

THE
DUTY AND DOCTRINE
OF
BAPTISM.

IN THIRTEEN SERMONS.

BY THOMAS BRADBURY.

WITH

AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES,

BY JOHN B. ROMEYN, D. D.

AND

ALEXANDER M^CLEOD, D. D.

2 Tim. iii. 4. Continue in the things thou hast learned, and hast been assured of.

2 John, ver. 9, 10. Whosoever transgresseth and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God: He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed.

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INTRODUCTION.

No subject perhaps is less understood, and no privilege more abused among professing Christians, than that of infant baptism. Every attempt to exhibit it in its true light, and restore it to its proper place in the system of divine truth, is commendable. Under this impression, the following discourses are republished, as calculated to correct prevailing errors in opinion about this solemn ordinance of the Lord Jesus, and to prevent its serious and awful abuse.

The design of the worthy and able author, whose praise is in all the Churches, was not controversial but practical. He did not avoid exhibiting in their details, the ground on which infant baptism rests, or the subjects who are entitled to it, because he could not, but because he considered these objects of inferior importance, to the duties connected with the subject, and the doctrines it embraces and unfolds. His desire was to heal, not widen the differences existing between good and great men about this ordinance, by endeavoring to shew, how far they could agree in what was really essential to it.

The design unquestionably was laudable, but from the very nature of the difference chimerical. They who reject infant baptism, in the view of its advocates deprive the Church of a precious privilege: and they

who advocate it, in the view of those who reject it, are guilty of corrupting an institution of Christ. Since these two thus widely differ, how can they be made to agree? There is not a single middle point on which they can meet. This being the case, the path of wisdom and duty, is for each to defend their individual sentiments, with moderation and candor, avoiding those harsh and unchristian expressions, which disgrace religious controversy and indicate an unfavorable state of mind.

One of the most formidable, because one of the most just objections, which the Anabaptists can make against infant baptism, is drawn from its abuse by those who practice it. To such a height has this risen, that it is no wonder pious minds are oftentimes perplexed on the subject. They hear and read that it is a religious rite, a sign and seal of covenanted mercies; and yet see parents, who have no more idea of the mercies signified, than a man born blind has of the beauty of colors, who make no pretensions to real religion, and habitually neglect its peculiar duties, admitted to a participation of it. Reasoning on principles of common sense and propriety, they know not how to reconcile the known, acknowledged want of personal and family religion, in the parent or parents who offer the child, and the admission of such parents to a privilege, the very nature of which, presupposes their possession and practice of real religion.

This abuse of infant baptism is a gross departure from the principles which are avowed in the standards of all the Reformed Churches. In these standards it is distinctly declared that the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper belong to those who are in the visible Church of God, to confirm their faith and manifest their separation from the world. Thus the former confession of Helvetia, which was written in Basil, an. 1536, says expressly 'the sacraments do appertain to them which are in the Church.' The confession of Bohemia calls them 'the holy covenants of God with his Church and of the Church with God.' The French confession maintains there are 'only two Sacraments common to the whole Church.' Similar to this is the doctrine taught in the Belgic confession art. 33—in that of Ausburgh art. 8—of Saxony art. 13—of England art. 25.*

Concerning this Church these same standards teach that it is the company of the faithful or true believers called by the grace of God out of the world, together with their children. In the latter confession of Helvetia which was written by the pastors of Zurich in the year 1566 and approved by their confederates of Bern and other parts of Switzerland, as also by those of Geneva and the Churches of Hungary and Scotland, the Church is defined to be a community of all saints, i.e. of them who do truly know and rightly worship and serve the true God in

* Harmony of confessions, &c.

Jesus Christ the Saviour, by the word and the Holy Spirit, and which by faith are partakers of all those good graces which are freely offered through Christ. In the confession of Basil, written in the year 1532 by the ministers of the Church of Basil, and allowed by the pastors of Strasburgh, all they are said to be citizens of the Christian Church which do truly confess that 'Jesus is the Christ the Lamb that taketh away the sins of the world and do shew forth that faith by the works of love.' The French confession drawn up in the year 1559 by the reformed in France in the 27th art. affirms out of the word of God that the Church is a company of the faithful which agree together in following the word of God and in embracing pure religion. The Belgic confession published by the Belgic Churches in the year 1566, art. 27, defines the Church to be an holy congregation of true Christian believers. The confession of Augsburgh presented in the year 1530 to Charles the 5th by the protestants of Germany says 'to speak properly the Church of Christ is a congregation of the members of Christ i.e. of the saints who do truly believe and rightly obey Christ.' The same doctrine is evidently taught in the confession of Bohemia, Saxony, Wirtemberg, and Sueveland.

In the Church, thus understood, the children of its members, that is of true believers are also included, according to the confessions already quoted. To them, they teach, and to no other children, may baptism be lawfully

administered. Thus the latter confession of Helvetia restricts the privilege to 'young infants born of *faithful* parents'—The former confession of Helvetia to such as are born 'of the people of God'—The French confession to infants 'born of holy parents'—the Belgic to the infants of believers, the children of the faithful—the Saxon to those only which are ingrafted into the Church.

To these testimonies we add the forms for baptizing infants used by the French, Genevan and Dutch Churches, which are founded upon the fact supposed, that the parent or parents presenting the infant or infants are actually at the time in visible covenant with God, as belonging to the household of faith.* Most explicit indeed are the words in the form of the latter Church. The parents are called 'beloved in the Lord Christ' and are informed that baptism seals to them and their seed God's covenant. In consistency with which they profess their belief, that their children though subject to all misery and condemnation itself, as born in sin, are *sanctified in Christ* and therefore as members of his Church ought to be baptized. Who but a real believer, a person actually in covenant with God, can conscientiously and truly make this profession?

As the following discourses will most probably fall, chiefly, into the hands of Presbyterians, being specially suited to their state, we

* The Genevan form is in Calvin's Works, vol. 7. p. 38. Ed. Gen.

will more particularly confine ourselves, in the subsequent remarks, to their standards as our guide and authority.

In the confession of faith of the Presbyterian Church, chap. 27, sect. 1. sacraments are declared to be holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace—to put a visible difference between those that belong to the Church and the rest of the world. Similar is the language of the larger Westminster Catechism, answer to ques. 162 where a sacrament is defined to be, ‘an holy ordinance instituted by Christ in his Church to signify, seal, and exhibit unto *those that are within the covenant of grace* the benefits of his mediation.’ Hence it is expressly stated in the answer to the 166 ques. of the same catechism that ‘baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible Church:’ and provision is made in the 29th chap. of the Confession of Faith and in the answers to 169, 170, 171, 172 and 173 questions of the larger Catechism, to keep off from the Lord’s table such as are not visible members of the Church.

‘The visible Church’ according to the answer to the 62d question of the larger Catechism, is ‘a society made up of all such as in all ages and places of the world profess the true religion, and their children.’ This profession in the answer to the 166th question of the same is more particularly specified to be ‘a profession of faith in Christ and obedience to him.’ The faith meant, according to the answer to the 86th question of the shorter

Catechism, is a 'saving grace whereby we receive and rest upon Jesus Christ alone for salvation as he is offered to us in the gospel.' Obedience to Christ is obedience to the moral law, which according to the answer to the 40th question is the rule God gave to man at first, and to which, according to the answer to the 97th question of the larger Catechism, they that believe in Christ are bound to conform themselves as the rule of their obedience.

From this brief analysis of the nature of that profession of the true religion, which constitutes membership in adults, according to the acknowledged standards of the Presbyterian Church, we see that it is a solemn and serious matter. And yet this is the profession which so many who call themselves Presbyterians make with the utmost lightness and irreverence in the baptism of their children; though at the very time, they are informed, according to the Directory for Worship, chap. 7, sect. 4, 'that baptism is a seal of the righteousness of faith, and that the seed of *the faithful*, have no less a right to this ordinance, than the seed of Abraham, to circumcision under the Old Testament;' and are also solemnly required, 'to pray for, and with their child—to set an example of piety and godliness before it, and endeavor by all the means of God's appointment to bring it up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.' Truly it is painful to contemplate the fact for a moment. Corresponding to the manner in which the privi-

lege is received, will be its improvement. Children thus baptized, are left to themselves by their parents, to discover moral and religious truths. They are never reminded of their duty and interest, but suffered to wander at large as their fancy and appetite dictate.

Why do parents offer their children to God in baptism? Is it to conform to custom, or to comply with duty? If the former, they profane the ordinance. To them the question put to the Jews, may be applied with awful emphasis, Who hath required this at your hands? They solemnly mock God, and deserve the severest rebuke. For the sake of custom they violate truth, for they profess what they do not believe, and promise, what they never mean to fulfil. This is dishonorable, and yet this, men from custom, will do in religion. They would startle, with horror, from similar conduct in common affairs.

Are parents desirous of performing their duty to their children? They ought to understand the nature of the duty, or else their performance of it will be superstitious. It is a solemn transaction, in which the parents covenant with God to train up their child or children in his fear, and God graciously condescends to own them as his covenanted seed. Now can the parents do this, if they are not members of the visible Church—that is, if they do not profess faith in Christ and obedience to him? Or can God own their children as his? What is the medium of intercourse between God and sinners? It is the

Covenant of Grace, in which God 'freely provideth and offereth to sinners a Mediator, and life and salvation by him, and requiring faith as the condition to interest them in him, promiseth and giveth his Holy Spirit to all his elect, to work in them that faith with all other saving graces: and to enable them unto all holy obedience, as the evidence of the truth of their faith and thankfulness to God, and as the way which he hath appointed them to salvation' (answer to Q. 32, larger Catechism). Now if persons do not profess this faith and display this holy obedience, they cannot be considered as included in this covenant; and of course the seals cannot be administered to them. If they are not included, their children are not.

To determine whether it be their duty to offer their children in baptism, let parents ascertain what is their own standing in the visible Church? Are they baptized? their baptism has imposed upon them, the obligation of walking before God in newness of life. The character baptism has impressed upon them is indelible. They are the Lord's property, and are bound to glorify and serve him. Do they do this? Are they in actual covenant with God? Have they given themselves to the Lord as his seed? If they have not yet done this, do they mean to do it in the baptism of their children? Are they prepared to profess faith in Christ intelligently and credibly, and to engage sincerely to walk before God in all holy obedience? If not they have lost

their place in the house of God, and forfeited their privileges, till they return and repent. By their own unbelief and disobedience they thus injure their children, and deprive them of the sacrament of baptism. Refusing to give themselves to the Lord, they are, whilst they thus remain, utterly incapacitated to give their children to him. Rejecting the Covenant for themselves; they cannot on any principles of common sense, reason or scripture, acknowledge it for their children. The children of such parents may be baptized, but not by virtue of their parent's standing in the visible Church. Others who have a credible standing in the visible Church, may present such children, if they are providentially placed under their control; but then they become the moral parents of those children and are responsible for them. There is nothing in the word of God, or the standards of the Presbyterian and other Reformed Churches, to forbid sponsors in infant baptism—but the sponsors must be members of the Church.

By members we do not mean merely communicants. Persons must be members before they are communicants. They are admitted to the Lord's table in the same manner that they are admitted to their own baptism, if they have not been baptized in their infancy, or to the baptism of their children, viz. on the fact of their being already in the Church. Their credible profession of faith in Christ, and of holy obedience to him con-

stitutes the test of their membership. On such a profession they are received to full privileges. The same profession is required for the one sacrament as the other. The scriptures make no difference between these two, nor do the standards of the Presbyterian Church. Whether the profession be made first at the baptism of a child or on admission to the Lord's table, is perfectly immaterial. Persons who have been baptized in infancy, are bound to make the same profession whenever they come to years of understanding, or they must be excluded from the privileges of the Church. This does not invalidate the fact of their infant membership, any more than the requirement of a profession, invalidates the fact of an adult's having been, through the grace of God, made a member of his Church. The profession in both cases is the profession of a fact that has already taken place, to which we must give credence when it is proved by a corresponding life, i. e. a life of religion as well as morality.

With these prefatory remarks, explanatory of what the received standards of the Reformed Churches, and especially of the Presbyterian Church, teach on this subject, we recommend the following discourses, to the serious, attentive perusal of the reader. They are written with sufficient perspicuity of style to make them intelligible, and are replete with sound divinity and the most important practical lessons. A few notes are added to this edition, to prevent misunderstanding of some

places, and to enforce truth in others, as well as to illustrate, more fully the principles advanced in this introduction. We conclude with the following sketch of the author's life and character.

THIS excellent divine was born in 1677 of pious parents. He spent part of his youth in the family of the Rev. Thomas Whitaker of Leeds, and was long happy in his friendship. He entered on the ministry at the early age of eighteen, and was first settled in Newcastle-upon-Tyne, as assistant to some aged minister. Here he was both loved and respected in his youth; and his ministrations were attended with considerable success. About 1703, he removed to a congregation in Wapping, London. He also labored long as pastor to a Church which met in New Court, Carey-street, in the service of whose souls he died. He was employed in several of the most celebrated lectures among the Dissenters in London, as in Pinners Hall, Salters Hall, Sabbath-evening lecture; one at Eastcheap on singing, praying, reading, and hearing the word; and at the Lime-street one, in opposition to Arminian doctrines, and in defence of the doctrines of grace.

In 1718, he was called to appear in *behalf* of the doctrine of the Trinity, and the divinity of our glorious Redeemer. Several ministers and others, in the west of England and in London, denied these glorious truths, or sinfully concealed them. This called the

zeal of Mr. Bradbury to action, who with others of his brethren, Tory, Robinson, Wilcox, Calamy, Cummin, &c. defended them in a pamphlet, entitled, 'The judgment of some London ministers about the Holy Trinity,' and also in various conferences. At one of these, in Salters Hall, March 3d 1718-19, Mr. Bradbury, with the concurrence of some of his brethren proposed the following clause to be inserted in a paper of agreement between the different parties in this controversy. 'That we may not suffer by misrepresentations, as if our endeavors for peace and charity proceeded from an indifference to the truth, we declare our continuance in the things which we have heard and been assured of, viz. that there is but one only, the living and the true God; and that there are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and that these three are one God, the same in substance equal in power and glory.' Upon this they divided; and those who were open confessors, as well as believers, of the above doctrine, *subscribed* their declaration. Of this Mr. Bradbury speaks in his Sermon *on the nature of Faith*; 'Those persons, who, in a late day of rebuke and blasphemy, were not ashamed to own Christ for their God, may have returns made them in a proper way, that he will not be ashamed to be called their God.' Mr. Bradbury was particularly happy that his Brethren, the Lecturers at Pinners Hall, and he had the same

views on these momentous points. These gentlemen were the following: Messrs. John Nisbet, Matthew Clark, Robert Bragge, Thomas Ridgley, and John Hoxon. In a dedication to some sermons on contending for revealed religion, directed to these ministers he says, ' You know the trial of cruel mockings, and how shamefully we have been intreated, with what contention we have kept the faith of Jesus, and not denied his name. I must own it, as the honour of every preacher of your lecture, that they have not been ashamed of Christ and his word, notwithstanding the furious measures that were used to hinder your subscribing with the hand to the Lord God of Israel; and I can look back on all the scandal that has followed this word of our testimony with a satisfaction, that though it is not much I can do for the cause, yet it is no little matter that you and I have suffered.'

Mr. Bradbury thought it his duty in this important controversy, particularly to defend the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ; and this he did to good purpose, in various sermons he published, especially in his great work, *The mystery of Godliness*. The following hints about this work, in Mr. Bradbury's own words, discover the experience and spirit of this great man. ' In proving the truth, that *Christ*, equally with the Father and Holy Ghost, is the Supreme God, I have honestly given a reason of the hope that is in me, by searching the scriptures daily whether

these things are so. The opinions of Fathers, councils, divines of all sorts, and indeed the whole body of the faithful, from Egypt even until now, have been well collected by others; but you know I have used none of these arguments, though I always read with pleasure, with what a great cloud of witnesses we are encompassed. Nor can I think it very modest that they who have obtained so good a report through faith, should be treated with contempt by such as are far from being superior to them in learning or holiness. However, you are my witnesses, and so may the world be now, that I pleaded no authority but that of scripture. As I read I believe, and as I believe so I speak.'—'I hope, as the providence of God led me into this subject, so his good Spirit has carried me through it. The sermons have been of service to myself, and to many of you that heard them; so that while I was imparting to you this spiritual gift, I have been established together with you, by the mutual faith both of you and me.'

The following anecdotes, among others, are related of Mr. Bradbury. In the progress of the Arian controversy, he was challenged to a public dispute in London. When they met, the gentleman of the Arian sentiments desired him to open the debate, by producing an argument in favor of Christ's divinity. Upon this he reads Isa. 6th chapter from the first to the 5th verse inclusive; this, said he, I compare with John, 12th chapter, 37th to the 41st verse. These things said Isaiah, when

he saw *his glory*, and spake of *him*. Now, gentlemen, says Bradbury, I wait for your answer. The above application of scripture so confounded the Arians, that they went out one by one, and left the good man with his friends.

About the same time, as he was preaching the lecture in Salters Hall, and was led by the subject to prove our Lord's divinity, he was hissed at by many who were present. Mr. Bradbury's friends were much affected with this insolent abuse, and expressed their grief on account of it; to which, with his usual vivacity and ingenuity, he replied, You need not be concerned about this, it is quite natural. You know we have been bruising the head of the old Serpent, and no wonder you heard the hisses of the generation of vipers.

When he saw criminals going to execution, he used to say, There would have been Thomas Bradbury, had it not been for the grace of God.

As he was employed in family-prayer, some thieves broke into his house; however, by means of what one of them heard as he was employed in this nefarious deed, he was, it is hoped made truly pious, and afterwards joined Mr. Bradbury's congregation.

This good man continued in the labors of the Gospel, with little interruption by sickness, from the eighteenth to the eighty-second year of his age; and from the beginning to the last period of his ministry, his life was justly esteemed a great blessing, upon various accounts, to many Churches and saints, both

in city, and country. His popularity in preaching was uncommon; besides, his ministry, not only in his own congregation, but in several of the most public lectures in the city, was in various instances crowned with remarkable success. Nor was his usefulness confined to the pulpit, but he frequently employed the press to the best of purposes; and his good understanding in the mysteries of the Gospel, his faithfulness and zeal in contending for the faith once delivered to the saints, his capacity and valor in defending the cause of liberty and religion, were manifestly discovered to the world, in the useful pieces which he published. He wrote on a great variety of religious subjects, and his works (says an excellent judge) will be in high reputation, as long as evangelical truth, solid learning, godly sincerity, comprehensive thought, clearness of argument, and a lively animated style, are of any esteem in the world.

