speaks; which entirely excludes infants from all consideration here.—Besides, our opposers themselves are obliged to consider the fulfilment of this promise, let the blessings included in it be what they may, as very much limited. For, either they view the gracious declaration as absolute, or as conditional. If the former, and if it refer to pardon, peace, and life eternal, there can be no such character as a finally impenitent person, whose parents were truly pious. This, however, few of our Brethren will dare to assert. Mr. Maurice indeed seems to have been of that opinion:* and Dr. Ad-dington also has an assertion which is very much like it; for, speaking of this text, he says, “Herein pardon, grace, and glory, are promised to such as repent and return unto the Lord. . . . This he [Peter] calls, by way

* Social Religion, dialogue viii.

of eminence, *The promise*; partly on account of the superior value of the blessings engaged for in it, and partly because it secures the continued succession of them to the people of God and their seed to the end of time.”* Candour compels me to suppose, that Dr. Addington did not well consider the necessary consequences of these positions, or he would never have penned them. For if those ineffable blessings, pardon, grace, and glory, be not only promised to the people of God, but SECURED to *their seed* also, to the *end* of time; how should the immediate offspring of any believer—nay, how should any of his descendants, in the remotest generations, fall short of eternal blessedness? Because, on the same ground that the immediate posterity of a pious parent are assured of converting grace, of pardoning mercy, and of heavenly happiness, are their immediate offspring equally assured of the same blessings; and so on till the whole of that lineal succession cease. According to which, all the Jews, as descending from Abraham, and all the post-diluvian world, as descending from Noah, would be secured of immortal felicity. Though I am far from imputing a sentiment so erroneous to the worthy author, yet his unguarded assertion reminds me of what the Talmudists have said, concerning the final safety of all the seed of Abraham. They tell us, “That Abraham sits at the gates of hell, and does not permit any unrighteous Israelite to enter the infernal regions.”†—Mr. Baxter, when animadverting on a position similar to those of Dr. Addington, says: “If this doctrine of yours stand, (that this be the promise to all the faithful for their seed, to give them *cor novum*,) then all the seed of the faithful are certainly saved, whether they die in infancy or not. But that is certainly untrue.”‡—If the

* Christian Minister's Reasons, p. 120.

† Apud Lampium, Comment. in Evang. Joan. ad cap. viii. 33.

‡ Plain Scrip. Proof, p. 362.

promise before us be *conditional*, it must be limited to persons of a certain character; and if limited, by what? The secret intention of God? but that can be no rule for the administration of baptism. By the text itself? then it must be by those expressions, "As many as the Lord our God shall CALL." For these words are as plainly as possible a limiting clause, and extend a restrictive force to the term *children*, as much as to the pronoun *you*, or to that descriptive language, "all that are afar off." Consequently, the promise is limited to such as are called by the Lord our God; but whether infants be of that number the reader will be at no loss to determine.—Besides, if the gracious intention of this promise be not thus limited, the passage will prove more than many of our opposers wish to establish. For as it would be absurd to confine the term children to the infants of Peter's alarmed hearers, such of their offspring as were capable of religious instruction, whether converted or not, must be considered as having had an equal title to baptism with their infants; because, on this view of the text, the promise was to their *children* without exception.

Some of our learned opposers, indeed, contend for this indefinite sense of the term *children*. Thus, for example, Vossius: "To you and to your children was the promise made. Now mention is made of children simply, without difference of age."*——Heideggerus: "The promise was made to their children indefinitely, without difference of age."†——Witsius: "Mention is made of children simply, without difference of age."‡ Consequently all the children of the apostle's awakened auditors, whether infants or adults, were, without exception, to be baptized. But did these respectable authors imagine that such as were grown up, be their parents

* Disputat. de Bap. disp. xiii. § 6.

† Corp. Theol. loc. xxv. § 55.

‡ Œcon. l. iv. c. xvi. § 43.

whoever they might, were entitled to baptism previous to instruction, and without a profession of repentance? I can hardly suppose it; yet this is the unavoidable consequence of their assertions.

Some of our opponents, I know, represent the distinct mention of children in this passage as a trifling affair, if understood according to our interpretation, and that of learned Pædobaptists already produced; because the promise thus considered, exhibits no spiritual blessings for the offspring of Peter's awakened hearers, in preference to the children of others. Our Brethren, however, seem to forget, that the mentioning of children, on this important occasion, was peculiarly proper to remove those painful fears which it is highly probable, some of the auditors then had respecting their offspring, on whom the blood of Immanuel had been solemnly imprecated but a little while before. Was it then a small thing to be informed by the oracle of heaven, that there was forgiveness with God for their own damnable crimes; and that the gift of the Spirit should not be withheld from their children, notwithstanding the enormous load of imprecated guilt under which they lay, whenever they should feel their want, and be willing to accept salvation as a blessing of divine grace? Or would our opposers have the offspring of repenting sinners fitted for baptism and future felicity, by other means than Providence employs for the happiness of children whose parents are impenitent and ungodly? *Those*, when infants, to be entitled to baptism, and, if they leave the world in their infancy, to eternal bliss, in virtue of parental piety; while *these*, except they arrive at years of discretion, and give evidence of regenerating grace, are to be treated as outcasts, both here and hereafter? The Talmud—a book to which our Brethren often refer us for information, respecting the proper subjects of baptism,—the Talmud assures us, “That all the Israelites are the sons of

kings ;”* but the compilers of that huge farrago consider the Gentiles in a very different point of light. Must we, then, or does the Almighty, make a similar distinction between the offspring of godly parents and the children of impenitent sinners? The scripture is far from asserting any such thing. That heavenly volume gives us abundant warrant, I think, to conclude, that as all are equally *the children of wrath by nature*, from whomsoever descended, so they must all be interested in spiritual blessings, and entitled to baptism, on the same grounds, or have no share in the one or the other.

§ 7.—Acts xvi. 15, 33. “When she was baptized, and her household. —And was baptized, he and all his, straightway. . . . I Cor. i. 16. I baptized also the household of Stephanas.”

Dr. Whitby.—“And when she [Lydia] and those of her household were instructed in the Christian faith, and in the nature of baptism required by it, she was baptized, and her household.” Paraphrase on the place.

2. Calvin.—“Luke commends the pious zeal of the jailor, because he dedicated his whole house to the Lord; in which also the grace of God illustriously appeared, because it suddenly brought the whole family to a pious consent.” Comment. in loc.

3. Mr. Henry.—“‘He rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house.’ There was none in his [the jailor’s] house that refused to be baptized, and so made a jar in the harmony; but they were unanimous in embracing the gospel, which added much to the joy.” Exposition on Acts xvi. 34.

4. Dr. Hammond.—“I think it unreasonable that the apostle’s bare mention of baptizing his household [that of Stephanas] should be thought competent to conclude that infants were baptized by him, when it is uncertain whether there were any such at all in his house.” Works, vol. i. p. 494.

* Apud Lampium, ut supra.

5. Bp. Patrick.—“ If there were any infants in this person’s [the jailor’s] family, it is certain they were baptized; for ‘ he was baptized, he, and all his.’ It is doubtful, indeed, whether there were any or not.” Discourse of the Lord’s Supper, p. 447.

6. Dr. Doddridge.—“ Ye know the household of Stephanas, and as they have set themselves to ministering to the saints’ . . . *They have set themselves:* This seems to imply, that it was the generous care of the whole family to assist their fellow Christians; so that there was not a member of it which did not do its part.” Version of 1 Cor. xvi. 15, and Note on the place.

7. Limborch.—“ Whether any infants were in her house [Lydia’s] is uncertain. An undoubted argument, therefore, cannot be drawn from this instance, by which it may be demonstrated that infants were baptized by the apostles. It might be, that all in her house were of a mature age; who, as in the exercise of a mature understanding they believed, so they were able also to make a public profession of that faith when they received baptism. As I neither will nor can deny that there were infants in that house, so likewise I cannot affirm the contrary. . . . It may be urged, [in favour of infant baptism,] That we read of whole families being baptized, wherein doubtless there were some children. Answ. As for my part, I will readily grant that there might be children in those families; yet the Holy Spirit furnishes me with no solid argument, whereby I can demonstrate it evidently against others, who shall deny or question the truth of it; since it does not expressly say there were any children in them. And though this should be granted, yet we are not informed that they were baptized together with their parents: on the contrary, all those who were baptized are said to *give thanks to God*, which children could never do. So that, at the most, this argument amounts to no more than a bare probability.”

Comment. in loc. System of Div. b. v. chap. xxii. sect. ii.

REFLECTIONS.

Reflect. I. These Pædobaptists inform us, that it is uncertain whether there were any infants in the households here mentioned, No. 4, 5, 7;—that if there were, it affords no solid ground to conclude upon their being baptized, No. 7;—that the household of Lydia was instructed in the Christian faith, No. 1;—that the whole family of the jailor were brought to a pious consent, and were unanimous in embracing the gospel, No. 2, 3;—that all the members in the family of Stephanas, were active in promoting the good of their brethren, No. 6;—that the argument from these passages only affords a bare probability in favour of infant baptism, No. 7;—and that it is unreasonable to conclude the apostles baptized infants, merely because the ordinance was administered to households, No. 4.

Let us now consult our impartial Friends, with reference to these families; by which it will soon appear that they are decidedly in our favour.

Thomas Lawson.—“It is written, that whole families believed, (John iv. 53.) Must it be inferred hence, that children not grown up to years of discretion believed? Families may be without children: they may be grown up; or they might be newly married families; or their children might be dead. So it is a wild inference to ground infant baptism upon, saith Optatus.” *Baptismalogia*, p. 92.

Samuel Fothergill.—“If any proof, or plain declaration, could be produced in support of sprinkling infants, it would have been long ere now produced by those who have continued the practice of that ceremony. The present advocates for it would not be reduced to the necessity of presumptive arguments and uncertain consequences; such as the supposition that there were

children in the household of Lydia, the jailor of Philippi, and Stephanas." Remarks on an Address to Quakers, p. 6.

Joseph Phipps.—“ For want of real instances [of infant baptism] mere suppositions are offered in support of it. Because it is said, in the case of Lydia, that ‘ she was baptized and her household;’ and by the apostle, ‘ I baptized also the household of Stephanas;’ it is supposed that there might be infants, or little children, in those households; from whence it is inferred such were baptized.” Dissertat. on Bap. and Communion, p. 30.

Reflect. II. Here we have three passages of sacred writ, that are usually pleaded by our opposers; in which, though baptism is mentioned, yet neither the word infants, nor the term children occurs: and that Dr. Hammond was not precipitate, in pronouncing it *unreasonable* to infer the baptism of infants, from the baptizing of a household, may, perhaps, more fully appear, if the following things be duly considered.

No substantial argument can be formed against us on this ground, nor any legitimate conclusion drawn to authenticate infant baptism, till it is proved, either that it would be absurd to understand the term household, so as to exclude the idea of infants; or that, in the sacred style, when any thing is described as performed by or done to a household, every individual belonging to such family must be considered as interested in the transaction. But neither of these can be evinced. Not the former; for it is notorious, that many households consist only of the master, the mistress, and the servants; and it is equally evident, that there are multitudes of large families in which there are children, but no infants. Nay, it may admit of a query, whether, in this metropolis, a majority of households have any mere infants in them. Nor is the baptizing of whole families without example among the modern Baptists; yet our opponents will not

thence infer, that they baptize infants, or approve of the practice. How vague, then, how futile must every argument in favour of infant baptism be, which rests on the term *household*, as used in these passages!—Not the latter; for were it proved, incontestably proved, that infants made a part of the families here mentioned, it would not unavoidably follow, as Limborch has well observed, that those infants were baptized: because, it is not uncommon for the sacred writers to assert this or the other concerning a household, without any express limitation, which is manifestly meant of only the greater part; and, in other places, the same form of speaking is used, where none but adults can be intended. A few examples may here suffice. Thus it is written, *ALL THE HOUSE of Joseph, and his brethren, and his father's house, went up to bury Jacob; only their little ones—they left in the land of Goshen:—Elkanah, and ALL HIS HOUSE, went up to offer unto the Lord the yearly sacrifice*; yet we are told in the following verse that Hannah, and the child Samuel, *went not up*. So, in the New Testament, the word *house*, or *household*, is repeatedly used in such a manner as to exclude infants. Thus, for instance, we are informed, that *a man's foes shall be they of his own HOUSEHOLD*; that a nobleman at Capernaum *believed, and his WHOLE HOUSE*; that Cornelius *feared God with ALL HIS HOUSE*; that *unruly talkers subvert WHOLE HOUSES*; that Paul and his companion *spake the word of the Lord to this Philippian jailor, and to ALL that were in his house*; that *he rejoiced, believing in God with ALL HIS HOUSE*; that *Crispus believed in the Lord, with ALL HIS HOUSE*; and that *the house of Stephanas ADDICTED THEMSELVES to the ministry of the saints*:* in all which examples infants must be excepted.—As to the case of Lydia, there is no intimation that she was a married woman, but rather the contrary, for the expression is, *HER household*. But, supposing her to

* Gen. i. 7, 8; 1 Sam. i. 21; Matt. x. 36; John iv. 53; Acts x. 2; Tit. i. 10, 11; Acts xvi. 32, 34, and xviii. 8; 1 Cor. xvi. 15.

have had a husband; as Philippi, where she was merchandizing, does not seem to have been the place of her stated residence, but Thyatira,* it is the more unlikely, if she had any children, that infants made a part of her household at the time to which the text refers.

Respecting the Philippian jailor, Mr. Horsey says, "He believed, or embraced Christianity, (and the Greek word *πεπιστευκως*, being *singular*, limits, I think, the believing to *him personally*,) upon which, not only he, but *all his* were straightway baptized." † But is not the original term, *εβαπτισθη*, there used in the singular also? By his own rule, therefore, as none besides the jailor believed, so none but he was baptized. Thus happily does his criticism confute his argument.—*The whole family were baptized*, because the jailor himself believed. But might not Mr. Horsey as well conclude, that each member of that household was finally *saved*, on the ground of his faith? For the inspired teachers addressed him in the following language: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, **AND THY HOUSE.**" Nor need this worthy author be told, that *πιστευσον* is in the *singular*, as well as *πεπιστευκως*; so that the eternal happiness of all the family is as much connected with his believing, as their baptism is. This consequence, I take it for granted, Mr. Horsey does not approve.—No; for, as Dr. Doddridge says, "The meaning cannot be, that the eternal salvation of his family could be secured by his faith, but that his believing in Christ would be the best security of his family from present danger; and that if they also *themselves believed*, they would be entitled to the same spiritual and everlasting blessings with himself: which Paul might the rather add, as it is probable that many of them, under this terrible alarm, might have attended the master of the family into the dungeon." ‡ Besides, Mr. Horsey's argument, if it

* Wolfii Curæ, ad Act. xvi. 14.

† Inf. Bap. Stated and

Defended, p. 14.

‡ Note on Acts xvi. 31.

prove any thing, proves too much: for it infers, that the jailor's wife, if he had one, and his domestics, were all baptized on the ground of his faith; a consequence this which our author, I presume, does not approve.

Some, without the least shadow of reason, that I perceive, to support their hypothesis by what is recorded concerning the jailor, would render the adverb *πανοικι*, not WITH, but OVER *all his house*. This acceptance of the word, however, is not countenanced by any lexicographer, nor any translator, that I have observed. Mr. Parkhurst, for example, explains it thus: “*Πανοικι*, from *πας*, *all*, and *οικος*, *a house*; q. d. *συν παντι οικω*, *with all one's house, or family*, (Acts xvi. 34.) Josephus, as remarked by Wetstein, uses this word, *Antiq. lib. iv. cap. iv. § 4*, ‘*Ὅστε αὐτοὺς πανοικι σιτεισθαι ἐν τῇ ἱερᾷ πόλει*, *So that they, WITH ALL THEIR FAMILIES, might eat it in the holy city.*” Thus also the Septuagint: “Now these are the names of the children of Israel which came into Egypt, every man, *πανοικι*, WITH HIS HOUSEHOLD, came with Jacob.”*

Reflect. III. As the argument here manifestly turns on the term *household*, if it have any force, it will prove too much for the generality of our opposers; because we may, with equal propriety, reason thus. The apostolic example must be followed. By this example we are informed, that the master of a family professing faith, his *entire household* was baptized along with him. But his adult offspring, and his domestics, whether converted or not, were part of the household, and consequently were baptized. When, therefore, the master of a family professes faith, and is baptized, his children at years of discretion, and servants also, are

* Exod. i. 1. “*Πανοικος*, ut *πανοικος απολλυται*, cum tota domo seu familia perit.” Pasor. (Schoettgenii edit.) “*Πανοικι αναρεισθαι* dicuntur qui funditus pereunt, veluti quum pestilentia nullum in familiâ reliquum facit.” Lex. Græco-Lat. fol. Basil. 1568. Vid. Poli Synopsin, ad Act. xvi. 34.

entitled to baptism, whether they be converted or not.— Thus Mr. Blake seems to have understood the apostolic precedents; for he speaks in the following manner. “ We have examples, not to be contemned, of the baptizing whole households; and whether infants were there or not, as it is not certain, though probable, so it is not material. The precedent is, *a household*. He that followeth the precedent must baptize households. It appears not, that any *wife* was there; yet he that followeth the precedent must baptize wives; and so I may say *servants*, if they be of the household.”*— The following words of Mr. Horsey involve the same consequence: “ To baptize households or families, the parent, or head of it, being a Christian, is an exact and literal imitation of the conduct of men divinely inspired.”†— The same opinion is explicitly avowed by Wolfius,‡ and by many other Lutherans.— Nay, Mr. Cotton intimates, “ that in God’s account, and in scripture phrase, parents themselves are not reputed to be baptized, if their children remain unbaptized.”§ If, therefore, our opposers would be true to their argument, by acting consistently with it, they must, when called to baptize the master of a family, administer the same ordinance to his wife, his children, and his domestics, without exception, if not baptized before, whether they profess repentance towards God and faith in Christ, or not. For the example, as Mr. Blake observes, is a *household*; on that very word their own argument rests; and these characters constitute the bulk of such a society. Thus also they will be more consistent with themselves, in regard to their argument from circumcision, and more conformable to the precedent set them by Abraham, in reference to that affair.

* In Mr. Tombes’s Examen, p. 141.

† Inf. Bap. Stated and Defended, p. 15.

‡ Vid. Curas, in 1 Cor. i. 16.

§ In Mr. Tombes’s Antipædobaptism, part ii. p. 156.

This, however, our Brethren do not approve. For though the law of baptism be but one, and though the qualifications expressly required by it are the same in every proper subject, yet, strange as it may appear, the baptizing of households must, at all events, be considered as including infants, that cannot believe; and as excluding all the rest of the family, if they do not believe. You must know, then, that the term *household*, in this connection, is of a singular nature; for it often treats with a distant reserve, and with generous complaisance, the different members of the same family. Are you, for instance, inclined to oppose Mr. Blake, who argues from it in favour of his hypothesis? you may easily show, that when the master of a family is baptized on a profession of faith, the word *household* must not be understood as extending to either his wife, his adult offspring, or any of his domestics, except they believe. Have you a mind to confute the Baptists, who dwell so much on a profession of faith as necessary to baptism? this identical word will open its friendly bosom to embrace infants, and secure their title to that institution, though incapable of repentance and faith: for, Janus-like, it has two faces respecting the same family, and will turn the one or the other towards its different objects just as your case demands.—Our Brethren seem to forget, that the ordinance about which we contend is a positive institution; and that the only rule of its administration is divine law, or apostolic example, and not dubious conjecture, which is the utmost that can be supposed here; for none, whom I have observed, pretend a certainty that there were infants in any of these baptized families. There is too much reason therefore to suspect, that the love of hypothesis, and the want of solid argument, excite many of our opposers to produce the passages before us with such an air of confidence as they often do.

§ 8.—Rom. xi. 16. “For if the first-fruit be holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches.”

Toletus and Menochius.—“Paul here denominates the first Jews that were converted to the faith, namely, the apostles and disciples of our Lord, *first-fruits*; and he calls the first patriarchs, *the root*.” Apud Poli Synopsis, in loc.

2. Venema.—“The word *holy*, as here used, signifies the dedication of a thing, or of a person, sacred to God. Now, seeing the Jews that believed, in the time of Paul, fitly answer to the first patriarchs, especially Abraham, he considers them as a happy token and example, whence he might lawfully hope for the future conversion of that people; and that the mass and the branches, laid aside for the same use, should be gathered together, and in their own time become holy, like the first-fruits and root, and be afresh implanted in their own olive-tree.” Comment. ad Malach. iii. 23, 24, [Eng. Ver. iv. 5, 6,] p. 565.

3. Dr. Doddridge.—“‘For if the first-fruits be holy, so is the lump.’ The consecration of them was looked upon as in effect the consecration of all. And so would I look upon the conversion of some few of the Jewish nation, as an earnest of the conversion of all the rest: and so much the rather, when I consider how eminently dear to God those pious patriarchs were from whom they have descended; for ‘if the root be holy, the branches are likewise so,’ and will surely at length be regarded as such.” Paraphrase on the place.

4. Mr. Leigh.—“By the name of *root*, in that nation of the Jews, he doth not understand the next parents, who peradventure were profane and ungodly, but those first parents of that people, viz. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to whom the promise was made and the covenant confirmed.” Body of Div. b. viii. chap. viii. p. 673.

5. Gerhardus.—“By the *first-fruits* and *root*, Paul

understands the holy patriarchs ; by the *mass*, or lump, their posterity." Loci Theolog. tom. iv. de Bap. § 216. Vid. Vitringæ Comment. in Jesa. vi. 13.

REFLECTION.

Here it may be observed, that baptism is not the subject of Paul's discourse ; it is not mentioned in the whole chapter ; nor, for any thing that appears, was it so much as thought of by the apostle—much less infant baptism. But the word *holy* is mentioned. True : yet, according to these authors, and agreeably to the scope of the place, it is in reference to the ancient patriarchs, especially Abraham ; in reference to those converted Jews that were the first-fruits of a Christian ministry ; and in reference to the future conversion of Abraham's posterity in the latter day ; so that the passage has no regard to any Christian parent, as a root, nor to his infant offspring, as branches arising from it. Yet in this light some of our Brethren seem to understand the text, as appears by the following instances. " The Christian," says Dr. Addington, " is to his or her family as the root of these branches ; and, upon the principles here laid down, he or she being holy, so are they."*—" This proves that the seed of believers, as such," says Mr. Henry, " are within the pale of the visible church, and within the verge of the covenant, till they do by their unbelief throw themselves out ; for ' if the root be holy, so are the branches.' Though real qualifications be not propagated, yet relative privileges are : though a wise man do not beget a wise man, yet a free man begets a free man : though grace doth not run in the blood, yet external privileges do, till they are forfeited, even to a thousand generations. Look how they will answer it another day, that cut off the entail, by turning the seed of the faithful out of the church, and so not allowing ' the blessing of Abraham to come upon the Gentiles.'

* Christian Minister's Reasons, p. 80.

The Jewish branches are reckoned holy, because the root was so.”*—*Not allow the blessing of Abraham to come upon the Gentiles!* Truly, Mr. Henry, this is very severe! Happily for us, however, though we hear the thunder roar, we are neither much hurt, nor greatly provoked, nor sadly frightened. Not the first; for our cause is yet safe, except it be proved, that every Christian parent is under the same peculiar economy with Abraham—that his children are interested in the same temporal promises and ecclesiastical privileges as those of that illustrious ancient—that the Sinai covenant is yet in force—and that there is equal certainty of a believer’s remote descendants, after a long apostasy, being converted in the latter day, as there is that Abraham’s posterity shall be so. Not the second; for though we do not admire this observation of the celebrated commentator, we highly respect his character, and are unfeignedly thankful to Providence for his excellent exposition. Not the last; for though we heard the terrible explosion, it was at a distance; and we are still capable of reflecting, that the principles on which our expositor here proceeds, are more becoming a member of the ancient synagogue, than a pastor in the Christian church; and more consistent with the creed of a national establishment, than with that of a Protestant Dissenter.†

But if the censure of Mr. Henry be severe, what is that of Mr. Baxter? who, at the end of a long list of dismal charges laid against the Baptists, adds; “Lastly, they do plainly play the devil’s part, in accusing their own children and disputing them out of the church and house of God, and out of his promises and covenant, and the privileges that accompany them; and most ungratefully deny, reject, and plead against the mercies that Christ hath purchased for their children, and made over to them.”‡ Ah! reader, did you ever meet with such a terrible “lastly” as this, from the pen of a Protestant

* Exposition on the place.

† See Sect. 3. Reflect. II.

‡ Plain Scripture Proof, p. 13.

Nonconformist against that of his Dissenting Brethren? It wants only the anathema of a Popish Council to make the censure quite complete, and the prison of the Inquisition, that these abettors of Satan may receive deserved punishment. It is no small comfort, however, that we can say,

— Telumque imbelle sine ictu
Conjecit.

§ 9.—I Cor. vii. 14.—“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.”

Mr. Poole's Continuator.—“The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife.’—I rather think it signifies brought into such a state, that the believer, without offence to the law of God, may continue in a married state with such a yoke-fellow; and the estate of marriage is a holy state, notwithstanding the disparity with reference to religion.” Annotations on the place.

2. Camerarius.—“*The unbelieving husband hath been sanctified*—that is, sanctified in the lawful use of marriage. For without this, the apostle says, the children would be *unclean*; that is, infamous, not being legitimate. Thus they are *holy*; that is, during the marriage, they are free from every spot of ignominy.” In loc.

3. Vatablus.—“‘The unbelieving husband is sanctified.’ That is, the husband, though unclean, shall be accounted pure in reference to matrimonial commerce; otherwise the children would not be legitimate, who nevertheless are legitimate.” In loc.

4. Camero.—“‘Else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.’ This holiness, of which the apostle speaks, is not opposed to that impurity which by nature properly agrees to all, on account of Adam's offence; but to that impurity of which believing wives were apprehensive, from their cohabiting with unbelieving husbands.” In loc.

5. Velthuysius. — “Some think, by that holiness mentioned in 1 Cor. vii. 14, is to be understood such an external holiness as was that of the Israelites, and of the circumcised; which was possessed by an Israelite and a Jew, even though his life made it appear that he was not a true Israelite, ‘whose praise is not of men, but of God.’ Now those who are of this opinion suppose, that there is a kind of external covenant under the gospel; on account of which covenant some are called *holy*, though nothing appears in their lives to prove them real saints. But I see no intimation of this external covenant in the whole gospel; and this opinion is akin to an error of the Papists, who suppose that a congregation may be a true church, though destitute of holiness.” Opera, tom. i. p. 801.

6. Dr. Whitby. — “*By the wife*: because of the wife; i. e. he is to be reputed as sanctified, because he is one flesh with her that is holy. . . . Or we may take these words in the sense of the Greek interpreters; viz. The unbelieving husband hath been sanctified to the believing wife, by his consent to cohabit with her, and to have seed by her.” Annotat. on the place.

7. Justinianus. — “The apostle does not mean that sanctification of a married person, by which he becomes truly righteous and holy; but that by which the use of marriage may be honourably enjoyed.” Apud Chamierum, Panstrat. tom. iv. l. v. c. x. § 47.

8. Salmero. — “The sanctification intended relates to marriage.” Apud Chamierum, *ibid.*

9. Suares and Vasques. — “The children are called *holy*, in a civil sense; that is, legitimate, and not spurious. . . . As if Paul had said, If your marriage were unlawful, your children would be illegitimate: but the former is not a fact, therefore not the latter.”* Ubi supra, § 50.

* Chamier informs us, that Ambrose, Thomas, and Anselm, so understand the passage.

10. Dr. Ames.—“The unbelieving partner is said to be sanctified, not simply, but as to the use of marriage; like as all creatures are sanctified to a believer’s use, (1 Tim. iv. 5.)” Bellarminus Enervatus, tom. iii. p. 68, 69.

11. Dietericus. — “*Hath been sanctified*; that is, legitimated, so that their marriage is lawful. This the apostle proves from the natural effect. For if the unbelieving husband be not sanctified, i. e. legitimated, by the wife; and if the unbelieving wife be not sanctified, or legitimated, by the husband; *your children—are unclean*; that is, they were born of an unlawful marriage; rather, of an illicit commerce. *But now are they holy*: that is, *legitimate*, not bastards, or born of unchastity.” Apud Wolfium, Curæ, in loc.

12. Hackspanius.—“The opinion of Piscator, in his note on this passage, is very agreeable to me. He thinks that ‘the unbelieving husband is said to be sanctified by the believing wife,’ and the unbelieving wife to be ‘sanctified by the believing husband,’ because the use of marriage was granted as holy; that is, it does not injure the conscience of the wife or of the husband; because the wife with a good conscience may cohabit with an unbelieving husband. Thus different kinds of food are said to be *sanctified*, (1 Tim. iv. 5,) which a person may use without hurting his conscience: which parallel passage is here urged, after Austin, by Flacius, and by Ames.” Apud Wolfium, ut supra.

13. Melancthon. — “Paul answers, that the marriages are not to be pulled asunder for their unlike opinions of God, if the impious person do not cast away the other; and for comfort, he adds as a reason, ‘The unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife.’ Of which speech divers interpretations are made; but the true and natural is this, as elsewhere he saith, ‘Meat is sanctified’ for that which is holy in use, that is, granted to believers from God. So here he speaks

the use of marriage to be holy, and to be granted of God. . . . The connection of the argument is this: If the use of marriage should not please God, your children would be bastards, and so *unclean*; but your children are not bastards, therefore the use of marriage pleaseth God. How bastards were unclean in a peculiar manner, the law shows, (Deut. xxiii.) ‘ Let not a bastard enter into the congregation of the Lord, to the tenth generation.’ ” In Mr. Tombes’s Exercitation, p. 11.

14. Wolfius.—“The generality of our Lutheran divines understand the sanctification of the unbelieving partner only in this sense; Paul asserts that a marriage of this kind ought to be esteemed lawful and firm by Christians, though only one of the parties profess the name of Christ.” Curæ, in loc.

15. Vitringa.—“We would have it observed, the apostle does not mean, that all the children of believers and saints are truly partakers of the Holy Spirit, and by him engrafted into the body of the church; for there is no promise of this prerogative made to believing parents; nay, rather, the events of every day teach the contrary. You see parents that love and worship God, and educate their children in the fear of God; you see children in this respect, exceedingly different from their parents, and of contrary dispositions. He who reads the history of the kings of Judah, will meet, as it were, alternately, with a virtuous father, and a wicked son and grandsons; and again, from these an offspring that is acceptable to God. . . . Seeing it is manifest, therefore, that the children of believers are not called holy, because they are all actuated by the Holy Spirit; the generality of our divines recur to an *external holiness*, which has its original from an external covenant. So that the children of believers are holy, because, being separated from the world, they live and are educated in the communion of the external church, and are par-

takers of the symbols of the external church. Like as the Israelites in former times, being chosen out of the other nations of the world, are called a *holy nation*, (Exod. xix. 6,) though a very great part of them were impure; and their children are denominated a *holy seed*, (Ezra ix. 2, compared with Neh. ix. 2.) It is undoubtedly true, that in Israel, according to the flesh, there was an external and typical holiness, arising from an external covenant, which consisted in external precepts, (the scripture calls them *carnal*, because the flesh is the exterior part of man;) and also external promises, which the scripture calls *worse* than the promises of the new covenant; in which external covenant the internal covenant of grace was involved; for so God was pleased to act in the economy of those times. God signified this to Abraham, when he said, that he would *make a covenant*, not only with Abraham, but also *with his seed*, (Gen. xvii. 7.) Now the promises of that covenant, which are there mentioned, are both spiritual and carnal, which circumcision sealed. An interest in *these* was conferred on the whole seed of Abraham, whether pure or impure; but a right to *those* was limited to the spiritual seed of Abraham; that is, to them that should believe in Christ, and by faith obtain righteousness and life. Paul, to the Romans, expressly says; 'They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted for the seed,' (Rom. ix. 8.) Thus also those learned men seem to conceive of this passage, that it is the external holiness of those who give up themselves to the church, so far as they are separated from the world: in the multitude of whom seeing there are infants, hence also they are called holy, as were infants of the Israelites in former ages. But this is inconsistent with the clear doctrine of the divine word, and absolutely contrary to the genius of the new covenant. . . . So far from an external holiness of this kind having any place under the New Testament, that, on the

contrary, this is the prerogative of the New Testament, or covenant, THAT NO ONE BELONGS TO IT, EXCEPT HE BE TRULY SANCTIFIED; no one is called holy, except he be truly considered as internally holy; and in this consists the difference between the old and the new covenant, that *this* is entirely spiritual, entirely internal. The precepts and promises of it are internal: it acknowledges none as covenantees but those that are truly sanctified, or accounted such. But that had both carnal precepts and carnal promises; and it also admitted covenantees that were ceremonially clean, though not pure in heart. . . . The infants of believing parents are therefore called holy, because we justly presume, that they are sanctified by the Holy Spirit in their parents. For seeing God has conferred his grace on the parents, or on one of the parents, by a judgment of charity, we presume that he will afford the same grace to the infants, as long as the contrary is not manifest to us. This is the reason why the children of unbelievers are not admitted to baptism; because we are supplied with no argument or foundation by which, in a judgment of charity, we should be persuaded that God will communicate his grace to them." *Observat. Sac. l. ii. c. vi. § 25, 26, 27, 28.*

16. Lord Brooke.—“‘Else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.’ I know some interpret it thus: If it be unlawful for a believer to live in wedlock with one that believeth not, then have many of you lived a long time in unlawful marriage; and so your very children must be illegitimate, and these also must be cast off, as base born: but this is not so; for your children are *holy*, that is, legitimate. I confess this seems a very fair interpretation; yet I much question whether this be all the apostle means by that phrase, *holy*; especially when I reflect on the preceding words, ‘The unbeliever is sanctified by the believer.’ Nor yet can I believe any inherent holiness is here meant; but rather, that relative church-holiness, which makes a man

capable of admission to holy ordinances, and so to baptism, yea, and to the Lord's supper also, for aught I see; except perhaps infants be excluded from this sacrament, by that text, 'Let him that eateth examine himself, and so let him eat.'" Discourse on Episcopacy, sect ii. chap. vii. p. 97, 98.

17. Musculus.—“The most plain understanding of this place is, first, in that we understand not the word *holiness*, of that holiness which is by the covenant of God, or the spirit of faith, by which believers are sanctified as a people of God, but of the holiness of the conjugal bed; otherwise, it will bring forth a troublesome dispute, how an unbelieving husband may be said to be sanctified. Then, that we attribute this sanctification, that is, cleanness, not to the faith of the believing yoke-fellow, but to the marriage, by reason of the appointment of God; with Hierome, who saith, *Because by God's appointment marriage is holy*; and Ambrose, who hath it thus, *The children are holy, because they are born of lawful marriage*. . . . I have sometimes abused the present place against the error of Anabaptists, keeping back infants of Christians from baptism; thinking that speech, *But now are they holy*, to be the same as, *They are the people of God*, by reason of the believing parents. But although it be sure in itself, that the children of believers are both holy, and pertaining to the people of God, by reason of the participation of the covenant, and so are partakers of baptism as the sign of the covenant; yet the present place makes nothing to this cause, in which the sanctimony of the covenant and people is not meddled with, but the cleanness of lawful marriage, even of infidels: for not only to children, to whom perhaps the holiness of a believing parent may so appertain, that for it they may be partakers of the covenant, but also to unbelieving husbands and wives is sanctimony ascribed, although they oppose the Christian faith. Nor is any other holiness or cleanness of children

meddled with, than that which agrees also to unbelieving parents; for to them no other agrees, than that which is by lawful marriage." In Mr. Tombes's Exercitation, p. 12, 13.

18. Calovius.—“The unbeliever is said to be sanctified by marriage with the believer; not as to the *person*, which is not sanctified, except by faith; but as to use, and conjugal intercourse, which are sanctified by the prayers of the believing companion. . . . Paul here treats concerning a mutual participation of such holiness as depends upon conjugal custom, as Chrysostom teaches; a holiness, which the believing and the unbelieving partner have in common between themselves. Whence it follows, that these things have been rashly and violently applied by Calvin, Beza, Paræus, and others, to a natural or original holiness of children born of believers.” *Biblia Illustrata*, in loc. Vid. Grotium, in loc.

REFLECTIONS.

Reflect. I. From these quotations we learn, That the sanctification of the unbelieving husband relates entirely to matrimonial commerce, No. 1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 17, 18;—that the holiness of the children is not of an external kind, arising from an external economy; the new covenant being altogether spiritual and internal, No. 5, 7, 15;—that the holiness intended is legitimacy, No. 4, 9, 11, 13, 17;—that no holiness is here ascribed to children, which does not agree to the unbelieving parent, No. 17;—and that this passage affords no argument for infant baptism. *Ibid.* Such are the sentiments of these Pædobaptists concerning this remarkable text.—I will now add the concurring testimony of Anthony Purver, an impartial Friend. “*Is sanctified*: so as to continue married together. *Unclean*: in respect of the parents, as if born out of wedlock.”*

Reflect. II. It is very observable, that though this

* Note on the place.

passage is more frequently urged, and more confidently pleaded against us than any other, yet there is not a word in it, nor in all the chapter, concerning baptism, any more than about the sacred supper. Quite similar is the conduct of Roman Catholics, in defence of transubstantiation. For Chamier tells us, "that their first and most common argument is taken from the sixth of John, which they urge with wonderful vehemence, and largely insist upon it;" though there is nothing in the whole chapter concerning the holy supper. Yet as it is with Pædobaptists in the present case, so it is with Papists in reference to the words of our Lord. For Chamier adds, "Notwithstanding, there is not a universal agreement in this affair; because, even among the Catholics, there are not wanting (says Vasques) those who think the forementioned passage is not to be understood of eating and drinking the eucharist, but concerning a spiritual reception of Christ."*—The chapter in which our text lies, has been denominated by Mr. Wharton, "The great storehouse of the assertors of celibacy;"† and from the frequent appeals which are made to it by our opponents, one is led to suppose that they consider it as 'the great storehouse' of Pædobaptism."

The cause of infant baptism seems, indeed, to be very unhappily circumstanced; for if a passage produced in its favour mention *baptism*, it says nothing of *infants*; as in § 1 and 7. If it mention *seed*, or *sons*, or *little children*, or, indefinitely, *an individual*, it says nothing of baptism; as in § 2, 3, 4 and 5. If it mention *children*, in connection with the term *promise*, the word *baptized* being in the context, it very untowardly falls out, that the blessing promised is not *baptism*, nor does the word children signify *infants*; as in § 6. If it mention *first-fruits* and *lump*, *root* and *branches*, the sacred writer neither speaks of baptism, nor seems to have had any

* Panstrat. tom. iv. l. xi. c. iii. § 1, 6.

† Preservative against Popery, title i. p. 281.

thought about it; as in § 8. So here, though *children* are mentioned, and though they are denominated *holy*, yet there is a deep silence about baptism. If, therefore, infant baptism be a divine appointment, the predicament in which it stands, as a positive rite, must be quite peculiar—so peculiar, that we may challenge our opposers to produce a similar instance, relating to ritual service, and allowed by Protestants to have a divine warrant.

Reflect. III. As the ordinance of baptism is not the subject of Paul's discourse, either in the text or context, all arguments formed upon it must be far-fetched, feeble, and inconclusive; for our Brethren should not forget, that the matter in debate is a positive institute. This being the case, we cannot argue, either on the one side or on the other, as in moral duties, from remote principles, general truths, and moral considerations: for the administration of baptism is no more under the regulation of this passage, than that of the holy supper is under the direction of John vi. 53; nothing being said about those appointments in either of these texts. Now Protestant authors, when disputing with Papists, will not allow the latter of these passages to prove any thing, in reference to communion at the Lord's table. Thus Mr. Leigh: "We may ask a Papist whether the eucharist be here spoken of. If it be not, why do they allege this chapter to establish their transubstantiation?"* Consider the subsequent reasoning, and see if it will not apply to the case before us. "If the Lord's supper is not the direct subject of the discourse, [in John the sixth,] but quite another thing,—then," says Dr. Hughes, "nothing can be inferred from it, or built upon it, which relates to it. If our Lord is not professedly speaking of the sacrament, but of believing in him, and embracing his doctrine, then it cannot be inferred from hence, that we eat his flesh and drink his blood, in a literal sense, in the Lord's supper: for it would be an

* Annotations on John vi. 53.

inference without any foundation, and would be inferring one thing of a quite different nature from another; as if I should say, *It is mid-day, because it is high tide; or dark night, because it is low ebb;* where there is no necessary connection. We might at this rate infer any thing from any thing, and argue without any principles to proceed upon, and draw conclusions without premises If the Lord's supper is not the direct subject of it, however it may be alluded to, but spiritual eating and drinking by faith, a mere allusion can be no sufficient ground to raise any doctrine whatsoever: it would be foreign to the matter, if the doctrine were ever so true, and could not, at least, be inferred or proved from thence."*—Now, if it be absurd for the votaries of Rome to argue from John vi. 53, in favour of transubstantiation, because our Lord is not there speaking directly about his own supper; because it is inferring one thing from another of a quite different nature; and because a mere allusion cannot be a sufficient ground on which to raise any doctrine; then, surely, our opponents do not act prudently in arguing from the text before us. Because it is manifest, that baptism is not the direct subject of Paul's discourse; because it is inferring one thing from another of a quite different kind; and because a bare allusion to baptism, of which there is no appearance, is not a proper foundation for any doctrine, and much less for the administration of a positive ordinance to any description of subjects.

Reflect. IV. The incompetency of this passage to prove the lawfulness of infant baptism will farther appear, if the following things be considered. Whatever the apostle intends by the term *holy*, as here applied to children, one of whose parents is a believer, it is not confined to the *infants* of such persons, but belongs to *all* their offspring, whether younger or older; whether born before the conversion of either parent, or after that

* Second Discourse concerning Transubstan. p. 24, 25, edit. 2nd.

happy event had taken place; for the *children*, without any distinction, are pronounced holy. If, therefore, it be lawful to baptize them on the ground of this holiness while infants, it must be equally so when grown up. That holiness, of which the inspired author speaks, is not inferred from the *faith* of the believing parent, but from the *sanctification* of the unbelieving party, by or to the believer. See No. 17. Whence it follows, that the holiness of the children cannot be superior, either as to nature or degree, to that sanctification of the unbelieving partner from which it is derived. For Paul as expressly asserts, that the unbelieving husband hath *been sanctified* (*ἡγιασται*) *by, or to the wife*; and that the unbelieving wife *hath been sanctified* (*ἡγιασται*) *by, or to the husband*; as that the offspring of such parents are (*ἁγια*) *holy*. Agreeably to which Bengelius considers the holiness of the children, and that of the unbelieving parent, as the same: because *ἡγιασται*, and *ἁγια εστιν*, differ only as, to be *made holy*, differs from, to be *holy*.* If, then, that sanctification of the unbelieving husband gives him no claim to baptism, the holiness thence arising cannot invest his children with such a right.

Farther: Whatever be the holiness here designed, we have reason enough to conclude it is not like that of the ancient Jewish offspring, which consisted in being the lawful issue of a Jew and of a Jewess: for if an Israelite married a heathenish woman, and had children by her, they were not accounted a holy seed.† Whereas, it is highly probable, the apostle is here speaking of two *Gentiles*; one of them converted, the other an idolater, whom he forbids to separate on account of the Christian faith; while, on the contrary, the Jews were commanded to put away their heathenish wives, even after having had issue by such marriages. This external, relative holiness of the chosen tribes entirely ceased, when that dispensation to which it belonged became extinct. Con-

* Gnomon, in loc.

† Ezra ix. 2; Nehem. ix. 2.

sequently, as holiness of this kind has no existence under the new economy, no argument for infant baptism can be derived from it.

Mr. Blake assures us, that “privileges in church and commonwealth are *ex traduce*.”*——Paræus expresses himself thus: “Of a prince, a prince is born; a Mahometan, of a Mahometan; and why not a Christian, of a Christian?”†——Peter Martyr: “Infants, that are born of believers, belong to God before their baptism. Though they had not a father, or a mother, that was acquainted with God, yet perhaps they had some ancestors who were so favoured; and therefore they are members of the church. Through the mere mercy of God they are holy, though they have not real faith in Christ.”‡——Beza: “The first access to salvation for the infants of godly persons, is not baptism, but their propagation itself by pious parents—Whence it is, that they are born members of Christ.”§——Mr. Henry also maintains, that federal holiness is propagated by Christian parents to their children.||——In opposition to these authors Gerhard asserts, “That the infants of believers are no less *the children of wrath by nature*, than those of others The sentiment of these authors [Paræus, Martyr, and Beza] depends on a false hypothesis; namely, that the children of Christian parents are born holy, and are actually comprehended in the covenant of grace. . . . This opinion concerning the holiness of children before their baptism, is akin to a Pelagian error. . . . If they are born holy, they are certainly holy by nature.”¶

The sentiment opposed by Gerhard brings to remembrance what some rabbinical doctors have said concerning the propagation of holiness. “Blessed,” says a Jewish author, “are the righteous, who give themselves up to the law; who know the ways of the holy

* Covenant Sealed, p. 94. † Apud Gerhardum, Loci Theolog. tom. iv. de Bap. § 211. ‡ Idem, ibid. § Ibid. || Treatise on Bap. p. 108. ¶ Ut supra, § 122, 198, 213, 214.

and blessed God; who exercise themselves in the holiness of the King, and are found holy in all things: therefore, they receive the Holy Spirit from above; their children are truly holy, and are called the holy sons of the King.”—“When a man walks in a good way,” says another of those blind guides, “he attracts to himself all holy spirits, and the son whom he generates proceeds from the part of a holy spirit: but if he walk in a bad way, he derives on himself a polluting spirit, and the son whom he begets proceeds from the side of impurity.” The learned Lutheran to whom I am obliged for these extracts, lays before us a third quotation; for which, though it contain a *recipe* of great importance to the transmission of holiness by carnal descent, I must refer my reader to the author himself.*—How far any of our opponents may approve of these rabbinical fancies, I cannot pretend to say; but there is reason to think, that the doctrine of an external, relative, and federal holiness, for which so many of them earnestly plead, was derived from the ancient synagogue; and that it is much more becoming the creed of a Jew, than the faith of a Christian. For we are taught by the New Testament, that, with reference to evangelical blessings and privileges, no one is distinguished from another, nor to be regarded by us, in virtue of carnal descent; that the heirs of heaven are “born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God;” and that “there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all, and in all.”†—Upon these words, *Where there is neither Greek nor Jew*, Bp. Davenant says: “That is, in which new, or renewed man, or in which state of regeneration, no difference of nation is considered, so that any one should hope to be more acceptable to God, because he is a Jew; or fear that he shall

* Apud Schœttgenium, *Horæ Heb.* p. 608.

† 2 Cor. v. 16; John i. 13; Col. iii. 11.

be rejected, because he is a Gentile. Nay, if thou art a Jew, and wantest this regeneration, thou art a dog, not a son: if thou art a Gentile, and hast it, thou art a son, and no longer a dog.”*

Some Pædobaptists have thought that the children are called *holy* because they have been baptized; but others oppose it as an idea foreign to the text. Mr. Claude, for instance, when reasoning on the passage, says; “Behold, now, on what the apostle founds this holiness, and whence he derives it. Is it from baptism? Doubtless it is not. Of this he says not a word; and it would be injurious to draw it from thence.”†——Scharpius, thus: “Infants are said to be holy without baptism, (1 Cor. vii. 14,) because baptism does not make the infants of believers the children of God, but seals to them the covenant of grace, and renders them certain of being included in that covenant.”‡ Nor is the idea of such children being called holy, because they are in the *external* administration of the covenant of grace, any more to the purpose; for they cannot have greater opportunities of religious improvement than their unbelieving parent. If, therefore, they be entitled to baptism on that ground, so must the unconverted parent; and so must the children of all nominal Christians, who enjoy the external means of spiritual knowledge. Neither have we any reason to think, that the children of believers are denominated holy, in reference to internal sanctification; as Vitranga shows, No. 15. But what that excellent author means, when he presumes that they are sanctified by the Spirit *in their parents*, I do not understand; nor do I see the reason why he presumes, that God will afford his grace to them, rather than to the children of unbelievers. Have they a *pro-*

* *Exposit. in loc.* Vid. Dr. Whitby, Bengelius, and Dr. Doddridge, on the place.

† *Les Œuvres Posthumes*, tom. v. lett. xvii. p. 94, 95.

‡ In Mr. Baxter's *Disputat. of Right to Sacram.* p. 220.

mise of this grace? If so, I ask and argue with his learned successor, Venema: "Was it made to *all* the children of believers, or only to *some*? The former being contrary to experience, and without reason, is rejected by all; the latter is pressed with the greatest difficulties. For, first, the condition of all the children of believers, and the relation they have to their parents are the same. If, therefore, that grace be afforded in respect of the parents, it must equally, and by right, belong to all. Secondly; The promises of God, given to parents in regard to their infants, are general. We have no reason, consequently, to affirm, that they are under any restriction. Thirdly; If you assert, that God applies a general promise according to his own pleasure, you should take heed how that can be reconciled with the goodness and justice of God. For as the most Holy is wont to perform his engagements in the most liberal manner, I would not say, that a promise given to infants in general, and not suspended on any condition, (because that has no place in regard to infants,) is performed by God to very few, and fulfilled in the most sparing manner. Fourthly; With what reason is it affirmed, I desire to know, that the promise is made only to *some*? for it is no where found in scripture: nor can it be maintained that there is any impediment in the infants themselves, by which an application of divine grace should be prevented. . . . What some very rashly affirm, that all who in a course of time believe, possess from their infancy the seeds of regeneration, I consider as unworthy of confutation; for, *seed of regeneration*, often lying hid in the mind for a long time without any effect, is to me a sound without sense, and merely vain words. For what is meant by the seed of regeneration, but a habit of doing well? Or, is there an idle habit in the soul, a spiritual substance, lying hid without any act?"*

* Dissertat. Sac. l. iii. c. i. § 6, 9.

But were we to admit the great Vitringa's presumptions as facts, yet while positive appointments are under the direction of positive laws, it would not follow that such children should be baptized, unless it were proved that Jesus Christ commanded, or that the apostles practised infant baptism: for as all ritual worship depends on the sovereign will of God, so it must be entirely governed by a revelation of that will.* Thus, for instance, when Jehovah made a covenant with Abraham, the sign of it was peculiar to the males, though his female posterity were equally interested in the blessings of that benign constitution. Nor were his male descendants to be circumcised till the eighth day, though in the covenant from their birth: neither danger of death, nor any other supposed necessity, could warrant the performance of circumcision before that appointed time. Lot was cotemporary with Abraham, nearly related to him, and in the covenant of grace, when God entered into that federal transaction with the renowned Hebrew; yet as he did not spring from the great patriarch's loins, nor was of his household, neither he, nor any of his posterity as such, had a title to circumcision. Now baptism being an institution entirely positive as much as circumcision, it must be equally under the control of positive precepts; and, consequently, the strongest evidence that infants of any description are in the covenant of grace, or that they are holy, in any sense you please, is no warrant for baptizing those infants, independent of a divine precept, or an apostolic precedent. Besides, whatever idea our Brethren affix to the term *holy*; whether they consider what is meant by it as an internal and personal quality, or as an external and relative thing; seeing baptism is not mentioned, any more than the Lord's supper, if the holiness intended infer a claim on the former, it must do so in regard to the latter. Of this Lord Brooke seems to have been suspicious, as ap-

* See Part I. Chap. I.

pears by No. 16; and Mr. Peirce boldly asserts it, pleading for infant communion on that very foundation.*

Reflect. V. Whatever difficulty may attend the right interpretation of certain terms, as here used, the preceding Reflections, I humbly conceive, sufficiently show, that our Brethren have no reason to boast of this text as a solid foundation for their practice; because, be the true meaning of the words, *unclean*, *sanctified*, and *holy*, what it may, none of them can be so understood, consistently with the genius of the new covenant, and the scope of the place, as to warrant infant baptism.—It cannot, I think, be doubted, but that each of these expressions must be understood, either in a *ceremonial*, a *moral*, or a *civil* acceptation. Not the first; for it would restore the legal impurity and the ceremonial sanctity of the old, the abrogated economy. *The unbelieving husband is sanctified to the wife:*† but, surely, not as the ancient priests were sanctified for the solemn service of Jehovah. The children are not *unclean*: but, certainly, the pollution which is here denied is not of a ceremonial kind, or like that of an Israelitish leper; nor similar to that of an uncircumcised Gentile, under the Mosaic dispensation. For a vision and a voice from heaven required long ago, that no one, whether infant or adult, should be called

* See Chap. V. No 15, of this Part.

† So Dr. Doddridge and others render the particle *ev*; and more properly, I think, in this passage, than it is translated in our common version.—Thus Mr. Baxter: “We say, as the apostle saith, the unbeliever *is sanctified in, or to the believer.*” *Plain Scrip. Proof*, p. 90. Mr. John Robinson, thus: “*The unbelieving wife is sanctified in, or to her believing husband.*” *Religious Communion*, p. 83. The same preposition is rendered *to*, in the very next verse, and in many other places. See Matt. xvii. 12, compared with Mark ix. 13; Luke i. 17; Rom. i. 24; 1 Cor. ix. 15, and xiv. 11; 2 Cor. v. 11, and viii. 1; Gal. i. 6; Col. i. 23; 1 Thess. iv. 7; 1 Tim. iii. 16; 1 John iv. 16; and six or seven times over, in 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7. See the Septuagint of Deut. xxviii. 60; 2 Kings v. 27. But if we render it, *in the wife*, and expound it, with Beza, “in respect of the wife,” or with reference to cohabitation, the general idea will be the same.

or treated as, in that sense, unclean.* The children are *holy*: but not as the sons of Jacob, when free from legal contamination; or as a child, whose parents under the Sinai covenant were both descended from Abraham: for that would replace the carnal prerogatives of Judaism, and confound the two very different economies. Yet on this mistake the argument for Pædobaptism, from the passage before us, generally proceeds. Thus, for instance, Dr. Doddridge: "Nothing can be more apparent, than that the word *holy*, signifies persons who might be admitted to partake of the distinguishing rites of God's people. (Compare Exod. xix. 6, and so on.)"† Granted, in reference to the former dispensation; but what then? Does it follow, that God has made an external covenant with *all Christians*, as he did with all the Jewish nation, when convened at Horeb? Are all who profess Christianity *holy*, in the same sense that all Israel were *holy* at that memorable period? Or is it apparent, that all who acknowledge Jesus for the true Messiah, have an equal title to the positive institutions of the gospel church; with all the ancient Israelites to the distinguishing rites of Judaism? The bulk of the latter were manifestly carnal and ungodly; yet, while free from ceremonial impurity, they had as good a claim on those rites as Moses himself: but, if legally polluted, the fervent piety of an Elijah would not have warranted their participation of them. "The whole nation of the Jews were not only permitted," says Dr. Freeman, "but commanded by God, except in cases of legal uncleanness, and those notorious crimes for which they were to be cast out of the congregation, to observe his ordinances, and to join in the celebration of his public worship; and we know 'they were not all Israel, that were of Israel.' Three times a year were all their males to appear before the Lord, to keep the solemn appointed feasts unto him; many of which, it is to be feared, had no other qualifica-

* Acts x. 15.

† Note on the place.

tion than what they were beholden to their birth, and the loss of their foreskin for.”* Where now shall we find things of the same nature under the new economy?

A nameless author, when arguing on the passage, speaks thus: “ ‘Else were your children unclean;’ as polluted, *put from the priesthood*; illegitimate, not the genuine offspring of heaven, or seed of the church. . . . ‘But now are they holy;’ that is, appropriate, as the *priest’s* children, to sanctuary privileges.”† So, then, the children of Christians have by inheritance a title to baptism and the holy supper, just as the male descendants of Aaron succeeded to the honours of a typical priesthood!—Mr. Cleaveland, when speaking of the ancient Jews, has the following words: they “were holy with a relative, federal holiness, and in this sense were called *a holy nation*, and their children *a holy seed*; and, therefore, if the visible church now stands in the same holy relation to God, by the same covenant, it must follow that the visible church is now holy, and all the members of it holy, and the children of individual members holy, with the same kind of relative federal holiness, as the Jewish church were.”‡ IF *the visible church now stand in the SAME holy relation to God, by the SAME covenant*. Yes, truly, if you be but so ignorant, and so generous in your concessions as to grant, that the Sinai covenant is now in force, and that it extends to all who profess Christianity, as it did to the Jewish nation; this author will prove that nominal Christians, both parents and children, are all *holy*—without exception holy. Nay, do but allow this warm opposer, that we are under “the same covenant” with the chosen tribes of former ages, and he may apply the epithet *holy*, not only to nominal Christians in general, and to ministers of the word in particular, however ignorant and profligate they may be, but also to the surplice, the gown, or the band of those ministers, if, like

* Cases to Recover Dissenters, vol. i. p. 244.

† Simple Truth, p. 18.

‡ Inf. Bap. from Heaven, p. 40.

