

AN

ESSAY

ON OUTWARD

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

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P R E F A C E.

THE occasion of the following Essay, as represented in general terms, in the beginning of it, did, in the view of the Church affected by it, call for very serious and deliberate consideration; that they might be clear to discharge themselves, as the nature and importance of the case required; and so as they might be acquitted in the day of account.

They considered the two persons referred to, as practising contempt of the sacred ordinance of baptism in their childhood; which baptism is certainly vindicable from the scriptures; whether the following Essay shall be considered as having done it, or not. They considered them also, as violating their solemn federal connection with this Church, to submission to which, they were bound, as well as to union with it. Also, those persons appeared to look down on the various lenient measures of the Church towards them, contemptuously. But as they alledged conscience for what they did, so the Church considered the case, as wholly out of their power. Yet viewed the persons as going a stray, and that the end would be bitterness, when all disguises shall be removed. The Church therefore were at a plunge, being sharply pinched, between sympathetic feelings for their old friends, and a pressing sense of duty lying on them, to do something. Of course, considering the evidence they had, that Baptists proceed in an unscriptural way, and the possibility that pertinent light might tend to extricate those persons from their present entanglements, and be of use to others in like temptation; and at the same time be a discharge of duty for themselves; they determined to exhibit as clear an account as they could, of the nature of the baptism which was used by John the Baptist, under the law; as also

of the baptism appointed to be used under the gospel. And they were disposed to desire their Pastor to prepare those exhibitions for public view. He was sensible of his insufficiency to do honour to those important topics, together with his daily avocations and incumbrances, would necessarily confine him to the very shortest method of treating those points. And when he considered the people, whose benefit he had in view, were not able or disposed to comprehend large treatises, he judged it was best for them to give as short sketches on each head, as could consist with some measure of light, in the nature of it. However, he foresaw some disadvantages in so brief a manner of treating the scriptural doctrines of baptism; both because many interesting points could not be, in that way, so distinctly illustrated or proved; and because the class of people, to whom he would feign communicate some light, are as apt to harp on a supposed defect, as they are averse to feel and yield to a fair demonstration. On the whole, as the Church held themselves disqualified to pass censure, for the reason already given; though they knew that no conscience ever dictated, what is not scriptural, either materially or in mode of management. Of course they held, that the case before them must be referred to the Lord of all consciences; and that they who charge to conscience any other kind of influence, or prepossession, must answer it.

And the Church were equally barred from approving the said two persons, in their conduct, either by neglect, indifference or silence; because in either they would injure known truth; so they held themselves confined to the present method.

The writer of the following Essay is sensible, that the general representation he has given of the covenant of grace, is not exactly agreeable to the sentiments of those who conceive of a covenant of redemption, between the Father and the Son, distinct from the covenant of grace; and who conceive man a party in the covenant of grace. He rather thinks, with many others, who see no necessity of understanding a distinct covenant of redemption; but that Jesus Christ, as the second Adam, undertook the redemption of the elect from eternity; was sole party contractor for them, without any actual pardon or justification

justification granted to them, as not yet existing, till faith and repentance should open a door, for the consistent display of such acts of grace upon them. Other sentiments in the Essay, may be charged to the writer's account; but he hopes none offensive to the generation of God's children, whose hearts are found in his statutes, nor unsupportable by the scriptures.

The writer found it nearly impossible for him to avoid saying the same things, in some parts of the Essay, which have been said by others on the same subject; however, he has been dictated by the scriptures, and the nature of the argument.

He begs leave to insist on two points, from every reader of the following Essay, viz. to read attentively every article, with the evidence adduced to support it: and to suspend censure till he is sure of the sentiment; for if the sentiments are contained in truth, they claim all this as due; but if not, censure is a just reward.

N. B. The said Church also thought it a proper part of the following testimony, to add a number of marks of a wrong sort of religious spirit, in whomsoever they are found. As

1st. To be insensible of the sacred nature of religious covenants.

2d. To refuse visible communion with such as are allowed to be real Christians.

3d. To prefer any temporal consideration to the observance of sacred bonds.

4th. To support a profession of faith, without endeavours to keep the commandments.

5th. To hold a confidence of good moral state, on the foot of any outward action whatever.

6th. To suppose any outward action of his own, commends a person to divine favour.

7th. To hold one Christian better than another, in God's esteem, by any outward action whatsoever.

8th. To hold any outward action of his own, to be any mean of justifying righteousness to any person.

9th. To hold any branch of justification, to be a mean of justification in the sight of God.

10th. To feel preferable to other Christians in the sight of God, by doing any duty whatever.

11th. To prefer ourselves to other Christians, on any account.

12th. To treat any visible Christians contemptuously.

13th. To indicate a divisive propensity towards visible Christians.

14th. To be inclined to say, "Stand by thyself, I am holier than thou."

15th. To suppose divine favour as partial to us, as our own.

16th. To hold ourselves excused from any private duty, merely by performance of any public duty.

17th. To be void of that union to all Christians, which is the mark of Christ's disciples.

18th. To break Christian union, rather than practice self-denial.

19th. To hold a spirit of self justification.

20th. To have more religious confidence, than scriptural evidence.

21st. To support a religious hope, by what is not certainly scriptural.

22d. To supply the want of clear scriptural evidence, by mere suppositions.

23d. To be more apt to believe in our own favour, than divine authority will support.

24th. To be deaf to reason and scripture, when they don't favour our own opinion.

25th. To regard the word of God, just as it appears, to suit ourselves.

26th. To make our own principles our rule, for understanding scripture.

27th. To support any religious principles, by rejecting fair scriptural consequences.

28th. To make a merit of differing from other Christians.

29th. To hold the favour of God, engrossed by any sect whatsoever.

30th. To feel a little more happy, by dividing from any visible Christians.

An E S S A Y
ON OUTWARD
CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

In two PARTS.

The first PART, on the BAPTISM used under the
Law.

THE judgment of a Church in Hampshire county, in the case of two persons, who have heretofore professed the christian faith, and submitted to the government, watch and care of said Church, and so became divinely bound to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace with it.

And yet paying no regard to those sacred bonds, have of late, in a disorderly manner, withdrawn themselves from all connection with said Church, not only without its council and concurrence, but contrary to its painful labours and faithful remonstrances, and united themselves to what is called a Baptist Church.

And now said Church, still meaning to practise fidelity to Jesus Christ and them; in consideration of the premises; in consideration also of the noted habit of the people called *Baptists*, to criminate all opposition to their bias, with the style of persecution; and lastly, in consideration of the utter inconsistency of their scheme, with that of the bible; the said Church holds itself called to exhibit scriptural light to the said two persons, and to whomsoever else it may concern; in
confidence,

confidence, that when their minds are disentangled from the bondage of error, as they certainly will be in this case, they will then know we have treated them in consistency with our stable profession: and then we shall leave the said two persons entirely to the Judge of right.

Now as the people called *Baptists*, hold it a necessary part of obedience and following Christ, to be buried in water, as they say he was in baptism: We therefore are bound to testify and prove,

1. That Christ's baptism, was not christian baptism.

1. Because christian baptism is a seal of christianity; but the christian dispensation was not in being when Jesus Christ was baptized, and so there was no such thing to be sealed at that time; and then it must be a seal to nothing, which is no seal at all. Therefore the baptism of Jesus Christ was not the christian baptism.

2. Because Jesus Christ's baptism was under the law; but no ordinance under the law, could at the same time be under the gospel; and if not under the gospel, it could not be a christian ordinance: therefore Christ's baptism was not christian baptism.

3. Because Christ's baptism was part of that law-righteousness, which he came to fulfil, and which must be finished before the gospel dispensation could begin; as justification must be finished before sanctification can begin: therefore Christ's baptism could not be christian baptism,

4. Because as every thing done to fulfil the law was legal, and as Christ's baptism was confessedly done to fulfil the law; Matt. iii. 15,—therefore Christ's baptism was legal, not christian baptism.

5. Because to be baptized in obedience to the legal dispensation, must be legal obedience; but Christ was so baptized: therefore his baptism was legal, not gospel obedience.

6. Because what Christ came to do was to fulfil the righteousness of the law, Matt. v. 17. But that was law-work, not gospel-work: therefore Christ's baptism was legal, not evangelical.

7. Ordinances of the law, and of the gospel, are different; but Christ's baptism was an ordinance of the law, as the next argument will shew: therefore Christ's baptism was not a gospel or christian ordinance.

Objection. But the Lord's supper was instituted under the law also.

Answer. True; but it was the very night in which he was betrayed, so it must be then or never, I. Cor. xi. 23. Whereas Christ was baptized several years before. Beside, he commanded the future constant use of the Lord's supper; but no such command about his baptism, because that was part of his perfect law, righteousness, which none ever could do but himself.

Nay further, Jesus Christ knew that he was appointed by the Father to be faithful in all God's house, the church, as Moses was,—Heb. iii. 2. But Moses appointed the Paschal feast, as a constant token of divine presence and favour, and a mean of communion with him, which Paschal feast was to cease the moment Christ died. Therefore he must appoint the gospel feast, the Lord's supper, before he died, or else he would not be as faithful in God's house, as Moses was; but would leave it quite destitute of this chief mean of visible connection and communion with God; which would show he had not finished his work, and be a blot on him and his kingdom forever.

II. The baptism of Jesus Christ, was the appointed mean of entering on his public ministry, which he must fulfil, both as it was a part of the law, which he was to obey perfectly, and also, because otherwise he could not claim that priesthood all to himself.