The last sermon he preached was August 12, 1759, on the accession of king George I. His subject was Micah v. 5. 'This man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land.' A few days after this he was taken ill, so as to be prevented from attending public worship for three Lord's days; but during his illness, he waited for his change with a fixed confidence that the end of his faith would be the salvation of his soul. This appeared by the frequent humble, and thankful declarations he made; that his God was with him, and that he was kept nigh unto

him; that none but our Lord Jêsus Christ was the foundation of his trust, and therefore he had an assured hope that at his dissolution, his garments being made white in the blood of the Lamb, he should be received into the heavenly mansions, to dwell in the immediate presence of God, where there is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand, (as he often solemnly declared) he firmly believed there were pleasures for evermore, and for him in particular. Hence arose his fervent and daily breathings, 'Come, Lord Jesus,' and when he had strength he would add, 'come quickly;' but near his death, through his bodily weakness, his speech so faltered that he was not able to finish the sentence so as to be heard. His exit was joyous and triumphant. He died Sept. 9, 1759.

Upon the whole, this excellent person enjoyed an early and efficacious acquaintance with the grace of God, a large understanding in spiritual things, and in civil liberty. The glory of Christ, and the interest of his country, were so closely united in Mr. Bradbury's principles, that it is no wonder they are sometimes interwoven in his writings, and joined in his motto, *Pro Christo et Patria*; For Christ and my country. His high regard for the honor of his Lord and Master, rendered him proof against the frowns and flatteries of the world. Notwithstanding he was possessed of an uncommon degree of natural vivacity, yet none could be more steady in the principles of the Gospel; or more constant and regular

in family-religion. He was one mighty in the Scriptures. In his sermons he is clear in his proofs from these sacred oracles, happy in his accommodations of their forcible imagery to his subjects, and their truths to the various occurrences of providence. That share of natural wit which he possessed, enlivens his writings: and being sanctified by the grace of God, was employed by him against the adversaries of religion and liberty. It introduced him to an extensive acquaintance with the members of the two houses of parliament, by whom he was greatly valued as a most agreeable companion. But he accounted his greatest honor to be the instrument of doing good to the souls of those who attended his ministry. He was of a Catholic spirit, loving all who hold the Head, and who love him in sincerity; uncommonly courageous and bold in the defence of truth. He was always open and honest, and delivered the very sentiments of his heart. The gospel of the blessed God was so dear to him, that he desired, if it was the will of God, he might die preaching it. In a word he was a good and faithful servant of our Lord Jesus Christ, eminently useful in his day and generation.*

New-York, June 30, 1810.

* This sketch is chiefly extracted from the Christian Magazine for 1802, No. 68.

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE.

THE first and second of these Sermons were preached, and prepared to be published, above eight and twenty years ago, in pursuance of a design which the six Ministers who served Friday Lecture at the Weigh-house, had already begun. They had made a distribution of the several parts, which related to practical duties, into the nature of the work, the argument for it, the excellency of it, the answer to objections, directions in it, and an exhortation to it.

Upon this scheme they begun with the ordinance of singing; the year following they, in the same method, considered the duty of prayer; then hearing the word; and after that reading it; varying the several parts that the ministers were to take. Thus far for the space of four years we went on in peace, and we had in view the sharing out of this design upon the duties of baptism and the Lord's supper. All the sermons upon the former were delivered from the pulpit; and I will venture to say, the whole was managed with that temper, candor, and evidence, that it is pity mine comes alone into the world, which is upon the head of directions.

I may vouch for all the rest of my breth-

ren, that their compositures were with temper, moderation, and charity, not to gender strifes or evil surmisings. Several of our brethren, that are of another opinion, as to the mode and subjects of baptism, desired I would consider some neglects of the duty among themselves, which I have done with brotherly kindness and charity. All that know my manner of life can witness, that I never made any difference of opinion to be an article of friendship, and I see no reason it should be a term of communion: Let us receive one another as Christ has received us. And the reader will easily perceive, that with a design of such an agreement among those that love us in the faith, a great part of my sermons is directed.

But at the time that our discourses about baptism should have come into the world, the abomination that made desolate, was brought amongst us, upon a suspicion that we were not all agreed about a more substantial article, viz. The doctrine of the ever blessed Trinity. Our particular view was over-ruled by a previous dispute about scripture consequences. Whether this was done with a design to turn us aside from the main question about the truth of the doctrine, I must leave to every man's conscience; but, I confess, it was always my suspicion, from the fawning carriage of some to the troublers of Israel, and their shyness, virulence, and reproaches, to them that had fought a good fight, and kept the faith. But God has cut off those that

troubled us, men have clapped their hands at them, and hissed them out of their place.

Such a wrangle about consequences from scripture arguments, would have come out of time at the opening of Christianity; for had the apostles been called to prove that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, (which they declared from deductions drawn out of the Old Testament) I can hardly think they would have continued the argument from morning to evening, or testified and alleged from the scriptures that Jesus was Christ.

However by this artifice our design was blasted; and ever since there has been a breach of love carried on under a pretence of charity. These two sermons have been preached on the occasion of God's blessing my family with an increase of children's children.

The other discourse about the doctrine of baptism has been so well received at Pinner's Hall, that I have had the unanimous desire of those that direct the concerns of the Tuesday's lecture to print it. Those sermons also were preached some years ago, and they come out without much alteration. As the doctrine of the Trinity is only revealed in the Bible, so it is only proved by it. I have done no more than brought it from the fountain-head: And though there is a frequent return of the same argument; yet, as that was unavoidable from the distance between one sermon and another, so it serves to keep the fundamental article of our religion always in view.

I have no more to add, than as this is what I was taught in my youth, so I hope for a comfort in it, when gray hairs are upon me. To his blessing I resign it, whose cause it pleads against all gain-sayers.

THO. BRADBURY.

London, Sept. 18, 1749.

THE DUTY OF BAPTISM.

SERMON I.

1 PET. iii. 21.

Not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God.

THE apostle does, in these words, let us see with what a long extended care, divine providence has watched over good people. We have an instance, *before* the ceremonial law was given; and, that is, the preservation of *Noah* and his family in the ark: And here is another, *since* it expired, that we have through *baptism by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*. In the first, there were *but few, that is, eight souls saved by water*. The flood that washed away the world of the ungodly bare up the ark, and kept it from dashing upon the mountains. And it is a protection of the *same kind* that believers have now. They are floating in a life of temptation and danger where thousands perish eternally on every side, but they are inclosed in a *covenant*, and so kept by *the power of God through faith unto salvation*.

He shews us, that as we are delivered by the same goodness, that distinguished those

eight persons, so there is a resemblance between the *ark*, which was a means of *their* preservation, and that *ordinance* which God has appointed either to convey, or to publish *ours*. *The like figure whereunto baptism does now save us*; that is, as the *ark* was a divine institution, an outward visible sign of God's favour, so is *baptism*. They are *both* of them prepared for a *select number*, those that are the heirs of salvation. They are *both* designed to express and to help on the happiness of such as have a concern with them. But neither of them have this protecting virtue in themselves. The people might have been lost *in* the *ark* as well as *out of it*, if the tender eye of God had not remembered and watched over them there; and so kept that swimming house from being swallowed up by the waves upon which it rode, or crushed by the vast number of trees that floated about.

And so *baptism* does not secure to us the salvation that it is appointed for, by any *necessity*, but only avails to that glorious end, by the greater things that it refers us to.

We have it by the *resurrection of Jesus Christ* that procured it. He made the title good, being *raised again for our justification*, and from the perfection that he went into, the principles of religion are sent down: And thus he is the *author of eternal salvation to as many as obey him*. Heb. v. 9. This is what we profess in *baptism*, that our dependance for the happiness we are looking after, is on Him that *died for us and rose again*.

That ordinance is a *seal* that he has set to his *covenant*, and we use it as a *seal to our hopes*; by which we declare them, and ratify the whole opinion that faith has of a Mediator. So that here is an honourable correspondence, a great transaction between us, and our God, in the solemnity of *baptism*. But though this is performed by external actions, a visible *application of water*, yet do not suppose that the ceremonial, or the outward part draws into it all the happiness: It does save us indeed, in the same way that the ark did, *not by the washing away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God*.

These words are inclosed with a parenthesis. But the holy Spirit thought fit to wedge in this tremendous caution, as an antidote against the indolence of these latter days, when men shall have a *form of godliness* but deny the power thereof: when they would keep up a round of religion, and imagine it was enough, if they went through the grosser parts of duty without any care about the *temper* that led it on, or the *improvement* that followed it.

What perverse disputings have we had from men of corrupt minds about this ordinance. Some can drop an opinion like a thunder-bolt, "That without baptism there is no salvation, and without a regular ministry there is no baptism, and without bishops no regular ministry, and without something or other (which they have not yet determined) no bishops." This unprofitable enthusiasm has come on the church like an east-wind on a

garden. It blighted where it blew. It destroyed our blossoms, and left caterpillars upon our leaves.

Hence, some have been persuaded, as it is called, to *renounce their baptism*, and receive the water over again from more qualified hands. But alas ! how little is there in the doctrine of these *teachers*, or in the conduct of their *proselytes*, that shews a regard to the main design of the institution ! They consider not, that the great benefit of the ordinance is spiritual, and therefore inward. For we may change the apostle's words, and yet pursue his argument, *he is not a Jew that is one outwardly* ; and as little is any man a Christian for the sake of his profession ; *nor is that circumcision that is outward in the flesh*, Rom. ii. 28, 29 ; not but that it was outward in the flesh : but if that is all a person could say of it, it passed for nothing. And we may transfer this reasoning, that is not baptism which is external ; we call it so, but people are never the better for it ; *but he is a Jew*, and he is a Christian *who is one inwardly* ; and *circumcision or baptism, is that of the heart in the spirit and not in the letter, whose praise is not of men, but of God.*

If there was more care about this, we should not have so much noise about words and names. It is no matter, *who it was that baptized either you or me.* If we value ourselves upon this *our glorying is not good.* It is a greater concern to know and feel, that what is resembled in this ordinance is realized in the conscience.

So again, it must be confessed, on all sides, that good people have been intemperate with one another, and argued with a warmth that has done little service to the cause; first, about the *subject* of baptism, whether it may be administered to infants or no; and secondly, about the manner of performing it, whether by *sprinkling* or plunging. I dare say there are many of both opinions, who bewail the excesses that have come into the controversy, and could wish that the disputants were *Christians* as well as *Orthodox*; that in maintaining the truth they would not grieve the good spirit of God, but let all bitterness and wrath, partiality, noise, clamour, and *evil-speaking* be put away with all malice; that the arguments may be as gentle as the cause it maintains. I say, this is what all serious persons of both *denominations* wish for. And well they may, for if they keep my text in view, we shall find that it is but a very little matter which of us are in the right, in comparison of this greater and more important affair. Though it is the duty of every one to be *fully persuaded in his own mind, and happy is he that condemns not himself in the thing that he allows.* Rom. xiv. 22. yet I have something else to take up the chief of my thoughts, than whether I am to be baptized by dipping or sprinkling. I may have either of these, and yet no more a change of nature than an *Ethiopian* has a change of skin.

Let the manner of washing be either by pouring or plunging, *putting away the filth*

of the flesh is not baptism ; that is, it is not significant baptism, without *the answer of a good conscience towards God*. The Devil would very gladly set us a wrangling about the *mode*, on purpose to divert us from the *thing*. For whether we are right or wrong in the controversy, it is very possible we may fall short of the grace that is signified by it ; and then what will it avail to have proved from an hundred arguments, and a thousand authors, that we are right in the *manner*, when God tells us we have no lot or portion in the *matter* ?

As it is the design of my text, so I hope you will be convinced it is the design of this sermon to carry you above and beyond the dispute. And my end will be happily secured, indeed, if you do but go away with this persuasion, that the mere ordinance of baptism signifies nothing, either to yourselves, or to your children, without *the answer of a good conscience towards God*. Without this, it is only profaned. And therefore your improvement of the doctrine must be a resolution never to engage in it without a hearty concern about this great end for which it is appointed ; that you will not be indifferent how it is done, provided it is done at all, but desire to have it in that way that will be pleasing to God, and most useful to yourselves : that it shall not be enough for you to walk in the statutes and ordinances of the Lord, but to walk in them *blameless* : that you will use your feet in going to the house of God, and *keep your feet*

when you come there; not be content with mere offering a sacrifice, which may be no more than *the sacrifice of fools, who consider not that they do evil*—that they do evil in their very devotions.

This text, therefore, I believe you will think a very good foundation, for *the part* that is assigned to me, in the great subject before us. I am to give you DIRECTIONS how to manage the ordinance of baptism, that you may be *blessed in your deed*, and your labour not be in vain in the Lord. In this it will be apparent to all, that I have no controversy with any about the subjects or the modes of baptism. Our brethren that do not administer this solemnity to infants, will not be angry at the seriousness of those that do. Though they may think that the ordinance is misapplied, yet it will grieve them worse, to have it profaned, by a want of reverence in the temper of such as go about it. And therefore, I am sure, they wish well to those instructions that are only practical, and which are as much directed to *them*, as others; for whether persons are transacting for their children or themselves, whether it is to be done by dipping or sprinkling, they ought to *take heed to their spirits, and none of them deal treacherously in the covenant.*

But though I may have no controversy with these people, yet God knows my part has put me into a greater war, than any of the rest. My debate is with the lusts of men, with their formality in religion, their carelessness

and indolence about the things of God, which are only a more covert sort of Atheism. I should not be very triumphant to hear, that any proselytes are made, by the arguments that have been delivered on this subject; nor will it give me any uneasiness to be told that there are none; but *this is a lamentation, and shall be for a lamentation*, that after all the warmth of persuasion, men will go on in their stupid, heedless, lifeless way: it will be enough for them to *wash away the filth of the flesh*, and they will expect in vain the salvation from that which only comes from *the answer of a good conscience towards God*.

Here you observe in these words these three things.

First, The faculty engaged in this ordinance, and that is your *conscience*.

Secondly, The benefit that arises from this solemnity, and that is the *answer of a good conscience*; and

Thirdly, In this you have very little concern with men, but it is all *towards God*. You do it to please him, and no other approbation than *his* will be of any avail to you.

First, You see that being baptized, either offering up yourselves or children to God in that ordinance, is a work of *conscience*, which is that faculty that affirms a judgment about your duty. Therefore if all you have to say for doing it, is, "that it is a family practice, that you tread in the steps of your

“ fathers, it is the custom of the place where
“ you live, people will think it strange if
“ you neglect it, you will have the reproach
“ of being singular:” in short, if these are
your best reasons for it, though the *thing* it-
self is an act of religion, yet in *you*, it is no
more than a conformity to the world. And I
fear it may be said of many a one even in the
duties of worship, that he only *fashions himself*
according to his lust in the days of his igno-
rance.

Conscience has no part in the splutter that
some people make about their devotions. They
do not pretend to give you reasons for it
from the word of God. If they plead the
authority of the *Church* it is as high as they
will go: but that is a great way short of the
sacred rule. Your duty arises purely from a
divine command. If it is with a sense of *this*
that you offer up, either yourselves or children
to God, you begin well. But if your reasons
for serving him are fetched any lower than
from himself, your baptism will be no more,
than that of *Simon Magus.*

No manner of doubt of it, it was *valid*, ac-
cording to the wretched sense that is put on the
word, in this dispute. By the *validity* of your
baptism they mean that which every serious
person ought to despise; whether it is perfor-
med by one who had authority for it. Certain-
ly there can be no question but the apostle
Peter had that: But I can tell them, that
this baptism was *not valid*, to any good pur-
pose. It passed for nothing in the soul of the
man who received it; *his heart was not right*

in the sight of God : and instead of being indulged by the talk of vain men in our day, that he had got the *baptismal regeneration*, he is bid to repent of his wickedness, if *perhaps the thought of his heart might be forgiven, for he had no lot or portion in this matter*, Acts viii. 21; he was in the *gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity*, notwithstanding his being baptized by a person of undoubted authority.

Secondly, You see further, that the benefit which arises from this Ordinance is owing to the answer of a good conscience. The word *ἔκκρισις* signifies a question as well as an answer. A good conscience is *first*, one that is well instructed about the things of God, it must have a correspondence with his word. As to the Unbelievers, *their mind and consciences are defiled*. Tit. i. 15.

Secondly, It signifies the grace of God in that faculty, that there is a love of the truth, a delight in the law of the Lord after the inward man, that it endeavours to make persons *blameless and harmless as the sons of God*.

Now the answer of this good conscience may be taken two ways, according to the different sense, that is given of the word,

1. For the *profession* that it makes; *Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? Truly I am thy servant*. Thou art he whose I am, and whom I would serve. *I am not my own, but bought with a price*.

2. It may be understood of the *demand*, or plea, that arises from a good conscience. This is an act of faith in the covenant : and each of

these belong to the improvement of baptism; for, as in that, we confess our dedication by which *we are the Lord's*, so, at the same time, we lay hold on the relation by which *he is ours*. *I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people*, is the substance of that covenant, to which both parties set their seal in the solemnity of baptism. The ordinance itself, without this, is a thing of nought; but they that say, and do such things, declare plainly that they seek a city, which is an heavenly, *wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God*. Heb. xi. 16. As to others he shuns the title. It is as it were forced upon him; but these he owns with pleasure. The importance of this answer of a good conscience will appear from

Thirdly, The concern it has with God. It is *towards him*. Our relation to Churches, or particular professors, is of a lower nature. Religion, is first of all, an individual thing, what I have in myself and not another; I am the Lord's and his only: not my own, and much less *theirs* who can have no share in my salvation.

For which reason, I wish some good and learned men had not fallen in so much as they have done with the *popish cant*, of living *within the pale of the Church*. It is plain, this phrase is used in a very selfish way, and seldom means any more than the reputation of a *party*. Therefore I was grieved to find this remark in an useful annotator upon the story of *Noah's Ark*, that there is no salvation *but*

in the Church. If by the Church they mean in Christ, the change of the word is scandalous; and if they mean any thing else, the doctrine is false. To say that by being *in the church* our derivations are *from it*, is, both foolish and wicked; and if by being in the Church, we understand our communion with it, there must be salvation antecedent to *that*. A man is supposed to be in Christ, and therefore a *new creature* before he is admitted into the fellowship of the Gospel. And if he never does complete his profession, either for want of opportunity, or for want of care; though the first is his unhappiness, and the latter his fault, yet to say that he shall not be saved, is talking at random; for *the foundation of God stands sure, having this seal*, not that the Lord knows them who are Church-members, but *them that are his*.*

* The author is not to be understood as affecting to despise the Church of God. Had he, however, been careful to attend to the distinction between the *Church invisible* and the *Church visible*, his remarks would have been more perspicuous and just. By 'being within the Church' invisible, the same thing is meant as 'being in Christ'; because the church invisible comprises all those who are effectually called to be saints, and are united to the Redeemer as the Head of his *body the Church*. Without this pale there is no salvation. By 'being in the church', Mr. Bradbury, evidently understands actual fellowship with some *visible society* of religious professors; and he accordingly, very justly condemns the rashness of those who assert that there is no salvation without being, in this sense of the word, 'within the pale of the church.' He is far from denying the advantages of communion with the church of Christ, and from encouraging inattention to the duty of making a

From these hints, I shall have my way very clear to several directions that I would give you, for a more useful engagement in the duty of baptism; and I shall range them under these three heads.