Jewish priests in the performance of public service, they wear those idle badges of clerical distinction;—to their places of solemn worship; to the houses in which Christians dwell; to the produce of the lands they occupy; and to the country where they live.”* For, as Mr. Cruden observes, expressions to that effect are frequent in the Old Testament. “There,” says he, “we read of “holy garments, holy oil, holy field, holy city;—in a word, all the utensils of the sanctuary are mentioned in the same style.”† Upon this extravagant idea Apollonius proceeds, when he says; “The Reformed hold, that a certain federal holiness—is communicated to the *whole nation*, or people to whom God does so impart the tables of his covenant, that they receive and profess them, whom he calls and brings to the state of his church visible. This federal holiness is transmitted to posterity, not by the inherent holiness of immediate parents, which either their faith or unbelief should take away, or establish, to their immediate posterity; but by the good and gracious will of God, whereby he extends and constantly bestows the outward privileges promised to more remote parents, for many generations to posterity, professing the faith, even to those whose immediate parents have been found wicked and false in their covenant.”‡ To which Mr. Blake agrees.

It is upon this grand mistake, *That the state of the Christian church, and its relation to God, are like those of the Jewish church under the Old Testament*, that Dr. Doddridge and others proceed in their interpretation of the term *holy*, as used by the apostle in this passage. The Jews were a *holy people*, and their children a *holy seed*; therefore Christians and their offspring are all holy. Nor can any thing be more apparent than

* See Exod. xxviii 2, 4; xxix. 1; Lev. xix. 23, 24; xxv. 2, 4; xxvii. 14, 30; Numb. xvi. 38; xxxv. 34; Deut. vii. 6.

† Concordance, under the word Holy, edit. 2d.

‡ In Mr. Blake's Covenant Sealed, p. 119.

that the word *holy* signifies persons who might be admitted to partake of the distinguishing rites of God's people, as is manifest from a multitude of passages in the Old Testament. Thus Dr. Doddridge supposes the epithet *holy* to mean the same thing when applied to the children of believers now, as it did when used of the Jewish nation, under their theocracy. An unreasonable supposition this! I said *unreasonable*; and it affords me peculiar pleasure to think, that I have so respectable an authority as that of the doctor himself to prove it. These are his words: "Dr. Whitby shows at large, that the phrase, *God's chosen*, is applied to the *whole* nation of the Jews, good and bad; and not to those among them who might be supposed *elected to eternal life*. But it seems VERY UNREASONABLE to limit such phrases as these when applied to Christians, just to the idea which the like phrases had when applied to the Jews."* Nay, so averse is he to this way of arguing, when Pædobaptism is out of sight, that in another of his works he says: "I cannot forbear saying, that to determine the sense of the words *called, redeemed, sanctified*, and so on, when applied to the Christian church, by that in which they are used in Moses and the prophets, with respect to *the whole people of Israel*, seems to me as *unreasonable*, as it would be to maintain, that the dimensions, the strength, and the beauty of a body, are to be most exactly estimated by looking on its shadow."† Now who could have expected, after perusing these passages, that the worthy paraphrast and annotator would have given such an interpretation of the text before us? But when Pædobaptism was to be supported he found it convenient, in his own language, to look on *a shadow!*—Mr. Arch. Hall has imitated the example of Dr. Doddridge: for though, when arguing

* Note on 1 Pet. ii. 9.

† On Regeneration, Postscript to Preface, p. 17, edit. 4th.

in defence of infant baptism from the passage before us, he asserts, that the offspring of believers "are externally, relatively, and federally holy, as a seed visibly separated and appropriated to the Lord;" yet when describing the "singular circumstances of the covenanting Jews," he says; "Their *covenant holiness*, as a nation separated to dwell alone, and not to be reckoned among the rest of the nations, was *entirely peculiar* to them."*

Still farther, to show the futility of pleading this relative holiness, it may be asked; Why were not the Jews baptized by John on the ground of their federal holiness, without a profession of repentance? for it is evident that they were possessed of it as long as the Mosaic dispensation continued in force. If then it did not qualify either them or their children for baptism, by what reasons does it appear that any of our offspring ~~are~~ qualified for it upon that ground? Again; It is frequently maintained by our opposers, on the authority of this passage, that the unbelieving husband is in a relative sense holy, in virtue of his converted wife; and it is plain from the text, that as is the *holiness* of the children, such is the *sanctification* of the unbelieving parent. How comes it, then, that the latter does not qualify the subject of it for baptism, as well as the former? Is not the relation between a wife and her husband as near and as efficacious, as that between a parent and a child?

Besides, if Dr. Doddridge's argument prove any thing in support of infant baptism, it will equally evince the right of infants to the sacred supper. For if because the epithet *holy* is here applied to children, we must immediately recur to the ceremonial purity of ancient ages; and thence infer, that as "the word *holy* signifies persons who might be admitted to partake of the distinguishing rites of God's people," under the former dispensation, so the infants of believing parents

* Gospel Worship, vol. i. p. 310.

are now to be baptized; it will unavoidably follow, that the same infants have a claim on the Lord's supper.—Mr. Peirce has unanswerably proved this to be a necessary consequence of the doctor's principle:* for the holy supper is no less a *distinguishing rite* of Christianity than baptism; or than the ordinance of circumcision, or the paschal feast of Judaism. Hence it appears, that the terms under consideration should not be understood in a ceremonial or Jewish sense, that being abhorrent from the Christian economy. Let us review them, therefore, under a *moral* acceptance.

The unbelieving husband hath been sanctified to the wife, says the oracle of heaven. If the word *sanctified* mean a moral act or operation, what is it? Something performed *for* him, or something wrought *in* him? If the former, it seems to be no other than the work of the believing wife recommending him to God by solemn prayer, and using her best endeavours for his conversion. This, undoubtedly, is a moral duty; yet not peculiar to a believing wife, or a believing husband, on the behalf of an unconverted partner. No; it is incumbent on parents, for the good of their children; on masters, in regard to their servants; and on every believer, in respect of his unconverted neighbour: for it is a branch of that law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." But the apostle is here speaking of something peculiar to those who are in the conjugal state; nor have I observed, in the course of my reading, any Pædobaptist author who understands the sanctification here intended, as common to any description of persons not in that relation. Besides, to seek the blessing of God upon an unconverted companion, is the work of every day; but the inspired writer speaks in the preter-perfect tense, *ἡγιασται*, *hath been sanctified*; expressing an act completely past.—No; the apostle does not mean, as Chamier observes, "that the believer

* See Chap. V. No. 15.

sometimes wins over the unbeliever to Christ; for this, though true, is foreign to his design. First, because it is uncertain; for though it be sometimes the case, yet generally it is otherwise. When Paul, therefore, speaks of that affair, his language is very different, and thus it reads: ‘For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?’ plainly intimating that the event is uncertain. But the contrary appears in the passage before us: for he says, *The unbelieving husband HATH BEEN sanctified—The unbelieving wife HATH BEEN sanctified*: not, *shall be sanctified*. He speaks in the past time, of a thing done and finished; not in the future, of something uncertain, that is desirable and to be expected. Secondly; It would be beside the subject, seeing he treats about the marriage of a believer with an unbeliever. As, therefore, the believer is supposed to be steady in the faith, and to continue the same, so the unbeliever too, if he depart not from his infidelity. The meaning then is, that marriage with an unbeliever should not be dissolved, even though he continue an unbeliever; because he also is thus holy.”*

Besides, if we consider the apostle as having his eye to the future conversion of the unbelieving parent, we represent him as making a contingent event the rule of duty, which is very unlikely, if not absurd: for such an exposition makes the reason of their cohabitation to consist in what had sometimes taken place, in regard to others; and might do so, in respect of themselves. But what sort of reasoning is it thus to speak; You may lawfully do such a thing, because it is likely to be followed by a good effect? A contingent event cannot possibly determine the lawfulness or unlawfulness of any part of our conduct. It is neither success, nor the want of it, that stamps legality or illegality upon any branch of our behaviour; but its conformity or its opposition

* Panstrat. tom. iv. l. v. c. x. § 46.

to divine law. We have seen from Chamier, that Paul, in a following verse, represents the unbeliever's conversion as quite uncertain; for his language is, not that of promise, not that of assurance, but that of query—*What knowest thou?* Perhaps thou mayest. The past conversion of other married persons, and the future conversion of our own partners in life, are entirely foreign to our duty and liberty, though nearly related to our conveniency and happiness; to which the apostle adverts in the sixteenth verse, after having determined the legality of the case. But if a converted wife scruple the lawfulness of living with an unconverted husband, will it satisfy her conscience to tell her, That she may safely continue her cohabitation; because there have been some instances of unbelieving husbands being converted by their wives; or, because she has reason to hope that her own companion will be converted, if she abide with him?

On the other hand, if the sanctification of the unbelieving husband be something wrought *in* him, what can it be but real holiness? That, however, is out of the question; because the person sanctified is yet an unbeliever, a Jewish bigot, or a Pagan idolater. The tempers of his heart and the course of his life, therefore, are far from bearing the genuine marks of real sanctity. —The children are *not unclean*—they are *holy*. But this freedom from impurity, this holiness, is a fruit of the forementioned sanctification, and therefore must be of the same nature. Consequently, that not being of a moral kind, neither can this. Besides, if such children be holy in a moral sense, it cannot be by any prerogative of birth; for they are *by nature the children of wrath, even as others*. It must, therefore, be in virtue of divine agency, or of divine destination. But of such an influence producing holiness, or such an appointment to the enjoyment of it, there is no evidence while in their infant state; and if there were, either they must all be

finally saved, though dying under the strongest marks of impenitency, or the immutability of Jehovah's purpose, and the doctrine of perseverance, must fall to the ground. As then the *moral* sense of these terms is not here admissible, we must look out for another acceptation.

Reflect. VI. *The unbelieving husband hath been sanctified to the wife.* The children are not *unclean*—they are *holy*. The ceremonial and moral signification of these words being discarded, what remains, but that we consider them in this passage as expressing facts of a *civil* nature? And were this interpretation attended with any difficulties, they would be found much less than those which embarrass that of our Brethren: for they would not arise from the spiritual nature of the new covenant, which is absolutely inconsistent with the ceremonial acceptation of these words; nor from our interpretation being contrary to plain facts, or foreign to the occasion and scope of the text, as is the moral acceptation of these expressions. This, I think, will be manifest, if the following things be duly regarded.

The design of Paul was to evince, that such converts as were married to unbelievers, should reject every thought of a separation on account of the Christian faith; because that faith was far from dissolving the matrimonial bond, and equally far from rendering their cohabitation unlawful; for it seems that a doubt of this kind was then entertained by some who were members of the church at Corinth. But, with what appearance of reason such a query could have arisen, if it had been usual in those times to baptize the infants of parents in this predicament, we leave our opposers to show. As there is ground to conclude, that it was no uncommon thing for a husband, or a wife, to embrace the glorious gospel, while his or her partner in life continued averse to it, the very doubt which Paul resolves affords a strong presumptive argument, that it was not the custom for apostolic ministers to baptize children; such, at

least, whose parents were not both converted. For had that been a prevailing practice, there would not have been the least shadow of reason in the painful query; because, on the principles adopted by many of our opposers, a practice of that kind would have been an open avowal of such a marriage as valid, and as obliging to all the tender duties of the conjugal state. Whereas, if infant baptism was then unknown, it is not at all strange, that such a scruple should have arisen in the minds of those who considered the contrariety which there is between Christianity and Paganism; and especially if they advert to that obligation under which the Jews had formerly been, to put away their heathenish wives.

Now to rectify this mistake, which had so baneful an aspect on domestic happiness, the apostle observes, that *the unbelieving husband hath been sanctified to the wife*; and, that *the unbelieving wife hath been sanctified to the husband*. On this term *sanctified*, the inspired writer manifestly lays a particular emphasis—such an emphasis, that it seems to be the governing word of the whole sentence, and a key to its true meaning. For it is twice mentioned as containing the grand reason why the believing party should neither desert, nor divorce, the unconverted companion; and also, as expressing the ground of that holiness which is ascribed to their children. By what then were the persons concerned *sanctified* one to the other? By the faith, or prayers, of the believing party? Something different from these must be intended by the expressive word—something which rendered it lawful for them to *cohabit* as husband and wife, and utterly prohibited a separation; but such was not the result of merely devotional dispositions or acts of piety. Besides, as the apostle, in verse the thirtieth, expressly puts in a caveat against the conjugal connection commencing between a converted and an unconverted person; so, in this text, he leads us to consider the married pair of whom he speaks, as being

sanctified before either of them was a believer, which the reader should by no means overlook. What then could it be that sanctified them one to another, but the public and voluntary act of taking the woman for a wife, and the man for a husband? By this transaction, according to the legal custom of their country, they mutually *gave up*, or *set apart*, themselves one to the other. Now the person of each having been thus devoted to the other, while both were unconverted, and no positive divine law being transgressed by that reciprocal engagement, its obligation must be lasting. For as a servant is not released from his master, by commencing a believer; so a husband, or a wife, is not freed from the duties of marriage by becoming a Christian; and, therefore, it is not lawful for a believing wife to depart from her husband, nor for the converted husband to put away his wife.—Agreeably to this is the language of Bengelius, when he says; “It is by the marriage covenant, that a woman becomes the wife of a man before the man adheres to her; and in this the reason chiefly consists why they are inseparable.”*

I have observed, that the husband and the wife mutually *gave up*, or *set themselves apart*, the one for the other. Nor is this inconsistent with what our learned opposers teach respecting the term *sanctify*. Thus, for example, Dr. Doddridge: “*To sanctify*, signifies, in general, to set apart to any appropriate use.”†——Buddeus: “The principal notion of *holiness*, in scripture, especially in the Old Testament, is that of distinction, secrecy, separation from a common state and use; whence it is, that *common* is frequently opposed to *holy*.”‡——Mr. Bate: “קדש, to set apart from common use; to separate, or appropriate; to sanctify; and it is often applied to appointing war; guests, that are to

* Gnomon, ad 1 Cor. vi. 16. † Note on John xvii. 17.

‡ Theolog. Dogmat. I. iv. c. v. § 2.

be invited; in short, to any thing that is appointed to any particular business, in a good or bad sense; appropriated to a good or bad use.”*—Dr. Taylor, when explaining the same Hebrew root, informs us, that it signifies, “To be set apart, appropriated, and devoted to some particular end and use.”† So the term *sanctified* is used by the apostle with reference to our common food, upon which we seek a divine blessing. These are his words: “Every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is SANCTIFIED, *ἀγιαζεται*, by the word of God and prayer.”‡ Hence it appears, that the verb *sanctify* is employed by inspired writers, to signify the act of separating a person, or thing, not only from a secular to a *sacred*, but also from a common to a *special* use, whether there be any thing in it of a religious nature or not.—Thus, in the present case, the unbelieving husband having been sanctified, or set apart for his wife, in contradistinction to all other women; and the unbelieving wife having been sanctified, or separated for her husband, to the exclusion of every other man; the believing companion cannot either divorce or desert the unconverted party, on the ground which is here supposed, without violating the law of marriage and the rights of justice.

This reason is farther enforced by the apostle when he adds, “Else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.” If the term *sanctified*, express that which constituted the parents husband and wife, as appears from what has been said; and if that word have any influence on the sense of this clause, as it manifestly has; the terms, *unclean* and *holy*, must signify spurious and legitimate. Had not the unbelieving husband been so sanctified to the wife, as to constitute a

* Critica Heb. p. 543.

† Heb. Concord. root, 1650.

‡ 1 Tim. iv. 5, 6. Compare Lev. xix. 23, 24.

real marriage relation, there would have been reason for her to scruple the lawfulness of cohabitation; for their offspring would have been spurious. As he was so sanctified to her, she had no ground to question the chastity of her connection; for the very nature of it shows that her children are legitimate.

This view of the clause is perfectly suitable to Paul's design; which was to prove, that the converted wife had no reason to be uneasy on account of her cohabitation with an unbelieving husband. For he does not say to the Christian wife, You are a *believer*, and therefore sanctified; but, Your partner, though an unbeliever, *has been sanctified* to you. From which his inference is, Let no separation, therefore, take place, lest, by such imprudent and unrighteous conduct, you disgrace yourselves and bastardize your children. Agreeable to this are the words of Dr. Whitby on the place. Having mentioned another interpretation of the word *sanctified*, he adds; "Or, we may take these words in the sense of the Greek interpreters, viz. *The unbelieving husband hath been sanctified to the believing wife, by his consent to cohabit with her, and to have seed by her.*"—Dr. Doddridge paraphrases the former part of the verse thus: "The unbelieving husband is *so* sanctified to the wife, and the unbelieving wife is *so* sanctified to the husband, that their matrimonial converse is as lawful as if they were both of the same faith." Now it is plain, though the latter of these respectable authors did not think proper to explain the term *sanctified*, that his paraphrase proceeds upon the idea for which we contend. Once and again is that significant word mentioned by the apostle with a manifest emphasis; and it is worthy of observation, that each time it respects the *unbelieving* companion; which, on the principle of our interpretation, affords an easy and pertinent sense, but very different on that of our opposers: for if not understood of the conjugal contract, how should the past sanctification of an unbe-

lieving husband, or wife—a sanctification which took place before the conversion of either party, lay an obligation upon the believer to cohabit with the infidel, and free their offspring from a charge of impurity? Yet such was the nature of that sanctification about which the apostle speaks.

This, if I mistake not, entirely obviates an objection of Dr. Doddridge against the sense that is here given. When pleading for a kind of ceremonial sense in the word holy, and opposing the idea of legitimacy as intended by it, he says; “Nothing can be more evident, than that the argument will by no means bear it; for it would be proving a thing by itself, *idem per idem*, to argue that the converse of the parents is lawful because the children were not *bastards*; whereas all who thought the converse of the parents unlawful, must of course think that the children were *illegitimate*.”* But this representation is quite a mistake; for, according to the interpretation here adopted, the argument runs thus: The children are legitimate, because the converse of the parents is lawful; and that converse is lawful, because they have been *sanctified*, or mutually set apart for the enjoyment of each other, exclusively of all other persons.

Nor are the ideas of *spurious* and *legitimate*, which this interpretation affixes to the terms, *ακαθάρτα* and *ἅγια*, more foreign to the language of inspiration, when delivering the promises, doctrines, and laws, of the present economy, than those which Dr. Doddridge himself annexes to them: for we may venture to affirm, that these expressions are never used in those laws, doctrines, and promises, to denote a ceremonial uncleanness, or a legal purity; because no such distinction between one person and another now exists. But we do find, that the word *uncleanness* is frequently used to signify an illicit commerce between the sexes; and there-

* Note on the place.

fore we need not wonder if the issue of such an intercourse be here intimated by the term *unclean*.

It may be observed also, that this very apostle directly opposes *ἀγιασμος* to *πορνεία*, and *ἐν ἀγιασμῷ* to *ἐπι ακαθαρσία*;* consequently, it is not at all extraordinary, if *ἀγια*, in the passage before us, mean *legitimate*, and *ακαθαρτα*, *spurious*. Thus the learned Schwarz, in his excellent Lexicon to the Greek Testament, interprets the former of these words, as used in the text before us.†—Paul speaks in a following verse, of being HOLY *both in body and in spirit*; upon which Bengelius has justly remarked, “That the term *holy*, as there used, signifies something more than it does in the fourteenth verse.”‡ Yes, it is manifest, that in verse the thirty-fourth, it is used according to its obvious, and most important acceptance under the Christian economy; but in verse the fourteenth, its connection and the design of the passage compel us to understand it in a remote and much less emphatical sense. This our opposers themselves must allow; for their interpretation represents the holiness intended as being of a relative, or Jewish kind—far different from that which is produced in regeneration, and maintained by a divine influence on the human heart. Now, it is manifest, that this is a diminutive and far-fetched sense of the word, as it respects Christianity; and that the subject of such holiness may be as remote from final happiness, as a Jew or a Turk.—There is another expression in this chapter, which, according to Mr. Henry’s continuator on the passage, is used in a very singular sense. These are his words: “*Τηρειν την ἑαυτου παρθενον*, seems to be rather meant of preserving *his own virginity*, than keeping his daughter a virgin; though it be *altogether un-*

* 1 Thess. iv. 3, 4, 7. Vid. Schœttgenii Hor. Heb. in loc.

† Under the words *ἁγιαζω*, and *ἁγιος*. Vid. Mintert, under the same terms. So *sanctimonia*, *sanctitas*, and *sanctus*, convey the idea of *chastity* as well as of *holiness*. Vid. Ainsworth under those words. Edit. 1783.

‡ Gnomon, ad 1 Cor. vii. 34.

common to use the word in this sense.”* As we are, therefore, obliged to understand the word *holy* in a sense that is not common, when used with regard to the new economy; and as the connection in which it stands must here determine its meaning; there is no reason to consider the idea of *legitimacy* as impertinent, except it were proved to be inconsistent with the design of Paul in the passage. Now, it appears from what has been said, that the term cannot be here understood in a ceremonial sense, for that is abhorrent from the Christian dispensation; and it is equally plain, that holiness in a moral view is not intended; for the offspring of believing parents are born in a state of depravity and of guilt, so as to be *by nature the children of wrath, even as others*. Besides, the holiness here designed results from the parents’ being *sanctified* one to the other; nor is the epithet holy restricted to their *infant* offspring, while such, but common to *all* their children, whether older or younger. Far, therefore, is the notion of *legitimacy* from being foreign to this text; so far, all things considered, that we must either embrace it, or adopt the idea of a Jewish, external, and ceremonial kind of holiness existing among Christians; which restores the Sinai covenant, and is absolutely inconsistent with the economy of grace.

It may, perhaps, be objected, “That no instance can be produced from the sacred writings, of the word holy meaning legitimate.” In answering this objection, I am happy to find that Pædobaptists themselves with great readiness afford their assistance. For thus Mr. Henry: “Being born in lawful wedlock, they [the Jews] might call God, *father*, who instituted that honourable state in innocency; for a *legitimate* seed, not tainted with divorces, or the plurality of wives, is called a *seed of God*,

* Exposit. on 1 Cor. vii. 37. See Dr. Whitby’s note on the place.

Mal. ii. 15.”*—Mr. Poole’s Continuators: “*A seed of God*; either an excellent seed, as [the] Heb. expresses the excellency of a thing by the addition of the name of God to it; or rather a *holy seed*, born to God in *chaste wedlock*, and brought up under the instructions and virtuous examples of parents living in the fear of God, and love of each other, which in polygamy cannot be expected.”†—But supposing there were no propriety in what these commentators have said, with regard to the subject before us; yet we might venture to assert, that no example of *ἀγιος* being used under the new economy for an external, relative holiness, like that of the ancient Jews, can be adduced. Nay, it is demonstrable from the nature of the Christian dispensation, that there neither is nor can be any such thing; yet on that idea the argument against us from this text almost always proceeds. Nor is there an instance in all the Bible, that I recollect, of the word *sanctified* being used precisely as it is in this passage: for where, I demand, where is it employed in the whole sacred code, to express that act, or engagement, between a man and a woman, which renders it lawful for them to cohabit as husband and wife? This, however, is manifestly the case here. When, therefore, our Brethren produce a parallel text, respecting the term *sanctified*, we will engage to return the favour, with regard to the word *holy*.

Besides, admitting for the sake of argument, that external, relative holiness, of which they speak, we desire to be informed, Whether it be common to the offspring of all that profess Christianity, or confined to the children of real saints? The latter, I take it for granted, is the opinion of many who plead this holiness against us. But if so, the offspring of ancient Jews enjoyed this

* Exposit. on John viii. 41.

† Annotat. on Mal. ii. 15.

Calvin, Junius, and others on the passage, express themselves to the same effect. Vid. Poli Synopsin, in loc.

prerogative to a much greater extent, than that for which our opposers plead; because the children of unregenerate and ungodly Jews had as much relative holiness, as those Jewish infants had whose parents were born of God.—We take the liberty of asking still farther, Whether all the children of all believers retain this relative holiness while they live? and if not, Whether it wear out by age, or be liable to forfeiture? If the first, why do not our opposers baptize the adult offspring of believers, if not baptized in their infancy, merely on the ground of that holiness, without any profession of repentance and faith? If the second, we may justly demand, At what age does relative holiness begin to decline, and in what period of life is it quite extinct? Gamaliel Ben Pedazur, informs us, that “all Jewish parents are reckoned to be accountable for the sins of their sons, till they are thirteen years old, but no longer.”* Is this the term of relative holiness among Christians? or is it a longer, or a shorter time? It is of manifest importance that this be settled with precision, to direct the administration of baptism on the ground which is here opposed. But whatever may be the term of continuance, if not co-extended with life itself, we cannot consider it as equal to that of the ancient Jews, which was possessed as long as they lived. If the last, we may pertinently ask, By what means is it forfeited? By the want of real godliness when grown up, notwithstanding a fair exterior? or by notorious immorality? Here also there is reason to think, this relative holiness of Christians is far inferior to that of the chosen tribes; for after the covenant made at Horeb, there is no appearance, that I recollect, of any descendant from Abraham forfeiting his relative holiness by any thing short of that which exposed him to capital punishment. Various and frequent, indeed, were those legal impurities which laid them under a temporary suspen-

* Jewish Ceremonies, p. 22.

sion from actual communion; but such incapacities did not in the least affect their original relative holiness. Relation to Jehovah, grounded on the Sinai covenant, and the holiness resulting from that relation, continued till death, or the commission of some capital crime.—After all the pleas for Pædobaptism, upon the foundation of privilege enjoyed by Jewish children, it therefore appears, that many of our opposers depart from their own rule, and lay the offspring of believers under a restriction, which was neither known to the institutes of Judaism, nor practised by the seed of Abraham.

It must indeed be acknowledged, that a great majority of Pædobaptists have more liberal views, respecting the extent of this federal and relative holiness, than those of our English Independents. Thus, for example, Mr. Rutherford: “The children in a chosen nation, are holy with the holiness of the chosen nation; though father and mother be as wicked as the Jews that slew Christ.”* *Children are holy with the holiness of the chosen nation!* Is this the language of Christianity, or of Judaism? of the New Testament, or of the Talmud?—But let us hear Mr. Bingham: “It is certain our [English] church in this matter goes by no other rule than all the Reformed churches, which exclude the children of Turks, Jews, and Infidels from baptism, as being *out of the covenant*, and *unclean*, except in some particular cases. . . . But, however, she admits the children of wicked Christians, and commands the minister to baptize them. And where is the harm of that? Is it not much better than to perplex her ministers, as many Dissenters do themselves, with doubting consciences and endless scruples about the parents’ godliness, which they cannot always, nay, very seldom certainly know.—Rivet and Walæus tell us, that their churches do not exclude the children of Christian parents from baptism, though the parents have

* In Mr. Tombes’s *Antipædobaptism*, part ii. p. 130.

rendered their own baptism null, as to any efficacy upon themselves, by an ungodly life, or an impure faith; and their reason is, *Because the son is not to bear the iniquity of the father: God is still the GOD of those children.*”* —*Out of the covenant.* What covenant? That which was made with Abraham? In this, if considered as the covenant of grace, none but the children of the patriarch’s faith are covenantees: if as made with his natural seed, the Gentiles were not comprehended in it; nor under that consideration, is it now in force, either as to one or another. Is it the Sinai covenant? but that has long been abolished. Is it the covenant of grace as administered under the new economy? if so, all nominal Christians, and all their natural seed, are comprehended in it. But then, the consequence is, they must all be saved; for the gifts and calling, the promises and privileges of it are without revocation and without repentance. †—*The children of Turks, Jews, and Infidels are unclean.* *Unclean!* What, notwithstanding *the partition wall* has long been demolished; and in spite of a divine order to call no one *unclean*? ‡ Hence it appears, that though baptism, according to this rule, is to be administered on a much larger scale than that which is adopted by some of our opponents, yet the old leaven of natural descent, and of Jewish holiness, continues to operate. Yes, it so operates as to divide millions of children into *holy* and *unclean*, just as it did under the Sinai covenant.

It is a great alleviation, however, of that unhappy state in which the generality of children are born, with reference to this impurity, that there are *three* ways of cleansing them; namely, by purchase, by contract, and by believing. For thus Mr. Baxter: “He that is born unclean, may become by purchase, or contract, the child of a believer; or, at age he may believe himself, and

* Works, vol. ii. p. 777.

† Rom. xi. 29.

‡ Eph. ii. 14; Acts x. 15, 28.

then he ceases to be unclean.”* Purification by *purchase*, or by *contract*. An admirable provision this, for those who are born in a state of relative uncleanness! What believing Pædobaptist would grudge to enter into a contract, or to part with a little money, for the cleansing of a poor creature from that native impurity? As to this kind of purity being obtained by *believing* in Jesus Christ, I have indeed my doubts. For though it is clear, that *real* holiness always attends *the faith of God's elect*, yet I very much question, whether it be accompanied by any purity that is merely *relative*. The latter we may justly consider as a Jewish tenet, as a part of the Mosaic dispensation, and as having no existence under the present economy; nor would it, as I conceive, have ever appeared in the Christian church, if it had not been for Pædobaptism. This fancy of Mr. Baxter's reminds me of the following saying: *Malo hîc ignorantiam profiteri, quam nugas effutiendo me aliis deridiculum exhibere.* †

Against this view of the text it is also objected, “That the validity of the marriage in question did not depend on either party being a converted person.” This we readily grant; nor does our sense of the passage involve such an absurdity; for it proceeds on the repeated and emphatical use of the term *sanctified*, as here applied to the unbeliever; nor does it at all depend on one of them being converted. The apostle indeed mentions that particular, and there was reason for it; because the believer only could entertain a doubt concerning the lawfulness of cohabiting with an unbeliever; but the force of Paul's reasoning, and the propriety of our interpretation, chiefly depend on the unconverted party *having* been SANCTIFIED to the believer.

Reflect. VII. The Baptists are often represented, as if they were the only persons who adopt this inter-

* Disputat. of Right to Sacram. p. 279.

† Ikenii Dissertat. Philolog. Theolog. dissert. xxii. § 9.

pretation of the passage, and as if they were obliged to it by mere hypothesis. But that they are not the only persons who so understand the words, appears from the authors produced; to whom I might have added Erasmus, and Eras. Schmidius.* That the Baptists have no need of subterfuge to evade the force of any argument formed upon it is plain, I humbly conceive, from the preceding reflections. No; while they have both precept and example on their side, and while they remember that the affair in dispute is a positive institution, they must be either very timid, or extremely weak, if they entertain apprehensions of danger to their cause, from any part of the sacred records where baptism is not so much as mentioned, and where a subject very different is under discussion; both which are manifestly the case here. They are, indeed, so far from being alarmed for the safety of their cause, by any evidence produced against them from this text, that they cannot forbear wondering so many learned, wise, and godly Pædobaptists should lay such a stress upon it. When, therefore, the Baptists find it alleged with an air of supercilious confidence, as if it were expressly in favour of Pædobaptism, they cannot but reflect on a spirited reply of the famous Mr. Poole, in opposition to Cressy, a Roman Catholic writer. Cressy, when defending the Papal infallibility, expressed himself with an exalted tone of assurance in the following manner: "This doctrine of the church's infallibility, is the *most express* in scripture." On this, Mr. Poole remarks: "I suppose he told us so upon the same account that the old painter wrote under his picture, *This is a LION*, for fear some should have mistaken it for a bull."†

* The latter of these learned authors has a long note on the text, expressly in favour of that interpretation which is here adopted.

† Nullity of Romish Faith, Appendix, p. 25.

When I was just going to congratulate my Baptist Brethren, on the perfect consistency of scripture with our distinguishing sentiment and practice, Dr. John Edwards came in my way, and utterly forbade such a procedure. Yes, that learned author severely checked my pleasing emotions, resulting from those interpretations which Pædobaptists themselves have given of the several texts produced against us, by insisting, that there is another passage of holy writ, which, though much overlooked, is *quite decisive* against us. When discoursing—but who could have thought of meeting with such a rebuff, by a comment on such a text!—when discoursing on those words, “Thy navel is like a round goblet which wanteth not liquor;”* and when considering the passage as relating to baptism, he thus proceeds: “Here is a great controversy solved, namely, between us and the Anabaptists, who are against the baptizing of children, because they are not come to the years of understanding. Let it be remembered, from what is suggested to us here, that infants (according to the notion which prevailed in those days) receive nourishment by the navel, though they take not in any food by the mouth.—So it is no good objection against baptizing infants, that they are ignorant and understand not what they do, and that they are not able to take in spiritual nourishment after the ordinary way: it may be done, as it is said here, by the navel, by that federal knot, or link, which ties them fast to their Christian and believing parents.”†

Now, my Baptist Brethren, is not this demonstration, and bright as the sun? What can we say, or what but incorrigibility can withstand it? Because, though Moses when writing his Pentateuch, and though Ezekiel when penning his prophecies, had no thought of infant baptism; nay, though the apostles themselves

* Cant. vii. 2.

† Exercit. Crit. Philosoph. exercit. ix. p. 136, 137.

have said nothing about it, yet, while it appears that Solomon had such a clear discernment of it when recording his inspired song, we are obliged to exclaim with the alarmed servant of an ancient prophet, "Alas, master, how shall we do?" For though, by the friendly assistance of Pædobaptists, we have parried the thrust of our adversaries from other texts; yet this unexpected attack affects us in such a manner, that we have no inclination to make a defence, or to look out for auxiliaries. We shall, therefore, only just mention a few instances of similar ingenuity in defence of different hypotheses, and one remark upon them. Dr. Barrow, when speaking of the Papal supremacy, and of the Roman Catholics, tells us, That "they have found the pope in the first chapter of Genesis; for, if we believe pope Innocent the Third, he is one of the two great *luminaries* there; and he is as plainly there as any where else in the Bible.*—Cardinal Bona is very confident that Paul's *cloak*, which he left at Troas, was a priestly vestment." †—Once more: Dr. Nichols has invincibly proved the propriety of our English clergy wearing a surplice, by the following observation: "At our Saviour's transfiguration, he himself, together with Moses and Elias, appeared in *bright* raiment, as *white* as snow. The angels in their appearances are generally said to have appeared in *white*." ‡ So easy is it to demonstrate Pædobaptism, Papal supremacy, and canonical robes, to be of divine right!—The remark follows: "These doctrines of the doctor's are collected and raised from the text," says Mr. Alsop, "just as our collectors raise a tax upon indigent, non-solvent people, who come armed with a law and a constable to distrain for that which is not to be had, rather than the king should lose his right. And, certainly, never was text so strained and distrained

* On the Pope's Supremacy, p. 155.

† In Bingham's Orig. Eccles. b. xiii. chap. viii. § 1.

‡ In Mr. Peirce's Vindicat. of Dissent. part iii. p. 192.

to pay what it never owed ; never man so racked to confess what he never thought ; never was a pumice-stone so squeezed for water which it never held ; nor ever a good cause so miserably put to its shifts, as to press those innocent texts against their wills, which refuse to come in as volunteers.”*

SECT. 5. — *Apostolic Tradition, and the Impracticability of pointing out the Time when Pædobaptism commenced.*

J. A. Turretinus.—“ *Tradition* is a convenient word, to excuse and retain those things that were brought into religion without the authority of scripture, by the ignorance of the times and the tyranny of men.” *Cogitat. et Dissertat. tom. i. p. 44.*

2. Bp. Burnet.—“ To convince the world how early tradition might either vary or misrepresent matters, let the tradition, not only in, but before St. Irenæus’s time, concerning the observation of Easter be considered, which goes up as high as St. Polycarp’s time. . . . If, then, tradition failed so near its fountain, we may easily judge what account we ought to make of it at so great a distance.” *Four Discourses to the Clergy, p. 247, 248.*

3. Mr. Robinson.—“ If—whatever we find to have been a general and prevailing custom a few hundred years after the apostles, must necessarily be allowed to have been the practice of their times too, I am afraid we must not only have forms of prayer, but also prayers for the dead, and invocations of saints and angels, and so on.” *Review of the Case of Liturgies, p. 111.*

4. Mr. Poole.—“ That the fathers were oftentimes deceived in the point of traditions, and in matters of fact, is acknowledged by several of the most learned Papists ; and Baronius gives us divers examples of their

* *Mischief of Impositions, Epist. Dedicat. p. 18.*

mistakes, in sundry parts of his annals, and that too among the first fathers, who had far greater opportunities to know the truth than their followers, and greater integrity to deliver nothing contrary to their knowledge; and much more mistakes there might be committed by those who came after them." Nullity of Romish Faith, p. 66, 67.

5. Anonymous.—“The church of Rome—will not acknowledge their points of doctrine to be erroneous, unless we can assign the time, and point out the persons who first broached them. . . . If a man be sick of a consumption, will he refuse help of the physician, except he can resolve him whether his lungs or his liver were first infected, and show the time when and the occasion how his body grew first distempered?” Popery Confuted by Papists, p. 26, 27.

6. Bp. Taylor.—“The fathers were infinitely deceived in their account and enumeration of traditions; sometimes they did call some traditions such, not which they knew to be so, but by arguments and presumptions they concluded them so. Such as was that of St. Austin: ‘Those things which the universal church holds, that are not found appointed by councils, descended, it is credible, by tradition from the apostles’*. . . . Clemens of Alexandria pretended it a tradition, that the apostles preached to them that died in infidelity, even after their death, and then raised them to life. . . . He affirmed it to be a tradition apostolical, that the Greeks were saved by their philosophy. . . . Tertullian and S. Basil pretend it

* “Just,” says the bishop in another place, “as if one were to give a sign how to know whether lying were lawful or unlawful, and for the determination of this question should give this rule; ‘Whatsoever mankind do universally which they ought not to do without God’s law, that certainly they have a law from God to do. But all mankind are given to lying; and yet nothing can make it lawful to lie, unless there be a warranty, or no prohibition from God to lie: therefore, certain it is, that to lie descends from the authority of God.’” Ductor Dub. p. 378, 379.

an apostolical tradition, to sign in the air with the sign of the cross. . . . There are yet some points of good concernment, which, if any man should question in a high manner, would prove undeterminable by scripture, or sufficient reason; and yet, I doubt not, their confident defenders would say, they are opinions of the church, and quickly pretend a tradition from the very apostles, and believe themselves so secure that they could not be discovered; because the question never having been disputed, gives them occasion to say, *That which had no beginning known, was certainly from the apostles. . . .* The baptism of infants is called a tradition by Origen* alone, at first, and from him by others. . . . It is said to be a tradition apostolical, that no priest should baptize without chrism, and the command of the bishop. . . . There is no pretence of tradition, that the church in all ages did baptize all the infants of Christian parents. It is more certain that they did not do it always, than that they did it in the first age. St. Ambrose, St. Hierom, and St. Austin, were born of Christian parents, and yet not baptized until the full age of a man, and more. . . . That it was the custom so to do in some churches, and at some times, is without all question; but that there is a tradition from the apostles so to do, relies but on two witnesses, Origen and Austin; and the latter having received it from the former, it relies wholly on one single testimony, which is but a pitiful argument to prove a tradition apostolical. He is the first that spoke it; but Tertullian, that was before him, seems to speak against it, which he would not have done, if it had been a tradition apostolical. And that it was not so is but too certain, if there be any truth in the words of Ludovicus Vives." Liberty of Propheying, sect. v. p. 84, 89, 90, 93, 94. Dissuasive from Popery, part ii. lib. ii. sect. iii. The latter of these in Dr. Wall's Hist. Inf. Bap. part. ii. chap. ii. § 10.

* This, it has already appeared, is a mistake. See Vol. I. p. 387—391.

7. Hospinianus.—“ In the time of Austin it was commonly believed, that whatever was received by the church as a devotional custom, proceeded from apostolic tradition and the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. . . . Not all things of which the ancients boast, under the title of apostolic tradition, are to be immediately received as such.” Hist. Sacram. l. ii. p. 41; l. v. p. 424.

8. Mr. Henry.—“ Irenæus, one of the first fathers, with this passage, [John viii. 57,] supports the tradition, which he saith he had from some that had conversed with St. John, that our Saviour lived to be fifty years old, which he contends for. See what little credit is to be given to tradition!” Exposition on John viii. 57.

9. Anonymous. — “ Our Popish pettifoggers — to prove their church to be the very same [that the church at Rome was in the time of Paul,] thus argue: ‘ If things which we maintain and the Protestants condemn, were indeed errors and innovations, sprung up since the primitive age, then might you certainly assign the particular times when, and by whom they were first advanced. But this you are not able to do. *Ergo*, they are no such upstart errors, but primitive truths, at all times extant in, and owned by the church.’ This very argument is no less frequent than plausible with our seminary seducers. Both the propositions are false. The first, because many times the truth may be abandoned, and error advanced in its stead, and yet no certainty left to posterity of the precise time when the same happened. The second, because, in many things held by the church of Rome at this day, we can—assign the respective times of alteration. . . . The errors of the Romish church are now so notorious, it were better to redeem the time by correcting them, than to enquire after the times and persons that hatched them. For, if a man be sick of a consumption, will he refuse help of the physician, except he can resolve him whether his lungs or his liver were first infected, and show the exact time when,

and occasion how, his body grew first distempered? . . . The Scribes and Pharisees taught many things against the law, and Christ reprov'd them; yet the time when those corruptions first came in, and the persons that devised them, to us are unknown." History of Popery, vol. i. p. 61, 62, 63.

10. Mr. Claude.—“As to the scripture, instead of making that the only rule of faith, they [the Papists] had joined traditions with it; that is to say, the most uncertain thing in the world, the most subject to impositions, and the most mixed with human inventions and weaknesses. . . . Tradition is so far from being able to serve for a rule, that it ought itself to be corrected and regulated according to that maxim of Jesus Christ; ‘In the beginning it was not so’ . . . There is, therefore, nothing more improper to be the rule of faith than that pretended tradition, which is not established upon any certain foundation, which serves for a pretence to heretics, which is embraced *pro* and *con*, which changes according as times and places do, and by the favour of which they may defend the greatest absurdities, by merely saying, That they are the traditions which the apostles transmitted from their own mouths to their successors.” Defence of Reformation, part i. chap. iii. p. 34; part. ii. chap. viii. p. 254, 258.

11. Mr. Ellys.—“The plain truth is, there have been such vain pretences to tradition in all ages, one contradicting another, that it seems impossible in this age to discern between true and false. Did not Clemens Alexandrinus call it an apostolical tradition, that Christ preached but one year? And did not Irenæus pretend a tradition, descending from St. John, that Christ was about fifty years old when he was crucified? And do the Papists account either of these to be true? Many things might be named, which for some time have been received as apostolical traditions, which the church of Rome will not now own to be so; and those which

she owns, she can no more prove to be so, than those she hath rejected. It were easy to show this, even from abundance of their own writers, who assert the perfection of the scripture, and complain of the mischief this pretence to traditions hath done; and who confess, they cannot be proved to come from the apostles. But I shall now content myself with the ingenuous confession of the bishops assembled at Bononia, in their counsel given to pope Julius the Third: 'We plainly confess,' say they, 'among ourselves, that we cannot prove that which we hold and teach concerning traditions, but we have some conjectures only.' And again: 'In truth, whosoever shall diligently consider the scripture, and then all the things that are usually done in our churches, will find there is great difference betwixt them; and that this doctrine of ours is very unlike, and, in many things, quite repugnant to it.'" *Preserv. against Popery*, title iii. p. 199.

12. Lampe.—"When I find such things reported as facts, in the writings of the first fathers, I can scarcely believe my own eyes. . . . Whoever is not an entire stranger to the writings of Irenæus, cannot be ignorant that he placed too much confidence in ecclesiastical traditions." *Comment. in Evang. Joan. Prolegom.* l. i. c. iii. § 5; c. 5. § 2.

13. Mr. Bingham.—"Some of the fathers call the quadragesimal fast a tradition, or canon apostolical. St. Jerome says, 'We observe one Lent in the year, according to the tradition of the apostles.' Pope Leo calls it, 'the apostolical institution of a forty-days' fast, which the apostles instituted by the direction of the Holy Ghost.' But it is no small diminution to the judgment of pope Leo, that Mr. Pagi and Quesnel observe of him, that he was used to call every thing an apostolical law, which he found either in the practice of his own church, or decreed in the archives of his predecessors, Damasus and Siricius; and, for St. Jerom, he himself tells us, he sometimes calls particular customs of churches

by the name of apostolical traditions." Orig. Eccles. b. xxi. chap. i. § 8.

14. Turretinus.—“ But you will say, If any alterations have taken place in the church of Rome since the apostolic age, the time when, and the persons by whom they were made, should be pointed out. But no reason obliges us to this. As if—various alterations did not frequently occur to our notice, of which, neither the time, nor the place, nor the first authors can be accurately known. . . . It is difficult if not impossible to mark the first moments in which any corruption began, though the fact be so manifest that it cannot be denied. But what necessity is there to point out either the authors, or the times, provided the facts be certain? In order to prove that you have the plague,—is it necessary for me to show, in what moment the destructive disease began to rage? Is it not quite sufficient by undoubted arguments to prove, that you labour under the fatal malady? Would not he deserve contempt, who should think rather about the commencement of the disease, than concerning an effectual remedy that should be used for his recovery? Though the precise time of such corruptions commencing cannot be exactly showed, it does not therefore follow that there are none; or that they are by us falsely attributed to the church of Rome. For the question is not, *WHEN were such corruptions introduced?* but, *Whether in reality there BE SUCH?* which may be learned, not from the monuments of ancient history, but from considering the present state of the Romish church. Agreeable to this was our Lord's manner of acting, when he reproved the Scribes and Pharisees. Did he particularize either the authors, the places, or the times in which such or such errors were brought into the church? Nothing less. Yet no one could have performed it better than He, who knew most accurately the commencement of every alteration. Satisfied with the scripture only, he appeals to the first beginning: ‘ From the

beginning it was not so.' Or, 'Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures.' Why then should we be tied to such a scrupulous designation of time, and of other circumstances that make nothing to the purpose? when it is quite sufficient for us to show, That the doctrine of the apostles differs exceedingly from that which prevails in the Papacy; and that the present Romish church differs much from that in the apostolic age; and, therefore, 'from the beginning it was not so.'" *De Necess. Seccess. ab Eccles. Rom. disput. v. § 10.*

REFLECTIONS.

Reflect. I. The Baptists are here informed by their learned opponents, That the pretence of tradition is a happy expedient, in favour of those who wish to retain unscriptural rites in the worship of God, No. 1;—that some of the first fathers who pleaded apostolic tradition, stand convicted of error, No. 2, 4, 6, 8;—that were an ecclesiastical custom, but a few centuries after the Christian era commenced, to be considered as an apostolical practice barely on a traditional ground, we must adopt a variety of ceremonies, which all Protestants have agreed to reject, No. 3, 6;—that the conduct of Roman Catholics in refusing to acknowledge their errors, except the time when, and the persons by whom they were introduced, be pointed out, is grossly absurd, No. 5, 9, 12;—and, that there is no pretence of tradition, relating to all the infants of Christian parents being baptized in the early ages of the church; but that the contrary is manifest, No. 6.—Such are the sentiments of these respectable authors concerning the matter before us.*

Reflect. II. Though the preceding quotations are but as the tithe to the whole crop, if compared with what might be produced from learned Protestants when disputing with Papists, as all who are versed in that con-

* For the opinion of the people called Quakers, respecting Pædobaptism as a tradition, see Vol. I. p. 310—312.

troversy must be aware; yet they are quite sufficient on this occasion, both by way of authority, and in point of argument: for if this method of reasoning against the novelties of Popery be conclusive, as every consistent Protestant will readily grant, it must equally affect the argument for infant baptism, so far as tradition detached from scripture is pleaded for it; because these learned writers warrant us to assert, that if all the fathers, from Polycarp to Austin, had agreed in pronouncing Pædo-baptism an *apostolic tradition*, which is far from being a fact, the evidence of its divine authority would still have been precarious, notwithstanding the hoary antiquity of such a plea in its favour.—As errors in doctrine and corruptions of worship were multiplied in the second and third centuries; as, in every succeeding age for a long course of time, the fertile invention of ecclesiastics devised something new, in addition to former depravations of truth, of worship, and of church-order; as books were forged under the venerable names of primitive fathers; and as apostolic tradition was pleaded to sanctify a great number of novelties; we are bound to consider all arguments from tradition as futile, except so far as they derive any force from corresponding evidence in the apostolic page. “For,” as Bp. Taylor observes, “no church at this day admits the one half of those things, which certainly by the fathers were called traditions apostolical.”*

Fond, however, as the fathers were of tradition, we have sometimes the pleasure of hearing them speak a different language. Thus, for example, Cyprian: “Whence does that custom or tradition derive? Does it come with the authority of our Lord in the gospels, or is it given in charge by the apostles in the epistles?—If it be either commanded in the gospel, or is to be

* Liberty of Prophesying, sect. v. p. 96. See Dr. Owen's Enquiry into Orig. Nat. and Order of Churches, Pref. p. 54, 55. Hottingeri Analecta Hist. Theol. dissert. vii. § 7.

found in the epistles, or Acts of the Apostles—then let it be owned and regarded as a divine and sacred tradition A custom which has crept in among some, ought not to prevail to the prejudice of truth; for custom without truth is nothing but an old overgrown mistake. . . . The way to subdue error, and to find out the truth, is very short and plain; for if we have but recourse to the spring and original of divine tradition, [meaning the holy scriptures,] the mistakes of men are immediately suppressed.”*

Reflect. III. That subjects of the triple crown should be fond of tradition, we have no reason to wonder; because it not only agrees with their avowed principles, but is in many cases almost their only resource. Hence we find, in their contests with Protestants, that they boldly prefer tradition to scripture. Thus, for example, Salmero: “Gainsayers can never be convinced out of the scripture; therefore you must confound them with tradition.”†—Canus: “There is more strength to confute heretics in traditions, than in scripture; yea, all disputations with them must be determined by traditions.”‡—Bristow: “Get the proud heretic out of his weak and false castle of ONLY SCRIPTURE, into the plain field of traditions, councils, fathers, miracles, and so on, and then, like weak cowards, they shall not be able to stand the encounter.”§—Thus these veterans in the cause of superstition. But that Protestants, on any occasion where positive divine law is concerned, should have recourse to a similar practice, is a disgrace to that first principle of the Reformation, THE SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE. Nor can it, indeed, be supposed that any of the Reformed should solicit the friendly aid of tradition in support of religious practice, if they did not

* In Mr. Robinson's Review of the Case of Liturgies, p. 126, 127.

† In Mr. Poole's Nullity of Romish Faith, p. 218.

‡ In Hist. of Popery, vol. i. p. 234.

§ Ibid. See Morning Exercise against Popery, p. 113.

feel their want of direct evidence in the sacred writings. The following words of Mr. Peirce, respecting the conduct of Episcopalian Protestants in defence of their hierarchy, will here apply. "They themselves seem to distrust the holy scripture's defence of their principles, when they so eagerly fly to their great refuge of the fathers. Mind now, with how much triumph he [Dr. Nichols] begins his appeal to their writings. *But if the ancient records of the church be consulted, they will give ample testimony to the Episcopal order.* If he had confessed the truth, he should have said; Although little help can be expected to our cause from the holy scriptures, and they afford us no testimony of any great weight, yet we need not despair; for that defect will be made up abundantly by the number, if not the worth, of testimonies of another sort."*—Nay, Leydecker tells us, "That the Papists themselves would not urge tradition, if they were not aware that the chief articles of their faith, concerning the authority of the pope, purgatory, indulgences, and the mass itself, depended upon it."†—Dr. Owen has well observed, "That when professing Christians had laid great weight on those things which are not mentioned in the holy scriptures, and which for that reason should have no place, either in the worship of God or in the churches of Christ, they immediately betook themselves to traditions, or to those things which they had heard, by very uncertain reports, were practised by Christians in former times."‡

Bossuet having laid it down as a principle, *That the law of the holy supper should be explained by constant and perpetual practice*, Mr. Payne replies; "But cannot then a law of God be so plain and clear, as to be very well known and understood by all those to whom it is given, without being thus explained? Surely so

* Vindicat. of Dissent. part iii. chap. i. p. 61, 62.

† Veritas Evang. Triumph. l. i. c. ii. § 46.

‡ Theologoumena, l. vi. c. viii. § 9.

wise a lawgiver as our blessed Saviour, would not give a law to all Christians that was not easy to be understood by them. It cannot be said, without great reflection upon his infinite wisdom, that his laws are so obscure and dark, as they are delivered by himself, and as they are necessary to be observed by us, that we cannot know the meaning of them without a farther explication. If constant and perpetual practice be necessary to explain the law, how could they know it, or understand it, to whom it was first given, and who were first to observe it, before there was any such practice to explain it by? This practice must begin somewhere, and the law of Christ must be known to those who began it, antecedent to their own practice. There may be great danger if we make *practice* to be the rule of the law, and not the *law* the rule of practice; and God's laws may be very fairly explained away, if they are left wholly to the mercy of men to explain them. For thus it was the Pharisees, who were the great men of old for tradition, did thereby reject and lay aside the commandment of God, by making tradition explain it contrary to its true sense and meaning."*—To the reasoning of Mr. Payne, I will add the following remarkable words of the famous Wickliffe: "All human traditions, which are not taught in the gospel, are superfluous and wicked."† *Superfluous*, because the Bible is a complete rule of faith and practice; *wicked*, because tradition frequently usurps the place of divine law, and vacates the commands of God. Thus, as Dr. Allix observes, the Jews of old having corrupted their moral precepts by false glosses, "with these being stamped with the name of *tradition*, they evaded the force of the laws."‡

Nothing, as I conceive, can impel serious and sen-

* Preserv. against Popery, title vii. p. 147.

† In Mr. Peirce's Vindicat. of Dissenters, part i. p. 5.

‡ Judgment of the Jewish Church, p. 30.

sible Protestants to seek a refuge for any religious tenet or practice in tradition, but a conviction that the scripture affords it little or no support. What can be the reason, for instance, that our English Episcopalians make such loud appeals to ancient ecclesiastical writers, in defence of their hierarchy, and various other things in the national Establishment, but a conviction that the orders and laws of Christ in the New Testament do not extend their divine sanction to those particulars? What is the reason of Protestant Pædobaptists in general, laying so much stress on proselyte baptism, Jewish circumcision, and ecclesiastical tradition, in favour of infant baptism, but a painful conviction that the New Testament is not explicit in proof of their point? What besides can induce any of them to consider and practise infant baptism, as an *ancient custom*, or a *tradition*, rather than under the notion of a divine command? Curdellæus, for instance, expresses himself to this effect. "Pædobaptism was unknown in the two first ages after Christ;—and therefore this rite is indeed observed by us as an *ancient custom*, but not as an apostolic tradition."*—Thus Mr. Brandt: "That good and very *ancient custom* of baptizing infants, is advanced with too much violence by some, and opposed with no less by others. This ceremony, as some think, prevailed first in Africa and Greece;† but in such a manner, that some doctors of the church openly declared that they could not consent to it."‡—Thus also Mr. Daniel Rogers: "I take the baptism of infants to be one of the most reverend, general, and uncontrolled *traditions* which the church hath, and which I would no less doubt of than the creed to be apostolical, although I confess myself yet unconvinced by demonstration of scripture

* In Dr. Gill's Argument from Apostolic Tradition, p. 8.

† But if so, it certainly was not practised till some time after the ascension of our Lord.

‡ Hist of Reformat. Annotat. on b. ii. p. 8.

for it.”* Nay, though the church of England in her twenty-seventh article now says, “The baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ;” yet Bp. Gibson informs us, that in the articles of Edward the Sixth, this part of the article reads thus: “The *custom* of the church to christen young children is to be commended, and in any wise to be retained in the church.”† Here it is tacitly confessed, not only by individuals, but by a whole national church, that the foundation of infant baptism is tradition, or ancient custom, rather than a divine command, or an apostolic example. Nay, that learned writer, Mr. Tombes, when speaking of his opponent, says; “Nor do I think Mr. Baxter can show one author until Luther’s day, who made infant baptism any other than an *unwritten tradition*; although they produce, many of them, scripture, for the necessity, reasonableness, and lawfulness of the church to use it.”‡ It behoves Protestants, however, well to consider, that if the antiquity of Pædobaptism be so venerable and so important, as to justify the practice of it, the very same plea will equally serve the cause of superstition. Thus, for instance, not only the use of sponsors in baptism, but the consecration of baptismal water, exorcism, the sign of the cross, anointing the baptized person with oil, giving him a mixture of milk and honey, and wearing a white garment for some days after his baptism, with other things of a similar nature, are most of them mentioned by Tertullian, and were considered, either by him, or by others in following times, as warranted by tradition.§ Respecting one of these particulars, the church of England says; “The honour and dignity of the name of the

* In *Vanity of Infant Bap.* by A. R. part ii. p. 7.

† *Codex*, title xviii. chap. i.

‡ *Antipædobaptism*, part iii. p. 767.

§ Vid. *Suicerum*, *Thesaurus Eccles.* tom. i. p. 653, 654; and *Dr. Gill’s Argument from Apostolic Tradition*, p. 27—34.

cross, begat a reverend estimation, even in the apostles times, (for aught that is known to the contrary,) of the sign of the cross, which the Christians shortly after used in all their actions."* To which Mr. Peirce, among other things, replies; "The first plain express mention we find made of it is by Tertullian, about the year two hundred."† Just so in regard to Pædobaptism, for he is the first who plainly mentions it; not, however, as he does the sign of the cross, with approbation, but the reverse. Dr. Nichols would fain persuade us, that the "Quadragesimal fast has been observed ever since the apostles' times;"‡ to which, I suppose, Pædobaptist Dissenters pay but little regard, either as to the fast itself, or the evidence of its apostolic antiquity.