1. Legal priests were always inducted to their public ministry, by washing or being baptized with water; therefore it was commanded for *Aaron*, his sons and all his successors, to be washed, or baptized with water, when they went into their public ministry,—Exod. xxix. 4, xl. 12.—Exod. 30. 18.—20. So Christ, who knew the whole law, when he was going into his public discharge of the legal priesthood, knew he must be washed or baptized with water; and as no legal priest

could enter that public ministry, till thirty years of age, —Num. iv. 3, 47,—so Jesus Christ, when he arrived to that age—Luke iii. 23—knowing it was the appointed mean of entering the ministry of the law, was obedient in that, as in every thing : therefore Christ's baptism was wholly legal, not christian.

2. This is exactly the reason which Jesus Christ gives to *John*, when he come to be washed or baptized by him ; “ *thus it becomes us to fulfil all righteousness.* ” Importing I can't fulfil all righteousness, viz. of the law, unless I submit to it ; nor you do your duty unless you administer it ; for this was the reason why *John* was sent to baptize—And as this was a noted part of obedience to the law, so all righteousness could not be fulfilled without it : therefore Christ's baptism was not christian baptism.

3. It is declared, John i. 31, &c. that the very reason why *John* was sent to baptize, was, that he might by that ordinance make Christ manifest to Israel, viz. to be their promised high priest ; and he was made manifest by public baptism, according to law, by the heaven's visibly opening at the same time ; by the descent of the holy spirit on Christ, and by the voice from heaven approving him. Therefore as soon as the necessary trials of forty days in the wilderness were out, he began to preach. Matt. iv. 17. Therefore Christ's baptism was altogether legal, not christian.

III. The baptism of Jesus Christ was no part of christian obedience. For,

1. Then it must be obedience to himself ; for Jesus Christ is the head of all christian matters. He came to do the will of God, Psa. xl. 8, not to do his own will, John vi. 38. But the will of God by Jesus Christ, primarily, was his fulfilling the law, and his baptism was part of that work, as he told *John* at the time : therefore Christ's baptism was obedience to the law, not to christianity.

2. To be christian obedience, it must be under christianity, not under the law ; but it was under the

law, not under the gospel: therefore the baptism of Jesus Christ was wholly legal obedience, not christian.

3. Not only the fact was under the law, but the view and design of it was to fulfil what the law already required, and to be a lawful qualification for his public ministry while under the law; the last act of which ministry and priesthood, was his offering up himself in death, Heb. viii. 3, 7, 27. Therefore the design of Christ's baptism was altogether legal, and peculiar to himself; which was implied, when he said, "*suffer it to be so now*," Matt. iii. 15, as the only instance of it in the world.

IV. Christ's baptism could not be a pattern for his people's obedience. For,

1. Obedience to the law for justification, never can be a part of his people's obedience: But Christ's baptism was a part of his obedience to the law, for the justification of sinners: therefore no pattern for his people's obedience.

2. If Christ's baptism was pattern for his people to copy, then there must be a law in christianity for his people to be baptized as he was; but there is no such law: therefore Christ's baptism was not a pattern for them to follow.

3. Therefore there is no more reason to follow Christ in this action, than in all the actions of his obedience to the holy law.

Question. What was *John's* baptism?

Answer. *John's* baptism was a rite which divine wisdom designed and proclaimed by *Malacky* of old, Mal. iii. 1, which was to serve three purposes.

1. *John* was a pioneer and herald, sent before his General, and the following christian army, to remove impediments; and as sin was the chief impediment, so *John's* work was to witness against it, and require repentance of it; and then to baptize, or wash with water, all who complied, as a badge of their cleanness from it; just as Jews always did to profelytes and priests, under the law, as token of their purity. But now *John* did

did this to all penitents, both because God ordered him so, and because the holy christian kingdom was then coming, in three or four years: so it was called the baptism of repentance.

2. As *John's* ministry was all under the law, so it was a type, like other religious actions, under the law; to be a picture of that holiness, which was to be characteristic of approaching christianity; that every body might see in that symbol, what they must be and what Christ could make them, viz. all over holy: But no use for types when the substance is come, except among Jews.

3. As Christ could not enter on his public ministry without baptism, and it could not be administered without a qualified officer; so, John i. 31, tells us the very reason why *John* was qualified, was that he might introduce Jesus Christ to his public ministry under the law, by the baptism of that dispensation.

And with this testimony we refer the said two persons to God the righteous Judge. Only adding, that we shall as clearly delineate what is true christian baptism, with its nature and evidence, when you, or any in your behalf, shall desire it.

The Second PART, on CHRISTIAN BAPTISM.

AS all goods derive from God to men through the channel of the covenant of grace, so I shall,

1st. Open the nature of the covenant of grace.

2d. Prove that this was the covenant established with Abraham.

3d. Show what were the contents of it, in that establishment.

4th. Shew what provision God has made for the propagation of these contents. I

I. I shall very briefly open the nature of that covenant of grace, through which all goods as such, derive to man. But,

1st. If all men are sinners, then divine justice forbids all favours to them, except on supposition of equal atonement; but all men are sinners, and therefore the justice of God forbids all favour to them, except on supposition of equal atonement. Rom. iii. 23. "*All have sinned and come short of the glory of God,*" and Jer. v. 25, "*Your sins have withholden good things from you.*" But since mercy and truth have found atonement, and "*righteousness is come down from heaven, the Lord will give that which is good,*" Psa. lxxxv. 10, 11, 12.

2d. But the man Christ Jesus, could not consistently undertake the work of atonement, without express security to be preserved through, accepted and sufficiently rewarded; therefore when the determination of the Father, was to give his son "*a covenant of the people,*" Isa. xlix. 8. Jesus Christ replied, "*Lo I come, I delight to do thy will, O my God,*" Psa. xl. 7, 8. And for his security, God said, Isa. xlii. 6, "*I have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand and will keep thee. And promised* "*he should see his seed, and the ends of the earth should see his salvation; that he should say to the prisoners, go forth,*" &c. Isa. xlix. 6, 9: So that there was a complete stipulation or contract, between the Father and Son; with reference to the elect of God.

This contract is commonly styled the covenant of grace. On which remark,

1st. This covenant is called, *covenant of grace*, or mere favour, because the heart of the parties contracting first gave spring to the scheme of it, Cant. vi. 12.

2d. Because their object, *lost sinners*, deserved no favour at all. "*They had destroyed themselves, but in God was their help,*" Hos. xiii. 9.

3d. Because it contains all grace, for time and eternity, without money or price, Isa. lii. 3.

4th. Because the parties contracting, knew they never

ver could need any thing from the creatures. God said “*I am God, I will take no bullock of thee, &c. but will shew the salvation of God,*” Psal. l. 7, 9, 23.

5th. As nothing can be new to God, so 'tis evident this covenant was made from eternity, Tit. i. 2, “*It was promised, viz. in Christ, before the world began.*”

6th. The parties contracting were God the Father, of the one part, and God the Son, as accepting the human nature God provided, on the other; and without which it was impossible he should make atonement. Psal. xl. 6. Heb. x. 5. “*This counsel of peace was between them both,*” Zech. vi. 13.

7th. Therefore the covenant of grace, is as necessarily (by divine appointment) infallible, unchangeable and eternal, as God himself is. “*'Tis the covenant which God always remembers; the word which he has commanded to a thousand generations,*” Psal. cv. 8.

And this gives us light in several texts of scripture, as Psal. lxxxix. 3, “*I have made a covenant with my chosen.*” And, II. Tim. i. 9, “*This was his own purpose and grace, given us in Christ, before the world began.*” So also, Psal. xxv. 14, “*The secret of the Lord, i. e. his free love and favour, is with them who fear him, and he will make them know his covenant.*” For Abraham, as having the secret of the Lord with him eminently, had this covenant notably established with him, Gen. xvii. 7. On the same account, God made Isaac know his covenant, Gen. xvii. 19. And in the same way it was revealed to Jacob, I. Chron. xvi. 15, 16, 17. And God has to this day made all know his covenant, who were governed by its principle, for “*his secret is always with the righteous,*” Prov. iii. 32.

Question. When God says, “*I give thee for a covenant of the people,*” must we understand that Jesus Christ is himself the covenant of grace?

Answer. By no means. 'Tis as absurd to hold Jesus Christ himself to be the covenant of grace, as to hold a treasurer to be the treasury itself. Or a testator to be his own testament. Or, an administrator to be the

the administration itself. The whole nature of the two parties to whom the covenant of grace has respect, is in Christ, and he has full power of sole administration of it. For "*in his hand was the pleasure of the Lord to prosper,*" Isa. liii. 10. 'Tis therefore amazing! that any man endowed with common sense, and privileged with the bible, should ever imagine, that the covenant of grace is not from eternity; or that it is possibly subject to intermission or failure, in whole or in any part, touching any of its subjects, in any respect whatever.

Q. But don't the covenant of works interfere with the covenant of grace?

A. Not at all. Their agreements and differences are as follows:

1st. They agree, in that their preceptive part containing all the laws of the bible; and their promissory part, including all the goods of promises; and their penal part, containing all the executions against sin, are the same in both. And they agree also that perfect conformity to the precept, is the only qualification for the promise; and that the want of it, induces the execution of the curse. They both run through all ages, just as do the seed of the woman, and the seed of the serpent. And all human persons in the world, are now subject to the one or the other. But,

2d. Those two covenants essentially differ, in the following respects.

1st. The covenant of grace is coeval with God, and the other is coeval with men.

2d. They differ essentially in their several headships. For in the covenant of works, the first *Adam* was federal head. Therefore *in Adam, all die*, I. Cor. xv. 22. But Jesus Christ is sole head in the covenant of grace: therefore "*in him all its subjects are made alive*, I. Cor. xv. 22.