First, Some are preliminary to your concern in that ordinance.

Secondly, Some relate to the work itself, and the temper with which it ought to be performed. And

Thirdly, Some follow after, and become our duty when the solemnity is over. In all these I shall consider with an equal regard, both the case of those, who offer *themselves* to God, and those who bring their *children*. For whatever difference there may be in their *opinions*, I am sure there is none in their best *interest*.

Now, if you would make baptism to be more than *the washing away the filth of the*

profession of religion. He, on the contrary, declares that 'to be without it, for want of opportunity, is an unhappiness, and for want of care, a fault.' No christian will deny the truth of this declaration. The communion of saints in the visible Church, is a privilege which every man of piety sincerely desires to enjoy; and all to whom the everlasting gospel is preached, are under indispensable obligations to embrace its precious offer, and to make an explicit profession of religion by joining the church. Resistance to the outward dispensation of grace introduced in the New Testament, proceeds from the inward opposition of the sinner to the grace of God; and not to become a member of the Church, 'the kingdom of heaven,' is to continue in open rebellion against our almighty king. In the Church we enjoy the means of grace; but in Christ alone we have eternal life.

flesh, if in it you would find the *answer of a good conscience towards God*, I hope you will give your testimony to the following directions.

First, I shall begin with those which are *preliminary* to the duty. Though under this head I may bring in the whole practice of that religion, that is undefiled before God and our Father, yet I will mention no more than these three particulars.

1. That your conversation becomes the gospel of Christ.

2. That those of you, who design to devote your children to God in *baptism* be partakers of the *Lord's supper*; and that such who are adult do enter upon one ordinance with a view to the other.

3. That you guard against the evil and dangerous *opinions* that some people have got into about the nature and design of baptism. I shall pursue, and enlarge upon these directions in their order.

1. It is supposed, and it must be so, that those people who are, either admitted to baptism or whose children are brought to God in that ordinance, have a *conversation becoming the gospel of Christ*.

That is a low notion of it, that it is no more than a civil badge, to tell the world that we make a profession of the Christian religion as distinguished from others. If it is only that, it is pity we should have it, nor was there any occasion to deliver it from a fund of authority, that comprehends *all power in heaven and in earth*.

A drunkard, a swearer, a scandalous, or an ignorant man, is no better than an *heathen or a publican*. He has nothing to do to take the covenant into his mouth, much less to receive the seals of it. As in the Lord's supper such an one only *eats and drinks damnation to himself*; so baptism to him, will prove like the *bitter waters* that cause the curse. It is only the prostitution of an ordinance of God to the formality and profaneness of men.

There is a dreadful threatening against the man who eats of the holy things of the Lord, *having his uncleanness upon him*; and this obliges to the greatest care, those, who bear the vessels of the Lord that they be not *partakers of other men's sins, but keep themselves pure*.

This, I think, may be laid down as a principle, that I am to admit no child to baptism, one of whose parents I would not receive to the table of the Lord. Nor should any adult person be allowed one ordinance, who gives sufficient ground of debarring him from the other. I cannot see any value in that objection, "Why should the child suffer for the parent's fault?" Because I consider the baptism of a child as an act of the father: it is the surrender that he makes of what God has graciously given him. Now, if his whole life declares that, he never gave *himself* to the Lord, it is combining with his hypocrisy, for me to assist him in giving of his *infant*.*

* In common with all the other ordinances of religious worship, sacraments are divinely appointed

We call these two institutions of the *New Testament* the seals of the covenant; but they never seal what you *have not*, nor can they seal any thing that you *did not*. If they are seals on God's part, it is, of his love to you in your pardon and sanctification. But how can this be, when they are the things which you despise? And if they are seals on your part, it is of your resolution to be the Lord's: whereas

means of exhibiting instruction, and of promoting the edification of the saints: but there is a certain character which to them exclusively belongs. By the application of a sensible sign they actually declare our covenant connection with God in Jesus Christ, and visibly distinguish God's covenant people from others in the world. Therefore, are they called by the Church, sacraments—Oaths confirming a covenant. They are *signs* or visible tokens of the covenant previously agreed upon. They are *seals* publicly notifying this covenant to be the very deed of the parties. He, therefore, who takes the *oath*, and rejects the *covenant* perjures himself; and he who administers the oath to any one who evidently rejects the covenant is *accessary* to the crime. The Christian minister who admits to any sacrament a man who is not evidently in covenant with God, assists that man in profaning a holy ordinance, in offending God, and in ruining his own soul—He assists him in executing a forgery, in deceiving society, and in polluting the Church of God in which he is himself appointed a watchman. The public Notary, who should annex his seal of office to sanction an instrument of writing, of the falsity of which he had evidence lying before him, would justly forfeit the respect of the profession and the confidence of society. And is there more delicacy of moral sentiment among the men of the world, than among believers in Christ Jesus? God forbid!

Baptism is the sacrament which represents and seals our Union with Christ as members of his body the

you are resolved not to be his, but are *alienated from the whole life of God, through the ignorance that is in you.*

I begin with this direction; and if *you* do not begin there too, it is in vain either for me to add, or you to hear any more. If you are *enemies to the cross of Christ*, it signifies nothing offering yourselves or your infants to God in baptism. You must abstain from all filthi-

Church; and the union of an infant to the Church is intermediately by the parent. Let either parent be a member of the body of Christ and the child is esteemed holy also. Let it be otherwise, and the child is unclean. The admission, therefore, of any parent to present a child in baptism, who would not be admitted if the application were made for himself, is as great an absurdity as it is an abuse of a holy ordinance. The parent who does not embrace the covenant for himself cannot certainly have embraced it sincerely for his child. Baptism is not merely the "act of the parent surrendering his child" to God. It is the public sign and seal of God's promise to the Church, and through the adult members to their infant offspring. *The promise is to you first and through you to your children.* It is the act of God, because it is performed by his authority—the oath by which he confirms his covenant. It is the act of the Church of God designating the holy from the unclean, and publicly proclaiming her faith in God's promise, now displayed in each additional member, baptized in the name of Jesus. As are the parents, therefore, so must the children be esteemed, whether strangers and foreigners or fellow citizens with the saints. It is worse than trifling with the great name, pronounced at the administration of this sacrament, to baptize the children of those who are not themselves members of his Church, and then return them to these very parents, who live in the habitual neglect of religious duties, to be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Christ, is the true and living vine; and Christians are the

ness both of flesh and spirit, or otherwise it will do you no good to wash away *the filth of the flesh*. For all this, while there is a powerful reluctance in your nature, you are not subject to the *law* of God, instead of having the answer of a good *conscience* towards God.

I fear there is many a one who would be afraid of leaving his child unbaptized, and yet he has no fear of God before his eyes. As if he thought *baptism* was more needful to his infant, than *repentance* to himself. How uneven are the notions of ungodly men about religion! Who would think they should lay so great a stress on a revealed law, that take so much pains to break all the inlaid commandments of nature; *the work of the law in their own hearts*?

Wilt thou know, oh vain man! that there is

branches. Shall we then declare with the solemnity of a Sacrament, that the bud, growing from a branch which has no connection with this vine, does belong to the vine, and still permit it to wither and die upon the branch from whence it sprung? Children, who are actually committed, in the Providence of God, to the care of his Church through the medium of any one of its members, are to be baptized, whether the parents be living or dead, and whatever may be the religious character of such parents. Being placed in the bosom of the Church, she becomes, by adoption, their mother; and both the promise and the seal are accordingly extended to them. The sprig is ingrafted into the true vine, and is not any longer affected by the condition of the original parent branch. Gen. 17. 11, 12, "And ye shall circumcise the flesh of the foreskin, and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and 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." The principle of this law is unalterable.

a thousand times more necessity of repentance and faith, and fruits meet for repentance, than there is of baptism either for thee or thy child; and until thy life is better, thy bringing an infant to an ordinance, is an abomination to the Lord, like smoke in his nose? Until thou hast done offering thyself to *Mammon*, thou hadst as good offer thy child to *Moloch*. Thou knowest that the true God, is one, whom thou hast nothing to do with. And if there is any here whose case this reaches, may it go into his conscience. If the next time such an one is to think of the ordinance of baptism, he is led to inquire into the ground of his own salvation, he will be very happy in the argument.

2. As a consequence upon this, it is very desirable that they who offer *themselves* to God in baptism, should do it with a view of owning the same covenant in the Lord's supper; and that those who have thought of bringing *their infants* to that ordinance should have engaged in the other, before hand.*

* Baptism and the Lord's supper are the two and only sacraments of the New Testament. They are seals of the same covenant. The question, in the examination of applicants for admission to sealing ordinances in any Church, is, do you embrace the covenant of God, and express your faith in it, in the language of the public confession of this Church? If, in the same mind with us, you enter with us into covenant with God, we shall admit you to its seals. The qualifications for admission are the same whether a man apply for baptism to himself or his child, or apply for a seat at the Lord's table, because the covenant is in each case the same. That man, who seeks to have his child baptized and has no inten-

I do not apprehend one single argument, that a person can have against his joining in the Lord's supper, that does not conclude as much against the baptizing of his child. The unfitness that deserves to keep you from the one, will have the same ill consequence in the other.

The two ordinances of circumcision and the passover, were made equal parts of profession among the *Jews*; and he that neglected bringing the offering of the Lord in his appointed season, had no claim to the other solemnity for his male child, but was to be cut off from among his people. We have in the *New Testament*, as plain a command for the Lord's supper, *do this in remembrance of me*, as we have for baptism of any sort; and will you become *partial in the law*?

tion to commemorate, in the other sacrament, the death of our Redeemer, cannot have thought both seriously and accurately upon the subject of sacraments. If a friend should enter into a bond with me, to which the law requires the application of two distinct seals, I must esteem him either very weak or very insincere, if while he is anxious to apply one seal he is determined to have nothing to do with the other. It is, nevertheless incorrect, to teach that no man may present his child in baptism until he have eaten at the Lord's table. The *fact* of partaking in the latter ordinance, does not at all constitute the right of partaking in the other; but *Church membership* entitles us to admission to both these privileges of Christian fellowship. It is the fact of embracing the covenant that gives a title to the seals. As to the order of time, it is of no importance whether a pious parent shall have first presented his child in baptism, or taken his seat at the table; but in either case it is an indispensable prerequisite that he give evidence of his piety.

The success of Christianity at first was remarkable this way; as people turned to God from *dead idols* amongst the Gentiles, and from *dead works* amongst the Jews, so they brought forth *fruit meet for repentance*. In the 2d chapter of the *Acts* that vast number of converts were bid to save themselves from an *untoward generation* in which they lived, to *believe and be baptized*. In obedience to their doctrine they were so, and the same day they were added to the Church. I suppose that phrase takes in all the parts of a profession, as it is explained afterwards. *They continued in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers.* Acts ii. 46. The Converts were very ready to receive ordinances.

Here I would take occasion to give an hearty advice to those in this assembly who are of another opinion from me; and I hope the different *cast* of our notions will not make my words fall to the ground, as waters that cannot be gathered. It is upon this case that I hear there are several, who suppose that baptism is only the work of those that are grown up, and yet neglect it themselves. My brethren, whoever is in the right in doctrine, you are quite wrong in practice. Do not despise the advice of one who has more value for *your happiness* than he has for his *own opinion*. I will give you it in the words of Ananias, *Why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized, washing away thy sins, and calling on the name of the Lord.* Acts xxii. 16.

You know in what haste the *eunuch* was;

see, here is water, what hinders me that I should not be baptized? Peter upon seeing that the Holy Ghost fell on them that heard the word, soon concluded what was next to be done; what man, says he, can forbid water, that these should be baptized who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we! The jailor was baptized the same hour of the night; and it is but changing one term in the exhortation, and that will serve those of different sentiments, and with whom my concern chiefly lies.

Own the covenant for *yourselves*, in the way that God expects it from you, and then it is more regular and uniform to own it for *your children*. I am far from pretending to be either an example or a judge for other ministers; but I have a long while thought that admitting children to baptism, whose parents live in a plain neglect of their duty, has sheltered a great impropriety in churches. I am sure it is not doing things decently and in order. It is begining at the wrong end. Put them in mind how the covenant runs, *I will first be a God to thee, and then to thy seed after thee*. Thus one ordinance shall appear connected to another. You will be among the living, and praise our God. *The fathers to the children shall declare his truth*.

3. As another preliminary to your benefit and comfort in this ordinance, do not admit of some vile and dangerous opinions, that men of corrupt minds have tossed into the world about it. I will mention these three.

1. That it is a regenerating ordinance.
2. That there is no salvation without it.

3. That the salvation that comes by it, is owing to the regularity of the minister that performs it.

1. It is a base and carnal opinion to say that it is a regenerating ordinance. The papist tells you very roundly, that it *washes away original sin*. If so, I suppose there would be no occasion in the *New Testament* to complain as *David* did in the old, *Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me*; for which he prays, *purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean, wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow*. Psal. li. 5. But, it is apparent, that the apostle *Paul* had no such notion of it. *Ananias*, indeed, bade him be baptized, and wash away his sins: but that refers to his calling on the Lord *Jesus*. Remission of sins comes with the sanctification that is by faith in him. It is, *the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins*, that is, the baptism that obliges to repentance, as even *John's* did; and the baptism that led up to the righteousness in which we are accepted and pardoned. This *Saul* had before his baptism. In his baptism he did no more than declare his consent to, and his dependance upon that covenant in which he was baptized.

So that as to the guilt of original sin (and actual too) it was done away, but the remains of sin stuck by him as long as he lived; and a great while after his baptism he complains, *in me, that is in my flesh, there dwells no good thing. O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* Rom.

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vii. 18. That is far from being the baptism of repentance, which is advanced, with such notions as supersede the practice of repentance. No! Poor wretches are taught to think that a *minister* has done all that, for them, which ought to be their chief care to do for *themselves*. But it is plain when the grace of God comes, into the souls of men, it roots up all that the Church has planted.

We are told in the office for baptizing infants, that 'the child is conceived and born in sin;' then follows a prayer for sanctifying grace: and so, when he has got the water and the cross in his forehead, the priest ventures to say, that 'this child is regenerated and grafted into the body of Christ's Church'. This is afterwards delivered in a prayer. "We give thee thanks, most merciful father, that it has pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy holy spirit, and to receive him for thine own child by adoption." And how early are poor ignorant persons taught to say, that in their baptism they were made members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven?"

But can regeneration, adoption and union to Christ mean so little in the *bible* as they do in that *Catechism*? Are children to be taught to go astray, speaking lies as soon as they are born? for either what they say is false, or if there is any way of making it true, it is not enough to be a privilege of the Church, namely, it ought to be administered to heathens, whilst heathens, that they may be regenera-

ted, adopted, &c. It is a notion of the same stamp that closes the whole office; that "it is certain by the word of God, Children which are baptized dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved." As God himself has thrown a veil over this, so *intruding into those things which we have not seen, only proves that we are vainly puffed up in our fleshly minds.* Col. ii. 18.

But it is very bold to say that it is certain by the word of God, which the word of God has never told us a syllable of.*

* Although the language employed by the Episcopal church in the places referred to by Mr. Bradbury is by far too incautious, there is no reason to believe that the compilers of the liturgy intended to convey that meaning which he justly censures as erroneous. It is probably more just, and certainly more charitable, to allow, that they intended to instruct the youth to place their confidence in the thing signified by baptism rather than in the sign itself. By a figure of speech which is very common in the sacred writings, the sign is used for the blessing signified; and if this mode of expression has been abused by unreasonable men to support the doctrine of transubstantiation, it would still be impious to censure the use of these expressions, *This is my body—this cup is the New Testament in my blood—whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood hath eternal life.*

The salvation of sinners is entirely of grace, and it is accordingly freely offered to us. As the scriptures exclude none, as no one ought to exclude himself from applying for mercy, and as the Church in her collective capacity is represented as both redeemed and sanctified, the Churches of the reformation have with one voice instructed their youth to appropriate the blessings offered in the holy word, and to employ the language of appropriation in speaking of all the doctrines and blessings of the Everlasting Gospel. The answers to the questions

Whether your children are regenerated by baptism or no, is more than we can tell. God has not said so. That they shall be sanctified and filled with the Holy Ghost from their mother's womb; upon their being received in this ordinance, is making the blessing of the new covenant come by the will of men, and of the will of the flesh and not of God. But be not deceived, *God is not mocked.* Do not think so idly of those favours that come by his spirit. If he does not more for you than ministers were capable of doing by baptism; if the regeneration of that ordinance, is all the regeneration you have, you are still *sowing to the flesh, and must reap corruption.*

2. It is another very dangerous opinion that there is no salvation without baptism. The former notion brings you into *stupidity*, and this into *despair*: but the comfort is, that there is as little ground for the one, as the other. Where has God made, either this ordinance, or any other, so needful to happiness, that persons who cannot have them, which is the case of many thousands, are under a necessity of perishing eternally? Why will men talk with such a confidence? As if they had

in their several catechisms are usually in the first person. This is the case with the Heidelberg and the Westminster Catechisms as well as with that of the Episcopal Church; although in both the former, there is a more copious and just exhibition of evangelical truth, and much greater precision of terms, than are to be found in the latter. The assertion respecting the state of baptized infants after death, is left to the pertinent criticism of the author. Secret things belong only unto God, and shall not the judge of all the earth do right?

the keys of death and of the unseen world ; and could, at their own pleasure, make passes either to Heaven or Hell ! Is it in this sense that they have *the keys of the kingdom of heaven* ? We may well say, as the scripture does, upon another occasion, *Wo ! Wo ! Wo !* to the earth, because of such a plague, that happiness and damnation shall be disposed of by a selfish and peevish order of men.

But *rejoice, O Daughter of Sion, that thy king reigns* ; and there is but one, of whom it is said, that he has the key of *David*. *He opens and no man shuts, he shuts and no man can open.* Do not give way to such a notion as will tear the bowels of tender parents with unquiet fears about their children that die young. Do not think that they are not in the covenant, because not received, as it is called, into the *visible Church*.

We have one case in the *bible* that will shew us how good men used to think upon this head, and that is *David's* behaviour upon the death of that child which he had by *Bathsheba*. He was not to be circumcised until the eighth day. Now he died upon the seventh. But what then ? Is that any torture to the Father's hopes ? No, far from it. He speaks with as much serenity as if he had lived to the ninth day, *I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.*

I think there is a practice which pays too great a compliment to this scandalous notion ; and that is hurrying on the baptism of a child because it is sick. For this I can see no show of argument, unless it springs from the root

of bitterness that I have been speaking of. I rather think a dying creature, one, of whose recovery we have no hopes, cannot be the object of baptism. That ordinance was never designed to be used among protestants, as extreme unction is among the papists.

