

# Christian Baptism.

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# S E R M O N

DELIVERED

At HANOVER, in NEW-JERSEY;

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By JACOB GREEN, A. M.

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*As many of you as have been baptised into Christ, have put on Christ.--  
And if you be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs  
according to the promise.* Apostle Paul.

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*Non ideo abluimur, ut delinquere desinamus, sed quia desimus; quo-  
niam jam corde lauti sumus* Tertul.

*Multi sunt in sacramentorum communione cum Ecclesia, & tamen jam  
non sunt in Ecclesia.* August.

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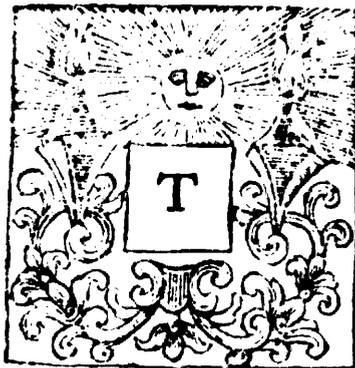


*Alexander Gillies book 1771.*  
*Christian Baptism.*

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ACTS VIII. 36, 37.

*And the Eunuch said, see here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptised? And Philip said, if thou believest with all thy heart thou mayest.*



W O very important articles of religion are mentioned in these words, viz. (1) The sacrament of baptism: and, (2) The qualifications requisite or necessary in those that are to be baptised.

Baptism is the subject of this discourse; and my design is,

I. To consider the nature and design of *christian baptism*. And,

II. How persons must be qualified, before they can properly receive that sacrament.

I. The nature and design of *christian baptism*.

Baptism is one of the sacraments of the gospel dispensation, to continue in the church to the end of the world. A sacrament is a divine institution, wherein, by sensible and material things, spiritual blessings and benefits are held forth and communicated to believers. As baptism is a sacrament of divine appointment, 'tis not, on the one hand, to be rushed upon carelessly, nor on the other, to be treated with indifference or neglect.

The washing with water in baptism is an outward and very significative sign of something inward and spiritual : It signifies the washing away our native and contracted guilt and defilement, and the purification of our natures by the spirit of God ; the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost. Again, 'tis a seal or token. By this mark or token God's visible people are distinguished from others. Hence 'tis ordered to be set upon all that would be accounted the disciples of Christ. *Mat. xxviii. 18.* "Go *disciple* all nations, baptising them." Baptism is a seal of the covenant of grace. When adult persons receive baptism, 'tis, on their part, a ratifying and confirming seal or token, that they are the Lord's ; that they do devote themselves to him, and will be for him. As a seal put to a covenant, bargain, or agreement among men, is the ratifying and confirming it, so the reception of baptism is a seal confirming our covenant and engagements to be the Lord's. And when persons are duly qualified, and rightly receive it, according to God's direction, 'tis a seal on God's part. He does hereby confirm to them the blessings of the covenant of grace. He engages, if I may so say, to be to them a God ; which comprehends all that they want. This ordinance being by his appointment, is as his hand and seal, which he will never deny, but will make good and confirm all that is implied in the covenant, to them that receive the seal according to his appointment.

II. *I am to shew how persons must be qualified, before they can properly receive the sacrament of baptism.*

I am not here to consider the scripture-warrant for the baptism of infants ; you are satisfied in that point, and I take it for granted : What I propose, is, to shew how adult persons must be qualified, if they were to receive baptism ; and how those who were baptized in infancy, and come to adult age, must be qualified, before they can properly offer their children to baptism. You will readily

readily grant, that some qualifications are necessary. If Papists and some others baptise without any qualifications, you, whose judgments are formed by the word of God, know that qualifications are insisted upon; so that it would be very improper to receive those to baptism, who openly continue in the sins of drunkennes, profane swearing, uncleannes, and the like scandalous vices. The door of the church is not to be opened to take in all the world, while persons evidently appear to be of the world: The church and the world are distinct things according to scripture; nor is it baptism merely that will distinguish them. They who live after the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eye, and the pride of life, are of the world, and baptism would not make them otherwise, unless they should live up to their christian profession. If any should say, they think all persons ought to come to baptism, because all ought to pray to God, love their fellow-creatures, and do other duties of the moral law: I answer, there is a great difference between natural and instituted duties. By natural duties, I mean such as these, viz. praying to God, and praising him; relative duties of parents and children, honesty and uprightnes in dealing, being punctual to our word, and affording relief to persons in distress: The obligations to these duties rises from the relation we stand in to God, and one another. Every rational creature is bound to perform them, and sins less while he endeavours to perform them as well as he can, than by a careless willful neglect of them, under a pretence that he has not the qualifications which God requires of him. But now the nature of instituted or appointed duties is far different: Of this sort, were, the priesthood and sacrifices of old, circumcision, and the passover. It was not the duty of every son and daughter of *Adam* to offer sacrifices, attend circumcision and the passover; it was the duty only of those, that God pointed out, and directed, to attend and  
perform

perform them. *Uzza* might not touch the ark, tho' in danger of falling, because he was not a priest, nor must *Uzziab* the king enter into the temple to offer sacrifice. So now, the gospel ministry, baptism, and the Lord's supper, are instituted duties. The persons and the qualifications are described in the sacred oracles; every man may not perform the duties of the ministerial office, tho' he might plead that therein was a near and delightful approach to God. Nor may any draw near to God in the reception of sacraments, (which are instituted duties) unless they are such persons as he declares qualified for them. *John* and *Philip* would not baptise till they found the requisite qualifications. (See *John* iii. 6. and *Acts* viii.) God has appointed who shall attend instituted duties, what must be their qualifications, and who shall not attend them; and what it is disqualifies, or unfits them therefor. I think all who will attentively consider these things, must see, that there are qualifications necessary for baptism, without which it is not to be attempted; and also, that there is a difference between duties which are instituted, and those that are natural or moral.

And this will further appear, when I come to consider the qualifications necessary, which I should immediately do, was it not proper, first, to consider whether persons, baptised in infancy, who in adult age come to renew the covenant, and receive baptism for their children, must not have the same qualifications, as if they were to be baptised themselves, or the same qualifications that persons must have, who were not baptised in infancy, but in adult age, come to seek it on their own account. I think the qualifications of each sort of persons must be the same; and many doubtless will say, this is so evident, that we wonder any thing should be said upon it; but however evident, yet it is denied by some, who say, that those baptised in infancy, need not have so high qualifications

cations when they come to get their children baptised, as if they sought it in adult age, without being baptised in infancy. Though one would be ready to think, if any allowance should be made, it ought to be in favour of those poor creatures, who have not been brought up in the bosom of the church, nor enjoyed the advantages of those who have been favoured with a pious education. But I would shew, that there must be the same qualifications in each, for these reasons,

1. As much knowledge is necessary in those who were baptised in infancy, and renew covenant in adult age, as is necessary in the other sort of persons; none can rightly attend sacraments without knowledge; but the equal degree of knowledge is not denied.