3d. The parties contracting in each are different; for in the covenant of works, *Adam* contracted for all his posterity. So Rom. v. 19, says, "*By his disobedience many were made sinners.*" But in the covenant of grace, Jesus Christ contracted for all the elect; so

"*grace*

“*grace reigns thro’ righteousness to them all.*” Rom v. 17 to 21.

4th. They differ as to the ground of claims on the promise; for in the covenant of works, each candidate claims on the foot of his own performance of the precept: But never so in the covenant of grace. For there every claim is made on account of Jesus Christ’s performance of all the precepts. ’Tis “*for his righteousness sake only, God is well pleased,*” Isa. xlii. 21.

5th. Though neither of these covenants admit any plea, but perfect righteousness; yet the covenant of grace admits those to use it successfully who have no righteousness at all personally. In this way, “*he who hath no money may come, buy and eat,*” Isa. lv. 1.

Q. Doth not this doctrine injure morality, by encouraging neglect of duty?

A. Right the reverse; it discourages proud arrogance; but gives infinite encouragement to humble duty and obedience. Rom. iii. 31, “*Do we then make void the law, thro’ faith, God forbid, yea we establish the law.*”

II. I am next to prove, that this was the covenant established with *Abraham*. This indeed is evident from what has been already said. But,

1st. If *Abraham’s* seed, named in the covenant made with him, implies christians, then that covenant was the covenant of grace: But *seed* in *Abraham’s* covenant, implies christians: therefore the covenant made with *Abraham*, was the covenant of grace. For God himself has told us, Gal. iii. 29, “*If ye are Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed.*” And speaking of the same covenant, God assures his people in all ages, Isa. liv. 9, 10, “*It never should be removed from them.*”

2d. If by *righteousness of faith*, Rom. iv. 11, is meant the covenant of grace, then the covenant with *Abraham* was the covenant of grace; but *righteousness of faith*, in Rom. iv. 11, doth as evidently mean the covenant of grace, as that saving faith, and its perfect righteousness, are the peculiars of that covenant. But then ’tis just so certain that the covenant with *Abraham* was the covenant of grace: For it was *Abraham* who received circumci-

sion, as the initiating sign and confirming seal of the covenant made with him ; which as it contained the sum of all grace, *I will be thy God,*” &c. must be that covenant through which only grace flows to men.

3d. If the mere mercy of God is equally the source and fountain of the covenant of grace, and the covenant with *Abraham* ; then the covenant with *Abraham* was the covenant of grace : but 'tis as certain to be so, as that both covenants contained good things for the unworthy ; and that there is no other fountain, whence to derive them. Of course, the covenant with *Abraham* was the covenant of grace.

4th. Gal. iii. 6, says, “*The promises of the bible were made to Abraham and his seed.*” But the promises of the bible contain all grace revealed ; either therefore, the covenant with *Abraham* was the covenant of grace, or there is no such covenant.

5th. The scriptures never speak of more than one covenant of grace ; but a covenant of grace was certainly made with *Abraham* and his seed. Gen. xvii. 7, “*I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and thy seed after thee.*” Therefore the covenant with *Abraham*, was the one only covenant of grace, which runs through the whole bible.

6th. If Jesus Christ was the very seed of *Abraham's* covenant, as Gal. iii. 16, says, “*and to thy seed which is Christ,*” then the covenant with *Abraham* was the covenant of grace.

Objection. The covenant with *Abraham* was to secure temporal things, as a numerous posterity, and the possession of the land of Canaan.

Answer. These things were examples and shadows of heavenly things, Heb. viii. 5. His numerous posterity, represented that multitude which no man could number, Rev. vii. 9. For they who are Christ's are *Abraham's* seed, Gal. iii. 29. And the earthly Canaan, represented that better country, even the heavenly, which they desired. Heb. xi. 14, 15, 16. But if the

antitypes of those temporary figures, were most gracious things : then the covenant by which they were secured, was the covenant of grace, by which all good things are secured to its subjects.

7th. If God never published but one system of gracious promises, and these *Abraham* received, Heb. xi. 17. Gal. iii. 16, then 'tis certain that the covenant which contains all gracious promises, was the covenant made with *Abraham*.

8th. If no person has justification and salvation, but through the covenant of grace ; and yet *Abraham* had justification and salvation through the covenant made with him ; Gal. iii. 18, “ *For God gave the inheritance to Abraham by promise ;*” then the covenant with *Abraham* was the same covenant, by which justification and salvation are received by all who are saved.

9th. If the words promise, promises, &c. very often used in the inspired writings, generally mean *Abraham's* covenant, then *Abraham's* covenant is the covenant of grace. But those words generally mean *Abraham's* covenant. For instance, Rom. iv. 13, 14, “ *For the promise was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.*” So Gal. iii. 18, *If the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise, but God gave it to Abraham by promise.* Also Heb. vi. 13, *when God made promise to Abraham, he swore by himself, saying, blessing I will bless thee,*” &c. which are the very words of *Abraham's* covenant. Gen. xxii. 16, 17, 18. Therefore the covenant with *Abraham* was the covenant of grace.

10th. If heirship, often mentioned in the new testament, as predicable equally of *Abraham*, and of all christians, implies title to the covenant of grace, then the covenant with *Abraham* was the covenant of grace ; but heirship in the new testament implies title to the covenant of grace ; therefore the covenant with *Abraham* was the covenant of grace. For Rom. iv. 13, says, “ *Abraham became heir of the world ;*” i. e. not only entitled to Canaan, but a father to all who believe everywhere, “ *through the righteousness of faith ;*” i. e. through
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the covenant of grace. So Gal. iii. 29, "*If ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise;*" i. e. according to the covenant made with *Abraham*. So also Heb. xi. 9, "*By faith Abraham so journeyed with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise,*" or covenant of grace.

11th. If inheritance, in the sense of the bible, implies interest in the covenant of grace, then the covenant with *Abraham* and his seed, was the covenant of grace; but inheritance, in the sense of the bible, implies interest in the covenant of grace, I. Pet. i. 4, "*He hath begotten us to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away.*" And yet such inheritance God gave to *Abraham*, in the covenant made with him. Gal. iii. 18, "*God gave the inheritance to Abraham by promise.*" Therefore the covenant with *Abraham* was the covenant of grace.

12th. If there is no salvation but through the covenant of grace, then the covenant with *Abraham* was the covenant of grace; but there is no salvation except through the covenant of grace. Acts iv. 12, "*There is no other name under heaven, whereby ye can be saved.*" Yet *Abraham* had salvation, for the beggar was carried to *Abraham's* bosom; Luke xvi. 22. Therefore the covenant with *Abraham* was the covenant of grace.

13th. If saving faith is always grounded on the covenant of grace, and yet *Abraham* had such faith, then the covenant with *Abraham* was the covenant of grace.

14th. If the people of God were all saved for two thousand years, viz. from *Abraham* to Christ, in the faith of *Abraham's* covenant, then *Abraham's* covenant was the covenant of grace, the only standing way of salvation; but the people of God for two thousand years, viz. from *Abraham* to Christ, were saved through faith in *Abraham's* covenant; it was by such faith "*the elders obtained a good report,*" Heb. xi. 2. And the 13th verse says, "*These all died in faith, not having received the promises,*" i. e. not living to the outward establishment of christianity. Yet "*God was not ashamed to be called their covenant God,*"—and pre-
ferred

pared for them a city. So surely, therefore, was the covenant with *Abraham*, the covenant of grace.

15. If Christ did not receive christian baptism, previous to his instituting and receiving the Lord's supper, it must be because the initiating seal of the covenant of grace, was already on him in circumcision; but Jesus Christ did not receive christian baptism, previous to his instituting and receiving the Lord's supper—which is thus proved:

1. Because the dispensation to which christian baptism belongs, was not in being.

2. Because to receive christian baptism, is an instance of christian obedience; but, it was inconsistent for Jesus Christ to perform any act of christian obedience for his people, till he had finished a righteousness for their justification.

3. Because the baptism, then in use was *John's* baptism, which was legal not christian.

The consequence is, that as Jesus Christ had the witnessing seal of the covenant of grace upon him, in circumcision, so he was as well qualified for access to the Lord's supper, as any can be now by christian baptism. But then 'tis just so certain, that the covenant with *Abraham*, which contained circumcision was the covenant of grace.

Quest. 1. Why did not Jesus Christ himself baptize, but his disciples only?

Ans. 1. The baptism with which his disciples baptized, was *John's* baptism; of which before.

Ans. 2. As *John's* baptism was typical of christian purity; so for Christ to practice it, would be bearing witness to himself; contrary to his own maxim. *Jon.*

v. 31.

Ans. 3. The work of Jesus Christ was to obey the Law; now though the law required him to be baptized, as the induction to his public priesthood; yet no precept or prophet of the law, ever said he should baptize with water; so he had no such work to do.

Quest. 2. What is christian baptism?

Ans.

Ans. 1. Christian baptism is being so enriched, and endowed, with the special gifts, and graces, of the holy spirit, as is in scripture called, baptized with the holy ghost. Matt. iii. 11. “*He shall baptize you with the holy ghost and with fire.*” Where fire is explanatory of this baptism; for ’tis purifying as fire.

Ans. 2. But as nature abounds with speaking emblems of spiritual things; so it pleased God to appoint outward resemblances of inward and spiritual things. And the outward signal, and representation of christian baptism, is that external application of water, in the name of the Godhead, which is called baptism, from its resemblance to true baptism. Ezek. xxxvi.

25.

Ans. 3. But then the sign must always tally with the thing signified. And therefore as no person is totally subject to true baptism; for we are sanctified but in part; so to apply the outward sign to the whole body, does not agree to the thing signified, in any case, in this world.