But I am not so much surprised, that a whole national Protestant church, or that individuals who avow their approbation of civil establishments of religion, should plead tradition and ancient custom in this case, because it is common for them to do so in various others, as I am, that our English Nonconformists should adopt the same plea. Our Dissenting Brethren, as Pædobaptists, must keenly feel their want of scriptural evidence in defence of their practice, or they would never make use of arguments against us, which may be retorted upon themselves, not only by Episcopalian opponents, but even by the Papists. That the ingenious author of *The Dissenting Gentleman's Letters to Mr. White*, should publish a pamphlet entitled, *The Baptism of Infants a reasonable Service, FOUNDED upon Scripture AND UNDOUBTED APOSTOLICAL TRADITION*, is very extraordinary. For why must this pretended apostolic tradition be utterly discarded by him as a Dissenter, when opposing the unscriptural rites and ceremonies of the church of England, but adopted and caressed by him as a Pædobaptist? while it is manifest, if we may

* Canon xxx.

† *Vindicat. of Dissent.* part iii. p. 149.

...‡ In Mr. Peirce, as before, p. 234.

judge from express testimonies of ancient writers, that some of those discarded rites of the English establishment can plead a higher antiquity than infant baptism.* Why then should this advocate for Pædobaptism *found* his cause, partly upon apostolic tradition, while, when pleading the cause of Nonconformity, he rejects that very tradition with contempt? This, as a certain writer observes, is to “make evidence shift sides, by turns, just as it happens to favour or to thwart our cause.” † Mr. Towgood, when ably maintaining that the scripture is a sufficient and perfect rule in matters of religion; and when animadverting upon the conduct of Episcopalian authors, in their disputes with Protestant Nonconformists and with Papists; has the following remark, which, *mutatis mutandis*, may be applied to the case before us. “It is really pleasant to observe how, in their attacks upon Dissenters, councils and fathers—are gravely mustered up, and plied warmly upon us. But no sooner does a crafty jesuit come forth armed *cap-a-pie*, with weapons of this kind, than away they are all flung! to *our* quarters they retreat! Then, the BIBLE, *the BIBLE only is the religion of Protestants.*” ‡ What can be the reason of a conduct so inconsistent, except it be that which is mentioned by Mr. Chambers in a passage already produced? That learned philosopher, when speaking of the German Baptists, and of their argument from the words of our Lord in the sixteenth of Mark, informs us, that “Calvin and other writers against them, are pretty much embarrassed to answer this argument, and are OBLIGED to have recourse to TRADITION, and the practice of the primitive church.” §

Pædobaptism, says Mr. Towgood, is “FOUNDED upon scripture, and undoubted apostolical tradition.”

* See Vol. I. p.385. † Monthly Review for Sept. 1783, p.220.

‡ Dissent. Gent. Letters, lett. iii. p.119.

§ Cyclopædia, article Anabaptists.

Then its foundation is like the heterogeneous feet of Nebuchadnezzar's image, partly iron and partly clay: rather like that of some Colossus, which has one foot on a mountain of brass, the other on the foam of the water. Divine revelation is as the former, apostolic tradition is as the latter; for the learned Henry Alting and others have justly denied the very existence of such tradition, farther than it is contained in the New Testament.*—“FOUNDED upon scripture, and undoubted apostolical tradition.” Marvellous language this, from the pen of a Protestant Dissenter! Much more becoming the creed of a high-flying Churchman or of a zealous Papist, when defending the use of sponsors, the sign of the cross, the consecration of water, and so on, than it is the principles of a Protestant Nonconformist; yet so it is, and so it is likely to be, while Pædobaptism is defended by our Dissenting Brethren.

Upon this inconsistency of conduct among Protestant authors, Bossuet animadverts as follows: “Experience has shown, that all the attempts of the Reformed to confound the Anabaptists by the scripture, have been weak; and therefore they are at last obliged to allege to them the practice of the church. We see in their *discipline*, at the end of the eleventh chapter, the form of receiving adult persons into their communion: where they make the proselyted Anabaptist acknowledge, that the baptism of infants *is founded on scripture*, AND ON THE PERPETUAL PRACTICE OF THE CHURCH. When the pretended Reformed believe they have the word of God very expressly on their side, they are not wont to build on the perpetual practice of the church. But in this case, because the scripture furnishes them with nothing, by which they are able to stop the mouths of the Anabaptists, it was necessary to rely on somewhat else; and at the same time to confess, that in these

* Loci Commun. pars ii. p. 287. Hist. of Popery, vol. i. p. 349.

matters the perpetual practice of the church is of inviolable authority.”*

Reflect. IV. What is remarked, No. 5, 9, 14, concerning the absurdity of Roman Catholics, in refusing to acknowledge their errors till the time when, and the persons by whom they were introduced are exposed to view, will equally apply to infant baptism, if it be not contained in scripture. For were it a valid plea on the behalf of Pædobaptism, That no one is able to point out the precise time when it was first practised, and therefore it must be apostolical; we might on the same ground safely infer, that many other things, which all Protestants have agreed to reject, have a claim to the sanction of divine authority. I will produce a few particulars, respecting the commencement of which learned men acknowledge their ignorance. Thus, then, Mr. Bingham: “Though the name of Patriarchs came not into the church till about the time of Socrates, yet the power itself, as is agreed on all hands, was much earlier; though where precisely to fix the epocha, and date its rise, is not so easy to determine. . . . Christians, —in the Greek and Oriental churches, have time out of mind, and without any known beginning thereof, used to bow—with their posture toward the altar, or holy table. . . . The first rise and original of this unction [of confirmation] in the church, is not exactly known, and the sentiments of learned men are various about it.” † —Cotelerius confesses, that the original of the inferior orders of ecclesiastics in the Romish Church, “is involved wholly in obscurity.” ‡ —Buddeus tells us, that it is obscure and uncertain when the custom of sponsors at the administration of baptism commenced; and that

* In Mr. Stennett's Answer to Russen, p. 184.

† Orig. Eccles. b. ii. chap. xvii. § 7; b. viii. chap. x. § 7; b. xii. chap. iii. § 2. See also b. xiii. chap. ix. § 3, 8; b. xv. chap. v. § 6; b. xviii. chap. i. § 2.

‡ In Bingham's Orig. Eccles. b. iii. chap. i. § 1.

it is not known when the ceremony of exorcism was first practised in connection with baptism.*—Dr. Owen says, it is “very uncertain” when the guides of the church first imposed humanly devised forms of prayer, under the sanction of ecclesiastical and civil penalties.† —“It is difficult,” says Turretin, “exactly to assign the time when the primacy of the Roman bishop was either founded or confirmed.”‡

Our Protestant Episcopalians, when defending the observation of Christmas, and that subordination of church officers which subsists in their parliamentary establishment, can plead the silence of antiquity respecting the commencement of such a festival, and of such a subordination. Now to these and other particulars, what have Presbyterians and Protestant Dissenters to say in their own defence? Are they not obliged to acknowledge their ignorance of the precise time and occasion of those things being introduced, and to rest in this; The New Testament knows nothing of them; and therefore “from the beginning it was not so?” Thus, for example, Dr. Nichols having pleaded in favour of observing the feast of our Lord’s nativity, That *no one mentions its beginning*; Mr. Pierce replies, “What then? must it, therefore, have been from the very first beginning of Christianity? How many things are there, whose beginnings are expressly mentioned by nobody, which yet are much later than that comes to!”§—Thus Dr. Owen: It is not “agreed, nor, as far as I see, will it ever be agreed among learned men, when first a disparity among the ordinary officers of the church, in order, degree, or power, did first begin, nor by what means it was brought about.”||—Stapferus, likewise, having ob-

* Theol. Dogmat. l. v. c. i. § 9.

† Discourse on the Work of the Holy Spirit in Prayer, Preface. Vid. Vitring. De Synag. Vet. l. i. pars. ii. c. xii.

‡ Institut. loc. xviii. q. xx. § 2.

§ Vindicat. of Dissent. p. iii. chap. xi.

|| Enquiry into Orig. Nat. of Churches, Pref. p. 23.

served that the bishops and presbyters of the New Testament differ only in respect of their names, immediately adds; "But from this appointment men departed by little and little, when first a distinction was made between bishops and presbyters; though it is uncertain when this new institution began to be introduced into the church."*—The learned Chamier speaks more fully to the same effect.† *Infant* communion may also be mentioned on this occasion; for thus a dignitary of the church of England speaks concerning it: "As for the original of this custom, it is not known when it began; probably it came in by degrees, from the ancient and laudable custom of administering the Lord's supper to grown persons presently after their baptism."‡ To all which, I may add, none of our learned opposers can inform us when the Jewish proselyte baptism was first practised.

It may, perhaps, be objected, Had Pædobaptism been an innovation, it would, probably, have met with great opposition when first introduced; and that opposition, it is likely, would have been recorded by some ecclesiastical author. We reply, Tertullian has recorded his disapprobation of it, as we have already seen. To this may be added the reasoning of Bp. Stillingfleet, in answer to the same kind of objection when made by a Roman Catholic. These are his words: "*As to the impossibility of innovations coming in without notorious opposition*, I see no ground at all for it, where the alteration is not made at once, but proceeds gradually. He may as well prove it impossible for a man to fall into a dropsy, or a hectic fever, unless he can tell the punctual time when it began. And he may as well argue thus: Such a man fell into a fever upon a great debauch, and

* Theol. Polem. c. xiv. § 28, 29.

† Panstrat. tom. ii. l. x. c. vi. § 20. Vid. Quensted. Antiq. Bib. pars i. c. ii. num. iii. § 2.

‡ Cases to Recover Dissenters, vol. ii. p. 461.

the physicians were presently sent for to advise about him ; therefore the other man hath no chronical distemper, because he had no physicians when he was first sick : as because councils were called against some heresies, and great opposition made to them, therefore when there is not the like, there can be no innovation.”*

Till, therefore, it be fairly proved that infant baptism is warranted, either by precept or by example, in the New Testament, we need not be much concerned about the precise time when it was introduced ; but may safely shelter our cause under the wings of that divine oracle, FROM THE BEGINNING IT WAS NOT SO. If, however, our opponents will pledge themselves to inform us with precision, when the Jewish proselyte baptism commenced, or when infant communion first came into the church, we will engage in our turn to inform them with equal punctuality, when infant baptism was first practised.—The conduct of our opposers in arguing for Pædobaptism from tradition, reminds me of an old saying, with which I shall conclude this chapter : *Cum leonina non sufficeret, pellem vulpinam esse assuendam.*

* Preserv. against Popery, title ix. p. 310. See Vol. I. p. 391—394.

CHAPTER V.

Infant Baptism and Infant Communion introduced about the same Time, and supported by similar Arguments.

BR. BURNET.—“ We see a practice that was very ancient, and that continued very long, which arose out of the exposition of those words, John vi. 53; by which infants were made partakers of the eucharist.” Four Discourses to the Clergy, p. 206, 207.

2. Hospinianus.—“ The Lord’s supper was given to the infants of believers, in the time of pope Innocent the First, of Cyprian, and of Austin; as well in Europe, as in Asia and Africa, and that as necessary to salvation . . . Jerome, Austin, and other fathers testify, that they who were baptized, not only adults, but also infants, without any delay received the Lord’s supper in both kinds. . . This anciently received custom prevailed afterwards to such a degree, especially in the time of Charles the Great, that the eucharist was not only given to infants in the public assemblies, after the administration of baptism, and at other times when the church usually met for the celebration of the holy supper; but also the bread of the supper was reserved to be given to little children that were sick, equally as to adults. . . Agreeable to that canon; *Let a presbyter have the eucharist always ready, that when any person is afflicted, or a little child is weakly, he may immediately administer it, lest he die without the communion.* . . . There were some remains of this custom in Lorrain and the parts adjacent but a few years ago: for there, when an infant was baptized, the priest who baptized him,—used to dip his fingers in the cup, and drop the wine into the child’s mouth, saying; *The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ profit thee to eternal life*

. . . . The ancients, and among them Austin especially, were principally induced to give the sacred supper to infants, by that saying of Christ; 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.' Whence they thought it necessary, that infants also should be admitted to the Lord's supper, by which they might be rendered partakers of Christ and of eternal life. . . . And certainly they are to be commended who give the eucharist to infants, if the arguments of the fathers, of the Papists, and of others be of any weight, by which they tie salvation to baptism; for they see, with equal reason, that the same blessings may follow a participation of the Lord's supper. On that account, those who pleaded the necessity of communicating at the Lord's table, urged an equal necessity of being baptized: among whom Austin unwarrantably indulged his own opinion in respect of baptism, when writing against the Pelagians; too inconsiderately consigning over the infants of Christians to damnation, that died without being baptized. There is nothing that he more zealously urges, nor on which he more firmly depends, than those words of Christ; 'Except a man be born of water and of the Holy Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.'" *Hist. Sacram. l. ii. c. ii. p. 51, 62.*

3. Heideggerus.—"The ancient church for a long time gave the sacred symbols of the holy supper to infants; being led to it by a false interpretation of our Lord's words, (John vi. 53;) compared with another declaration of the same divine Teacher, (John iii. 5.)" *Corpus Theolog. loc. xxv. § 75.*

4. Salmasius.—"Because the eucharist was given to adult catechumens when they were washed with holy baptism, without any space of time intervening, this also was done to infants, after Pædobaptism was introduced." *Apud Dalenem, Dissertat. de Pædobaptismo.*

5. Suicerus.—"It is notorious from antiquity, that the eucharist was given to infants. . . . This custom, an-

ciently received, afterward prevailed to such a degree, especially in the time of Charles the Great, that the holy supper was given to infants, not only in the public assembly of the church after baptism, or at other times when the church used to assemble for the holy communion; but some of the bread of the sacred supper was reserved, to be given to such infants as were sick, as well as to adults. Ansegisus, abbot of Liege, who recites a canon of the same Charles, published on this account, gives us a strong testimony of it; for the words of the canon are these: ‘Let a presbyter have the eucharist always ready, that when any person is sick, or an infant afflicted, he may immediately give it him, that he may not die without the communion.’” Thesaur. Eccles. sub voce *Συνοχίς*.

6. Mr. Chillingworth.—“St. Augustine, I am sure, held the communicating of infants as much apostolic tradition, as the baptizing of them. . . . The eucharist’s necessity for infants—[was] taught by the consent of the eminent fathers of some ages, without any opposition from any of their contemporaries; and was delivered by them, not as doctors, but as witnesses; not as their opinion, but as apostolic tradition.” Religion of Protest. Answ. to Pref. § 10; and chap. iii. § 44.

7. Dr. Wall.—“That which I conceive most probable on the whole matter is, That in Cyprian’s time, the people of the church of Carthage did oftentimes bring their children younger than ordinary to the communion. That in St. Austin’s and Innocent’s time, it was in the west parts given to mere infants; and that this continued from that time for about SIX HUNDRED YEARS. That some time during this space of six hundred years, the Greek church, which was then low in the world, took this custom from the Latin church, which was more flourishing. That the Roman church, about the year one thousand, entertaining the doctrine of transubstantiation, let fall the custom of giving the holy

elements to infants; and the other western churches mostly following their example, did the like upon the same account: but that the Greeks, not having the same doctrine, continued, and do still continue the custom of communicating infants. They think that command of St. Paul, ‘ Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat,’ so to be understood, as not to exclude such as are by their age incapable of examining themselves from partaking, but only to oblige all that are capable. As the like command of his, ‘ If any one will not work, let him have nothing given him to eat,’ must be so limited to such as are able to work, as that infants, and such as are not capable to work, must have victuals given them, though they do not work. . . . VERY NEAR HALF THE CHRISTIANS IN THE WORLD do still continue that practice. The Greek church, the Armenians, the Maronites, the Cophti, the Abassens, and the Muscovites; as is related by the late authors, Jeremias, Brerewood, Alvares, Ricaut, Heylin, and so on; and so, for aught I know, do all the rest of the Eastern Christians. And it is probable, that the Western had done the same, had it not been for the doctrine of transubstantiation coming up in the church of Rome. . . . It is a question in the present Christian church, whether giving the communion to infants be an error or a duty. The present Western Christians think it an error. The Greek church, which is I think the biggest half of Christendom, think it a duty.” *Hist. Inf. Bap.* p. 517, 518. *Def. of Hist. Inf. Bap.* p. 384.

8. Mosheim.—“ It appears by many and undoubted testimonies, that this holy rite [the Lord’s supper] was looked upon as essential to salvation; and when this is duly considered, we shall be less disposed to censure, as erroneous, the opinion of those, who have affirmed that the Lord’s supper was administered to infants during this [second] century.” *Eccles. Hist.* vol. i. p. 171.

9. Dr. John Edwards. — “ Infant communicating

was a Catholic doctrine. . . . Herein all the fathers agreed; who misunderstanding and misapplying Christ's words, in John vi. 53, held that the sacrament of the Lord's supper was to be administered to infants and children, and that it was necessary for them to their salvation: accordingly, they made them partakers of that ordinance." Discourse concerning Truth and Error, p. 232.

10. Buddeus.—“It is manifest, that in the ancient church it was usual to give the eucharist to infants; which custom arose about the third century, and continued in the Western church to the beginning of the twelfth century, as Quenstedius shows. This custom seems to have prevailed first in the African church, and to have been propagated thence to other churches of the west. Certainly, we no where find it more frequently mentioned than in the writings of Cyprian, of Austin, and of Paulinus. The error seems to have arisen from a false opinion concerning the absolute necessity of the eucharist; and it has been observed by learned men, that this arose from the words of Christ, (John vi. 53,) not well understood.” Theolog. Dogmat. l. v. c. i. § 19.

11. Venema.—“From the things before narrated, it plainly appears what is to be concluded concerning the admission of infants to the Lord's supper in the second century. For seeing access to the holy table was granted only to baptized persons, it is manifest that the eucharist was not commonly given to infants, if Pædobaptism was not then in common use. It may be added, that no sign of admitting infants to the holy supper appears before the time of Cyprian, in the third century; who is the first that mentions it, as will appear in its proper place. From which, what has been said about Pædobaptism acquires additional force; seeing, *in the ancient church, those two sacraments, in respect of the subjects, WERE NEVER SEPARATED THE ONE FROM THE OTHER. . . .* Infants, in the third century, were

generally admitted to baptism and the Lord's supper. That Pædobaptism was now the received practice in the churches, manifestly appears from Cyprian;—by whose writings, it is evident, that baptized infants were partakers of the eucharist; which custom was continued through many ages. . . . In the thirteenth century, baptized infants ceased to be admitted to the eucharist, because it began to be administered under one kind." Hist. Eccles. secul. ii. § 100; secul. iii. § 57; secul. xiii. § 164.

12. Dr. Priestley.—“ It is remarkable, that in all Christian antiquity we always find, that communion in the Lord's supper IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWED BAPTISM: and no such thing occurs, as that of any person having a right to one of these ordinances, and not to the other. . . . There is no express mention made of infant baptism before this [in Cyprian] of infant communion The apostle Paul seems to have referred to the custom of giving the eucharist to children, in 1 Cor. vii. 14. . . . In all Christian churches that have never been infected with the Romish superstition, and subject to the Papal authority, the right of infants to Christian communion was never invaded. Infant communion is to this day the practice of the Greek churches, of the Russians, the Armenians, the Maronites, the Copts, the Assyrians, [perhaps it should be *Syrians*,] and, probably, all other Oriental churches; and it was also the practice of the Bohemians, who kept themselves free from the Papal authority till very near the Reformation; and in a petition which the Bohemian bishops presented to the Council of Basil, in one thousand four hundred and thirty-eight, they pleaded very earnestly to be allowed to continue this their ancient custom. . . . No objection can be made to this custom, but what may with equal force be made to the custom of baptizing infants.” Address, on giving the Lord's Supper to Children, p. 10, 17, 20, 28, 31.

13. Bp. Taylor.—“ Whether the holy communion may be given to infants, has been a great question in the church of God; which, in this instance, has not been, as in others, divided by parties and single persons, but by whole ages; for some of the earliest ages of the church, down to the time of Charles the Great, that is, for above six hundred years, the church of God did give the holy communion to newly baptized infants. . . . It is certain, that in scripture there is nothing which directly forbids the giving the holy communion to infants. For though we are commanded to *examine*, and so to eat, yet this precept is not of itself necessary, but by reason of an introduced cause: just as they are commanded to *believe* and *repent*, who are to be baptized; that is, persons that need it and can do it, they must: and infants without examination can as well receive the effect of the eucharist, as without repentance they can have the effect of baptism. . . . Infants, indeed, cannot discern the Lord’s body; so neither can they discern truth from falsehood, an article of faith from heretical doctrine; and yet to discern the one is as much required as to discern the other; but in both the case is equal: for they must *discern* when they can confound, or dishonour; but till they can do evil, they cannot be tied to do good. And it were hard to suppose the whole church of God, in her best and earliest times, to have continued for above six hundred years in a practical error: it will not well become our modesty to judge them without farther enquiry and greater evidence. . . . The primitive church had all this to justify their practice, that the sacraments of grace are the great channels of the grace of God;—that this grace always descends upon them that do not hinder it, and therefore certainly to infants; and some do expressly affirm it, and none can with certainty deny, but that infants, if they did receive [the] communion, should also in so doing receive the fruits of it;—that, to baptism there are many acts of pre-dispo-

sition required, as well as to the communion; and yet the church, who very well understands the obligation of those precepts, supposes no children to be obliged to those pre-dispositions to either sacrament, but fits every commandment to a capable subject;—that there is something done on God's part, and something on ours;—that what belongs to us, obliges us then when we can hear and understand, but not before; but that which is on God's part is always ready to them that can receive it;—that infants, although they cannot alone come to Christ, yet the church, their mother, can bring them in her arms;—that they who are capable of the grace of the sacrament, may also receive the sign; and therefore the same grace, being conveyed to them in one sacrament, may also be imparted to them in the other;—that as they can be born again without their own consent, so they can be fed by the hands of others; and what begins without their own actual choice, may be renewed without their own actual desire; and that, therefore, it may be feared lest, if upon pretence of figurative speeches, allegories, and allusions, in the injunction of certain dispositions, the holy communion be denied them, a gap be opened upon equal pretences to deny them baptism;—that since the Jewish infants' being circumcised is used as an argument that they might be baptized, their eating of the paschal lamb may also be a competent warrant to eat of that sacrament, in which also, as in the other, the sacrificed lamb is represented as offered and slain for them. Now the church having such fair probabilities and prudential motives, and no prohibition, if she shall use her power to the purposes of kindness and charity, she is not easily to be reproved, lest without necessity we condemn all the primitive Catholic church, and all the modern churches in the East and South to this day. Especially, since without all dispositions infants are baptized, there is less reason why they may not be com-

municated, having already received some real dispositions towards this, even all the grace of the sacrament of baptism, which is certainly something towards the other; and after all, refusing to communicate infants, entered into the church, upon an unwarrantable ground. For though it was confessed, that the communion would do them benefit, yet it was denied to them then when the doctrine of transubstantiation entered; upon pretence lest, by *puking up* the holy symbols, the sacrament should be dishonoured." Worthy Communicant, chap. iii. sect. ii. p. 202, 207, 208, 210, 211, 212.

14. Mr. Williams.—“ If infants have a right to baptism, what assignable reason is there why they have not a consequential right to church-membership? And if they are entitled to the latter, why should they not be treated as other members are, especially as a considerable benefit might attend it? As to the objection, *That the counterpart to this, is to admit them to the Lord's table, if they do nothing to deserve censure*,—I ask, what is there unreasonable or unscriptural in such an objection? Nay, farther, in point of *right*, how can the two ordinances be separated? Are not *the SAME REASONS which are brought for infant baptism, in like manner applicable to infant communion?* And will not *the objections against the latter, admit of the same answer as those against the former?* See Mr. James Peirce's Essay in favour of the ancient Practice of giving the Eucharist to Children.—Nor do I see how this reasoning can be evaded by a consistent Pædobaptist, while we alone attend to the *legal right* of infants to that ordinance; but such advocates for the practice must allow that many things are lawful which are not expedient. And should it be granted that a Christian minister cannot justly deny the eucharist to any church member (who does not lie under its censure) when demanded, yet there are *prudential* reasons why a parent should not desire it for infants and young children; especially

when we reflect that, though the *ground* of right is the same, the nature and design of the two ordinances are different." Note on Mr. Maurice's *Social Relig.* p. 78, 79. *

15. Mr. James Peirce.—“It is well known, that the practice of giving the eucharist to children, is at this day, and has been for many ages past, used in the Greek churches, which are not of the Roman communion. . . . This custom continued in the West, among the Bohemian churches, which kept themselves pure from the Roman superstition and idolatry, till very near the Reformation. . . . The Lord's supper was for several ages together given to infants in the Western churches, and was not laid aside in them till the eleventh or twelfth century, when the grossest corruption and abuses came in amongst them. . . . The giving the eucharist to infants was the custom in St. Cyprian's time. . . . There is no reason to believe the practice of giving the Lord's supper to infants was peculiar to Carthage, in Cyprian's time; nor is there any evidence that it was not universally received in the Christian church. . . . It is highly probable this had been the practice of the Christian church from the apostles' time. . . . It is easy to account for our not meeting with any express mention of this practice in the writers who lived before Cyprian, even supposing it to have been then received. . . . I must here remind the reader of the manner in which St. Cyprian speaks of this custom; which, I think, plainly argues it not to have been any novel thing brought in by himself, or in his own time, but to have been a received and settled usage of the church. I may here urge, that we have no account of the *rise* of this custom. No one who pretends it was not derived from

* So Mr. Baxter, when speaking of infants being denied the holy supper, says, “That is for want of natural capacity to use the ordinance, and not for want of a *right*, if they had such capacity.” *Disput. of Right to Sac.* p. 294.

the apostles, and constantly practised in the succeeding times, is able to give us any probable account of the time when, or occasion upon which it began. We never hear of any contest or dispute that was occasioned by this practice: and yet had it not been received from the apostles, one would think such a vast innovation as this would have been, must of necessity have raised some grievous quarrel. As there is no express mention made of this usage before Cyprian's time, so neither is there, as far as I can find, any thing mentioned before his time from which it can be inferred that it was not then used. . . . The very *silence* of antiquity is a strong argument they admitted infants to the Lord's supper as well as to baptism. . . . As the ancients could never have fixed upon the interpretation of John iii. 5, which is so general among them, and makes baptism absolutely necessary to salvation, unless they had admitted infants to baptism; so they could never have received such an explanation of John vi. 53, as made the eucharist absolutely necessary to salvation, unless they had used to give the eucharist to infants. And, to speak my mind freely, I am persuaded they equally missed the true sense in both texts. . . . What better recommendation of antiquity can almost any thing come with? It appears very probably to have been the practice of the most early times after the apostles, and to have continued in the church, universally observed by the Greek church ever since; and by the Latin churches for about a thousand years, and never laid aside by them till they became most grievously corrupted, and till the monster of transubstantiation appeared in the world; and that the same superstition occasioned the abolishing of this custom and the taking away the cup from the laity together, and these were both professedly done by the same councils: and when the Latins laid it aside, it still continued among the purer Christians of Bohemia, who bore such a noble

testimony against the superstition and tyranny of the Roman church, and was kept in use among them till within about half a century of the Reformation.....

“The baptism and communion of infants stand upon the same foot; and, therefore, they who admit the one ought to admit the other also. For the confirming of this argument, I will show, first, That the *same reasons* which are brought for infant baptism, are in like manner applicable to infant communion. Secondly, That the *objections* against infant communion, will admit of the same answers as those against infant baptism.... One strong argument for infant baptism is taken from the words of the apostle, 1 Cor. vii. 14. I need not say how much stress has been laid upon this, in the controversy about infant baptism, nor do I think it is more than the text will bear; but I desire only a reason, why this will not as well prove infants' right to the eucharist as to baptism. Let it but be observed, what sort of holiness the apostle speaks of, and what allusion he manifestly uses. The holiness he attributes to children, stands in opposition to *uncleanmess*, and so is to be explained from the ceremonial law. Now, according to that, persons were unclean when they were debarred the public worship, and the communion of the people of God. And accordingly, in opposition thereto, then persons were reckoned holy when they were fit and qualified for the service of God, and communion with his people, either in or out of acts of worship.... In this sense the apostle must be understood to say, the children of Christians were not *unclean* but *holy*; that they were not, as unclean persons under the law, debarred the public service or communion with the church of God. And, in the same manner, as this warrants their baptism it will their communion also.

“I see no reason why infants' right to the eucharist may not, as well as their right to baptism, be pleaded

from their being *members of the visible church*. I grant the argument is good: infants are members of the visible church, therefore they are to be solemnly initiated and entered into it by the ordinance of baptism, which God has appointed for that purpose. But then, why should not the same hold for their communion in the Lord's supper? If they are members of the church, and baptized into it, why should they not as such be brought up in it; and be stately nourished and fed with that food which God has provided for his church? * Upon what reason are some of the members of the visible church, without any fault on their part, excluded from any of the privileges and advantages which God has granted to his church in common? For if infants are in the church of Christ, they must be reckoned his sheep, or his lambs; but let them be one or the other, they are to be fed by his ministers, and this is one way of doing it.

“Another plea for infant baptism is, *their having an interest in the new covenant*. It is urged, that baptism is a *seal* of the covenant, and nothing can be more proper than to apply the seal of the covenant to those to whom the covenant itself does belong. But then I desire to know, Whether the Lord's supper is not a seal of that covenant? And if their part in the covenant will infer their right to one seal, why not to the other? There is great need here of some very nice distinction; or I cannot see how we shall be able to urge the same argument, when it is brought to prove their right to one sacrament, and answer it, when it is urged to prove their right to partake of the other.

“The *harsh and injurious treatment* of infants, which is the consequence of denying them baptism, is urged sometimes in behalf of their being baptized.

* So says Turretin, though on a different occasion. His language is, “If we ought to enter into the church, we ought also to be nourished in it.” Institut. loc. xix. quæst. xiv. § 5.

They who refuse to admit them into the church by baptism, are represented as treating their children like dogs; according to those texts, 'For without are dogs;' 'It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it unto dogs.' And whether they who refuse to give them children's bread, the sacrament, as though it were too holy for them, treat them any better, may be easily judged by those words of our Saviour; 'Give not that which is holy unto dogs; neither cast ye your pearls before swine.'

"Another argument is, *Infants are capable of salvation*, and therefore may receive baptism, which is the means of salvation. And why does not this consequence as well hold to their receiving the Lord's supper, which is as much a means of salvation as baptism? Another plea made use of for infant baptism is, *That such may be devoted to God*. And certainly this is as good a reason for their partaking of the Lord's supper as of baptism; since the one is as properly a devoting persons to God as the other. And is it not strange, there should be sufficient reason for devoting children to God in their infancy, and none at all to repeat and renew that dedication before they are grown up to maturity?

"Great stress is often, in the matter of baptizing infants, laid upon that text, Luke xviii. 15, 16. Hence it has been argued, That Christ is *willing* little children should come to him; that he is *pleased* when infants, who are not able to come themselves, are brought by others to him, that he may bless them. And who has been able to assure those who make use of this argument, that Christ is only willing to have them brought to him in baptism, and not in the Lord's supper? Is not the giving them the eucharist as solemn a way of bringing them to Christ as the baptizing them? Why should we think Christ has no proper opportunity of blessing them, when he gives to his church the solemn

tokens and pledges of his love and favour? Or why are we to suspect or question his gracious readiness and inclination to bless them at such a season? And what reason can there be, that the faith of parents should not be as available in bringing them to the Lord's supper as to baptism?

“It is frequently alleged, *That infants are disciples*, (Acts xv. 10;) and therefore they ought by baptism to be enrolled as such, and to be solemnly initiated to his discipline. And certainly their receiving the Lord's supper is as proper a testimony of their continuing, as their baptism was of their being initiated to be his disciples. And since Christ would have his disciples *taught to observe all things whatsoever he has commanded*, certainly this is one of the things he has commanded, and this is one of the ways he has appointed of teaching his disciples. And what can be a more proper method of teaching baptized children to observe this ordinance in particular, than to bring them up from their very infancy to receive it? Is not this the way which all the world takes to teach children? Do people use to neglect to set children upon their feet, or begin to teach them to go, till they have acquired strength enough to be able to go alone? Do they use to forbear speaking to them in order to teach them to speak, till they are able to make themselves some distinction of sounds, or to understand all that is said to them? Is not every one sensible these things are to be taught them by little and little, and that they are to be begun with early, even before they come to take any great notice, or make much observation of things? And who can assure us that Christ, though he would have young disciples, would not have any such method as this taken with them?

“Whereas it is pleaded in the behalf of infant baptism, that it has been practised *from the beginning of the Christian church*, I have likewise endeavoured to evidence the same to be true concerning infant communion

. . . . The parallel between the arguments in the one and the other case might be easily run a great deal farther.

“The *objections* against infant communion will admit of the same answers as those against infant baptism. The only objections which carry any appearance of weight in them, are taken from their *incapacity* to perform some acts which are required in the adult communicants; such as, *remembering* Christ, *discerning* the Lord’s body, and previously *examining themselves*. And just such arguments may be and are alleged against infant baptism. Infants are not capable of that repentance and faith which are required in the adult when they are baptized. And the same kind of answer will serve in both cases. . . . I should be glad to know of those Pædobaptists who go on the contrary supposition, what communion they admit infants to when they baptize them? What one privilege in the church do they admit them to? Right to communion in the other sacrament, it is supposed, they have none—right to communion in prayers they are reckoned to have, in common with Heathens, antecedently to their baptism. So that, for aught I see, the only privilege bestowed upon them (I speak only with reference to the communion of the Christian church, of which they are made members by baptism,) is this; That if ever they shall think fit to come to the Lord’s table, *they shall not be baptized over again*. . . . It is objected, That children, and especially infants, cannot do this *in remembrance of Christ*; and, therefore, the nature and design of the Lord’s supper shows they are not qualified to join in it, since our Saviour, when he instituted it, expressly required his disciples to do this *in remembrance of him*. . . . Such kind of objections will as soon overthrow infants’ right to baptism as to the eucharist. ‘He that BELIEVETH and is baptized, shall be saved.’ ‘If thou BELIEVEST WITH ALL THINE HEART, thou mayest’ be baptized. ‘REPENT, and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus

Christ, for the remission of sins.' These, and many other such texts may as well be urged to show the necessity of repentance and faith before baptism; of which yet infants are as incapable as they are of remembering Christ. . . . Children are not capable of performing the duty of *self-examination*, which is prescribed as previously necessary to a person's receiving the Lord's supper, (1 Cor. xi. 28.) I answer, If I should allow the words of the apostle to be taken in their true sense in the objection, yet the Pædobaptists must own, that the texts I mentioned before may be as strongly urged against infant baptism as this can against infant communion. . . . Some will urge, That children ought not to receive the Lord's supper, because they are not able to *discern the Lord's body*, as all communicants ought to do, according to the determination of the apostle, 1 Cor. xi. 29. I might here answer as before; That this concerns the adult, and requires, that such as are capable of doing it should discern the Lord's body when they partake of his supper. . . . And certainly, as Christians are to put a difference between the sacramental and common bread and wine, so they are between the baptismal and common washing; and if an incapacity to make such a difference will exclude infants from the Lord's supper, it may also from baptism. . . . It may be farther objected, That children cannot do what the apostle supposes Christians should at the Lord's supper; that is, *show forth Christ's death*, (1 Cor. xi. 26.) I answer. . . . The ancients did not think this showing forth the Lord's death was peculiar to the Lord's supper: they thought, and, as far as I can see, with good reason, that baptism was likewise a showing forth Christ's death. *Therefore*, says Chrysostom, arguing against the Marcionites, *we show forth his death upon all occasions, in the mysteries, in BAPTISM, and all the rest. . . .* The ordinance of the Lord's supper is *very solemn*; but if children should be admitted to communicate therein,

it might take off the respect due to it, and bring it into contempt. Now here I grant the ordinance is solemn, and that it should be attended with answerable solemnity and seriousness of mind by all the adult; but—why may it not be as well alleged, that the administering baptism to infants is the ready way to bring that sacrament, which is likewise a solemn ordinance, into contempt? . . . Will not this practice make the Lord's supper look like a *charm*, and encourage the Popish doctrine of sacraments being effectual *ex opere operato*, without any regard had to the disposition of the receiver? This can no otherwise be the consequence of children's receiving the Lord's supper, than it is of their receiving baptism. . . . The Lord's supper is an *establishing* ordinance, designed to confirm the grace that is already in a person, and not to work the first grace in him; and, therefore, not proper to be given to any before that work is begun in them, and consequently not to children. . . . Let this ordinance be an establishing ordinance. Is there any thing contradictory to that notion in letting children partake of it? I plead not for its being administered to any but such as are baptized; and if they need baptism, certainly they need establishment after baptism; and the Lord's supper, according to this notion, is appointed for that end." *Essay in favour of the Ancient Practice of giving the Eucharist to Children, passim.**

* I will here subjoin another testimony in favour of infant communion, from a zealous anonymous Pædobaptist. "Infants were admitted," says he, "in the primitive church to the Lord's supper; but in later times have been excluded by the spirit of Popery, and still continue to be so in Reformed churches, without any sufficient reason. Superstition, as it is a weakness, is the only excuse for them. Their practice, in general, in their admissions to communion, is a proof that they lean towards transubstantiation, though in words they deny it. Every soul, according to their number, in every family of the Jews, ate of the passover, or paschal lamb. See *Exod. xii. 4.*" *Eight Answers to Eight Queries*, p. 5. — See Mr. Bingham's *Orig. Eccles. b. xv. chap. iv. § 7.*

REFLECTIONS.

Reflect. I. Omitting various other particulars, which are included in the long quotation from Mr. Peirce, we are here told by our opponents, that the Lord's supper was anciently given to infants, No. 1 to 14;—that this custom first prevailed in the African churches, No. 10;—that it became general, No. 9;—that there is no express mention of infant baptism before that of infant communion, No. 12;—that the practice of giving the holy supper to infants originated in a misunderstanding of John vi. 53, No. 1, 2, 3, 9, 10;—that it followed immediately on their being baptized, No. 4;—that in point of legal right, the two positive ordinances cannot be separated, No. 14;—that in the ancient church, baptism and the sacred supper were never separated, in regard to their subjects, No. 11, 12;—that the Lord's supper was esteemed necessary to the salvation of infants, No. 2, 6, 8;—that when they were sick it was privately administered to them, as to adults in a similar situation, No. 2, 5;—that infant communion was the general practice for six hundred years; and, among the Bohemians, till near the time of the Reformation, No. 7, 11, 12;—that the doctrine of transubstantiation was the occasion of its being laid aside in the Latin church, No. 7, 11, 12, 13;—that Paul seems to refer to this custom, in 1 Cor. vii. 14, No. 12;—that no objection can be made against it, which will not lie with equal force against infant baptism, No. 12, 14;—and, that one half of the Christians now in the world still continue the custom, No. 7, 12.—Such is the important intelligence communicated by these Pædobaptists, independent of the more laboured and accurate account which is given by Mr. Peirce. To these various testimonies, I will add the attestation of impartial Friends. Thus, then—

Robert Barclay.—“For aught can be learned, the use of this [infant communion] and infant baptism, are

of alike age; though the one be laid aside both by Papists and Protestants, and the other, to wit, baptism of infants, be stuck to." Apology, proposit. xiii.

Joseph Wyeth.—"If from the commission, Matt. xxviii. 19, must of necessity be understood baptism with water, and that infants must be understood to be within the limits of it, it may be convenient to show, why infants are not within the limits of 1 Cor. xi. 25, 26; and that they must not communicate of the bread and wine." Switch for the Snake, p. 270.

Reflect. II. The long quotation produced from Mr. Peirce, and the force of his reasoning in defence of infant communion on the principles of Pædobaptism, render it superfluous for me to enlarge by way of reflection: the tenour of his argumentation being such, as may safely challenge the united efforts of our opposers fairly to confute it, without sapping the foundations of infant baptism. Nor, indeed, have I as yet heard that any professed answer was ever attempted; though the cause of Pædobaptism seems to require it, and though the character of Mr. Peirce, for learning and parts, may be justly considered as a motive to such an attempt. For as the learned author grafts infant communion on the principles of infant baptism, and in a masterly way insists, that those principles infer the former as well as the latter, our opponents cannot be insensible, that a thorough confutation of his essay would be of great importance to their cause.* Were we to behold Pædobaptism fairly and entirely divorced from its old associate, infant communion; that being confirmed, while this is confuted; one great impediment would be removed out of the way of our commencing Pædobaptists. Nor can

* This reminds me of what Mr. Peirce himself has remarked concerning Mr. Calderwood's *Altare Damascenum*. His words are, "The patrons of Episcopacy have never yet answered it, how much soever their cause requires it." *Vindicat. of Dissent.* part i. p. 175, 176.

we forbear commending the consistency of sentiment in Mr. Peirce; and of both sentiment and practice in one half the Christian world, where each of our Lord's positive appointments is administered to children; because we think our Brethren themselves must feel the force of the following remark. "It may be reckoned," says Mr. Peirce, "no small advantage in this case, that we shall become more *consistent* with ourselves, in maintaining infants' church-membership and right to baptism. The Antipædobaptists hardly say any thing more plausible on this head, than when they argue from our own proceedings, and ask us, Why we do not administer the Lord's supper to infants, as well as baptism?"* While, therefore, the title of infants to baptism is loudly pleaded, but their access to the Lord's table utterly denied; and while the arguments of Mr. Peirce remain in their full force, it is natural for us to conclude, that the conduct of our Brethren, in this respect, is not reconcileable to the necessary consequences of their own principles. No; for our author has made it appear, that infant baptism and infant communion are twin sisters; that they were adopted and cherished as such by the whole Christian church, through a course of ages; that they are now fostered, as bearing that strict relation one to the other, by half the Christian world; and, consequently, that they should either live together and be supported, or die of the same disease and be discarded, at once and on equal grounds.

Mr. Williams indeed suggests, that though, in respect of *legal right*, infant *baptism and infant communion cannot be separated, yet prudential reasons forbid the latter*. See No. 14. But as the whole of any one's title to a positive ordinance must originate in positive divine law, if our Lord have invested any description of infants with a title to the holy supper, he must have made it the duty of their parents or guardians to demand it for them; because the infants themselves lie under a natu-

* Essay, part iv. p. 171.

ral incapacity of so doing. As well have no title at all to the privilege, as one which they cannot plead, and which their parents are tacitly forbidden to plead for them. Strange to think, that our Lord should have indulged infants with a claim on the sacred supper, and that, without any forfeiture or any fault, they should be utterly denied the ordinance on a prudential ground! According to our annotator, something called *prudence*, not divine law, is to direct our conduct in regard to this affair. We should be glad of information, however, what his chief prudential reason is. Bp. Taylor tells us, that when the doctrine of transubstantiation came into the Latin church, infant communion was laid aside; "lest by *puking up* the holy symbols, the sacrament should be dishonoured." See No. 13.—A delicate reason this, and nearly allied to one that is assigned by Quenstedius, for converting infant baptism into infant sprinkling.* Whether, in the opinion of Mr. Williams, infants that have a legal title to the holy supper may be kept from the ordinance on this prudential ground, I cannot say; but it seems a little surprising, that prudential reasons of any kind should counteract the operation of legal right from year to year: for if there be any such right in the case, it must be founded in divine institution. Now Dr. Owen assures us, that "what men have a right to do in the church by God's institution, that they have a *command* to do:"† and Mr. Charnock has told us, that "they must be evasions past understanding, that can hold water against a divine order."‡

Infants have a legal right to the holy supper, but it is not expedient for them to partake of it. . . . A legal title to the Lord's table, but prudential reasons forbid their approach. And is this the language of a Protestant Dissenting Brother? How similar to that of Roman Catholics, respecting a participation of the eucharistical

* See Vol. I. p. 256, No. 13.

† On Heb. vol. iii. p. 127.

‡ Works, vol. ii. p. 763.

cup by the laity! for none of the Popish writers deny, as far as I have observed, that the laity have a legal right to the wine any more than to the bread; but, like Mr. Williams, they do not think it *expedient—prudential reasons* lie against it. Thus adults in the one case, and infants in the other, are not permitted to enjoy what belongs to them by acknowledged legal right. This is the more surprising, in respect of our annotator, because he does not, like the church of Rome, formally claim a dispensing power; though, on the principle here adopted, it is undoubtedly exercised by him in regard to infants. —His reasoning, indeed, on positive institutes is very extraordinary. Does our Lord's command *to baptize* come under his notice? the most eminent authors, according to him, are quite uncertain what it means; and therefore he thinks that those concerned should please themselves, as to the manner of using baptismal water. Are the *subjects* of baptism under his consideration? he represents the baptismal statute, in reference to that matter, as indeterminate.* Is the *supper* of our Lord the article of his enquiry? he does not, as before, charge the law of that solemnity with being obscure or indeterminate; no, not even in regard to infants: for it is clear to him that they have a *legal right* of participation, that is, a right by divine law. Surely, then, in his view their title must be thoroughly good; and in his practice, their place at the holy table must be inviolably secured. So it might seem to one who considers divine law as the highest authority, and a divine grant as supremely authentic; but Mr. Williams has I know not how many *prudential reasons*, which rise up in opposition to legal right, and guard the sacred supper against the approach of infants. Thus, to support the credit of infant sprinkling, he impeaches the law of baptism as *very obscure*; and, to evade infant communion, he tacitly

* See Vol. I. p. 93 — 130, Reflect. IX.; and p. 350 — 360, Reflect. X. See also Vol. I. p. 275, 276.

charges the eucharistical appointment with *great weakness*. The former is directly apparent; the latter follows by inevitable consequence. For if it be a fact, that infants have a legal right to the Lord's supper, and if his prudential reasons for withholding it from them be valid, it may be justly presumed, that the Legislator *did not think of those reasons*, when he enacted the law of that solemnity. While, however, I entirely acquit Mr. Williams of intending any reflection upon positive divine law, in either of these cases, I may venture to ask, What he would say of us, were we to allow the legal right of infants to baptism, though we never administer that ordinance to them?—Our annotator finding the arguments of Mr. Peirce for infant communion, on the principles of Pædobaptism, too strong for him; and being unwilling to abandon his usual practice of baptizing infants, is inclined to compromise the matter. This he does, by allowing that legal right is undoubtedly in favour of Mr. Peirce's hypothesis; while he insists, that it would not be prudent for any one to act upon it. But this compromise is of such an awkward complexion, that it will be approved, I apprehend, by very few of his brethren; for it places in contrast and in contest, *divine authority and human prudence*; yet so as to give an example which he approves, of prudential reasons gaining the ascendancy over divine authority.

Reflect. III. Our principles respecting baptism have often been charged with *contracting* the privileges of the gospel dispensation, so as to render it less favourable to infants than the Jewish economy was; which is considered as a great absurdity. To this we reply: It is with an ill grace that such an objection is made by any who maintain, that the piety of parents is necessary to entitle their children to baptism; because the objection may be retorted. For is it not manifest, that they confine the administration of baptism to much narrower limits than Jehovah allowed in regard to circumcision?

Who ever thought of circumcision being restricted to the children of such as appeared to be truly pious? When, or in what instance, was it made a condition of administering the painful rite, that either of the parents should make a credible profession of repentance towards God, and faith in the promised Messiah? The descent of the parents from Abraham, and their making a general profession of Judaism, were in this case quite sufficient. Why then should these objectors except against the baptizing of any child whatever, provided either of its parents profess Christianity? Why lay the privileges of infants under such restrictions as were not known to the ancient Jews? for that, on this hypothesis, a very small number of children should be baptized, must appear to all who duly consider those words of our Lord, “Many are called, but few chosen.”—Nor was true spiritual conversion to God, no, nor yet a pretension to it, required as necessary to the circumcision of a proselyte from Paganism. On the foundation of this objection, therefore, our Brethren might say, that we render the privileges of the Christian covenant less than those of the Jewish economy, if we insist on a credible profession of repentance and faith from adults, that were brought up in Judaism, Mohammedanism, or Heathenism; and thus, to satisfy the objector, we must adopt the conduct of Popish missionaries among the Indians.—Besides, near one half the posterity of Abraham were members of the Jewish church without being circumcised, or having any similar ceremony performed upon them; and this, considering circumcision as a painful rite, was a greater privilege than that of the male children. Why then, on the ground of ancient privilege, do not our opponents infer, that females are to be honoured with complete membership in the gospel church, without being baptized?—Again: Might not one who approves of infant communion make the same complaint against our opposers in general, for withholding the sacred supper

from little children? for Mr. Peirce has proved, beyond all reasonable doubt, that they were partakers of the paschal feast.* To which I may add the following words of Mr. Baxter: "They are the same benefits that are conferred in baptism and the Lord's supper, to the worthy receiver; therefore the same qualification, for kind, is necessary for the reception."†

Once more: The Papists advance a similar argument, in vindication of their darling infallibility; and endeavour to fasten absurdities on our Protestant principles, for daring to question their haughty claim. To which Bp. Burnet answers in the following manner: "It is a vain thing to prove that this [infallibility] must be in the church, because otherwise a great many absurdities must needs follow, if it were not in it. When it is once proved that God has given it to his church, we shall very willingly yield, that he had very good reasons for it;—but it is a very preposterous way to argue, That God must have done such a thing, because we fancy that it is necessary to prevent some great evil, or to procure some very great good. For this is only to pretend to prove, that God ought to have done somewhat that he has not done; unless they can at the same time prove, that God has done it: this is to conclude, *That his ways must be as ours are, and that his thoughts must be as our thoughts.*"‡ This answer, by only substituting *infant baptism* for *Papal infallibility*, will apply with equal force to the objection we are now considering.§

Reflect. IV. We have been frequently blamed, for denying the validity of inferential proof in defence of infant baptism; and for demanding a divine precept, or an apostolic example, as the only thing that can support it. Nay, our opposers have sometimes reflected upon

* Essay, p. 116—128 Vid. Buddei Theolog. Dogmat. l. iv. c. i. § 17.

† Disputat. of Right to Sacram. p. 119.

‡ Four Discourses to the Clergy, p. 174.

§ See Vol. I. p. 7, No. 14; and p. 8, No. 18.

us, as if we rejected all arguments of that kind in the affairs of religion. That we avow the former, is an acknowledged fact; that we have done the latter, is a gross misrepresentation. Let the subject of enquiry be moral duty, and we admit of proof by illation to as large an extent as any of our opposers; concluding, that a genuine inference from a moral principle, and relating to things of a moral nature, has all the certainty of the principle itself. Or if any Baptist have denied this, we cannot but consider him as either weak, or perverse, or very inadvertent. For we are of opinion with Dr. Belamy, that “the inspired writings of the Old Testament consider these two maxims, *That we must love God with all our hearts, and our neighbour as ourselves*, as first and fundamental principles; and all the various duties which they urge, respecting God and our fellow-men, are but so many inferences and deductions from them.”* But when *positive* duties are under our notice, when either the manner of performing those duties or the proper subject of them is before us, the case is greatly altered: for the enquiry being entirely conversant about the sovereign pleasure of God, concerning an article of human duty which absolutely depends on a manifestation of the divine will, the nature of the case forbids our expecting any intelligence relating to it, except what arises from divine precept or scriptural precedent. Such is the ordinance of baptism, and such was the system of ritual appointments in former times. Now, to what an extent analogical reasoning and inferential proof may be pursued, in regard to positive institutions, and for the support of error, Mr. Peirce has given a striking instance—such an instance, that we despair of seeing his arguments fairly answered, on any principles but those of a Baptist. If our opposers, however, be otherwise minded, we should be glad to see a trial of their strength, by labouring to confute him on the principles of Pædo-

* True Relig. Delineated, p. 143. Boston, 1750.

baptism. To which I may add, that Protestant authors in general, when exploding a multitude of ceremonies in the Popish system; and Protestant Dissenters in particular, when opposing various rites appointed in the English liturgy, are sure to proceed on this principle; *There is neither precept nor precedent for them in the word of God.* This maxim is a firm barrier against encroachments on the government of Christ, by princely domination, priestly pride, or popular unsteadiness. It guards the throne of our ascended Sovereign, and secures his honour as legislator in his own kingdom. This maxim duly observed, his disciples treat with equal contempt the mandates of a pope and the edicts of a prince, the canons of a council and the statutes of a parliament, whenever they presume to appoint rites of divine worship, or to alter those which Christ ordained. But if this rule of religious conduct be outraged by one set of Protestants, arrogantly claiming for something called **THE CHURCH**, a “power to decree rites or ceremonies;” or if, while its authority is acknowledged, its operation be suspended by others, in favour of some ancient prejudice or prevailing practice; the former cannot with consistency maintain their ground against the votaries of Rome, nor the latter defend their dissent from the national Establishment. For while both parties, whether in the same or in different ways, forsake that rule which obliges all, they lay themselves open to the mutual attacks of each, and thus the controversy is continued.

Having discussed the principal articles in this controversy, I shall now conclude with a few

GENERAL REMARKS.

Remark I. As it appears, from the foregoing pages, that a great number of the most learned and eminent Pædobaptists of different communions, have made such declarations as are much in our favour, concerning the mode, the subject, and the design of baptism, we can-

not but acknowledge their impartiality and candour with sincere approbation; and, while paying this tribute of honour to those amiable virtues, we cheerfully adopt the language of Dr. Fulke, when addressing the Rhemish Jesuits: "We accept your testimony, as the witness of our adversaries."* We farther say with Mr. Daillé; "This testimony of theirs, to *us*, is worth a thousand others; seeing it comes from such who, in *our* opinion, are evidently interested to speak quite otherwise."†—Now, though we are far from considering either the number or weight of the preceding quotations, as constituting any part of the ground on which our distinguishing conduct proceeds; and though we appeal to the inspired writings, as containing our only rule and law; yet, perhaps, the reader may be of opinion, that the numerous testimonies produced from so many respectable authors, are of sufficient authority to teach some of our opponents a little more modesty and caution, when writing or speaking against our discriminating sentiment and practice. Yes, while such a multitude of the first literary and religious characters give their suffrage so much in our favour, the candid reader may peradventure conclude, That our opposers ought not to call us Anabaptists, by way of reproachful distinction;‡—that when

* Note on Acts xvii. 4.

† Right Use of the Fathers, book i. p. 39.

‡ Dr. Wall, adverting to this particular, says; "As they disown the name of *Anabaptists*, or *Rebaptizers*, so I have no where given it to them." Hist. Inf. Bap. part ii. chap. v. p. 335.—Buddeus, when speaking of the Mennonites, or Dutch Baptists, justly and candidly remarks; "Anabaptism, properly so called, is by unanimous consent rejected of all, even by those very persons who have thence obtained a name." Theol. Dog. l. v. c. i. § 23.—That very learned and impartial historian, professor Venema, after having enumerated the distinguishing sentiments of the Mennonites in the sixteenth century, makes the following observation: "Whence it appears, that the name *Anabaptists* does not agree to them; because, according to their opinion, lawful baptism is not repeated." Hist. Eccles. tom. vii. p. 439. See Vol. I. p. 54, No. 63.

Messrs. Featley, Baxter, Wills, D'Assigny, Russen, Henry, and others, treat the practice of immersion with bitter contempt, as being dangerous or indecent, they, in this instance, manifest a love of hypothesis, rather than learning, candour, or piety;—that stigmatizing us with a want of regard to the best interests of our infant offspring, is very precipitate and uncandid;*—that representing us as obstinate bigots, who are chiefly concerned to support a favourite practice, is ungenerous and un-

It has been the opinion of both ancient and modern Pædobaptists in general, if I mistake not, and it is plain, I think, from the nature of the case; That a ceremony performed under the name of baptism, essentially different from that which was appointed and so called by Jesus Christ, is not baptism; and, consequently, that a person who has received such an un instituted rite, may afterward be baptized, without the least ground of suspicion, that either the subject or the administrator is chargeable with Anabaptism. In regard to the ancients, my reader may consult Mr. Bingham's Orig. Eccles. b. xii. chap. v. § 4. Of the moderns, many eminent authors might be produced, but the following may here suffice. Buddeus: "Doubtless, if baptism was not rightly administered, with reference to those things which belong to the substance of it, it is all one as if the person had not been baptized; and therefore he is to be *baptized*, and not *rebaptized*." Theolog. Dogmat. l. v. c. i. § 10. —Deylingius: "If a Socinian come over to our church, he must by all means be washed in the holy font; notwithstanding his having received baptism, according to their usual manner, in his former connections." De Prudent. Past. pars iii. c. iii. § 9.—Hoornebeekius: "Another baptism is not baptism, because not the true baptism." Socin. Confut. tom. iii. p. 391.—J. E. Gerhardus: "As that baptism which is received among the Photinians, is not the true and lawful baptism, so that which is administered in our churches, to any person come over from them, is not to be called Anabaptism; for that cannot be considered as repeated, which was not before lawfully performed." August. Confess. Eucleata, p. 147. Jenæ, 1730.

* Mr. Marshall charges the Baptists with being guilty of pronouncing "a rash and bloody sentence; condemning infants as out of the state of grace; condemning all the infants of the whole church of Christ, as having nothing to do with the covenant of grace." Nay, he affirms, that their conduct "exceeds the cruelty of Herod and Hazaël, in slaying and dashing the infants of Israel against the wall." In Mr. Tombes's Examen, p. 170.

just,* and that raw striplings, who know but little about the controversy, should be careful how they mount the pulpit, or take up the pen, to declaim against us, under a notion, that their cause is all bright with evidence, while ours is involved in thick darkness;—that erudition and piety, that genius and impartiality, unite in supporting theirs, while sound learning and extensive reading, while candor and common sense, withhold their patronage from ours;† because it appears, from what has been said, that, supposing the Baptists ever so illiterate, ignorant, and bigoted, almost all the premises from which they argue are either expressly or implicitly granted by some of the most eminent Pædobaptists that ever filled the professor's chair, or that ever adorned the Protestant pulpit.