2. If those baptised in infancy have been vicious, they must manifest signs of repentance, as much as if they had not been baptised; they must therefore be free from scandal as much as the other sort.

3. Those baptised in infancy must renew the covenant, and make a credible profession of religion: Their renewing covenant is making their parents act their own. They then come to consider the nature and design of the sacrament of baptism, and their obligations to renounce the flesh, the world, and the devil; they are to engage for themselves as much as if they were now to be baptised. They are to consider and realise, that they are sealed and marked out for God, and explicitly give into all that is implied in baptism, which, as our catechism well expresses it, *signifies and seals our engagements to be the Lord's*. As nothing less than such a profession of religion is necessary in these, so I think nothing more in point of profession can be necessary in those not baptised in infancy; and as to other qualifications it will be granted they must be the same. But this point will be further confirmed, when I come to speak of the profession of religion, and of entering into, or renewing covenant.

I now proceed to consider, what qualifications are necessary in those who apply for baptism.

I. *It is necessary that such persons should have a competent degree of christian knowledge.* Without this they will offer the blind and lame in sacrifice; God must be worshipped with understanding, as well as in a spiritual manner; yea, without understanding they cannot worship him in spirit. But what understanding, what knowledge is necessary? Answer, the degree of it cannot be easily prescribed: But it is easy to observe, that such persons must have some proper knowledge of the great and holy God, his glorious perfections; the trinity of persons in the godhead; of our fallen depraved state, and inability to help ourselves; of the nature and necessity of regeneration, repentance, and faith; of justification, and its meritorious cause; of progressive sanctification; and also of the nature of sacraments, and a profession of religion; and on what grounds a person may lawfully enter into the visible church. Unless persons have some proper knowledge in such points as these, they cannot apply for baptism without presumption.

II. *They must be free from scandalous sins and offensive behaviour.* Were scandalous persons admitted, religion would suffer on their account. We all so well understand what is meant by scandalous sins, that I scarce need mention them; such as, adultery, fornication, drunkenness, lying, profane swearing, and cursing, stealing, cheating, sabbath-breaking, and the like; and in case persons have been guilty of scandal, it is necessary they should make a public confession of that sin.

The open violations of God's law, are a contempt of his authority; and when such as have broke his law, come to seek the privileges which he grants to his peculiar people, 'tis necessary that they should publicly testify their dislike and abhorrence of sin, and take shame for the dishonour done to God. Otherwise it is

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do not know; but they still allow of sin, and approve, or at least think light of, the violations of the divine law. By a publick confession of sin persons give glory to God, thereby acknowledging that his law is holy, just, and good, and that sin is an evil and hateful thing. 'Tis strange any should entertain that false groundless notion, that 'tis a disgrace to make a publick confession of sin. 'Tis not a disgrace among any that have a true sense of honour and reputation, but 'tis a credit. And on the other hand, to refuse a publick confession, is really dishonourable. It manifests pride, cowardice, and a mean unworthy temper, with little regard to God, or his honour and government. God's word not only approves, but requires, confession for sin, (*Matt. iii. 6.*) "They were baptised confessing their sins." (*1 Tim. v. 20.*) "Those that sin, rebuke before all," &c. And as persons must be free from scandal, so they must

III. *Be actually engaged in the positive and practical parts of religion.* The profession they make must be adorned by a good conversation: They must manifest a relish for religion, and the company and conversation of godly people; a reverence for the holy name of God, and dislike to such persons as profane it. They must have a regard for the sabbath, and house of God. How inconsistent is it for such persons to profess they take the Lord for their God, and will serve him, and yet mispend or profane the sabbath, and seldom attend the worship of God. They must also attend the worship of God in their families, praying in them daily. This branch of practical religion must be insisted on as a necessary qualification. What an absurdity is it, to lead parents to engage to bring up their children in the fear of the lord, and to set a good example before them, while this duty is neglected? Such parents do not set a good example, nor teach their children to fear the Lord.

IV. *There must be a profession of true religion\**. Baptism is not to be administered to any, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him†. Profession of religion, or covenanting, is necessarily previous to the administration of a seal; for a sacrament is a seal of the covenant, of some covenant whatever it be that persons enter into.---But here the great enquiry is, what are persons to profess? What is implied in a profession of religion? Or what is the nature of the covenant persons must enter into, renew, or engage in?---In a profession of religion, two things should be well attended to, 1. That persons well understand and consider what it is they profess. 2. That it be a proper profession of religion, or of that in which religion does consist.

1. *Persons should well understand and consider what they profess.* They should understand the proper meaning and import of the words used in their profession or covenanting; whether the nature of the covenant implies gracious sincerity or not. There is no transaction between God and man more solemn and important than that of covenanting; none in which we should be more careful  
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\*. I do not mention faith and repentance as distinct heads of qualifications, any further than they are implied in a profession of religion; because I am considering the qualifications that ministers must find and insist upon, in order to admit persons to baptism. And if we look into the scripture, we shall find that it is a profession of faith and repentance, with proper fruits, which is insisted on, in order to admission: The profession that I insist upon, fully implies saving faith and repentance; and that these are necessary, I hope I have made evident, where I speak of persons being sincere in what they profess. That saving faith and repentance are necessary in the sight of God, is evident from the nature of the sacrament of baptism. The reception of baptism in adult age, signifies and seals the reception of Christ's blood, and the sanctifying influences of the Holy Ghost; for these are certainly signified by baptism, and the reception of these cannot be without true faith. Repentance is also necessary, even such repentance as is necessary for the remission of sins. (*Acts* ii. 38.) "*Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins*".

†. See shorter catechism; also larger cat. Quest. 166.

to act exactly according to God's will and direction. In this matter God is a jealous God.† And if people understand the meaning of the covenant, they must take heed that they do not make a lying profession. God hates hypocrisy, will not be mocked, requires truth in the inward part. (Consider *Jer.* iii. 10. and *Acts* v.) Ministers should be careful to guard people against the sin of making a lying profession. People are apt to comply with customary forms, will often offer to profess religion, when it is to be feared, they do not understand or sincerely comply with it. Ministers should warn them of this evil; shew them the danger of transacting this matter in a careless or hypocritical manner. Although they do not know the heart, cannot see sincerity, yet they may do much to guard people against coming rashly, and professing what is not true. Nor can a minister be free from great guilt, if he is not faithful in the matter. John Baptist would not let some comply with the customary form, and receive baptism when they offered it. (*Mat.* iii.)