Quest. 3. Why was circumcision appointed a seal of the covenant of grace?

Ans. 1. ’Tis a prerogative of every royalty to chuse and appoint his own seal.

Ans. 2. A seal of the Covenant of grace should always suit with the present dispensation of that covenant. When it was established with *Noah*, and his seed; the universal terror, was fear of another flood, and so the rainbow was a sign and seal of the covenant of grace, exactly suited to those times. Gen. ix. 9. to 17. But in the gentle reign of Jesus Christ, when blood has virtue enough, to answer all the purposes of cleansing our sins; then the cleansing medium of water baptism, becomes the proper seal of the covenant of grace. Whereas for two thousand years before, viz. from Abraham to Christ, the business of all that time, was to give assurance that their little bloods would certainly issue, in the allsufficient blood of the Messiah; for which purpose nothing could be more suitable.

suitable, than for all families to be constantly shedding blood in circumcision ; so that was appointed, the witness and seal of the covenant of grace. Gen. xvii. 10, 11. The bloody ordinance of circumcision, with all the burdensome rites of that dispensation, excited desires, and prayers for Christ's coming, and gave constant assurance of it.

Quest. 4. When was the form of the seal of the covenant changed?

Ans. When the dispensation was changed, from that of the law, to Christianity. When the dispensation was changed, it was proper its witnessing seal should in its outward form be altered. Heb. x. 9. "*He took away the first that he might establish the second.*"

Quest. 5. When did the christian dispensation begin ?

Ans. 1. Exactly when that of the law ended. But neither could the first cease, or the second begin, till *John's* ministry was finished ; for he generally spoke of Christ as coming after him. Mark i. 7. Matt. iii. 11. He preached "*the kingdom of heaven is at hand.*" So then it was near, but not come.

Ans. 2. The christian dispensation could not begin before the death of Christ.

1. Because many legal types could not be fulfilled till that event. Heb. ix. 7, to 16.

2. Because Christ's legal priesthood, which must be finished, before the gospel dispensation could begin, was completed by his offering himself in death. Heb. viii. 3, 7, 27, ix. 26, x. 12.

3. Because as the doctrine of Christ's kingdom was to be peace on earth. Luke ii. 14. And that peace is founded in the blood of the cross, Col. i. 20. So the gospel dispensation could not be set up, till that blood was shed.

Ans. 3. The christian dispensation could not begin till after Christ's resurrection.

1. Because his finishing the atonement must be proved, by his resurrection from the dead. But when
God

God raised him, it was proof of his work fully done, and that justice was satisfied. Acts ii. 24.

2. Pardon of sin, the privilege of the gospel dispensation, could not be boldly affirmed; till Christ's rising had proved the meritorious cause complete. Heb. ix. 26.

3. It was impossible to believe, without doubting, in what Christ had done, till he was proved to be the Son of God with power, by his resurrection from the dead. Rom. i. 4. Therefore his dispensation could not begin till this proof was given.

Ans. 4. The christian dispensation could not begin till the day of Pentecost.

1. Because as Pentecost was the fiftieth day from the second day of the passover; so such as are learned in scripture chronology alledge, *that* was the day, in which the Church was established, and her law given from Sinai of old. And the institution of her christian form, must answer ancient types; but then it must be on the day of Pentecost, according to Acts ii. 1, which says "*when the day of Pentecost was fully come.*" The inspired words are, "*en too symplee roustbai,*" as importing, it must be at that juncture, neither sooner, nor later.

2. Because it was proper, that the religious privileges of this world, should commence in presence of witnesses from every nation under heaven; which was the case then, Acts ii. 5. to 12.

3. Because the circumstances of that day, indicate that the great institution was upon it. As

1. That God might not surprize his people, with such important events, without previous notice. He gave them these days, from Christ's resurrection, to the said fiftieth day, to digest the evidence of what they had seen, that they might be prepared for this establishment, ten days after his ascension.

2. The gospel dispensation was to be managed by twelve apostles, as the old one had been by twelve patriarchs; but these apostles were not all appointed till after

after Christ's resurrection. And they were directed to bear witness of Christ, &c. after the Holy Ghost was come on them, Acts i. 8 ; but this was not till Pentecost : Therefore the gospel dispensation did not begin till that day.

3. Tongues were a needful mean for propagating the gospel ; but these were not given till Pentecost. Therefore this dispensation did not begin till that day.

4. The gospel is the holy spirit's instrument, in gracious operations ; but he did not come to possess and use it till Pentecost, Acts ii. 2, 3. Therefore his dispensation did not begin till that day.

5. Special divine power was essentially necessary for the management of this dispensation, but the apostles, the instruments of that work, were commanded *to tarry at Jerusalem, till they should be endowed with power from on high* : that is, till the promise of the Father, which was the holy spirit, should come on them, Luke xxiv. 49. Acts i. 4. But this was not done till Pentecost ; therefore the dispensation did not begin till that day.

6. The apostles were not endowed for casting out devils, taking up serpents, and being proof against poison, &c. which infernal malice against the gospel would give occasion for, till Pentecost, Mark xvi. 18, 19, 20.—Luke xxiv. 49. And so their dispensation did not begin till that day.

7. Whenever the christian dispensation begun, it may be expected such providences would soon follow, as should witness it's divine nature. But such events took place at Pentecost.

1. The Holy Ghost took possession of gospel truth, as the mean of his gracious operation then.

2. Then did the sacred symbol of it's nature and effects appear in fiery tongues.

3. Then did cloven tongues indicate Gentiles, as well as Jews, to be its designed objects.

4. Then did their fiery appearance, foretel, the thoroughly purifying effect of the gospel.

5. Then were all the world together, to witness the advent of the universal religion.

6. Then was a most distinguished day for miracles and devils malice charging all to drunkenness. Acts ii. 13.

7. Then was a day the most crowned with gospel success, having three thousands converted at once.

Quest. 6. Where is authority for the institution of outward baptism ?

Ans. 1. In the nature of the case. For, as God has been pleased, in various dispensations of the covenant of grace, to appoint an outward sign and seal of it ; 'tis therefore certain, that it was right and reasonable, that the covenant of grace should have an outward sign and seal ; but the nature of the case determines, it is as right and reasonable now as ever it was ; therefore, as there is no pretence, to any other outward initiating sign and seal to the covenant of grace now but outward baptism ; therefore that ought in all reason, to be held the initiating sign and seal of the covenant of grace now.

Ans. 2. In the institution of circumcision. For 'tis certain God appointed circumcision, Gen. xvii. 10. and called it "*a seal of the righteousness of faith.*" Rom. iv. 11. And as there is no pretence of any thing to succeed circumcision, as a seal of the covenant of grace but outward baptism ; therefore either circumcision is still of force, as a seal of the covenant ; or else outward baptism has taken its place : But we are forbidden to use the ordinances of that dispensation, Col. ii. 20, 21, "*Touch not, taste not, handle not, for they are all to perish in the using.*" Therefore outward baptism is the visible seal of the covenant of grace.

Ans. 3. In divine institution, Matt. xxviii. 18, 19, "*All power is given to me in heaven and earth ; go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them.*" And as this is an express command, there is equal authority for baptism, as for any thing in christianity.

Quest. 7. Is there any further evidence that baptism comes in place of circumcision ?

Ans. 1. There is ; For since circumcision did
D confessedly

confessedly, terminate with the legal dispensation, if baptism does not succeed to it, then the dispensation of the gospel, cannot be much more glorious than that of the law; but it is in its outward circumstances much more glorious. II. Cor. iii. 8, 9, 10, 11. Therefore this must have an outward initiating seal, as well as that; and as there can be no pretence of any other, it must be baptism. And this exceeds circumcision, as there is nothing bloody in it, and as it admits females, and lastly, as it expresses what we need, viz. cleansing by the blood of Christ, more clearly.

Ans. 2. The maxim of christianity is, "*give no offence in any thing, to Jew or Gentile.*" I. Cor. x. 32. II. Cor. vi. 3. But to stop circumcision, and not replace it by some other form of a seal to the covenant of grace, would have been an inappeasible offence to all Jews; especially the most serious and godly of them. And it would have been offensive to Gentiles, to call them under a covenant not so well endowed, as that by which they knew the Jews had ever been dignified. So it is contrary to an established rule of the bible, to suppose circumcision abrogated, and baptism not instituted in its place.

3. If baptism does not take the place of circumcision, then the church is not so complete in her outward privileges, under Christ, as she was under Moses; but divine testimony affirms, the church is "*complete in Christ.*" Col. ii. 10. Therefore baptism takes the place of circumcision; and you find, in the 11th verse, baptism is called christian circumcision, or the circumcision of Christ, and in the 12th verse this circumcision is expressly called baptism.

4. If baptism imports the same things, and is of the same use now, as circumcision under, the law then as 'tis certain circumcision has ceased, baptism takes its place.

But, 1. Baptism imports the same things; for as none might eat the passover, till circumcised, Exod. xii. 49. So the apostles divinely guided, always baptized

tized their converts, as their visible qualification for church state, and privileges. As Acts ii. 41. Also circumcision was then a seal of the covenant of grace. Rom. iv. 11. And it has been proved that baptism is so now. And when, I. Pet. iii. 21, says "*baptism doth now save us.*" He implies, 'tis a visible witness of the salvation, which is in the covenant of grace, for its subjects.

2. Baptism is of the same use to us, as circumcision was to them. For as circumcision was the ordinance of admission into the visible church then; so is baptism now; therefore the apostles baptized those they taught, as set apart for God. And they whom Peter baptized, were added to the Church. Acts ii. 41, 47. Circumcision was the visible badge of relation to God, and his Church; so is baptism now. Gal. iii. 27. "*As many as are baptized have put on Christ.*" Therefore baptism answering the same purposes, succeeds to circumcision.