We do, and I think with a great deal of justice, refuse to administer the Lord's supper to a person on a death-bed : and I cannot see but the argument is as conclusive against this abuse of baptism. *He that believes makes not haste.* If God has given me a child, I shall resign it to him very often, before I do it in a solemn ordinance ; and if he denies me an opportunity of expressing this, in the manner I think it ought to be done, it will be no part of my uneasiness, if it dies unbaptized. It is better I think to leave such a duty *undone*, than not to have it *well done*. God never expects it either from you or me, when he has thrown a bar in our way, that we break it, or leap over it. There is no more harm in your not doing it, than there was in *David's* not building the temple. You had *made provision for it*, and you did well in that it was in your heart. And though you should not hasten the work, *with such an opinion* as this, yet take care, that your good be not evil spoken of; that you do not harden others in it, and so become a stumbling block to them that are weak. As the apostle, in a parallel case, says, *If any man see thee, who hast knowledge, sit at meat in the idols temple, shall not the conscience of him who is weak be emboldened to eat those things*

which are offered to idols; and through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died? but when ye so sin against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ. 1 Cor. viii. 10—12.

The argument holds good here. Perhaps you are not so much in haste for the baptism of your child, from a supposition that there is no salvation without it. But what if an uninstructed neighbour puts this sense on the zeal you shew to have it done, and conclude it is, for the same reason that would have moved *him* to do so? you may in this, lay the foundation of a great uneasiness to him if the providence of God should do, what we have ten thousand examples of, snatch away this child on a sudden. The error of his judgment is enough to throw him into melancholy, and thus through thy knowledge shall thy weak brother offend.*

* Applications to ministers for dispensing the ordinance of baptism to sick infants, as appeals to their sympathy, are not easily resisted; and yet compliance with such requests is rather to be excused than justified if it indeed admit even of excuse. In most cases, the application proceeds from superstition, and, in all cases, compliance has a tendency to encourage this pernicious emotion, if not in the parties immediately concerned, certainly in others who come to the knowledge of the fact. The tender sorrow excited in the bosom of parents by the sight of suffering infancy, and the painful apprehension of the death of a beloved child, are feelings naturally allied, with superstitious fears, in the breasts of those who are not accurately acquainted with the doctrines and power of Godliness. In such a state of mind arguments which otherwise have little force appear conclusive. 'Baptism being one of the means of grace, it is an act of injustice toward the child

3. It is of all others an opinion the most foolish and impudent, that the salvation which comes by baptism is owing to the regularity of the minister that performs it; and that not a regularity in a *moral sense* but an *ecclesiastical* one. By his being a fit minister to baptize, they do not mean, that he shall be sober, of good behaviour, apt to teach, holding fast the faithful word. All this avails him nothing without a *lineal* virtue, which if it did not come from Anti-Christ, it certainly came through him. Nay, so foolish have some been in this unmannerly doctrine, as to tell us "the very "immortality of our souls is owing to the bap-

to deprive him of it in the prospect of death." This is the only argument worthy of being at all examined on this subject. And even this has no weight when placed in the balance against the powerful reasoning of the author. The baptism of dying infants and the administration of the Lord's supper to dying adults, must stand or fall together. To neglect for a length of time the baptism of our children is indeed improper; and to administer the ordinance, hastily, for fear of the child's death, proceeds from the same principle; the want of a conscientious disposition to attend to every ordinance of God on the first opportunity for doing so, according to due order. The seal of circumcision was applied to infants on the eighth day; and this fact shews that the corresponding seal ought not in its application to be needlessly delayed or unbelievably hastened. Many infants must have died in Israel, before the eighth day, and of course uncircumcised. The private baptism of the sick leads to private baptism as a general practice; and the general practice leads to the abuse of this Sacrament by its administration to the unworthy. A sacrament, belonging to the Church of God as a visible society in covenant with him, ought to be administered publicly before the Church.

"tismal spirit; which, since the apostle's days, is only conveyed by bishops:"* As if it was not enough to confound the works of grace, unless they destroy those of the God of nature. If you proceed to the ordinance with any such delusions in your head, it is no wonder that you fall short of the benefit. *The foolishness of fools is deceit.* You ought to be established in the truth, and the truth shall make you free. *Be not carried about with every wind of doctrine, or suffered to be tossed to and fro, by the sleight of men, and the cunning craftiness of those that lie in wait to deceive.* If you offer the blind for sacrifice is it not evil? *A wise man's eyes are in his head, but a fool walks in darkness.*

SERMON II.

Secondly, I AM to give you some directions that relate to the work itself, and are to be observed at the time of the administration. Under this head I will not crowd you with a multitude of particulars, but only leave with you these three things.

1. Be satisfied, that it is performed according to the rule, given you in the word of God.
2. If it be possible, let it be done in the public assembly of his people.
3. There should be a great deal of seriousness in your temper, whether you bring yourselves or infants to God in this ordinance.

* Dodwell's scrip. ac. of rewards.

1. It is of the utmost importance to the benefit and comfort of this duty, that it be administered according to the word: otherwise, though there may be a washing away the filth of the flesh, there will never be *the answer of a good conscience towards God*. As if he foresaw how much this ordinance was to suffer by human intrusions, our Saviour sets a bar quite around the institution.

1. By telling the apostles that this order to baptize into the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, was the result of his having *all power given to him both in heaven and in earth*: from which I would conclude, that the solemnity is complete as he left it, and that it wants no more to make it effectual. And then

2. He places a caution on the other side, *teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you*. And you are to limit the promise with which he closes, by the rules, that he had given them; *lo, I am with you always unto the end of the world*. This divine presence will attend nothing but a divine ministration. When people leave Christ, and the method of his worship, he will leave them. He has not published his laws, as men do theirs, with such imperfections, that they must be explained and mended. *No, he is the rock, and his work is perfect, and all his commandments are sure*.

The institution itself is a *divine ceremony*. It would be of no value if we had not his command for it. We never could be of opin-

ion that either dipping or sprinkling would be of any avail, if we did not find it among the orders given by an exalted Saviour. Therefore, to throw our ceremonies among *his*, is mingling two authorities together. If he had thought that washing with water was not sufficient without *the sign of the cross*, he would have told us, and made that supernumerary addition more ancient than it is: for *from the beginning it was not so*. We may call it *a token of people's fighting manfully*; but it is no token for good: nor did mankind ever find any more courage in those that have it, than in those that want it:

Nor does it scatter among those, that have received this mark in their foreheads, any zeal for the *doctrine of the cross*. They do not understand better than their neighbours, the great article of justification, from that righteousness that was brought in by *the death of the cross*; nor do see that it promotes the influence of the cross upon our hearts and lives; or that it makes people more self-denying, and mortified to the world. In a word, it rather tends to crucify our Lord afresh in the honour of his authority, and the liberties of his people. It has made men *schismatics* who walk in all the statutes and commandments of the Lord blameless; and is a token of nothing so much as this, that *other Lords have had dominion over us*.

And as to that other piece of human lumber that is come into this ordinance of appointing *godfathers*; it is such an undoing

of what God has established in the laws of nature, such an over-ruling and transferring a *parental authority*, that it is no wonder so little good comes of it. That it has spread perjury through the land, and brought people into a habit of *promising and vowing* what they never designed to perform, is not so much as denied. And what benefit may be expected to a poor child who is offered up to God, with a solemnity of so much falsehood I cannot imagine. *Solomon* has given such a name to these practices that should not make us very fond of them. *If thou vowest a vow unto the Lord, defer not to pay it, for he has no pleasure in fools.**

If any should object, that the sprinkling of infants is a breach of this direction; that it is not according to the word of God, and therefore must be as bad as those abominations that I have now mentioned; I am satisfied any brother who loves the *meekness of wisdom* will not despise this answer, because there is a great difference between *mistaking* the divine rule, and totally *laying it aside*. The reason why we do not act as some other Christians do, is because we think these demands are not made in scripture. And though they may think they are, yet both parties pay a defer-

* Cases may occur in which it would not be improper to admit what are called Sponsors or Godfathers. When an orphan is left in the care of the Church, or a child is providentially separated from its natural parents and put under the direction of the Church, not only may such child be admitted to baptism; but the Church may publicly appoint some member to take charge of its Christian education.

ence to the book of God. But it is quite otherwise, when persons make no pretence of fetching the practice from this rule, but are going willingly after the traditions of men, the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

In one controversy the scripture is magnified, though not fully understood; in the other it is depreciated. Keep the ordinances *as they are delivered to you*, and the commandment pure and unrebukable unto the coming of Jesus Christ, or otherwise, instead of a blessing we bring upon ourselves a curse. The second commandment relates to the worship of the true God in *a right manner*, and the only standard of that, must be the rule that he has given us. He there shews us what a different entail there is on your children, as parents keep close to the direction, or as they wander from it. *He is a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon their children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate him.* He considers superstition as no better than a hatred of God, and therefore this is so far from being the way to hereditary mercies, that it is an iniquity to be visited upon the generations that come after them; but *he shews mercy unto thousands of them that love him*, and declare their love to him by *keeping his commandments*. You see then the way that you have for any hope of obtaining mercy, either for yourselves or for your infants, in this ordinance.

2dly, It is very desirable that this solemnity of baptism should be administered in a

public assembly. *John's* was so. He did it in the face of multitudes, and I think the nature of the ordinance requires it. It is not so properly my closing with God's covenant either for myself or my child. If it is with my soul as it ought to be, that must be done very often in private, with a greater freedom than I can use before any witnesses. But when I do this in *baptism*, it is my declaration to the world, or at least to the people of God, that I will be the Lord's. This was plainly the case with that great shoal of converts, which were brought in by the draught of one sermon. *Peter* bids them *repent and be baptized*. This repentance was a secret thing, a godly sorrow that lay within themselves, but *they gladly received the word*, and were baptized, about three thousand of them, and so were witnesses to one another.

The examples of the eunuch and the jailor, are far from concluding against this rule. As to the former *Philip* was alone with him, and so preached the gospel to him, and he was never like to see him more; but however, his baptism was as public as the sermon by which he was converted. The jailor's case does plainly turn the argument the other way, for he was *baptized with his household*, before all those that made up the auditory.

The benefits of a public administration ought to turn the scale. I believe both ministers and people find a great deal of difference in the frame of their spirit, when they are pulled at once out of the noise of the world, and can hardly shake off the cares that

hang about them, and when on *God's own day* they have given a solemn discharge to every incumbrance of that nature. It is certainly desirable in this ordinance, as well as in others, to attend on the Lord without distraction. Besides, as all things are to be done *to the use of edifying*, so whatever does most answer that end, will be chosen by a man who would keep a conscience void of offence towards God. Now, as the assembly has an opportunity of being instructed about the nature and improvement of the duty, so the party baptized, is received under a larger confluence of prayer. However, I leave you to judge of this rule by your consent to the next, and that is,

3dly, Let it be done with the greatest measure of seriousness. *Abraham* fell on his face when God talked with him, and gave him the covenant. It is indeed an awful transaction, when you call angels and men, as witnesses to the surrender that you make either of yourselves or your children. When *Joshua* had engaged the promise of the *Israelites*, that they would not forsake the Lord God of their fathers, he set up a *stone*, and tells them, this stone had heard all the words that he had spoken. The meaning is not according to the sound of the expression, but it signifies thus much, that when they saw that stone, it might put them in mind of what they had said.

But, in this case, we have *living witnesses*. We can appeal to the people of God. They have heard you profess your consent to the

covenant. They who are like to see how you bring up your children, know what you have promised for them; and would you have your *wickedness shown before the whole congregation?* Angels are in our assemblies; and would it not grieve you to know they make this remark? “There is a wretch who compassed God about with lies, who engaged himself to do the parent’s part in a Christian way, and yet brings up his children to the destroyer.” Nay, every one of the assembly have their eyes upon you, and therefore they will be looking after you; and if your care is but a counterpart to your promise, *you pay your vows in the courts of the Lord, and among all his people.* I have often wondered that some professors who shew so much seriousness at the Lord’s supper, should make any abatement of it in baptism. They are but two seals to the same covenant, and ought to be attended to, with equal reverence. Nay, if there is to be any distinction, it is on the side of baptism, because that is only once done for ourselves, or that particular infant. Whereas we are often called to eat this bread, and drink this cup, and shew forth our Lord’s death until he come.

· It must strike you with an awe to consider what you are doing. You have conveyed to your children a nature, that without the grace of that covenant which you own in baptism, will make them unhappy for ever. You therefore owe that infant, who, by yourselves, is made a polluted creature, the utmost care that he may have a *second birth.* In the de-

dication of him to God, you confess a lineal stain that is derived from one to another. How deep ought the sense of this to go into your souls!

Again, reflect upon the hope that is set before you. The ordinance of baptism is a memorial that God has consecrated for us a new and living way: that when we lie in our blood, he passes by with a look and voice of love, and says unto us, live. What an honour is it upon you, now? And what an earnest of the satisfaction, above, if you are parents to a child of God? If what he has graciously given to *you*, he has more graciously owned to be *his*?

They are dear to you: your lives are bound up in theirs: but what if both you and they are in the bundle of life with the Lord your God? A person who has devoted himself to such meditations, who feels the horrors of a polluted nature, and breathes out his desires after a renewed one, will have his whole soul engaged.

And whilst I am recommending to you a serious performance of this duty, suffer me to tell you that there is one practice, which, if not inconsistent with it, looks very unsuitable to it, and that is the indulgence of any sensual joys upon the occasion. We are told, that the *Ark* was an emblem or figure of our baptism; and when *Noah* entered into it, we read of abundance of eating and drinking, but *he* was not among the number who were thus engaged. What we call a *christening dinner*, is but a poor attendant on our

putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, and rather looks like *making a provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof*. We read that *Abraham* made a great feast the same day that *Isaac* was weaned: and that seems to be the season of life that nature itself has directed us to rejoice in, when God has preserved a child through the weakness and dangers of infancy. But to follow baptism with an *excess of riot, is turning the grace of God into wantonness*. I should think, that if I had been owning the covenant for myself or for my child, my soul would be so full of it for one day, that I should not have leisure for *revellings, banqueting, and abominable idolatries*.*

Sdly, I am to give you some *directions* which concern your practice after the solemnity is over. You may be pleased with the ordinance, and yet never the better for it: as in preaching the word, *Herod* heard *John* gladly: and many with joy received the Gospel. So during the administration of baptism, your

* Festivity and mirth are very unbecoming appendages to the ordinance of baptism, the sign and seal of our ingrafting into Christ. When the pious parent is about to renew his covenant with God, in the faith of the promise transmitted through him to his child, he is anxious to cherish a frame of mind very different from that which *feasting* with common friends produces. God is always to be worshipped with reverence and godly fear. The believing parent feels this. He sees in the child which he is about to present to his covenant God, a creature, which is destined to exist for ever, and who must shine in glory, or burn in unquenchable fire. He reflects that he has been the means of bringing this creature into being, and of transmitting to it both sin

affections may be touched; but if it goes no deeper, that water had as good been spilt on the ground. Therefore, whether you have been offering yourselves or your children to the Lord, if you would have the answer of a good conscience towards God, charge these four things on your soul, and keep them upon the imagination of the thoughts of your heart.

1st. Oftentimes remember, what you have been doing.

2dly, Do not think you are baptized into a party.

3dly, Follow all, by earnest prayer. And

4thly, The whole work must be performed "looking unto Jesus."

1st, Oftentimes remember what you have been doing for *yourselves*; and when your children are capable of it, let them know what you did for *them*. *When thy sons ask thee in time to come, what mean you by these statutes?* let them be convinced how early a care you had about them. I do not remember any

and death. He loves his child and desires its salvation, and his hope is directed to the mercy extended to his own soul. He is about to apply the token of God's covenant to the tender object of his love and sympathy; and is it possible that he can trifle with a gay party at the time? Is this the way we are to prepare for the communion table, the other seal of the same covenant? No; humiliation and prayer are much more becoming. The example of the godly in former ages is worthy of imitation. The reverend and very pious Mr. Henry observed, in every instance, a *fast* before the baptism of his children.

thing that struck me sooner with religious thoughts in my youth, than my father's telling me how greatly his soul was enlarged when he gave me up to God in baptism: and if ever I have tasted, that the Lord is gracious, I hope it is in consequence of that surrender.*

It is certainly a proper argument to use with a child, in very affecting language, which king *Lemuel's* mother spake to him, *what my son? the son of my womb, and the son of my vows?* Prov. xxxi. 2. And for a father or mother to say, "I was glad that a man was born into the world; but a care about thy immortal part soon found its way into my soul; and the first great act of my love to thee as an infant, was returning thee again to the God that gave thee. Wilt thou not stand to the agreement? Shall the transaction pass for nothing? I am then clear of this mine oath, and having been a witness for thee, must at the great day of account come forth as a witness against thee."

If such an exhortation as this, delivered with the tenderness and authority of a parent, does not make an impression, it is a sign that conscience is far gone into stupidity. But do your children ever hear you talk at this rate? are they not rather tempted to think that you baptized them, just as you feed and clothe them? It was a thing of course. What

* Other names, besides that of Mr. Bradbury might be quoted in support of this sentiment; and if a note could avail in fixing the attention of parents and children upon the whole of this *direction*, its insertion would answer a valuable purpose.

pains will you take to make a son know the privileges he was born to; the title and extent of his estate, and what he is like to be master of, by his relation to you. You will fit him by education, to enjoy, and perhaps to enlarge the inheritance of his father: and it is a mighty trouble, to see that the fruit of your pains, shall be a sacrifice to his folly. But, is there to be no concern, about the transaction you had for him, with the great God? have you given him up in a covenant of pardon and sanctification? and is he never to hear of it?

Nay, telling your children is not all; but you are to bring them up in *the nurture and admonition of the Lord*. Your care should be to form their thoughts and inclinations; to the blessings you desire for them. What lamentable cries have we from parents, who live to see their children despise both God and them? Then they desire ministers and christian friends, to plead the promise of the covenant, when either by their neglect or indulgence, nothing has been done to make them sensible that they were baptized at all. Whilst they are young you gratify their humours, and when they are grown up, their divers lusts and pleasures. When you come to settle them, the chief inquiry is about a portion in this life. Now this is so much the reverse to the whole profession that you made in baptism, that it is no wonder the blast of God follows this shuffling and trifling temper. Instead of desiring that he should be the

God of you and your seed, you throw religion out of your families by an *after-bargain*; you make sure of every thing else by settlements and articles; but leave the worship of God to shift for itself.

Is this *training up a child in the way that he should go when he is young*? Is this laying in against apostacy that when he is old he will not depart from it? It is a wonder that the Churches of Christ continue, if we reflect upon the folly, the pride and worldly mindedness of many professors in the disposal of their children. The natural consequence of these things is, that as they are taught to cast off God, God is provoked to cast off them. Hence our assemblies are not filled with such families as they used to be; but sinners are awakened and brought in from the east, and the west, the north and the south, while the children of the kingdom are cast out.