There is another imputation from which, perhaps, the preceding examination of Pædobaptism may be adapted to acquit us. Many Pædobaptists, it is well known, have endeavoured to render our practice odious, by exhibiting in frightful colours the conduct of some German Baptists in the sixteenth century; and by representing our distinguishing sentiment as derived from those obnoxious characters. To that evidence, therefore, of the high antiquity and heavenly origin of our baptismal practice,

* Dr. Mayo, through an excess of benevolence and politeness, calls us "*watery bigots.*" True Script. Doct. of Bap. p. 33.—Mr. De Courcy, when speaking of the Baptists, expresses himself thus: "Bigotry is interwoven with their very sentiments." He exclaims, in the following elegant and candid apostrophe, "O bigotry! hadst thou ever more trusty friends, or more zealous devotees, than the Anabaptists in general?" Rejoinder, p. 12, 14.—This, however, is not equal to the *Qui iterum mergit, mergatur*, of Zuinglius; that is, *He who rebaptizes, let him be drowned*; which was the sentence pronounced by Zuinglius on Fœlix Mans; upon which he was drowned at Zurich, in the year 1526. Brandt's Hist. of Reformat. vol. i. b. ii. p. 57.

† Mr. De Courcy, when speaking of our opposition to Pædobaptism, says; It "is still carried on with vehement zeal—in defiance of scripture, reason, and the general voice of antiquity." Rejoinder, p. 298.

which arises from the concessions and reasonings of Pædobaptists, I will now produce a few testimonies from our learned opposers, more directly fitted to free us from all suspicion of being descended from the Munster Baptists. Thus, for example, that famous Arminian, Limborch: “ If the doctrines and rites of the Waldenses be well examined without prejudice, it must, I think, be said, That among all the denominations of Christians which there are at this day, none have a greater agreement with them than that which is called *Mennonites*.”* Venema, after assigning various reasons against considering the Mennonites as descended from the Baptists at Munster, proceeds thus: “ The nearest origin of the Mennonites, in my judgment, is better derived from the Waldenses, and from them also that of the Anabaptists. The Mennonites desired to have the innocence and purity of the primitive church restored, and to carry on the Reformation farther than Luther and Calvin intended. Certainly the Waldenses, if you except the origin of the flesh of Christ, held the principal articles of religion almost in common with the Mennonites; as appears by the history of the former already given in the twelfth century. . . . The errors of the Mennonites, concerning Pædobaptism and the incarnation of Christ, are to be considered as proceeding from a different source. We have no need to search for other principles from which Mennonitism flowed, much less of those invidious ones maintained by the disorderly persons at Munster, and other fanatics of a similar kind, from which the Mennonites vindicated themselves a great while ago; and now, for a long time, they have so cleared and justified themselves, both as to life and doctrine, that they cannot be any longer confounded with those at Munster, without notorious injustice and signal injury.”† Such is the language of this impartial histo-

* Hist. Inquisit. cap. viii. p. 32.

† Hist. Eccles. tom. vii. p. 443, 444.

rian. I will here add the following testimony from cardinal Hosius, who was president of the Council of Trent. "The Anabaptists are a pernicious sect; of which kind the Waldensian Brethren seem also to have been. Concerning whom it appears, that not very long ago they rebaptized persons; though some of them lately, as they testify in their apology, have ceased to repeat baptism. Certain it is, however, that in many things they agree with the Anabaptists. . . . Nor is this heresy a modern thing; for it existed in the time of Austin."*—Thus it appears, that these eminent authors consider the Baptists as deriving their pedigree, not from the Munster enthusiasts, but from the Waldensian confessors; which is a line of descent that we are not ashamed to own: it is, however, quite as honourable as the derivation of sprinkling, or of pouring, from the *mother of abominations*.

But, independent of these and similar testimonies, it may be observed, that those Pædobaptists who are so fond of tracing our pedigree up to the German insurgents, and there to stop, have as good a claim of descent from them as we: for those insurrections, of which we have been so often told, were far from originating in merely religious principles; and equally far from being peculiar to people that were called Anabaptists. In evidence of this, let the celebrated History of Lutheranism, by Seckendorf, be consulted.† Respecting this particular, the anonymous translator of Dupin's Ecclesiastical History speaks as follows. "Dupin, and indeed all the Popish writers, are willing to make us believe, that the preaching of the gospel was the sole occasion of these stirs; but Seckendorf has demonstrably proved, that grievances of a *civil* nature gave the true rise to these horrible tumults. Nay, in these very insurrections, there were but few of the peasants, com-

* Apud Schyn Hist. Mennonit. p. 135.

† Lib. ii. sect. i—iv. § 1—5.

paratively, that were Lutherans, or that pretended to be so; particularly, those in Suabia were most of them Papists, and rose chiefly upon a civil account. Muncer preached to the boors in Saxony and Thuringia, who were of a different gang.”*—Thus Venema: “The insurrections of the rustics were occasioned by the severe slavery with which they were distressed, and the oppressive taxes imposed on them; which cruel treatment had frequently before thrown the boors through Germany into a state of sedition, as is proved at large by Seckendorf.”†—Thus also Bp. Jewel, in answer to Harding, who objected the Rustic war against the Protestants: “The boors of Germany, of whom you speak, for the greatest part were adversaries to Dr. Luther, and understood no part of the gospel; but conspired together, as they said, only against the cruelty and tyranny of their lords; as they had done twenty-two years before, in the same country, in the conspiracy called *Liga Sotularia*, fifteen years before Luther began to preach. The partners of which conspiracy had for their watch-word, the name of *our Lady*, and in the honour of her were bound to say five *Ave Marias* every day.”‡ Nay, from the vast number of persons concerned in those insurrections, of whom it is reported that a hundred thousand fell by the sword, it may with certainty be concluded, that a great majority of them were Pædobaptists.§

Do we then coincide with some of those oppressed and infatuated people, in denying baptism to infants? our opposers agree with a much greater number of them, in regard to the mode of administration. For as they were [very] far from being all of them Antipædobaptists, so Meshovius informs us, that even some of those who were so practised aspersion. His language, concerning baptismal practice in certain congregations among them,

* Note on b. ii. chap. xviii. cent. xvi. p. 97. † Hist. Eccles. tom. vii. p. 51. ‡ In Mr. Stennett against Russen, p. 236.

§ Idem. p. 237. || Hist. Anabap. l. iv. § 10. Colon. 1617.

is; "The pastor taking water in his hand, *sprinkles* it on the head of the person to be baptized." * Nay, that illiberal opponent, Mr. Russen, tells us, that "dipping was not practised by the first Anabaptists in Germany, as he can any where read." He adds, "That it is not a general opinion or practice, is evident from the contrary practice of their Brethren in Holland. . . . Those here [in England] plead hard for dipping; those in Amsterdam use sprinkling only." † Here then is an essential difference between their practice and ours; for we have no more idea of sprinkling, or of pouring, deserving to be called *baptism*, than we have that either the one or the other can with propriety be called *plunging*. Consequently, we are so far from having an exclusive claim to the honour of being very nearly related to the obnoxious characters in question, that justice requires our Pædobaptist Brethren should have a liberal share.— Besides, we are informed by our learned opposers, that many of those German Antipædobaptists were, in a strict and proper sense, *Anabaptists*. Thus, for example, J. E. Gerhardus, when speaking of them, says; "The Anabaptists not only rebaptize, when they arrive at an adult age, those that were baptized in their infancy, but also as often as any person comes from one of their sects to another; or as often as any one is excluded from their communion, and again received into the bosom of their church, they baptize him." ‡ The testimony of Cloppenburg is to the same effect. § This being the case, let observation and impartiality say, whether we appear to be the genuine descendants of those German insurgents.

But supposing all those oppressed and fanatical people had been Antipædobaptists; and admitting, in regard to baptism, that we believed and practised as they did;

* Hist. Anabap. l. iv. § 10. Colon. 1617.

† In Mr. Stennett, ut supra, p. 243.

‡ August. Confess. Eucleat. art. ix. p. 145.

§ In Mr. Stennett, ut supra, p. 242, 243.

yet where would be the justice, the reason, or the decency of stigmatizing us on account of their disorderly conduct? What connection is there between insisting, that the baptism which Christ appointed is nothing short of immersion, upon a personal profession of faith, and those extravagances of which the madmen at Munster were guilty? just as much as between sprinkling infants and the fires of Smithfield, or the infernal arts of an inquisition; or, as there is between Pædobaptism and the late riots in London. With equal reason do Papists in general, and Maimburg in particular, ascribe the insurrections in Germany to the publication of evangelical doctrine by the Reformers,* as our opposers insinuate, that the principles of Antipædobaptism are chargeable with that fanaticism and those outrages of which some denominated Anabaptists were then guilty. With as much propriety might we charge Pædobaptism with the following remarkable and infamous fact, which is narrated by Mr. Neal: "The Anabaptists in both Englands were certainly in very low repute at this time. Their enemies did not think it worth their while to confute them with arguments; but took a shorter way to ruin them, by as unparalleled a piece of villany as ever was heard of. A pamphlet was published in the year sixteen hundred and seventy-three, entitled, "Mr. Baxter Baptized in Blood; or, A sad History of the unparalleled Cruelty of the Anabaptists in New England: Faithfully relating the cruel, barbarous, and bloody Murder of Mr. J. Baxter, an Orthodox Minister, who was killed by the Anabaptists, and his Skin most cruelly fleaed off from his Body. Published by his mournful Brother, Benjamin Baxter, living in Fenchurch Street, London." This pamphlet was licensed by Dr. Parker, the archbishop's chaplain, and cried about the streets by the hawkers. The author represents his brother as worsting the Anabaptists in a public disputation at Boston; for

* Vid. Seckend. Hist. Lutheran. l. ii. sect. iv. § 4.

which, by way of revenge, they sent four ruffians, in vizors, to his house a little way out of town, who, after they had bound his wife and three children, first whipped, and then fleaed him alive. The author concludes, *I have published this narrative, in perpetuum rei memoriam, that the world may see the spirit and temper of those men, and that it may stand as an eternal memorial of their cruelty and hatred to orthodox ministers.* When the Anabaptists came to examine into this story, they found it a pure piece of forgery, contrived on purpose to set the mob upon them; there was no such person to be found as Benjamin Baxter of Fenchurch-street, nor was there any such man as Josiah Baxter of New England. The passengers who came over in the first ships after the date of the fact, made oath before the Lord Mayor, that they never heard of the fact, though they were at Boston twenty-two days after it was said to be committed. The publishers of it were one Savil and Seymour, who imposed upon Dr. Parker by forged letters, as himself owned by a public advertisement under his hand: nay, the king and council, after an examination of the whole affair, did them so much justice as to declare in the gazette, that the whole story was false and fictitious. But to such extravagances do men sometimes proceed, who will support their cause by other methods than the gospel prescribes.”*—What now would our opposers think, were we, at every turn, to declaim upon this infamous fact, in order to disgrace Pædobaptism? Or what would they say, were we to charge the doctrine of infant baptism with a great part of the wickedness practised by nominal Christians ever since the time of Cyprian? for they contend, and frequently boast, that a Baptist was hardly to be found for a course of ages—was almost as rare as a phoenix; and that all the national churches now upon earth agree in baptizing infants. Such methods of supporting a cause we con-

* Hist. of New England, chap. viii.

sider, however, as an unrighteous appeal to the passions, and unworthy of a Christian character—as deserving, in one view, our pity; in another, our marked contempt. For we are fully persuaded, that no sensible person will deliberately avail himself in disputation of such an invidious topic, unless conscious of wanting substantial argument in support of his cause.

Remark II. It is very observable, that so many Pædobaptists themselves have admitted the facts on which we reason, and that they have either expressly rejected the texts usually pleaded against us, as having nothing to do in the controversy; or so explained them, as renders their application in support of infant baptism quite impertinent. *They have admitted the facts on which we reason.* Do we maintain, for instance, that baptism is a positive institution, and that positive rites depend entirely on the revealed will of God, in regard to the manner of performing them, the persons to whom they belong, and the signification of them? All this they readily grant.—Do we insist, that the obvious and native sense of the term baptism is immersion? They expressly allow it.—Do we assert, that the principal thing intended by the ordinance is a representation of our communion with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection? It is cheerfully granted.—Do we maintain that immersion was the apostolic practice, and that, except in extraordinary cases, it was the general custom for thirteen hundred years? They confirm our sentiment.—Do we affirm, that immersion is the present practice of the Greek and Oriental churches, and that those churches include one half of the Christian world? Their own pens bear testimony for us.—Do we insist, that plunging is more expressive of the great things intended by the ordinance than pouring or sprinkling? They accede to our opinion.—Do we assert, that the first instance of pouring or sprinkling, instead of immersion, which is expressly recorded, was about the middle

of the third century, and then condemned; that the apostate church of Rome, all sovereign as her claims are, brought pouring into common practice, and that Protestant churches received it from her polluted hands? These being stubborn facts are all acknowledged.—Do we maintain that, in ordinary cases, immersion is not prejudicial to health? Pædobaptist physicians without a fee, and medical practice without hesitation, confirm our opinion.—Do we assert, that no power on earth has authority to alter the law of Christ, or to depart from apostolic example, in regard to immersion? So do they, in effect, when disputing with Papists concerning the sacred supper.—Do we contend, that there is no express command nor plain example in the New Testament relating to infant baptism? It is granted by them. Do we plead, that there is no evidence of Pædobaptism's being practised before the conclusion of the second or the beginning of the third century? This also is readily granted, even by some of those who were the greatest adepts in Christian antiquities.—Is it our opinion, that the extravagant notions of the fathers, in the second and in the beginning of the third century, concerning the great utility of baptism, and their misunderstanding of John iii. 5, laid the foundation of Pædobaptism? It is allowed.—Do we consider the arguments from proselyte baptism, an external covenant, and circumcision, as of no avail to the cause of infant baptism? They concur in our opinion.—Do we treat with contempt the plea of pretended apostolic tradition, unsupported by scripture? So do all Protestants, except Pædobaptism, Episcopacy, or something similar, solicit their patronage.—Once more: Do we maintain, that infant baptism and infant communion were introduced about the same time; that they are supported by kindred arguments; that they were equally common for a course of ages; and that they are still united in the practice of half the Christian world? We have the happiness

to find, that these facts are all confirmed by their learned pens.

Again: In regard to *passages of scripture* usually pleaded against us, we have the pleasure to see, that various eminent Pædobaptists either expressly reject them, as having nothing to do in the controversy, or so interpret them, as renders their application to infant baptism quite impertinent. Do we, for example, consider Matt. xxviii. 19, as requiring instruction previous to baptism? So do they.—Do we maintain that Gen. xvii. 7, speaks of a twofold seed, carnal and spiritual? They freely allow it.—Do we understand Ezek. xvi. 20, 21, as regarding the Jews, on the foundation of the Sinai covenant? They acquiesce.—Are we of opinion, that Matt. xix. 14, is no proof of infant baptism? They coincide with us.—Do we insist, that our Lord, in John iii. 5, is not speaking about the necessity of baptism? So do they.—Do we assert, that Acts ii. 39, is impertinently cited in proof of infant baptism? They confirm our assertion.—Do we consider the baptizing of households as equally unavailing, when produced against us? So do they.—Do we interpret Rom. xi. 16, as foreign to the cause of Pædobaptism? They agree with us.—And, finally, do we explain 1 Cor. vii. 14, as relating to lawful marriage and legitimate offspring? Even here we are not entirely deserted, for some of them afford us their friendly suffrage.—In a word, there is not, that I recollect, one topic of argument, nor one text of scripture, usually pleaded in favour of infant baptism, even by the more judicious of our opponents; but it is either expressly cashiered, as having nothing to do with the controversy, or so understood, as to be of no service to the cause. We have the honour, therefore, to agree with many of them, as to a great part of our premises; and with some of them, respecting the whole. Yes, amazing as it may seem, we are honoured with having some of them for our associates in every

thing, except the conclusion. Here indeed we are utterly deserted by them. Nor can it be otherwise, while they are PÆDO and we ANTIPÆDO-Baptists. However, whether our conclusion or theirs be right, it is manifest, that notwithstanding the number of evidences usually subpœnaed against us, when the validity of infant sprinkling is to be publicly tried; and notwithstanding the formidable appearance they frequently make, in the eyes of superficial observers; yet when those very evidences are impartially examined by Pædobaptists in private, without being perplexed with captious queries; they have not a word to say for infant sprinkling; but all their depositions are directed to prove doctrines and facts of quite a different nature.

Just so it is with Roman Catholics, respecting the invocation of saints; for J. Fabricius has remarked, “that there is not a single passage of scripture, usually pleaded in defence of praying to saints,—which some of the most learned Papists do not explain in a different manner.”*—Thus Abp. Tillotson, with reference to Papal infallibility; which, *mutatis mutandis*, will here apply. “Can any man think that this privilege was at first conferred upon the church of Rome, and that Christians in all ages did believe it, and had constant recourse to it for determining their differences; and yet that very church which hath enjoyed and used it so long, should now be at a loss where to find it?”†—Thus Mr. Owen, relative to diocesan Episcopacy: “It seemeth no small prejudice to the diocesan cause, that the grand patrons of it so extremely differ among themselves, and cannot agree about the foundations of it.”‡—Mr. B. Bennet speaks more largely to the same effect, respecting ecclesiastical authority, both in

* Hist. Biblioth. Fabrician. tom. ii. p. 121.

† Preservative against Popery, title iii. p. 231.

‡ Tutamen Evangelicum, Preface.

the Romish and the English church.* Now if this way of arguing be valid from the pen of a Protestant, against the tyranny and superstitions of Popery; and from that of a Nonconformist, against the claims of English Episcopacy; it must be equally so in the present case.

Remark III. If you ask Pædobaptists, whose infants are to be baptized, on what ground, and for what purposes? they will be found extremely divided. Do you enquire, *Whose infants are entitled to baptism?* some of them will answer, Those only of church-members. Of this opinion, among many others, was Mr. Barcroft; who “was not for baptizing any children but such whose parents, one of them at least, were communicants with him at the Lord’s table.”†—Others maintain, that the children of true believers in general, whether church-members or not, are entitled to baptism; while they strenuously insist, that the children of ungodly parents ought by no means to be baptized.—Thus, for instance, Mr. Bradbury: “Wilt thou know, oh vain man! that—until thy life is better, thy bringing an infant to an ordinance is an abomination to the Lord, like smoke in his nose: until thou hast done offering thyself to mammon, thou hadst as good offer thy child to Moloch.”‡ These hypotheses, however, have always been rejected by a vast majority of Pædobaptists, as uncharitable restrictions and narrow notions. Austin, and others in former times, were so far from confining baptism to the infants of real saints, that they maintained the propriety of baptizing the children of infidels, if they fell into the hands of Christians:§ with whom numbers of the moderns agree. Thus, for example, Buddeus: “The infants of Infidels taken captive in war,

* Irenicum, p. 30, 31, 37.

† Nonconformist’s Memorial, vol. ii. p. 499.

‡ Duty and Doct. of Bap. p. 14.

§ See Bingham’s Orig. Eccles. b. xi. chap. iv. § 17, 18.

or that come under our power by other means, are doubtless to be baptized.”*—Hunnius expresses himself precisely to the same effect. †—Thus also Deylingius, another learned Lutheran: “The children of Pagans, of Turks, and of Jews, if by purchase, or the right of war, they come under the power of the church, are to be baptized.” ‡—Mr. Baxter, thus: “When we either buy infants, or they are left orphans wholly to us, so that they are wholly ours and at our dispose, the parents being either dead, or having given up their interest to us, I doubt not, though they were the children of Jews and Turks, but it is our duty to list them under Christ, and enter them into his school, kingdom, or church, by baptism.” §—The Synod of Dort, Mr. Brandt informs us, was very much divided about the baptizing of such children as are purchased, or taken in war, but came to no resolution upon the point. ||

The notion of restricting baptism to children of godly parents is cashiered by some, as placing the infants of nominal Christians in a worse predicament than that in which the offspring of ungodly Jews were under the former dispensation, in reference to circumcision. For thus Mr. D’Assigny interrogates and replies: “What right have the infants of vicious parents, who are no better than Pagans, Jews, and Mahometans, to baptism? I answer, the same right they have to baptism, as the infants of debauched Jews, of Publicans and sinners, had to circumcision.” ¶ Agreeable to this is the practice of the church of England, and of other national Establishments. Various Dissenters also seem to be of the same opinion. Thus Dr. Ames: “Exposed children, whose parents are not known, if they were born among Chris-

* Theolog. Moral. pars iii. c. iii. § 70.

† Apud Fabricii Hist. Biblioth. Fabrician. tom. ii. p. 29.

‡ De Prudent. Pastoral. pars iii. c. iii. § 12.

§ Plain Scrip. Proof, p. 101. || Hist. Reformat. vol. iii. p. 35.

¶ Mystery of Anabaptism, p. 195.

tians, are charitably to be accounted the children of Christians, if there be not just cause of presuming the contrary;”* and consequently to be baptized.—Mr. Towgood: “Foundling infants are very rationally brought to baptism, by those who will engage solemnly for their Christian education.” †——Mr. Henry thinks, if parents be excommunicated, that the right of their children to baptism is for the present suspended; ‡ and so Mr. Baxter: § but Dr. Ames is of opinion that they may be baptized, if suitable sponsors be found for them. ||——Beza expresses himself thus: “Charity bids us hope well of all, and labour to restore those who are taken captive in the snare of the devil; therefore, God forbid we should conclude that, when parents are excommunicate, their posterity belong not to the kingdom of God!” ¶

Under this head I will mention another particular, about which it is probable our opposers may differ; a particular, the barely suggesting of which would hardly be excused by some of our Brethren, if it were not very gravely proposed for discussion by learned Pædobaptists. Deylingius, for instance, when writing a system of pastoral duty for the instruction of young ministers, after having laid it down as an incontrovertible truth, that every living birth which has the appearance of a man should be baptized, adds; “Concerning a *monstrous* birth, it is now and then exceedingly doubtful. . . . If it be animated by a rational soul, and its principal members, for example, the head, bear the human form, it ought, without hesitation, to be baptized. But what must be done if it have the appearance of a *double* man? It is queried, whether it should be baptized once only, or twice? If it cannot be accurately and certainly known, whether two men be corporally united, it is more prudent for baptism

* De Conscientiâ, l. iv. c. xxvii. §. 5. † Infant Bap.
 a Reasonable Service, p. 53, 54. ‡ Treatise on Bap. p. 72.
 § Disputat. of Right to Sac. p. 257, 280. || Ut supra, § 8.
 ¶ In Mr. Bingham's Works, vol. ii. p. 777.

to be conferred upon it but once; but it must be done twice, if it plainly appear that the monstrous birth has two souls; which may be justly supposed, when—for instance, one body sleeps, and the other is awake; one smiles and is pleased, the other sheds tears, or is offended. For these are marks of a twofold person; though, perhaps, the feet or the back represent only one individual.”* Instances of which kind the author mentions; and one perfectly similar has lately appeared on the records of a learned society.†—How far our opponents in this country may approve of the eminent Lutheran starting such a knotty question, or what they may think of the solution which he has given, I do not know; but, on their hypothesis, the way of duty in this case must be very dubious, whether such a birth be the issue of believing parents or not; because it cannot speak for itself, to declare whether it be two persons or only one. If, therefore, it be the latter, to baptize it twice would incur the charge of Anabaptism; and if it be the former, to baptizæ it once only, would be to withhold a seal of the covenant where it is due, and to imitate the supposed cruelty of the Baptists towards their offspring.‡

Do you enquire what is the *principal ground* of Pædobaptism? Mr. Williams will tell you, that “the champions [for it] are by no means agreed upon this question, On what is the right of infants to baptism founded?”§ That this is a fact, will appear by the following particulars. Cyprian, the great patron of in-

* Ut supra, § 17. † See Philosoph. Transact. vol. lxxii.

‡ That eminent Pædobaptists have been greatly puzzled respecting the baptism of monstrous births, is very clear from their publications. If the reader would see more upon this curious and edifying subject, he may have recourse to Picart's Religious Ceremonies, vol. ii. p. 79; Heideggeri Corp. Theolog. loc. xxv. § 56; and Gerhardi Loc. Theolog. tom. iv. de Bap. § 168, who mentions Luther, And. Osiander, And. Angelus, and Landulphus, as having handled the subject, and considered the difficulties which attend it.

§ Notes on Social Relig. p. 68.

fant baptism, and others in former times, considered a supposed universality of divine grace, and the necessity of baptism to salvation, as the main foundation on which they proceeded.—Austin, with many more, the faith of the church, as Mr. Tombes has observed.—Hincmarus, in the ninth century, maintained that children are saved by the faith of their sponsors, who answer for them at the administration of baptism.* It may be supposed, therefore, that he considered a vicarious faith as the ground of their baptism.—The church of England proceeds on a profession of faith made by the sureties. A certain dignitary of that establishment says; “As for children, baptism may be administered unto them, upon an implicit and imputative sort of restipulation, as circumcision was to the Jewish, and baptism now is to agonizing Christian infants; or else it may be administered unto them as baptism formerly was among the Jews, to the infants and minors of proselytes, upon a vicarious restipulation by their sponsors; which seems to have been translated, together with the use of baptism, from the Jewish church.”†—Beza tells us, “that the children of saints are admitted to baptism, for no other reason than because they are *holy* (that is, included in the covenant) from their very birth.”‡ —Anonymous: “Children, by baptism, are actually brought into the covenant of grace.” This is denied by his opponent, who maintains that the “children of believers were actually, i. e. really and truly, in the covenant of grace before their baptism; because,” he says, “it is by virtue of their interest in that covenant that they are admitted to that ordinance.”§—A New England synod interrogates and affirms as follows: “What have infants more than mere membership to give them

* In Bingham's Orig. Eccles. b. x. chap. ii. § 24.

† Cases to Recover Dissenters, vol. ii. p. 463.

‡ Annotat. ad 1 Cor. vii. 14.

§ Nonconformist's Advocate, p. 51.

right unto baptism? We know no stronger argument for infant baptism than this, That church-members, or *fæderati*, are to be baptized.”*—Among many others, of different communions, Mr. Williams denies this. “Baptism,” says he, “is no church-ordinance; nor do we read of any person in the New Testament that was baptized in a church, or as being a church-member.”† Query: Does this annotator read of any *infant’s* being baptized at all?

Farther: Dr. Hammond rejects the ancient rite of circumcision, on which many lay a considerable stress, and seems to view the Jewish proselyte bathing as the best ground of infant baptism;‡ while Sir Norton Knatchbull reprobates the proselyte plunging, and recurs to circumcision as a proper support for Pædobaptism.§—Mr. Baxter makes the faith of parents the condition of their children’s church-membership, and of their salvation.||—Mr. Henry considers a profession of faith made by the parents, as the foundation of an infant’s title to baptism.¶ Others look upon the faith of pious ancestors as quite sufficient.—Thus a nameless author: “By the seed of the righteous, the children of believers, I mean, the children of such as make a credible profession of Christianity, and have faith enough to bring their offspring to this ordinance, who are born within the pale of the church. And, by the bye, supposing the immediate parents are profligate, *all their ancestors* might not have been so; and God remembers his covenant, not only with the seed of his people, but with their seed’s seed. If he visit sins as far forward as the fourth generation, will he not extend mercy and remember his covenant as far?”**—Mr. Neal informs us, that about the year sixteen hundred and sixty-two,

* Dr. Mather’s Hist. of New Eng. b. v. p. 79.

† Ut supra, p. 96.

‡ See p. 69 of this Vol.

§ Ibid. p. 5.

|| Plain Scrip. Proof, p. 315.

¶ Treatise on Bap. p. 76.

** Simple Truth, p. 11.

“Great debates arose among the New England ministers, concerning the right of the grandchildren of churchmembers to the sacrament of baptism, whose immediate parents had not entered into the communion.” To settle which disputes a synod was called, which determined, with one exception, in the negative.*

A vast majority of Pædobaptists, however, pay no regard to the piety of parents, or of ancestors. Thus it is with our English Establishment, the Lutherans, the Papists, and the Greek church. Of this opinion Mr. Perkins appears to have been, for thus he speaks: “There is no reason that the wickedness of the parents should prejudice the child, in things pertaining to eternal life.”†—Abp. Leighton, thus: “Touching baptism, freely my thought is, it is a weak notion taken up on trust almost generally, to consider so much, or at all, the qualifications of parents. Either it is a benefit to infants, or it is not. If none, why then administer it at all? But if it be, then why should the poor innocents be prejudged for the parent’s cause, if he profess but so much of a Christian, as to offer his child to that ordinance? For that the parent’s faith gives the child a right to it, is neither from scripture nor any sound reason.”‡—Mr. Blake: “I can scarce meet with a minister that says, (and I have put the question to many of the most eminent that I know,) that he baptizeth any infant upon this ground of hope, that the parent is regenerate, but still with earnest vehemence professes the contrary.”§—Synod of Rochelle: “The parents’ fault cannot prejudice the children,—nor should any scruple in the least be made about admitting such infants unto baptism; especially whenas godly persons will become sureties for their religious education.”||—

* Hist. of New Eng. chap. viii.

† In Mr. Keach’s Rector Rectified, p. 210.

‡ Select Works, p. 518.

§ Covenant Sealed, p. 129.

|| In Bingham’s Works, vol. ii. p. 777.

J. L. Fabricius thinks, the infants of heterodox parents are to be baptized, if the magistrate require it.*—— Agreeable to which is the language of Mr. Baxter, when he tells us, that one reason “commonly pleaded for the right of the child of notoriously ungodly parents to baptism is, Upon the account of the church’s faith, and the magistrate’s authority over them. For this it is pleaded, That the magistrate, or sovereign ruler, hath power to dispose of his subjects, and therefore to make covenants for them, and in their names, as much as a parent hath; for the power of a magistrate is greater than of a parent, in that the magistrate may put children to death, and so may not a parent.” This, however, is opposed by Mr. Baxter.†

Witsius, Vitringa, Venema, and others, consider the infants of believers as in a relative state of grace, and make that the main foundation of Pædobaptism.‡ Others, not satisfied with a merely relative state of grace, as the chief ground of baptizing children, maintain that infants believe or possess faith. Thus, for example, the church of England teaches, that infants exercise faith and repentance by their sponsors—such repentance, *whereby they forsake sin*; and such faith, *whereby they steadfastly believe* the promises of God made to them in baptism.§——Bp. Prideaux and the learned Heidegger insist, that infants are to be baptized, because they have “the faith of the covenant, though not the faith of covenantees.”||——Thus a nameless author: “‘He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved.’ Children, I confess, cannot actually believe,

* Apud Fabricii Hist. Biblioth. Fabrician. tom. iv. p. 528.

† Disputat. of Right to Sac. p. 265.

‡ Wits. Miscell. Sac. tom. ii. exercit. xix. § 5, 19. Vitring. Obs. Sac. l. ii. c. vi. § 10. Venem. Dissert. Sac. l. iii. c. iii. § 1.

§ Catechism.

|| Prid. Fascicul. Controvers. p. 290 Heidegger. Corp. Theol. loc. xxv. § 55.

and so, perhaps, this promise is not properly theirs; yet they cannot wholly be debarred of it: for even in their infancy, the seed of grace and the seed of faith may be sown and rooted in their hearts.”*——Dr. Tull: “May not infants possess faith? They may in the root, though not in the fruit.”†——Dr. Goodwin: “You suppose children to believe before you baptize them.”‡——Anonymous: “We are to judge as charitably of the child as we do of the parent. We baptize them [children] as being disciples and believers, and visibly belonging to the kingdom of heaven. Dr. Goodwin says, *The infants of believers are the purest part of the church.*”§——Mr. Bingham tells us, that “Calvin owns a sort of faith in infants, though not formed as it is in adult persons, yet *in semine*, and that wrought by the operation of the Holy Ghost; which was also the opinion of Melancthon, Chemnitius, Rivetus, and generally of all the Lutheran and French churches.”||——Poliandrus, Rivetus, Walæus, and Thysius: “In all that are to be baptized we, with the scripture, prerequire faith and repentance; at least, according to a judgment of charity: and that as well respecting infants, who are in the covenant, (in whom, by virtue of a divine blessing, and of the evangelical covenant, we maintain that there are the seed and spirit of faith and of repentance,) as in adults, in whom a profession of actual faith and repentance is necessary.”¶——Chamierus: “Catholics account the infants of Christians for Christians, according to the covenant, ‘I am thy God, and the God of thy seed;’ in which promise they sweetly acquiesce. Now, though they do not actually believe, it cannot be denied that, in this respect, they are

* Nonconformist's Advocate, p. 53. † Enchirid. Didact. cap. ix. p. 38. ‡ Works, vol. i. part i. p. 200.
 § In Backus's Church Hist. of New England, vol. ii. p. 34.
 || Works, vol. ii. p. 779.
 ¶ Synops. Pur. Theol. disput. xlv. § 29.

believers; though this is more curiously than necessarily disputed.”*—Chemnitius: “To *believe*, and to be *baptized*, are joined together by Jesus Christ. How then do infants that are baptized believe? Though I, who love simplicity, neither understand, nor can explain how infants that are baptized believe; yet I conclude, that the various and very strong testimonies already explained, sufficiently evince that infants are to be baptized. . . . When we assert that infants believe or possess faith, it must not be imagined that infants understand or feel the motions of faith; but the error of those is rejected, who suppose that baptized infants please God, and are saved, without any operation of the Holy Spirit upon them. . . . Which action, or operation, of the Holy Spirit in infants, we call *faith*, and assert that little children believe.”†—Luther: “We assert that little children should not be baptized at all, if it be true that in baptism they do not believe.”‡—Buddeus: “If we enquire into the reasons why many are so much against Pædobaptism, I think we shall find the principal to be this: They will not ascribe faith to infants, because they cannot conceive in what way faith, which requires the use of reason, can belong to an infant that has not the use of reason. But if this be understood as we have already explained it, there will be no cause for any farther hesitation. To which I will now add, unless it be granted that the effect of baptism, in respect of infants, is real and truly spiritual, of which we best conceive under the notion of *faith*, nothing solid can be replied to the Anabaptists, chiefly urging this, That baptism is of no use to infants. This also is to be kept in mind against some doctors of the Reformed church, particularly Vitringa; who, though with us they admit Pædobaptism, yet they will not attribute faith to infants. . . . There is no other

* Panstrat. tom. i. l. ix. c. xi. § 50. Vid. tom. iv. l. v. c. x. § 28.

† Exam. Concil. Trident. p. 245, 246.

‡ Apud Schyn Hist. Mennonit. p. 82, 83.

true reason of rejecting Pædobaptism, besides this; The Antipædobaptists cannot persuade themselves that baptism has the efficacy of regenerating infants.”*—In the Catechism of the Council of Trent, there is a section entitled, *After what manner infants baptized receive faith*; and the matter is thus explained: “Nor is it to be doubted but, when they are baptized, they receive the sacrament of faith. Not that they believe with the assent of their mind, but because they are established in the faith of their parents, if their parents were faithful; but if not, to use St. Austin’s words, they are armed with the faith of the whole company of the saints. . . . By holy tradition it has been received and always observed, not to administer baptism to any, before he be asked whether he *wills* it. Nay, even in children and infants it **must** be supposed that the will is not wanting, since the will of the church which answers for them is not obscure.”†—Mr. Bingham: “When an infant is said *to believe*, this must consist in such an acceptance of, and submission to the gospel, as his state is capable of, which is passive. Thus, by being baptized, he accepteth Christ and the covenant of grace, and is united to and made a member of the church, entering on the profession of Christianity, which his sureties declare, and himself stands obliged to own when he comes to years of understanding.”‡—Now, reader, what think you of these efforts and struggles to support the reputation of Pædobaptism? Are they not plain indications, that the obvious meaning of divine law, and the natural import of New Testament facts, are inconsistent with the modern prevailing practice? The language of these Pædobaptists respecting the faith of infants, brings to remembrance a saying or two of Mr. Hobbes: “Though all matter thinks,” says he, “yet it is

* Theol. Dog. l. v. c. i. § 6, 7.

† Part ii. p. 162, 164.

‡ Works, vol. ii. p. 779. Perkins and Beza are quoted by Mr. Baxter, in proof of infants having faith, of some sort or other. Plain Scrip. Proof, p. 336, 367.

not conscious of it.”* Again: “When reason is against a man, a man will be against reason.”†

Do you ask, *For what purposes* are infants to be baptized? The church of England will tell you, that it is to make them the members of Christ, the children of God, and the inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. Others deny this, and maintain that the children of believers are to be considered as interested in those high and celestial blessings, or in others of a similar kind, prior to baptism. Thus, for example, Mr. Ferd. Shaw: “The child of a Christian parent is a christian as soon as it is born; and therefore it has a right to baptism: it is in the covenant, and so has right to the seal. . . . I understand it [the term *Christian*] in a scripture sense, A disciple of Christ; a federal Christian; one in covenant with God; one that is within the pale of the church; one that has a right, on the parents’ account, to have the Christian covenant sealed to it. Such a Christian is the child of a Christian parent, as soon as it is born Though a child be a Christian in God’s account by being born of Christian parents; yet must he be baptized in order to his being incorporated into the church.”‡ —The church of Rome and the Greek church, make baptism necessary to salvation: the Lutheran churches and the church of England, consider it as generally necessary to final happiness.§ —Some Pædobaptists, however, deny this high necessity of infant baptism; though they consider various and great benefits as connected with it. Mr. Horsey, for instance, when addressing the parents of a recently baptized infant, uses the following very singular words: “You anticipate, but with great uncertainty, its future character and lot. Is

* In Mr. Grove’s *Essay on the Soul’s Immateriality*, p. 44.

† In Dr. Reid’s *Essays on the Intellect. Powers of Man*, p. 530.

‡ *Valid. of Bap. by Dissent. Minist.* p. 33, 128, 131. Vid. *Witnium, Miscell. Sac. tom. ii. exercit. xix. § 5*, and *Beveridge’s Private Thoughts*, part ii. p. 49, 12mo.

§ See Vol. I. p. 419—432, *Reflect. III.*

it an EMBRYO-ANGEL, or an EMBRYO-FIEND?"* Can the parents of an *unbaptized* infant be in more painful anxiety than that which is here suggested?—Some assert that baptism initiates children "into the general assembly and church of the first-born;"† others, that it introduces them into the visible church; while, on the contrary, many insist that the children of believers are entitled to baptism, because they are members of the church by hereditary descent. Mr. Horsey tells us, that "circumcision was the regular door of admission into the dispensation of the Jewish religion; and we, being baptized—are regularly admitted into the dispensation of the Christian religion. The circumcised among the Jews, were consequently entitled to the outward privileges of the Christian dispensation."‡ Dr. Priestley, in

* Infant Baptism Stated and Defended, p. 23.

† Simple Truth, p. 9.

‡ Ut supra, p. 9. *Regularly admitted* INTO THE DISPENSATION of the Christian religion, by being baptized. While I cannot but question the truth of this position, yet I freely allow it the merit of originality: for though many have talked of baptism's admitting into the visible church, yet Mr. Horsey is the only author whom I have observed, that speaks of its admitting into the *Christian dispensation*. To live under the Christian dispensation; to enjoy the *privileges* of the Christian dispensation, and such like phrases, are commonly used; but "*regularly admitted* into the dispensation of the Christian religion," and that *by baptism*, is both uncommon and improper. To convict it of impropriety, we may ask, Is it a fact, that neither Jews nor Gentiles had any *regular* interest in the Christian dispensation till they were baptized? Was not the gospel, by divine order, preached to them, and was it not quite regular for them to hear it, prior to their being baptized? Were not believing the gospel, and rejoicing in the grace it reveals, perfectly regular before a reception of baptism? Might not both Jews and Gentiles, while unbaptized, attend the apostolic ministry in all branches of moral worship, without the least irregularity? Might they not study the scriptures, converse with Christians about their souls, and solemnly pray in the name of Jesus, without being suspected of irregularity, except they were baptized? From what branch of moral worship are unbaptized persons debarred, by any rule of Christ, or by any custom of the apostolic churches? Or will our opponent say,

a manner different from all that I have observed, says; “I consider the baptizing of my children, not as directly implying that they have any interest in it, or in the things signified by it, but as a part of my own profession of Christianity.”*

Decidedly as the generality of our opponents pronounce upon the efficacy and utility of infant baptism, I find some of them consider it as a very difficult subject of investigation. Thus, for example, the celebrated Witsius: “The question relating to the efficacy and usefulness of Christian baptism, in reference to the elect infants of parents who are in the covenant, is peculiarly arduous and abstruse; and as of old, so very lately, it is embarrassed by the subtilty of curious disputes.”†——Mr. Jonath. Edwards: “God’s method of dealing with such infants as are regularly dedicated to him in baptism, is a matter liable to great disputes and many controversies.”‡——Saurin: “Does an infant participate in the blessings of a covenant, which he may perhaps reject when he comes to the age of reason? Is baptism

that these particulars are foreign to the dispensation of the Christian religion?—*Baptism regularly admit into the dispensation of the Christian religion!* As if no one could have any thing to do with Christianity, in a regular manner, till he is baptized! or, as if baptism succeeded circumcision as a *middle wall of partition!* So that unless a man be baptized, he is an alien from the means of public instruction, and from the ordinances of social worship—as much an alien as any uncircumcised person was, respecting sanctuary service, and the external privileges of ancient Judaism.—*In consequence of baptism, we are entitled to the outward privileges of the Christian dispensation.* But how far does this baptismal title extend? To all the outward privileges, or to some only? If the former, why does not Mr. Horsey make infants partakers at the holy table? If the latter, we should be glad of information what those external privileges are, to which baptized infants as such are entitled; and of which the unbaptized children of Christian parents may not with equal regularity and advantage partake, so far as either of them can be considered as partaking of any.

* Hist. of Corrupt. of Christ. vol. ii. p. 75.

† Miscell. Sac. tom. ii. exercit. xix. § 1.

‡ Enquiry into Qualificat. for Commun. Appendix, p. 13.

useless, then, till such as have received it shall perform the vows which have been made for them? Why do not we wait, then, till that time before it be administered? We do not pretend that these difficulties are insurmountable; but we think that means more consistent than those which are commonly employed should be offered.*—Nay, were my reader to appreciate infant baptism by what some of our learned opponents have said, he would certainly consider it as of no worth at all. Thus, e. g. Vitringa: “The sacraments of the new covenant—are of such a nature, as to seal nothing but what is spiritual; nor are they of any advantage, except with regard to those who really believe in Jesus Christ.” †—Venema, thus: “Those religious rites which are now practised, are connected with the internal covenant of grace, as signs and seals with a covenant that is ratified by them; nor have they any other use or end: so that if any one use them detached from the covenant itself, he is necessarily engaged in rites that are void of all virtue.” ‡ It is not pretended, that these eminent authors intended to sink the credit of Pædobaptism; but we insist, that the principle of these assertions is absolutely inconsistent with its utility, and inimical to its existence.

That very eminent Lutheran, Buddeus, having reviewed a variety of opinions adopted by Calvinists respecting the efficacy of infant baptism, concludes in the following manner: “The mentioning of all these particulars appeared suitable to us, that we might show how greatly the doctors of the Reformed church differ among themselves, relating to the operation and efficacy of baptism; and into what great difficulties they plunge themselves, while they admit Pædobaptism, and yet will not allow that baptism is an efficacious means of exhibiting divine grace, of conferring it, and of producing faith

* *Abregé de la Theologie*, p. 202.

† See this Volume, p. 36.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 40.

in infants: for if, with us, they would acknowledge this, they might easily get rid of all their difficulties.”* But, with due deference to this very learned professor, I will venture to say, Perhaps not.

Glassius informs us of some Jewish rabbies, who maintain “that there are *seventy* ways of expounding divine law;”† and Dr. Allix tells us, that rabbi Lipman “lays this down as a maxim, *That the law was capable of divers explications, and all of them, though never so incompatible and contradictory, were nevertheless the words of the living God.*”‡ Now, as the sentiments of our opponents respecting infant baptism are so greatly diversified, and so grossly inconsistent, I do not perceive how they can be reconciled, without admitting these rabbinical principles of interpreting holy writ; nor even then, without insulting common sense, and rendering the divine word of no utility.—Frankelius, we learn from Dr. Schyn, published a book, which he entitled, *The Babel of the Anabaptists*;§ and it appears from what has been laid before the reader, that he might have published its counterpart, under the title of *The Babel of the Pædobaptists*: for we may safely defy our keenest opposers, to produce a mass of inconsistencies from the writings of Baptists, and relating to baptism, equal to that which appears in the foregoing pages.

Dr. Rush has remarked, that “errors may be opposed to errors; but truths, upon all subjects, mutually support each other.”||—Thus Dr. Owen: “Every undue presumption hath one lameness or other accompanying it: it is truth alone which is square and steady. . . . Men put themselves into an uncertain, and slippery station, where they know not what to fix upon.”¶—Dr.

* Theolog. Dogmat. l. v. c. i. § 7. † Philolog. Sac. p. 259. Francof. 1653. ‡ Judgment of the Jewish Church, p. 412.

§ Hist. Mennonit. tom. ii. p. 255.

|| Oration before American Philosoph. Society, p. 67.

¶ Discourse on Evangelical Love and Peace, p. 190.

Allix, thus: "When men dispute against the truth, what one of them builds up is presently pulled down by another."*—The principle of these remarks has been frequently applied, especially in the Popish controversy; of which I will here produce an example or two. Roman Catholics, it is well known, unite in claiming the high prerogative of infallibility for their church; while, nevertheless, there is a great variety of sentiments among them, respecting the seat of that distinguishing honour. "By the church," says Mr. Pool, "some understand the ancient church, whose testimony is expressed in the writings of the fathers: others, the present church, whose living testimony and authority, they say, is sufficient without any farther enquiry. And this present church too, they cannot agree what it is. Some say, the pope; others, a general council; and others, the pope and the council together. Nor are they less at variance about the ground on which they build the church's authority. This, some lay in the testimony of scripture; others, in the authority of the fathers; others, in universal oral tradition; others, in the motives of credibility."†—Respecting the doctrine of transubstantiation, a nameless Protestant says; "In this faith [of the holy supper] we are confirmed, not only by those unanswerable proofs which our writers have given;—but also from those irreconcilable differences which this error has thrown the writers of the church of Rome into. In effect, we find every party exposing the falseness and impossibility of every one's hypothesis but their own. Their greatest men confess the uncertainty of their own proofs, *That there is not in scripture any formal proof of transubstantiation*. . . . And here, who

* Ut supra, p. 315. † Nullity of Romish Faith, Introduct. See Barrow on the Pope's Supremacy, Introduct.; Chillingworth's Relig. of Protestants, part i. chap. iii. § 6; Jurieu's Hist. Council of Trent, Preface, p. 15; and Morning Exercise against Popery, p. 11, 12, 13, who all speak to the same effect.

can choose but admire the power of truth? That after so many outcries against us, for opposing a doctrine, which they would make the world believe is as clear as if it were written with a ray of the sun; after so many anathemas against us for heretics and schismatics, and ten thousand repetitions of their great *Scriptum est, This is my body*; they should at last be forced to confess, that they are not, cannot, nor are ever like to be agreed in the explication of them. . . . We hope that these declarations have been permitted by God to fall from the greatest and most esteemed of their church, not only to confirm us in our faith, but also to prepare the way for their return to that Catholic truth from which they have so long erred.”*

Now if the conduct of Protestants be just and pertinent, in concluding that this variety of sentiments among the votaries of Papal infallibility, and of transubstantiation, is a strong presumption that they have no foundation on which to proceed; why should not the numerous and opposite opinions of Pædobaptists, relating to the subject before us, be considered in a similar light?—Mr. Alsop, when concluding his *Antisozzo*, makes the following remark, respecting the inconsistencies of the author on whom he animadverted: “The reader will learn, at least, how impossible it is for error to be consonant to itself. As the two millstones grind one another, as well as the grain; and as the extreme vices oppose each other, as well as the intermediate virtue that lies between them; so have all errors this fate, (and it is the best quality they are guilty of,) that they duel one another with the same heat that they oppose the truth.”†

Remark IV. When reflecting upon these things, I have been amazed to find, that young men should preach and write against us with such a petulant and

* *Exposit. of Doct. of Church of England*, p. 56, 57, 58. See *Popery Confuted by Papists*, p. 59. † *Antisozzo*, p. 725.

haughty air as they have often done; setting themselves very gravely to prove, that the Greek prepositions, *εις** and *εκ*, in certain connections, must be con-

* Though the meaning of this particle is frequently varied, according to the connection in which it stands, yet the learned, I think, will readily grant, that its primary and most common signification is, *into*. When used in a local sense, it seldom signifies any thing else in the New Testament; and when connected with *ἕδωρ*, *Ἰορδάνης*, or *ποταμός*, it never, if I mistake not, has any other meaning. See Matt. xvii. 15; Mark i. 9, and ix. 22; Acts. viii. 38; Rev. xvi. 4. “Significat *in cum signatur motus ad locum*,” says the learned Schwarzius. Does the inspired historian inform us, for instance, that Philip and the eunuch *came to a certain water*? his language is, *ἤλθον ΕΠΙ τὴ ἕδωρ*. Does he describe them as alighting from the chariot, and as *using* the water? he varies the preposition, and his words are, *κατεβησαν ἀμφοτεροὶ ΕΙΣ τὸ ἕδωρ*; *they went down both INTO the water*. Luke represents them as coming to the water, before baptism is mentioned; and he describes them as going *into* the water, before baptism is administered. See Acts viii. 36, 38. The preposition *εις*, being here used with the most explicit reference to the administration of baptism, and being manifestly designed to express a different idea from that of the particle *επι*, it must in this passage signify *into*. Compare Matt. iii. 13, with Mark i. 9. In the former passage, it is written, *Jesus cometh from Galilee, ΕΠΙ τὸν Ἰορδάνην*, *to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him*. In the latter we are told, *That Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John, ΕΙΣ τὸν Ἰορδάνην, INTO Jordan*. The reader may observe a similar use of these two particles, in John vi. 16, 17, *His disciples went down, επι, to the sea, and entered, εις, INTO a ship*. So, Mark xvi. 2, 5, *They came, επι, to the sepulchre,—and entering, εις, INTO the sepulchre*. Acts xii. 10, *They came, επι, to the iron gate that leadeth, εις, INTO the city*. Thus Beza, Castalio, Dr. Doddridge, and others, render the last of these passages; and I think more properly than our translators, who have rendered both the Greek prepositions by the obsolete English particle, *unto*. Once more: Acts. xvi. 19, *They caught Paul and Silas, and drew them, εις, INTO the market-place, επι, to the rulers*. See also Matt. v. 23, 25, and xiii. 48.

As *επι* and *εις* are thus distinguished, so the particles *εις* and *εκ*, whether used separately or in composition, are manifestly opposed the one to the other. See, among many other passages, Matt. xv. 11; Mark vi. 51, 54; Luke ii. 4; John iv. 47, 54; Acts vii. 3, 23; ix. 28; xvi. 40; xxvii. 30; Rev. xvii. 8.—It must indeed be admitted, that the preposition *απο* is used respecting the baptism of our

strued *to* and *from*, which nobody ever denied; and also flourishing away as if they had entirely confuted us in regard to the mode of administration, by undertaking to evince, that the covenant of God with Abraham, included both temporal and spiritual blessings, but without distinguishing between his carnal and spiritual seed; and then with confidence concluding, that the

Lord, Matt. iii. 16; Mark i. 10. It is plain, however, from the circumstances of the fact, that in those places it is employed to express the same idea as *ἐκ* would have done; and so translators in general have understood it. In Matt. iii. 16, Dr. Dan. Scott, indeed, translates it, *FROM the water*; but then he has the following note upon it. "Though I believe our blessed Saviour did actually come *out of* the water; yet since our author [Matthew] uses a different word from that, in Acts viii. 39, I chose to follow his example. And, in fact, a person may come *from* a river that did not come *out of* it." New version of St. Matthew. The particle *απο* is frequently used by inspired writers to signify *out of*; as the reader may find, by consulting Matt. vii. 4, 5; xiv. 29; Mark v. 17; xv. 21; xvi. 9; Luke viii. 2, 12, 33, 35, 38; John vii. 2; Acts ii. 5; xiii. 50; Rev. xxii. 19. In Luke ii. 4, and viii. 33, it is directly opposed to *εἰς*.

Now as the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch is, perhaps, more circumstantially related than that of any other person in the New Testament; we are led to consider the prepositions in question as having the same signification, whenever they are used in a correspondent connection by the inspired writers. To which I may add, if the particles *εἰς* and *ἐκ*, in this and similar connections, do not naturally express the ideas of *into* and *out of*, we should be glad of information what other Greek prepositions the sacred historians could have used, to convey those ideas with greater precision.—I will conclude this note with the following remark of Bp. Stillingfleet: "Nothing hath been a more fruitful mother of mistakes and errors than looking upon the practice of the primitive church through the glass of our own customs; especially when, under the same name, (as is very often seen,) something far different from what was primarily intended by the use of the word is set forth to us. It were no difficult task to multiply examples in this kind; wherein men meeting with the same names, do apprehend the same things by them, which they now, through custom, signify, without taking notice of any alteration in the things themselves signified by those names." *Irenicum*, part ii. chap. vi. § 3.

children of believers are entitled to baptism. Yes, I have been surprised to find, that they should assume such a confident and magisterial tone, when defending the practice of infant sprinkling; as if the facts and the texts on which we argue, were nothing at all to the purpose; as if divine precepts and apostolic examples, primitive fathers and Greek lexicons, were all on their side; and as if all the particulars relating to their hypothesis perfectly harmonized. To such inexperienced youths, the advice of a Hebrew monarch may, perhaps, be suitable: "Tarry at Jericho till your beards be grown."

But is it not, I appeal to the reader, is it not a very singular phenomenon in the religious world, that so many denominations of Protestants should all agree in one general conclusion, and yet differ to such an extreme about the premises whence it should be inferred? Is it not astonishing that they should thus disagree one with another, when all are professedly supporting the same cause? I will venture to challenge our Pædobaptist Brethren to produce an instance of equal disagreement among Protestants, about the proper mediums of proof, where the same general conclusion is intended by each. That a number of persons, however judicious or pious, when writing in defence of a doctrine or of a duty, should not all think the same topics of argument, or the same texts of scripture, applicable to the subject before them, is not to be wondered at; but then, in every other instance that I have observed, they all agree in considering some particular arguments, and some passages of scripture, *as properly belonging* to the subject of discussion. Thus it is with the English Baptists, in regard to their distinguishing sentiment and practice. They perfectly agree, so far as I have observed, in applying many declarations and facts recorded by the apostles, *as directly in point*, with reference to the mode, the subject, and the design of baptism; and this, I think, our

opponents themselves must acknowledge.—Here, however, we have an example of a singular kind. Pædobaptism is the thing to be defended, by a number of learned pens, each of which glows with zeal for its honour and safety. But, behold, some of them reject one topic of argument, and some another; these except against an application of that sacred text, and those explain this in such a manner as is foreign to the subject, until all the premises are frittered away, and nothing remains in which they all agree, but a naked conclusion; and yet this very conclusion must be worked with caution, or you will not have the pleasure to see them quite unanimous. For while multitudes labour to prove Pædobaptism highly necessary, and while most of them consider it in the light of parental duty on the infant's behalf; others, and among them the great Vitrunga, only plead for its being lawful, or that there is no harm in it.* A conclusion, therefore, in which they will all agree, must be thus expressed: *Pædobaptism is lawful.* Or, *There is no evil in baptizing infants.* If you push for a general conclusion one step farther, they vary in their judgment—they divide—they quarrel among themselves. I cannot forbear observing, however, in the words of a great genius; “How happy it is to have to do with people that will talk *pro* and *con*! By this means you furnish me with all I wanted, which was to make you confute yourselves.” †

What now can be the reason of this astonishing difference among Pædobaptists concerning their common cause? Pardon me, reader, if I should answer, Because in that affair they all differ from the word of God. The scripture being profoundly silent about infant baptism, they are obliged to argue in its defence, from general principles and moral considerations—from notions of expediency, fitness, and utility. Thus uniting in one common mistake, they depart from the true nature of the

* See his words, p. 45, 46.

† Mr. Pascal's Letters relating to the Jesuits, vol. ii. lett. xv.

subject in question: for that subject is a positive rite; consequently, the whole being of it, and all its legitimate connections, depend on the sovereign pleasure of God. Now, though moral duty may be fairly argued from general principles and moral considerations, that lie at a great distance from the particular case which is to be proved; though the same natural duty may be inferred from a thousand texts of scripture, where that particular duty is not mentioned, and of which the inspired writers had no thought when penning those texts; yet the case is widely different when a ritual duty is the subject of discussion: for then we have nothing to guide our enquiries, besides positive law, and the example of inspired men, relating to the matter of investigation. To such precepts and precedents, therefore, we must adhere, or perpetually wander in a maze of uncertainty, and be continually differing one from another: because, as Bp. Burnet justly observes, “Though *lawful* and *unlawful* are severe and rigorous things, and of a fixed and determinate nature, yet *fit* and *unfit* are of a more loose and unstable order.”* Common observation shows, that the ideas of men concerning expediency, fitness, and utility, are extremely various; these esteeming a ceremony proper and useful, which those consider as absurd and injurious. It is no wonder, therefore, that the wisest and best of Christians, when reasoning on moral grounds about a positive institution, should be thus divided, concerning the eligibility of arguments to support their general hypothesis; the description of infants that should be baptized; the proper mode of administration; and the purposes to be answered by it. †

Remark V. It is, I think, apparent, that no positive divine appointment can be secure from gross corruption, flagrant mutilation, or entire abolition, if positive law and primitive example be not strictly regarded. If, by reason-

* Four Discourses to the Clergy, p. 350.