5. Jesus Christ could not be faithful in God's House, the Church, as Moses was, if when he put an end to circumcision, he did not institute baptism in its place; but he was faithful in the house of God, as Moses was. Heb. iii. 2. Therefore he appointed baptism, as certainly as Moses appointed circumcision.

Obj. 1. The baptism of the bible, is called a being buried with Christ, and so means plunging.

Ans. 1. Rom. vi. 4, says, "*buried with him, by baptism into death.*" But there is but one sort of Baptism in the bible, or in the world, that is into death; and that is spiritual baptism, or sanctification; which is to the death of sin only. Therefore buried with Christ in baptism, is not true of any baptism at all, by water.

Ans. 2. Col. ii. 12, says, "*buried with him in baptism.*" And it says also, "*risen with him,*" in the same baptism. But there is no baptism in the world, which implies death and resurrection too, but baptism by the holy spirit. And the certain effect of this spiritual baptism is, union to, and not separation from re-

al christians. I. Cor. xii. 13. “*For by one spirit, we are all baptized into one body, and have been all made to drink into one spirit.*”

Obj. 2. But there is no command in the bible for baptizing children.

Ans. 1. It is a reproach common to baptists, that they will not allow of fair scriptural consequences. But we believe fair scriptural consequences, are good scriptural authority. As

1. If God did once command his people to dedicate their children to him ; and his mind has never changed ; then 'tis the mind of God now, that his people should dedicate their children to him ; but if he has abrogated circumcision, as has been proved ; and instituted baptism in place of it, as has been proved ; then we know 'tis the mind of God now, that his people should dedicate their children in baptism. Now he has told us, his mind always was, that circumcision should cease in the using. Col. ii. 21. 22. And that baptism should succeed to it, as has been proved, so that this alteration, shows no change in the mind of God, about it. And now the fair consequence is, that his visible people must dedicate their children to him in baptism, or sink into the character of unbelievers, and disobedient.

2. Tis a command of God, “*If thou know not, go thy way forth by the footsteps of the flock.*” Cant. i. 8. But we know that the flock of God, for two thousand years before Christ always dedicated their children to God, with acceptance, it being according to his express command. And there is reason to judge, that when Christ commanded his followers to baptize all nations, he meant they should baptize children ; both because they are a great part of all nations ; and because they had been always used to dedicate children of professing parents ; and he makes no exception about it. And when *Peter* directed the multitude of his hearers, *to be baptized, every one of them.* Acts ii. 38, 39. And instead of saying, *but not your children,* he

he adds, as a reason taken from divine commandment, “ *For the promise,*” meaning Abraham’s covenant, “ *is to you and your children.*” And he implies, that the same establishment extended to the Gentiles, as those afar off, as fast as they should receive the same faith. And the fair consequence of all this is, that believers ought to give up their children in baptism. Nor will it help the cause of such as dislike this conclusion, to wish there was a little alteration of the bible on this head,

Beside, as we have reason to judge the apostles practiced infant baptism, because they tell us they baptized whole households, of which children are generally a part. And they had always used a like practice; and never gave a word of caution against admitting the children of christians, with their parents, as they certainly would, if ’twas wrong. So we historically know, that many nations have practiced it, and do still, viz. all who are called christians, in *Asia* and *Africa*, and divers nations in Europe. So that ’tis easy to see what it is to follow the foot-steps of the flock, in this case; and what they must expect, who disregard this commandment, with its evidence.

Ans. 2. Baptists seem to suppose that the bible favours their peculiar notions of baptism, which don’t lie in baptizing professing adults who were not baptized in infancy for that is our constant practice. But what is peculiar to baptists, is, *first*, to deny baptism to young children, even of professing parents; for which there is not one word in the bible. And *Secondly*, to baptize adults, who have already been baptized in infancy; and the bible knows as little of this as the other. Now till these their two peculiar points become scriptural, which ’tis certain they never will, baptists should be very sparing in boasting of favour from the bible.

3. I am now according to the methods proposed to shew what were the contents of the covenant of grace as established with Abraham. And I shall take
notice

notice only of two things contained in that covenant, and consider them together.

1. The infant children of believing parents, are there declared to be in the covenant of grace, with their parents. And,

2. The seal of that covenant is there ordered by God to be applied to them. But it is necessary to set some things, relative to these points, in their true light, before I proceed to the points themselves, as Baptists do not seem to notice them rightly.

Quest. 1. How can any, either parents or children, be in the covenant of grace, without saving faith?

Ans. 1. 'Tis certain some infants have been sanctified from the womb. As Jer. i. 5. Also *John* the baptist. Luke i. 15. And what has been of that kind, certainly may be again, and there is reason to think, some are so still. I know the word *sanctified*, is sometimes used only for sequestration to divine use. But other expressions, in the case of *Jeremiah*, as well as the concurrent sense of interpreters, make it evident enough, that *Jeremiah* had gracious sanctification; and of course, infants are certainly capable of saving faith. And whoever knows, that the gift of faith, is totally a work of God; and that the difference of adult years, from infancy, in respect to the bestowment of saving faith, is that it encreases opposition, and never furnishes any concurrence; will doubtless allow that a state of infancy, in itself, is of no weight at all, against saving faith being wrought.

Ans. 2. Being in the covenant of grace, does not always imply saving faith, or any other saving grace. The covenant of grace has its outward court, just as the holy temple had, I. Kings, viii. 64, and many texts. And just as the godhead in Christ had the outward court of flesh and blood, in his manhood; in which, tho' it was holy, was no divinity at all. So 'tis common for rich palaces, to have court-yards round them, containing things belonging to the palace, but not fit to be bestowed in its interior apartments. So has the
covenant

covenant of grace its outward court, and to this belongs the unsanctified children, houses, cattle, fields, &c. of all the believers. Now I will prove that the covenant of grace, has such outward court.

1. Every understanding christian in the world, holds his house, cattle, all he has, are in the covenant of grace ; how else should he take hold of the truth and faithfulness of God, in prayer about them ; but these can only be in such outward court of that covenant.

2. This doctrine of an outward court to the covenant of grace, gives light about many scriptures. As John xv. 2. *“Every branch in me, that beareth not fruit, will be finally burned.”* But there are no such branches in Christ, but these who are in this outward court of the covenant of grace, who are in Christ only by outward appearance, visible standing, or mere profession. So also Matt. xv. 3. *“these are the plants which God hath not planted,”* viz. in the inward spirit and grace of his covenant, and so *“they must be rooted up.”* Therefore many may be in the covenant, without saving grace.

3. You know God often calls the children of *Israel* his people, as Exod. iii. 7, 10, and vii. 4, which necessarily implies; they were in the covenant of grace ; and yet you know they were not in the special grace of that covenant generally. For they were a rebellious people, and God often threatens to cast them off utterly. So it appears, they were only in this porch, or outward court of the covenant. But then the consequence is, that persons may be in the covenant of grace, without any saving grace.

4. 'Tis in this sense God claims and owns the children of his covenant people, when they were generally fallen to idolatry ; but not yet visibly cast off. As Ezek. xvi. 20. 21, and xxiii. 37. *“Ye have taken your sons and daughters, which ye did bear unto me, and have slain my children, by causing them to pass through the fire.”* viz. to Moloch. And the margin of the text refers to Gen. xvii. 7. 11. where the covenant of grace was established

established with Abraham and his infant seed ; to shew the wickedness of this conduct. But these children, and indeed their parents too, were in God's covenant claim, only as they were in this outward court of the covenant of grace. Therefore parents and children may be in the covenant of grace without any saving grace ; which was to be proved.

Quest. 2. What are the privileges of young children in the covenant of grace ?

Ans. 1. God knows they are his creatures, and that he has required his people to dedicate them to him in his appointed way, and "*he is ever mindful of his covenant.*" Psal. iii. 5. And the psalmist draws the consequence. Psal. cxv. 12, 13. "*The Lord has been mindful of us, and will bless us. He will bless them that fear him, the small with the great.*" So the Hebrew is. And if God's blessing small children, as well as parents, is allowed to be a privilege, then the question will be allowed to be answered, by all who duly regard the word of God.

Ans. 2. The psalmist held the privilege of a child in the covenant of grace, very great, when he said, Psal. lxxxvi. 16. "*Oh turn to me, and have mercy on me, and save the son of thine hand-maid !*" Importing, "*my mother was in covenant with thee, she gave me to thee, in thine own way.*" Now I pray grant me the privileges of that covenant, in which I was given up to thee at eight days old. Again he says. Psal. cxvi. 16. "*Oh Lord I am thy servant, I am thy servant, the son of thine handmaiden !*" Importing, I am doubly bound to fidelity in thy service ; viz. by my own covenant obligations, and by the early dedication of my pious parent. Those then who love the obligations of the covenant of grace, will hold it a privilege to be under them. *Bathsheba* also, as became a pious penitent, urges on King *Lemuel*, his duty, from the consideration of the vows, by which she had dedicated him to God, in his own way. And such as hold urgent arguments to holiness, a privilege, will allow their children

privilege by that holy covenant in which they have been vowed to God. *Samuel's* piety and honors were his privilege, in consequence of an early and pious dedication to God, in the covenant of grace. I. Sam. i. 11.

Ans. 3. Godly parents have advantage to plead the covenant of grace for their children, given up in a covenant way. And if 'tis allowed to be a great privilege for children to have such prayers made for them, which is peculiar to such as have given up their children to God, in his own covenant way; then this is another answer to the question.