2. *We are to consider, that a proper profession, is a profession of that which is religion, or in which religion does consist.* I think this is well expressed by the assembly of divines, when they say, "'tis a profession of faith in "Christ and obedience to him." 'Tis not enough to profess a belief of the doctrine of christianity, but also obedience to Christ, submission to him, and compliance with his will. The covenant persons engage in, is a covenant to be the Lord's, in the sense in which he requires us to be his in his word. The whole of the covenant of grace is comprehended in God's being our God, and our being his people. By persons professing religion,  
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†. How strange it is, that in covenanting, some ministers should choose to use such words, which are of a doubtful meaning, or may be used in two different senses; that good men and wicked men, friends and enemies to God, may all use them, and none know in which sense they were to be understood.

is not meant professing or declaring in so many words, that they are religious, or have true religion; but they profess that, which if true, implies it. If persons declare they take and avouch *Jehovah* to be their God, and give themselves to him as his people, it properly implies all that God requires of any of us. It implies, that we prefer God and Christ to every thing else; that we love his will, and take his word for our rule; that we hate sin, and watch against it. Now, persons that can say this, have true religion.

But it will be said by some, “If so much should be implied in the covenanting of those, who have in no sense been in covenant before, yet ’tis not necessary that so much should be required of those baptised in infancy, for they are already God’s covenant people, and within the church, and their children have a right to baptism, if the parents cannot covenant so as to imply true religion.”

Answer. This is taking something for granted without proving it; taking for granted something that will appear not to be fact. Those baptised in infancy, in order to enjoy church-privileges in adult age, must understand the nature of being God’s covenant-people, and take the covenant upon themselves. To this purpose, let me offer you the following words of the late rev. president *Edwards*. “When those persons, (says he,) who were  
 ‘ baptised in infancy, do properly own their baptismal  
 ‘ covenant, the meaning of it is, that they now being  
 ‘ become capable to act for themselves, do professedly  
 ‘ and explicitly make their parents act, in giving them  
 ‘ up to God, their own, by expressly giving themselves  
 ‘ up to God; but this no person can do without  
 ‘ dissembling, unless that he supposes, that he in his heart  
 ‘ consents to be God’s. A child of christian parents  
 ‘ never does that for himself, which his parents did for  
 ‘ him in infancy, till he gives himself wholly to God.

‘ And

‘ And surely a person doth not give himself wholly to  
 ‘ God, while he keeps back not only a part, but the  
 ‘ chief part, viz. his heart and soul. He that keeps  
 ‘ back his heart, does in effect keep back all. If there  
 ‘ be any words used by such persons in their profession,  
 ‘ which don’t imply that they really give themselves to  
 ‘ God, but reserve and keep back their chief part; it  
 ‘ ceases to be a profession of giving themselves up to  
 ‘ God, and so ceases to be a professed covenanting with  
 ‘ God, or owning God’s covenant: For the thing which  
 ‘ they profess, belongs to no covenant of God in being;  
 ‘ for God has revealed no such covenant; nor has any  
 ‘ such covenant of God any existence, in which our  
 ‘ transacting of the covenant, is a giving up ourselves  
 ‘ with reserve, or holding back a part, especially holding  
 ‘ back our souls, our chief part, and in effect our all.”

Thus he.---But it is still said by some, that such explicit  
 covenanting cannot be required of those baptised in  
 infancy, because they are already in the church; the  
 question, say they, is, concerning one already in the  
 church; what is necessary to keep his standing and enjoy  
 privileges, not what would admit one a-new? And in  
 order to keep their standing and enjoy privileges, they  
 think no such covenanting can be required. I answer,  
 that to clear this objection, it should be well considered,  
 how far persons are, and how far they are not, in the  
 church, merely on account of their infant baptism.  
 Much confusion is thrown on this point, by intimating  
 that infant baptism so brings persons into the church, as  
 to intitle them to the privileges of church members in  
 adult age. But such are by no means church members  
 in full, or to have the privileges of adult members.  
 They are only in the church, as infants are taken in with  
 their parents; they are only passive, and not capable of  
 enjoying the privileges of adults, till they have knowledge  
 and make their parents acts their own. The objections

would

would have little weight, if it was well considered, that when a person comes to adult age, to receive church privileges upon his own account, he must do a great deal more than just continue in the standing he was in by infant baptism: He now comes to exercise knowledge, make his infant baptism as much as he can his own act, and comply with the covenant that gives a right to baptism: In brief, he passes from infancy to manhood, from a passive to an active state; and thus becomes a church-member, very different from what he was before.

But since some maintain, that persons may be admitted into the church as adult members, and to church privileges, whether baptised in infancy, or not, without having ground to think that they are really and savingly in the covenant of grace, or have sincerely taken God for their God, in preference to all other things; and that the church admit them, and they have a right to come, by their being in a sort of outward covenant relation to God, having *moral sincerity*, and the like; and therefore that such a covenanting and profession as I have been pleading for, cannot be requisite; I must discuss this matter a little further.--And let the three following particulars be well considered.

1. The opinion that I am opposing, viz. of unregenerate men having a right to come by being externally in covenant, &c. cannot be supported, without maintaining, that God enters into covenant with unregenerate men, makes promises to them, yea, fulfils and confirms those promises to them; and that upon their complying with the terms of the covenant, while yet they are unregenerate: For it must be granted, that in every covenant between God and man, which is sealed by both parties, there are promises and engagements on God's part, and duties on man's part, to be complied with, in order to have God make good the promises on his part. Now the sealing of such a covenant, is the ratifying and confirming the covenant;

covenant; the applying such a seal on man's part, is his declaration, and solemn visible token of his compliance with the terms of the covenant. And when any creature does, by God's direction, and according to his will, use or apply the seal of the covenant; I say, if done by his direction, God does thereby declare, that that creature has complied with the terms of the covenant; and therefore that the promises belong to, and are sealed to that creature. The seals of the covenant, are God's seals, as much as the creature's, when the creature complies with them according to God's appointment. To suppose therefore, that God directs, or allows, an unregenerate man to apply the seals of the covenant; supposes that the promises of the covenant belong to that man; which is a principle contrary to all sound *Calvinist* divines.\*

2. If the right to circumcision and baptism, be according to the opinion that I am opposing, viz. of an  
external

\*. 'Tis strange that the danger of self-righteousness, does not make some ministers cautious of admitting graceless persons into the church. There are some ministers, that will admit people to church privileges, without the supposition of grace, and yet will scarce allow it proper to advise and encourage unconverted persons to pray and use other means, lest they should be self-righteous and rest in duty. Now if there is danger in encouraging persons to pray, and do other duties of the moral law, which is binding upon all rational creatures as such; there is much more danger in encouraging them to come, and admitting them to the instituted duties and privileges of God's peculiar people; to apply to God in a covenant way, and receive the seals of the covenant of grace, even those seals that represent all the benefits and blessings of that covenant. But 'tis strange how prejudice will blind.---'Tis certain that in some places, people are inclined to run into the church as soon as they have a little conviction, and their minds turn upon religion more than usual. They are not easy till they apply for baptism, or enter into the church; and this gives them relief. Whether this is a common case or not, there is certainly great danger of it. What is here said may at least be a balance to an objection that some make, viz. that admitting persons on the supposition of their having grace, may build them up, and establish them in a false hope, when it may be they have no grace.