† See Vol. I.

Chap. I. p. 1—39; and Chap. IV. Reflect. II. p. 202—204.

ing on texts which do not speak of the ordinance in question, and by arguing on moral grounds, men be allowed to infer the right manner of its performance, its proper subjects, and its design, they will have liberty to model the appointments of Christ just as they please. Whence originated the use of sponsors, the sign of the cross, anointing the baptized person with oil, giving him milk and honey, his wearing a white garment, and trine immersion, which so debased and corrupted baptism in, or soon after the time of Tertullian, but in reasonings of this kind? Departing from the simplicity of positive divine law, and of apostolic practice, the venerable ancients imagined such additions to be expedient and useful; as being, in their opinion, silent lectures of moral instruction.

On this ground, the church of England adopted and still retains various Popish ceremonies, as plainly avowed in the following words: "Other [ceremonies] there be, which although they have been devised by man, yet it is thought good to reserve them still, as well for a decent order in the church, (for the which they were first devised,) as because they pertain to edification. . . . Being content only with those ceremonies which do serve to a decent order and godly discipline, and such as be apt to stir up the dull mind of man to the remembrance of his duty to God, by some notable and special signification, whereby he might be edified. . . . We think it convenient, that every country should use such ceremonies as they shall think best to the setting forth of God's honour and glory, and to the reducing of the people to a most perfect and godly living, without error or superstition."*

On the same principle of utility, and by reasoning on a text which does not speak of the sacred supper, infant communion was first introduced, and is yet practised by a great part of the Christian world. By rea-

* Preface to Book of Common Prayer. Of Ceremonies.

sonings of this kind, the positive institutions of Jesus Christ have been metamorphosed and corrupted to the last degree.—Cast your eye on the Romish communion, and there you may see a flagrant *mutilation* of the Lord's supper. Now on what kind of reasoning was that outrage first committed upon positive law and primitive example? Or by what arguments is it now defended, except those of a moral and analogical nature?—Those who defend the lawfulness of admitting persons to the Lord's table, whom they consider as *unbaptized*, proceed on the same principles. It is only on moral considerations, and by analogical reasoning, that their novel conduct obtains the shadow of a defence; because to a positive precept, or an apostolic example, the votaries of this innovation do not pretend.* The Socinians also

* As the last author who appeared in defence of this practice, was not contented with endeavouring to support his cause in the common way, it may not be amiss to make a few remarks on his conduct. To this I find myself greatly encouraged by his own generous declaration, when he says; "The man who undertakes to correct one's mistakes does one *a great honour*. He remonstrates in hope of reclaiming; but before he can hope to reclaim, he must presuppose all those amiable dispositions which enable a man to say, *I am mistaken*." *Arcana*, lett. i. p. 14.

Thus encouraged, I proceed to observe, that this writer, being determined, if possible, to carry his point, maintains *the innocence of error*; nor does he scruple to palm the sentiment on Paul himself. These are his words: "There is, he [the apostle Paul] affirms, no moral turpitude in mental errors." (*Gen. Doct. of Tolerat.* p. 27.) Now this position, it must be observed, is an universal negative: it denies that moral turpitude belongs to any mental error whatever. Conformably to which the author assures us, in another of his publications, that he hath "no idea of guilt in regard to different reasonings on the nature of [scriptural] facts, or the persons concerned in them". . . . He "never saw any danger in a difference of opinion, till some unruly passion, by disturbing the disputants, and souring their tempers, brought the subject into disgrace." *Sixteen Discourses*, Preface, p. 4, 5.

Must we, then, consider Paul as affirming the innocence of error, even while he maintained against some in the Corinthian church, that a certain mental error unhappily imbibed by them, inevitably

adopt a similar course of argument when they endeavour to set baptism aside, except in particular cases.—But

inferred the subversion of all religion, and of all hope; and while he repeatedly pronounces an awful anathema on others, for publishing a mental error? (See 1 Cor. xv. 12—18; Gal. i. 6—9.) If so, the apostle was no less inconsistent with himself than this writer is, in the publication to which I advert. Among other things of a similar kind, let the following positions be compared. “The candidate for fellowship, who has examined believers’ baptism by immersion, and *cannot* obtain evidence of the truth of it, is indeed in a state in which his knowledge is imperfect; but this imperfection is innocent, because he hath exercised all the ability and virtue he has. . . . They [the Baptists] constantly affirmed, that the New Testament was a book so plain, and the religion of it so easy, that any man of common sense might understand it *if he would*.” (Gen. Doct. of Tolerat. p. 19, 43.) Nay, though he represents infant sprinkling as an “innocent mental error,” as an “innocent irregularity in obeying a positive institute,” as an “innocent mistake,” and calls it “innocent ignorance of a positive precept;” (Gen. Doct. of Tolerat. p. 25, 28, 32, 40;) yet, in a following page, he says; “Sprinkling is so different from dipping; the incorporating of infants into the Christian church is so incompatible with the nature of a rational religion, to be received and professed on a conviction of the truth and excellence of it; the New Testament is so utterly unacquainted with infant sprinkling; the arguments brought to support it are so far-fetched; the concessions of learned divines are so numerous, and the MISCHIEFS attending it so NOTORIOUS, that [the strict Baptists] may well be excused for their aversion to it.” (Ut supra, p. 42.) Besides, he talks of *tolerating* this perfectly innocent error; as if *innocence* were an object of *toleration*!

Were the innocence of error, which this gentleman ascribes to an inspired apostle, worthy of regard, we might justly consider the conduct of Pilate, when he asked, *What is truth?* but waited not for an answer, as deserving imitation, rather than censure. For though philosophers talk about the beauty of truth; though theologians dispute about the articles of truth; though inspired writers unite in displaying the glory of truth; and though the Son of God became incarnate that he might bear witness to the truth; yet after all, this very truth deserves not a serious enquiry. A sentiment this, which becomes none but a sceptic. Persons of that character have laboured to sink the value of truth, and to exculpate error from every suspicion of harm; but that a Christian minister should boldly assert, and hold it as a kind of theological axiom, *That*

would you see in a yet stronger light the powerful energy of drawing conclusions, in opposition to positive pre-

mental error has no moral turpitude in it, is very extraordinary. For we may venture to affirm, that allegiance to divine truth requires us to abjure the principle as absurd in itself, and as deistical in its natural tendency. The language of infidelity, when addressing the Great Supreme, is an echo to the maxim of this writer; for thus the author of *Essays on the Principles of Morality and Religion*: "What mortals term *sin*, thou [the Most Holy] pronoucest to be only *error*; for moral evil vanishes, in some measure, from before thy more perfect sight." (In Dr. Witherspoon's *Essays*, vol. i. p. 59, 60.) Dr. Witherspoon remarks, that "though infidels always set out on a pretence of searching impartially after truth, yet they have unanimously agreed in putting truth and error entirely on the same footing, both as to worth and influence." (Ibid. p. 95.)—How far the following observation, from the same sensible writer, will justly apply to the author upon whom I animadvert, is left with my reader. "If freedom of enquiry be a blessing at all, it can be so for no other reason than the excellence and salutary influence of real truth, when it can be discovered. If truth and error are equally safe, nothing can be more foolish, than for a man to waste his time in endeavouring to distinguish the one from the other. What a view does it give us of the weakness of human nature, that the same persons so frequently hold inconsistent principles! How many will say the strongest things in favour of an impartial search after truth, and with the very same breath tell you, *It is of no consequence at all, either for time or eternity, whether you hold one opinion or another.*" Ut supra, Advertisement. p. 4, 5, edit. 2d.

"They who allow themselves to contradict matter of fact," says Dr. Beattie, "will find it no easy matter to avoid contradicting themselves." (Essay on Truth, part ii. p. 170, first edit.) Whether this remark be not verified to an uncommon degree by the writer to whom I advert, my reader will judge by the following extracts. For, harmless, universally harmless as error is, in the language of this position, *There is no moral turpitude in mental errors*; he elsewhere speaks of an "absurd and dangerous error"—of "most pernicious errors"—of "the great, the fatal error"—of "error, guilt, and vice," as the principal causes of human misery—of "errors and vice," as "sources of misery to men, and reasons of punishment with God, the Judge of mankind"—of an "abominable error"—"a monstrous error"—of an error that "may be fatal to revelation"—and of an error that "may be fatal to religion." (Notes upon Claude's *Essay*, vol. i. p. 132, 227; vol. ii. *Dissertat.* on

cepts and original precedent, from principles of a moral kind? contemplate the people who are, by way of dis-

Preaching, p. 63; Notes, p. 253, 364. Sixteen Discourses, p. 125, 162. Saurin's Serm. vol. iii. Pref. p. 30.) When speaking of Jesus Christ, he says; "As all his doctrines were true, so he chose to make those truths the subjects of his ministry which were important; and there is not in all the information given us by him a single trifle. Every thing is of the utmost consequence for somebody to know, and most articles are of great moment to all his disciples. . . . All his discourses have a singular artlessness and simplicity. They not only *may* be understood, but they cannot be misunderstood."

Again: Speaking of erroneous doctrine, the influence of sentiment, and the worth of truth, he says; "That false doctrine doth *harm*, cannot be doubted. It hath hurt the bodies, the understandings, the consciences, and the tempers of mankind. It hath injured the reputation, the property, the peace, the lives, and liberties of thousands. It hath cramped trade, suppressed genius, perverted government. What evil hath it not done? It poisons one half of the church, and persecutes the other to death. The subject would fill volumes. . . . It would be a sad misfortune to a man in trade not to know a guinea from a shilling, or a light guinea from one that is full weight; but it would be much worse not to know truth from error. . . . It would be a melancholy thing to be cold and indifferent to truth and error. . . . This is the constant method of error; it conceals itself under an appearance of truth, and by such means sits easy on a conscience that would otherwise be unhappy. . . . Belief worketh; belief of any thing worketh; belief of a part of Christianity worketh a partial conformity to Christianity; and belief of the whole worketh universal obedience. . . . Nothing is more common than for men to form gross notions of God; and as surely as they do form them they act agreeably to their notions. . . . All truths have a worth; but the truths of religion are the first in value, and ought to be the first in rank. . . . The gospel is truth and virtue struggling against error and vice." (Sixteen Discourses, p. 140, 141, 142, 263, 270, 271, 315, 320, 357, 372, 435.) Now, who could imagine the author to have said in his preface to these Discourses, he has "no idea of guilt in regard to different reasonings on the nature of [scriptural] facts, or the persons concerned in them—never saw any danger in a difference of opinion" relating to the affairs of religion, except what arose from unrighteous tempers in disputing about it? Yet so it is! He deserves commendation, however, for exposing the absurdity and the pernicious tendency of his own asser-

tion, called Quakers. They, you know, have long rejected baptism and the holy supper, as temporary and

tions respecting the innocence of error, whether they be found in the Preface to his Discourses, in his General Doctrine of Toleration, or in any other of his publications.—He farther assures us, and we cordially agree with him, that “all religions in the world consist of principles and practices, and the last are founded on the first.” (Arcana, p. 102. See Notes on Claude’s Essay, vol. i. p. 401.) He tells us, that “there is not one single doctrine in all the Christian system, which does not reduce itself to practice; and [that] this is the glory of the system.” He also maintains, that “there is a general excellence, a supreme love to truth and virtue, *religious principle*, if you will, in all believers, on which the Christian church is constituted.” Notes on Claude, vol. ii. p. 279. Gen. Doct. of Tolerat. p. 36.

Some particulars in this gentleman’s writings are apparently adapted to make his reader believe, that men may not only *think* as they please about the affairs of religion, without being chargeable with moral turpitude, but that they are also tolerated by the great Object of all our worship, to *act* as they choose in matters of that kind; which, nevertheless, he has been so kind as to contradict in other places. The following examples may here suffice: “When the Jews were under a theocracy, and *there was no king in Israel, every man did what was right in his own eyes*: And when Moses was immediately appointed of God to govern them, not only in their morals was divorcement tolerated, but in their religion they were SUFFERED to carry *the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of their god Remphan, figures which they made to worship*. . . There are traces of *extreme toleration* all through the history of that people down to the death of Jesus Christ, when Sadducees are found in the high priesthood.” (Arcana, p. 45.) What can this mean, but that Jehovah tolerated idolatry’ and Sadducæism? He seems, however, to convey a different sentiment, when he says; “Monsieur Voltaire observes, God called Cyrus *his shepherd*, and Nebuchadnezzar *his servant*; and thence concludes very gravely, that the religions of Babylon and Persia were as agreeable to God as that of the Jews was.” (Notes on Claude, vol. ii. p. 171.) Again: “We must so *constitute our churches* as to allow variety of sentiment and practice, and by so doing, acknowledge the force of nature for the voice of God.” Yet, in the course of a few pages, he says; “In a case that comes under *written revealed law, as the constitution of Christian churches evidently does*, general dispositions must be regu-

carnal things; nor do they, as far as I have observed, endeavour to defend the abolition of those institutions, except on moral grounds.

lated by particular directions." (Gen. Doct. of Tolerat. p. 3, 4, 14.) See Vol. I. p. 319, 320. Respecting another particular, he says; "Friendship is the state from which we derive the discipline of the primitive church. . . . What chapter of the life of Jesus can any church produce, and say, Here is our *ritual*; this is our order; these are the institutes of our discipline? . . . On these subjects the wise Master of our assemblies said *nothing*. . . . The apostles no more drew up a discipline, than they did a ritual for the hiring of servants or the celebration of marriage." (Sermon at Mr. Birley's Ordination, p. 37, 40, 41.) The members of every Christian society, therefore, may do that which is *right in their own eyes*, respecting church-order, discipline, and rites of worship, if they can but agree about them in a friendly way; for there is *no king in Israel*, no ritual, no law, but that of mutual friendship, to control or to interfere. But let us hear him on the other side. "In regard to positive institutes, such as baptism, the Lord's supper, and, some add, the sabbath, and rules of church-government, we affirm, Jesus Christ was not a refiner of old rites, an interpreter of old institutes; but a *legislator*. . . . In natural religion, mankind are to exercise reason, and to form a *ritual* by conjecture; but in revealed religion, reason is silent, the Deity speaks, and conjecture is at an end. . . . The Founder of the Christian church appointed no Jewish ceremonies to be performed in divine worship; yet (as our Protestant ministers have always argued against the church of Rome) *express positive divine law* is essentially necessary to religious institutes." Notes on Claude, vol. ii. p. 258, 259. Christian Doct. of Cerem. p. 6, 8. See Plan of Lectures, p. 18.

Farther: "No instance can be produced of any apostle *presuming* to judge for any primitive Christian, and making his *opinion* the ground of that Christian's conduct." (Gen. Doct. of Tolerat. p. 29.) So, then, it would have been *presumption* for an inspired apostle to have required from any primitive Christian, the adoption of what he believed, as the articles of his creed; the practice of what he taught, as matter of religious duty; or the imitation of that example which he set, as any way necessary to such Christian's usefulness and happiness! The apostles, it seems, like other men, had their private *opinions*; but, according to this position, they took particular care never to make those opinions articles of Christian faith, or grounds of religious practice, for either Jews or Gentiles.

Once more: Nothing is more expressly or awfully condemned than the conduct of Jereboam, on account

Must we, then, consider our Lord's ambassadors, when speaking in the New Testament, as only *proposing their opinions to examination*, and politely leaving every man at his option, either to believe and act upon them, or to refuse his assent and oppose them? Let us now hear our author on the other side. When animadverting upon a departure from the *letter* of apostolic example, in the benediction commonly used at the conclusion of public worship, he thus exclaims; "When shall we cease to be wise above what is written? When shall we be content with the simplicity of revelation?" On a different occasion, he says; "Our prophets and apostles come without a peradventure; and THUS SAITH THE LORD, is the introduction to all they say." (Notes on Claude, vol. ii. p. 500. Kingdom of Christ not of this World, p. 7.) Agreeable to this is the language of our Lord to his apostles, and of those inspired ambassadors concerning themselves. *He that receiveth you, receiveth me. . . . He, therefore, that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God. . . . He that knoweth God, heareth us.*

Once more: "The man who begins his creed with, *I believe in God*, should pity but not persecute the *brother of low degree*, (James i. 9,) who begins his with, *I believe in the DEVIL*." (Sixteen Discourses, p. 254.) Our author has told us, on a different occasion, that "a minister of Christ should speak freely. His language should be frank, open, ingenuous, free from duplicity and suspicion of collusion." (Notes on Claude, vol. ii. p. 16.) Whether in this very singular saying he punctually conform to his own rule, I must leave the reader to judge. It may be remarked, however, that though, on the highest authority, we frequently hear from the pulpit, of devils who *believe and tremble*; yet this is the only instance, that I have observed, of a preacher claiming our pity for a Christian brother of any degree, the first article in whose creed is, *I believe in the DEVIL*. I said, *for a CHRISTIAN brother*; because the apostle, whose words he professedly quotes, will not permit us to think of any other. Now, as I never before heard of any Christian considering such a believer as his *brother*, in a religious view, it looks as if our author claimed relation to a fraternity of which few have heard, and fewer still are inclined to own—As if those who adore Jehovah, and those who bow at the shrine of Moloch, were so nearly akin as to constitute but one brotherhood. But; be that as it may, I will produce another quotation, and leave my reader to determine whether he does not fall under the chastisement

of his innovations ; yet had he been allowed the privilege of pleading his own cause on moral grounds, and from historical facts which did not refer to the subject in question, impartiality must have acquitted him. This, if I mistake not, the learned Ainsworth has proved in a masterly manner. That celebrated author, when exploding the Popish idolatry, detecting the artifices of its deluded votaries, and maintaining the prerogative of God in opposition to their sophistry, represents the apostate son of Nebat as thus addressing the ten tribes, in order to quiet their minds and conciliate their eeteem, while he gave his royal sanction to outrageous violations of Jehovah's positive laws. "I see my course, O men of Israel, to be much suspected, if not wholly

of his own pen. Mr. Claude having said, that "the preacher must be wise,—in opposition to those impertinent people who utter jests, *comical comparisons*, quirks, and extravagancies ;" his annotator observes, "It is not worth while to exemplify this rule from the Romish church. . . . The best use we can make of such things, so contrary to the gravity and uncorrupt speech of every man of God, is to pass them over in silence." He gives, however, various instances of preachers who have dared to make the language of devotion and scriptural terms a vehicle for their buffoonery. After which, he adds, "I beg pardon for transcribing this *stuff*: I only observe, that there are *fools* in other communities, as well as in that of Rome. Such things, however, have a very bad effect, as they destroy the gravity of sacred things, in the same proportion in which they sanctify the levity of profane ones. . . . That farcical droll, Dr. South—abounds with ludicrous and offensive puns." Notes on Claude, vol. i. p. 14, 15, 18.

I will conclude this long note, not in the following polite and candid language of our author, when animadverting on certain Episcopalians ; "Ah ! ye bilingual sons of dissimulation ! . . . You rogue of Babylon ! you great mass of corruption, putrefying in prunella !" (Ut supra, p. 218 ; vol. ii. p. 283,)—but in the words of Mr. Hervey : "Contradiction ! didst thou ever know so trusty a friend, or so zealous a devotee ? Many people are ready enough to contradict others ; but it seems all one to this Gentleman whether it be another, or himself, so he may but contradict." Letters to Mr. J. Wesley, p. 234.

misliked of many; some thinking my ceremonies to savour too rankly of Heathen superstition; some charging plainly with flat apostasy and forsaking of God. But—the alteration that I have made is in matters of *circumstance*, things merely ceremonial, whereof there is no express, certain, or permanent law given us of God; and which are variable, as time, place, and person give occasion, and such as good kings have changed before me, and have been blameless.

“ And, first, for the *place* where God is to be worshipped, which many now would have at Jerusalem only, I find the practice of our patriarch Abraham, and the fathers following, to be far otherwise. They sacrificed to God, as occasion was offered, in every place they came to;—so this superstition of tying God to one place, was not hatched in their days. After this, when our fathers came out of Egypt, they offered sacrifices in the wilderness; and, being come into this land, in how sundry places of it have they served God!—And shall we now grow so superstitious, as to bind God to any one place? Nay, this is all the Lord’s land, and his eyes are in every part of the same; and it is not so material *where* we do worship, as *whom* we do worship, and with *what affection*; for our God is near, in all times and places, to all that call upon him in truth.

“ But it will be said, That Jerusalem is the place which God hath chosen; promising unto Solomon, to put his name in the temple there for ever, and that his eyes and his heart should be there perpetually. I answer: The promise and covenant were *conditional*, if God’s statutes and judgments were observed; for, if they should turn away and serve other gods, God said he would cast out of his sight that house which he had hallowed for his name.—And see we not how Solomon forfeited his bond? His wives turned his heart after other gods; for which his wickedness God was angry,

and hath rent his kingdom from his son, and given it to me. . . . And now that this Bethel, where I build a house to our God, is the place which he hath chosen to dwell therein, we may boldly say—They boast, in Jerusalem, how their temple standeth upon mount Moriah, where Abraham our father offered his son Isaac (a type of the Messiah) for a sacrifice to God: we also can glory, how Jacob our patriarch saw, in this our place, a ladder that reached from earth to heaven, by which the angels of God went up and down; a type also, doubtless, of our Messiah.—Here God appeared to our father Jacob, promising him the land, and heirs to possess it: he then acknowledged how the Lord was in this reverend place; that it was no other but the house of God, and the very gate of heaven; and thereupon gave it a new name, *Bethel, God's house*.—To go to Jerusalem, it may prove perilous: sure, it is overmuch for the people that dwell afar off, and seemeth to me altogether unreasonable. For may, and ought not every prince and people to serve God in their own country? Was there any before me that might not do it? and am I more in bondage than all? Besides, who knoweth not the grudge that Rehoboam hath against us?—He counteth me and my people rebels; and if he can get me within his dominion, he will surely cut off my head, and the heads of many more. And doth God, who *desireth mercy rather than sacrifice*, require of men thus to run upon the sword's point, and endanger their lives without cause, and only for a circumstance of place? I am not so weak of judgment as to think it; neither will I be so unwise as to hearken to those Levites, who kindle a fire of contention among my subjects, and teach that we all must go up to Jerusalem, or else we may offer no sacrifice to God. Believe it they that list: I have otherwise learned the truth of the law; and trust we shall so serve the Lord at home, as will please him well enough.

“For the worship that here we perform unto God, is, for the substance, the same that himself commanded by Moses. We serve the same GOD that brought us up out of the land of Egypt; and this is the first and great commandment, on which all others do depend.—We hold the main article of our Messiah to come.—If here it be said, we do against God in making these golden figures, because he forbiddeth graven images to be made, the answer is easy. God’s meaning is, not to forbid all images simply, but only idols, that have divine worship done unto them.—Yet some—think, that I give the honour unto them that is due to the eternal and blessed God himself.—But were I so minded, I should be indeed more brutish than a calf myself. . . . These priests of Levi are much to be pitied, that urge so the letter of the law, which, I think, they understand not. They say it is written, *Ye shall put nothing to the word that I command you, nor take aught therefrom*: but they mind not how this intendeth matters of faith and doctrines fundamental, which I willingly grant may in no wise be corrupted; but ceremonies are variable, and circumstances may be changed upon every just occasion. . . . The prophet that came out of Judah to Bethel, and gave there a sign, made some for to think I had sinned indeed. Myself, I confess, was somewhat moved, when I felt my arm withered; but seriously weighing things after, as they were, I stayed my thoughts. For—I find in the law, that a prophet may arise, giving a sign or wonder which shall come to pass; and yet his doctrine may be abominable, and God thereby proveth the hearts of his people. The enchanters of Egypt could also do miracles, even like unto Moses; yet were they no ministers of the Lord.—The abuse of God’s name cannot go long unpunished, for it is a great sin; neither ’scaped this prophet due vengeance for his crime, but as he went homeward he was slain by a lion. Well worthy end for such as dissemble the message of the

most High! However, therefore, some think of this matter, I am not persuaded he was a man of God that came to so fearful a death.

“But the death of my own son, Abijah, sat nearer me, and made me look narrowly into my actions, till I found indeed whereof to resolve. I sent my own wife to Ahijah the prophet for counsel about him; but the choleric old man would not suffer her to speak, but, breaking out into heat and menaces, gave her answer before she asked. It is easy to see his partial affection: he leaneth towards Judah, and speaketh with bitterness against me, that never did him hurt.—My son is dead and gone; for his day was come. If he were cut off before his time, it was rather for his vice than for his virtue. The prophet said, there was *some goodness found in my son towards the Lord God of Israel*; and, therefore, he must *die*. But doth the Lord use so to reward them that are good before him? It is said in the scripture, of wicked men, *that they shall not live out half their days*; yet, now, this young man’s death is brought as an argument to prove he was godly! Ahijah, I perceive, is too old to be a seer any longer; else could he not have been so much overseen in this new doctrine. God’s law biddeth children *honour their parents, that their days may be long in the land*; but this my child had his days shortened, doubtless, for disobedience. My other sons consented to that which I did about religion, and they live and prosper. He only would be more precise than his brethren, and his honour was laid in the dust. Thus I see in my house the proverb fulfilled; ‘The fear of the Lord increaseth the days; but the years of the wicked shall be diminished.’”*

By this abstract of the masterly mock apology which our famous Puritan makes for the conduct of

*Arrow against Idolatry, chap. iii. p. 45—65. See also Josephus’s Antiq. of the Jews, book viii. chap. iii.; and Dr. Jennings’s Jewish Antiq. vol. ii. p. 26, 27, 28.

Jeroboam, it plainly appears, that as those general principles on which human legislation proceeds, whenever it dares to prescribe how God shall be worshipped, are much the same in every age and nation; so when human appointments in the affairs of religion are called in question, they must be defended, if defended at all, on the same general grounds. Yes, whether it be an assembly of presbyters, or a council of prelates,—whether the injunction of a pope, or the mandate of a prince, by which the inventions of men are incorporated with the appointments of God, they admit of the same kind of defence: for the espousers of them will always be forced to stand on similar ground with Nebat's apostate son.—It farther appears, by this extract from Ainsworth, that the most detestable corruptions of ritual worship admit of a plausible defence, when managed by persons of genius, if you do but allow them the privilege of arguing on general principles, as distinguished from positive laws, and on such passages of sacred writ as are foreign to the subject in question. It certainly behoves us, therefore, to be exceedingly careful of deserting positive law and primitive example, when a positive ordinance is under consideration; seeing this apology for Jeroboam defies the art of man to confute it on any other ground.

Remark VI. I will here present the reader with a plain popular argument, which, among many others, has been used with great propriety and force against the church of Rome. The anonymous author of a little book, which is called, *Popery confuted by Papists*, gives the last section of his work the following title: “Proving, by the confession of all sides, that the Protestant religion is *safer*, because, in all positive points of doctrine, the Romanists themselves agree with them [the Protestants]; but in their additions, they stand single by themselves.” Then he proceeds to mention particulars, in the following manner. “We say, there is a

heaven and a hell. It is true, say they; but there is also a *purgatory*.—We say, we shall be saved by the merits and satisfaction of Christ Jesus. It is true, say they; but there are likewise merits and satisfactions of *our own*.—We say, the sacraments of baptism and the eucharist are two proper sacraments, instituted by Christ. It is true, say they; but there are *five more* to be received”—and so on.* Why now may not we adopt a similar method? There is no reason that I perceive to forbid our proceeding thus: We assert, that positive institutions depend entirely on the sovereign will of God. It is true, say our Pædobaptist Brethren, and censure the Papists for presuming to alter them.—We maintain, that the term baptism properly signifies immersion. It is true, say they; but, many of them add, it also signifies washing, where there is no immersion.—We contend, that the grand facts represented by the ordinance, cannot be so well expressed by pouring, or sprinkling, as by immersion. It is true, say they; but sprinkling was a Jewish method of purification, nor is it destitute of analogy.—We insist, that immersion was the apostolic practice. It is true, say they; but there are difficulties in the way of conceiving that it was always used.—We assert, that immersion is now practised by one half of the Christian world, and that it was the general practice for thirteen centuries. It is true, say they; yet pouring or sprinkling may suffice in these northern climates.—We maintain, that there is no express command, nor plain example, for infant baptism in the sacred scripture. It is true, say they; but it may be inferred from Genesis the seventeenth, Ezekiel the sixteenth, and from various parts of the New Testament.—We contend, that there is no solid evidence of Pædobaptism being practised at all, before the end of the second century; and that it was not a prevailing custom, before the middle of the third century. It is true, say they; but yet we think it

* See Morning Exercise against Popery, serm. vii. p. 172.

our duty, at least it cannot be unlawful, to baptize infants.—We insist, that infant communion is hoary with high antiquity, recommended by general practice for a course of ages, and is now the custom of one half of the Christian world. It is all true, say they; but yet infants have no claim on the sacred supper, though they are entitled to baptism.—Finally: Do we solemnly immerse those who profess faith in the Son of God? they cannot, they dare not deny that we have divine authority for it.

The reader will judge, from the foregoing pages, whether this be not a fair state of the case; and if it be, I appeal to him, whether ours be not the safer side of the question. That every one should choose the safer side, in the Pædobaptist as well as in the Popish controversy, is a dictate of common prudence; and her authority must not be confronted by any thing short of divine revelation. Having, however, of late been fond, as the reader must have observed, of adorning my page and supporting my cause by attestations from the writings of our opposers, I shall introduce another quotation, and that from one who never played booty when disputing with Baptists. The author to whom I refer, is the celebrated Mr. Baxter. “Methinks men,” says he, “should desire to go on the surer side of the hedge; and seeing, where there is no law there is no transgression, sin being nothing else but a transgression of the law, they should conclude, that it is certainly no sin, and therefore safest, to let go those additions which no law enjoineth. But, on the other side, that it may be a dangerous sin to use them; both as being an accusation of scripture as insufficient, and as adding to God’s worship. If, when his worship was so much ceremonious, he yet layeth a charge to do whatever he commanded, and add nothing thereto, nor take aught therefrom, (that is, not to or from the *words commanding* only, but also the *work commanded*;) is it likely then, that he will be less jealous

in this now?"*—Thus also Mr. Chillingworth: "Men are bound, for avoiding sin, always to take the safest way."†

Remark VII. As the people called Quakers are unbiassed spectators of this controversy, and impartial judges of the arguments produced *pro* and *con*, it affords us peculiar pleasure to find, that these respectable Friends, whether learned or illiterate, award the cause to us. This they have most explicitly done, both as to the mode and subject; and in this, as far as I have had opportunity of consulting them, they appear unanimous.‡

It is worthy of observation, that the deistical author of "Christianity not founded on Argument," availed himself of infant baptism, as held and practised by multitudes. Thus he interrogates: "Can a man be baptized into a rational religion?"—"By which," says Dr. Doddridge, "I suppose you mean, Can that religion be *rational*, of which infant baptism is a part?" The Deist proceeds: "Where is *reason* concerned, when babes accept the terms of salvation *by deputy*, and are entitled to all the privileges of the most extensive faith by another's act? By the baptismal ceremony they commence true believers at once, and are made heirs of heaven, you know, by the faith of their bondsmen. . . . The merits of the most finished conviction are already theirs by imputation."§—To this Dr. Doddridge replies; "I am obliged to say, that if there be any form of baptism in the Christian world, which justifies such inferences, and such a manner of speaking, I am extremely sorry for it. But I am very confident, the scripture teaches nothing of this kind; and it is by *that*, and not by the

* Plain Scrip. Proof, p. 303.

† Relig. of Protest. part i. chap. vii. § 8. Vid. Chemnitii Exam. Concil. Trident. p. 315.

‡ See Vol. I. p. 59—62, 101, 200, 201, 310, 311, 312, 332, 334, 342, 373, 374; and Vol. II. p. 109, 160, 179, 180, 196, 270, 271.

§ In Dr. Doddridge's Third Letter to the Author of Christianity not founded on Argument, p. 54, 55.

rubric of any particular church, whether Popish or Protestant, that the merits of this cause are to be tried.*"—The following particulars, as collected by Mr. Richards, relating to this objection of the subtle Infidel, are worthy of notice. "Dr. Benson urges," says Mr. Richards, that "the objection was on a *mistaken* notion of baptism;" and that the author knew very well that some Christians denied infant baptism; and that he had much better have done so, than have given up his understanding, and rational Christianity all at once. Dr. Leland, on the same side, affirms, that the strength of his opponent's arguments here 'depends upon the sneering account he gives of the nature of baptism;' but that there needs no more to show the weakness and fallacy of it, than to state the case of baptism according to the gospel notion of it; in which alone Christianity is concerned.' Mark his account of the *gospel notion* of baptism, which immediately follows: 'At the first founding of the Christian church, the first work was to bring persons over to the faith of the gospel, by setting before them the evidence whereby it was confirmed; and then, when they were once converted to the faith, they were, according to the divine appointment, to be baptized;' which was a solemn taking upon them a profession of the Christian religion, and a bringing themselves under the most sacred obligations to obey its laws. And there is nothing in this but what is perfectly consistent with faith's being founded upon good and rational evidence; nor can so much as the shadow of an argument be brought from it to prove, that because persons were *ordered to be baptized after they believed*, therefore they did not, nor could not use their reason, or intellectual faculty, to lead them into that belief. . . . Our author is sensible of this, and therefore he lays the stress of his argument upon the baptism of *infants*, which he represents in his own way. . . . Let us therefore argue with him upon the

* Ut supra.

supposition, that it is the will of God, that not only adult persons, who themselves embraced the Christian faith, but that their children too should be baptized.'—'You ask, (says the author of the Cambridge Letter to this Deist,) *Can a man be baptized into a rational religion?*—By commenting on the form of baptism in our church, you endeavour to establish the negative; which you conclude with,—*Yet such is the pleasure and ordinance of God himself in this point.*—All this is said as if the whole of your account was expressly revealed in the New Testament. The forms and modes of worship, the manner of administering the sacraments, and definitions and decrees relating to doctrines, as far as they are human appointments, do not belong to our consideration.—All our present concern is with *pure and simple* Christianity, and not to account for difficulties added by religious establishments.' The words of the Oxford Replier are, perhaps, still more remarkable. 'You lay it down peremptorily, (says this writer to his antagonist) that it is the pleasure and ordinance of God, that infants should be baptized;—because, I suppose, it best suited your purpose. For you know very well, that all Christians are not of a mind in this matter; and it shows you are hard put to it for arguments against Christianity, to lay hold of *a disputed practice*, and build upon it as a plain express law of Christ. . . . I do not remember any passage in the New Testament, which says expressly that infants should be baptized; and, as I am informed by better judges, the evidences for this practice from antiquity, though very early, do not fully come up to the times of the apostles.'*—Hence it appears, that Nonconformist Pædobaptists found it no easy matter to repel the force of this Deist's objection, without sapping the foundations of their own practice; and that ministers of the National church had little to say on this occasion, which did not implicitly contradict various particu-

* History of Antichrist, p. 18, 19, Note.

lars in their Articles and Liturgy,—which did not condemn their own solemn *subscription*, together with their professed *assent* and *consent*.

Remark VIII. Baptism being an appointment of Christ, and a branch of religious worship, should ever be viewed as an evidence of our Lord's divine authority, as a fruit of his consummate wisdom, and as an expression of his immense goodness. Thus considered, its design must be gracious, and of a practical tendency. Now it appears, that many Pædobaptists agree with us in maintaining, that it was chiefly intended to represent our communion with its great Institutor, in his death, burial, and resurrection.* All, therefore, who have been baptized on a profession of faith, should endeavour to live under a practical sense of those duties and blessings to which the ordinance directs their attention, and to which they expressed a solemn regard when they were baptized. To such an improvement of this institution the apostle exhorts.† Nothing is more reasonable than to suppose, that a reception of baptism should be calculated to promote the exercise of those dispositions, hopes, and views, which qualify a candidate for it. So, for instance, if nothing short of really believing on Jesus Christ, can be a sufficient ground of professing faith in him; and if such a profession be required previous to baptism; then, certainly, the baptized person should constantly aim at living by faith, as a characteristic of those who are truly righteous. Habitually regarding *the blood of Christ*, not the baptismal water, as *cleansing from all sin*; and the obedience of our great Substitute, not a submission to this ordinance, as that righteousness by which a sinner is justified; he may be said, in the language of inspiration, to *live by the faith of the Son of God*.—As every candidate, properly qualified for the sacred rite, solemnly avows the authority of Christ, and a sincere desire of living in subjection to him, as

* See Vol. I. Part I. Chap. III. p.132—170. † Rom. vi. 1—5.

Lord of conscience and King in Zion; so, after baptism, he should often reflect on that avowal, with earnest prayer, that the holy dispositions he then felt may increase and operate with all their force. Thus advert- ing to the doctrine of scripture concerning baptism, he finds it rich with encouragement for hope, and big with exhortation to duty.—The former, because it presents to his view, the dying, the entombed, the rising Redeemer; on whose glorious person and finished work, his hope of acceptance with God is founded. Yes, advert- ing to this institution, he is reminded that Christ died, was buried, and rose again; yet not for his own emolument, but for the guilty, the wretched, the dam- nable: while, feeling his want and confessing his un- worthiness, he hopes, rejoices, and bows at the feet of his adorable Sponsor.—The latter, because it emphati- cally cries in his ear, *How shall we, who professed in our baptism to be dead to sin, live any longer therein?* Was Christ “raised from the dead, by the glory of the Father,” to a life of sublime honour and perfect happi- ness; and shall not “we also live in newness of life?” When tempted by Satan, or solicited by mortals, to defile their consciences and offend the Lord, a serious reflection upon their baptism will cause them to say, *How shall we do this great evil and sin against God, whom, in our baptismal profession, we engaged to serve?*

Nor is the doctrine of baptism, rightly understood, less fitted to detect the artifice of several capital errors, as Paul teaches.* Does, for instance, the Socinian de- nial of our Lord’s real and proper atonement, solicit the believer’s reception. He recurs to his baptism, and, after the example of an apostle, he asks; “If there be no atonement for sin by the blood of Christ, why was I baptized in token of my communion with him in his death? If he did not suffer and bleed as a substitute for sinners, what part can baptism represent me as having

* 1 Cor. xv. 29.

in his death, any more than in the martyrdom of Peter? If there be no atonement for sin, why was the most holy Lamb of God immersed in the torrent of eternal justice, and plunged in the most bitter death? And why are we baptized *into his DEATH*, if not as a memorial of his being *made a curse*, and falling a victim to divine justice *for us?*—Again: Does the Sabellian, the Arian, or the Socinian hypothesis, relating to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, present itself to the Christian's notice? He still recurs to his baptism, and asks; “Into what, or whom, was I baptized? Into the name of *a name*, or into the name of *three offices?* Far be it that I should entertain such an absurdity!—Into the name of GOD, and of two *exalted creatures?* Abhorred be the thought, that creatures should be joint objects with the Creator in any act of religious worship! What! shall creatures, who cannot but owe their being to divine power, and their blessedness to divine favour, be thus associated with eternal Majesty, and thus adored with the great Supreme? The first command of the law, and the first dictate of reason, in reference to God and creatures, forbid the idolatrous absurdity. Was it by placing dependence on the throne of ALL-SUFFICIENCY; by treating subjects as on a level with their Sovereign; and by worshipping those who, on this hypothesis, must be worshippers, that I commenced my public profession? Detested be such imaginations, as no less insulting to the human understanding, than contradictory to divine revelation!—Into what, or whom, then, was I baptized? Into the name of GOD, of a *man*, and of a *property?* What an heterogeneous association of ideas!* A

* This, in the language of inspiration, is to *worship and swear by Jehovah and by Malcham*, (Zeph. i. 5.) Like the oath of supremacy, which once ran in this form: “By God, by the saints, and by the Holy Ghost.” Neal's Hist. Puritans, vol. i. chap. ii. p. 68. Or like the form of dedicating St. Thomas's Hospital at Edinburgh; for it “was dedicated to God, the virgin Mary, and all the saints.” Encyclopæd. Britan. vol. iv. p. 2620.

divine Person, a merely human person, and something divine which is not a person! Was I baptized on the united authority of these? Or was my submitting to baptism an act of obedience to a man like myself, and to an unintelligent property, equally as to the FATHER? Did I then profess, not by a parent, nor by a proxy, but personally and solemnly profess, my dependence on a mere man, my subjection to his authority, and my desire of living to his praise? No! I then solemnly acknowledged, I then profoundly adored, the FATHER, and the SON, and the HOLY SPIRIT, as the THREE *who bear record in heaven*, and yet are but one God.* My baptism teaches, that this part of my creed is of the last importance; and therefore, through the aids of grace, I will abide by it."—This may serve as a specimen of that practical improvement which believers are called to make of their baptism—that baptism which was administered at their own request, on a conviction of duty and in hope of a blessing.

Now, reader, are you a baptized person? Have you professed faith in the Son of God, and have you been immersed in the name of the eternal Trinity? Reflect, then, on what your baptism teaches, and on what your solemn profession demands. Make it your daily business to improve your baptismal profession in the best manner.—Perhaps you are one of those who call themselves Baptists *in sentiment*, but are not yet baptized. If so, I beg leave to enquire, why not a Baptist *in practice*? Is it because you are conscious of not being fit for the ordinance? You are, it may be, dead in sin, and have only an educational knowledge of this institution. Should

* So embarrassing is Matt. xxviii. 19, to the cause of the Socinians, that some of them have affected to suspect it of being an interpolation; nay, there are not wanting of those among them, who would expunge from the sacred canon whole chapters and books, because they find them refractory, and uncompliant with their hypothesis. See Dr. Allix's Judgment of the Jewish Church against the Unitarians, p. 296, 416, 423, 427, 428.

that be your case, you have reason to tremble every moment. Unfit for baptism you are, indeed; and equally unfit for heaven. Your soul, your everlasting all is at stake, and God only knows what will become of you.—But peradventure you are not careless about your immortal interests; you hear the gospel with devout attention, read the Bible with fervent prayer, examine with great anxiety the state of your soul, and yet, after all, a painful suspicion prevails that you are not a partaker of regenerating grace. If so, I would take the liberty of suggesting a hint for your direction, from that remarkable distinction which the beloved apostle makes between *fathers*, *young men*, and *little children*. You are pained, it may be, because you cannot find the marks of a *father*, while you ought rather to be thankful for those of a *little child*; that is, of a young or a feeble convert. Now, it is plain, from the tenour of apostolic practice, that baptism and the holy supper were intended for the weakest of real disciples; for we have scarcely an instance in the New Testament of baptism being administered, without being informed that the persons baptized were but just before converted.—You are afraid, or ashamed, perhaps, of the despised immersion; and that is the reason you have never participated of the ordinance. Afraid! ashamed! of what? The chill of the water? The sneer of your fellow-worms? If either fear or shame had been allowed thus to operate in the bosom of Abraham, when hoary with age, he would never have submitted to that command, “Ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin.” If selfish and servile passions prevent your obeying an appointment of Christ, you deserve the severest censure; for our Lord himself has declared, “He that is ashamed of me and of my word, of him will I be ashamed.”—You reply, it may be, “It is not *essential*.” Essential to what? Your pardon or justification? by no means. But is not a prevailing disposition to obey the authority of Christ essential to true holiness?

and is not holiness essential to real happiness? Whatever confidence, therefore, you may pretend in the mercy of God, your trifling with divine authority in this manner, is a sufficient reason for the most painful doubts concerning your state. To what purpose confess yourself a Baptist in sentiment, while, though free from harassing fear about your conversion, you neglect the ordinance? To what purpose, did I ask? your own conduct replies; To expose your want of integrity in regard to sacred things;—to let others know that your conscience, in this respect, is not under the controul of him whom you call your LORD;—and to declare that, in reference to baptism, you think yourself wiser than He; because you treat as unimportant and inexpedient, what you cannot acknowledge he has required.—You are a Baptist in *sentiment*. Well, but what would people think were you to say, “I am a *Dissenter*, in sentiment—an *honest man*, in sentiment?” Think? why they would certainly consider you as a hypocrite in religion, and as a knave in moral conduct.

Remark IX. In what light those of our Pædo-baptist Brethren, who may condescend to peruse the foregoing pages, will consider the course of argumentation contained in them, I cannot determine; there is no doubt, however, but many objections will arise in their minds against it. This, there is reason to conclude, would have been the case, had the arguments produced in opposition to infant sprinkling been far more numerous, and much more cogent than those with which the reader is presented. Such, in a particular manner, as labour under violent prejudices, will be sure to object; because, as Dr. Doddridge observes, “There is hardly any argument in favour of truth, from which a prejudiced and captious wit cannot draw an objection, and frame a sophistry to maintain error.”* Far be it, notwithstanding, from any to imagine, that this is intended as an im-

* Note on Acts xxviii. 23.

peachment of the good sense, the integrity, or the piety, of those who differ from us in regard to the mode and subject of baptism, while we have fellowship with them in the most capital truths of divine revelation. No; a difference of judgment and practice concerning this part of religious duty, may be accounted for by considering the powerful influence which long established customs have on our modes of thinking and acting, without indulging a suspicion which is unfriendly and unwarrantable. Besides, though the author of this treatise has freely examined the grounds of infant sprinkling, and plainly shown his cordial disapprobation of them, he has a sincere and high esteem for great numbers of Pædobaptists, as his Brethren in the Lord, not only among Dissenters, but also in the national establishment; while there are others, of his own persuasion in respect to baptism, with whom he has no fellowship, and for whom he has no regard, except in the exercise of that justice, and in the expressions of that benevolence, which are due to all mankind.

Having examined Pædobaptism, according to the plan at first proposed, a remarkable declaration of Bp. Taylor's occurs to remembrance. The declaration to which I refer, was made by him when taking a retrospect of the arguments usually produced on both sides of this dispute, and is as follows. "I think there is so much to be pretended against that [Pædobaptism] which I believe to be the truth, that there is much more truth than evidence on our side."* Reflecting on this language of the learned prelate, I am pleased, I am puzzled, I am discouraged. I am *pleased*, greatly pleased, to hear a person of the bishop's erudition and penetration acknowledge, that *much*, so much may be said against infant baptism. I am yet more pleased to hear him tacitly confess, that *greatly preponderating*

* Liberty of Propheying, sect. xviii. p. 245.

evidence is on our side.—I am *puzzled*, however, extremely puzzled; for I cannot imagine how the right reverend author, notwithstanding all his learning and all his acumen, discovered truth without evidence. This, it must be confessed, is a wonderful secret; and he would certainly have laid posterity under great obligations, had he but made the *arcantum* public. Mankind might have reaped a harvest of benefits from the discovery of such an invention; because it would have been of admirable use in many a pinching case besides Pædobaptism, to which it is here applied. I am equally nonplused, when thinking of truth and evidence taking *opposite sides* of a controverted subject. Having never heard of any quarrel between them, either before or since the flood, I took it for granted, that they were leagued in eternal friendship; whereas, it now appears, on the word of a bishop, that they cannot agree about infant baptism.—This being the case, I am greatly *discouraged*, in respect of an issue to the present controversy. For as truth and evidence do not depend on the pleasure of man, they are stubborn things; and we may justly presume, they will not easily quit their stations, out of complaisance to either side. While, therefore, each abides by her party, the Baptists, it is likely, will plead preponderating evidence, and firmly insist upon it as a maxim of logical prudence; That our assent should always be proportioned to the degree of evidence.* On the other hand, we need not wonder if Pædobaptists exult in the possession of truth, because it is a precious jewel; and such truth, especially as is obtained *without evidence*, must be precious indeed, it being so extremely scarce. Despairing, therefore, of putting an end to any controversy where truth and evidence take different sides, I must here lay down my pen.

* Dr. Watts's Logic, part ii. chap. iv. direct. viii.

PART III.



A DEFENCE

OF

PÆDOBAPTISM EXAMINED,

&c.

A
DEFENCE
OF
PÆDOBAPTISM EXAMINED:
OR,
ANIMADVERSIONS
ON
DR. EDWARD WILLIAMS'S
ANTIPÆDOBAPTISM EXAMINED.
BY ABRAHAM BOOTH.

As nothing should be considered as an established principle of faith, which is not in some part of scripture delivered with perspicuity, so that perspicuity should be sought for principally where the point in question is most professedly handled.—*Dr. E. Williams.*

The power of truth has extorted from some or other of our adversaries, the confession of—the premises which infer our conclusion.—*Dr. Clagett.*

It is highly probable the Baptist-ideas will prevail.—*Mr. Pirie.*

PREFACE.

THE Performance of my Opponent having made its appearance, I purchased and perused it with care. But though I plainly perceived, in "Antipædobaptism Examined," a variety of novel ideas, expressed with an air of confidence; yet, not considering the general principles on which my reasoning in Pædobaptism Examined proceeds, as being in the least subverted, nor my arguments on those principles as having received even a *plausible* answer, I resolved to make no reply. Such was my unwavering determination for more than two years; and in that determination I should probably have still continued, had it not been for credible intelligence, which struck me as very extraordinary.

A gentleman in the country, who is professedly of the Baptist persuasion, sent me a letter, in which he informed me of a friendly interview that he had with Mr. (now Dr.) Edward Williams, and of some particulars which passed in conversation relative to Antipædobaptism Examined. Among other things, he mentioned the following: "Mr. Williams said, Mr. Booth *confessed that his book was UNANSWERABLE.* At this I was much surprised, and immediately asked; Why, then, does not Mr. Booth declare for infant baptism? Mr. Williams replied; *The disadvantages attending an open declaration of sentiments, render it inexpedient and imprudent to do so at all times,—or to that effect.*"

On reading this, I paused—I was astonished—and said within myself; Of what superlative excellence, in the

estimate of its author, must Antipædobaptism Examined be possessed! What a compliment he pays to my integrity! If my Opponent, when conversing with one whom he knows to be an avowed *Baptist*, cannot restrain the ebullitions of self-gratulation, relative to his performance, nor forbear exclaiming, *Io triumphe!* in what sublime strains of self-complacency, and in what an ample manner must he express himself, when conversing with his *Pædobaptist* Brethren! It is time for me to put an absolute negative on his totally unfounded assertion; to chastise his unparalleled vanity; and to vindicate my integrity against his implicit, but odious charge!

On this occasion, the following particulars, with which I have met in respectable authors, occur to remembrance. Dr. Johnson: "He that is pleased with *himself*, easily imagines he shall please others."*—Mr. Cowper:

"None but an author knows an author's cares,
Or Fancy's *FONDNESS* for the child she bears." †—

Mr. Hicks: "They [the Roman Catholic missionaries] triumph mightily in conversions which were *never made*, and converts *not instructed*." ‡—Mr. James Owen: "I should not have thought it worth while to have answered [the performance of my opponent,] but for the clamorous confidence of some—people, who reckon a book *unanswerable*, when no reply is made unto it." §

A repeated perusal of Antipædobaptism Examined, far from producing that strong conviction, of which Dr. Williams was pleased to boast, had an effect quite the reverse. For the principles on which he endeavours

* Beauties of Johnson, part. i. p. 35, edit. 6th.

† Poems, vol. i. p. 67.

‡ Preservative against Popery, title xiii. p. 43.

§ Tutamen Evangelicum, Preface.

to support infant sprinkling,* are many of them so novel, so paradoxical, and so extremely foreign from every idea suggested by the law and practice of baptism, as recorded in the New Testament, that I received additional confirmation of my avowed sentiments. Nay, so far from being convinced, in the manner he fondly believed and rashly asserted, I could not forbear suspecting, that even many Pædobaptists themselves, among the Dissenters, and especially among our *Congregational Brethren*, must be *ashamed* to see their cause defended on such principles, and to find such effects attributed to baptism, as various of those with which they meet in *Antipædobaptism Examined*.

Though I have not the least expectation of what is contained in the following pages, being considered by Dr. Williams as *unanswerable*; and though, being firmly persuaded, that an upright Pædobaptist is more worthy of esteem than a hypocritical Baptist, I do not so much as *wish* for any such conviction taking place in his mind, except he were to avow and act upon it; yet I have endeavoured to convince him, and to produce a confession, that I am NOT a Pædobaptist *incog*. Yes, I have made some exertions, in order to prove, that I am not “enamoured” with *Antipædobaptism Examined*—that I am no more convinced by the force of my Opponent’s arguments, than I am charmed with the modesty of his pretensions, the consistency of his sentiments, the perspicuity of his meaning, the accuracy of his language, or the elegance of his composition: on all which I have made some animadversions, that would certainly have been spared, even though I had thought proper to

* As the expressions, *infant sprinkling*, wherever they occur in this *defence*, are used merely by way of distinction, and not of contempt; so the terms *Pædo-baptism* and *infant baptism*, are employed in compliance with general custom, and not because the author considers an infant as *baptized*, on whom water has been solemnly poured or sprinkled.

write a *defence*, if he had not considered me as *captivated* with his performance.* But whether, after all my endeavours, I shall be so happy as thoroughly to convince him, that I am still, *ex animo*, a Baptist, is to me uncertain.

Elevated with joy, as Dr. Williams may be, in expectation of his book powerfully supporting the cause of infant sprinkling, and of its making a multitude of converts to that cause; yet my zealous opponent, Mr. Pirie, evidently despairs of any exertions whatever proving effectual for that purpose. Thus he speaks: "It is *highly probable*, that the Baptist-ideas will prevail."†—This, to us, is pleasing intelligence; and I must acknowledge myself inclined to the same opinion, though not on the same grounds; but because, in the reasons assigned by him for that persuasion, there is *a flagrant misrepresentation* of our sentiments, relative to the importance and utility of baptism—a misrepresentation *so palpably gross*, that I am astonished, that an author of his respectable character could be so inadvertent, when writing against "Messrs. M'Lean and Booth."

It has generally been considered as unfair for any polemical author to animadvert upon the *first* edition of a book, if an improved impression of the same work had made its appearance time enough to have been consulted.‡ Now, though Dr. Williams informs us, that the "former part" of his work was "sent into the press" before the second edition of *Pædobaptism Examined* came out, § yet, in the second volume of his performance, he might have regarded the improved impression of my book. It is very observable, that though the

* Luther, when writing against king Henry the Eighth, says: "Non mihi, sed sibi imputet rex Henricus, si durius et asperius à me tractatus fuerit." Opera. tom. ii. fol. 333. Witeberg, 1562.

† Appendix to Dissertat. Preface, p. v.

‡ See Dr. Waterland's Second Defence of Queries, p. 412. Mr. Hervey's Eleven Letters to Mr. J. Wesley, p. 3.

§ Preface, p. iv.

enlarged edition of Pædobaptism Examined was published about six months before Mr. Elliot's Dipping not Baptizing appeared; yet, from the *latter*, my Opponent could find an opportunity of introducing a long quotation in *the body* of his work,* while not a tittle appears, from the corrected impression of my book, as matter of animadversion, except a few particulars in his Appendix:—an indication this, that he was not quite so desirous of doing justice, either to me† or to our cause, as he was of obtaining, what he denominates, *a concession* from the late Mr. Elliot, under the character of an *Antipædobaptist*.

Widely as I differ from Dr. Williams, respecting the mode, the subject, and the utility of baptism; uncandid as I think some of his reflections upon the Baptists; and obnoxious to severe animadversion, as I consider a number of particulars in his performance; yet, for his professed respectful regard to my character,‡ I sincerely acknowledge myself obliged.

A. BOOTH.

London, Aug. 1st, 1792.

* Vol. ii. p. 119—135.

† See this Defence, Vol. II. p. 386, 387, 388; Vol. III. p. 164, 165, 166, this edition.

‡ Preface, p. ix. vol. ii. p. 417.

A DEFENCE
OF
PÆDOBAPTISM EXAMINED,
&c.

CHAPTER I.

Concerning the Title of Dr. WILLIAMS'S Book, his Professions, and his Conduct, relative to this Controversy.

DR. WILLIAMS having called his book, Antipædo-baptism Examined, as a counter-title to mine, it is natural to enquire, why he did not add, On the Principles, Concessions, and Reasonings of the most learned Antipædobaptists? Having reversed the leading term in the title of my book, and professing to give it a *full* reply, it might have been expected that the title of his performance would have been a perfect contrast to mine. It might also have been justly expected, that he would present his reader, under each branch of the general subject, with a number of such quotations from the writings of Baptists, as would (to use an elegant phrase of his own) have been "*plump* against"* themselves. For though the publications of Baptists are

* Antipæd. Exam. vol. ii. p. 70. N. B. For the sake of brevity, I shall, in the following pages, when quoting the book on which I animadvert, mention only vol. i. or vol. ii., and the number of the page.

very few, in comparison with those of Pædobaptists, yet, had the authors of our persuasion been divided among themselves, with reference to the subject before us, their printed works are sufficiently numerous to have furnished my opponent with a considerable number of quotations, upon the plan of Pædobaptism Examined.

To what then was it owing, that Dr. W. did not avail himself of "principles, concessions, and reasonings," contained in the writings of Baptists, when professedly contending with them, and when answering a book intended to show that Pædobaptists are extremely inconsistent with themselves? Was it because he was quite averse to confront them with their own words, and to confute them on the ground of their own concessions? That is to the last degree improbable; because it is manifest from various instances, to be remarked in their proper place, that he did not want an inclination to avail himself of the *argumentum ad hominem*. Was it because he considered the Baptists as being, of all Christian professors, the most harmonious in their theological views, and the most consistent with themselves; so that it would have been in vain to seek for a difference of sentiment among them, relative to any article of importance? Were that the case, it would be a strong presumption in our favour, and much to our credit. But this honour Dr. W. is extremely far from allowing us; for he represents the Baptists as being, "perhaps, more than any other denomination of Christians divided about the import" of our Lord's "command, 'Go—preach the gospel to every creature.'" In regard to which, he exhibits them to the public, as "perpetually clashing" one with another.* Was it, then, "perpetually clashing" as they are about some other particulars, that he could perceive scarcely any thing in their publications which has the appearance of inconsistency with their avowed sentiments and practice,

* Vol. ii. 403, 404.

relative to the mode and subject of baptism? This is, apparently, the fact; and it is greatly to the reputation of their cause, considered as *Baptists*: for it is a presumptive evidence that their views and conduct in regard to baptism, proceed on a solid foundation—on plain scriptural principles, contained in precepts and precedents.