And so it will ever be. He will be found of them that seek him not, when he is neglected by the descendants of those that used to seek his face. He will never want a people. But these degenerate plants of a noble vine, will sooner or later come to find that they want a God.

Endeavour to awake such thoughts in your children. Tell them what *you* have done, and what *they* must do. As they grow up, let them know the scriptures which are able to make them wise unto salvation; and be sure to acquaint them, that though they were passive in the ordinance of baptism, yet that

they must be active in the Lord's supper. Persuade them to own that covenant in person, which they were received into by proxy, that so they may be no longer considered as descendants from you, but placed on a level with you, *heirs with you of the same promise*. And if parents would take some special time for this, I believe it would turn to an account.

As for example. On the birth-day of your child, instead of bloating him with vanity, and giving him a loose to riot, spend some time of that day in serious prayer both *with him, and for him*. We read of *Job's sons* that they went and feasted every one, *on his day*, which it is probable was the day of his birth. But when these days of feasting were gone about, *Job sent and sanctified them, and rose up early in the morning, and offered burnt offerings according to the number of them all, for he said it may be my sons have sinned and cursed God in their hearts*. Thus did *Job continually*. Job i. 5. Thus you may have, as it were, an anniversary baptism, and give a yearly revival to the solemnity of that ordinance. Take the rule of your practice from that good word; *He has given meat unto them that fear him, he will ever be mindful of his covenant*. Psal. cxi 5. Be you so too. Say as *David* did to *Solomon* his son, *Know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind. For the Lord searches the heart, and understands all the imaginations of the thoughts; if thou seek him he will be found of thee, but if thou forsake him he will cast thee off for ever*. 1Chron. xxviii. 9.

2dly, Whether you have given up yourselves or your infants to God in this ordinance whether it be by dipping or sprinkling, do not think that you are baptized into a *particular denomination*. In all these little varieties, as there is but *one body and one spirit, and one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, so there is but one baptism*. The character that is taken from the *manner* in which the duty was performed, is taken very low, and looks as if I had rather be considered in *my distinction from God's people, than in my union with them*. From hence come strifes, railings, evil surmisings, and perverse disputings. The man that despises me, that denies me his *conversation* as a friend, and will not admit me to *communion*, as a Christian, merely because I am not baptized in the way that he thinks best, may be right in his notion, but *I am sure he is wrong in his practice*.

Certainly to quarrel about this, is to forget the main design of the ordinance. The baptism of *my* infant, does not throw me one step from a person who thinks it unlawful to do the same by *his*. The reason is very plain; though there is a difference between us, yet it is a small one. There are several things in which both sides are agreed; and not only so, but with a harmony of temper, as well as principle. As for example:

1st, It is confessed, on all hands, that a believer ought to give himself unto the Lord, and take hold of his covenant.

2dly, That we should make such a surrender

as this, of all that we have, our estates, our honours, our reputation, and indeed every thing else. Therefore,

3dly, A good man, whatever his opinion is about this ordinance; will, and does make a solemn dedication of his children to the Lord that gave them. He is prompted to it by a love to them and a zeal for God.

4thly, In this work he will plead the covenant, that is, be earnest for the blessings contained in it. He will beg the Lord to be a God both to him and his seed, that his children may be pardoned by the blood of sprinkling, and may have the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; nay,

5thly, He confesses his obligation to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. And though he cannot join with some of his brethren in the ordinance of baptism, yet he heartily begs that they may join with him, in their prayers for his children, and their advice to them. These two Christians can bow the knee together to the same Lord Jesus. He is both their Lord and ours. Only here is the difference: the one thinks the motions and working of his soul about his posterity, may be expressed in baptism, and the other thinks not. So that upon the whole you may conclude,

1st, That neither of them want a love to their children, and inward serious thoughts for their eternal welfare.

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2dly, Neither of them despise the covenant of God, or any blessing contained in it: Nay,

3dly, There is no contempt on the ordinance on either side. He that omits it, does not live in the neglect of a known duty; but carries the same sense of a relation to his infant without baptism, that another does with it. He that observes it, ought by no means to be charged with a *profanation*. He that is so careful about every other solemnity, and so serious in this, may be in a mistake; but he has given all the evidence which charity can desire, that his heart is right in the sight of God.

And upon the whole, I cannot see any sin at being present at an ordinance, when my judgment does not approve the administration. Consider the apostle's argument, *Why am I evil spoken of for that, for which I give God thanks?* That which is an offence, or matter of scruple to my brother, may be an inward satisfaction to me; as he pleads, *one man esteems one day above another; another man esteems every day alike; he that regards the day, regards it unto the Lord, and he that regards not the day, to the Lord, he regards it not*, Rom. xiv. 5.; that is, he thinks it for God's glory to neglect it. *He that eats, eats to the Lord, and gives God thanks; he that eats not, to the Lord he eats not; he makes it a religious omission, and he gives God thanks.* The former praises him, for the sense he has of his Christian liberty, and the latter for the conviction he supposes to have of his duty. Now if God be thanked, why should they be condemned?

Such a temper as this, would be more credit to religion, than a capacity of gaining proselytes. I had rather let my light shine before men in meekness of wisdom than in a furious course of argument. *The wise, the scribe, the disputer of this world, is not the most significant person in the Church of Christ.* And I am so far from being offended at the strength of reasoning on the other side, that I can sincerely bless God, that though his people differ from one another, yet the common adversary cannot reproach either opinion with folly.

There is many an argument that has not convinced me, that yet has delighted me. I have not thought a person either the worse or the weaker, for his having other notions, any more than for having another complexion.

If any say, this destroys *Christian unity*, I must confess, my thoughts are quite the reverse to that insinuation. It gives a greater evidence to the world of that charity which is the *bond of perfectness*, by managing our differences with temper, than by closing it with uniformity; and therefore, for people to charge conclusions upon one another, which they will not own, is unfair.—On the one hand, to say that the baptizing of a child, is no more than the sprinkling of a dog, or that a child of a believer, unbaptized, is in the same state with that of an infidel, is but foaming out our own shame. Such language is the froth of unmortified nature, the stench of a carnal mind, that is enmity against God. The serious

on both sides cannot but hate those tongues which say so as an unruly evil. They savour not the things that be of God.

The same disposition of soul, you may carry through the other branch of the dispute, that is, about the *mode of baptism*. Certainly the benefits of the ordinance may be conveyed either way. We are said to be *buried with Christ in baptism*. Col. ii. 12. Would it not be cruel for any of our brethren to say, that because we miss the *symbol* of his burial, that therefore we have not the *thing*. I believe the design of these words is neither to express one form, nor another. But as we are said to be *circumcised in Christ*, in the verse before, by *the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh*, so we are *buried with him*; and this must be understood of something done *without hands* too. And though I may think that the words allude to the manner *how*, the work is to be performed, yet the sense of the expression, carries my thoughts to some thing, that is more than twenty such allusions; for it signifies no less than my interest in Jesus Christ. Whatever phrases the apostle uses, he is describing the state of the soul, and no forms of administration. *Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Christ, were baptized into his death, therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death.* Rom. vi. 4. What? Is it to be convinced that *ours* is the right way? No, but *like as Christ was raised up from the dead, by the glory of the father, so we should walk before him in new-*

*ness of life; for if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall also be in the likeness of his resurrection. Is this similitude to tell us the way how the duty should be performed? Alas! that is a little matter indeed. No, it is to put us in mind of that which is not resembled at all; knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, that henceforth we should no longer serve sin.**

As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. And I may invert the proposition, that as many as have put on Christ, who are clothed with his righteousness, and conformed to his image; these are baptized into Christ, whether it is by dipping or sprinkling. Observe the latitude of the expression, ye are baptized *into Christ*; not into this or that denomination of his people. It is pity that we are known among men by mere circumstances. The name should not be taken from the quantity of water that is used; for God never did by the Church, as he has done by the earth, *founded it upon the seas and established it upon the floods.* Psal. xxiv. 2.

3dly, Follow what you have done by earnest prayer. When you have owned the covenant of God, it is undoing all again, if you lay aside family religion. All the good of this ordinance, either for yourselves or your children,

* The great length of this note upon the points in controversy with Anabaptists, forbids its insertion in this place. It will therefore be found at the end of the volume.

comes from the fountain of life. If he is *your God, prepare him an habitation*, Exod. xv. 2. If you consider him as *your father's God*, be sure that you *exalt him*. If the solemnity of baptism was administered to yourselves, since you were capable of thinking or choosing, then you have professed before the world your relation to the father of mercies. You hope to live in his house, and will you not be often knocking at his door?

Your baptism is also in the second place, a symbol of the relation you stand in, to God's people. It may be said of you now, as it was of those of old; *ALL our fathers were under the cloud, and ALL passed through the sea, and were ALL baptized unto Moses in the cloud; and in the sea. And they did ALL eat the same spiritual meat, and ALL did drink the same spiritual drink.* 1 Cor. x. 1. So that you may look upon your brethren as fellow-heirs of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ by the Gospel.

Learn then to pray for them and with them, if you are heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered. This is the most endearing work that you can be employed in. It shews the best of your own love, and engages the warmest of theirs. *This is the fellowship of the Spirit.*

Let me in the same exhortation, put those people in mind of their duty, who have given up their children to the Lord. You have several occasions to feel the *parent*: in their sickness, their cries, their dangers. At these

times practise the *Christian*. You are afraid of their starving, and therefore provide for your own; if you did not so, it would be denying the faith. But are there no other neglects that will be called your denying the faith? Let your surrender of them to God, and the rest of your behaviour be all of a piece; that when your child is capable of asking you, why you are at so much pains to instruct him, so afraid of his doing ill, so importunate for him on your knees, you will be able to say, this is no more than following the *baptismal vow*.

4thly, there must be always a looking to Jesus. This may be called a general direction that belongs to every duty. But here it stands under a particular mark; for the apostle says that baptism saves us by *the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God, angels and principalities and powers being made subject to him*.

A regard to him is that which animates our practice, as well as maintains our hope. The apostle argues in the beginning of the next chapter, *forasmuch as Christ has suffered for us in the flesh, we should arm ourselves with the same mind; for he that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sin, that he should no longer live the rest of his time in the flesh, to the lusts of men, but to the will of God*. And the same plea is drawn from that article of his story which is mentioned in my text; his resurrection: that as we are buried with him in baptism, so in that, we are also *risen with him through the*

faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead: and you being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, he has quickened together, having forgiven you with him all trespasses. Col. ii. 12, 13.

This will keep you to the purity of worship; for if you be dead with Christ, as you ought to be in baptism, to the rudiments of the world, why, as though living in the world, are you subject to ordinances after the commandments of men? This will give a heavenliness to our conversation: *If ye be risen with Christ set your affections on things above, where Christ sits at the right hand of God. Col. iii. 1.* And this will make you dare to die, knowing what consignments you have made, *for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God, that when he who is our life shall appear, we also shall appear with him in glory.*

Let these be the heads of nurture and admonition, that you give your children, that they may have the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus. Desire that they may learn Christ, and be found in him. We have a mighty run now against *revealed* religion, by those who do not much exceed their brethren, in what is called *natural*. But remember that you are baptized not only in the name of the *Father*, but of the *Son and the Holy Ghost*. And shall your children be brought up as without Christ? Or ever say to you as some disciples at *Ephesus* did to *Paul*, *we have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost*. We may well answer to such a profession, as he did, unto

what then were ye baptized? We find the danger of those impressions, made upon those, that never had any education, or through a great deal of sloth, have lost it. You therefore, beloved, seeing you know these things before, beware lest you also, being led away by the error of the wicked, fall from your stedfastness: but grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. 2 Pet. iii. 17.

In this, you will see your persons accepted, your iniquities pardoned, your debates with one another reconciled. He has united you in principle. You have obtained the *like precious faith, through the righteousness of God and our Saviour.* He has united you in character, *for as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, sprinkling or dipping, for ye are all one in Christ.* And he will unite you in habitation: You are no longer to be assemblies scattered or separated by conscience or prejudice. Our various opinions about this ordinance, shall hinder none of us from that common salvation that we have in him, who has baptized us with the Holy Ghost. *To him that has loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

THE DOCTRINE OF BAPTISM,

PROVING THAT IT IS IN THE FAITH OF
THE TRINITY.

SERMON I.

The improvement of Baptism is a thing of more value than the mode and the subjects. It was appointed by Christ; administered by teachers; always desired by converts; to be performed by the use of water, in the name of God, (which makes it one of the greatest works in life) i. e. with regard to his authority, command, perfection, honour, favour, blessing, image, mercy, capacity, and the communion of his saints. It was not a practice borrowed from the Jews. Christ's deity argued from the ordinance. We are universally resigned to him; worship him as God, with an open profession.

MATT. xxviii. 19.

Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

I HAVE not chosen these words to entertain you with any doubtful disputations about the subject or the mode of baptism; but upon a superior design, and that is, a right *improvement* of the ordinance. The other way of preach-

ing, ministers questions, rather than godly edifying that is in faith; 1 Tim. i. 4. What I aim at, is a point in which we are *all united*. It is a more awful question *what* it is to be baptized, than *who* should be the persons, and *how* it ought to be performed.

I think it no hard matter for sincere Christians to be convinced, that it is possible to differ, with equal love to God, and equal charity to one another. There is no occasion, on this account, to judge and set at nought your brother. Rom. xiv. 10. If you see there is a spirit of religion in the people, take care you do not ruin it in the manner of this debate. Do not speak of that, with contempt, which others observe with reverence; but receive one another as Christ has received us to the glory of God. Rom. xv. 7. Let not that which is matter of conscience to them, be matter of ridicule to you.

I have all the conviction which can be desired, that many who offer their children to God in baptism dare not be guilty of profaning an ordinance, and that many who take another method, dare not be guilty of neglecting a duty. Each of them gives God thanks, and obey what they take to be *his* will. He has a glory from them both; they are equally accepted by him. Religion has not made either opinion, a term of communion with God; and I see no need that it should be a *term of communion* with men. As we have one Lord, and one faith, so we have no more than *one baptism*. Eph. i. v. 5.

It is possible that people may agree in their notions upon the manner of administration, and be never the better for it. Whatever my opinion is about dipping or sprinkling, without *the washing of regeneration* and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, it is all as water spilt upon the ground, that cannot be gathered. What signified the circumcision of *Ishmael* in his infancy, or the baptism of *Simon Magus* in his riper years? They were each of them called the external seals of a covenant, which these persons knew nothing of: the one was a mocker, Gen. xxi. 9 and the other in the gall of bitterness, Acts viii. 23. And therefore, as I said, it is of much greater importance, to know *what it is* to be baptized; for *as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ*, Gal. iii. 27.

I do not speak this with any contempt of the outward sign. I believe the use of *water* in this solemnity is by the appointment of Christ Jesus, and what he has bound upon his Churches to the end of the world. But it is the *spirit*, the meaning, the instruction, the advantage of the ordinance, that you and I are concerned in.

The words of the text are well known to give us some account of *both*. They are the last orders that our great law-giver left with his disciples, after he had finished transgression, and made an end of sin; after he was raised from the dead, and had received all power both in heaven and earth. In this fulness of authority he directs those whom he had chosen and ordained to go into all nations.

His empire was now unconfined. He himself was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of *Israel*, but his servants were to *make disciples* every where. To which purpose he does not only appoint the preaching of the Gospel, but a *new solemnity*, in which, they expressed their dedication to him, being baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

The persons employed in this work, were the same who should be endued with power from on high, and sent out as witnesses to him. Luke xxiv. 48, 49. It is a part of the *ministerial office*, and joined with our *teaching* men to observe all things that he has commanded. We find that the preachers of the gospel always did it, and the people who gladly received the word, desired it. How indifferent soever it appears to some in our day, yet the grace of God never failed, to stir up an early regard to it, in times of old. The three thousand souls converted at *Peter's* sermon, were *baptized and added to the Church the same day*. Acts ii. 41. Though we do not read, that *Philip* did any more to the eunuch than preach Christ Jesus from the 53d of *Isaiah*, yet the spirit that opened his understanding to a *mystery*, did the same to an *ordinance*. As they came to a certain water, the *eunuch* makes the proposal. He was not prompted to it, or pushed upon it, but speaks as soon as he saw; *here is water, what hinders me to be baptized?* Acts viii. 36. And though *Saul* after his conversion was not thus hasty, yet *Ananias* would

have him so; *why tarriest thou? arise and be baptized*, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. Acts xxii. 16. And thus saith Peter upon the success of his ministry at Cesarea; *can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized?* Acts x. 47.

The words of our Lord's institution, *baptize them into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, lead us to consider this great solemnity; *first*, as it is an external action; and *secondly*, as the design and meaning of it is explained at large. The external sign is *baptizing*; the heart, the soul, the signification of it is, that it is done *in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*.

1. The thing that he directs them to, is *Baptism*, which signifies the use of *water* upon the body. That the action itself is of no value, we can own as readily as they who deride it: but the question is, whether it is not the will of God concerning us. Has he not bid us do it? have we not *received it of the Lord Jesus?*

The argument drawn from this, for human ceremonies, is of no weight at all. We may justly contend against any subjection to *the will of man*, upon reasons, that are never to be used against an institution of our great law-giver. The question is not whether there are shadows, ceremonies, and outward signs in his worship, but *who* has the right to appoint them?

God begun with *figures* of religion in Paradise; making the tree of knowledge to be the

test of *Adam's* duty, and the tree of life the pledge of his acceptance. He was worshipped by *sacrifices* from the first revelation of a Messiah. Righteous *Abel* brought a lamb of the flock, no doubt of it, by divine appointment. This was a type of God's design, and a token of *Abel's* faith in the Lamb, who takes away the sins of the world. He gave circumcision to *Abraham*, and the passover to *Moses*: and the soul who neglected either of them was to be cut off from among his people. These were each of them *carnal ordinances* in their nature, as afterwards they are called in contempt; things *outward in the flesh, bodily exercises*: Heb. ix. 1. Nevertheless, as none but God could *appoint* them, none but God could *dissolve* them, and set up others. Now, he that had all power both in heaven and earth, from a divine authority, from a fulness of Godhead, sent forth his servants to *disciple* all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

That this is to be done *by water* appears from all that the scripture has told us, both before the institution that Christ gave, and afterwards. *John* was called the *Baptist*, from that which was to be, the chief part of his ministry; he sent me, saith he, *to baptize with water*. The apostles acted in the same way. Though there is a *spiritual baptism*, and the other signifies nothing, where *that* is not; yet if this was all that our Lord designed; if there was no outward action, there had been no oc-

occasion for the *eunuch* to stop his chariot, and for him and *Philip* to get out of it, when they saw water.