external covenant, &c. then the covenant with *Abraham*, of which circumcision was a seal, was not the real and proper covenant of grace. For the opinion does not suppose, that their right depends upon their having grace, or a real spiritual in-being, in God's gracious covenant. If there be any covenant-relation, or state that gives right to baptism, without being really in God's gracious covenant, it must be the covenant with *Abraham*; for that covenant was the foundation of circumcision and baptism; nor can infant baptism be defended any other way. If the covenant with *Abraham*, was not really and properly a gracious covenant, to what purpose have there been so many volumes written by our divines, strenuously asserting and maintaining that it was, and all allowing that infant baptism cannot be defended on any other principle. I have not here time, nor room to hint at the arguments by which our divines irrefragably prove, that *Abraham's* covenant was a covenant of grace: But what I would show, is, that the opinion I am opposing, is contrary to all orthodox divines, that maintain infant baptism; and contrary to the arguments which so abundantly prove *Abraham's* covenant to have been properly the covenant of grace.

3. The opinion that I am opposing, cannot be supported without interpreting the most spiritual, weighty, and important texts in the new testament, in an *Arminian* or *Socinian* sense, so as in effect to render void the whole gospel: For it supposes, that the faith, or believing, required in order to baptism, in the gospel, is only doctrinal faith, or at most, something short of saving faith; that repentance, and fruits meet for repentance, required, may be found in unregenerate men; that being baptised into Christ's death, and planted together in the likeness of his death, whereby the old man is crucified with him; and being risen with him to newness of life, (*Rom. vi.*) does not imply saving grace, but something  
short

short of it. And that when it is said, (*Gal. 3.*) that such as have been baptised into Christ, have put on Christ, it does not imply putting on the image of Christ, or holiness of nature, but something short of it. And when the apostle adds, ye are all the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus, and if ye are Christ's, then are ye *Abraham's* seed, and heirs according to the promise; he does not mean, that they are the children of God, in a saving sense, or that they are the seed of *Abraham* in a true spiritual sense, but only in some external sense.† Now if the spirituality and internal excellency of all these texts, and others that might be mentioned, which are joined with baptism, shewing the qualifications requisite for the ordinance; I say, if these are all given up to serve an *Hypothesis*, there is as much reason to interpret those other scriptures, of the new creature, the new birth, &c. as the *Socinians* do; and thus we are deprived of the truth of the gospel at once. After having been led thus far upon this particular of christian profession, I proceed to the

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† If any should think that the difference between me, and those I contend with, lies only in this, viz. That I insist upon persons having grace; so that it must be known that they have grace; and my opponents only insist upon the appearance, or outward evidence of it; I answer, this is not the case: For tho' I maintain that nothing but the truth and reality of grace, gives right in the sight of God; yet 'tis the credible evidence and outward appearance of it, and nothing else, that ministers or the church have any concern with, as to other persons. 'Tis not in the power of ministers or churches to know the hearts of others, nor can they have any internal evidence, 'tis external evidence alone that they are concerned with. By being externally in covenant, my opponents do not mean persons appearing to have grace, so far as they can judge, tho' we may be mistaken: but they hold, that persons may be God's covenant people, so as to have right to sacraments, when neither the persons themselves, nor the ministers as door-keepers, or the church have any sufficient scriptural evidence, that they have true grace: Nay, they do not *profess* that, in which true religion consists, and therefore are not Christians by *profession*.

V. *And last qualification for baptism, which is, that persons come into full communion in the church, with a design to partake of the sacrament of the Lord's supper.* Those who receive baptism for their children, are not to neglect the Lord's supper. Those who have professed religion, and received baptism, are in the church. There is no other way of coming into full communion in the church, but by a profession of religion and baptism. All that come for baptism, must profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him; and if they obey him, they come to his table. To profess obedience to Christ, is to profess obedience to his commands; and he expressly commands his disciples to observe the sacrament of the supper. 'Take, eat, drink, do this, says he, in remembrance of me.' Persons cannot sincerely profess obedience to Christ's commands, without coming to his table. Let such as apply for baptism, consider they have entered into covenant, and sealed it once, viz. by baptism; and now to neglect or refuse to seal it again at his table, is to break covenant with God, and refuse his commands. To pretend to set to their seal once, as they do in baptism, and not at the same time design to repeat it in the sacrament of the supper, is to deal deceitfully in the covenant of their God.---But such will say, we are unfit, and dare not come to the Lord's table. I answer, if this is the case, you are also unfit for baptism. For consider, the same qualifications are necessary for one sacrament as for the other, in adult age. Baptism is as much a sacrament as the Lord's supper; the former as much a seal of the covenant of grace, as the latter. There are not two covenants, one for baptism, and other for the Lord's supper, but one and the same covenant. Baptism as much represents the blood of Christ, and the blessings procured by his death, as the other sacrament, and our receiving it, as much implies our receiving the blood of Christ, as our receiving the other sacrament does. Since baptism is a sacrament,

sacrament, Christ and the benefits of the new covenant are therein represented, sealed and applied to believers. § Baptism is as solemn and sacred an ordinance, and as solemn an approach to God, as the Lord's supper. Much more is said in scripture concerning qualifications for baptism, than for the supper. (See *Mat.* iii. *Mat.* xxviii. *Acts* ii. *Acts* viii. *Acts* x. *Rom.* vi. *Gal.* iii.) Why should any think so light of baptism, that they will dare to apply for this, when yet they dare not come to the other sacrament? 'Tis as great a sin, and as dangerous to receive baptism unworthily, as to receive the Lord's supper unworthily; and the same worthiness is required for both. If the apostle *Paul* had had occasion to speak of the unworthy reception of baptism, he would with the same reason have said that they received condemnation or judgment to themselves. If persons are not qualified for the Lord's supper, they should not be allowed to profess religion, come into God's holy covenant, and take and apply the seal of it in baptism: For how is it possible that this can properly or lawfully be done, when they cannot shew forth Christ's death in the sacrament of the supper.

But some will object, and say, we dare not come to the Lord's table, for we cannot see our way clear, but we think it our duty to renew our covenant, and get our children baptised, and we are willing to come as far as we see our way clear. These words, or words of the same import, are often in people's mouths; but ask the question, what makes you think it your duty to have your children baptised, when you are not fit for the Lord's table? And they are speechless. I never yet received from any Body a tolerable answer to this question.---Now as to the opinion of those who think it duty to have children baptised, while 'tis not duty to come to  
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§ See shorter catechism.

the Lord's table; I observe that such persons labour under a mistake in one of these two points. (1) They think it duty to renew covenant and get their children baptised, when 'tis not duty in present circumstances. Or (2) they labour under some groundless scruples and fears about coming to the Lord's supper.