Ans. 4. Children given to God in his own covenant way, may always plead their outward covenant relation to God, for deliverance in any distress: As David did, Psa. cxix. 94. "*I am thine, save me.*" Such as are not addicted to plead promises, will hold this answer very light. All others will allow the weight of it.

Obj. But God hears no prayers but such as proceed from saving faith.

Ans. This objection proceeds from an antinomian principle; and indicates ignorance of the scriptures, and of the power of God. Prayer is first of all the language of nature in distress; and the God of nature hears it. For 'tis an aphorism of the kind bible. Isa. xxv. 4. "*He is a strength to the needy in his distress.*" And he hears the cry of the ravens. Psa. cxlvii. 9. The God of nature, hears the voice of nature in man and beast.

Ans. 5. The Church of God holds itself bound, to exercise watchfulness, and careful inspection, over the lives and manners, of such as having been dedicated to God, are become the children of the church. As Psa. xxxiv. 11. "*Come ye children, hearken unto me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord.*" For 'tis a maxim with the church of God, "*the things that are revealed belong to us, and to our children forever.*" Deut. xxix. 29. Therefore 'tis said of Christ, the great head

head and patron of his Church, Isa. xl. 11. "*He shall feed his flock like a shepherd, He shall gather the lambs, with his arm, and carry them in his bosom.*" And therefore Christ forbids his people to hinder little children from coming to him, and intimated, they were under the watch and government of his church, by saying, "*for of such is the kingdom of heaven.*" Matt. xix. 14. Accordingly when Christ gave order to Peter how to treat his sheep, he especially charges him to feed his lambs. John xxi. 15. The inspired words are. "*boske ta arnia mou.*" Which allude to the case of children in a natural family, where oversight and government, belong to feeding. And all such as chuse to have their children inspected and well regulated, will certainly hold this a great privilege. And to this all children publicly dedicated, are of right always subject.

Ans. 6. The consideration of such solemn dedication to God, has a tendency to solemnize and restrain the spirit and manners of such children. And surely all advantage this way is a privilege. And for this reason, children should be taught the nature of such dedication.

Ans. 7. The obligation arising to christian parents, from such solemn dedication is Eph. vi. 4, "*bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*" And every faithful parent esteems his obligation this way a privilege, which centers in covenanted children.

Ques. 3. What is it that is sealed by a sealing ordinance?

Ans. 1. Never the immediate object. Persons or children are no more sealed in baptism, than the cloud was, in which was the rainbow, which was a seal of the covenant of grace in *Noah's* time. Gen. ix. 13, 14, 15. The immediate subject of baptism, is not at all morally or spiritually affected by that ordinance. The spirit of God may bestow quickning, comfort, blessing, at the same time, to a believing parent, or a believing adult at the time of the administration; as

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he sometimes does in a clap of thunder: An earthquake; or a sudden death. When the apostle says, "*Baptism doth now save us.*" I. Pet. iii. 20, 21. He tells us this is as *Noah's* ark saved him. The ark was a sensible mean of security from the flood: And especially a speaking signal of future salvation by Christ. So baptism is a sure evidence of pardon and salvation to be had; but baptism itself gives none of it. And so the apostle explains himself, when he says, "*not the putting away of the Filth of the flesh; but the answer,*" or correspondence, "*of a good conscience:*" in the covenanting agent. And this derives not all from the ordinance itself; but from the holy spirit of grace.

Ans. 2. The only thing actually sealed in baptism is the covenant of grace. Baptism is like every thing else in christianity, "*a witness to the truth.*" John xviii. 37. And so serves the same purpose as circumcision did; which God himself has told us was a seal of the righteousness of faith. Rom. iv. 11. It gives a certain present witness of the truth of christianity. And so reminds every believer, of the certainty of the ground of his hope; and of the matter of his faith. And so by the frequency and believing use of it, christians *may hold fast their confidence, and the rejoicing of their hope firm unto the end.* Heb. iii. 6. Baptism is also a declarative seal, witness, and monitor, to the beholding world, as far as they are instructed enough to understand its speaking import; it bespeaks a certainly, in all the materials of the gospel, and true religion. And so the gospel kingdom of Jesus Christ as antitype to that of David, "*is established forever as the Moon, and as a faithful witness in Heaven, Selah.*" Psal. lxxxix. 37. And so by this ordinance, as a picture of his blood he witnesseth also on the earth. According to, I. John, v. 8.

Now let us return to what was proposed; viz. To shew that the contents of the covenant, with Abraham were, that infant children of believers, were declared to be in the covenant of grace, with their parents; and accordingly

accordingly the seal of the covenant was ordered by God himself to be outwardly applied to them. And the first evidence I shall give of this affair is the letter of the text.

1. If the bible says, that God declared the children of believers to be in the covenant of grace, with their parents ; and that God accordingly ordered the seal of that covenant to be applied to them ; then such children are in that covenant, and the seal of it must be outwardly applied to them : But the bible does say so ; therefore such children are in that covenant, and must have its seal applied to them. For Gen. xvii. 7. &c. says, “ *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 to thee, and thy seed after thee. And God said unto Abraham thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou and thy seed after thee, in their generations. This is my covenant which ye shall keep, between me and you, and thy seed after thee, every man child among you shall be circumcised. And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a token of the covenant between me and you. And he that is eight days old, shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations ; he that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, which is not of thy seed, he that is born in the house, and he that is bought with thy money, must needs be circumcised, and my covenant, shall be in your flesh for an everlasting covenant ; and the uncircumcised manchild, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people, he hath broken my covenant.*”

Now, Rom. xv. 4. says “ *whatever things were written aforetime ;*” viz. as long ago as *Abraham*, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.” And to prove that this text refers to this establishment with *Abraham* ; the 8th verse adds, “ *Now this I say, that Jesus Christ was a minister of the circumcision, for the truth of God.*” But then the covenant of circumcision, was the truth of God ; to be continued down to us Gentiles. And

to prove it, the apostle adds, “to confirm the promises, made to the fathers.” Pointing to this covenant with *Abraham*. And then gives the reason; “that the Gentiles might rejoice with his people,” viz. in the enjoyment of the establishment with *Abraham*. Now all who believe the bible must confess, that children were taken into the covenant of grace, with their parents, and that the seal of it was applied to them. And in the said 15th chap. of *Romans*, the apostle proves, that these things were not ordered for Jews only; but especially for Gentiles; for the time of the New-Testament; i. e. for us. But the holy spirit who guided the apostle, knew that circumcision, in its jewish form, was never to take place with us: but that baptism, which is the christian circumcision, was to be in use now, as has been proved. The consequence is, that the children of believing parents, are in the covenant of grace, with such parents, and by them to be given up to God in baptism.

2. If the plainest sense of *Act. ii. 39.* “be baptized for the promise is to you and your children,” is, that children are under the outward administration of the covenant of grace, if their parents are in the spirit and grace of that covenant; and that therefore the seal of it, is to be outwardly applied to them; then this is good authority for our practice; for scripture ought always to be understood in the plainest sense that is consistent with the whole. But that this is the plainest consistent sense of the text; I shall now prove.

1. 'Tis exactly agreeable to the letter of the text, as all may see, if they read impartially.

2. 'Tis exactly agreeable to the practice of all God's people, for two thousand years before that time.

3. As *Peter* knew the Jews were tenacious of their religious rites; so you may see, if you please, that *Peter* who perfectly knew what his hearers were used to; would not give them offence at the new christian religion; by cutting off their children from their usual privilege; but lets them know in this first christian sermon, that this new religion extended privilege to them

them and to their children just as the bible always did.

4. *Peter* knew the will of God, was, “give no offence to Jew or Gentile, or the church of God.” He knew also that the moment he gave the least suspicion, that this new religion, was so much narrower, and less glorious in outward privileges, than what they had always been subject to, as to exclude all their children, from covenant privilege; they would immediately renounce it, and conceive offence not to be removed. And as he knew there was no ground for this offence; but that they were all under the same covenant, to which they were always subject; He therefore addresses them in language they had always heard; importing “you and your children stand related to God, and his covenant, just as you, and they always did; God is not altered, the covenant is the same, the promise is to you and to your children, just as it always was. And ’tis evident they understood him so; and so all proceeded, without one word of objection.

5. To construe this text as baptists do, is to set aside the plain literal sense of the text, although it perfectly consists with the whole bible; it also implies that the mind of God is altered since *Abraham’s* time, which is atheistical. It implies also that the covenant with *Abraham* was not the covenant of grace, contrary to the above demonstrations. If then we would avoid such sentiments, let us allow the text to speak honestly its own meaning; and then we shall adopt the mind of God, plainly express’d in it.

6. *Peter* had now a fine advantage to have taught his hearers otherwise; viz. to have told them, “you are now under another dispensation, and must not expect any old Jewish matter to be continued to you” &c. It was a fine opportunity to advance the baptists notion of this text; for his hearers were soft and ductile, fit to receive any thing from their spiritual father; it was also a time for new things to take place. Beside, he was divinely bound to speak the thing, as it was. And doubtless, but two reasons can be devised, why he delivered himself

himself as he did, viz. because it was true, and because the reverse was not true. But indeed the apostle was not so far advanced in the light of modern times, as to see reason to correct a gross error in divine conduct, in putting such subjects into his holy covenant, as were no way fit for that situation.