I have no inclination to draw out this matter any farther; because all this while, I am held back from my chief design. But, my friends, I ought to warn you, that the main debate *in a little time* will be, not *how* much water should be used, but whether *any at all*. They who deny the doctrine of the trinity, are so uneasy at the form of words, that our Saviour has made essential to baptism, that they have a great mind to lay aside the ordinance, as *Socinus* did in *Poland*. They write and argue, that it is not *necessary*, by which if they mean any thing that is worth our heeding, it must be, that it is *not commanded*. For though we dare not say that it is necessary to God's *grace*, yet the question is whether he has not made it so to our duty. And when they ask you whether a man may not be *saved* without it, do you ask them, whether he is *obedient* without it; whether he stands complete in all the will of God, whether he fulfils all righteousness; or whether he neglects to do, what the scripture told him he ought to do:

I would therefore hope that by baptism, you understand *the washing with water*. I do not determine whether this water should be applied to the body, or the body to it; let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind. Happy is the man who condemns not himself in the thing that he allows, nor condemns others

in the thing that they allow. But that it is an external ordinance, a bodily action, which we should never have regarded without a divine appointment, is very plain.

2. He opens out the *meaning* of his own institution. It is to be *in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*. So that, though the pouring of a little water, or plunging the whole body into a greater quantity, is no more than a washing away the filth of the flesh, yet the explication Christ has given us of it, makes it the greatest affair we can ever engage in. You see,

1. That baptism is *in or into a name*.

2. This name is no less, than that of *the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*. These are the two propositions that I desire to consider.

1. I would show you what it is to be *baptized into a name*; and

2. What the great and glorious name is, that believers and their children are baptized into, that of the *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*.

1. What is the meaning of the expression, when we say that our baptism is *into the name of God*? This is what we should inquire into with reverence and a godly fear; and it calls us to mind, what the generality of professors seldom think of, that perhaps it is the *greatest solemnity* of your lives. I have been amazed to see how little of a serious temper has appeared at a baptism, among those who would be ashamed to use no more at the Lord's supper. Far be it from me, to make any comparison between them; but I should think,

that if either ordinance required a greater care and preparation, it is that of Baptism; as it is, what we do no more than once, either for ourselves, or the particular child, who is then given up. And therefore to hurry it over, as if it was, only complying with a fashion, or an introduction to revellings and banquetings, is an argument that though those people remember the *water*, yet they forget the *name* in which it is applied.

The ordinance, you know, is the first of those in which you give up either yourselves or your children to be the Lord's. Now, what do you mean in doing so? Or rather, what has the scripture told us was the design of Christ in directing the practice? That you do it in the name of the *Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, is true. We have no authority to change the very form of those words: but what do they import? I answer, there are no less than these ten particulars comprehended in being baptized into the name of our God.

1. That we confess his *authority*.
2. That we are devoted to his *command*.
3. That we adore his *perfections*.
4. That we profess our *homage* to him alone, before all the world.
5. That we depend upon his *acceptance* and favour.
6. That from him, we are to have the particular *blessings* of this ordinance.
7. That we would be conformed to his *image*.

8. That we do it with a hope of his *mercy* to eternal life.

9. That we are satisfied he *can* give us all this.

10. That we join with the whole *number* of his devoted people. These are *duties* comprehended in baptism, or *felicities* revealed by it: and if our souls are not employed upon them, we do but take the name of the Lord our God in vain.

1. They who are baptized in the name of God, do in that very action confess his *authority*: that he is the only law-giver who is able to save and destroy. This was ever the sense of a divine institution, what God *meant* by it, and what man ought to *observe* in it. *Circumcision* was an act of homage paid to the God of *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*. Any of their posterity who neglected *that*, neglected *Him*. They disowned his authority over them. On the other hand, they who submitted to it, whether of their own nation or of strangers, did in that very action, declare themselves to be *the people of the God of Abraham*. Ps. *xlvii. 8.*

And to the same purpose are we *baptized*, that it may appear we are among them, who serve and *call on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ in every place, both theirs and ours*. I Cor. i. 2. As many say, they will not have this man to rule over them, so we say we will, that *one is our master, even Christ*. Mat. *xxiii. 10.* *Abraham* did not receive the order of *circumcision* from *Melchizedeck*, but from the most

high God himself: and by the same authority are we called to baptism. None but He who had all power in heaven and earth, was able to issue the commission you find in my text. It is the declaration of God himself, behold, *I create new heavens* and a new earth, and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. Isa. lxx. 17. And yet it is the work of *Christ*; for, he that sat upon the throne, said, behold, *I make all new things*. Rev. xxi. 5.

I know, it is said, that the *Jews* had a method of baptizing among them, and that our Saviour only fixed it with his disciples as he found it with his countrymen. They who tell us so, quote the great name of *Grotius* as the champion of that opinion. Indeed, I do not wonder to find any thing of that nature in the writings of one, who has committed so many robberies upon the deity of our supreme Lord; and is famous for a number of imaginations and high thoughts that exalt themselves against the knowledge of God. But the bible itself will not allow me to think as these men do, whatever their learning is.

Nothing can be more apparent, than that the *Jews* expected, that the person who brought baptism amongst them, must be either the *Messiah* himself, or one of his fore-runners. This was the question of the Priests and Levites who came from *Jerusalem* to ask *John*, whether he was the *Christ*, or *Elias*, or that prophet. And they who were sent were of the Pharisees, a people diligent to know the

law, and zealous to advance it. Therefore they ask him farther, *why baptizest thou then, if thou be not the Christ, nor Elias, nor the Prophet?* John i. 25. And *John* in his answer shews us, that though the *Jews* mistook in a circumstance, yet they were right in their notion. I knew him not, says he, but that *HE* should be manifest to *Israel*, therefore am I come baptizing with water. Ver. 21.

What he preached was the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, as it is written in the book of the Prophet *Esaias*; the voice of one crying in the wilderness, *prepare ye the way of the Lord, and make his paths strait.* And all along he bore testimony to this, I baptize you with water, but there is *one among you*, who is mightier than I, *HE shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire.* And the apostle in his sermon at *Antioch*, (though he abounded in *Jewish* learning) seems to say, that they never heard of any baptizing before *John*. *John first preached* before Christ the baptism of repentance, to all the people of *Israel*; and, as he fulfilled his course, he said *whom think ye, that I am?* I am not he. Acts. xiii. 24, 25.

From which things I conclude, that the first time that ever the Church heard of Baptism, was in reference to a person who was actually then among them, and after a few weeks was to be declared and shewn forth to *Israel*. We read of some that had not been baptized into the name of the Holy Ghost, but, as they say, unto *John's* baptism. *Paul* tells them, *John*

verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on him, who should come after, that is on Christ Jesus. Acts xix. 3. And now when the ordinance is complete, we have it from Christ himself.

And do you suppose that we can understand him to be a creature? They who deny his deity give an awkward turn to that text, *He thought it no robbery to be equal with God* Phil. ii. 8. They tell us, it ought to be read, he did not catch at the robbery of making himself equal with God. A wonderful act of humility indeed! But the subject I am upon, gives us an instance, that *he did* make himself equal with God; and though these people count it a robbery, he thought it none, and that is, in giving us the ordinance of baptism.

Or otherwise, I am sure it is out of my power to defend our cause against a *Jew* supposing that he should plead to this purpose; “by what authority are you baptized, but that of *Jesus*? yourselves own him to be a creature, an inferior dependant being; whereas our circumcision was ordered by the most high God; and why shall one, that is *not God*, bring in a solemnity of his own to juggle out the ordinance of him that *is*? Why must a God, by office, supercede the appointment of him who is God by nature?”

Our Lord acts in the *form of God*, when he gives rules to his own house. The *Jews* came to him with a question about the miracles that he wrought, by what authority dost thou these

things, and who gave thee this authority? That was a proper time for him to have spoke of a derivative empire, if he had not known that there was but *one throne* for God, and for the Lamb for ever. But the answer that he gives them is to the purpose of the argument before us: I, says he, will ask you one question, the baptism of *John*, whence was it, from heaven or of men?

Had *Grotius* lived in those days, or had the *Jews* known their own practice as well as he pretends to do, they might have answered, that *John* had his baptism from a custom among themselves; but though they durst not *say* it was from heaven, they *knew* it was so; from whence I argue, that baptism never came by another authority than that of heaven. And if I did not believe, that when Christ appointed it, he had all power in heaven, (and yet none but God has prepared his throne there) I would no more obey a creature by a new ordinance, than I would believe an Angel upon his preaching a new gospel. I would no more take a sacrament from Christ, than I would from Anti-christ, if he was not God; for nothing can be more scandalous to the *New Testament*, than that all the solemnities under the law should be appointed by God, and those under the gospel by a creature.

2. Baptizing in the name of any one, is giving up ourselves to his *command*; it is making him the head of our interest. This way the apostle turns his argument, when the *Corinthians* begun to glory in men. Every one

of you saith, *I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ; was Paul crucified for you, or were ye baptized into the name of Paul?* 1 Cor. i. 12, 13. The strength of his reasoning lay in this, that the very baptizing into any person's name, is a virtual surrender of ourselves to his authority; and therefore as this was never done to any other than Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, we declare ourselves by it, to be the servants of God.

What is there less in this solemnity, than a profession that we will be the Lord's in all the latitude of duty and devotion; that whatever he commands we will obey? It is entering ourselves under an obligation, to walk in all the statutes of the Lord blameless.

And this is said of Christ. Nothing short of an universal resignation to his will, is what he claims, and what we owe. Christ is a son *over his own house*, Heb. iii. 6, 7, 12, 14. whose house we are; wherefore as the Holy Ghost says, *to day if ye will hear HIS voice.*—And with regard to *him*, we are exhorted to take heed, lest there be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the *living GOD*; for, says he, we are made partakers of *CHRIST*.

We are said to be *under the law to Christ*, 1 Cor. ix. 21. Certainly then he is the great law-giver; for the law is the demand of an authority over us, and our profession of subjection to him. This is the perpetual language of the *New Testament*; so he that is called *being a servant is the LORD's free man*; and he that is called *being free is CHRIST's servant*.

Moses was the servant of the most high God; and does the apostle contemplate any lower character, when he calls himself the servant of JESUS CHRIST? That passage in the *Old Testament* [*other Lords besides thee have had dominion over us, but now we will mention THY name, even thine only*] would have made us afraid of saying so if we had not known that the name of JESUS is above every name. When we read that *of the LORD, we shall receive the inheritance*, Col. iii. 24. it is explained that we serve *the Lord* CHRIST. Nor should we ever have been baptized into this great name, if he was not that Lord, who bids us give him our hearts, and to whom we say without any limitation, *Lord, what wilt THOU have us to do?* Acts. ix. 5. *For whether we live, we live unto the LORD; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether therefore we live or die, we are the LORD's:* Rom. xiv. 8. 9. Who this Lord is, you learn from the following argument; *for to this end Christ both died and rose, and revived, that he might be the Lord both of dead and living.*

3. Being baptized into the name of any one, intimates that we adore his *perfections*. This is the uttermost act of duty, the farthest that our obedience can go. I believe *Paul* to have been one of the best Christians, and the most accomplished minister that ever lived; but the reason why I would not be baptized into the name of *Paul* is, because he is not my Creator. All the value I have for

him does not rise into an adoration. His qualifications were not perfections.

The disciples worshipped our Lord, when he appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh; but had they not *seen his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the father*, John i. 14. they would not have done it, nor would he have suffered it any more than he did the young man's falling down before him. Luke xxiv. ult. They also did it after he was gone from them, which shows they believed his omnipresence, for they would never worship a God afar off; and much less a creature afar off. And when they held him by the feet and *worshipped*, it was no rebuke of their conduct, to tell them so soon afterwards, that all nations were to be baptized into his name, and by his authority. Matt. xxviii. 9.

Thus would he open the womb of the prophecy, that *all kings shall fall down before him*, and all nations shall serve him. Ps. lxxii. 11. It is the seizure that he makes of *the whole earth*, which is to be the Lord's, and he the governor among the nations. Ps. xxii. 28.

Adoring is not *making* him what he is not, but *owning* him for what he is. Should we adore and worship a creature, *he is no better* for the action, and *we are the worse*. Worship gives nothing to God, but acknowledges that every thing is in him. It is saying with Job, *I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no counsel can be withholden from thee*. Job. xlii. 2.

For a person to be baptized who does not

take Christ for the supreme God, is either to carry a lie in his forehead, or to roll, in the waters of deceit and falsehood. To be called by the name of one, whom he does not worship is to have that name in vain; and to worship any thing but an infinite nature is the essence of heathen idolatry. To say that God may command us to worship a creature is giving him the lie, for he has said, I will not give my glory to another. He has forbid it in the *Old and New Testament*; and to think that he will establish such an iniquity by a law makes his people the *servants* of idols, and him the *patron*.

4. Being baptized into the name of any one is a *public profession* of our homage to him before all the world. We are not ashamed of the *testimony of the LORD*: 2 Tim. i. 8. And therefore this solemnity is a heavy a load upon them that do not own him, as it is upon those that openly deny him. Are we called by his name, and is it a name that we are ashamed of? Remember how well he has spoke of those who *kept his faith*, and did not deny *his name*. Rev. iii. 8. There was some name or other which at that time the enemy struck at; some revelation that he made of himself which went heavily down; and his faithful people had rather part with all than part with this.

It is *for his name's sake* that ministers go out to preach the gospel, 3 John 7; it is for his name that we suffer reproach, Acts. v. 41; and yet under all the revilings of men, this

name will be as ointment poured forth to those that love him. Cant. i. 4.

And indeed this is what all parties in the world, mean by their religion. The God who is not to be owned, is a God that has no servants. *All people will walk every one in the name of his God, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever. Mich. iv. 5.* Pass over to the isles of the Gentiles, and you will find they *have not changed their Gods, which yet are no Gods. Jer. ii. 11.*

Christ knew there would be some *ashamed of him* in a corrupt and an adulterous generation, and of those will he be ashamed before his holy angels. *Mark viii. 38.*

We have called this ordinance a *sacrament* which we are told is a military word, and signifies the oath of fidelity that the army took. Now the silence of a baptized person in the cause of the *Trinity*, shows that he is a cowardly soldier, and ought to be turned out of the camp. The title soldier belongs to ministers in the *New Testament*. The apostle calls those who labour in the word and doctrine *fellow-soldiers*, and advises *Timothy* to endure hardness, as a good *soldier of Jesus Christ*. And therefore any cowardice and treachery in them, is a thousand times worse than in others. They make themselves vile examples of an indifference that they ought to reprove, rebuke, and oppose. *2 Tim. ii. 4.*

But I shall be treacherous to you, and guilty of profaning the solemnity itself, if I do not tell you, that the name called upon you is

never to be concealed. Christ has trusted it with you, and he will require it of you. The *fearful and unbelieving* are both of them called *abominable.* Rev. xxi. 8.

I cannot now proceed to the other important things contained in this ordinance. Those that I have mentioned express your *duty*, and the rest relate to your *happiness*; which shews that Christ is never behind-hand with all the faith, and zeal, and self-denial of his people; for his countenance does behold the upright.

SERMON II.

Baptism is the seal of a righteousness, and that of faith as circumcision was. How that phrase is to be understood. What the answer of a good conscience means. What it is to be buried with him in baptism. What to be baptized for the dead. Baptism ought never to be the badge of a party.

5. **BEING** baptized into the name of our God, signifies the dependance that we have upon his *favour and acceptance*, in an everlasting covenant. The whole transaction between God and man has been in a covenant of grace; and all the external marks and figures that he ever appointed, were but so many *patterns of things in the heavens*. Thus Abraham received the sign of circumcision as a *seal of the righteousness of the faith* which he had, being yet uncircumcised. Rom. iv. 11. Though the sign was new, yet the thing signified by it was

what he had before, and that is the *righteousness of faith*. This is of more value than all the ceremonies in the world, whether they are of divine or human appointment. For though by the external part of that ordinance, *Abraham* had no other relation than to his carnal seed, yet the mystery, the principle, the benefit that is figured by it makes him, as the apostle says, *the father of all them that believe*, though they be not circumcised, that *righteousness* may be imputed to them also.

The same interpretation is put upon *Baptism*. It may be called, a seal of the *righteousness of faith*. Both these solemnities, that which God appointed to *Abraham*, and that which Christ, with equal authority, gave in commission to his disciples, have their sense, their meaning, their blessing, their accomplishment, in the same *good-will towards men*. Whatever difference there is in the manner of administration, yet the doctrine of the action is the same in both. The thing signified by them is the *Righteousness of faith*.

In these two words you see the blessing of the new covenant; *first*, that *by* it and *in* it we receive a *righteousness*; and *2dly*, that this is the *righteousness of faith*. With what a swelling joy would *Abraham* submit to the pain and the peculiarity of circumcision, a thing never heard of before, and not likely to be approved of then, when he understood what it meant! It was both a token of the *righteousness* that he received from God, and an emblem of the *faith* by which he had it.

First, Each of these divine ceremonies, circumcision and baptism, are a contradiction to a maxim that ought to obtain among all our degenerate nature, that man after his fall can never be *righteous with God*. This is what our whole race is bound to believe; and yet by these ordinances you see, there is a *righteousness* for us; not merely a *pardon*, for that may be given in a way of sovereign mercy, but the believer is *righteous with God*; and the two external seals of the covenant, will tell him so.

It sounds very odd to those who either do not know what God has said, or do not heed it, that men should be both guilty and righteous, acquitted by the very law that had condemned them: that God should be just, and yet the justifier of him who had sinned. These things appear as contradictions to human nature. They would have no other sound in those places where the gospel never came. Indeed they have no better treatment among them who do not believe the report, and to whom the arm of the Lord is not revealed. Yet, if God is true, his word is true, and if that is true, these doctrines are so too; that our pardon from him, and our acceptance with him, are upon the grounds of an unalterable equity; *righteousness and peace have kissed each other*. Psal. lxxxv. 10.

What advantage then has the Jew? or what profit is there in circumcision? Much every way: chiefly, because to them were committed

the oracles of God. Rom. iii. 1, &c.; these oracles by which that ordinance was appointed, and by which it was explained. The outward sign, which went no farther than the flesh, the apostle will not allow to be circumcision, *i. e.* it has no connection in that person with the blessing signified by it. But as he goes on with his argument, *what if some did not believe?* to them circumcision was no more than a scar or a blemish; yet, *shall their unbelief make the faith of God of none effect?* Were there none who knew, what had been done to them and for them? What if *Ishmael*, who had the mark upon him, could be guilty of mocking at the covenant? He was a son merely after the *flesh*, but there are children by *promise*.

To those that believe this righteousness, Christ is precious. They feel the need of it, and see a glory in it. Thus in baptism is he held forth to be *a propitiation for our sins, through faith in his blood, to declare the righteousness of God in the remission of sins that are past, to declare at this time his righteousness,* in the very moment and article of remission, Rom. iii. 25, 26. *Ἐν τῷ νῦν καιρῷ*; that when he freely forgives our iniquities, he does it with regard to the justice of his nature. There would be a discord in his attributes and a *flaw* in his glory, if they did not all come in for equal shares.