1. Persons may think it duty to apply for baptism, &c. when 'tis not their next immediate duty, because they may not be qualified for it. They may think too lightly of covenanting and baptism, whereas 'tis a most weighty and solemn thing. All that would thus apply, should well consider the nature of covenanting and engaging to be the Lord's. Now if persons do rightly consider the nature of covenanting, as mentioned under the last head of qualifications, and can in an understanding and proper manner thus engage, and yet are afraid to come to the Lord's table, then they labour under the

2 Mistake just mentioned, viz. groundless scruples and fears respecting the Lord's supper; as if there was something much more solemn and sacred in this, than in covenanting with God, and sealing the covenant by the sacrament of baptism.---It is the duty of such persons to endeavour to get light, and understand the nature of sacraments, and of covenanting with God. They should consider, how inconsistent 'tis to say, as they do in covenanting, 'that they avouch the Lord *Jehovah* to be their 'God,' and say this publickly before the world, and yet be afraid to attend the Lord at his table, and own a crucified saviour there. Can they say in covenanting, that they take Jesus Christ for their saviour, depending alone upon him for salvation, and yet not come, and in the exercise of faith, observe the sacrament of the supper? Can they say, in covenanting that they renounce their sins, make the word of God their rule, and promise obedience to Christ, and yet neglect his command, to shew forth his death in remembrance of him? Can they seal their engagements

engagements to be the Lord's in the sacrament of baptism, and yet fear to seal it again in the sacrament of the supper? People labouring under mistakes about sacraments, should be enlightned, and not be allowed to come rashly in ignorance, and separate what God has joyned together.

But after all, some have objected in this manner, and said, may not baptism be of great service, if persons have not the particular qualifications which the scriptures seem to require? May it not be a great blessing to our children to bring them into the church of Christ? Is it reasonable that children should suffer for their parents faults?---In answer to this objection, let me intreat such persons to consider, that no ordinance or means can be blessed, or do any good, unless God gives the blessing. No good is to be obtained but what he communicates; and 'tis not likely he will give his blessing, when things are not done according to his direction; when his terms are not complied with, but his will contradicted. God will not bless means in every way, but only in the way that he hath appointed. What advantage was baptism to *Simon*, (*Acts* viii.) who afterwards continued in the gall of bitterness, and bonds of iniquity, and became an implacable enemy to the church of Christ? What benefit did the *Jews* receive from their sacrifices and offerings, when not done as God directed? (*I/a.* i.) These offerings, new moons, &c. were of God's own appointment, as much as baptism; but for want of due qualifications in the people, God abhorred them; they were an abomination, his soul hated them. Instead of hoping for a blessing, it is awfully dangerous to meddle with intituted duties unless we are qualified. *Uzza* had a good intention in steadyng the ark, but was struck dead, because not a person whom God had appointed for it, or because he meddled with a sacred thing, in an improper manner, without God's direction. *Nadab* and *Abihu* were struck dead in their offerings, because there

was something amiss in them. Consider, that in the second command, which respects God's worship, he says, he is a jealous God, (consider also *Jer.* vi. 20. and *Prov.* xv. 8.) And as to children suffering for parents faults, let me observe, they are not like to suffer less, for being baptised, if done in a way that God does not approve. - Baptism can do the child no good, unless God blesses the ordinance. And is it more likely that God will bless the child, when baptised in an improper manner? 'Tis strange that God should be obliged to follow a sinful action with his blessing! His word gives no encouragement to do evil that good may come, but threatens damnation to those that do, because it is just. (*Rom.* iii.) It should be considered, that children or infants have no right to baptism, but what comes by their parents, through the divine appointment. The baptism of infants cannot be defended from scripture, without granting this: And if children's right depends upon the qualifications of the parents, then parents not qualified, have no right to offer their children to baptism: And if they do that which they have no right to do, they have no reason to think God will own and bless it, because they do it; but have much reason to think God will disown it, and reject them and their children, as he has done others for the profanation of sacred things. God will at last say to such parents, who has required these things at your hands, done in the manner you have done them? Let parents well consider these things, who seek baptism for their children when they are not duly qualified for it.

But still some have objected, were not all circumcised persons under the law allowed to circumcise their children; and as baptism is come in the room of circumcision, why should the children of baptised persons be cut off? Answer,

1. If the objection has any argument in it, it proves too much, viz. That scandalous persons may bring their children

children to baptism, which my opponents do not plead for, and therefore is as much against them, as against me; and the same answer that will do for them, will do for me.

2. God then appointed, that none should come, but such as were holy, his covenant people, that had the visible evidences of grace. All others were by his express direction to be cut off from the congregation of the Lord. It was by their neglecting and departing from the rules God gave them, that they admitted the unclean. *Ezek.* xxii. 26. compared with chap. xlv. 23. is a full answer to this objection. The former shews how God looked upon the degeneracy of the Jewish church in these things, viz. ‘ Her priests have violated my law, and have profaned my holy things; they have put no difference between the holy and profane, neither have they shewed difference between the clean and the unclean.’ And the latter points out what should be in gospel times; speaking of the priests, God says, ‘ They shall teach my people the difference between the holy and profane, and cause them to discern between the clean and unclean.’

If this second answer does not satisfy all, as not being agreeable to their notion of the *Sinai* covenant, Yet

3, ’Tis easy to observe, that the scripture is abundant in mentioning a very great, yea, essential difference between the *Mosaic* and *Christian* dispensation. The first was weak, imperfect and faulty, compared with the second. That was a state of bondage, nonage, no glory, compared with the glory and freedom of the gospel church; and much more to the same purpose: These things considered must certainly enervate this objection.

I have now finished what I had to say upon the qualification for baptism; but must here observe, that ministers or church officers are door keepers to the church, and are under solemn obligations to take care, that those they admit be duly qualified according to the rules of God’s word.

word. He ordered of old, that there should be a proper difference between the clean and the unclean ; and blames and threatens the priests whose business it was, because they did not keep up this difference. And it was prophesied that under the gospel dispensation, ministers should be more careful and faithful in this matter.

Gospel ministers are bound to proceed by the rules of Christ. They are not to pretend to discern the heart, or determine who are internally gracious, and who not. Their private opinion or suspicion is not to be the rule of their procedure. Christians are to be judg'd of by their proper fruits. 'Tis easy for ministers to proceed by Christ's rule in admitting persons into the church. Those are to be admitted who make *an understanding profession of faith, repentance, and new obedience, and whose behaviour and practice gives reason to think their profession is sincere.* This may be considered as the rule. 'This is sufficient to direct ministers. They can easily judge of these things.