3. Mark x. 13. 14, says, They brought young children to Christ; he sure not to be baptized; for he baptized not. John iv. 2. Reasons for which have been given above. But Matt. xix. 13. says, "*that he should put his hands on them and pray.*" Mark x. 13, says, "*that he should touch them*" and the 16th verse shews they meant that he should bless them; which he did. But this blessing must come from the treasury of the covenant of grace. But we are sure, a blessing from the covenant of grace, could not be bestowed on such as were not in that covenant. For a divine rule is, "*give not that which is holy to dogs.*" Matt. vii. 6. But then 'tis evident these children of his covenant people, were in the covenant of grace. And though he did not baptize them, he required them to be brought to him, to receive a covenant blessing. And if there is no way for his people to copy out this instruction visibly now, but by baptismal dedication, according to the revealed mind of him who changeth not; then 'tis their duty, so to dedicate them. And though there were some even then, who opposed this practice of bringing children to Christ for a covenant blessing; yet it was done; and received great encouragement by Christ's being much displeas'd with those who opposed it; and also by his command, equally binding now as then. "*Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not.*" And his reason for it is of force now, "*for of such is the kingdom of heaven.*" And 'tis of no importance in the case, whether by "*kingdom of heaven.*" is design'd the church militant or triumphant; since they are both of one nature. And if children belong to either, they are entitl'd at least, to the privileges of the former. And if Jesus Christ now owns little children to belong to the kingdom of heaven; if you

are not sure of their salvation, you are the more sure they belong to the visible church. Therefore who is he that shall dare deny them ?

4. If the principle of forbidding a dedication of children in baptism, tends to prevent the millennium, or glorious state of the church in this world, in which the prophecies of scripture so generally centre ; then 'tis an unscriptural principle ; but it has such a palpable tendency. For in the millennium all nations are to flow into the church of God ; Isa. ii. 2. But children are a great part of all nations ; and the hope of the people, both for church and state. And to exclude them all from so much as the outward court of the church of God, is to shut them all up visibly in the devil's kingdom : for all who are not of the visible church, are, as to their visible standing, in the kingdom of the devil. And to place all children there has a direct tendency to prevent all nations ever to become, entirely the kingdom of Christ. Whereas if they were dedicated to him, according to his own plan ; and so put in his way ; he would be holden by his covenant to take care of them ; *for he is ever mindful of his covenant.* Psal. iii. 5. They would be in the way of religious inspection and regulation, instruction, prayers, every mean, private and public, appointed to ripen them for divine service. But to exclude them from all these, has an awful tendency to keep them out of God's appointed way, and to prevent the designs of his grace in this world. And so is an unscriptural and antisciptural principle. I am sensible antinomians who are hearty enemies to the laws and regulations of God's house, will easily harden themselves against this reasoning ; for at bottom, they hate a religion which confronts their loose and licentious spirit. But the people of God may comfort themselves, such unhappy people are more against God and the bible than against any of his people. And we may be sure, divine truth will have weight, with all whose hearts are found in God's statutes.

5. Children were in the covenant of grace, and so
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in the outward court of the church, under the former dispensation, by God's own order; this has been proved and can't be denied. But the same covenant of grace still stands, and God is of the same mind; therefore in right, they are there now.

Obj. 1. But the same word of God says "*believe and be baptized.*" Whereas children can't believe; and therefore ought not to be baptized.

Ans. 1. It has been proved, that children have believed, and of course may be often made believers

Ans. 2. This is no more a bar to their dedication in baptism, than it was in case of circumcision, little children are as able to believe now, as they were when God declared them to be in the covenant of grace of old. 'Tis no mark of one being taught of God, to be disposed to dictate his maker; or dispute his revealed will.

Ans. 3. When little children are denied baptism, on this principle, that they can't believe. It looks like an evidence of unregeneracy; for it seems to imply that an adult, can contribute something toward getting true faith; but an infant cannot, for want of abilities, which shews ignorance of the nature of human depravity, and of the power of God. For faith is solely the gift of God. Eph. ii. 8. And infants certainly have not so strong opposition to this work; and adults as certainly never concur in it. Rom. viii. 7

Ans. 4. God knew the state of infants with respect to believing when he connected circumcision with faith; for Abraham believed before circumcision was commanded. Gen. xv. 6. And all parents of his progeny believed the great doctrines of revealed religion, in those days. And so dedicated their children in circumcision. And this fully explains the doctrine of "*believe and be baptized.*" The command lies on the agent, not the infant subject.

Ans. 5. We insist on the principle "*believe and be baptized,*" as strictly as any; but we insist on it only where God originally required it; viz. in the agent, who is bound by the command, and who can obey, and accordingly desires baptism, for his child, if he is a parent; as a part of himself, and as what God requires of him, as his own, and to be rendered to him in his own way. We therefore keep his commandment exactly according to the original state of it. Whereas baptists insist on it, where it never was required, in the original establishment of the covenant to which all these things belong. For God said not a word of faith in the infant subject of circumcision; but in the agent, the parent, or actor in the affair; who feels the bond of duty, and who being himself dedicated to God, means to dedicate these branches of himself also, viz. his children.

Obj. 2. But little children know nothing of what they are doing; have no sense of the affair.

Ans.

Ans. They do nothing in the affair, and have nothing to do. They are not the subjects of command about it; nor have any duty to do in it. But they have full as much sense about the matter now, as those had who were circumcised in infancy, when this covenant and its seal were established of old. And the author of the whole scheme, knew full as much about it at first, as any body does now. He knew how this test of allegiance would operate through all generations. But as he did order it; so we mean to obey his revealed will without disputing it with him; without charging him with error, or absurdity in it; or substituting our own imagination about it. For we know "*the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.*" Deut. xxix. 29.

6. If the letter of the apostolick commission, doth not exclude children, as it certainly would if it was the mind of God to exclude them; but includes them with their parents; then we ought to include them, and allow them to be the subjects of that witnessing ordinance, which God has appointed for them; but that commission does naturally include them; therefore we must include them, and apply the ordinances of baptism to them, as God has directed. The words of that commission are "*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them.*" Now if 'tis certain and well known that children are always a great part of all nations; then they are not excluded, when the command says *all nations*, but necessarily included; since there is no exception at all made. Beside if the command had been "*circumcise all nations,*" the admission of children, could not have been doubted; and be sure 'tis as evident they are to be admitted now. For the institutor, and his authority are the same; the covenant is the same; and baptism is exactly in place of circumcision, as has been proved. Therefore the children of visible christians, are in the covenant of grace with their parents; and by divine direction the seal of that covenant is to be applied to them.

7. The last evidence I shall adduce for the point, is the evident import of Rom. xi. 17. "*If some of the Jews, were broken off, from the former state of the church and gentiles were grafted in their place, and so gentiles under the gospel, partake with such jews as believed, and so were not broken off, in the root and fatness of that former state of the church, &c.*" Then the following things are certainly true, viz.

1. That by olive tree, in the close of this text, is meant the church of God, in which those Jews who believed, and so were not still broken off, still remained.

2. That when gentiles were converted under the gospel, they were grafted into the same church state, with those Jews who stood by faith, and were never broken off.

3. And so the believing gentiles, did with those Jews, who were

were never broken off, equally partake of the root, i. e. of the church privileges derived from *Abraham*, or the institution established with him; and of the fatness, i. e. the promises, ordinances, and blessings, of that good olive tree, the church of God. All which may be reduced to the two following heads.

1. That all gentile christians, are grafted in, and belong to that church which was first founded on the covenant made with *Abraham*, and which was commanded to use circumcision, as the visible seal of the covenant. And so all gentile christians came to be entitled to all the ordinances and privileges of the church, down from *Abraham*. But circumcision of children was one of them. Therefore, since God has only altered the form of this ordinance, which also the apostle knew, when he wrote this text; gentile christians, being now in the same church, are equally bound to dedicate children in baptism, as Gods people of old were in circumcision.

2. As this insertion of all gentile believers, into the same church, is called grafting; so it implies that their children are set in with them; just as the buds of a cyon are set into the stock, with the cyon, as parts of itself. And as the cyon, with its buds all partake of the sap of their stock; so christians with their children partake in the same privilege of religious dedication by baptism, as the people of God, did of old by circumcision. 'Tis certain, God never had, or designed to have, more than one church. There never was more than one such good olive tree. The lamb never had, or will have more than one wife, Rev. xxi. 9. The covenant of grace, is her only charter of privileges; and baptism is her only initiating seal; the first public witness of the truth, durableness, and certainty, of her grand charter. And as circumcision of their children was part of the fatness of that state of the good olive tree; we being grafted into the same olive tree, have this branch of her fatness, in christian baptism. And such as daily attend to, and regard this word of God, may be fully satisfied in the conclusion.

4. And this brings me in the last place, to shew what provision God has made for the propagation of these contents.

1. Baptismal dedication is one mean to propagate and distinguish the visible church, and so to attain the end and design of the covenant of grace in this world. As circumcision was an ingredient in the wall of separation, between the church of God, of old, and the heathen world, so is baptism now; for all who are not baptized, are heathen in their visible standing. When the apostle Peter had declared. Act. ii. 39 That baptism belonged to believers and their children; just as circumcision did, from *Abraham* down to that very day, in which he delivered this doctrine; he afterwards compares baptism to *Noah's* ark, so that as the ark was a mean and pledge of safety to *Noah* and his family; just so he says, *baptism doth now save*

us. I. Pet. iii. 21. But intimates at the same time, 'tis not the mere formal action, that does it, any more than *Noah* and his family were saved from the flood, merely by the ark, which if God had not upheld and kept, must have foundered by the weather and the flood. But baptismal dedication, is like the ark, a mean and pledge of safety and preservation to the church of God. 'Tis of God's own appointing; and by it, his visible church is distinguished, from all who do not practically own the true God. And as he owns and honors his own appointments; so this ordinance, as the witnessing seal of his covenant, and mark of his people, is evidence of his promised-fidelity, in watching over them, and preserving them, as his people and church, from final ruin in this world. Even the gates of hell, can't prevail to that effect. Mat. vi. 18. Nay the church which is faithful in these observances "shall be established forever as the moon, and as a faithful witness in heaven, Selah Psal. lxxxix. 37.