Secondly, There is another thing to which both circumcision and baptism gave a sort of visible testimony, and that is the righteous-

ness of *faith*. The Holy Spirit has so delighted in this language, that the Church has it, with great variety. Sometimes we read that *Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness*: Rom. iv. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7. at other times it is said, to him who *works not, but believes in him, that justifies the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness*. And again, Ver. 9. David, *describes the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord imputes righteousness without works*. After this he saith that *faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness; and, he is the father of all them that believe, that righteousness may be imputed to them also*. Thus again it is said, that the promise is made to *Abraham* and to his seed, through the law, but not through the *righteousness of faith*. Ver. 13.

We might have hoped, that this happy variety, in which the Holy Spirit has turned the phrase, would have made it very easy to see what the righteousness is, that is imputed to us, and accepted for us. It cannot be a *principle* of faith within us, or any acts or *operations* that are performed by us, for his is no more our righteousness, than charity or justice is.

1st. That which is in us can scarce be said to be *imputed* or reckoned to us. I apprehend that such a manner of speaking signifies that one thing is to pass for another: as it is said of the person who offered his sacrifice in an unappointed place, blood shall be imputed to that man. Lev. xvii. 4. The

meaning is, that his shedding of blood in a wrong way, should make him as guilty as if he had taken it from a wrong creature. *He that kills an ox, is as if he slew a man: he that sacrifices a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck.* Is. lxvi.3. And so when a righteousness is *imputed to us*, it is supposed by the sound of the words, that antecedent to the imputation, it was *not in us*. Phil. iii. 9. *Our own righteousness* which is of the law, is distinguished from the righteousness which is *of God by faith*. Then

2dly. The whole design of this doctrine, and those seals that gave it a solemnity, was, to advance the free goodness of God. It is *of faith* that it might be *by grace*, and therefore if it is put upon any thing in ourselves, the whole design of the covenant is defeated. Boasting is excluded, not by the law of works, but only by *the law of faith*. Rom. iii. 27. For to him that works, the reward is reckoned not of grace, but of debt: and therefore *David* speaks of the man to whom the Lord imputes righteousness *without works*. For if our own actions are that upon which we are justified, *faith is made void*; nay, according to this notion, faith makes itself void. If *Abraham* was justified by works, he has *whereof to glory*, Rom. iv. 2. but he has no such thing before God.

3dly, The whole employment of faith upon this occasion is going out to another, and relying upon him. It supposes a total diffidence in the creature, and it can have no confidence in itself. *Abraham's* faith led him off from every thing in himself, that might either

help it or hinder it. *He considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old ; that never made him stagger at the promise of God through unbelief ; but being strong in faith, he gave glory to God ; Ver. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25. being fully persuaded that what he had promised he was able to perform, and therefore it was counted to him for righteousness. What was so counted to him ? his own action ? did that make him righteous ? did that fulfil the law ? no ; but the seed which he had his eye upon, with whom the promise was made ; and the obedience of Christ which Abraham saw with gladness, this is what he reached to as a righteousness, and it was counted to him for it. Now this is written not for his sake only, that it should be imputed to him : that he should have a son when he was an hundred years old is all personal ; that was for his sake only. Therefore it must be something else that is imputed to us, if we believe in him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and rose again for our justification.*

4thly, Upon the whole, it appears that faith is the instrument of receiving this privilege. It is a grace that God has implanted, by which a believer looks after this righteousness, takes hold of it, and feels a comfort in it. Therefore, we read of being justified *by faith* as an instrument of receiving ; Eph. ii. 8. and in another place, that we are saved by grace, Gen. vi. 9. *through faith*, as a medium of conveyance. Thus it is said of Noah, that he was

a righteous man in his generation. You may understand it of his upright walking with God; but there is something else attending upon that character, and indeed superior to it; and that is believing God *concerning things not seen as yet*, Heb. xi. 7. by which he became *an heir of the righteousness that is by faith*.

You mean the same thing by *Baptism*, that this holy man did by preparing the ark. The apostle has brought them together from a long distance of ages. 1 Pet. iii. 20, 21. It is said that the long-suffering of God waited in the days of *Noah* whilst the ark was preparing, wherein few, that is eight souls, were saved by water, *the like figure* whereunto baptism does now save us, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who is gone into heaven. What do we learn by his going into heaven, but the doctrine that he himself taught us? the spirit shall convince you of *righteousness*, because *I go to my father, and ye see me no more*. John xvi. 10. Therefore,

A person who is either baptized himself, or knows what he is doing for his infant, does by that action declare that salvation is come to the Gentiles; that sinners are made righteous with God; the law has no more to *say*, and justice has no more to *do* against them. But then this righteousness is not in themselves; they behold it in another, they fetch it from him. We through the Spirit wait for the hope of *righteousness by faith*. Gal. v. 5.

6. Being baptized into the name of our God signifies that we depend on him for the parti-

ular blessings of this ordinance. It is not merely taking upon us a badge that is to be worn for life, but it is an act of *worship* to our God, and of communion with him. As the scripture has directed us to this action, it guides us in it, tells us what we should mean, and what we are to aim at. I have shown you, that it is a seal of the righteousness of faith. And what does this righteousness issue in, with respect to ourselves? I cannot give a better answer to that, than in the language of the Bible.

John preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, because *the kingdom of heaven was at hand*. That kingdom was now to be opened, which called for repentance from sins, and proclaimed a remission to them. Here is a sovereign, *a king of saints*, Rev. xv. 3. the blessed and only potentate, to whom we should bow with repentance and godly sorrow; and who himself has bowed the heavens with all the treasures of salvation and pardon. 1 Tim. vi. 16. Not that the external action did any more, than signify these things. The Sadducees and Pharisees came to *John's* baptism, as people warned to flee from a wrath to come. They thought they had a visible claim to any ordinance in the Church of God, having *Abraham* to their father, Matt. iii. 7, 8, 9; but he exhorts them not only to appear in the signs of repentance, but to bring forth fruits that are meet for it. Or otherwise, though the king of *Sion* was come among them having salvation, yet his fan was

in his hand, and he would thoroughly purge his floor, as well as fill his garner. Ver. 12.

And so *baptism* saves us, not by washing away the filth of the flesh, but by the *answer of a good conscience* towards God. What is that? I believe, though it includes our integrity, yet it relates to a great deal more: for it is the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, that *purges our consciences* from dead works, to serve the living God. Heb. ix. 14. A good conscience signifies that a person is in a state of pardon. If our hearts *condemn us not*, then have we confidence towards God. 1 John iii. 21.

Thus does *Ananias* explain it to *Saul*; now why tarriest thou, arise, and be baptized, *washing away thy sins*, and calling upon the name of the Lord. Acts xxii. 16. Not that the virtue lay in the action. A flood of water does no more than the blood of bulls and goats to take away sin; and therefore he speaks of this in connexion with his *calling upon the Lord*. So that though a person who is baptized, ought not, cannot, and dare not say, that this ordinance is a token of his being pardoned, yet he knows it is the emblem of that blood, by which alone he can be so. Therefore,

There is an application in this solemnity, whether I do it for myself or my child.
 “ Lord, in this way of thine own appointment
 “ I come to thee for mercy. I am looking to
 “ Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant,

“ and the blood of *sprinkling* that speaks
“ better things than that of *Abel*. The privi-
“ lege is not secured by this duty, but it is re-
“ presented and may be conveyed. Let my
“ person, my garments, my children be
“ washed indeed in the blood of the lamb. It
“ is this that takes away the sins of the
“ world.”

Simon Magus was baptized but not pardon-
ed, Acts viii. 23. He still continued in the gall
of bitterness, though he had passed under that
ordinance, which to others is a token for good.
He that believes not shall be damned, whe-
ther he is baptized or no, Mark xvi. 16.
They will be *bitter waters* to him. Though he
make his body never so clean, God will
plunge him in the ditch, and his own clothes
shall abhor him. Washing does no more
change the nature of an *infidel* than it does
the skin of an *Ethiopian*. But he that be-
lieves, and is baptized, shall be saved, *i. e.*
he that believes what baptism signifies, and is
baptized as an act of his faith, and an emblem
of a justifying righteousness, he shall be saved.
And if you do not mean all this by it, either
you do it not; in the name of God, or you take
that name in vain.

7. Our being baptized into this great name
signifies that we must be conformed to his
image. Circumcision was a seal of the cove-
nant; and therefore *Abraham* meant by the
sign what he meant by the covenant itself,
that the Lord would be his God; and that
he was obliged to walk before him and be

perfect. Gen. xvii. 1. Baptism carries the same demand along with it. It is a reliance upon the death and the resurrection of Christ, as that, by which, he brought in a righteousness. But, besides that, it also calls us to a fellowship in his sufferings, to be *partakers of his death*, and to feel the power of his resurrection. Phil. iii. 10.

I will turn you to the apostle's argument upon this head, which may excuse me from making any of my own. He observes, that believers are dead to sin, and therefore cannot live in it. Upon this he argues, *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death.* Rom. vi. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6. Whether this refers to the *manner* of baptism, is a question very trivial, in comparison of what I now bring it for. If you think that being *under the water* is all that is meant by this *burial*; or that it is essential to it, so that there cannot be the one without the other, you make a poor business of it indeed. The apostle tells us what he means by the phrase; that we are therefore buried with him by baptism *into death*, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should also *walk in newness of life*; for if we have been planted together *in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.* And to let you see that what he speaks of in these allusions, has nothing to do with *external forms*, he binds an interpretation upon his own words, that is all spiritual;

Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin may be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. So that

The whole design of the ordinance, is to represent and enforce our conformity to him, who lived as one dead to this world, and whose conversation was all in another. Col. iii. 27.

Thus he pleads again; as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have *put on Christ*. You are to look like him, to walk as he also walked. The life you live in the flesh should be by faith in him, that you may have boldness in the day of judgment. 1 John iv. 17.

The phrase of *putting on Christ* sometimes relates to your justification and signifies a being found in him, not having on our own righteousness, but it is also used in another branch of your character. And it is thus expressed to show the entireness of this conformity, that as you put off the old man with all his deceitful lusts and deeds, so you *put on the new man*. Eph. iv. 24. This is what you should design, understand, and promote by this ordinance. *In him ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God.* Col. ii. 11. 12.

8. When we are baptized into the name of God, we do it with a hope of his mercy to eternal life. It is a temporal ordinance, but

it carries an everlasting sense ; it relates to spiritual blessings in *heavenly places*. Eph. i. 3. In the Lord's supper we shew forth not only his dying, but his coming again. We eat and drink at his table in view of the new wine in our father's kingdom. And so it is here. Circumcision was the token of an *everlasting covenant*. The sign itself was to be abolished at a certain period, and so shall baptism at the consummation of all things. Gen. xvii. 7. They are both of them but patterns of things in the heavens ; but the *covenant* that each of them related to is *everlasting* in its form, its security, its benefits, and its effects.

This is the plain sense of a certain text, if you will take it unpuzzled with criticism, and the folly of those, whose bellies being filled with the east-wind, do reason with unprofitable talk. *What shall they do who are baptized for the dead? if the dead rise not at all, why are they then baptized for the dead?* 1 Cor. xv. 29. This passage has put many learned persons, upon *striving about words*, and, I think, to no profit. Sometimes a scripture has the same fate with interpreters, that *Job* has with his comforters, who came with a good meaning, but did not act very much to the purpose. The apostle quite through that chapter, is proving the resurrection of the dead ; that *Christ's has been and ours shall be*. He argues it from the ministry of the word, that otherwise our preaching is vain, and your faith is vain ; and then he does it from another ordinance, *people are baptized for the dead*, that is, with a

professed subjection to Christ who *is* raised from the dead, and with a declared hope that *we shall be so*. Now, as he saith, if there be no resurrection from the dead, why was this ever made the signification and import of baptism? In this solemnity as we look *to* a Saviour, so we look *for* him. We *wash* these vile bodies, and he will *change* them by a power that can subdue all things to himself. Phil. iii. 21.

9. We are baptized into the name of our God, upon a full satisfaction, that he is able to do all this for which we are waiting. Our privileges in him and by him, are pardon, acceptance, conformity to him, and felicity with him. And as these are our desire, so they are our *earnest expectation and confidence that in nothing we shall be ashamed*. Phil. i. 20. To depend for pardon upon one that cannot give it, or for holiness upon him who cannot work it, or for heaven upon a hand that cannot bring us to it, would make us ashamed of our hope. How dreadful would it be for these expectations to raise us up to heaven, and then upon a disappointment, to go down, both *sneaking and howling* into hell.

But, as we are baptized upon his command who has all power both in heaven and earth, his power upon earth can preserve us from *falling*, and his power in heaven will present us *faultless* with exceeding joy. Jude 22. We *durst not* have taken his name upon us, if he *was not* our sovereign. We *durst not* have done it with confidence, if he was not omnipo-

tent. But he has a mighty arm; strong is his hand, and high is his right hand. Who is a *strong Lord* like unto him, or to *his faithfulness* round about him? His faithfulness will declare his strength; his strength will secure his faithfulness. He shows a greater majesty in a *covenant* than he does in a *creation*. Psal. lxxxix. 6, 7.

What do you mean by being baptized? It is declaring plainly to the world, that you seek a city, which is an heavenly, whose builder and maker is God. Heb. xi. 16. For in this ordinance God is not ashamed to be *called your God*; and from thence you may conclude that he has provided for you a *city*. Behold what manner of love he has bestowed upon you, that you should be *called* the children of God! He has called you so by appointing baptism. You call yourselves so by observing it. By this it appears that you are, *the sons of God*, 1 John iii. 1, 2. and though it does not fully appear what you shall be, yet here is a happy general conclusion, that we shall be like him, by seeing him as he is.

10. Being baptized into the name of God, expresses the common interest, that all believers have in him. It was never designed to be *the badge of a party*, but of a christianity that is now diffused among all nations; and it belongs to *all* that in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus, both theirs and ours. The distinction of kingdoms, languages and sexes, (and I think of particular opinions too) ought to be swallowed up in it.

As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. Gal. iii. 27, 28. You see the apostle makes the name of *baptist* to be of the same extent with that of *believer*; not that believers should think themselves divided by it, but united in it. *As the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ. For by one spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free, and have been made all to drink into one spirit. 1 Cor. xii. 12, 13.*

Hence it appears, that what is only external is a very little matter. We are said to drink into one spirit, to let us see, that spiritual baptism is something *within us*. He has said that we have but one Lord, one faith, and *one baptism*; and therefore, let us not charge some persons with having *no baptism*, and others with having *two*. I am sure a difference of opinion, upon this head, never so much as *biased my friendship*, and I hope it never will be in my practice a *term of communion*. Christ has made it an ordinance so wide as to comprehend us all; and I shall not in-close what he has left open.

By being baptized, you declare yourselves christians; and in this are distinguished from none, but those who do not own Christ Jesus to be head over all things to his Church; or, which comes to the same thing, do not be-

lieve him to have the fulness of him, that fills all in all. Eph. i. 21, 22.

And thus have I considered what this expression, to be baptized into a name, imports in a more general way. What that name in particular is, you see by the perpetual form of the ordinance. It is that of *the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*, which brings the first article of our religion into the first act of our profession.

SERMON III.

Baptism completed by Christ, and an argument of his omnipotence. He gave the form of it, which expresses the first article of religion, a trinity of persons in an unity of Godhead. We are baptized in no other name than that of God. The first command unrepealed. None but God can give the blessings of the ordinance, pardon and purity, which are ascribed to the Son and Spirit. Baptism is into the name of one God. This was very little known among the heathen. The charge of tritheism false and impudent.

IT is very evident, that to be *baptized into the name* of any one is the greatest homage we can pay to such a being. It shows that all our devotion is *to him*, and all our springs are *in him*. Psal. lxxxvii. 7. And therefore,

II. Let us inquire *what that name is*, into

which, by our Lord's appointment, we are baptized. Who is there in heaven or in earth, that is entitled to a surrender of all that we have, and can answer our dependance in all that we hope for? Certainly the former is a tribute given only to God, and the blessing is derived from him alone. Therefore the name by which we are called in this solemnity must be *above every name*, if you do but consider these four things.

1. **Baptism** is what you may call the *frontispiece* of the christian religion. It is the first public declaration, that we make of our adherence to the Messiah. And therefore *Peter* presses the converted *Jews* to it immediately, "repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ." Acts ii. 38. The baptism of *John* was to prepare the way of the Lord; to let them know they should now see the great salvation that had been promised and expected, of which God had spoke in types, and believers in prayers. xxvi. 7. To this *hope of Israel*, the twelve tribes instantly serving God day and night, did hope to come. And therefore they that understood his baptism, looked upon it as the opening of the everlasting gates. The kingdom of heaven was now at hand, and the *King of Glory, the Lord of Hosts, was entering in.* Ps. xxiv. 9. The people were musing in their hearts concerning *John*, whether he was the *Christ* or no. Luke iii. 15. From the day of his showing to *Israel*, he was to give them *the knowledge of salvation* in the remission of their sins,

through the tender mercy of their God; whereby the day-spring, the bright and morning star had visited them. Therefore,

2. It is an ordinance more explained and enlarged by Christ himself. *John* was to decrease, being only the friend of the bridegroom, and rejoiced to hear his voice. *John* iii. 29, 30. For as *John's* baptism was a declaration that he who should come *was come*, neither look we for another: so Christ's baptism is a testimony not only of his arrival, but his *accomplishment* of all that he came for; that he had glorified the father on earth, and *finished* the work that was given him to do; that the pleasure of the Lord had prospered in his hand. *John* xvii. 4. By *John's* baptism, they who believed, gave a token to the conviction within them, that the fulness of time was come, that the work of a Redeemer was *begun*; by *ours* we declare, that it is *all finished*; that by one offering he has for ever *perfected* them that are sanctified. *Heb.* x. 14.

The doctrine of *their* baptism was, that a Son is born, a child is given; that of *ours* is, that *the Messiah is cut off*. They proclaimed in the deserts, the highway of their God, and told the world that he was *come*; we make the same declaration that he is *gone* as a faithful high priest within the veil. Christ appointed it, when he had no more to do on earth, and was exalted by the right hand of the Father, to sit with him upon his throne in heaven. The first incorrect edition of baptism was christianity in the *dawn*, and now it is the

badge of that religion in its more *perfect day*. By baptism we tell the world, that we look for no other *Saviour* than Jesus Christ, and for no other *salvation* than what he has wrought. It is the mark of our religion, as distinguished from that of the *heathen*, and as transcending that of the *Jews*.

3. It is altogether the contrivance of Jesus *at the time*, when he asserted his right to do it. It was not agreed on, by a council of *apostles*, as what seemed good, to the Holy Ghost and to them; but it is delivered to them, by their *Lord* in person, after they had seen his glory forty days, and heard him speaking things *pertaining to the kingdom of God*. Acts i. 3. They wanted no conviction that he had all power in heaven and earth; not only *great power*, but *all power*, for any limitation to the word is a contradiction to it: a power that is confined and bounded is not *all power*. He had shown his superiority to the powers on earth; not only kings and priests, but the devils, the *principalities of darkness*. Col. ii. 15. He had spoiled these in his death; and by the resurrection of his body had torn the prey from the mighty, disarmed the *strength* of death, by loosing the *bands* of it. He had insulted the grave, and over-ruled all its victory.