As it is ministers duty to take care that persons are properly qualified; and as I think none have a right in adult age to apply for baptism, unless they at the same time apply for full communion in the church; I am now my hearers, to inform you, that I cannot any longer baptise children for any but such †. The reasons for this have been mentioned in the preceding discourse, where I have shewn what profession is necessary for baptism, and that such persons are not to neglect the Lord's supper.

But here some are ready to propose such a question as this: Suppose a person whom I look upon properly qualified for both sacraments, who yet through some fears and scruples dare not come to the Lord's table, but

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†. It has been the common practice in our churches to admit almost every body to the sacrament of baptism, and very few comparatively into full communion, to attend the sacrament of the supper. This groundless dividing of the sacraments, and making a difference, where there ought to be none, has been the occasion of this discourse.

is desirous of baptism for his children, why cannot I allow this; allow him to comply with his duty as far as he can? This I have found used as a common objection, and thrown in my way, as tho' it had the force of a strong argument. But to this I answer,

1. 'Tis not at all to the purpose, if applied to the common practice of admitting almost every body. Suppose the person mentioned here, might be indulged this liberty, it is nothing to the common practice of admitting to baptism those, whom neither themselves, nor church officers, think fit for the Lord's supper.

2. While the person proposed, labours under these groundless fears and scruples, rising from error and mistake, his next immediate duty is to get light; get acquainted with the nature of sacraments and qualifications for them: Such a person cannot act right in one sacrament, while he is under so great errors as to the other: While he is in such darkness, we have reason to fear he comes presumptuously, so far as he does come, and offers to God the blind and the lame in sacrifice; for 'tis granted, that he has not right views of covenanting and the nature of sacraments, otherwise he would not apply for one seal and neglect the other. I think it my duty to instruct such a person, and not encourage his acting presumptuously. Suppose a person I thought qualified, should conscientiously desire to come to the Lord's table, when yet he had never been baptised, and should refuse to be baptised, fearing he was not fit for it; since there is much more said in scripture about qualifications for baptism, than for the Lord's supper; should I allow this person to comply with duty so far as he should see his way clear? Should I allow him to come to the Lord's table without ever being baptised? Surely no. My duty is to keep him off, and enlighten him. Or, suppose a person should conscientiously think, (as thousands have taught) that he might properly come and partake of the  
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bread in the Lord's supper, but might not partake of the cup, and should offer himself upon this condition ; should I admit him to come so far as he can see his way clear ? No ; I would keep him off until he was taught better. And thus I think it duty to do with the person mentioned in the objection. Answer,

3. I have endeavoured for some years to practise according to the question, and I know other ministers that now endeavour it, viz. admit none to baptism, but such as might be admitted to the Lord's table, if they would come. And I find the consequence is still this, that people will come to baptism in a careless manner, without proper qualifications. For in this case, if the minister who admits them, thinks the qualifications the same for both sacraments, the persons that apply; think there is a great difference, and they will come upon their own principle. As a minister can only judge of doctrinal knowledge, and external conduct, and people who apply, are restrained by no principles of conscience; they come to baptism in a careless presumptuous manner; for they think almost any body may get their children baptised. 'Tis reasonable to suppose this would be the case; and I find in fact it is so, by the after irregular and unbecoming behaviour and practice of those that did apply. Ministers may warn people, and solemnly inculcate the necessity of being properly qualified in order to baptism, but 'tis to little purpose, while the people think they may freely come without those qualifications, which the minister thinks necessary. Answer,

4. Another reason why I cannot admit such as are proposed in the question, is, that it obliges me to receive those who are admitted in the most lax manner in other churches. If I admit some to baptism, who come not to the Lord's table, I appear to practise as in other places; and as I must hold communion with the churches, I cannot consistently refuse those that move into my congregation,

congregation, if they bring certificates of being admitted to the privilege of baptism for their children elsewhere. What shall I do? I know that in many other places people are allowed to apply for baptism in the most lax manner. Neither ministers nor people think there is need, or so much as pretend to the qualifications, which I in my conscience think are necessary. Shall I attempt to make these persons profess religion different from what they have done, and it may be reject some that have been admitted elsewhere? This would be odd. Shall I receive those that my conscience tells me ought not to be received? This I cannot do. In fine, I know of no middle way between opening the church doors too wide, and admitting those only who come into full communion. There is no *medium* between right and wrong: There are but two states after this life. All the world will be divided into two sorts at the judgment day: and I can see no reason, that in this world there should be a sort of community erected by *protestants*, that belongs neither to the visible kingdom of Christ, nor to the visible kingdom of Satan.†

I know the objection of novelty will be thrown out against the method I here propose: It will be said, this is a new and strange way, contrary to the practice of all the churches.---Answer, 'tis not so strange and unheard of a thing as some may imagine. If any will take pains to search, they will find that all the protestant churches have

† We all profess a desire to bring children who are baptised under the discipline of the church. Ministers and churches say, they desire it, and will attempt it. Now this would be much easier attained to, if no children were admitted to baptism, but of those that are in full communion. 'Tis next to impossible, to discipline baptised children, when almost every body is allowed to bring to baptism. The benefit of infant baptism is in a great measure lost, if baptised children are not watched over and disciplined. The general neglect of this duty is, I suppose, in a great measure occasioned by opening the doors of the church so wide.

have held, that saving faith and repentance are necessary qualifications for baptism, in adult age; and that the same qualifications are necessary in those who were baptised in infancy, when they came to renew covenant, and obtain baptism for their children. Our excellent Westminster confession of faith, and catechisms are undeniably plain upon this point; and that almost all the protestant divines are on my side, may be easily seen in *Mr. Foxcroft's* answer to *Mr. Edwards's* five queries. § And my opinion is so far from being novel and unheard of, that this charge will be found to lye against the contrary practice. In the first settling of *New-England*, they baptised for none but such as entered into full communion: It was not till after some considerable time that they allowed of two sorts of covenanting; and even now there are many churches in *New-England*, that admit none to baptism, but such as come into full communion in the church. And I know a number of ministers among us, who think 'tis the scriptural method; that it ought to be the practice of the churches, and are groaning under the difficulties of the contrary custom; who wish for an alteration, and hope that it may be obtained.

But the question here ought not to be so much what is the practice of the churches, as what saith the scripture? To the law and to the testimony. We are not to follow a multitude to do evil. Christ approves the few that keep their garments clean. If we walk according to his word here, and obtain his approbation at last, it is enough. As to myself, I submit the event to God. I know not what will be the consequence in this congregation; but I cannot act contrary to the principles of my own judgment: Unless I obtain other light, I must  
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§ And that this was the opinion and practice of the antient church, from the apostles times, appears from what *Mr. John Erskine* has cited from the fathers in his second theological dissertation.

act by the light I now have, which is to baptise for none, unless they come into full communion in the church.

I shall conclude with an address to three sorts of people.