Severe, therefore, as my opponent's reflection upon us manifestly is, with reference to some other particulars, it furnishes an inference extremely favourable to our cause, in respect of baptism. For is it supposable, that such clashing mortals as, according to Dr. W's. representation, the Baptists are, should be so consistent, and so harmonious, respecting the baptismal rite, if they did not proceed on a good foundation? So consistent and so harmonious are the Baptists, relative to the ordinance under discussion, that our zealous opponent has not produced, from their publications of any sort, so much as *one* direct concession, that is by natural and fair construction, inimical to their own practice. No, not so much as a *single instance* has he produced of their admitting, that the rite in question is any thing short of a solemn immersion; that it was ever administered, by the apostles, in any other manner; that the apostles, or apostolic men, ever baptized any that were naturally incapable of making a personal profession of repentance and faith; or that they deliberately avow any principles which, in their necessary consequences, are inimical to their own sentiments and practice respecting baptism. Hence the reader may justly conclude, that "principles, concessions, and reasonings," in favour of Pædobaptism, were extremely hard to be procured, by Dr. W., from the writings of Baptists: even while he could easily have produced an immense number of inconsistencies, relating to other articles of doctrine and of practice, from those "perpetually clashing" authors.

It seems, therefore, that, with regard to baptism, we are tolerably well agreed among ourselves. For, had our sentiments and language, respecting the mode and subject of that ordinance been remarkably discordant, it is highly probable that the title of Dr. W's. book would have run thus : Antipædobaptism Examined, on the Principles, Concessions, and Reasonings, of Anti-pædobaptists; with whatever else the author might have thought proper.—None can doubt, but my opponent would have transcribed a number of testimonies and concessions in favour of infant sprinkling, had he found them in the writings of Baptists, with much more pleasure than he did those which he has produced from the works of Pædobaptists. I cannot forbear suspecting, therefore, that when he concluded to answer Pædobaptism Examined, it must have been a little mortifying for him to find, that he could not, with any appearance of propriety, reverse the *whole title* of my book, to make it "*plump* against" me. This, perhaps, may be considered by some readers as a presumptive evidence, that his performance is not a "*full reply*" to mine: to which particular I must, however, hereafter advert.

The *professions* and *conduct* of my opponent, in the management of this controversy, deserve regard. When, in a certain passage, he is observed to denominate his work an "*humble attempt*,"* one is led to suppose that the estimate he formed of his own abilities, as an author, was far from being high, or assuming; and, that no airs of self-importance, that no confident, overbearing language, would appear in the course of his undertaking. But, notwithstanding this, Dr. W. frequently, and in variety of style, gives plain indications of superior confidence. When reflecting on various particulars, to be introduced in a following paragraph, I cannot forbear suspecting, that we have an early specimen of the good opinion he entertains of his own abilities, in

* Vol. ii. 161.

the choice of his motto, which runs thus: "*When I had waited—I said, I will answer also my part, I also will show mine opinion.*" That Elihu, in so expressing himself, acted quite in character, and that he spake *the words of truth and soberness*, I have no doubt; for he was raised up of God, and well qualified, to perform the part of moderator between Job and his three friends. But these words, from the pen of my opponent, seem to have the appearance of self-importance. After quoting a passage from Dr. Gill, he pronounces it a "curious piece of dogmatism;"* and I am very much inclined to think, that the words of Elihu, as applied by Dr. W. to himself, may be justly pronounced *a curious piece of egotism*. For he no sooner enters on the stage of controversy, than, demanding audience from the disputants on both sides, those assuming monosyllables, *I*, *MY*, and *MINE*, make the most conspicuous figure in what he says. *I* waited—I said—I will answer—I also—*MY* part—*MINE* opinion. In the words of my opponent, it may be asked, "Well, reader, what say you to this?" † Did you ever see a more curious piece of *egotism*? Might not his readers justly demand "Who is this great and very important *I*, that speaks in such an *oracular* manner, and summons the *public* attention to *his* decision of that controversy on which he is beginning to write? We—they might add—we readily allow him, when acting under a certain character, to speak *ex cathedrâ*; but, when addressing the public, to assume the air of one that speaks *ex tripode*, is far from treating us with due respect." It is not credible, I conceive, that Dr. W. would have thus announced himself to the public, if he had not considered his performance as *uncommonly* excellent. — Speaking of the writers for, and against, infant baptism, Dr. W. says: "I perceive that the champions on the *one* side are by no means agreed upon this question, *On what is the right of infants*

* Vol. ii. 75.

† Vol. i. 383.

to baptism founded? And those on the *other* know very well how to avail themselves of the fact.* Feelingly apprehensive of consequences, and zealous for the honour of Pædobaptism, he therefore makes an "*humble attempt*" in support of the endangered cause; and thus, in effect, he introduces it: *Hear now, O ye champions, and regard my decisive opinion!*

Farther: As my opponent, speaking in his motto, implicitly declares, that the contents of *Antipædobaptism Examined* have an uncommon claim on the public attention; so, toward the conclusion of that work, he expressly avows his confidence of the performance obtaining divine acceptance, "as a *Defence of Truth—a work of faith and labour of love.*" † He seems also still to retain the very high opinion he originally had of his book, and to consider it as being in great estimation with the public. This appears by his proposals, recently published, ‡ for printing another work; in which proposals he subjoins to his name, "*AUTHOR OF ANTI-PÆDOBAPTISM EXAMINED.*" A plain indication this, that he considers his being the writer of that performance as procuring celebrity to his name, and as being a strong recommendation of any other work that he may offer to the public. Every theological author, however, is not warranted thus to announce his own importance in a motto; thus to be assured that God accepts his book, as *a work of faith and labour of love*; and thus to be gratified with the public approbation.

The authoritative language of Elihu, when appearing as moderator between Job and his three censorious friends, is highly agreeable to my opponents; for Mr. Alexander Pirie, who honoured *Pædobaptism Examined* with some remarks, has chosen the following words of that celebrated ancient as his motto: "*Great men are*

* Mr. Maurice's *Social Relig.* Note, p. 68.

† Vol. ii. 247.

‡ On the cover of the *Monthly Review* for August, 1791.

not always wise—Therefore I said, HEARKEN TO ME; I ALSO WILL SHOW THEE MINE OPINION.”* Thus both my zealous opposers announce their opinions to the public, with the solemn consequence of an ELIHU! But, oracular as each of them appears in his motto, the opinion of Mr. Pirie, and that of Dr. W., cannot both be infallible; because, in various respects, they contradict one another.

Again: Dr. W., in the course of his reasoning, frequently expresses himself like one that is confident of his own *argumentative abilities*. This he does by proposing, not merely to *prove*, but (which is the highest kind of proof) to DEMONSTRATE † a great variety of particulars. Yes, and lest, any through inattention or oversight, should suspect my opponent of having promised more than is performed, he at every turn reminds his reader, that he *has* demonstrated the article which was under discussion.‡ Respecting which I shall at present only say, with Dr. Waterland; “*Demonstrations* are good things, but sometimes very hard to come at.”§ With Le Clerc; “Men are apt to believe what they desire; and the weakest reasons which persuade them, appear like *demonstrations*.”|| And, with Mr. Bonnet; many authors “are continually speaking of *demonstration*,” but also with him, that “it were better to promise less: this method creates, and merits more confidence.”¶—The following, and similar expressions, are frequently used by Dr. W. “*I affirm—I scruple not to assert—I am bold to say—*

* Appendix to Dissertat. on Bap. Perth, 1787.

† Vol. i. 38, 77, 199; vol. ii. 8.

‡ Vol. i. 95, 205, 220, 227, 319, 362; vol. ii. 159, 200, 253.

§ Defence of Queries, query xxxi. p. 482, edit. 3rd.

|| In Waterland's Importance of Doct. of Trin. p. 516, edit. 2nd.

¶ Philosophical and Critical Enquiries concerning Christianity, Preface, p. x, xi.

we are bold to affirm—I maintain—I insist—that I deny”—and, “*I absolutely deny.*”*

My opponent, in his Notes on Mr. Maurice's Social Religion, speaks of *champions* for the right of infants to baptism;† and, on another occasion, he talks of “polemic champions” being seen “*hectoring* one another.”‡ Let my reader consider the subsequent expressions, and then judge whether our author does not assume the airs of a “*hectoring champion,*” and of a martial hero, rather than those of a person who professes only to make an “*humble attempt.*”—After having said enough, as he supposes, to confute his opponents, he adds; “We shall, *ex abundanti,* take ANOTHER TURN WITH THEM.”§ Now is not this language more becoming the lips of a brawny athletic, than the pen of a sober disputant? The former, having given his antagonist a foil, acts entirely in character when he struts about on the stage, and, with an air of triumph says, *I will take another TURN with him;* but, for a theological disputant, in the course of an “*humble attempt,*” to adopt such language, is very extraordinary.—After having politely charged us with being “*impertinently inimical*” to what he considers as reasonable and right, he says; “Their favourite terms, *positive law* and *apostolic example,*—are a *two-edged sword, which they brandish with great parade,* and with which they pretend to do *great execution;* [but] let us now see whether this weapon may not be wrested out of their hands.”|| Dr. W. having produced one of our objections to his own hypothesis, though there is not a word in it, even as expressed by himself, that breathes a martial spirit, immediately adds: “To face *this CANNON,* however formidable, we venture to *plant another.*”¶

* Vol. i. 192, 196, 324, 205, 400; vol. ii. 264; vol. i. 219; vol. ii. 255; vol. i. 51, 72, 207; vol. ii. 10, 251, 162, 174.

† Page 68. ‡ Letter to Dr. Priestley, subjoined to first vol. of Abridg. of Dr. Owen's Exposit. of Epistle to Heb.

§ Vol. i. 172.

|| Vol. i. 52.

¶ Vol. i. 230.

Then he introduces a number of short extracts from *Pædobaptism Examined*, in the following manner: “The *mercenary forces* they [the Baptists] place *in front* must be such as these.”* After producing which, he speaks of “their whole collective force from *van to rear*;” and then he threatens—Alas, for the poor Baptists! what must become of them?—then he threatens, in the fury of his martial indignation, “to *confront*, to *break*, and to *rout* the boasted sophistical *phalanx*.”† Nay, his polemical prowess increases, and his heroism rises to the highest pitch; for he boldly “challenges the *whole corps* of Antipædobaptists.”‡ “Well, reader, what say you to this?” Is it not in the high martial style, and in the true spirit of a “*hectoring* champion?”

Dr. W., I observe, considers himself, with reference to various important particulars, as possessing much more prudence, caution, and acumen, than the generality of Pædobaptist authors before him have done. Thus, for instance, when handling the subject of *positive institutions*, he says: “The Pædobaptists *in general* have tamely submitted to this position, *Baptism and the Lord’s supper are positive institutions*, in its most absolute and undistinguished sense, as a maxim not to be controverted; and the Antipædobaptists are, doubtless, much obliged to us for this piece of complaisance, as it is evidently the main pillar of their cause, and the armour in which they trust.”§—Again: “The abuse of terms, is notoriously exemplified in the word *covenant*—It must be acknowledged that *MANY Pædobaptist writers have been EXTREMELY UNGUARDED* in this particular, which has afforded no small handle to the opposite party.”|| —Once more: “If the above representation of the nature and design of this ordinance be just, it may contribute to vindicate the right use of two very important terms commonly employed in the controversy, liable to

* Vol. i. 202.

† Vol. i. 204, 205.

‡ Vol. i. 406.

§ Vol. i. 34.

|| Vol. i. 18.

abuse, and, may I not add, VERY SELDOM EXPLAINED *in a consistent manner?* I mean the terms *seal* and *covenant*. Hardly any thing more common in explaining the nature of baptism than some such phrase as this, *It is a sign and seal of the gospel covenant*: and the authority usually urged in favour of this application of the word *seal*, is—Romans the fourth and eleventh. Waving a particular discussion of the many *strange* things this notable passage has been made to speak, and the *absurd* deductions following thereupon; I would observe, that the chief, if not the only source of these mistakes, has been owing to the want of a proper attention to the different *uses* of *seals* among the ancients, in connection with the different acceptations of the term *covenant*.”*

The generality of Pædobaptist authors, it seems, both at home and abroad, when professedly defending the right of infants to baptism, have been a set of *ignoramuses*—such ignoramuses, that it would be hard to find, in the whole history of controversies, any fact of a similar kind and of equal extent. For here, according to Dr. W., we behold, with few exceptions, a learned and numerous class of polemical writers tamely surrendering that very *principle*, which is the “*main pillar*” of their opponents’ cause, and “the armour in which they trust.” This the Pædobaptists, from time immemorial, have done—simpletons as they were!—without necessity, without a contest, and without complaint!—Nay, so extremely unskilful have they been, in defending their own cause, that, in some instances, when they have not “tamely” given up, but faithfully retained an important principle, or a pertinent text, they have said such “strange things” upon it, and the natural deductions have been so “absurd,” as rather to disgrace and wound, than to support Pædobaptism. Thus have they proceeded, for a long course of time, while poor Pædo-

* Vol. i 145.

baptism lay bleeding under their unskilful hands! Yet such a “*latent* mystery” was there in their mistakes, and so remote was it from the ken of common understandings, that only Dr. W., and perhaps “a few more geniuses, superior in penetration to many of the most eminent that ever filled the professor’s chair, or adorned the Protestant pulpit,” have been able to detect the pernicious blunders. It was, therefore, high time for Dr. W. to arise, to *answer his part*, and to *show his opinion*; that Pædobaptists might be delivered from their mistakes, and Pædobaptism rescued from impending ruin.

Mr. Pirie also considers himself as having a claim to originality, and to share, with Dr. W., the honour of *detecting* inveterate mistakes among Pædobaptists, in the management of their common cause. For thus he speaks, respecting his own performance: “The novelty of some ideas, and their opposition to the sentiments of many respectable writers in the Pædobaptist line, may tend to render this work less popular. . . . Mr. Booth has quoted *a multitude of celebrated authors*, all agreeing with you, [Mr. M’Lean,] on the whole, in your ideas of the Abrahamic covenant and its token. Error, however, cannot plead prescription; nor can all the writings in the world change a falsehood into truth. . . . The truth is, this matter hitherto has been *altogether mistaken*. I have examined all the arguments produced by Baptists, and *self-inconsistent* Pædobaptists.”*—How uncommonly happy for Pædobaptism, that a couple of authors, possessed of such acumen, and of such caution, should arise about the same time, and stand up in its defence! But how deplorable must be my situation, and that of the cause which I espouse, considering that they both unite against me! However, as Dr. W. himself (forgetting that he was writing a *Treatise*, and not a *Letter to me*) has dropped a cheering word, and said; “Sir, let not this discourage you,”† I shall proceed.

* Ut supra. Pref. p. vii. p. 118, 122, 166.

† Vol. i. 7.

Dr. W. then professes a strong desire of promoting *love and peace*, between our Pædobaptist Brethren and us. Thus he expresses himself: "I should be very sorry, if what is advanced in the following Examination, should in any measure violate the sacred bond of Christian charity and friendship that subsists between me and, in this instance, my differing Brethren; with several of whom I wish to preserve and cultivate a fraternal affection. . . . How happy should I be if my humble attempt should procure me—the honour of *peace-maker* among brethren. . . . This work was not undertaken or prosecuted, with a view to foster a *party-spirit*, but to promote the union of Christians." And, near the conclusion of his book, he calls it a "*charitable effort* to lessen rather than increase the difference" between Pædobaptists and us. *

Let us now see whether the conduct of Dr. W. be quite agreeable to his affectionate, his gentle, and his pacific professions; of which the reader may judge, by the following particulars. He sarcastically represents me, "and a few more *geniuses*," as possessing "superior penetration." He charges us with making an "*inflexible* opposition" to infant baptism; and our principles, with being "*unreasonable, unscriptural, and highly uncharitable*." He calls us "the *rigid votaries* of plunging." He denominates immersion, as practised by us, "the *badge of parties* and carnal divisions in the church;" and "the distinguishing mode of a *sect*." He pronounces our views of positive institutions, *nearly* "*allied* to the interest of *genuine bigotry*;" and our sentiments, relative to immersion, as "*genuinely Popish*"—as "*first planted by a pharisaic hand*"—as "*watered by the hand of BIGOTED singularity*"—and as "*the line of bigotry*." Nay,—most admirable turn of thought, and choice of expression!—he says; "The Baptists—unwarrantably *SCREW* the initiating rite in the *vice of bigotry*." What,

* Pref. p. ix. vol. ii. 161, 347, 409.

reader, could possibly have been imagined more fine in itself, or more friendly to us! He maintains, that “to exclude sprinkling or pouring as a nullity, comes little short of the uncharitable rigour and unwarrantable zeal of those who hold” the necessity of baptism to salvation. Alluding to the words of Paul, when addressing the Athenians, he exclaims; “Ye Antipædobaptists, we perceive that, in all *these* things, ye are too *superstitious*.” He implicitly charges me with seeking occasion to “*cavil*,” and, apparently, with a *designed* “misrepresentation” of those Pædobaptist authors whom I quote. He represents my principles, relative to baptism, as little, if at all better than those of *Popery*. “If the one be Scylla, the other is Charybdis; the remedy is little better than the disease. His hypothesis, indeed, may cut off the *excrescence* of superstition; but instead of healing the wound, it will leave behind, as the inevitable effect, the *gangrene of bigotry*.” He charges me with “setting the Pædobaptists *together by the ears*,” by which, it is probable, some heads have been broken, and some blood has been spilt. That the quarrelling Pædobaptists might not be wanting of good company, he represents the Baptists as being, “perhaps, *more than any other denomination* of Christians—*divided* about the import” of a certain command, and as *perpetually* “clashing” one with another, concerning the performance of a particular duty.*

Such is the language of my opponent, respecting myself and my Baptist Brethren! Now, reader, are you not surprised, are you not greatly charmed, with that benignity of temper, that politeness of expression, and that pacific, uniting, healing spirit, which Dr. W. has discovered toward the Baptists? Extremely grieved to think, how destitute we are of brotherly affection for

* Vol. ii. 404; vol. i. 202, 401; vol. ii. 184, 160, 183; vol. i. 91; vol. ii. 176, 189, 184, 179, 180, 354; vol. i. 411; Pref. vi.; vol. ii. 408, 161, 403.

Pædobaptists; and knowing the reiterated imputation of bigotry to be a *specific* for that disease, he plies us with it in a plentiful manner. Nothing, surely, could be more agreeable to his professions of candour and love, or more suitable to promote those amiable tempers in us, than sounding in our ears, GENUINE BIGOTRY—BIGOTED SINGULARITY—LINE OF BIGOTRY—VICE OF BIGOTRY—GANGRENE OF BIGOTRY! We thank him for his most prudently kind regards, and will endeavour to derive advantage from the salutary medicine that he has given us; of which he certainly has administered a *quantum sufficit*.

It might, perhaps, be considered by Mr. Pirie as a token of disrespect for his character and performance, were I entirely to overlook the polite and friendly manner in which he also has treated us. The following particulars may serve as a specimen. “The moment these people are dipped in water, they too often *shut their eyes against the light of truth*—TO BE OPENED NO MORE; while the ear can listen with attention to nothing, but *the cry of the party*, PLUNGE AND BE SAVED.” He represents us as maintaining error, that “*blasphemes* the conduct of Christ and his apostles;” and calls our opposition to “sprinkling or pouring,—*blasphemy* against the words of the Holy Ghost.”—“What,” says he, “shall we think of a set of puny mortals, who can set their mouth against the heaven in *their blasphemous talk*, treating with scorn and ridicule the language of the divine Spirit? ‘How long, ye fools, will you love *scorning!*’”—He charges us with talking “idle gibberish;” and says, “I know no set of people so inconsistent as [the] Baptist writers.”*—On these extracts I leave my reader to form his own judgment; only remarking, that Mr. Pirie does not *pretend*, so far as I have observed, to aim at promoting love and peace between the Pædobaptists and us.

* Appendix, Pref. p. vi. p. 157, 189, 190, 189, 171.

To constitute a triumvirate, I will just mention Mr. W. Lewelyn; who denominates baptism, as administered by us, "*The bond and seal of perdition.*" Who exclaims, "O infant haters, bloody priests of Moloch, look in their faces and tremble!" Who declares, "I look upon their [the Baptists'] church, to be far more guilty and barbarous than that of ancient Moloch himself."*

This being sublimely perfect, *suo more*, I make no remark upon it, but return to Dr. Williams; who, possessing such a fund of benevolence toward the Baptists, and abhorring every thing that has in the least degree a tendency to widen the breach between us and our Pædobaptist Brethren, complains of some expressions in my book, as being censorious, unfriendly, and indecent. At this I was a little surprised; not merely because I did not recollect any ground for such a charge, at least in the second edition; but also, because he himself had long before declared, that "Mr. Booth's (Pædobaptism Examined)—discovers a *considerable degree of GOOD TEMPER.*"† But, let us hear his complaints; and, if just, make our acknowledgments. Thus, then, for example: "Our opponents insist, that what has been so often urged, [in defence of Pædobaptism] is not conclusive; and MODESTLY affirm, it is only calculated to catch *the eye of a superficial observer.*"‡ Now here is a charge of disrespectful and indecent language, relative to Pædobaptists; as if I had pronounced them all "superficial observers." But this is a gross mistake. For the phrase, *superficial observer*, is connected, both in grammar and in sense, with the preceding expressions, "formidable appearance:" and I am there speaking of the supposed numerous "evidences" *in favour of infant sprinkling*. Now, in whose eye do those evidences appear *formidable*? In that of a Baptist, or of a Pædobaptist? Not the latter, surely; for no Pædobaptist was

* Doct. of Bap. vol. iii. p. 83, 124, 125. Leominster, 1790.

† Note on Maurice's Social Relig. p. 69.

‡ Vol. I. 232.

ever yet *frightened*, by seeing what he considered as a great number of evidences in defence of his own cause. It was, therefore, of the more *uninformed Baptists*, that the offensive expressions, "superficial observers," was manifestly used.*—Dr. W. himself speaks of my numerous quotations making "a *formidable* appearance;" and of Mr. Tombes as being a "*redoubtable* antagonist." † *Formidable—redoubtable*. To whom? The Pædobaptists, doubtless, and to them only: the reverse of which is equally manifest in the case before us. Yet my opponent, once, a second, and even a third time, refers to the words, "a superficial observer," as if they contained an indecent censure on our Pædobaptist Brethren! ‡ A plain proof, that when Dr. W. does "show his opinion," it is not *always* to be regarded as demonstration.

Taking occasion, in the second edition of Pædobaptism Examined, to remark some things in my worthy opponent's Notes on his Abridgment of Mr. Maurice's Social Religion, and in Mr. Horsey's Infant Baptism stated and defended; I considered the particulars on which I animadverted in a *connected* view. This led me to use the expressions, "Messrs. Williams and Horsey;" and, "Messrs. Horsey and Williams." This displeases Dr. W.; because he considers it as introducing them "together, like brother tradesmen of the same firm." § —The reader, however, may be assured, that I had not the least thought of any such thing; nor did I, by those expressions, intend the smallest disrespect toward either of them. Nay, had I been aware that such language would give offence, it should not have been used by me.

If, however, my expressions were unbecoming, Mr. Pirie has made me a return in kind; for, "Messrs. M'Lean and Booth," constitute part of his title-page. ||

* See the passage at large, Pædobap. Exam. p. 449, 450, edit. 1st; or, Antipæd. Exam. vol. i. 9, 10.

† Vol. i. 18, 19, 372.

‡ Vol. i. 9, 232; vol. ii. 4.

§ Vol. ii. 352.

|| Appendix to Dissertat.

Nay, Dr. W. himself ought either to exculpate me, or plead guilty to a similar charge; for the very same form of expression is used by him, when he says, "Messrs. Lawrence and Gill."* This must be the case, except he "show his opinion," and fairly "demonstrate," that Lawrence and Gill are names of much less importance than those of Williams and Horsey.—Besides, what does my opponent mean, where, when speaking of me, he says; "Plunging is practised by himself and *his* CONSTITUENTS?"† I cannot help thinking that the aspect of these very singular expressions, is almost as ill-favoured as that of those for which I am censured. But whom does Dr. W. intend by my "*constituents*?" The *members* of the church to which I stand related? That cannot be; for they do not solemnly plunge, or baptize, either one or another. Baptist *ministers*? but in what sense can they be considered as *my constituents*? Till Dr. W. lend me the "glasses" of which he speaks, and "wipe them clean" too, there is reason to fear I shall never discover his meaning in these words. Meanwhile, I charitably conclude, that he *intended* something or other by them; but, whatever his meaning was, he seems to have suffered it all to evaporate, or to have transmuted it into nonsense.

Reflecting on my opponent's loud professions of regard to the promoting of love, of peace, and of unity among Christians; and comparing, with those professions, the various asperities of diction and severities of censure, which have proceeded from his pen, respecting his Baptist Brethren; I am reminded of what he says, in another place, concerning the Socinians; and which, *mutatis mutandis*, will here apply. "Their most formidable attacks—are so much the more dangerous, by reason of—the artful *innuendos*, thrown out against those who maintain the reformed doctrine, as BIGOTS, narrow-minded, illiberal, absurd—fine epithets and high encomiums they so *modestly bestow upon themselves*, as rational

* Vol. ii. 112, Note.

† Vol. i. 196.

liberal, charitable, humane, candid, and so on; as if, doubtless, they were *the men, and wisdom must die with them.*"*—How far the following remark of Dr. Owen, on Mr. Baxter, may be here applied, is left with my reader. "Had I not *heard* him profess how much he valued the peace of the church, and declare what his endeavours for it were, I could not but suppose—that an humour of disputing and quarrelling was very predominant in the man."† So the late Dr. Fleming, while complaining of the Baptists for intrenching on the rights of charity, pronounces them exposed to "a terrible anathema."‡

Dr. W. takes an early opportunity of informing us, that he was desirous his principles might "be *thoroughly understood* by every reader, if possible, without hazard of mistake."§ For this desire he deserves commendation. I very much question, however, whether *some* of his readers are not at a loss for his meaning in many places; and whether the *generality* of them, with regard to various passages, are not incapable of understanding him. This obscurity arises, partly from his mode of expression, and partly from his being, apparently, inconsistent with himself.

From his mode of expression. For instance: "Plunging is practised by [Mr. B.] and his CONSTITUENTS;" which has been already remarked. Again: "The grant, which baptism seals, is extensive as the gospel sound, on the part of God; but man's subjective, participated *interest* therein, must have its denomination, its kind and degree, according to the *reception* and treatment God's covenant-grant meets with. A *spiritual* reception, (effected by sovereign grace) insures a spiritual subjective, or actually participated interest. A

* Abridgment of Social Relig. Pref. p. vii.

† Doct. of Death of Christ, vindicated from the Animadversions of Mr. R. B., p. 5.

‡ In Burroughs's Farther Def. of Two

Discourses, p. 42.

§ Pref. p. i.

professional reception insures an external interest. The nature and degree of the reception or treatment the grant meets with, infallibly ascertains the nature and degree of the *possession*.”*—Once more: when opposing a principle of mine, relating to positive institutions, he says; “If my principle be not admitted in opposition to his, nothing would hinder, but Atheists, Deists, or blasphemers, might be the proper subjects of the Messiah’s kingdom, as contradistinguished from believers and penitents, *antecedent* to the institution.” †—Though I have carefully read these passages, time after time, I do not thoroughly, if at all, understand them; especially the first and the last. Yet,

“Our author has a meaning; and, no doubt,
But some have sense enough to find it out.”

From being, apparently, inconsistent with himself: respecting which, the following instances have occurred to observation.

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| <p>1. “Can that [law of baptism] be a law <i>merely positive</i>, which does not possess any such properties as ALL THE WORLD allows to be necessary for that purpose?” Vol. ii. 407.</p> | <p>1. “The <i>Pædobaptists</i> IN GENERAL have tamely submitted to this position. <i>Baptism and the Lord’s supper</i> are POSITIVE institutions, in its <i>most absolute and undistinguished sense</i>, as a maxim not to be controverted.” Vol. i. 34.</p> |
| <p>2. “While <i>we consider</i> the [idea of immersion exclusively] as uncertain, or rather very obscure,</p> | <p>2. “The obligation [of baptism] ariseth from the EQUITY of <i>the thing</i>, not from the <i>understanding</i></p> |

* Vol. ii. 233, 234.

† Vol. ii. 393.

it is *no part of our duty* to comply with it. As far as the law is plain, it claims obedience; but as far as it is indeterminate, *it leaves the subject free.*" Vol. ii. 359.

3. "There is no passage in the New Testament, I will not say that *confines* the mode of purifying to immersion, but from which it can be fairly deduced (*cæt. par.*) that immersion was *at all* used." Vol. ii. 81. See also p. 186.

4. "The scriptural BAPTISM [is] purification by water." Vol. ii. 176.

5. "I would say, in the language of Dr. Dod-

and capacity of the person." Vol. i. 401.

3. "As to the mode of baptism (though Mr. Maurice went so far as to contend, that immersion was *never* used in the apostolic age) it should seem an equitable rule, that—as the *practice* of the disciples, whence we should gather in what sense they understood [our Lord's command to *baptize*,] is attended with considerable difficulty, when reduced to any *one* invariable method, we should vary it according to circumstances." Social Relig. Note, p. 131.

4. "The different actions [of immersing, pouring, or sprinkling,] are only different means of attaining a proposed end. This END is purification by water." Vol. ii. 374.

5. "What English term shall we adopt, [as

dridge, who EXACTLY expresses my thoughts; *It is strange to me, that any should doubt whether proselytes were admitted into the Jewish church by baptism, that is, by WASHING.*" Vol. ii. 230.

6. "Will our author favour us with the curious intelligence of ANY MAN unbaptized, in a Christian country, on whom it is *not incumbent* to be baptized?" Vol. i. 253.

7. "The term [baptism is] a genus, denoting a *ceremonial purification* by water." Vol. ii. 355.

a substitute for the word *baptism*?] Shall it be either of those [washing, pouring, or sprinkling,] already mentioned by Mr. B.? Nay, THESE I would as much object to as himself, nearly." Vol. ii. 10.

6. "It is evident, on the least reflection, that criminal ignorance, impenitence, unbelief, and the like, are *excluded from all claim* to such a moral suitability, [as is essential to the subjects of baptism:] for how can they be *proper subjects*, who are professed rebels against the government of the King of Zion? . . . That there is in scripture a connection formed between *believing* and *baptism* in adults, is clear from particular passages, as well as the nature and design of the ordinance." Vol. ii. 402; vol. i. 212, 213. See also Vol. i. 72, 96.

7. "Christian kingdoms are the Lord's in a sense similar to that in which Israel was his; with *this difference*, that the yoke of Mosaic ceremo-

nies should be *removed* and a *spiritual* evangelical worship introduced." Vol. i. 267.

8. "What *both* the ordinances in question [i. e. baptism and the Lord's supper] require, as a *qualification* in their respective candidates, is that degree of *relative holiness* which is necessary and suitable to their respective nature and designs." Vol. ii. 240.

9. "We do [not] read of any person in the New Testament that was baptized in a church, or *as being a church member*." Social Relig. Note, p. 96.

8. "Whatever relates to the *qualifications* of the subjects [of baptism,] is of a nature ENTIRELY *moral*, —and to say otherwise must imply a contradiction." Vol. ii. 387.

9. "Infants [are] BORN *in the city of God*. . . . Persons are often called *church members* in this controversy, when they are so only *de jure*, or *quoad debitum*. And in this sense we regard *all adults* before baptism, who nevertheless may be lawfully baptized. The infant children of professing Christians, those of our opponents not excepted, we also regard as church-members in the same sense, though not baptized." Vol. i. 321, 408.

10. "The gospel revelation is *the* RULE and

10. "*The* LAW by which we suppose a pa-

positive directory" for baptizing. Vol. i. 225.

rent or master *ought* to be ruled [respecting the baptism of his children or servants] is this, That he *benefit* his children, and *all his*, as they are *capable*." Vol. i. 354.

11. "Dr. Doddridge exactly expresses my thoughts [when he says;] *It is strange to me, that any should doubt whether proselytes were admitted into the Jewish church BY BAPTISM.*" Vol. ii. 230.

11. "The *ceremony of admission* into the church is indeed ALTERED by our Lord's positive authority, 'Proselyte all nations, BAPTIZING them.'" Vol. ii. 232.

12. "Nothing should be considered as an established principle of faith, which is not in some part of scripture delivered with *perspicuity*; [and] that *perspicuity* should be sought for principally where the point in question is most professedly handled." Note on Social Relig. p. 368.

12. "If the scripture be *silent* about infants as the subjects of baptism, or even not *decisively express against* them, we are to take it for granted, that they were baptized with their parents." Vol. i. 280.

13. "What was the *nature* of that rite of which John was the administrator? I answer, It was a JEWISH *cleansing*, or ceremonial purification. . . . We conclude, that John's baptism *was one of the divers baptisms*" mentioned

13. "The baptism of John—was a rite appertaining to the legal dispensation, instituted by God the Father for the use of the Jews alone, *for a short time, to prepare them for the kingdom of the Messiah* then approach-

in Hebrews the ninth and tenth. Vol. i. 281, 282.

ing, as by an *extraordinary general purification*, attended with *suitable instructions and exhortations to the people*, and performed by *John himself* It is highly probable, that [Christ,] as the *Lord of ceremonies*,—should APPOINT and SUBMIT to one *baptism, as a general substitute* for all ceremonial purifications." Vol. i. 118; vol. ii. 13, Note

14. "It appears, that the Messiah's kingdom, in its external aspect, should have—*whole nations, AS SUCH, included in it.*" Vol. i. 263.

14. "Christ is a King, and his church is a kingdom, but *not of this world.*" Vol. i. 136.

15. "By a *gracious express appointment* [1 Cor. vii. 14,] the children common to both [parents] shall be deemed *holy*, on account of the [believing] mother as well as the father, so as to be treated as if both parents believed." Vol. i. 386.

15. "A *holy person*, in the relative sense of that word, is one to whom God gives a covenant grant of mercy, and the means of grace, and in virtue of which grant he is appropriated to God. . . . In a very general sense—EVERY MAN, whether Jew or Gentile, is deemed holy; *i. e.* in virtue of the gospel grant of mercy and the means of grace, to the Gentiles as well as the Jews." Vol. i. 365, 366.

16. "If *infants*—cannot be disciples, they cannot be *Christians*, for these terms are convertible, and used synonymously." Vol. i. 327.

17. "I reject [infant communion] ONLY as an *impropriety*. Were he, [Mr. B.] therefore, to grant as much in favour of infant baptism, as I am willing to grant in favour of infant communion, our controversy would be at an end. The state of the question would then be transferred from what is *essential*, to what is *merely preferable*." Vol. ii. 238.

18. Baptism "is an ordinance of *admission* into the visible kingdom of Christ Thereby the subject is translated, ministerially, from a state of distance to a state of nearness; is *separated* from the world and *joined* to the universal church." Vol. i. 121, 220.

19. "The scripture churches were made up of visible *saints*: they were *living stones*, sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus,

16. "*Holiness*, as well as *righteousness*, is an *essential part* of a Christian character." Vol. i. 132, 133.

17. "Infants—are not capable of the [third degree of relative holiness;] that is, do not answer its nature and design, and, therefore, OUGHT NOT to be admitted to" particular church-membership, and therefore not to the holy table. Vol. ii. 242.

18. Baptism "does not even *constitute* a visible subject or member, but only *recognize* one." Vol. i. 122.

19. "A *national establishment*, if well ordered, appears more agreeable to the prophetic passages we have been considering than

and by the Spirit of our God; were partakers of the Holy Spirit of Christ, as a spirit of faith and prayer;” and so on. “The world and the churches of Christ are — *dangerously intermixed.*” Maurice’s Social Relig. abridged, p. 10, and p. 71, Note.

20. “Authority cannot be positive, but in proportion as it is *express* and *unequivocal* . . . Presumptive proofs are very good ones, because they are *the VERY BEST the nature of the case can admit of.*” Vol. i. 51, 201.

21. “This we *must* maintain, that what circumcision *eminently* sealed [i. e. *the righteousness of faith*] under the law, baptism seals under the gospel.” Vol. ii. 235.

22. “God’s covenant of redemption TO fallen man, in its external form and manifestation, is NOTHING ELSE but a *decla-*

the Antipædobaptist plan; nay, more agreeable to the GENERAL TENOUR of *Revelation.*” Vol. i. 273.

20. “I maintain, that on supposition infants are NOT *expressly* and incontrovertibly mentioned in connection with baptism, there is sufficient POSITIVE *evidence* in favour of Pædobaptism.” Vol. i. 219.

21. “In baptism is *eminently* exhibited the downpouring of the Holy Spirit—I scruple not to assert it, there is *no object whatever* in all the New Testament, so frequently and so explicitly signified by baptism, as these divine influences of the Holy Spirit.” Vol. i. 126, 196, 197.

22. “Such *declarations* and *promises* cannot, I think, be conceived of, when addressed to man, under any other notion

ration of sovereign grace and a divine righteousness Baptism is—a seal of the Christian covenant, or the exceeding great and *precious promises* of the gospel.—God's covenant to man—is a *grant* of mercy to him as a sinner deserving eternal woe.” Vol. i. 158, 182; vol. ii. 233.

23. “Am I a *baptized* person?—Does not Jehovah say to ME, as well as to Abraham, ‘I am thy shield, and THINE EXCEEDING GREAT REWARD?’ May I not, without presumption, appropriate the words of Amasai to David, ‘Peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers; for THY God helpeth THEE?’” Vol. ii. 274, 275, 276.

than that of a PROPOSAL *from a first mover of covenant terms.*” Vol. i. 207.

23. “Alas! how many ignorant and slothful [*baptized*] professors must one day take up this bitter lamentation: ‘The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and WE ARE NOT SAVED!’ How many *baptized* persons are there, as Mr. Henry justly observes, who are ALTOGETHER *strangers to the covenants of promise!*” Vol. ii. 289, 290.

As a practical improvement of the preceeding particulars, I will add a friendly direction, a strong exclamation, and an undoubted position; for all which I must acknowledge my obligation to Dr. W. *A friendly direction*: “If you are dim-sighted, reader, have recourse to your glasses, and wipe them clean, and [my opponent's consistency,] no doubt will appear with superior evidence.”—*A strong exclamation*: “What contradiction!”—*An undoubted position*: “It is—evident, that

the pretensions of any hypothesis must be equally futile in proportion as it is inconsistent with itself."*—The two following short extracts may be subjoined.—Dr. Gasarth: "It is the fate of an erroneous doctrine, that one always falls into contradiction in the defence thereof; which truth alone, from the uniformity it carries to all the parts and branches of it, can secure us from."†—Dr. Waterland: "I desire no greater advantage over an adversary, than to see him reduced to self-contradiction."‡

Dr. W. having requested his reader's "credit" for the sincerity of his professed intention to state our arguments against Pædobaptism in a *fair and candid manner*,§ I take it for granted, that he was equally desirous, in regard to other things, of doing justice to us, and to our cause. I am fully persuaded, however, that, either through an unperceived bias upon his mind, or through inadvertency, he has neither given a *fair statement* of our arguments, nor a *just representation* of our conduct. It is of his inadvertent misrepresentations, that I would here produce a few instances.

I cannot but complain of unfair dealing with his reader, in reference to *my quotations from Pædobaptists*. For, either, as is generally the case, he takes hardly any notice of them; or, as in other instances, if he transcribe more or less of those quotations, it is in such a manner, as leads his reader to suppose that they are *my words*, and not those which I have produced from *Pædobaptists*.—For instance: He quotes, from *Pædobaptism Examined*, the following passage: "Supposing an equal degree of benefit resulting from each mode of administration, yet there is not, there cannot be, the same degree of *humble obedience* to Jesus Christ." Upon which he very gravely exclaims; "An argument this, worthy

* Vol. ii. 215, 139; vol. i. 100.

† Preserv. against Popery, title viii. p. 55.

‡ Second Defence of Queries, query iii. p. 182.

§ Vol. i. 202.

of the *painful* pilgrims to Jerusalem and Rome!"* but says not a word of this being an argument *ad hominem*, and transferred from a Nonconformist Pædobaptist, when disputing with Roman Catholics.†—I had observed, that "the practice of *aspersion* is calculated to embarrass Protestants in their disputes with Papists; and Nonconformists, in their controversies with Episcopalians:" to which he answers, "Not at all."‡ But he carefully avoids informing his reader, that I had produced Bossuet, bishop of Meaux, bishop Burnet, and Dr. Whitby, in proof of my assertion.§ He says, "We are next *impeached for dispensing with divine laws, or mitigating their severity.*"|| But he does not inform his reader, that the language of Pædobaptists, there produced, is the *direct* and *natural* ground of that impeachment. Did I not quote Perkins, as expressing himself thus? "The ancient custom was to *dip*, and, as it were, to *dive all the body* of the baptized in water, as may appear in Paul, Romans the sixth—but *now*—only to *sprinkle* the baptized. . . . We need not much to marvel at this alteration, seeing charity and necessity may *DISPENSE* with ceremonies, and *MITIGATE, in equity, the harshness of them.*" Was not Keckerman produced, speaking as follows? "Though the term *baptism* properly signifies *immersion*, and though also in the ancient church, through the Eastern countries, when baptism was administered, it was, not by *sprinkling*, but by *immersion*; yet in the colder parts of Christendom, aspersion is used instead of immersion, on account of infants: because charity and necessity may *DISPENSE* with ceremonies, *and temper them with GENTLENESS*, so far as may be done without injuring the analogy."¶ Dr. W. adds, "It is urged, that dipping was in use for *thirteen*

* Vol. ii. 184.

† See Vol. I. p. 266, 267.

‡ Ibid.

§ See Vol. I. p. 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 278.

|| Vol. ii. 185.

¶ See Vol. I. p. 254, 256.

hundred years."* But he cautiously forbears to tell his reader, that this is urged by the most learned Pædobaptists, as well as by us.†

Again: When proving that neither sprinkling, pouring, nor immersion, can be justly considered as a *circumstance* of baptism, I had said; "That various particulars relating to baptism are merely circumstantial, we readily allow—But it is quite otherwise, as to *the solemn use of water*. For if that be omitted, *baptism itself* is wanting." Thus much Dr. W. quotes; and then adds, "It is a rule with logicians, that the definition and the thing defined are convertible. Here Mr. B. calls baptism, *The solemn use of water*; and again, *This*, he says, *is baptism itself*. We cannot help wishing that he *will* always abide by *this* DEFINITION, in hopes that it might help to introduce an amicable reconciliation."‡ What a violent wresting of my words from their obvious application, and what a perversion of my meaning! *Calls* BAPTISM THE SOLEMN USE OF WATER. Far from it. If Dr. W. "be dim-sighted," let him "have recourse to his *glasses*, and wipe them *clean*," and then he will plainly perceive that my language was; Mere *circumstances* "may greatly vary, while the qualifications of the candidates, the whole form of administration, and the gracious purposes to be answered by the ordinance, are essentially the same. But it is quite otherwise, as to *the solemn use of water*. For if that be omitted, *baptism itself* is wanting: IF USED CONTRARY TO DIVINE ORDER and *primitive example*, the ordinance is corrupted, SO CORRUPTED, AS NOT TO DESERVE ITS ORIGINAL NAME."

"The solemn use of water—This DEFINITION—

* Vol. ii. 186.

† See Pædobap. Exam. p. 79, 93, 94, 101, 102, 137—140. See also this edition, Vol. I. p. 188, 190, 191, 196.

‡ Compare Antipæd. Exam. (Vol. ii. 371) with this edition, Vol. I. p. 113—118.

Baptism itself." Seldom have words been more tortured, to make them confess what they never meant, than mine, in this instance, have been by Dr. W. ! Supposing I were to distinguish *evangelical preaching* from the *circumstances* that might attend it, and were to say; The *time* when, the *place* where, the *number* of auditors, and the *strength* of the preacher's voice, are *mere circumstances*. But it is quite otherwise, as to the *solemn use of words*. For if that be omitted, *preaching itself* is wanting. Would Dr. W. say, "Here Mr. B. calls evangelical preaching, *the solemn use of words*; and again, *This is evangelical preaching itself*? We cannot help wishing, that he will abide by *this definition* of evangelical preaching." His good sense and his impartiality would forbid it. For he well knows, that though there can be no evangelical preaching, without *the solemn use of words*; yet there may be preaching which is not *evangelical*, and there may be a solemn use of words, (as in prayer) where there is no *preaching*. My opponent denominates baptism, "the proselyting ordinance—a seal of the first promise—God's confirming seal—the broad seal of heaven—the badge of our holy religion"*—and so on: but did he intend these, and similar ways of speaking, as so many *definitions* of baptism? Would he consider himself as treated, either with candour or with justice, were they so represented by me? I cannot help thinking that his conduct, respecting this and some other particulars, lies "*plump* against" his loud professions of ingenuousness and candour. "Far," said Mr. Baxter, concerning the conduct of Mr. Blake—"far was I from imagining that so reverend, pious, and dear a friend, would tell the world in print, that I said that which never came into my thoughts."

Farther: Among other short extracts from Pædo-baptism Examined, Dr. W. makes the following, which he introduces thus: "I do not find that any of the

* Vol. i. 265; vol. ii. 242, 259, 286, 342.

ANTIPÆDOBAPTISTS pretend to adduce one single text as an *express and positive testimony* [against infant baptism.] Therefore the mercenary forces they place in front must be such as these: *There is no express precept or precedent, in the New Testament, for Pædobaptism—That the scripture forbids what it does not mention—That, in religious matters, it is not only sinful to go contra statutum, but to go supra statutum—That faith and repentance are pre-required in baptism—Hence Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest, (Acts viii. 37.) The command of Peter was, Repent and be baptized, (Acts ii. 38.)—That the sacraments are not converting, but confirming ordinances—(Mark xvi. 16; Acts ii. 41; 1 Pet. iii. 21.)—That since office, or duty, means an action conformable to law, it is plain that duty cannot be conceived without a law;”**

and so on. Then he immediately adds; “These, I believe, are Mr. Booth’s most capital objections.”—Now who, among all Dr. W.’s readers, could suppose, either by what precedes, or by what follows these “*excerpta*,” that, they are the *very words of Pædobaptists?*—Yes, of LEARNED PÆDOBAPTISTS THEMSELVES.†

Nor must the following words on this occasion, be omitted: “If Mr. B.’s hypothesis be true, *That infant baptism is unscriptural, superstitious, absurd, a daring impeachment of Christ’s legislative authority*, and so on; can we look upon [those ministers that were cast out of the National church,] in a much better light than a set of maniacs?”‡ Dr. W. by marking the words (here printed in *italics*) with inverted commas, has led his reader to conclude, that I have used *those very terms*; and it is plainly intimated by his, “and so on,” that the number of harsh expressions, as employed by me, might have been greatly increased, had he thought proper.

* Vol. i. 202, 203, 204.

† See these and many more

particulars of a similar kind, Pædobap. Exam. Chap. VIII. edit 1; and this edition, Vol. I. p. 303—367.

‡ Vol. ii. 411.

But *where*, I demand—in the name of just representation and of common ingenuousness—*where* have I used such language, either in the first or in the second edition of my book? That Dr. W. has, in the most direct manner, charged *us* with being *superstitious*, and as guilty of the most violent *bigotry*, is a fact which he cannot deny; but let him prove, if he can, that I have ever used such language as will justify his representation. He has, indeed, “shown his opinion,” that I am verily guilty of his charge; but, respectable as he is in his character, and oracular as he is in his motto, I am not disposed to accept his assertion for infallibility.

My opponent, perhaps, may answer; “The representation is justified by the *natural* and *necessary consequences* of Mr. B.’s reasoning.” To this it may be replied; *Consequences*, however justly drawn, ought never to be charged upon an author, as if they were his direct assertions or negations. With equal justice might I represent Dr. W. as charging me, and the Baptists in general, with being *Socinians*; because he tells us, that some of our objections to Pædobaptism “savour *not a little* of the Socinian leaven.”* In a recent publication, which I have had the pleasure of reading, the author assures us, that, though “candour and justice forbid that we should ascribe to any intentions which they disavow,”—yet, “while we avoid imputing to the author of an opinion a bad design, it is but fair, and it may be useful, to examine its *genuine tendency*.”† To the author of that publication I am greatly obliged, for appearing so seasonably in my vindication against Dr. W., by laying down and avowing the principle on which I proceed, in those very passages to which my offended opponent adverts.

Dr. W. represents me as maintaining, that those

* Vol. i. 271.

† A Discourse on the Influence of Religious Practice upon our Enquiries after Truth, by Edward Williams, p. 12, Note.

passages of scripture, which contain either express precepts or precedents, "are our ONLY rule of *doctrine and worship.*"* That I have any where asserted this, or that which is tantamount, I do not recollect, nor do I believe. What I have asserted, and still maintain, relative to "express precepts and precedents," is confined to *positive* institutions—is limited to *positive* worship; in contradistinction to duties and worship of a *moral* nature. Nay, so far from saying or from approving what my opponent here ascribes to me, that I have expressly asserted the contrary, in regard to *moral* duty and *moral* worship.†

I have reason to complain of Dr. W. for transcribing and propagating a misrepresentation that was made by the Monthly Reviewers. The particular to which I advert, is a passage extracted from Tertullian *de Baptismo*. Concerning which, my opponent says; "If Mr. B.'s account of the above celebrated passage be compared with the original, it will soon appear with what justice those acute critics, the Monthly Reviewers, pronounced it *partial*; and said, that he *hath not presented the reader with the whole, nor the exact sense of the ancient father*. And I flatter myself, it will also appear, from the present attempt, that what they farther add, is equally just: *when the omission is supplied, and a fair translation given, the passage will bear a different aspect.*" ‡—In answer to this, I observe, that the charge of an *unfair translation*, as laid against me, is absolutely unfounded; for not a single word of the original was translated by me, but by that learned Pædobaptist, Dupin; of which I *expressly* informed the reader, in each edition of *Pædobaptism Examined*.§ But notwithstanding this, my opponent unites with the Monthly Reviewer in holding me up to the public, as giving an unwarrantable turn to

* Vol. i. 202.

† See Pædobap. Exam. p. 442; or this edition, Vol. II. p. 277, 278.

‡ Vol. ii. 216, 217. Month. Review, vol. lxxi. p. 213.

§ See p. 207; first edition; Vol. II. p. 92, second edition; and Vol. I. p. 382, of this edition.

the passage;* and, by so doing, their respective readers are led to draw consequences unfavourable to my integrity. That the version of the passage, by Dupin, is neither literal nor very exact, is readily granted; but that there is any thing in it more unfavourable to Pædobaptism than the original warrants, I do not perceive.†

As to that *omission*, of which the reviewer and my opponent speak, with regard to the *first* edition of my book, the fact is acknowledged; but that it proceeded from any sinister design, is firmly denied. These are the words that were omitted: “For the same reason, it is proper to make those who are not married wait for some time, by reason of the temptations they have to undergo

* Mr. White having charged Mr. Towgood with giving an unfair translation of a passage from Dr. Nichols, in order to serve his purpose, Mr. Towgood replied; “It will give you, surely, some confusion and pain to be told, that [it] is not *mine*, but it is the doctor’s *own* translation, or that of his learned friend, who published his Defence.” Dissent from the Church of Eng. fully justified, p. 169. Lond. 1787.

† See Mr. Robinson’s Hist. of Baptism, p. 174—182. My opponent denominates the Monthly Reviewers “acute critics.” Be it so; yet I have another ground of complaint against them, for a palpable blunder and a gross misrepresentation. Thus they represent, and thus they animadvert upon me. “His reflections on Mr. Robinson are very illiberal; and his whole note, where that gentleman’s publication on free communion is animadverted on with so much asperity, is a string of sophisms. Many of the most eminent and worthy Antipædobaptists are included in the censure, which those reflections meant to convey.” *Ut Supra*. The severity of this remark proceeds on a supposition, that, in the note of which the reviewer speaks, the whole of my business was to oppose *free communion*. Whereas the *principal* and almost my *only* design was, to expose Mr. Robinson’s notion relative to the *innocence of mental error*, which notion he had employed in defending *free communion*. See Pædobap. Exam. p. 462—467, first edit.; Vol. II. p. 514—522, second edit.—It is but justice, however, to add the following testimony respecting the reviewer, which I have lately received from a friend. “Mr. Badcock, the gentleman who reviewed Pædobaptism Examined, was soon afterwards convinced of his mistake, and candidly acknowledged, *That his reflections on Mr. Booth’s note were unfounded.*”

till they are married, or have attained the gift of continency." So Dupin translates. — Now, the only reason of my leaving out this part of the passage was, I did not consider it as respecting the baptism of *infants*, which was the subject before me. That learned Pædobaptist, Zornius, had, it is probable, a similar view of the case; for, when defending the antiquity of infant baptism, and when producing this passage from Tertullian, he concludes his quotation in the very place where the sentence that I omitted begins.* As the blamed omission, however, was completely supplied in the second edition of my book,† and as that improved edition came out so long before Antipædobaptism Examined appeared, it might have been expected, from the character of my opponent, and from his professions of candour, that he would have disdained to propagate a censure, for which there was not so much as a *presumptive* ground remaining. What apology can be made for his conduct in this respect, I am at a loss to conceive, except it be that of *extremely culpable inadvertency*; or, that he is "dim-sighted," and either totally neglected the "glasses" of which he speaks, or did not "wipe them clean."

Once more: Dr. Stennett, when discoursing on the design of baptism, says; "There can be no doubt that we are to consider it as a solemn test, whereby we voluntarily bind ourselves to new obedience; *for such is the reasoning of the apostle in the sixth of Romans, and in those other passages wherein he reminds Christians of their having put on Christ by baptism, and their being risen with him. But it is easy to see that baptism cannot be a seal of the righteousness of faith, that is, of their justification, to infants, they not having faith*: nor can it be in regard of them a test of new obedience, they not voluntarily submitting to it."‡ Now, reader, what think you of Dr. W.'s quoting the beginning and the end of these two sentences, but entirely

* *Historia Eucharist. Infant.* cap. viii. § 3. Berol. 1736. † Vol. I. p. 382, 383, this edit. ‡ Answer to Dr. Addington, part ii. p. 109.

leaving out the intermediate part, which is here distinguished by the italic letter? After having thus altered the sense, he proceeds, with all the ardour of rhetorical interrogation, in the following manner. “Is this the language of a Protestant orthodox divine? Is our *new obedience* founded upon our *submission*? Is our obedience obligatory in proportion as we *bind ourselves* to it? Be it so; there is one consequence inevitably follows, viz. That no person in the world is under *any obligation* to perform what he does not voluntarily submit to, or to regard any thing as a *duty* until he *binds himself* to the performance of it.”*

Had I but half Dr. W.’s prowess and skill, I would immediately proceed “to confront, to break, and to rout, this sophistical phalanx,” that appears in such formidable array against the doctor; but having no talents for those feats of heroism, the reader must be contented with a remark or two, in a style much less assuming. I observe, then, that Dr. Stennett is capable of writing, and actually did write, *sense*. But what sense is there in talking of *obedience* being FOUNDED *on submission*; or of *obedience* being *obligatory*? That divine *authority*, expressing itself in a precept, or in an appointment, is the *foundation* of submission, and that it *obliges* to obedience, is plain to every reader; but if there be any sense in speaking of *obedience* being *obligatory*, or of its being *founded* on *submission*, it is to me, what Dr. W. calls a “*latent* mystery.”—It should be observed, that there is an essential difference between the *foundation* of obedience, either to God or to civil governors, and *taking a test* of obedience. Now it is not of the former, but of the latter, that Dr. Stennett speaks. My obedience to the civil government of this country is *founded* in the constitution and laws of the state; but yet I may voluntarily lay myself under an additional obligation to civil obedience, by taking, as *a test*, the oath of allegiance.

* Vol. i. 223.

The consequence, therefore, which Dr. W. draws from the doctor's assertions, is as wide of the mark, as his quotation from him is unfair.

