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**Communications.**

**BRIEF THOUGHTS ON BAPTISM.**

(Continued from page 243.)

We have contemplated some of the uses of baptism when administered to adults. Let us now inquire into the uses of this ordinance when applied to infants. Here, as in many other things, men run into opposite extremes. Some magnify the benefit of this Christian rite beyond what inspired writers warrant us to expect; while others, equally mistaken in their views of duty, reject it as unscriptural and useless. The former affirm baptism to be regeneration; believing that all infants, washed in the name of the adorable Three, are delivered from the corruption of their nature, and endued with a new principle of spiritual life. To this opinion we cannot assent. We reprobate it as unfounded and dangerous. That the Almighty can regenerate an infant by his grace, is not to be doubted; and from the admission of this fact, it will follow that, if he please, he may communicate spiritual life at the moment in which a child receives the outward sign of this great and necessary blessing. But from the *power* of God to do a thing, we cannot infer his *determination* to do it. His omnipotence, which, by a word, brought this world into existence, is able to create, in the same way, ten thousand other worlds this *moment*; but no one is so extravagant as to found on this fact an ex-

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pectation of seeing, in this, or in the next hour, such stupendous exhibitions of Almighty power. The power of Jehovah to regenerate a child in the act of being baptized, supplies no ground of expectation that he will do so: nor could we infer even from occasional occurrences of such a connexion between the rite and the thing signified, any thing like a uniform procedure of a sovereign God, in dispensing renewing grace in conjunction with his own appointed ordinance.

If we look at the conduct of baptized children, we shall find no evidence to support this extravagant opinion. Alas! too generally they discover unequivocal signs of a depraved nature, and of being under its full and unbroken dominion. They need, as well as unbaptized children, to be regenerated. If baptism be regeneration, then, for the same reason, circumcision must have been regeneration; and consequently none of the seed of Abraham, who had received this initiatory rite of the church, would have needed the quickening process of renewing grace, how much soever they may have needed repentance and reformation. But our blessed Lord affirmed the necessity of being *born again*, in the most comprehensive terms; and he doubtless had respect to Nicodemus, with whom he was conversing, and all other circumcised Jews who had not been born again, as well as to Heathen men who were destitute of the seal of God's covenant. Simon Magus

hear persons of this description complain never of the *want of faith*, but only of its *weakness*.

Fourthly, the *tottering, doubtful unbeliever*, who halts between two opinions, and doubts whether he had best have Christ or not. He sees some good in Christ, which he would gladly have, for the sake of securing pardon, peace, and heaven; and yet he sees many things which he dislikes in Christ, especially his requiring us to renounce merry meetings, pastimes, cards, dice, and sinful amusements. These all reject Christ; and for this dishonouring, ungrateful, inexcusable sin, they shall be rejected of Christ. No sin will so gripe them in hell as this.

(To be continued.)

#### DR. WATTS HIS OWN ADVOCATE.

Dr. Watts has been assailed from two very opposite quarters. Both parties aim at the same point: they wish to prove this celebrated divine to have been a *Unitarian*; but they are influenced by very different motives. The one reject the *glorious doctrine* of the TRINITY, so clearly taught in the revelation which Jehovah has been pleased to make of himself; and are therefore anxious to shield themselves from the charge of HERESY by a name so famous in the church of God, as that of this learned and pious Christian. The other believe the doctrine of three persons in one Godhead; but, being hostile to the use of *Watts' Psalms and Hymns* in divine worship, they imagine that, if they can only impress the public mind with a conviction of the *Unitarianism* of this sweet singer in Israel, the expulsion of his aid in conducting so important and delightful a part of worship, as singing the praises of God, will, in many congregations, speedily follow as a matter of course.

But the expectations of both parties must be disappointed. In the subsequent publication the Trini-

tarian sentiments of Dr. Watts will appear with incontrovertible evidence. It will consist of the *Preface* and *Introduction* to his dissertation on the TRINITY, together with the *propositions* he establishes in that work. *Burder*, in his edition of Watts' works, speaks of it as an admirable performance on that mysterious truth. From these extracts it will be seen, that the author was a firm and decided believer in the doctrine of the *Trinity*, both before and after the publication of his *Psalms* and *Hymns*. His *Hymns* were published in 1707; his *Psalms* in 1719; and his work on the *Trinity* in 1722.

In the preface to this last mentioned performance the reader will observe in what strong language he expresses his feelings of surprise, at the conduct of those who profess to receive the *Bible* as the *word of God*, and yet believe JESUS CHRIST to be a mere man: and that although, in his riper years, when the *Arian* controversy was agitated, he was led to view his own sentiments in regard to the *Trinity*, and to read the writings of those who opposed it in the most candid manner; so far was he from being shaken in his belief of that *glorious doctrine* of divine revelation, that he became still more firmly settled in a conviction of its being plainly taught in the sacred scriptures.

We tender our thanks to a *correspondent*, for bringing this work of Watts to our notice, and for his kindness in submitting to the trouble of transcribing the copy from which we print. J. J. J.

PREFACE.—The late controversies about the important doctrine of the TRINITY, have engaged multitudes of Christians in a *fresh study* of that subject; and amongst the rest I thought it my duty to *review* my *opinions* and my faith.

In my *younger* years, when I endeavoured to form my judgment on that article, the SOCINIANS were the