1. I would address myself to those who have professed religion; properly entered into covenant; are in full communion in the church, and have obtained baptism for their children. Will you not try to improve your baptism and covenant relation to God to some valuable purpose? Realise the solemn vows and promises that you have made, and the obligations you have laid yourselves under. Have you not professedly renounced the flesh, the world, and the devil? Have you not declared that you will shew yourselves the disciples and followers of Christ? That you will take his word for your rule in all your conduct? And cheerfully submit to be governed by his laws? That you will be exemplary in your families, and bring up your children in the fear of the Lord? That you will promote religion, and endeavour to build up Christ's kingdom in the world? All this you have implicitly, if not in so many words, promised in your covenanting to be for God. And is all this to stand for nothing? Will you forget whose you are, and how you are to live? God forbid! Let your baptism and covenant relation to God, guard you against sin, and engage you to holiness, and every practical duty. Say within yourselves, have we that mark and seal upon us, that shews we belong to God; and shall we indulge sin, that abominable thing which he hates? Shall we practically renounce him after we are set apart and sealed for him? We cannot bear the thought; it shall not be so. Has God done so much to distinguish us from many others, and shall we be ungrateful? Shall we requite him evil for all his kindness? Shall we profane the sacred name which has been called upon us? Shall we in any respect act, as if we renounced our part in the benefits purchased

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by the dying pains and precious blood of Jesus Christ? We must not, we cannot act thus; but will devote our time and talents to his glory, who has loved us, and given himself for us. Thus you should improve your baptism, by guarding you against sin, and exciting you to obedience.

And would you manifest your gratitude to God, consider and realise what a great advantage it is to belong to the visible church; to have yourselves and children numbered among God's peculiar people. Christ has a tender regard to his church in this world; he has done great things for it. When others are destroyed, he has often preserved his church: If he afflicts it greatly, yet he will not suffer it to be overborne: He so regards his church, that he spares others for its sake. 'Tis good being in company and relative bonds with those that God has a peculiar respect for. (2 Kings iii. 14.) *Were it not that I regard Jehoshaphat, the king of Judah, I would not look towards thee.---But now bring, &c.* What a mercy would it have been to *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*, if there had been but a small church of God in them. (Gen. 18.)

By being in the visible church, you have the means of grace; the word and ordinances are committed to you: While it was confined in the Jewish nation, Christ would not let his disciples carry the means any where else. Go not to the *Gentiles*, or the *Samaritans*, but to the house of *Israel*. (Mat. x. 15.) What mercy did the *Cyrophenician* woman obtain, by living near the people of God. (Mat. xv.) And it shews how distinguished and regarded the visible church is, that before Christ would shew her mercy, she must confess that she was not to expect the favour of God's children or visible people, but only the crumbs, that they might easily spare. When *Cornelius*, who was not one of God's visible people, was to obtain mercy, he must be sent to the visible church for it.

(*Acts* x.) Surely the privileges of the visible church are not to be set light by ; more especially when we are by God himself brought into the number of his peculiar people, as we and our children are by baptism and covenanting, when done according to God's appointment.

Again, consider what an advantage 'tis, that by baptism you and yours are brought under the watch and care of christian people. You esteem it, and very properly, a great advantage in the education of a child, to have it under the watch, care and correction of good parents or tutors. In like manner it is advantageous to us, in this state of imperfection, to be under the discipline that God has ordered in his church. What a favour to have the friendly assistance of christian brethren ? To be reprov'd and admonish'd when we go astray ? A proper sense of these privileges must excite your gratitude, and lead you to enquire what you must render to the Lord, for his benefits.

And under this sense of things, be exhorted to perform your duty to your baptis'd children : When you view the goodness of God, in taking you and your children so near to himself ; when you consider your vows and promises, have you not all possible motives to educate your offspring for God. I cannot but fear a religious education of children is too much neglected : That some of you at least, neglect to realise the obligations you are under in this respect. Consider, my dear hearers, have you not given your children to God in their baptism ? desired his name and his mark to be put upon them ? And will you not try to have them distinguished from the rest of the world, by a regular practice, and an exemplary behaviour ? You cannot forget that your children have precious immortal souls, and will you not use all proper means for their salvation. Let your children know that you have devoted them to God in baptism ; that his name is called upon them. Convince them, if possible, that  
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it is a privilege to enjoy the means of grace: Warn them of the danger that is in sin; let them know that it leads to hell. Faithfully use all your wisdom and power to restrain them from evil practices. Try to convince them of the danger there is in evil company. Let them know what obligations you are under to them from your own covenant engagements, as well as from love to their precious souls. Remember, God has committed your children to your care, and that he will require their souls at your hands. Bear them on your hearts before God in prayer; set them a good example. How dreadful will it be to have your children follow you to hell, by following your example. Consider how much it tends to your comfort in this world to have them walking in the truth; how much it is for the glory of God, and how much it tends to make the church encrease and flourish.

And here let me observe, that you are obliged in duty to do what you can, to have the proper discipline of the church exercised towards your children; you have entered them into Christ's church, have promised to submit them to the government of it. This is a great privilege for them, and do you not desire that they should have all the advantages for religion, that they are capable of enjoying. Were all baptised children properly taken care of by the church, it might be an happy means of restraining them from vice, and leading them to consider their duty. A proper tender judicious discipline towards them, might have an happy tendency to convince the world, that there was something really advantageous in infant baptism. Hereby believers and their children would be distinguished from the rest of the world, and be what God would have them, a peculiar people. You, therefore, who are parents, should not only be willing, but afford your assistance, that your children may be called to a more private or publick account, and receive a proper discipline; when according to God's word the  
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case requires it. How unreasonable and sinful would it be for any parents, who have entered themselves and children into the church of Christ, to endeavour to screen their children from church censure, and be offended with church-officers when they call them to an account. How do such parents regard their promises; having declared they will do all they can to have their children brought up in the fear and admonition of the Lord? Is not church discipline one part of the admonition of the Lord? Is it not an excellent means in the good education of children? Parents, who refuse to bring their children to church-discipline, cannot with truth say, that they desire all proper means should be used with them, to bring them up in a religious manner.

To conclude this part of my address; although I would have you highly prize the privileges of the visible church, yet I must caution you not to rest in them. There have been too many in all ages, who have rested in external duties, without ever being acquainted with the inward or spiritual part of religion. It would be poor satisfaction to me, to find your notions and practices right as to externals, if at the same time you were destitute of holy natures, and your souls not conformed to God. There are many who belong to the visible church, that do not to the invisible. Think not that it is well with you, because you have been baptised, or come to the Lord's table. *Simon* the forcerer, professed his faith and was baptised; and yet was in the gall of bitterness, and bonds of iniquity. Many that can plead, they have eat and drank at Christ's table in the world, shall be rejected at last. How can you bear to go from the visible church to the regions of eternal despair? If you perish, you will be among the most miserable in hell, because you abuse privileges, by which you have been exalted as it were to heaven. Consider then, that without holiness no person can see the Lord. I am sensible, you are rationally con-

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vinced, that in order to be saved, you must have holy natures, must be born again, or must love God, and manifest that love by a sincere and chearful observance of his commands. And I earnestly entreat you not to rest, till you obtain good evidence that you are such persons.