But had my worthy friend, Dr. Stennett, actually maintained, That a voluntary submission to baptism is the *ground* of obligation to new obedience; the author of *Antipædobaptism Examined* would have readily furnished him with arguments, *ad hominem*, in his defence. For, in that performance, we are expressly taught, that “from Christian baptism RESULTS THE OBLIGATION to repentance—THE OBLIGATION to destroy the body of sin—THE OBLIGATION of newness of life, and heavenly mindedness—THE OBLIGATION of an inviolable attachment to Christ—THE OBLIGATION of filling up (honourably, no doubt,) the place of departed Christians—THE OBLIGATION of waiting for the promise of the Spirit;” —and, finally, that “another OBLIGATION highly important, RESULTING from Christian baptism, is an absolute devotedness to the grace and sovereign will of GOD, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST.”*—Here I retort, “Is this the language of a Protestant orthodox divine?” Is our *obligation* to repentance—to destroy the body of sin—to newness of life—to an attachment to Christ, and so on, *founded* upon, or does it *result* from our being baptized?—The language of my opponent is very emphatical. For he not only represents baptism as inducing an *additional* obligation to this, that, or the other, with reference to the baptized party; but, five times over, he prefixes the article “THE” to *obligation*: as if, in his view, there were *no obligation at all*, to any of those things which he specifies, except what arises from being baptized! Of all the writers whom I have perused, this gentleman should have been the last, thus to oppose Dr. Stennett; even supposing him to have really blundered, in speaking of baptism as the *ground* of obligation. For, even on that supposition, Dr. W. had very

* Vol. i. 131—139.

kindly provided a *corps de reserve*, to be ready at the word of command in defence of the doctor; or, in other words, he had formed, not a “sophistical,” but a well-compacted “phalanx,” to repel the first onset of any that should attack him. Our author, therefore, it may be presumed, had entirely forgotten that his forces were both as able, and as ready, to serve under the doctor’s banner, as under his own; or else he would not have dared “to confront,” much less could he have hoped “to break and to rout” such a formidable “phalanx.”—Other instances of unfairness, in the conduct of my opponent, will occur to our notice; but these may here suffice.

Notwithstanding the professed benevolence and candour of Dr. W., he is very severe in his treatment of what he considers as an *inadvertent* expression, whenever he meets with one from the pen of a Baptist. For instance: Dr. Gill, when speaking of the “divers washings, bathings, or baptisms, under the legal dispensation,” says: “There was nothing similar in them to the ordinance of water baptism, *but immersion only.*” A harmless position, for any thing I perceive: though, (in Dr. W.’s own words, as politely applied to me,) “to prevent the *cavils* of those who seek occasion,”* the doctor’s meaning might have been more accurately expressed.—But let us hear our author: “*Nothing similar to water-BAPTISM but IMMERSION.* That is, on his principle, which maintains that *Βαπτισμος* is *immersion*—there was nothing in those *divers immersions*, similar to the ordinance of *water immersion*, but *immersion only!* To such ridiculous inconsistencies is that hypothesis reducible, which makes the biblical use of the words *baptism* and *immersion* convertible and synonymous.”† So inconsistent was the hypothesis, and so inaccurate was the language, of Dr. Gill! How happy, on the contrary, must my opponent be, in reflecting on the com-

* Vol. i. 411.

† Vol. i. 282, 283.

plete consistency of his views, (which has already appeared,) and on the perfect accuracy of his pen, respecting baptism! But let us enquire whether Dr. W. have any just cause for thus ridiculing Dr. Gill.

Be it observed, then, that baptism, according to my opponent, is "purification by water."* Upon this principle, therefore, let the following words be considered. "We say that baptism is a Christian ordinance, which implies a ceremonial *purification by water.*"† *Purification by water.* "That is, (on his principle, which maintains, that Βαπτισμος is, *purification by water,*") *water-purification* implies *purification by water.* "To such ridiculous inconsistencies is that hypothesis reducible, which makes the biblical use of the words *baptism* and '*purification by water,*' convertible and synonymous!"—Again: "The scriptural baptism [is] *purification by water*; and yet he elsewhere tells us, that the END of baptism is *purification by water.*"‡ Not now to remark the incongruity of representing the *design* of an ordinance, as being the very same thing with the *ordinance itself*: it is obvious to every reader, that, on Dr. W.'s principles, baptism, or *purification by water*, is the end of baptism, that is, of *purification by water.* So little reason had my opponent to ridicule Dr. Gill! Other instances of this kind might easily be produced, but I will not here enlarge.—I may here add, with much greater propriety might our author have animadverted on Dr. Watts for saying; "The Greek word *baptizo* signifies *to wash* any thing, *properly by water coming OVER it* . . . The Greek word signifies *washing a thing* in general, *by water coming OVER it*;" as Dr. W. has quoted him.§ As if a person, or a thing, might be baptized, without "any contactation of the person," or the thing, "and the element!"

The delicacy of our author's taste for *just expres-*

* Vol. ii. 102, 176, 384.

† Vol. ii. 369.

‡ Vol. ii. 176, 374.

§ Vol. ii. 105.

sion, is a little offended with Dr. Stennett; because he, when speaking of the covenant which God made with the father of the post-diluvian world, "*quaintly* calls it," says Dr. W., "a *transaction* between him and Noah."* Few readers of ordinary discernment could, I presume, have discovered any thing amiss in the term *transaction*, as here used. We may, therefore, conclude, that Dr. W. has paid the most scrupulous regard to accuracy in the choice of his words, if not to elegance in the turn of his periods. Yes, we may naturally suppose, that no *quaintnesses* are admitted into his composition; much less vulgarisms, solecisms, or any gross improprieties of style. But whether he be quite so accurate as one is led to expect, the reader may judge by the particulars here subjoined.

As to *single expressions* and *phrases*, we meet with the following: "Smothered—nibble—baptizations—vindicable—God GIVES a covenant GRANT—syllogistic overthrow—they take it strange—PLUMP against it—to FOIST in the salvo—rummage—begrudge"—and others of a similar kind; not when used in the burlesque style, but in a serious manner.†—Whether the term *quaintly*, or some other epithet, should be applied to characterize Dr. W's. mode of expressing himself, in the annexed particulars, my reader will determine. "Dreadful scythe! and no mean mower, to cut so much at one stroke!" Dr. Stennett having used those proverbial expressions, "He who runs may read;" my opponent says, "I WALK and read, STAND and read, meditate and read, pray and read, and yet cannot discern the sense he puts on the passage." Complaining of what he considers as false argument, he says; "The specious sophism was supported, by arbitrarily uniting *what were in themselves* different. . . . Supposing, without granting, the exclusive invariable *meaning* of the term

* Vol. i. 156.

† Pref. p. vi. vol. i. 233, 273, 282, 365, 372; vol. ii. 7, 16, (Note) 59, 70, 344.

baptism *signifies* to immerse. . . . True *belief* entitles to that righteousness which *faith* regards. . . . God's covenant of redemption to fallen man. . . . Sinners who live within the *pale* of such a declaration. . . . Plunging is practised by [Mr. B.] *and his* CONSTITUENTS." He elegantly compares relative holiness to the *electric fluid*; and, speaking of natural descent, he calls it a "genealogical chain," which operates as the "CONDUCTOR Those, in the time of Ezra, [who had married Heathenish women] were obliged to *put off* each man his wife. . . . The unbeliever is sanctified, i. e. his professed unbelief is *overpowered* by the professed holiness of the other partner. . . . This *contact* may be *done*. . . . The feet [of the Israelites] are said to be TINGED AT the brim of overflowing Jordan" The word baptism is used "of him who only *intinges* even his hand."—He speaks of persons being admitted into the church, "by having PURE water poured on them; whereby they were TINGED, *washed*, or ceremonially *purified*, that is, baptized" A child is brought "into a *state of* WETNESS by immersion" Baptizing evidently includes "a *contaction* of the person and the element" "The rigid votaries of plunging hold the necessity of a dipping purification for the validity of a *true Christian church-membership*" "The Baptists unwarrantably SCREW the *initiating rite* in the *VICE of bigotry*." (The last instance is equally benevolent and elegant). . . . "Let the same parent and INFANT *apply* to a particular church, and the fundamental ground of admission is different" "My *possession* of the mercy sealed by my baptism, is to be *enjoyed* by faith" "Let us suppose, for illustration sake, that God *should* OF OLD *enact*."*—More such flowers of elegance might be produced, but these are sufficient.

* Vol. i. 12, 46, 49, 56, 146, 158, 196, 366, 385, 397; vol. ii. 57, 111, (N.B. The last is his language in translating) 136, 137, 138, 159, 184, 243, 269, 270, 363.

Having selected the preceding particulars, in proof of my opponent's admirably nice choice of words, and of the elegancies that adorn his composition, let us now consider his accuracy, with regard to grammar. Speaking of positive precepts under the Jewish economy, he says: "It does not follow that any *one* of these WERE so strictly positive, as"—and so on. "The *qualifications* of the subjects of baptism—*IS* what cannot," and so on. "It may be presumed—our opponents have *something* very express to urge out of the New Testament, to counteract so strong a probability in our favour. And surely express *THEY* must be, to resist the united forces of such considerations" "Those *objections* which are urged—*SAVOURS* not a little of the Socinian leaven" "The *both* ENDS of a genealogical chain *has* an appropriation to God" "Nor is there any more difficulty in ascertaining these degrees [of parental authority,] than in transacting the common concerns of life, where any *degree* of wisdom and prudence ARE required" "The reason why the *parent* is admitted [into a particular church,] is not because *IT* is baptized, nor yet because *IT* has a covenant right to all gospel privileges as baptized, but because *IT* possesses, over and above the fœderal and ceremonial, a natural suitableness to enter on this highest degree of relation" "The different actions [of sprinkling, pouring, or immersion,] are only different means of attaining a proposed end. This end is purification by water, to which *either* of the mentioned means equally LEAD."*—Such are the elegant diction and the grammatical precision of my opponent!

* Vol. i. 87, 88, 95, 202, 271, 366, 378; vol. ii. 243, 374.

CHAPTER II.

On the little Regard DR. WILLIAMS pays to Quotations produced from Pædobaptists; and on his Disposition to extort Concessions from the Baptists.

THE attentive reader of Pædobaptism Examined, and especially of the second edition of that work, must acknowledge, that the quotations produced from Pædobaptist authors, relative to this controversy, are both numerous and remarkable. So numerous and so remarkable are they, that it is not easy, if at all possible, to find a parallel instance, in any subject of dispute among Protestants. But notwithstanding the number of those quotations, and the high respectability of the authors in general, from whom they were extracted, my opponent affects to consider them, as having scarcely any pertinency of application, or any weight in our favour. This must be obvious to most of his readers; and particulars will be noticed in the following chapter.

But though my quotations from Pædobaptists are esteemed, by Dr. W., as lighter than air; yet so strong is his predilection for any thing like a concession from Baptists, that he makes them concede, in various particulars, by *mere inference*. Nay, he sometimes puts their expressions on the rack, to extort concessions from them.—Thus, for instance, by dislocating a few expressions of mine, relative to the mode of administration, and by annexing ideas to those expressions which are foreign to their natural import, he represents me as conceding the point for which he contends.* But of this, I have taken some notice al-

* Vol. ii. 371.

ready.* Nay, so extremely fond is he of concessions from us, that what I have adopted as a *principle* of argument against him, he calls a *concession*.†

Thus he speaks, with reference to Dr. Gale: “In proportion as those instances, to which he appeals as the supporters of his hypothesis, are incompatible with it, while at the same time they perfectly agree with that for which I contend, they may be not improperly ranked among the *concessions* of our opponents.”† As if the impropriety of an instance adduced, by any polemical author in proof of his point, were usually considered by his opponent as a *concession*! He again tells us of Dr. Gale’s “fair concession,” and of his “remarkable concessions:”‡ though common capacities, I am persuaded, will hardly be able to see any thing like a concession, in the passages to which he adverts.

Dr. W. insists that the conduct of those Baptists, who admit Pædobaptists to communion with them at the Lord’s table, is a practical concession, “That baptizing by *affusion*, or *sprinkling*, is equally valid with their own;” and that “the baptizing of *infants* is not a nullity.” He adds, “If it be said that Antipædobaptist congregations allow free communion to Pædobaptists *as unbaptized*, we ask, What evidence is there for such an assertion?”§—*What evidence?* why the very *titles* of their publications in favour of free communion. For instance: Water Baptism no Bar to Communion: A Modest Plea for Free Communion at the Lord’s Table, between true Believers of ALL Denominations; and others of a similar kind. *What evidence?* why their avowed sentiments, as Baptists, compared with their arguments in defence of free communion, afford undoubted evidence of the fact. Did not Mr. Bunyan expressly assert, that “baptism gives neither being nor *well-being* to a

* See p. 32, 33, of Mr. Booth’s Answer to Dr. Williams.

† Vol. ii. 393.

‡ Vol. ii. 141, 143, 155.

§ Vol. ii. 116, 117.

church?"* Never, to the best of my recollection, did I hear of more than *one* Baptist, that approved of free communion, who, either in any publication, in preaching, or in private conversation, ever acknowledged infant sprinkling to have the *essence* of Christian baptism.—No, with that single exception, so far as my observation has reached, our Baptist Brethren, who practise free communion, universally profess the contrary; and, when defending their conduct, the arguments used by them proceed on a different ground. They never pretend to receive Pædobaptists into communion, because they consider them as *really*, though not in the most agreeable manner, baptized; for, to the best of my knowledge and information, that is denied, with the foregoing exception, by every individual among them. The avowed ground on which many of them proceed, is: *If my Pædobaptist brother be satisfied in his OWN MIND, that he is rightly baptized, he is so TO HIMSELF.*† Which reminds me of that saying of Vasques; “If any man *think* that to be a relic of a saint, which indeed is not so, he is not frustrate of the merit of his devotion.”‡—Their *practice* also is evidence of it. For do they not solemnly immerse, on a profession of faith, those who have been sprinkled in their infancy? yet they do not consider themselves as guilty of *Anabaptism*, but profess to detest it as much as any other people. But, did they consider infant sprinkling as *real* baptism, they must, on their own principles, stand convicted of *Anabaptism*, whenever they immerse a person who had been sprinkled.—Dr. W. adds, “If any are proposed to strict fellowship, who, according to their own judgment and profession, were *never baptized*,—they are never admitted, if I mistake not, without previous bap-

* Works, vol. i. p. 174, octav. edit. See my Apol. for the Baptists, p. 43, 44, 45, 132.

† See my Apol. for the Baptists, p. 59.

‡ In Clarkson's Prac. Div. of Papists, p. 187.

tism.”* But my opponent is here under a great mistake; for stubborn facts lie against this view of the case. Of this I have related one instance in my Apology for the Baptists; † to which, were it needful, I could easily add another. It is not, therefore, a fact, that they do consider “baptism as an *essential prerequisite* for Christian communion.” ‡ The late Mr. R. Robinson, it is well known, was a strenuous advocate for free communion, and published in defence of that practice; but, as appears from his history of baptism, no one is farther from considering pouring or sprinkling as real baptism, than he was.

Dr. W. appearing to have read Mr. Bunyan’s publications on the subject, and my Apology for the Baptists, I am a little surprised to find him appealing to our Brethren who practise free communion, as conceding the point with regard to immersion; because there is, if I mistake not, in those publications, plenty of evidence that they do not consider infant sprinkling as having in it the essence of baptism. But my opponent wants concessions; is in search of concessions; and without concessions, either verbal or practical, from Antipædobaptists, he cannot be contented.—As to the censure which, on this occasion, he passes on me, for being “destitute of brotherly candour;” § and the compliment he implicitly pays to himself, as abounding in the exercise of that virtuous disposition; I shall only say, that it is not for names or parties which I contend, but what I consider as *truth* or as *duty*. It is not *persons*, but *errors* and *inconsistencies*, that I mean to oppose; nor does it make any difference, as to my conduct in matters of this kind, whether those evils be found among Baptists or Pædobaptists.

So extremely fond of concessions is Dr. W., that he classes a number of persons under the character of *Anti-*

* Vol. ii. 119.

† See Apol. for Baptists, 45, 46.

‡ Vol. ii. 119.

§ Vol. ii. 117.

pædobaptists, who professedly differ as much from us, with regard to the mode, as they do from himself, in respect of the subject; and ought, therefore, on both sides, to be left out of the question. Of this number are some of the Mennonites in Holland; and so was the late Mr. Elliot; in reference to whom our author says: It is “a fact, that some Antipædobaptists reject immersion, on conviction of the *preference* of aspersion or affusion, from a strict examination of scripture evidence. Not to mention the Antipædobaptists of Holland, of whom it is said, that they *commonly use affusion*, I shall present the reader not only with the *opinion*, but also with the *reasoning* of an ANTIPÆDOBAPTIST, who has lately published on this subject.”—He then gives a quotation from Mr. Elliot’s pamphlet, entitled, Dipping not Baptizing—a continued quotation, for sixteen pages together.* After which, he immediately adds; “There is little need of an apology, (at least to Mr. B.) for the *quantity* of quotation here produced; as the arguments urged by this ANTIPÆDOBAPTIST writer are, perhaps, NO LESS *weighty and pertinent* than all Mr. B.’s boasted concessions put together.”† On this I would make a few remarks.

“Little need of an apology.” True; if the quantity of quotation were the only thing to be considered; but not so, if all circumstances be duly regarded. We have reason here to complain of our author, for an oblique misrepresentation, relative to the Mennonites, and to Mr. Elliot; because he applies to them, as well as to us, and without any mark of distinction, the name of *Antipædobaptists*, as if they professedly agreed with us, both in regard to the mode and subject of baptism. Yet, as to Mr. Elliot, my opponent *knew*, and as to some of the Mennonites, he might have known, that they *avowedly* differ from us respecting the mode of administration; so that, when they argue for pouring or sprinkling, they

* Vol. ii. 119—135.

† Vol. ii. 135.

defend their *own* practice. They cannot, therefore, be considered as *Antipædobaptists*, in that latitude of meaning which belongs to the character, when applied to us. Three times over our author has used that characteristic denomination, with reference to all the Mennonites in Holland, and to Mr. Elliot, without the least intimation of any professed difference in sentiment and conduct between them and us. He calls them *Antipædobaptists*, for aught that appears to the contrary, in the *very same sense*, as when he so denominates the Doctors Gale, Gill, and Stennett; yet he must know that there is, in regard to baptism, an *essential* difference between them. Thus he leads his less informed readers to draw an inference that is entirely false.—Besides, the language of Dr. W. is adapted to make his reader conclude, that *all* the Dutch Mennonites, in their common practice, use affusion; which is far from being a fact.* That the late Mr. Elliot was against the baptizing of infants, is a fact; and so was Robert Barclay. But it is equally plain, that, as far as appears, neither of them ever called himself a *Baptist*, nor was ever so considered by others. The consequence is, Dr. W. owes to his readers in general, an acknowledgement of culpable inadvertency, for such an indiscriminate use of the term *Antipædobaptists*.

Again: We have reason to complain of my opponent, with reference to his favourite Antipædobaptist, Mr. Elliot, in another view. For he exhibits Mr. Elliot as agreeing with himself, respecting the mode of administration. Whereas it is evident, and Dr. W. could not but *know* it, that while he himself considers immersion, pouring, and sprinkling, as “equally lawful and equally valid,” Mr. Elliot boldly asserts, and labours to prove, that immersion is *not* lawful—is *not* valid—is *not* baptism. This is perfectly agreeable to the title of his pamphlet, which is, Dipping NOT Baptizing. But of this Dr. W.

* Vide Hist. Mennonitarum, by Schyn; and Mr. Robinson's Hist. of Bap. p. 547, 548, 549.

no more approves, I presume, than we. For, as if he had intended to oppose this peculiarity of Mr. Elliot, he says, "They must be *uncandid*, and perhaps *imprudent*, who deny immersion to be a species of baptizing."* With what candour or prudence, then, could my opponent palm on the public such a misrepresentation of Mr. Elliot's views, under the notion of his being an *Antipædobaptist*? He should have candidly informed his readers, that Mr. Elliot neither was, nor pretended to be a *Baptist*; and also to have settled the matter between that author and himself, relative to the "essentiality" of pouring or sprinkling, before he had produced him against us.—Dr. W. is very desirous of obtaining *concessions* in favour of his cause. But as, in the writings of Baptists, they are extremely scarce, and yet must be procured from one and another that are called *Antipædobaptists*, he knew not how to do better than, "having recourse to his glasses and wiping them clean," to seek them in the publications of those who are, as to the mode of administration, our avowed opposers.—His readers may justly demand an apology, though not for the length of his quotation from Mr. Elliot, yet for commending it, as being, "perhaps, no less weighty and pertinent than *all* Mr. B.'s boasted concessions put together!" because, those who peruse my *Pædobaptism Examined*, must have observed that, besides mere concessions, I have produced *strong assertions* and *various arguments*, in favour of immersion, from those whom all the world considered as PÆDOBAPTISTS. Nor should they forget, that what he calls "Mr. B.'s *boasted* concessions," were all made, a very few excepted, by those who *practised* pouring or sprinkling. But was there any thing similar in the profession or the conduct of Mr. Elliot? Nothing at all, of which I ever heard. Whatever, therefore, either of plausibility or force, Dr. W. may suppose his reasoning to contain, considered as an *author*, yet no *impartia*

* Vol. ii. 159.

reader can look upon it as having the least pertinency of application, in the present case, when represented as coming from an *Antipædobaptist*.

My opponent knows, that Mr. Elliot, in the same pamphlet, argues professedly against *the right of infants* to baptism. With equal reason might I, therefore, had his publication then appeared, have introduced him as a zealous defender of *sprinkling*; and have made a long quotation from him against *infant* baptism. But had I so done, and then, like Dr. W., boasted of the advantage to our cause afforded by it, what would Pædobaptists have thought of my conduct? Would they not, in one view, have *reprobated* my disingenuousness; and, in another, have *ridiculed* my puerility?

But why, in the name of common sense, does my opponent boast so much of Mr. Elliot, as a powerful coadjutor? and why should that Antipædobaptist be such a favourite with him? For it is evident, that if Mr. Elliot be right, Dr. W. is wrong—habitually wrong, in theory; and occasionally wrong, in practice. Because he uniformly maintains, in regard to the former, that a solemn immersion is legitimate Christian baptism; which Mr. Elliot strongly denies; and because he expressly says, “If baptizing be neither more nor less than *dipping*, I have the *certainty* of sometimes *baptizing* infants,”* which his admired “Antipædobaptist” will by no means admit, but labours to prove it a nullity. Whether this conduct of Dr. W. come under the notion of logical *felo de se*, I must leave the impartial to judge.—It is clear, however, all-martial as my opponent sometimes appears, when he professes “to confront, to break, and to rout” a whole “phalanx” at once, and without auxiliaries, that he is, nevertheless, liable to be deceived in the estimate he forms of his “mercenary forces:” for, in order to facilitate his conquest over the Baptists, he engages an ally, and treats him with singular honour;

* Vol. ii. 409.

who, far from being true to the trust reposed in him, is ungrateful to his commander, by fighting equally with Baptists and Pædobaptists.

Lightly as Dr. W. affects to esteem the testimonies and concessions of learned Pædobaptists, when produced by me, he is quite willing their assertions and verdict should be held in high estimation, when favourable to the practice of pouring or of sprinkling. For to prove this position, "*Baptize* and *baptism*, at least when sacramentally used, are generic terms,"* he produces a long list of names. Yes, to use his own elegant language, in a similar case, he "rummages" authors, and "musters together," no less than forty quotations, "which he imagines greatly assist his cause."† But there is an essential difference, with regard to pertinency and force, between *my* quotations and *his*. The *former* were taken from authors that were confessedly our opposers. The *latter*, from those whom he considers as the professed friends of his own cause. And though exceptions might justly be made to the manner in which some of his witnesses are introduced, as bearing their testimony, yet, waiving this for the present, none can wonder that those who *practise* pouring or sprinkling, should speak in favour of it, and endeavour to vindicate their *own* conduct. But it is very remarkable, that sensible and learned Protestant authors, who constantly adopt that mode of proceeding, should say such things as, by natural and necessary consequence, prove infant sprinkling an illegitimate practice.

That there is a wide and an essential difference, in the *argumentum ad hominem*, between the assertions of avowed friends, and the testimonies or the concessions of professed opposers, Dr. W. himself has taught us. For, quoting a few lines from Dr. Gale and Dr. Gill, relative to the Jewish proselyte baptism, and when reflecting on what they have said, he thus proceeds: "Therefore it appears with *superior evidence*, from the

* Vol. ii. 86.

† Vol. i. 189; vol. ii. 26, 86—113.

testimony of these **COMPETENT AND UNEXCEPTIONABLE WITNESSES**, that baptism was well known, as a ceremonial and purifying rite, prior to the Christian æra.*—Now though, if I may “show my opinion,” what Dr. Gale and Dr. Gill have said is very little to the purpose of Dr. W., yet hence it is clear, that when learned opponents bear testimony, either for our Brethren or for us, they are to be considered as “**COMPETENT AND UNEXCEPTIONABLE WITNESSES.**” This must be the case; except our author can prove, either, that Pædobaptism is justly entitled to a monopoly of this kind of evidence, or, that no witnesses are *competent and unexceptionable* for such a purpose, except they be Baptists; neither of which, I presume, will be attempted by him. He deserves, however, my grateful acknowledgments, for so freely and so emphatically adopting this principle of argumentation. Having such an example and such an authority, I shall therefore consider myself as completely warranted, while disputing with him, to take it for granted; *That, in whatever case learned Pædobaptists bear testimony in our favour, they are* **COMPETENT AND UNEXCEPTIONABLE WITNESSES.** To this principle, Providence assisting, I shall frequently recur: and it gives me peculiar pleasure, to think of the warm approbation with which it will meet from Dr. W., whenever it shall be presented to his notice. The reader also, I trust, will pay to this *datum* a due regard.

The propriety and importance of this principle, in polemical writings, being well known to my opponent, and the use I made of it, in Pædobaptism Examined, being so frequent, there is no reason to be surprised that he should endeavour, by all means, to avail himself of it whenever it was in his power. But as testimonies and concessions, in favour of infant sprinkling, from the pens of Baptists, are a very scarce commodity, and as

* Vol. ii. 231.

his pretence of having “given *a FULL reply*” to my book would have made but an awkward appearance, if he had not produced something *called* concessions from us, he felt himself obliged to accept the best he could obtain. In this extremity, what could he have done better than, by *mere inference*, to make us concede various things; and to produce, under the name of *Antipædo-baptists*, those who, in regard to the mode of administration, are as far from being Baptists as himself.—Differ, however, as he and I do, about some other things, we are perfectly agreed in this; *That learned opponents*, in matters which they directly concede, are COMPETENT AND UNEXCEPTIONABLE WITNESSES. Nor can I “help wishing that he may always abide by this principle, in hopes that it might tend to introduce an amicable union.”

CHAPTER III.

*On Dr. W.'s Pretence, that his Book includes A FULL
REPLY to my Pædobaptism Examined.*

THAT the reader of Antipædobaptism Examined, is taught by our author to consider it as a complete answer to my book, appears, not only from the language of his title-page, but also from that of his preface. For, speaking of Pædobaptism Examined, and of his own design relative to that work, he tells us, that the task he imposed upon himself was, “not to *nibble* at some of the branches of his stately tree, but to lay the axe of opposite principles to the root of it; not to uncover a little here and there of his building, to find a few faults in quotations, translations, and the like, but to undermine the foundation. The *principal grounds* of reasoning I have endeavoured constantly to keep in view; and my aim is throughout to show that the *principles* of Protestants and Nonconformists, taken in their only true sense and force, are either misunderstood or *misrepresented* by my opponent, and consequently his reasoning upon them, which derives all its plausibility from that MISREPRESENTATION, is inconclusive.”*

How various and how formidable is the appearance of this opponent! Do you consider the system of quotations and arguments contained in my book, under the metaphor of a stately *tree*? He appears bearing an axe, and, with menacing aspect, he lays it in a most unmerciful manner to the root.—Do you contemplate the same performance under the notion of an *edifice*? He comes forth with all the terrible apparatus of a skilful engineer; and, in a trice, he saps its deep foundations. The tree, with all its beautiful ramifications and verdant

* Preface, vi.

honours, lies in the dust. The edifice, with all its costly workmanship and elegant furniture, sinks in ruins. So terribly destructive are the weapons and the attacks of my opponent! Alas, for thee, poor Pædobaptism Examined, how art thou fallen!—so fallen in the estimate of Dr. W., as never to rise again!—But, supposing the fabric to be demolished, yet as it does not appear that my opponent, like Joshua respecting Jericho, has denounced an awful anathema on him who shall dare to rebuild the fallen structure, its re-edification may be lawful. It seems expedient, however, for me to examine, whether he have, in reality, “undermined” the building, or whether he have only, “uncovered a little here and there”—whether he have, indeed, extirpated the tree, or whether he have merely “nibbled at some of the branches.”—It behoves me, notwithstanding, before I proceed in this examination, to consider that *severe censure* which is contained in the passage I have just quoted.

Dr. W. tells his reader, that I have either *misunderstood* or *misrepresented* the principles “of Protestants and Nonconformists;” and that, from this “MISREPRESENTATION,” my reasoning derives all its plausibility. Now, by contrasting *misrepresented* with *misunderstood*, and by repeating the former idea, though not the latter, he manifestly impeaches the rectitude of my intention. But, whether I ought to consider this as the language of *inadvertency*, or as a *designed* impeachment of my integrity, I dare not assert. If the *former*, candour demands that it should be overlooked. If the *latter*, I know not how to reconcile it with his professed esteem for my character, as elsewhere expressed.* I boldly deny the charge, and earnestly call upon him to prove his assertion.

That Dr. W. has *confronted*—that he has endeavoured to *break*, and entirely to *rout*, what he elegantly

* See vol. i. Pref. ix. ; vol. ii. 417.

calls my "sophistical phalanx," is doubtless a fact; but whether, after all the displays of his polemical prowess, Pædobaptism Examined be completely confuted, is to some people doubtful, and may justly bear an enquiry. To this enquiry, therefore, let us now apply.

The *data*, or principal grounds of argument, all through my performance, were taken from Pædobaptists. These *data* are, *testimonies* to facts, *concessions* of what we assert, and *principles* of reasoning; as every intelligent reader of Pædobaptism Examined must have observed. Such were the topics on which I proceeded in every branch of the subject; and what my opponent says, relative to that system of quotations which I have produced from Pædobaptists, must now be considered.—It may, indeed, be observed in general, that he treats them as Job's leviathan treats brass and iron, like *straw and rotten wood*; while, what he is pleased to call, *concessions* from us, are considered by him as pointed spears and barbed arrows—fitted to pierce our cause to the very heart, and to perform terrible execution. Nor does he, as on some other occasions, "muster" his "forces of considerations;" or, in the true spirit of polemical heroism, "confront, break, and rout" my quotations in form; either as collected into a "phalanx," or as in detached parties: but he considers them as almost unworthy of his notice. Yes, whatever testimonies the most learned and eminent *Pædobaptists* have given in our favour, he treats as if little more than "showing his opinion," were quite enough to deter them from appearing more or less on our side of the question, and to drive them from the field.

Thus, then, Dr. W.: "My judgment entirely fails me, if a *very great number* of these quotations are not perfectly consistent with the practice of the persons quoted."* Here he barely "shows his opinion."—"There is not *one* of all the quotations from Pædobaptist writers con-

* Vol. i. 19.

tained in the first part of his Pædobaptism Examined, concerning the nature of positive institutions, but is *perfectly consistent* with Pædobaptist principles.”* *Ipse dixit*.—“Mr. B.’s third chapter is entitled, ‘The Design of Baptism; or, Facts and Blessings represented by it, both in regard to our Lord and his Disciples.’ And under this title he *musters* together no less than fifty-six Pædobaptist writers; who, having made some concessions respecting the propriety and expressiveness of immersion to represent the facts of Christ’s death, burial, and resurrection, he imagines greatly assist his cause.”† *No less than fifty-six Pædobaptist writers*. Then, by his own rule, we have *fifty-six* “competent and unexceptionable witnesses” in our favour, with regard to the *design* of baptism.—*Made some CONCESSIONS*. Nay, rather, the generality of them are *strong assertions*, and in the most direct manner to our purpose.—*He imagines they greatly assist his cause*. Yes; much more than those forty Pædobaptist authors, “mustered” by Dr. W. in favour of pouring and of sprinkling: for, in the latter case, they are only defending their *own* practice; and therefore are not “*unexceptionable* witnesses.”—“What Mr. B. cites as *concessions* from—professed Pædobaptists, should be understood in the sense just proposed [by Dr. W.]—It is extremely improbable, nay, highly uncharitable to suppose, that these eminent characters should be capable of so glaring a contradiction, as to hold any sense of the word *μαθητευω* incompatible with infant discipleship and baptism.”‡—*Extremely improbable—Highly uncharitable*. Indeed! So, then, we must consider learned Pædobaptists as absolutely incapable of saying any thing which, in its necessary consequences, is inimical to infant sprinkling! Privileged with a patent of consistency, you hazard your character for candour and for charity, if you endeavour to make it appear, that any of them have so interpreted the word

* Vol. i. 49.

† Vol. i. 189.

‡ Vol. i. 323.

μαθητεω, as to exclude the idea of *new-born infants being the DISCIPLES of Jesus Christ*. Whereas, detached from the love of hypothesis, one should rather have thought, that it would have been considered as an insult upon their learning and common sense, to represent them as maintaining any such thing. But let the reader, for his own satisfaction, peruse their sayings.*—What an admirably easy method my opponent has of defending his cause! Pædobaptism must be supported; and, therefore, Pædobaptists must be consistent. Because it would be a shameful thing indeed, for any of their principles to be at variance with their practice: the very idea of which Dr. W. can by no means admit. But might not the Roman Catholics, with equal propriety, avail themselves of the same plea, in answer to similar charges that are laid against them by Protestants? Here, as on various other occasions, our author “shows his *opinion* ;” but, certainly, he does not “answer his part.”

Again: “His quoting any who *sprinkle* the subject and pronounce him *baptized*, can answer no other purpose than to amuse and dazzle the eye of a superficial observer.”† Must the quotations, then, to answer our purpose, be taken from them, if such there be, who pour or sprinkle water on the subject, and pronounce him *unbaptized*? If so, the quotations could not be extracted, according to the plan of my book, from *Pædobaptists*; no, nor yet from *Baptists*. Because, the *latter* are as far from acknowledging pouring or sprinkling to be *baptism*, as the *former* are from EXPRESSLY *condemning* their own conduct.—According to my opponent, the cause of Pædobaptism is in the most singularly happy situation, with regard to concessions, which might, apparently, be pleaded against it, from the

* In Pædobap. Exam. p. 314—321, first edit.; or in Vol. II. p. 97—107, of this edition.

† Vol. ii. 4.

writings of Pædobaptists. For, whatever they assert, or whatever they concede, respecting the mode of administration, it cannot be of any service to our cause, except they plainly declare, that the subject on whom water has been only poured or sprinkled, is *not baptized*. In other subjects of polemical discussion you may forcibly plead the concessions of adversaries, who are far from *explicitly* giving up the point in dispute; but so peculiarly favoured is the cause of infant sprinkling, that nothing short of this will do to be pleaded against it, by way of concession. It is, therefore, impossible that learned, wise, and upright Pædobaptists, let them say whatever they may, should bear any testimonies, or make any concessions, in our favour; for none but a fool, a maniac, or a hypocrite, will ever *expressly* give up the point he professedly defends.

“Our opponents—ought to prove,—that the authors they produce, as countenancing their sentiments, *never acknowledge*, that *other* modes of sacramental washing are equally valid with that of *dipping*. Till they prove this— they prove nothing.”* Indeed! But then we must also prove, either that such authors are members of the *Greek* church, or that they are *Baptists*; or, at least, that they are not *Pædobaptists*, in the common acceptance of the term: and the producing of such authors would be as foreign to the purpose, as that of my opponent, when he quotes Mr. Elliot’s pamphlet, entitled, *Dipping not Baptizing*.—“One of his readers, at least, judges, that what he has produced from Pædobaptist writers, as concessions, *no more regard the leading point in dispute than*—(I was going to say) *the first verse of the first book of Chronicles, Adam, Sheth, Enosh*.” Then I may adopt that elegant exclamation of our author; “Dreadful scythe, and no mean mower, to cut so much at one stroke!” Then, I will add, my quotations are no more to the purpose than his

* Vol. ii. 4, 5.

appeal to the third chapter of Genesis, in proof that infants are entitled to baptism.

But he proceeds thus: "For the immediate question is,—whether the LEGAL, the *ceremonial*, or *sacramental* sense of the word excludes, *absolutely excludes*, every other idea but *immersion*? No concession short of this is of any real service to our opponent's cause"*—*No concession short of this*. But such a concession would prove, as already observed, that the authors were either members of the Greek church, or Baptists, or hypocrites. For, whoever seriously concedes, that the word *baptism* "excludes, *absolutely excludes*, every other idea but *immersion*," cannot, in the common acceptance of the term, be considered as a *Pædobaptist*: or if, after having made such a concession, he practise pouring or sprinkling, without giving any intimation of his judgment being altered, he must be viewed as having condemned his own conduct, and as acting the part of a hypocrite.—Dr. W.'s distinction between the *legal*, or *ceremonial*, and *philological* sense of the word *baptism*, will be considered in another place.

"If it be said, that such concessions favour their *practice*, let the unwary know, that this is only substituting a mean *sophism* in the room of solid *argument*. For if they *only prefer*, for reasons that appear to them conclusive, their plunging to our pouring or sprinkling, they are cordially welcome to adhere to that practice, as the Greek church does; but let them not uncharitably condemn and *nullify* the baptismal practice of all Christendom besides." †—*Cordially welcome!* Generous language, compared with that of his favourite Antipædobaptist, Mr. Elliot!—*As the Greek church does; but let them not nullify the practice of all Christendom besides*. As if those who practise immersion were, comparatively, a *very small* number! whereas, if we may credit learned Pædobaptists, they constitute

Vol. ii. 5, 6.

† Vol. ii. 6.

about *one half* of that part of the world called *Christian*. As if, also, the Greek church admitted pouring or sprinkling to be real baptism! contrary to what Pædobaptists themselves have said, whom our author has taught us to consider as “competent and unexceptionable witnesses.” To the testimonies respecting that particular, in *Pædobaptism Examined*,* I will add the two following. Schubertus: “It is the opinion of the Greeks, that the *true* baptism of Christ is administered, not by the application of water in any way, but by *immersion*, or by hiding the person to be baptized *under water*.” †—Russian Catechism: “This they [the Greek church in Russia,] hold to be a point *necessary*, that no part of the child be undipped in the water.” ‡—“But if,” says Dr. W. “by *our practice* be intended, the plunging of those persons who had been before *sprinkled* in the name of the sacred Trinity, under pretence that the latter was *no baptism*, the sophistical insinuation, that *this practice* is countenanced by the venerable list of Pædobaptists which he quotes, deserves a severe reprehension.” § But what ground has my opponent for this branch of his alternative? Have I any where insinuated, that the authors whom I quote intended to promote our cause? That they have said such things as, by natural and necessary consequence, are inimical to Pædobaptism, I have endeavoured to prove. I have, however, always quoted and represented them as Pædobaptists; nor can Dr. W. deny it.—The celebrated Mr. Claude being blamed, in a similar manner, by Mr. Arnauld, respecting some quotations from Arcudius, replies: “I allege Arcudius to confront him with himself, concerning some truths, and matters of fact, which do now and then escape him; after the same manner as

* Vol. I. p. 267, 268, 289, 290, of edit. 2d.; Vol. I. 155, 156, 239, 240, 241, 260, of this edit.

† Institut. Theolog. Polem. pars. ii. cap. iii. § 12.

‡ Russian Catechism, p. 73. London, 1723. § Vol. ii. 7.

I would quote cardinal Perron and Bellarmin, and Mr. Arnauld himself; *not as witnesses that believe what I would conclude, but as persons who affirm things, FROM WHENCE I CONCLUDE WHAT THEY THEMSELVES DO NOT BELIEVE.*"* Just such is my conduct. Dr. W. may, therefore, take to himself that "severe reprehension," of which he speaks, for producing against us, under the notion of an *Antipædobaptist*, the late Mr. Elliot; when he KNEW that the author of Dipping not Baptizing, was as far from agreeing with us, in regard to the mode, as he was from him, in respect of the subject.

"If union [among the authors that are quoted] be any proof, in the present case, they all unite against the *necessity* of immersion for the essence of baptism. Pray, then, what do their *concessions* amount to?—but that they consider the words as *generic* terms, admitting *diverse* modes; and that though the more common import of the terms, in *their* opinion, convey the idea of immersion, yet in their sacramental sense, at least, they are to be understood with greater latitude." † —*They all unite against the necessity of immersion.* True, or else I could not have quoted them under the character of *Pædobaptists*. It would have been strange indeed, if, while they practised pouring or sprinkling, any of them had acknowledged, that their mode of administration did not include the *essence* of baptism; for that would have been expressly to condemn their own conduct, and to fix a stigma on their own character. So the Roman Catholics, notwithstanding the numerous concessions which they have made relative to communion in both kinds, constantly unite in maintaining, that nothing *essential* to the Lord's supper is wanting in their administration.

"Pray, then, what do their concessions amount to?"

* Cathol. Doct. of Eucharist, book iii. chap. vii.

† Vol. ii. 165.

As this request of my opponent is expressed in elegantly condescending language, I will present both him and my readers in common with the “amount” of what Pædobaptists have testified and conceded; by giving an abstract of the quotations produced from them, relative to *The meaning of the terms, baptize and baptism—the design of the ordinance—the practice of the church—the mode of administration best adapted to answer the design of the institute—and the reasons of immersion being laid aside.*

The meaning of the terms. They teach us, that immersion is the radical and obvious signification of the word baptism;—that the Danes, the Swedes, the Germans, and the Dutch, render the term βαπτίζω, by expressions that signify to dip;—that it has no other signification in Mark the seventh and fourth;—that the idea of immersion is retained when the word is used metaphorically of the Holy Spirit, of sufferings, and of other things;—that βαπτίζειν, is of a middle signification, between επιπολαζειν, *to swim on the surface*, and δυνειν, *to go down to the bottom*;—that it is no where used in the scripture to signify sprinkling;—that it signifies immersion only; not washing, except by consequence;—that the Greeks wanted not other words to have expressed a different action, if the institution would have borne it;—that the manner of baptizing should correspond to the signification of the ordinance;—that all antiquity, and scripture, confirm the idea of plunging;—that sprinkling is rhanism rather than baptism;—that new customs introduce new significations of terms;—that Pædobaptists chiefly avail themselves of inferences, of analogy, and of doubtful construction;—and that the Baptists have the advantage in point of argument.—Such is the “amount” of concessions that are made by *eighty-two* Pædobaptist authors; all of whom we are warranted by Dr. W. to consider, “as competent and unexceptionable witnesses.”

The design of the ordinance. Under this branch of

the subject, the authors are almost unanimous in considering baptism as principally intended, by the great Legislator, to represent the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ; the communion his people have with him in those momentous facts; and their interest in the blessings thence resulting. To confirm and illustrate which, they agree in applying the declarations of Paul, recorded in Romans the sixth and fourth, and Colossians the second and twelfth.—*Seventy-five* Pædobaptists are here quoted; who are all “competent and unexceptionable witnesses.”

The practice of the church. That immersion was practised by John the Baptist, by the apostles, and by the primitive Christians;—that our Lord himself was immersed by the venerable John;—that the scripture nowhere speaks of any being baptized, but by immersion;—that the practice of immersion gave occasion for some very singular and emphatical phrases to be used by the apostles;—that the baptism of the three thousand affords no objection to the universal practice of immersion in those times;—that plunging was the general and almost universal practice, for a long course of ages;—that

Dr. Wall knew of no Protestant, who had denied immersion to have been the general practice of apostolic times; and of but very few learned men, who denied its being the fittest, if a regard to health do not forbid;—that sprinkling is indefensible;—that they who ridicule immersion deserve censure;—that it is uncertain where and by whom sprinkling was introduced;—and, that a restoration of the primitive practice is very desirable.—Such is the “amount” of what *ninety-six* Pædobaptist writers have conceded or asserted, under this branch of the subject; and all of them “competent, unexceptionable witnesses.”

The mode of administration best adapted to answer the design of the institute. That immersion, compared with pouring or with sprinkling, has the priority, in respect of time;—that it is more significant;—and, that it is more

safe, or certain of being right.—Here we have *sixteen* “competent and unexceptionable witnesses;” and this is the “amount” of their concessions.

The reasons of immersion being laid aside. That the most ancient instance on record, of pouring or sprinkling, was in the year two hundred and fifty-one;—that the reason of it, both then and afterward, was a supposed necessity, arising, either from bodily disease, a want of water for immersion, or something similar;—that, even then, the water was not applied by pouring upon or sprinkling the face, but the whole body;—that it was considered as an imperfect administration, and was denominated *sprinkling*, not *baptizing*;—that pouring or sprinkling, as a common practice, originated in the apostate church of Rome, and that the Protestant churches thence derived it;—that this mode of proceeding commenced among the English in the time of queen Elizabeth, but that immersion was the prevailing practice till the reign of James the First;—that the reasons of this alteration in England were, the love of novelty, delicacy of parents, pretence of modesty, and a high regard for the character of Calvin;—that Calvin’s form of administering the sacraments was, probably, the first in the world that prescribed pouring absolutely;—that sprinkling, strictly so called, did not commence in England, till the year sixteen hundred and forty-five, and was then used by very few;—that the assembly of divines at Westminster converted the font into a basin; and that basins, unless in cases of necessity, had never been used by Papists, or any other Christians whatever, till by the members of that assembly;—that Roman Catholics ridicule some of the Protestant ministers, for using only a few drops of water;—that the reasons more generally assigned for this novel mode of proceeding are, coldness of climate; tenderness of infants; Christianity not consisting in ceremonies; that sacred maxim, *God will have mercy, and not sacrifice*; the authority of the

church to alter ceremonial appointments; and, (most delicately to crown the whole,) because, in the very act of baptizing, it was observed, that *natura cursum suum tenet*; and, finally, that ALL THE CHRISTIANS IN THE WORLD, *who never owned the pope's usurped power, now do, and ever did, dip their children in the common course of their practice.*—Such is the “amount” of concessions made, and testimonies given, by *twenty-four* Pædobaptist authors; among whom, the learned and laborious Dr. Wall makes the most conspicuous figure,* though they are all “competent and unexceptionable witnesses.”

The most learned and respectable Pædobaptists having asserted and conceded such things as these, is there not reason to be surprised at our author's query; “Pray, then, what do their concessions amount to?” *Amount to!* why, to *every* thing, in the *argumentum ad hominem*, respecting the mode of administration, that we can desire. Their *explicit* amount, it is manifest, is as great as it could be, without verbally opposing their own practice; and their amount, by necessary consequence, is, *That immersion is the only legitimate mode of proceeding.*

Though, by what is contained in the preceding paragraphs, the pertinency of my quotations from Pædobaptists, and my inferences from them, is sufficiently established, yet, as Dr. W. earnestly contends, that no concessions are available to our purpose, except we could prove that the authors produced acknowledge immersion to be *essential* to baptism, the following particulars are submitted to my reader's consideration.

The writers whom I have quoted could not, *as* Pædobaptists, either assert or believe, immersion to be essential to baptism, without directly condemning their own practice. It appears, indeed, that Mr. Blake and Dr.

* My reader may see the above particulars, and the quotations at large, to which they refer, in Pædobaptism Exam. Part I. Chap. II., III., IV., VI., and VII.; or Vol. I. p. 40—238, and 245—300.

Wall did not consider *sprinkling* as having in it the essence of baptism; because the latter of those authors expresses himself thus: "As for *sprinkling*, I say as Mr. Blake, at its first coming up in England, *Let them defend it that use it.*"* He farther says, "I had the *disadvantage* [in defending the practice of pouring] to plead for a way of baptism, of which the *best* I could say was, *That it is sufficient for the essence of baptism*; but could not deny the other, [that is, immersion,] except in the case of danger of health, to be the fittest."† It is plain, however, that neither of these writers considered *immersion* as *essential* to the ordinance. Had that been the case, Dr. W. might justly have charged me with puerility and impertinence, for quoting them as I have done.

It has been common for polemical writers, whatever the controversy might be in which they engaged, to plead the concessions of their opponents, whenever it could be done with propriety. This way of proceeding, in the argument *ad hominem*, has always been esteemed both fair and conclusive. But it never was common for those who wrote in defence of any doctrine or practice, *expressly* to concede the point for which they contended. Nor can it be so at all, except through gross inadvertency, a want of integrity, or a defect of common sense. —The concessions, therefore, on which controversial writers argue, and from which they infer the point intended to be established, are considered as only implying that which is inconsistent with the general thesis opposed by them; and as being, by *necessary consequence*, subversive of it.

That the method of arguing adopted in Pædobaptism Examined, is neither novel, nor unfair, was proved in the preface of each edition of that performance. But of this Dr. W. takes not the least notice; being

* Defence of Hist. Inf. Bap. p. 140.

† Ibid. p. 404.

quite contented with "showing his opinion," that my quotations are nothing to the purpose, because they do not contain an *explicit surrender* of the point in dispute. To the testimonies contained in that preface, relative to the general course of my argumentation, I will add the following. "Of all methods of reasoning with an adversary," says M. Saurin, "none is more close and conclusive than that which is taken from his own principles. It hath this advantage above others, the opponent is obliged, according to strict rules of reasoning, to admit the argument, although it be so- phistical and false. For by what rule can he reject my proposition, if it have an equal degree of probability with another proposition, which he receives as evident and demonstrative? But when the principles of an adversary are well grounded, and when we are able to prove that his principles produce our conclusions, our reasoning becomes demonstrative to a rational opponent, and he ought not to deny it."*—Mr. James Owen: "All will allow, that the testimony of an adversary is good against himself."†—Bp. Newton, speaking of the Waldenses, says: "I will only produce the testimonies of three witnesses concerning them, whom both sides must allow to be unexceptionable, Reinerius, Thuanus, and Mezeray;—it cannot be objected that this is Protestant evidence, for they were all three members of the church of Rome."‡

That this method of arguing has been frequently and abundantly used, is plain to every man of reading and observation; though the persons opposed were far from giving up the point in debate. Thus, for instance, Irenæus, as observed by learned men, argues from the *testimonies* of his adversaries, and proves his point

* Sermons, vol. ii. p. 236, Robinson's translation.

† Defence of Scripture Ordination, p. 158.

‡ Dissertat. on the Proph. vol. ii. p. 254, 257. Lond. 1789.

from their *concessions*.*—Thus Mr. Horbery: “Our adversaries themselves, one or other of them, bear testimony to the truth of all [our principles] or most of them; as might be proved, if that was necessary, from their own plain concessions.”†—That eminent French Protestant, Mr. John Claude, expresses himself thus: “I will make their [own Roman Catholic] authors, that are not suspected by them, to speak; whose passages I will faithfully translate, which they may see in the originals, if they will take the pains.—I cannot—otherwise allege Arcudius than to confront him with himself, concerning some truths and matters of fact, which do now and then escape him, after the same manner as I would quote cardinal Perron, and Bellarmine, and Mr. Arnaud himself; not as witnesses that believe what I would conclude, but as persons who affirm things, from whence I conclude what they themselves do not believe. And thus does Mr. Arnaud quote Mes-tretat, and Daillé, and sundry others of our authors.”‡

It has been common for polemical writers, when arguing from the concessions of their opponents, to attribute those concessions to the *force* of truth and the *brightness* of evidence. Thus, for example, Dr. John Owen: “Bellarmine—being on the *rack of light and truth*, he confesseth and grants all that we plead for.”§—Dr. Clagett: “It may be observed, that the *power of truth* has extorted from some or other of our adversaries, the confession of both the premises which infer our conclusion.”—Mr. Payne having pleaded concessions from the pen of Cassander, and from that of Wicelius, adds:

* Vid. J. Fabricii Hist. Fabrician, Biblioth. t. i. p. 70. Twells's Crit. Exam. of New Text and Vers. of the N. T. part iii. p. 54, 55.

† Enquiry into the Scrip. Doct. of Future Punishment, p. 200. Lond. 1744.

‡ Defence of Reformat. part ii. p. 127. Catholic Doct. of Eucharist, b. iii. chap. vii.

§ Doct. of Justification, chap. xiv. p. 408. Lond. 1677.

“ But lest these two men—should be thought, through their great temper and moderation, to have yielded more in this cause than others of that communion, I shall show that the same has been done by others, who cannot be suspected to have granted more than the mere *force of truth* extorted from them.” *

Similar quotations might be greatly multiplied, but these may suffice. For things of this kind appear, more or less, in every species of controversy among learned men; but in a particular manner they abound in the writings of Protestants against the Roman Catholics. One can hardly dip into the publication of any learned author against the Papists, without perceiving that he argues from their concessions. But I never observed, notwithstanding, that any controversial writer, when using this mode of argumentation, confined himself to such concessions as explicitly yield the point in dispute. For what need of argument, when the cause is fully surrendered? Nor, to the best of my recollection, did I ever meet with an author, besides my opponent, who thus attempted to restrict that species of argument. Were Dr. W.'s limitation just, and universally allowed, the *argumentum ad hominem* would scarcely be used once in an age. If, however, he should think proper, in his own elegant phrase, to “take another TURN” with us, it is to be hoped, that he will prove the restriction for which he pleads, to be both just and commonly allowed. Or else it will behove him to “demonstrate,” that Pædobaptism possesses the exclusive privilege of not being attacked, on the ground of *concession*, except under his limitation.

There is a vulgar saying, *A man's actions speak louder than his words*. If this maxim be universally true, it is not uncandid to question, whether even Dr. W. himself steadily believes the propriety of that restriction

* Preserv. against Pop. title vii, 64, 122.

which he would impose on his Baptist Brethren, with regard to the argument from concessions; because it is plain, that he does not act according to his own rule.— For instance: To prevent mistakes, I prefixed a *Nota Bene* to the quotations from Pædobaptists, contained in my book, relative to the *signification* of the word *baptism*, and to the *practice* of the apostles: * in which I acknowledge, that *no inconsiderable part* of the authors quoted maintain, that the term baptism signifies *pouring* and *sprinkling*, as well as immersion; and that many of them insist upon it, as highly probable, that the apostles did sometimes *administer baptism* by pouring or sprinkling. Such is the purport of my concession. Upon which Dr. W. remarks, as follows: “When—Mr. B. expresses himself [thus,] what does he better than YIELD THE CAUSE?” † The reader will permit me here to adopt our author’s fine exclamation; “Dreadful scythe, and no mean mower, to cut so much at one stroke!”—*Yield the cause!* But how does that appear? Not, surely, by what I meant; nor yet by what was expressly said! If, therefore, the cause be at all yielded, it must be by natural and necessary *inference*. As, however, I am not in the least pain for my cause, even on that ground; so, it is manifest, that Dr. W. departs from his *own* rule, and takes a liberty which he denies to us.

My opponent insists, as before observed, that those Baptists who practise free communion concede the validity of *pouring* and of *sprinkling*. But have they any where expressly asserted this? He does not pretend it. How, then, does he endeavour to prove it? By considering it as absurd to suppose, that they allow communion to Pædobaptists, *as unbaptized*. But this is arguing upon an ungrounded supposition, as if it were a direct concession, and notoriously departing from his

* Pædobap. Exam. p. 16, 78; or Vol. I. pp. 40, 171, of this Edition.

† Vol. ii. 4.

own rule.—Nay, so violently disposed is Dr. W. to confute us, by drawing consequences from concessions, that he subpœnaes Mr. Elliot against us, under the character of an Antipædobaptist; and rejoices in the acquisition of such an admirable evidence in his favour.

Once more: My opponent, when defending the antiquity of proselyte baptism among the Jews, quotes Dr. Gale and Dr. Gill, as conceding, that there were “baptisms” in the Jewish church for ceremonial uncleanness; though they expressly deny the existence of proselyte baptism, in the time of John, as maintained by our opposers. Thence he thus infers: “Therefore, it appears, *with superior evidence*, from the testimony of these COMPETENT AND UNEXCEPTIONABLE WITNESSES, that baptism was well known as a ceremonial, purifying rite, prior to the Christian æra.”* Hence he farther infers, what he considers, a substantial argument for the right of infants to baptism.—The reader will here observe, that it is not the solidity of his argument, but the *mode* of his procedure, which is now under consideration. I may, therefore, safely appeal to all competent judges, whether Dr. W. does not argue from the concessions of his opponents, precisely upon my plan; and whether he does not violate, in his own practice, the rule he prescribes for us?—But Pædobaptism must be upheld; and, in order to that, must be tenderly treated. It must have an immunity, not granted to any other cause, lest the testimonies and concessions of those who defend it, should prove the occasion of its entire subversion.

In the course of my argument against infant sprinkling, I pleaded the *numerous and striking inconsistencies* among Pædobaptists, relative to the grounds of their own practice, as a strong presumptive evidence in our favour. That there is a remarkable disagreement among our opposers, Dr. W. expressly acknowledges. For,

* Vol. ii. 230, 231, 232.

when adverting to that very particular, he says; “ In reviewing this subject,— I perceive, that the champions on the *one* side are BY NO MEANS AGREED upon this question, *On what is the RIGHT of infants to baptism founded?* And those on the *other* know very well how to avail themselves of the FACT.”* In order, therefore, to defend Pædobaptism against the consequences which naturally flow from such a fact, Dr. W. replies: “ That many great and learned men have entertained different and even contradictory sentiments on the subject, does not affect it. That one should give up a topic in the debate, which another thought valid, is immaterial.—The PRESUMPTIVE and PROBABLE reasons and grounds for the practice, have been always thought so numerous, that it was difficult *out of many* to fix upon the *most* striking and solid. And this is a natural consequence, arising from the very *number* of the mediums of proof. For it is ever more difficult to choose one out of *many* things alike, than one out of a few. This also, in a good measure, accounts for the firmness with which the *conclusion* has been held by persons who have disagreed about the comparative importance of different arguments in this controversy. Each writer would be induced to magnify and extol an argument which appeared to him, viewed in certain *connections*, with superior force; and then by being disproportionately enamoured with the one convincing topic, might be tempted to discard all others as useless.”†—On this I will make a few remarks, and then lay before the reader an abstract of those testimonies, concessions, and inconsistencies, respecting the subject of baptism, to which Dr. W. refers.