2. Another mean of divine appointment, for perpetuating the designs of the covenant of grace, in this world, is family instruction, and government. Therefore Deut. vi. 7. After referring to the establishment with Abraham in several points, says, "*Thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children.*" And to fix a solemn engagement on them, to do so, adds 15th verse. *Left the anger of the Lord thy God, be kindled against thee, and he destroy thee from off the face of the earth.*" Which implies that if they were faithful in this duty of family instruction, it should be a mean of their preservation, as a church, and people of God, on the face of the earth. To which the apostle, long since, refers Eph. vi. 4. "*Bring them, your children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*" Nay the wisdom of God has determined both means and end. Prov. xxii. 6. *Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.* And God has added the christian confirmation. II. Tim. iii. 15. "*From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation.*" And the holy spirit in giving laws for the church's health and preservation, says Prov. xxix. 15. "*The rod and reproof give wisdom; but a child left to himself, bringeth his mother to shame.*" Therefore, 17th verse adds "*correct thy son.*" And the same divine council says, "*he that spareth the rod, hateth his son.*" Prov. xiii. 24. And, be sure, the want of such measures ruined *Eli's* House I. Sam. ii. 13. As surely then, as "*the reproofs of instruction are the way of life,*" Prov. vi. 23. So surely, family instruction and government, are a mean appointed by God, to preserve and perpetuate his church upon earth.

3. Another mean for accomplishing the design of the covenant of grace, and the last I shall name is ecclesiastical discipline. For as family discipline is for the members of the family; so church discipline is for all the members of the church.

1. If then the children of professing christians, are in the outward court of the covenant of grace; and so under its outward administration; then they are within the pale of the visible church. The former has been proved, and the latter follows of course. The common objection is, then they ought to partake of all ordinances; but 'tis not so. An infant heir at law, has right to an estate; or a crown; but he can't inherit, and possess it, 'till of lawful age. So a baptized infant member of the church, can't actually enjoy full communion 'till evidence of knowledge, faith, and holiness, qualifies him according to the laws of the visible church. II. Cor. xiii. 5. *Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith, prove your own selves.*" And all who can do this, may eat and drink. I. Cor. xi. 28. 'Tis certain that all circumcised children of old, were of the visible church. For in the first institution of that ordinance, God gave a rule to run through all ages of the law — "*The uncircumcised manchild, shall be cut off from his people*" Gen. xvii. 14. But he could not be cut off from the church by want of circumcision, unless circumcision constituted membership. And the Psalmist who knew the nature of church state, in those days, says Psal. cii. 28. "*The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee.*" But as God is the same, his mind the same, the church the same, and the covenant on which it stands the same; so of course children are in the outward court of the church now. And to this purpose, the apostle is quite full. "*The blessing of Abraham*" Part of which was circumcision of his seed, and their consequent privileges; "*is come on the gentiles;*" that is on us now; "*through Jesus Christ.*" Gal. iii. 14. The apostle Peter therefore had good reason to preach to visible christians. *The promise is to you and to your children.* Act. ii. 39.

2. As all baptized children are in the outward court of the church; so of right, they are under the care, oversight & discipline of the church; just as children of a private family, are, as to their Parents. And as 'tis of dangerous consequence, for Parents to neglect this duty; so 'tis for a church to neglect the discipline of her baptized members. This kind of conduct ruined *Eli's* house. Jesus Christ sat an example for his church, when in giving Peter charge about his fold, he especially commands him to feed his lambs; but feeding implies government. Yea, Christ himself took young children in his arms. Mar. x. 16. And as the out door members of his church, bestowed a covenant blessing on them, and was much displeas'd with those who oppos'd, 14th verse. — As certainly therefore, as jewish children, were within the pale of the church, and under its government; as has been proved; so certainly are baptized children now. So Act. iii. 25, tells us, "*ye are the children of the covenant, God made with the fathers, saying to ABRAHAM, in thy seed, shall all the kingdoms of the earth be blessed.*"

3. If God claims the children of his people, as his children and servants; then they are subject to the discipline, which he has instituted in his church; but he does so claim them. For he says, Ezek. xvi. 21. "*Thou hast caused my children to pass through the fire, viz. to Molock, thy sons and thy daughters which thou hast born to me.*" 20th verse. And in Lev. xxv. 41, 42. "*They are my servants.*" Also, Psal. cxxv. 3 "*Children are the heritage of the Lord.*" But heritage, is character for the church. Joel iii. 2. Therefore they are as surely subject to the discipline of God's House, the church; as that there is any discipline there. Or as children and servants are under discipline in a family.

4. If God owns the same relation to children in the church, as to their parents there; then they are equally under discipline there; but he does own the same relation; Ezek. xviii. 4. "*All souls are mine, as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine.*" And the following words inflict punishment equally on both, in cases of disobedience.— Therefore the children of the church, are equally subject to discipline, as parents there.

5. All persons, in the visible church are, as to their standing in the kingdom of Christ; but as the branch and the stock belong together; so 'tis absurd to suppose their children, given to God in baptism, are in the kingdom of Satan, as to their outward relative standing; yet 'tis evident, the kingdom of Christ, and that of Satan include all. Therefore children given to God in baptism, and so being of the Church, as to their relative standing, are of course under the inspection and discipline of the church.

6. If baptized children are not of the church, and so under discipline, the church will not be able to give account according to Heb. ii. 13. "*Behold I and the children which God has given me.*"

7. If the known and allowed distinction, of visible and invisible church, is founded on matter of fact, then there are those truly of the church who are not of it, as a spiritual and invisible body. And as the bible teaches, and it has been proved, that baptized children are of the church; so there are of it as visible in distinction from the spiritual and invisible state of that corporation; and of course such children are objects of the care and government of the church as a spiritual and truly christian corporation.

8. If all disciples are of the church, and subject to discipline, then baptized children are so; for Act. xv. 10, calls those disciples who actually endured circumcision; but in general, only children were circumcised from Abraham to the apostles; and we have proved baptism, to be in place of circumcision. As therefore circumcised children were disciples then; 'tis equally evident that baptized ones are so now; and of course, they are of the church, and under its inspection and

and discipline. For 'tis the claim of all corporations, to govern and regulate their own subjects.

9. If the church in both states of it, had one and the same lord and head; and he changeth not, Mal. iii. 6, but is of one mind, and none can turn him. Job xxiii. 13. Then as evidently as we find circumcised children, under the oversight and discipline of his church formerly; so certainly baptized ones, are equally under inspection and government of the church now. But the apostle ascribes the calling and forming of both states of his church to the same head and lord. Rom. ix. 24: Therefore subjects of the christian circumcision are equally under the inspection and discipline of the church now.

10. If *Abraham*, the father of believers did "*command his children and household after him, to keep the way of the Lord.*" Then 'tis the duty of a christian church, as consisting of his children, to copy the example of that patriarch. But he did do so; and God approved him in it. Gen. xviii. 19. Therefore a christian church, as *Abraham's* children, ought to follow his steps.

11. If for baptized children to be under discipline in the church, is one mean to form them for succession in the christian church, and other useful offices; then 'tis the will of God, and the duty of the church, to exercise it; but 'tis as evidently one mean for those ends; as training up a child in the way he should go, is a mean of his walking in it afterward. According to Prov. xxii. 6.

12. If when God said, "*I will be a God to thee and thy seed.*" Gen. xvii. 7. Heb. viii. 10. He did at least secure all outward blessings and privileges, to the children of the faithful; then, if the oversight and regulation of a christian church, in the government of their children, is a blessing and privilege; it was the design of God originally, and of course, the duty of the church, so to treat their baptized children. But the former is true, and so of course must be the latter.

13. If such care and government, is implied in God's being the God of *Abraham's* seed, which includes believers children; then they are under such care and government in the church; for be sure, God has government over all that are in covenant with him. And 'tis as sure, that a church under that government, and who mean to be followers of God as dear children, must, in fidelity exercise it over all baptized subjects of the same covenant.

14. If training up a child in the way he should go, implies discipline, and the church are bound by this command, as a law on every parent, then the church must exercise discipline, on all their baptized children, or be disobedient.

15. If baptized children, are under the bond of the covenant of grace, as has been proved; then they must pass

the rod of discipline; but they are under the bond of the covenant, both as given up to God, and as he calls them his own children; therefore they must pass under the rod of discipline. For God has connected these together. *Exod.*

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16. The church is God's family, *Eph. iii. 15.* There is therefore equal reason for discipline over all that belong to it; as in any natural family.

17. If discipline in a natural family is a privilege; then in the church it is part of that fatness, which every christian church derives from the olive tree into which it is grafted. *Rom. xi. 17.*

18. As "there is one body," the church, *one Lord, one faith, one God and father of all* churches, in all ages, *who is above all,* and so has right exclusively to *order every thing, "and is through all"* from the beginning of the world, to the end of it; "and in all" his people and churches; *Eph. iv. 4, 5, 6.* And as this one God, is of one unalterable mind, and has seen fit in his wisdom, to establish a church in the world; and calls it his family; and has appointed its rules, and internal government; and gave the sum of these to *Abraham,* and gave assurance to us all, that he should never depart from that plan; but maintain it for substance, through all ages to the end of the world; and as the public dedication of children, and their being subject to christian oversight, and discipline in his church, are parts of that plan which unchangeable uniformity has prescribed, and determined shall continue, and be observed by his people, in all times and places; so 'tis certainly safer, and more honorable as well as peaceful, for us, to be subject to his pleasure; and in every thing learn to say "*thy will be done.*"

The END.