2. I address those who are desirous to have their children baptised, and yet do not make a full profession of religion, but absent themselves from the Lord's table, will not join with christians to shew forth Christ's death, nor eat and drink in remembrance of the dear redeemer. You have heard what has been said of the necessity of qualifications, and what has been said to shew that no adult person is qualified for baptism, either for himself or children, unless he is also for the Lord's supper. I must urge you well to consider these things: For my own part, I have often been brought to great difficulty in this matter, being anxiously concerned on the one hand, lest I should offend people, and alienate your affections; and yet on the other, not daring to comply with their request, lest I should profane an holy ordinance, by applying it to improper subjects. I desire not to insist upon any qualifications but what the gospel requires: And as minister and door-keeper of the church, I am solemnly warned and obliged to act by the rules and directions Christ has given me, when I admit members into his church. Sure I am, I have no disposition, am under no temptation to keep out any that gospel rules will admit. I rejoice to see suitable persons offering to enlist themselves under Christ's banner. 'Tis my grief that there are no more such to offer themselves. But however glad I would be to see the church filled, yet I dare not admit such as are manifestly unqualified, lest I bring upon myself the displeasure of my Lord. If therefore, you will be disquieted with your minister in this matter, and apply elsewhere for baptism, even where qualifications

are but little regarded; you would do well to consider, whether you can expect Christ will bless the ordinance, either to yourselves or children. What will it avail you to wait upon ordinances, if not done according to Christ's appointment. In such cases, Christ will not regard the outward performance; but will reject it, and the person performing it. I must desire you to read, and consider these passages of scripture, *Isai. i. 11, 15. Jer. vi. 20. Prov. xv. 8.*

If you would come to one sacrament, and not to the other; it appears to me, you must be mistaken as to one or the other of them. Either you think baptism and renewing covenant, not to be such solemn and holy things as they are, or else you labour under needless scruples about the Lord's supper. Consider there are not two different covenants sealed by baptism and the Lord's supper, but one and the same. There are not two sorts of churches to be admitted into, one for them that come to baptism, and the other for them that come to the Lord's table: No, it is one and the same church, one and the same covenant, or else no covenant; and both sacraments are seals of the same covenant. If after all, you say, you are bound in conscience to apply for baptism, altho' you neglect the Lord's supper; you must act for yourselves; I desire not to influence you any further than I can enlighten you; nor would I have you act contrary to your own consciences: But let me insist that you look well to the matter, that it be conscience rather than custom, that influences you; and if it be conscience, that it be a well enlightned conscience; for sometimes a conscience not well enlightned, is a pernicious thing, and worse than no conscience at all. Thus *Paul*, and others, who persecuted and killed christians out of conscience, acted worse than if their consciences had been no way concerned about the matter. In a word, let us all often consider, that we must give an account

count to God. I know I must be answerable for my conduct, as to admitting or keeping persons out of the church, and as to administering or withholding the sacraments : And you must answer for your conduct in applying for sacraments : And if you apply in a manner that God has not directed, what can you answer, when God shall say, who hath required these things at your hands, in the manner that you have performed them ?

3. I would address myself to the children and youth who have been baptised in infancy. Consider, dear young hearers, that the name of God has been called upon you, his mark is set upon you ; your parents have given you up to God, and doubtless they desire that you should be wholly for him. You are now come to years of some understanding, and can consider your ways ; may I not then address you in the words of *Joshua*, choose you this day whom you will serve. God has taken you into his family, and requires you as rational creatures, to devote yourselves to him, and serve him. You should acknowledge the favour you received from him in infancy, now you are come to years of understanding ; you must own his goodness, and be thankful that he has distinguished you from the heathen ; that you have the light of the gospel and the advantages of a religious education ; that you are under the care of parents and the church, who are obliged to bring you up in a religious manner, watch over you, call you to an account for misconduct, warn and reprove you. 'Tis a mercy to young people to be brought up in such a way. And now will you not endeavour to improve your infant baptism to some valuable purpose ? You should be excited from hence, to make your parents act your own, in giving yourselves to God, and take encouragement to plead for further mercies. God designs that the mercies which you receive, should animate you to ask still more : He is never weary in well doing : He delights to give ; yea,  
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to give abundantly. God expects that you, who have by his direction been baptised, should apply to him, and plead for spiritual mercies. And will not you improve the price that is put into your hands ?

My dear young hearers, I cannot but look upon you with a tender concern, when I consider, how much depends upon the rising generation. You are capable of doing much for God and religion, but there is danger of the contrary. Your minds are flexible, and may receive impressions, good or bad : How desirable that you should take a turn to that which is good. The hopes of the church are upon you. The Fathers, who have been standards in the church, are passing off this stage of action, and what will become of the church, if the rising generation does not supply their place ; but instead of this, should rise up an encrease of sinful men ? I desire, I pray, I cannot but hope, many of you will be shining ornaments in the church. You have been taken into the bosom of the church by baptism, I hope you will not be so ungrateful as to forsake it by a sinful course, and so abandon yourselves to ruin. Will you give ministers and good people the gloomy prospect of your own destruction, and of the dwindling of the church for want of members ? Realise the goodness of God in giving you the means of grace, and especially a religious education. Remember the sacred name that has been called upon you, and how you profane it by living in sin. Remember, dear children, the prayers that have been, and are made for you ; the pains that have been taken with you, and the account, which in the day of judgment, you must give for all these things. Will you not be thoughtful, be teachable, hearken to good advice ? Don't give the best of your time and sprightly powers to the service of Satan. 'Tis good to serve the Lord, 'tis comfortable, 'tis exceeding satisfactory : And God has a right to your time and talents. Seek the Lord while

while he may be found ; you have his promise that you shall find him, if you seek him early. (*Prov.* iii. 17.) Beg God to give you his holy spirit, to sanctify your natures, to heal your spiritual diseases, to give you a new taste and relish for divine things, to strengthen and encourage you to serve him on earth, and fit you to enjoy him in heaven. I hope, my young hearers, you will be free to submit to church discipline. God has seen fit to appoint it, and that for your own advantage ; and you may doubtless receive great benefit by it. You will not afterwards repent that you have submitted to any thing, which God has appointed : As your being religious will glorify God, and cause the church to flourish ; so it will produce abundant peace in your own minds, while you live in this evil world, and will prepare you for the felicity of the heavenly state.

That all my hearers may finally be happy in heaven, may God grant thro' Jesus Christ. Amen.

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