“ Presumptive and probable reasons.” Then we may conclude, that Pædobaptists do not pretend to positive precepts and plain facts, recorded in the New

* Notes on Social Relig. p. 68.

† Vol. i. 19; vol. ii. 229.

Testament, as the reasons of their conduct.—“ Presumptive and probable grounds are numerous.” Yes, if we credit our author; you may find them at every turn, all through the Old Testament, as well as the New, beginning with the third chapter of Genesis. This, you know, gives Pædobaptism a very ancient look.— But do not the Roman Catholics lay an equal claim to numerous *presumptive* and *probable* grounds, in support of their peculiarities? Yes, Abp. Wake informs us, that “ cardinal Bellarmine has put together *nineteen* several texts out of both Testaments, but yet was far from thinking them all to his purpose; confessing either of all, or at least of all out of the Old Testament, except the first, that they are but PROBABLE *arguments*.”*—*The subject is not affected by the contradictory sentiments of great and learned men.* But if those contradictions, relative to *the* GROUND of their practice, be *numerous*, it is a very strong presumption, that they have no scriptural ground at all; and were Dr. W. disputing with Roman Catholics, about Papal infallibility, or the doctrine of transubstantiation, he would speak a different language.

“ The very number of mediums of proof, renders it difficult to choose the most solid.” In what a singular situation Pædobaptism stands! For, if you demand an *express* divine precept, or a *plain* apostolic example, to prove its validity, many of our most learned opposers will answer, *There is not one to be found.* † While the mediums of proof are so prodigiously numerous, that if you ask, *Which is the best?* they hesitate, they are embarrassed, by the very number of those *media*. So that you need not wonder, if one learned Pædobaptist select a medium as most solid and convincing; which another considers as quite impertinent, and is very much surprised that any person of common un-

* Preserv. against Popery, title viii. p. 117.

† See Pædobap. Exam. this edition, Vol. I. p. 303—309.

derstanding should ever adopt it. Thus, for instance, Dr. John Edwards considered those words of Solomon, "Thy navel is like a round goblet which wanteth not liquor," as decisively proving the right of infants to baptism, and as finishing the controversy at once:* while it is highly probable that my opponent, far from admiring the doctor's choice, would fix upon *the MORAL qualifications of infants*, as being, in his view, the best medium of proof; and yet, I presume, not one in a thousand of the learned Pædobaptists, though surprised at its novelty, will applaud his option.—*The very number of mediums renders it difficult to choose the most solid.* Of this difficulty, attending the defence of Pædobaptism, I never before heard. However, as our author speaks *feelingly*, I have no objection to give him credit. Besides, that profound observation of his, "It is ever more difficult to choose one out of *many* things alike, than out of a few," carries conviction with it. But, then, it is justly presumable, Pædobaptists must ardently wish those mediums were either *fewer* or *better*, that they might not be so embarrassed; nor so extremely liable to egregious blunder in making their choice. To which I will add, as there is not *any one* medium of proof, that I recollect, by which our most learned opposers universally abide, it affords just ground of suspicion, that *none of them are solid*, or fitted to bear the stress which is laid upon them.

"This, in a good measure, accounts for the firmness with which they hold the conclusion." Yes, just as it would in defence of Papal superstition: for, widely as the Roman Catholics differ, in various cases, about their premises, yet they are *firmly* united in the conclusion. That this is a fact, I appeal to Dr. W. himself.—*Each writer, disproportionately enamoured with the one convincing topic, may be tempted to discard others as useless.*

* Cant, 7, 2. See Pædobap. Exam. this edition, Vol. II. p. 229.

This, in our author's phrase, is "*curious* intelligence." He had before informed us of a singular difficulty which attends Pædobaptists when defending their cause—a painful difficulty, of which we were not aware; and now he tells us, of their being ENAMOURED—DISPROPORTIONATELY *enamoured*—and tempted too! which must, I presume, reduce them to a very pitiable situation. For *inamoratoes* are generally considered as intoxicated with the violence of their passion; and if, at the same time, they happen to be assaulted by *strong temptation*, there is no reason to wonder were they to fall into a state of insanity. It was kind, therefore, of Dr. W. to "show *his* opinion," to prevent Pædobaptists going on any longer at this extravagant rate. The intellects of our opposers, according to his representation, being frequently, through the *amor argumenti*, in so deranged a state; had he not published a sober and seasonable *caveat* against their wild proceedings, they might perhaps, in a little while, have quarrelled as much about the conclusion, as they have long done respecting the premises.—It is hard to conceive, however, that a number of authors, who are acknowledged to write, on other subjects, with learning, with prudence, and with acumen, should be considered, in their vindications of Pædobaptism, as discarding common sense. For, of what else can they be guilty, who are so *enamoured* of one topic as to rest the whole weight of their cause upon it, and reject others that are equally, and perhaps, more convincing? This, doubtless, is not their mode of proceeding in other cases.—As to the singular conduct of Des Cartes, which is mentioned by our author, it has been censured for its folly a thousand times; nor have I observed so much as one instance, in this controversy, of a similar kind. No; Pædobaptists in general, and especially Dr. W., are too keenly sensible of their cause needing every topic and every argument, that can be produced in its defence; or they would never seek a support for it in

the writings of Moses and of the prophets.—I am, indeed, as willing to admit the weakness of their arguments, whether considered separately, or taken in the aggregate, as any other person can be; yet, as to the generality of them, that insufficiency of argument should be ascribed—not to their want of learning, of prudence, or of acumen; no, nor to their being *enamoured and tempted*;—but, rather, to a *RADICAL defect* in the cause which they defend.

I shall now lay before the reader an abstract of those testimonies, concessions, inconsistencies, and contradictions, which are found in the writings of our opposers, respecting the *right* of infants to baptism, as produced more at large in my *Pædobaptism Examined*.

No Precept, nor Precedent, for Pædobaptism in the New Testament.

Under this particular, *thirty-one* “competent and unexceptionable witnesses” are quoted, who unanimously agree, that there is neither express precept, nor plain example, for infant baptism in the New Testament. It farther appears, by what one or another of them says, that the passages usually produced for it, only prove that it is permitted, or not forbidden;—that all those places where baptism is commanded regard none but adults;—that Pædobaptism must be supported by analogy and illation;—that there is no instance from which it may be incontrovertibly inferred, that any child was baptized by the apostles;—that infant baptism rests on the same foundation as diocesan episcopacy;—that Pædobaptism is properly denominated a *tradition*;—that though Paul baptized certain households, it is doubtful whether he ever practised Pædobaptism, and very certain that the other apostles did not baptize infants; because a supposition of their so doing would infer a gross absurdity;—that unwritten truth and tradition, are a succe-

daneum for express precept and plain example;—and, that persons have need of considerable penetration, to find a warrant in scripture for the avowal of Pædobaptism.

No Evidence of Pædobaptism before the latter end of the Second, or the beginning of the Third Century.

Under this article, *twelve* “competent and unexceptionable witnesses” are produced. Among whom, Salmasius, Suicerus, Curcellæus, and Formey, speak directly to the point; Rigaltius and Venema declare it uncertain, whether Pædobaptism was at all practised before the time of Tertullian; and the rest are favourable to their views of the case.

Jewish Proselyte Baptism.

Fourteen “competent and unexceptionable witnesses” are here produced: from one or another of whom we learn, that the Jewish proselyte baptism was rather a civil, than a religious rite; —that the rabbies themselves were divided about the necessity of it;—that its administration was confined to proselytes, and to such children as were born prior to the incorporation of their parents with the Jewish church;—that the earliest accounts of this baptism are contained in the Talmuds;—that there is no evidence of such a rite being administered in the time of our Lord, but strong presumptive evidence to the contrary;—that supposing there was a custom of this kind, it is unreasonable to imagine that Christian baptism was derived from it; because it must be considered as totally destitue of divine authority, as a tradition of the fathers, and as very severely censured by our Lord;—that it is absurd to imagine our divine Legislator should challenge to himself *all authority in heaven and on earth*, when going to recommend a human invention, that had been annexed to an obsolete system;—and, therefore, that the

derivation of Christian baptism from the Jews, is destitute of all probability, and a wild imagination.

External Covenant.

In opposition to the notion of an external covenant, under the new economy, those great names, Vitringa, Venema, and president Edwards, are produced; consequently, we have three “competent and unexceptionable witnesses.”

Jewish Circumcision.

Under this article, *fourteen* “competent and unexceptionable witnesses” make their appearance; by whom we are taught, that there are various and great disparities between baptism and circumcision;—that supposing the analogy between them ever so great, it would still be our duty to regard the institution of baptism; because that analogy could not be produced by way of proof, but only as an illustration of what is already proved by other mediums;—that circumcision did not represent baptism; nor does the scripture any where teach us, that the latter succeeded to the place of the former;—that admitting baptism to have come in the place of circumcision, it would not follow that the design of each was the same;—that we must not accommodate the positive appointments of the New to those of the Old Testament, the two dispensations being so very different;—and that the Jewish Proselyte baptism, already considered, is a much better foundation for Pædobaptism than circumcision.

Relative to particular Passages of Scripture.

Matt. xxviii. 19.

Under this capital text, we have *twenty-eight* “competent and unexceptionable witnesses;” from whom we learn, that this passage is of peculiar importance, in regard to the work of our Lord’s ministers;—that the word μαθητευσατε is to be considered as a command to

teach, in distinction from the act of baptizing;—that *μαθητευσατε* relates to instruction in the first principles of Christianity, and *διδασκοντες* to a more perfect information in its doctrines, duties, and privileges;—that disciples here, and believers (in Mark xvi. 15, 16,) are the same persons;—that the order appointed by Christ is, first to teach, then to baptize; and that ancient ecclesiastical authors did so understand it;—that slighting this order, is despising all rules of order;—that a disciple cannot be made without teaching, and that it is inconsistent with the plain design of the passage to understand it otherwise;—that we have no example in the New Testament of any one being baptized before he was taught;—that a regard to the credit of infant baptism, rather than any thing in the term itself, has led many learned men to interpret the word *μαθητευσατε*, so as to exclude the idea of instruction;—and, that Christ, in this passage, speaks only concerning the baptism of adults.

Gen. xvii. 7.

Relative to the subject of this text, we have *fourteen* “competent and unexceptionable witnesses;” by whom we are taught, that the covenant of God with Abraham ascertained no spiritual blessing to his carnal seed, as such;—and that, considered merely as his natural descendants, no promises were made to them of a spiritual nature.

Ezek. xvi. 20, 21.

By *three* “unexceptionable witnesses,” we are taught, that the language of this text proceeds on the idea of that national covenant which Jehovah made with the Israelites at Mount Sinai, and of that conjugal relation in which he stood to the whole nation.

Matt. xix. 14.

Five “competent and unexceptionable witnesses”

here offer their service; by whom we are informed, that the little children, mentioned by the evangelist, were neither baptized by our Lord nor by his apostles;—that it is dangerous to the cause of Pædobaptism, to found it on the conduct of Christ, as here narrated;—and, that infants were not baptized in those times.

John iii. 5.

Relative to this passage, *four* “unexceptionable witnesses” (to whom a great number of others might have been added) bear testimony, that baptism is not intended by the term *water*. Because the birth, concerning which our Lord speaks, is of a spiritual nature; and, therefore, the word *water* must not be understood in a literal sense;—because, were baptism here designed, none could be saved without it, any more than without the sanctifying influence of the Holy Spirit;—because baptism is not the cause of regeneration;—because it is not supposable that our Lord would speak to Nicodemus about baptism, before he was taught the mysteries of the gospel;—because those who understand the term *water* in a literal sense, are obliged, in certain cases, to depart from that interpretation;—because Christ, in the following verses, mentions being *born of the Spirit*, without saying any more of water;—because, had baptism been intended, there is no reason to suppose our Lord would have reproved Nicodemus, as he did, for his ignorance of it;—and, therefore, the term *water* must be understood in a mystical sense, or as denoting the regenerating agency of the Holy Spirit.

Acts ii. 39.

Relative to this text, *eight* “competent and unexceptionable witnesses” testify, that the *promise* intended is the Holy Spirit, or his extraordinary gifts;—that the term *children* signifies posterity;—that repentance, and a reception of Christ, are necessary to an enjoyment of

the blessings promised;—and, that the argument formed on this passage, in defence of infant baptism, is very inconclusive, of no force, and good for nothing.

Acts xvi. 15, 33; 1 Cor. i. 16.

Here we are taught, by *seven* “unexceptionable witnesses,” that it is uncertain whether there were any infants in the households which are mentioned;—that if there were, it affords no solid foundation to conclude upon their being baptized;—that the household of Lydia was instructed in the Christian faith;—that the whole family of the jailor were brought to a pious consent, and were unanimous in embracing the gospel;—that all the members of the family of Stephanus were active in promoting the good of their brethren;—that the argument from these passages affords a bare probability only in favour of infant baptism;—and, that it is unreasonable to conclude, the apostles baptized infants merely because the ordinance was administered to households,

Rom. xi. 16.

Under this article, we have *six* “unexceptionable witnesses,” from whom we learn, that, by the *first-fruit*, the apostles and primitive disciples of our Lord are meant—and, by the *root*, the first patriarchs of the Jewish nation;—and, that Paul considered the Jews who then believed, as a happy token of the future conversion of that people: at which time the branches should become holy, like the first-fruit and root.

1 Cor. vii. 14.

Relative to this remarkable passage, we have *eighteen* “competent and unexceptionable witnesses,” by whose testimonies we are taught, that the sanctification of the unbelieving husband, relates entirely to matrimonial commerce;—that the holiness of the children is not of

an external kind, arising from an external economy, the new covenant being altogether spiritual and internal;—that the holiness intended is legitimacy;—that no holiness is here ascribed to the children, which does not agree to the unbelieving parent;—and, that this passage affords no argument for infant baptism.

Apostolic Tradition.

Here we have *fourteen* “unexceptionable witnesses,” who depose, that the pretence of tradition is a happy expedient, in favour of those who wish to retain unscriptural rites in the worship of God;—that some of the first fathers, who pleaded apostolic tradition, stand convicted of error;—that were an ecclesiastical custom, but a few centuries after the Christian æra commenced, to be considered as an apostolical practice, barely on a traditional ground, we must adopt a variety of ceremonies which all Protestants have agreed to reject;—that the conduct of Roman Catholics in refusing to acknowledge their errors, except the time when, and the persons by whom they were introduced, be pointed out, is grossly absurd;—and, that there is no pretence of tradition, relating to all the infants of Christian parents being baptized, in the early ages of the church; but that the contrary is manifest.

Infant Baptism and Infant Communion compared.

Relative to this article, we have *fifteen* “unexceptionable witnesses;” and, omitting various other particulars contained in my long quotation from Mr. James Peirce, they testify, that the Lord’s supper was anciently given to infants;—that this custom first prevailed in the African churches;—that it became general;—that there is no express mention of infant baptism before that of infant communion;—that the practice of giving the holy supper to infants, originated in a misunderstanding of John the sixth and fifty-third;—that it followed im-

mediately on their being baptized;—that, in respect of legal right, the two positive ordinances cannot be separated;—that, in the ancient church, baptism and the Lord's supper were never separated, with regard to the subjects;—that the Lord's supper was esteemed necessary to the salvation of infants;—that when they were sick, it was privately administered to them, as to adults in a similar situation;—that infant communion was the general practice, all over the Christian world, for six hundred years; and, among the Bohemians, it continued till near the time of the reformation;—that the doctrine of transubstantiation was the occasion of its being laid aside in the Latin church;—that Paul seems to refer to this custom, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, the seventh and the fourteenth;—that no objection can be made against it, which will not lie with equal force against infant baptism;—and, that one half of the Christians, now in the world, continue the practice of giving the holy supper to infants.

Such are the testimonies and concessions, from eminent Pædobaptist writers, which are contained in *Pædobaptism Examined!* Great, indeed, must be the light of evidence and the force of truth, to extort so many things of this kind from such numbers of our most learned opposers! I said, *Light of evidence and force of truth*; for, by the nature of the case, and by the examples before adduced, we are fully authorized so to consider the fact. The reader, however, will judge for himself, whether these eminent Pædobaptists were induced to record the preceding particulars, by their being ENAMOURED *with certain topics* of argument, and by their being TEMPTED *to discard* others, as Dr. W. pretends? Or, whether their conduct proceeded on a rational principle, and from a deliberate regard, according to the best of their views, to truth and fact?

If, notwithstanding, it should be found necessary to consider the authors concerned as *enamoured and tempted*,

even to a logical *mania*, the following particulars, immediately relative to the *principal ground* of Pædobaptism, will afford additional evidence of that disease. With Cyprian, the principal ground seems to have been, a supposed *universality* of divine grace;—with Austin, the faith of the *church*;—with the Church of England, the faith of *sponsors*;—with a New England synod, *church-membership*;—with Beza, *federal holiness*;—with Mr. Baxter, the faith of *parents*;—with Mr. Henry, a *profession* of faith by the parents;—with others, the faith of *pious ancestors*;—with Witsius, Vitringa, Venema, and many more, a *relative state of grace*;—with Bp. Prideaux and Heidegger, infants possessing the faith of the *covenant*, though not the faith of covenantees;—with Luther, Poliandrus, Rivetus, Walæus, Thysius, Buddeus, and Dr. Goodwin, the faith of the *infants themselves*, without recurring to the foregoing distinction;—with Chamierus, not the actual belief of infants, but their being, in a *certain respect*, believers;—with Calvin, Melancthon, Chemaitius, and the Lutheran and French churches in general, infants having faith and *repentance in semine*;—with Dr. Priestley, his *own profession* of Christianity;—with J. L. Fabricius, and some others, (if the parents be heterodox,) the requisition of the *magistrate*;—with Dr. Hammond, the *Jewish proselyte bathing*;—with Sir Norton Knatchbull, *Jewish circumcision*;—and, finally, Dr. W. lays a capital stress on the *capacity* and *MORAL qualifications* of infants;* of which more particular notice will be taken in the following pages.—Similar differences, though not so numerous, attend their views relative to this question; *Whose infants are to be baptized?* † which, to avoid prolixity, I forbear to particularize.

Well, reader, what think you of these testimonies

* See these particulars more at large, and the authorities for them, in Pædobap. Exam. this edition, Vol. II. p. 296—303.

† See Pædobap. Exam. this edition, Vol. II. p. 293—296.

and concessions, respecting the common topics of argument for infant baptism? What think you also of other testimonies and concessions, relative to some of those principles on which we oppose it? Has Dr. W. given "a FULL reply" to the argument formed upon them? Or, is it not such a reply as Roman Catholics might easily make, and with equal propriety, to a similar argument against the Papal infallibility, the doctrine of transubstantiation, the mutilation of the Lord's supper, or any other article against which their own testimonies and concessions are pleaded by Protestants?—Again: What think you of those inconsistencies and contradictions, into which our most eminent opposers have fallen, respecting the *principal ground* of Pædobaptism? Must we consider them as proceeding from a set of learned *inamoratoes*, that were intoxicated with the love of different topics, and in a state of strong *temptation*? Or ought they not to be viewed as resulting from an *essential defect* in the cause espoused by those respectable authors; and from their being impelled, by the necessities of the case, to reason upon moral and analogical grounds?

But, in order to evade the consequence naturally flowing from these numerous and strong inconsistencies among Pædobaptists, my opponent interrogates as follows: "Can he [Mr. B.] suppose, that *his* hypothesis must needs pass for true, because he finds a disagreement among other authors?" No; he considers the truth of his hypothesis, as depending on *divine precept* and *apostolic example*, not on the *disagreement* of his opposers, flagrant as it is. But he cannot forbear to conclude, notwithstanding, that the violent and multiplied inconsistencies among Pædobaptists, when defending their common cause, are the strongest presumptive evidence that *their* hypothesis is false.—Our author, in answer to his own question, adds: "Were this mode of argument admitted, with what ease might the Quakers confute the

Pædobaptists and Antipædobaptists alike; the Papists, our Protestant principles; and Deists, our common Christianity.* When Dr. W. “takes another *turn*” with us, and *proves* this, I will give up the argument. Meanwhile, it may be observed, that the instances produced are far from answering his purpose: for it is not merely a *disagreement* among Pædobaptist authors that I plead, but a palpable and notorious disagreement among them, respecting *the* FOUNDATION of that religious rite for the practice of which they all contend. But by what arguments can my opponent prove, that either the Baptists or the Pædobaptists are equally divided about *the* GROUNDS of *the* perpetuity of baptism, when disputing with Quakers, as our opposers are, with regard to the *true grounds* of infant sprinkling? By what means will he evince, that Protestants are equally inconsistent respecting the *grand principles* on which they proceed, in vindicating their secession from the church of Rome? Or, how can he make it appear, that “our common Christianity” is defended against Deists, on *principles* that are equally different, inconsistent, and contradictory, with those on which Pædobaptism is maintained by its most learned friends? So far as I have observed, whether sensible and learned writers undertake to defend the perpetuity of baptism against the Quakers, Protestantism against the Papists, or Christianity against Infidels, they are sure to unite, if they act sincerely, in adopting *some* of the same general principles of argumentation; and when reasoning with Quakers or with Papists, in pleading *many* of the same scriptural texts, as being directly to their purpose. Yes; in each of these cases, there are some principles of argument, and various passages of scripture, so *directly* and obviously pertinent, that a sensible author can scarcely fail to avail himself of them; and this, I presume, Dr. W. cannot but know.

* Vol. i. 324.

Here, therefore, I will borrow the confident language of my opponent, and “challenge,” not only him, but “the whole corps” of Pædobaptists, to produce an instance of equal disagreement among Protestants, respecting the mediums of proof, where the same general conclusion is intended by each disputant. That a number of authors, however judicious or pious, when writing in defence of a doctrine, or of a duty, should not universally think *all* the same topics of argument, or *all* the same texts of scripture, applicable to the subject before them, there is no reason to wonder; but, then, in every other instance among the Reformed, that I have observed, they cordially agree in considering *some* particular arguments, and *some* passages of scripture, as *properly belonging to the subject of discussion*. Thus it is with the English Baptists, in regard to their distinguishing sentiment and practice. They perfectly agree, so far as I have remarked, in applying many declarations and facts recorded in the New Testament, as *directly in point*, with reference to the mode, the subject, and the design of baptism.—Here, however, we have an instance of a singular kind. Pædobaptism is the article to be defended by a number of learned men, each of whom glows with zeal for its honour and safety. But, behold! some of them discard one topic of argument, and some reject another; these except against an application of that sacred text, and those explain this in such a manner as is quite foreign to the subject; until all the premises are frittered away, and nothing remains in which they are all agreed, besides a *naked conclusion*: which conclusion, nevertheless, must either be worded with caution, or you cannot have the pleasure of seeing them quite unanimous. For though multitudes endeavour to prove Pædobaptism highly necessary, and though most of them consider it in the light of parental duty, on the behalf of infants; yet others, and among them the great Vitringa, plead merely for the *lawfulness* of it, or that there is *no*

harm in it.* A conclusion, therefore, in which they would all agree, must be thus expressed: *Pædobaptism is lawful*; or, *There is no evil in baptizing infants*. If you push for a general conclusion one step farther, they vary in their judgment—they divide—they quarrel among themselves; or, as my opponent, from the Monthly Reviewers, elegantly expresses it, they are “together by the ears.” I may, therefore, adopt the following language of a celebrated genius: “How happy it is to have to do with people that will talk *pro* and *con*! By this means you furnish me with all I wanted, which was to make you confute yourselves.”†

Relative to Pædobaptism, one thing, however, is plain; there must be a *capital defect* somewhere. That defect must lie, either in the rite itself or in the defenders of it. Either the cause of our opposers must be fundamentally bad, or it must have fallen into bad hands—hands that ought, by no means, to have been trusted with a good cause.—Dr. W. is firmly persuaded, that Pædobaptism is a cause *perfectly good*; but admits, to a certain degree, that it has been managed by its defenders in a very imprudent manner. This, according to him, was partly owing to their being so unhappily *enamoured*, and so frequently *tempted*. Whereas, he considers our cause as *essentially bad*; yet neither produces evidence, nor pretends to any, of the Baptists’ quarrelling about *their data*; nor yet, of their being so *enamoured with some topics*, however good, as to be under a strong *temptation* to reject others of equal value; even though, in certain cases where baptism is not concerned, he represents them as differing among themselves more than any other set of religious professors.

Whence, then, in defending each respective cause, can this amazingly different conduct proceed? That our conduct, in this respect, is the more *plausible*, all the

* Observat. Sac. tom. i. l. ii. c. vii. § 9.

† M. Pascal’s Letters relating to the Jesuits, vol. ii. lett. xv.

world will acknowledge.—Does it result, then, from superior learning, or parts, or piety? To such superiority we advance no claim; nor, if we did, would it be admitted by Dr. W.—Is it because, in managing the controversy, we are more cautious, and bestow more labour upon it, than our opposers do? But, were this admitted, it would be a presumptive evidence, that we surpass them in parts and prudence; to which we are as far from pretending, as my opponent would be from granting.—Is it, then, that an essentially bad cause is more likely to be defended, by a number of authors, in a consistent manner, than one that is perfectly good? To assert any such thing, would be to insult the human understanding. Nay, were I to affirm it, Dr. W. himself would be the first to pronounce me *enamoured*, *tempted*, or insane.—For those astonishing inconsistencies and contradictions among the most eminent Pædobaptists, relative to the principal ground of their practice, who then can account; except on a supposition, that infant sprinkling has *no foundation* in scripture? This, and nothing short of this, will account for the fact.

That my conclusion from those inconsistencies is not arbitrary, or fitted merely to serve an hypothesis, will plainly appear, if the conduct of polemical writers, in similar cases, be duly considered. Of this I will produce a few examples, relative to different subjects of debate; and first from the Popish controversy. Is Papal *infallibility* the object opposed by Protestants? Dr. Hascard says, “They [the Roman Catholics] are at war among themselves, where this infallibility is lodged; either in the Pope alone, or in a general council alone, or in both together; the Pope sitting in person there, or by his legates, or in the council confirmed by the Pope. *Till they AGREE AMONG THEMSELVES, and prove it better*, we say it is no where placed but in the scriptures.”*—Dr. Maurice: “One of the greatest hinder-

* Preserv. against Popery, title i. p. 221.

ances of our belief of infallibility, is, to see that those who affirm that such a privilege belongs to their church, cannot agree where to place it. Some are for the pope, some for a general council," and so on. "*Now while the Romanists are disagreed about their infallible judge, how can we believe that they have any?*"*—Bp. Stratford: "The Romanists cannot agree *among themselves* about the subject of this infallibility: but if you ask them where, or in whom it is seated? They answer with confusion of language, like that of Babel; yet they all agree in this, *That they have it somewhere.*"†—Dr. Freeman: "They are sure they have [infallibility,] though they *know not where to find it.*"‡

Is it the doctrine of *transubstantiation*? a nameless Protestant says, "In this faith [of the holy supper] we are confirmed, not only by those unanswerable proofs which our writers have given,—but also from those irreconcilable differences which this error has thrown the writers of the church of Rome into. In effect, we find every party exposing the falseness and impossibility of every one's hypothesis but his own. Their greatest men confess the uncertainty of their own proofs, *That there is not in scripture any formal proof of transubstantiation.* . . . And here, who can choose but admire *the power of truth*? That after so many outcries against us, for opposing a doctrine which they would make the world believe is as clear as if it were written with a ray of the sun; after so many anathemas against us for heretics and schismatics, and ten thousand repetitions of their great *Scriptum est, This is my body*; they should at last be forced to confess, that they *are not, cannot, nor are ever like to be agreed* in the explication of them . . . We hope that these declarations have been permitted by God to fall from the greatest and most esteemed of their church, not only to confirm us in our

* Preserv. against Popery, title iv. p. 25.

† Ibid. title i. p. 42.

‡ Ibid. title iii. p. 22.

faith, but also to prepare the way for their return to that Catholic truth from which they have so long erred.*

Again: Is it *the sacrifice of the mass*? Mr. Payne says, "They are most sadly nonplussed, and most extremely divided among themselves, about the essence of this their sacrifice of the mass, and wherein they should place the true sacrificial act. . . . *Their differences about the proper sacrificial act,—do, with good success, destroy one another's notion of it; and so, taken together, destroy the THING ITSELF.*"†—Is it the sacrament of penance? Mr. Gee says, "The doctors of the church of Rome,—are, indeed, agreed thus far, that there is a sacrament of penance; but are, notwithstanding, at *mighty disputes among themselves*, as well about the nature as the form of this their so much contended for sacrament of penance."‡—Is it the *worship of images*? Abp. Wake, addressing himself to a Roman Catholic, says, "It may not be amiss to observe, what *great diversity of opinions* there has been in stating of that worship which is paid by you to images; and what difficulty you have found to defend your practice against that charge of idolatry we have so justly brought against you upon the account of it. How the caution of some, and the distinctions of others amongst you, have been branded by the rest as scandalous and erroneous; and are forced to abjure as heretical, what others have set up as the only true exposition and representation of the church's sense. And this you will give me leave the rather to remark, because you are so often pleased to reflect upon *our divisions*; which yet are neither so frequent nor so dangerous, as among you."§—Is it *extreme unction*? Dr. Clagett says, "How well soever they may agree in the *practice of extreme unction* in the Roman church, yet,

* *Exposit. of Doct. of Church of England*, p. 56, 57, 58. See *Popery Confuted by Papists*, p. 59.

† *Preserv. against Popery*, title vi. p. 78, 79.

‡ *Ibid.* title vii. p. 25.

§ *Ibid.* title ix. p. 22.

as to the *doctrine* of it, their most celebrated writers *have fallen so foully one against another*, that to know what it is from them, would cost more pains than the thing is worth.*—Is it the Papal peculiarities *in general?* Bp. Stratford says, “The learned Romanists *are divided among themselves*, in all those points of doctrine in which they are divided from Protestants.”† Hence Protestant writers have proceeded, article by article, to confute them out of their own authors.‡ I may, therefore, conclude this particular with the admonition of Mr. Brampton; which, *mutatis mutandis*, will here apply. “I shall only admonish such scripturists as these, of these two things, and so leave them to a more impartial reflection on their own cause. First, *That it is very requisite they should AGREE AMONG THEMSELVES about this text of scripture, before they lay such stress and weight upon it, in so important a point as an article of faith.* Secondly, *That they would remember, that they are not only Protestants, but those of their OWN ORDER, which thus testify against them, how shamefully these have abused and distorted this plain scripture.*” §

Similar conduct is observed by learned men in other cases. Thus, for example, Mr. James Owen, relative to diocesan Episcopacy: “It seemeth no small prejudice to the diocesan cause, that the grand patrons of it *so extremely differ among themselves, and cannot agree about the foundations of it.*” || Thus also Mr. B. Bennett: “The Protestants—many of them, are for setting up an ecclesiastical authority, both for determining articles of faith and modes of worship; but neither are they agreed where to place it. . . . Now, methinks, it is no small prejudice against this authority, that we are

* Preserv. against Popery, title vii. p. 57.

† Ibid. title v. p. 37.

‡ Ibid. title x. p. 51—56. Sir

Humphry Lynde's Popery Confuted by Papists, *passim*.

§ Ut supra, title viii. p. 132.

|| Tutamen Evangelicum, Preface.

so much at a loss where to find it."*—Mr. Horbery, when confuting Mr. Whiston, relative to the *Duration of future Punishment*, says, "Our adversaries themselves, one or other of them, bear testimony to the truth of all [our principles,] or most of them; as might be proved, if that was necessary, from their own plain concessions. . . . Those of them who are for retrieving matters in the intermediate state, are confuted by others. . . . In all these points, though it be none of my business to reconcile them, it were to be wished that our restorers [Mr. Whiston and others] would come to some good agreement"† among themselves.—Thus Dr. Owen, when reasoning against the Jews: "They know not what to fix upon, nor wherewith to relieve themselves. Although they all aim at the same end, yet what one embraceth another condemns. . . . For error is no where stable or certain, but fluctuates like the isle of Delos, beyond the skill of men or devils to give it a fixation."‡—Stapferus also speaks to the same effect, when opposing the Jews.§—Finally, thus Mr. William Jones, respecting a commonly received principle of natural philosophy: "Is it not enough to discompose the muscles of a hermit, to see men thus notoriously contradicting one another, and all gravely pretending to authority and demonstration?"||

By the various instances here adduced, to which many others might have been added, it is incontrovertibly evident, That if any set of writers, maintaining the same conclusion, contradict one another, with regard to the *foundation* of their hypothesis, those of a contrary sentiment have sufficient reason to conclude, that

* Irenicum, p.30, 31.

† Enquiry into the Doct. of Future Punishment, p.290, 299, 220.

‡ On Epist. to the Heb. vol. ii. exercitat. iii. § 6, p. 30.

§ Theolog. Polem. cap. xi. § 304.

|| Essay on the First Principles of Nat. Philosophy, b. ii. chap. iii. p.84.

the dogma, or practice, has no solid ground on which to rest; and such is the inference of polemical authors, in all cases of this kind.—Though it is not unlikely that Roman Catholics, and others, to whom the authors just produced advert, might be a little embarrassed by “the very number of presumptive grounds” on which to argue; and though, it is probable, that some of them were *enamoured* with certain topics, and *tempted* to reject others that were equally good; yet not a grain of allowance was made, nor the least favour shown to their cause, on that account. Nay, I do not recollect any author, besides Dr. W., that ever attempted to vindicate his cause, against a charge of this kind, by a similar plea. Either, therefore, we must consider the *embarrassment* arising from a number of presumptive proofs, the *falling deeply in love* with certain topics, and the being *tempted* to reject others, as a polemical disease *peculiar* to Pædobaptists, when defending infant sprinkling; or else, in this conduct of my opponent, Pædobaptism itself must be considered as *crying for mercy*.—But whatever may be thought of our author’s very singular procedure, with reference to this affair, I will, for once, adopt his martial style, and “challenge the whole corps” of Pædobaptists to produce an example of equal inconsistencies and contradictions, among Protestants, on any theological subject. Nor do I think it could be *exceeded*, by any instance producible from the writings of Roman Catholic authors.

Why, then,—in the name of just argumentation, and of common sense—why may not we have the same liberty as all other controversialists have, in similar cases? For, that Pædobaptists are notoriously inconsistent with themselves, and that, with regard to the FOUNDATION of their practice, they frequently contradict one another, must be acknowledged. Except, therefore, Pædobaptism possess the exclusive privilege of not being opposed on this ground, the conclusion,

That it has no scriptural foundation, is unavoidable.— But as Dr. W. on a different branch of the subject, even when in his estimation there was no occasion for it, resolved to take another TURN with us; and as he can easily “confront, break, and rout” a whole “phalanx” of arguments; it may be expected that he will again “answer *his* part, and show *his* opinion,” so as to rescue Pædobaptism from the opprobrium of its most learned friends contradicting one another, with reference to the foundation on which it stands.

But there is another particular, which must not be overlooked, relating to my quotations from the writings of our fellow Protestants, called Quakers; to which Dr. W. in his “FULL reply,” has not paid the least attention. The following is an abstract of their declarations, testimonies, and verdict, relative to the original mode and subject of baptism.

Concerning the Mode of Baptism.

They assert, that the word *baptism* signifies immersion;—that the first administrators practised accordingly;—that if sprinkling had been the institution, the Greeks had their *rhantismos*; but dipping being appointed, *baptismos* was used in divine law;—that sprinkling is neither baptism nor washing;—that there is neither precept nor precedent for sprinkling;—that the contrast between baptism and the rite that is now practised, is like that between the waves of Jordan and the water in a portable basin;—that sprinkling of infants is a human invention;—that sprinkling is called *baptism*, to keep it in countenance;—that John the *Baptist* is John the *dipper*;—and that the author of sprinkling was, not Christ, nor the apostles, but CYPRIAN.

Concerning the Subject of Baptism.

They maintain, that, in the primitive times, those

who were adult, and had faith to entitle them to the ordinance, were baptized; but that the baptism of infants has neither precept nor example, in the New Testament;—that it is utterly destitute of any proof of divine institution;—that it depends on presumptive arguments, uncertain consequences, and mere suppositions;—that it was not known for two hundred years after Christ;—that it sprang up in the night of apostasy, after the church had fallen away from the primitive order;—that it is a mere human invention;—that it is an unscriptural tradition, both human and Popish;—that equal evidence may be produced for infant communion as for infant baptism;—and, that it ought to be banished from the church.*—Such is the testimony of *thirteen* writers, belonging to the denomination of Quakers; on which I would make a few remarks.

As the number of these authors is considerable, so some of them are truly respectable for their learning and parts; and they all unite in bearing witness against infant sprinkling. Nay, were twenty more authors of the same denomination consulted upon the subject, there is no reason to doubt but they would concur in awarding the cause to us.—These writers must be considered, not only as capable judges, but also as quite impartial in bearing their testimony; for their own sentiments respecting baptism are not in the least affected by the decision of this dispute. No; whether infant sprinkling was appointed by Christ, and practised by his apostles; or whether immersion, on a profession of faith, was the original institute and the primitive practice; the Quakers are equally unconcerned, as to their own principles and their own conduct. Besides, however much the Pædobaptists whom I have quoted

* See these and other particulars in the quotations at large, Pædobap. Exam. this edition, Vol. I. p. 59, 60, 61, 62, 200, 310, 311, 312, 373, 374; Vol. II. p. 79, 80, 109, 160, 179, 180, 196, 270, 271.

may stand suspected by Dr. W. of being *disproportionately enamoured* with topics, and of being *tempted* to act at random, as tempted inamoratoes usually do; yet, for the honour of candour and of common sense, it may be presumed, that he will neither impeach the intellects nor the sincerity of these authors, on account of the verdict which they have given.—Impartiality, therefore, must allow, that the harmonious attestation of so many writers, who speak without predilection and without prejudice, is a very strong presumptive evidence in our favour. For no Baptist in the kingdom can be more decided in his judgment, that infant sprinkling was neither appointed by our Lord, nor practised by his apostles, than the Quakers are, and that without a single exception occurring to my observation.—Yea, so strongly in our favour is the united testimony of these honest Friends, that, if I be not under a gross mistake, neither my opponent himself, nor “the whole corps” of Pædobaptists, can confront us with a similar instance of equal numbers, and of equally manifest impartiality, as having no hypothesis to serve by speaking decidedly on this controversy. If such an example, however, should be produced against us, either by Dr. W. or by any other Pædobaptist, I will immediately, on being informed of it, give up the topic as impertinent. Yet, were I not firmly persuaded that no such instance can be produced, and that the Baptists are tolerably free from a dangerous polemical disease, which, according to my opponent, has long prevailed among the Pædobaptists, I should certainly have been very cautious of making any promise of that kind: because it might have given Dr. W. reason to exult, and say, “Mr. B. is disproportionately enamoured with some argument or other—is manifestly tempted to surrender one of his topics—has caught the controversial complaint that rages among Pædobaptists—and is become *like one of us*.”

To illustrate the propriety of drawing an inference, very strongly in our favour, from the unanimous voice of Quakers, I will add a quotation or two from learned writers, when disputing on subjects of a different kind. Thus, then, Dr. Hascard, when contending with Roman Catholics: “We have many and *impartial judges* on our side, that our religion is pure and old Christianity. The particular Church of Rome—refuses to be tried by any other church;—yet we, that are certain and sure of the truth of our religion, though not infallible, dare appeal to the judgment of other Christian churches. The Greek church condemns their half communion, the doctrines of purgatory, mèrit,” and so on.*—Thus also Dr. Waterland, in opposition to Arianism: “You bring your scripture proofs, and I produce mine. You have your solutions of such difficulties as I press you with; I have solutions too, and such to be sure, as I think sounder, better, and juster than yours: you think the very contrary. Thus far it is combating text with text, criticism with criticism, reason with reason; and each side will think his own superior. Now, suppose I can produce a cloud of witnesses—confirming my interpretation,—and corroborating my reason;—this will add such weight, strength, and force to my pretensions, that impartial men will soon perceive, which is the most probable, which the safer side, and which it behoves them to cleave to. This is—agreeable to the common sense and reason of mankind.” †—Now if this way of reasoning, by Hascard and Waterland, be pertinent and forcible in the cases to which they apply it, there cannot be any doubt, but the decision of the Quakers, already produced, is one of the strongest presumptive evidences in proof of our point. Because those respectable Friends cannot be suspected of having any doctrinal sentiment, or any religious practice, to

* Preserv. against Popery, title i. p. 218.

† Defence of Queries, query xxvii. p. 455.

support, by deciding in our favour as they have done. Whereas those churches and individuals to whom the two doctors appeal, were considered by them, in reference to the particulars under their notice, as coinciding in *sentiment* and *practice* with themselves.* The attestation of a Quaker, in this case, is like that of Mr. David Levi, the Jew, respecting the sense of certain passages in the New Testament, in opposition to the sentiments of Dr. Priestley; which, I am persuaded, our author himself must consider as a strong presumptive evidence, that his own view of those passages is just, and that Dr. Priestley's is erroneous.

From the preceding pages it appears; I presume, that Dr. W. is far from having performed his promise to the public; either as it stands on his title-page, or as contained in his preface. In other words, that he has not given "A FULL REPLY" to Pædobaptism Examined;—that he has not laid his axe to the *root* of, what he calls, my "stately tree," but only "*nibbled* at some of the branches;"—and that he has not "undermined the foundation" of my argumentative edifice, but merely attempted to hide the numerous imperfections of his own cause. For, though I consider the appointment of Christ, and apostolic practice, as the *ONLY foundation* of my faith and conduct, relative to the administration of baptism, yet, as observed before, the *PRINCIPAL GROUNDS of my argumentation*, all through Pædobaptism Examined, are, testimonies to facts, concessions of what we assert, and principles of reasoning, produced from *Pædobaptists*. To all which were added, in the second edition of my book, numerous attestations to our cause, from the people called *Quakers*. In opposition to which, Dr. W. has not "answered his *part*," but merely "shown his *opinion*;" for he has only "*nibbled*," where he engaged to *extirpate*; and, to render the Pædobaptist edifice more pleasing to the

* See Pædobap. Exam. Vol. II. p. 332, 335.

view of its numerous occupants, he has endeavoured to plaster over its gaping flaws, when his promise was to sap the foundation of my fabric.

Nor has he failed merely with regard to those various *data* on which my argumentation so often proceeds; for a great number of my arguments, on different branches of the subject, are entirely overlooked by him; and as to those reasonings in our favour which I have produced from Pædobaptist authors, he never, that I recollect, attempts to answer them, except in the case of Mr. Peirce, with reference to infant communion. But of these particulars, farther notice, perhaps, may be taken in the following pages.—He seems, indeed, in a vast variety of instances, to have kept in remembrance one part of his motto, and to have forgotten another, by “showing *his* OPINION” in general, and without “answering *his* PART” in particular cases. He presents it, however, to the public, as “a FULL *reply*” to Pædobaptism Examined. But as Julius Cæsar himself, when contending for the empire, could scarcely profess a more heroic ardour to attack a Roman phalanx, than my opponent manifests in “confronting, breaking, and routing” one of the argumentative kind; so there is less reason to be surprised if, in multiplied instances, his conduct savour of Cæsar’s boast, VENI, VIDI, VICI.

END OF VOL. II.

**A
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
OF
ABRAHAM BOOTH
(1734-1806)**

**BY
JOHN FRANKLIN JONES**



A
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH
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Abraham Booth — General-turned-Particular Baptist, teacher, pastor, author — was born May 20, 1734 at Blackwell, in Derbyshire, England. In the first year of his life, his parents removed from Blackwell to Annesley Woodhouse, Nottinghamshire. The oldest of a family of numerous children, Abraham assisted his father in his agricultural concerns well into his teenage years. Though his circumstances prevented a formal education, his father taught the boy to read, and a robust mind early appeared in him. He was almost entirely self-taught in writing and arithmetic and pursued his studies avidly during his leisure hours (“Memoir”). Brought up with a reverence for the national establishment of the Church of England, at about ten years of age he became acquainted with the dissenters via the preaching of some plain and illiterate General (or Arminian) Baptists teachers who occasionally visited his neighborhood. Their influence first awakened Booth to a concern about salvation, and he applied for admission to the General Baptists. He was baptized by Francis Smith at Barton in 1755 at about age twenty-one (“Memoir”).

He pursued stocking-making from age sixteen to twenty-four. At twenty-four, he married Miss Elizabeth Bowmar, the daughter of a neighboring farmer; they were married more than forty years. Assisted by Mrs. Booth, he opened a school at Sutton Ashfield to instruct youth. Mrs. Booth taught needle-work to the female pupils (“Memoir”).

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The General Baptists recognized his abilities and occasionally invited him to preach. He soon became a leader among them and in their neighboring districts. Upon their organizing their churches and appointing pastors over them in 1760, Booth became superintendent of the church at Kirby-Woodhouse. He labored among them successfully for several years but declined to accept the office of pastor ("Memoir").

Booth strenuously advocated the General Baptist-Armenian doctrine of the universality of divine grace and published same in a poem, "Absolute Predestination," in his twentieth year. In the poem, he reviled election and particular redemption ("Memoir"). Later, he wrote of the poem:

I thought it my duty in a particular manner to bear a public testimony to that important part of revealed truth, having in my younger years greatly opposed it, in a poem on "Absolute predestination" which poem if considered in a critical light is despicable, if in a theological view, detestable, as it is an impotent attack on the honor of divine grace in regard to its glorious freeness, and a bold opposition to the sovereignty of God. So I now consider it and as such I here renounce it (Matrunola, 2).

His convictions underwent such a change, though, that he could no longer maintain his relationship with the General Baptists. Regarding the deep convictions he came to hold, he later wrote:

The doctrine of sovereign, distinguishing grace, as commonly and justly stated by Calvinists, it must be acknowledged, is too generally exploded. This the writer knows by experience, to his grief and shame. Through the ignorance of his mind, the pride of his heart, and the prejudice of his education, he, in his younger years, often opposed it with much warmth, though with no small weakness; but after an impartial inquiry, and many prayers, he found reason to alter his judgment; he found it to be the doctrine of the Bible, and a dictate of the unerring Spirit. Thus patronized, he received

A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF ABRAHAM BOOTH

the once obnoxious sentiment, under a full conviction of its being a divine truth ("Memoir").

After many cordial and lengthy discussions with them upon his now-firm convictions, he withdrew from the General Baptist ranks ("Memoir") in 1765 (Armitage). His departing remarks upon the occasion were from the parable of the unjust steward. He said: "Fraud and concealment of various kinds may obtain the favor of men, but, when favor is gained by these means, he who gains it and those who grant it, are chargeable with injustice peculiarly censurable" (Matrunola).

Booth would not obtain favor by such fraud and concealment.

Shortly after his withdrawal from the Arminians, Booth procured Bore's Hall, at Sutton Ashfield, and gathered a small group of Calvinistic or Particular Baptists. At Sutton Ashfield, and afterwards, at Nottingham and Chesterfield, where he preached alternate Sundays, he delivered a series of discourses from which came his excellent work, *The Reign of Grace* (1768). That work indicated both the bent of his thoughts at the time and the subjects of his preaching--the reign of divine grace in its nature and properties in election, effectual calling, pardon of sin, justification, adoption, sanctification, perseverance, and eternal glory ("Memoir").

He showed the manuscript to some friends. One of them showed it to Henry Venn, an evangelical clergyman well known for his popular work, *The Complete Duty of Man*. Venn recommended that Booth publish the work and Venn himself wrote a recommendatory preface to it. Booth published the work in April 1768 ("Memoir").

The Particular Baptist Church in Little Prescot Street, Goodman's Fields, London, needed a pastor and contacted Booth. He accepted their call October 1, 1768 and was ordained to that position February 16, 1769. Thereupon he publicly delivered a detailed confession of his faith, which confession was afterwards printed ("Memoir").

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Booth moved to London to begin a new era in one of the most respectable among the churches of the English dissenters, and he well-discharged his pastoral duties. Taking full advantage of the opportunities to satisfy his insatiable thirst after learning, he acquired the assistance of a former Roman Catholic priest, an eminent classical scholar, and studied Latin and Greek ("Memoir").

His study of Latin provided the ability to examine the erudite professors of the foreign universities--Witsius, Turretine, Stapferus, Vitringa, and Venema. He examined the ecclesiastical historians--Dupin, Cave, Bingham, Venema, Spanheim. He studied the Magdeburg Centuriators, Lewis, Jennings, Reland, Spencer, Ikenius, Carpzovius, Fabricius of Hamburgh, and others on Jewish Antiquities. He studied English writers, especially John Owen. To Owen he acknowledged great obligation. Excepting Scripture, he quoted Owen more often than any ("Memoir").

In 1770, only a year after his ordination, Booth published *The Death of Legal Hope, the Life of Evangelical Obedience, in an Essay on Gal. 2:19*. The essay demonstrated that grace relaxes no obligations to holiness but produces godliness. That grace denies the moral law as a rule of life to believers--a pernicious sentiment--was rampant in England at the period, and Booth continually opposed the idea both in his writings and his pastoral ministry ("Memoir").

A challenge to the deity of Christ delivering many respectable, established church clergy to the Socinians and their anti-Trinitarian theology occurred about the time Booth came to London. In 1777, Booth presented an improved, revised, corrected, and fortified new edition of *The Deity of Jesus Christ, essential to the Christian Religion*, originally penned in French by James Abaddie, dean of Killaloe in Ireland ("Memoir").

In 1778, he published *An Apology for the Baptists, in Which They Are Vindicated from the Imputation of Laying an Unwarrantable Stress on the Ordinance of Baptism*. This

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work opposed the more or less prevalent principle of mixed communion introduced to the English churches about the middle of the seventeenth century. Into this book Booth incorporated a series of letters he had written at the request from a fellow minister whose own convictions also opposed the practice ("Memoir").

In 1784, he defended the practice of baptism in his *Pædobaptism Examined, on the Principles, Concessions, and Reasonings of the Most Learned Pædobaptists*. Booth took up the Pædobaptists' principles, facts, interpretations of Scripture, and concessions, met them upon their own grounds, and thoroughly refuted them. In 1787, he published a second edition, which he enlarged with additional material ("Memoir"). His *Pædobaptism Examined* was "never fairly answered" (Armitage, 570).

The *Essay on the Kingdom of Christ*, published in 1788, showed how the kingdom of Christ in its nature so differed from the kingdom of David as to disallow using events occurring under the Mosaic economy being applied to the Christian church. The Christian church differs in its nature, origin, subjects, means of establishment and support, laws by which it is governed, immunities, riches, and honors from the kingdom. Those differences explain and necessitate its dissent from the national establishment and all political efforts to impeach Christ's dominion in His own kingdom ("Memoir").

First appearing in 1796 and followed by a second edition in 1800, *Glad Tidings to Perishing Sinners; or, The Genuine Gospel, a Complete Warrant for the Ungodly to Believe in Jesus Christ* addressed the issue of the persons to whom the Gospel is to be preached and their obligation thereto ("Memoir").

The Amen to Social Prayer, Illustrated and Improved (1800) was a sermon previously delivered at a monthly meeting of Particular Baptist ministers belonging to the Particular Baptist denomination. A series by different ministers

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addressed the Lord's prayer, and Booth treated the concluding word of the prayer, "Amen." The sermon demanded some extrication from Booth. In *Essay on the Kingdom of Christ*, Booth had solemnly protested the practice of taking a single word or phrase of a text for preaching. Despite his condemnation that the practice disgraced the pulpit and profaned the sacred ministry, on this occasion he admirably met his challenge ("Memoir").

Approaching seventy years of age but with undiminished mental powers, Booth discoursed at one of the monthly meetings of his Baptist brethren on the subject of divine justice. Soon afterwards in 1803, he published the sermon as *Divine Justice Essential to the Divine Character* ("Memoir").

In the last year of his life--1805--he published *Pastoral Cautions*. This work summarized the substance of twenty years of pulpit ministry. He delivered it as a charge at the ordination of Thomas Hopkins as pastor of the Baptist Church in Eagle Street, Red Lion Square, London. Booth had now completed fifty years of ministry, more than thirty-five as pastor of the church in Prescott Street. He cautioned the ministers' behavior in the house of God, in their families, and in the world. He exhorted them to exemplify the character of the Christian pastor and adorn the high, honorable office in which they are placed. Booth's sermon expressed the profitable experience of his maturing years ("Memoir").

Several "Funeral Sermons" and "Addresses" reflect Booth's occupation with the great truths of the Bible--the uncertainty of life, the certainty of death, the necessity of being prepared for death, the folly of taking lightly the interests of the immortal soul and neglecting everlasting peace, and the Gospel as alone giving effectual relief to a sinner under the dread of death and the judgment. The messages contain little regarding the decedents' character. Nor do they contain compliments to surviving relatives ("Memoir").

Though generally blessed with good health, Booth became increasingly afflicted with asthma, especially during the

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winter months. Some months before his death and en route home from a meeting of his ministering brethren in the city, he suddenly took ill. Henceforth he largely retired from public labors and demonstrated to his oft-calling friends that his mind retained all its clarity, calmness, and serenity. His uniform answer to their inquiries was "I have no fears about my state. The gospel bears my spirit up. A faithful and unchanging God lays the foundation of my hope in oaths, and promises, and blood" ("Memoir").

The several months preceding his death were occupied with revising and completing *An Essay on the Love of God to His Chosen People and A Conduct Formed under the Influence of Evangelical Truth*. He committed them to a friend for publication ("Memoir").

A few days prior to his death, he gave the same friend the manuscript for *Thoughts on Dr. Edward Williams's Hypothesis Relative to the Origin of Moral Evil*. Notwithstanding the difficulty of the metaphysical topic, Booth's treatment of it demonstrated his mental competence to grapple with the subject at such a late stage in his life. He carefully examined William's theory and exposed its fallaciousness. Regarding his position upon the subject, Booth wrote:

I have no opinion upon the subject; nor dare I form conjectures about it. . . . Of this, however, I have no doubt, that the existence and prevalence of moral evil in the rational creation, are completely consistent with all the perfections of God, and with all his eternal decrees; and that under the management of Supreme Wisdom, when the great system of Providence respecting both angels and men is finished, the conduct of God in reference to evil, both moral and natural, will be to the praise of his glory, in the eyes of all holy creatures ("Memoir").

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This declining period left many testimonies to the steadfastness of his faith and hope and the importance he attached to the doctrines he had published throughout his life. Among those testimonies: "I now live," said he, "upon what I have been teaching others" ("Memoir").

To an esteemed friend on the Saturday preceding his death, he communicated his last instructions with a testimony, "I am peaceful but not elevated." To the son of the same gentleman the following day, he replied to the inquiry regarding his health and added:

Young man, think of your soul; if you lose that, you lose all. Be not half a Christian. Some people have just religion enough to make them miserable; not enough to make them happy. The ways of religion are good ways. I have found them such these sixty years ("Memoir").

On the Lord's day prior to his death, he affectionately spoke to one and then to another of his friends who visited him. To one he said, "But a little while and I shall be with your dear father and mother." To another, "I have often borne you on my heart before the Lord; now you need to pray for me, and you must pray for yourself." To a third, referring to a well-known Socinian minister, he solemnly remarked, "Beware of _____'s sentiments" ("Memoir").

He spent the evening with his endeared family. Two of his daughters and their husbands continued with him. One of the latter led a time of family worship prior to their departure, and the dying Booth joined the time. Without struggle or sigh, he died the next day at age seventy-one ("Memoir").

The Little Prescott Street church records contain many references to its loving regard for the pastor of thirty-seven years. A marble tablet displays its public appreciation for Booth ("Memoir").

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Booth and William Newman of Bow attempted to revive a Baptist education society organized earlier. Posthumously, the actions were bolstered by wealthy members of his church to become Stepney Academy in 1810 and later, Regent's Park College. From the outset, he was a supporter, though lesser known than others, of the Particular Baptist Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen, formed at Kettering in 1792. In the 1790s, Booth and his church joined the protest of the African slave trade (Matrunola, 10).

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BY JOHN FRANKLIN JONES
CORDOVA, TENNESSEE
JULY 2004

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Thou hast given a standard to them that fear thee; that it may be displayed because of the truth. — Psalm 60:4

“REASONS WHY BAPTISTS OUGHT TO TEACH THEIR DISTINCTIVE VIEWS . . . First, it is a duty we owe to ourselves. We must teach these views in order to be consistent in holding them. Because of these we stand apart from other Christians, in separate organizations. . . We have no right thus to stand apart unless the matters of difference have real importance; and if they are really important, we certainly ought to teach them.”

JOHN A. BROADUS

The Duty of Baptists To Teach Their Distinctive Views.
(Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1881).

“No religious denomination has a moral right to a separate existence unless it differs essentially from others. Ecclesiastical differences ought always to spring from profound doctrinal differences. *To divide Christians, except for reasons of gravest import, is criminal schism.* Separate religious denominations are justifiable only for matters of conscience growing out of clear scriptural precept.”

J. L. M. CURRY

A Baptist Church Radically Different From Paedobaptist Churches.
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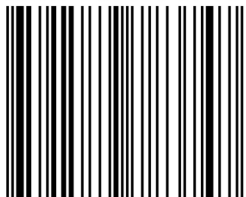
“There is something distinctive in the principles of Baptists. They differ from all other denominations; and the difference is so great as not only to justify, but to demand, their separate existence as a people . . . What distinctive mission have the Baptists, if this is not their mission? - to present the truth in love on the matters wherein they differ from Pedobaptists. What is there but this that justifies their separate denominational existence and saves them from the reproach of being schismatics? *If they have a right to denominational life, it is their duty to propagate their distinctive principles, without which that life cannot be justified or maintained.*”

J. M. PENDLETON

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ISBN 1-57978-374-0



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