His having all power on earth, they believed from what he *did*, and his omnipotence in heaven, they believed upon what he *said*. For, would he dare to tell them a lie, after the Father had so highly exalted him? Would he exercise himself, in things too high for him,

at the very opening of his kingdom? They saw that in him, the Father was well pleased; and therefore could never suppose, that at such a time as this, he would be guilty of an usurpation; that when he had so lately drank of the "brook in the way." And was just beginning to *lift up his head on high*, Psal. cx. *ult.* he should then be chargeable with the *robbery* of making himself *equal with God*, or indeed of provoking the eyes of his glory. Would he carry arrogance to the throne, or awaken jealousy round about it? No, no. What he then said, after he had prevailed in the greatness of his strength, he *spoke in righteousness*, as one *mighty to save*. Isa. lxiii.

1. And therefore, baptism is no *apostolical constitution*, no solemnity at the second hand; but an order from the *first begotten*, who was newly brought again into the world, with the sound of a trumpet, that all the angels of God might worship him. Heb. i. 6. Therefore,

4. The name into which we are baptized, *is of his appointing*. He has not left it to the humour of men, to contrive what they imagine, the most proper signification of our allegiance. It is by the ordinance of baptism, that we confess *Jesus is Lord*. It is he alone who has inscribed, on his own orders, the sense and meaning which they are to carry all over the world. It is a name, that is *not to depart out of our mouth*, nor out of the mouth of our seed, nor out of the mouth of our seed's seed, from henceforth even for ever. Isa. lix. *ult.* Baptism is a washing, not a doing

away the filth of the flesh ; but it is done in a *name*, and that is no other name than one of Christ's own *choosing*. In this ordinance is your first *action* as professors, in testimony to your first *principle*, as believers.

Baptism itself, is both an introduction to your religion, and an abstract of it. It signifies your pardon from Christ, your conformity to him, your dying and rising with him : And the name that you do it in, is the substance of that faith, which was once delivered to the saints. Every other truth, either flows from it, or flows to it. This is the original, and this is the centre. Here do all the heads of Revelation begin, and here they end. There are five things that you may observe in this form of sound words.

(1.) The name into which we are baptized, must be that of the *most high God*.

(2.) That it is the name of no more, than *one Being*. There cannot be two or three supremes. The word is put in the singular number. He does not say we should be baptized into the *names* of three, which might have led us to suppose a distinction of nature, but into the *NAME* as only of one ; and yet

(3.) The form itself tells, of no less than *three*, Father, Son and Holy Ghost ; though the ordinance reveals them all under one name. Whatever strife there is about the validity of another text, there is no need to *send over the sea* for vouchers to this. Deut. xxx. 13. Here is a word *nigh to us* in our mouths, and in our hearts ; and whether or no

John has said it in his epistles, we are sure *Matthew* has it in his gospel, that "there are three who bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one."

(4.) These three are *different* from one another. They are spoken of in these relative terms of Father and Son, to shew that they cannot be the same *person*. There are things ascribed to the Father, that are not true of the Son, as there are many of the Son which cannot with any possibility be said of the Father. The Father is neither the Son nor the Spirit: the Spirit is neither the Father nor the Son. We read of the most high God, in his own word, under no less a distinction than a Trinity, and under no greater. There are no more than three, and there are no fewer; yet

(5.) It is plain from the language of this *form*, and the whole design of the *ordinance*, that these three are *one*, in *nature*, in the *power* they have over us, and the *glory* they have from us. So that the doctrine of baptism, the thing declared and published by it, is a *Trinity of Persons in an Unity of Godhead*. He that denies this, breaks the *first* command in having other Gods. He that conceals it, breaks the *third*, by taking the name of his God in vain.

I. We are baptized into no other name than that of *the most high God*. We do not surrender ourselves or children to any creature in distinction from him, or in conjunction with him.

(1.) To suppose that baptism is administered in the name of a creature, is a visible daring insult, upon the first and the great commandment: *Thou shalt have no other Gods before me.*

Indeed some tell us that this is repealed. But it was time enough to have said that, when *heaven and earth are passed away.* Nay, it will be too soon to do it then, for when those are gone, not one *scruple* or tittle of the law shall perish; much less, shall the foundation of the whole be rased. Did Christ come to fulfil the minuter parts of the law, and would he strike out the greatest commandment of all? Was he so zealous, that his Father's house should not be a den of *thieves*, and has he himself made it to become the habitation of *Idols*? They that speak against his doctrine, revile his person, and rather than allow his deity, will number him among the *Idols*, the *Gods that have not made the heavens*, and who shall perish from under these heavens. Jer. x. 1.

Baptism is not only a part of our homage, but an introduction, an obligation, and a badge to the whole. All our duty is begun by it, and comprehended in it. It is the whole life of God, the entire obedience of the believer and his seed. Whatever we do afterwards, is no more than the ratifying and expanding of our baptism. And shall we confess all this allegiance, to any other besides the living and true God? We are sure that *faith cannot make void the law, and shall unbe-*

lief do it? Our business in preaching faith as a doctrine, and using it as a principle, is to *establish* the law; but they who deny this faith are pulling down the law.

It was the glory of the written law, that it gives us no more than one God; and can any thing be said more scandalous of the gospel, than that it has given us two or three? When *Joshua* circumcised the children of *Israel*, the case was clear; there was no strange God among them. And when *Peter* baptized those three thousand in one day, was it more involved? If so, though they might call the place of circumcision *Gilgal*, because it rolled away the reproach of *Egypt*, our baptism must be *Gilgal reversed*, by bringing back all the *Egyptian* darkness and idolatry. Blessed be God, he has written the great things of his law, and there is nothing greater in it than the unity of his nature, and the prerogative of his worship, but some have either counted them, or made them *strange things*.

(2.) The *surrender* we make of ourselves is too little for God, if creatures are to share it with him. We do not worship and swear, both by the Lord and by *Malcham*. *Zeph. i. 6*. What we profess in baptism is, that we will be *the Lord's*. It is a virtual disclaiming of any other authority. Other Lords, besides thee, *have had* dominion over us; and if baptism has joined them with him, then we may say other Lords besides thee *shall have* dominion over us. But how frightful is such an in-

tepretation of an ordinance, to those who have said, *by thee only* will we make mention of *thy name* ! If the Father is the only God exclusive of the Son and Holy Ghost, by making mention of them, we recognise *other Lords besides him*. We give his glory to another, which he will never do himself, nor allow in his people.

(3.) The *blessings* we expect from that Covenant of which baptism is the seal, are what none but the most high God can bestow. And therefore, if he had made the Son and Holy Ghost only *ministering spirits*, he would have taught them their distance, as he has the angels. They would never have been spoken of in such a way as to put us, upon giving them adorations, in which they ought not to be *sharers*, if they are not *equals*:

In baptism we declare our hope of two things that God has always kept in his own hand, though we receive them from the Son and Spirit: the one is *pardon*, and the other *purity*.

Baptism is a pledge of the *remission* of our sins. And what titular God can do this? *What God is like to him*, or has so much as the resemblance of him, who pardons iniquity, and passes by the transgressions of his heritage? Mic. vii. 18. It is he, even he, who blots out our sins *for his name's sake*; i. e. in declaration to that name, which would be to no manner of purpose, if another could do it as well as he.

To say that Christ does it in a name superi-

or to his own, is a matter that ought to be proved, and not delivered at random. If an angel had ever pronounced a pardon, he would have taken the same care that the apostle did, to show us that it was not done in his own name. And in *whose* would they do it then? *Peter* did it in the name of *Jesus*; faith in *his name* gave the poor man a perfect soundness. Acts iv. 16. How easy then would it have been for our Lord, to have sprinkled a few qualifications, upon some of the numerous cases, in which he said without any reserve, son, daughter, *thy sins are forgiven thee?*

It is this that we desire and hope for in the ordinance of baptism; and therefore do it in the name of that *Jesus*, in *whom* we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our sins. Col. i. 14.

And thus it is as to our *sanctification*. He that works us for the *self-same thing is God*, i. e. for heaven. He draws a plan within, of the eternal house which he has prepared above. It is one hand begins and carries on the change. It is *God* that works in us, both to will, and to do of his own good pleasure; and yet they who are born of God, are born of the *Spirit*. As we are baptized into one body, so we drink into *one Spirit*. For the washing of regeneration we are renewed by the *Holy Ghost*. It is the *Spirit* that quickens. It is *he* who draws out the whole length of conviction; who reproves the world of sin, and righteousness, and judgment. These things are as truly the operations of the Spirit, as they are

peculiar works of God. We make no doubt that a creature cannot do them, and we are as certain that the Holy Ghost has done them.

Baptism saves us by *the answer of a good conscience* towards God. It is by *the blood of Jesus* that our consciences are purged from dead works to serve the living God; and what is it that applies the one to the other? Heb. ix. 14. We are chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father; but it is the *sanctification of the spirit*, that brings us to obedience through the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus. 1 Pet. i. 2. He is a peculiar agent in this ordinance of baptism; we are born of water and of the *Spirit*. The disciples were baptized with *the Holy Ghost* and with fire. It was he who fell upon them, and had the supreme control of the greatest miracles the world ever saw, or that the Church ever felt.

Indeed the main security that we have, either of heaven or holiness, is God's *dwelling in us*. Angels or ministers are the helpers of our joy, but they are never said to be *in us*, or we *in them*. 1 John iv. 16. Though these words signify more than we can now explain, yet it is easy to see, that whatever they mean, can be true of none but *God*; Now Christ is said to be *in us* as our hope of glory. There is no medium between his being *in you*, and your reprobation.

And thus much is affirmed of the *third person*, as well as the *second*. If any man have not the *Spirit* of Christ he is none of his. He is to be *in us*, and to dwell *with us* for ev-

er. Your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and yet you are no other than the temple of the living God, as God has said I will dwell in them and walk in them. 1 Cor. vi. 19. He makes intercession for us; and he who searches the heart knows what is the mind of the Spirit. Not that this is any contradiction to his throne in heaven, or exclusive of his eternal presence and glory there.

(4.) God himself will never bear, the joining of any other with him, in the solemnity of our worship. To whom will ye liken God, Isa. xli. 18. or what likeness will ye compare to him? As deity is peculiar to him, so we acknowledge it by making worship peculiar to him. As there is an infinite distance between him, and the most exalted creatures, so he will have his people show it.

Solomon's impiety was not, denying the supremacy of the father. He had always the chief place in the temple: but it was bringing other Deities thither, and giving them any place at all. It would have been as vile, to have reared up a statue for Gabriel or Moses, as to do it for Chemosh or Milchom, and put it into the house that God had called by his own name. His name alone is Jehovah, and the house was built for no other. He was not to make it (as Micah did his) an house of Gods. Therefore had he pleaded, that the other were entitled to no more than inferior worship, that he made them no more than subordinate Deities, it would not have justified him; because that very thing itself of inferior worship was idolatry, and the action of a subordinate dei-

ty is nonsense. And shall a Christian ordinance come under the same rebuke?

Baptism is the consecration of a living temple, to no other than the God of *Israel*. Suppose we were left to contrive the form ourselves, and take the Son and Spirit to be creatures, should we here have dared to join them with our God? And can you imagine if Christ had been of that opinion, he would not have taken care to express the matter with more distinction? He would never lay such a snare for his people.

Did he think that baptism was no act of worship? Then we make more of it than he did. Or did he suppose that we might worship another besides the great God? Then he destroyed the law and the prophets. If he was a creature, he had no authority to change that law; for there must be as great a power in *taking* it away, as there was in *giving* it. Or, would he throw things together with a dangerous confusion, bidding us take the name of one who is God, and of two who are not, without explaining himself, the difference there must be in the threefold homage?

Really, that is saying as ill a thing of him as the *Jews* ever did, and making him a deceiver indeed. And yet I must think some of these particulars to be the case, if I am driven out from this chain of doctrines; first, that he designed baptism to be an act of the greatest homage and adoration—secondly, that he directed this by his own order, to no other than the most high God—and, thirdly, that he

speaks of this one God, in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

II. Another article of faith, contained in the form of baptism, is the unity of the Godhead. This you will collect from an observation that I made before, that we are baptized not into *names*, as if there were Gods many and Lords many, but into *the name* of God, to show that there is no more than one. Now that the Lord has extended his empire, and is king over all the earth, in this day there shall be one Lord, and *his name one*. Zech. xiv. 9.

This was ever the grand article of revealed religion, as you may see by comparing our Saviour's words with the preface to the ten commandments. In the original edition of them we read it thus: *I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and the house of bondage*. I believe it is easily proved, that the person, in the divine nature, who suffered himself to be visible, on that occasion, was the *Son*. He appeared to *Abraham* in *Mesopotamia*, to *Jacob* at *Luz*, to *Moses* at *Horeb*. The similitude of the Lord did they behold, though no man had *seen the Father* at any time. John vi. 46. And yet when Christ has occasion to speak of this, he does it with a testimony, not to the concern of that one person, nor to the three who bear the record in heaven, but to the *unity* that was among them.

The scribes having asked him, which was the first commandment of all, he answers the

first of all the commandments is this, *Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord*; from whence you may argue, that though he then made known himself as rejoicing in the habitable parts of the earth, yet what he did was in the *same nature* with the Father and Holy Spirit. This is the sense of those words, the Son does nothing *of himself*. John v. 19. i. e. he acts in an eternal unity of nature with the Father. The expression cannot import any inferiority, because it is said in universal terms that *whatever things* the Father does, these does the Son likewise. The scribe himself saith to him, well, master, thou hast said the truth, for there is *one God*, and there is no other but he. Nor does our Lord contradict him, but owns that he *answered discreetly*.

This unity of the Godhead, is the foundation of the apostles and prophets. There is no variety of doctrines upon this head, between the *Old and New Testament*. In this, revelation is distinguished from the light of nature, since the fall, by which the light that was in us, became darkness. There were indeed some sketches of this truth among the Gentiles, since *an eternal power and Godhead* may be argued from the things that do appear. But we know how deficient they were in this matter; though it seems so easy to human reason, now that revelation has set it a thinking. Rom. i. 21.

1. It was in all ages and countries, the undeniable doctrine that God revealed. We

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read of some few among the learned heathen that confessed it: but it was so far from being the universal opinion, that one person died a martyr for it. Now wherever revelation comes it is so established, that they all know it, from the least to the greatest. It was not the discovery of one, more eminent than all the rest; but they who are only babes in knowledge, receive it upon the greatest evidence. Such care does the Holy Spirit take, to keep all those under his instruction, from the practice of *Tritheism*: though such is the rant of heresy, that it will not suffer us, to be kept from the charge. We know of no more than *one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.* Eph. iv. 5.

2. Revelation always told us *who* this one God is. It is not a national dispute as it used to be, whether the God of the *Philistines* or the *Moabites* was superior. But we are as much determined upon the question, *who is the Lord*, as that there is but *one*. This is what the people of *Israel* pleaded in their arguments, and this he pleaded among them by his miracles. They tell *Pharaoh*, that their God was over all the earth. The Shepherd of *Israel* hath the earth in his hands and the fulness thereof. Ps. xxiv. 1. *Naaman* the *Syrian* owned, that there is no God but in *Israel*. The name that he went by, to distinguish him from other deities, was that of *Jehovah*. This *Daniel* professes, there is a God in heaven that reveals secrets; and *Nebuchadnezzar* owns, of a truth, your God is a God of gods, and a lord

of kings, and a revealer of secrets. Dan. ii. 28, 47.

3. They always understood by this one God, a being that made the world, not by proxies or deputies. They knew it was the dignity of their God to breathe out a creation; *he spake and it was done, he commanded and it stood fast.* Ps. xxx. iii. 9. The *Egyptians* and *Persians* had some notions of the supreme Deity: but they supposed him not to be the maker of the universe, and imagined his glory like that of their own kings, to consist in a slothful grandeur. It is from their wooden divinity, that we have the stupid notion of God's creating the world by *an instrument*; whereas the *bible* has taught us to think of the most High, as possessing his glory in a perpetual energy; upholding all things *by the word of his power.* Heb. i. 3. The *Father* works hitherto, and *Christ* works. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without our *Father.* Of *him*, and to *him*, and through *him*, are all things. Rom. xi. *ult.*

4. In speaking of one God, according to the language of revelation, all inferior deities are struck off. Psal. lxxxvi. 8. *Among the Gods* there is none like unto thee, O Lord, neither are there any works like to thy works; but afterwards they are swept out of the comparison: thou art great and doest wondrous things, *thou art God alone.* We do not only confess a supreme, but that there is *no other*; no communication of the divine nature, no distribution of the divine honour, nor partner-

ship in the divine worship. The heathen had their Gods many, and Lords many, but to us there is *one God* the Father, of whom are all things, and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things. 1 Cor. viii. 6. It is this that we mean in baptism. Should we suppose that the Father, Son, and holy Ghost were one God and two creatures, our distinction from the heathen would not be in the unity of the Godhead, but only in the *names* of those that are nearest to him. And thus he may be supposed, not to quarrel with them about the *true God*, but about the ministers of state, those that see the king's face, and sit first in the kingdom.

SERMON IV.

The unity of the Godhead is to be understood of the divine nature. Neither more nor less than a Trinity of persons. Reasons why baptism is in the name of the Father, and of the Son, or Word. A comparison between these two titles. He is our Creator, Redeemer, Sovereign. And of the Spirit being called our Maker, God, and Saviour.

III. **T**HOUGH this form of words signifies, our adoration to no more than one God, yet it gives us an account of *three*, into whose undivided name we are baptized. And this agrees to the perpetual revelation of the

Bible; for there we read of the most high God, either with regard to his *essence*, or with a declaration of his *personality*.

1. He is often mentioned in the *unity* of his nature. The names of God, and Lord, or *Jehovah*, the Almighty, the Eternal, and several other titles, are used with an individual application. They are given to no more than one. Thus it is said, *thou art God, even thou alone*, Ps. lxxxvi. 8. *i. e.* there is a meaning of the word that is only thine. Creatures may have the name, but without the sense that it contains, when it belongs to *thee*. So again, *thou whose name alone is Jehovah*; and hear *Israel, Jehovah our God is one Jehovah*: Ps. lxxxiii. 18. *Jehovah is one* and his name *one* in all the earth. Deut. vi. 4. There is but one Almighty; it is the attribute, not of a person, but a nature, to distinguish it from all that are derived and limited. He is the king eternal, immortal, invisible, the *only wise God*. 1 Tim. i. 17.

Then the several divine perfections of wisdom, goodness, truth, and purity, are laid down in the Bible, as the glories of that one Being, of whom it is said that he is, and that there is *none besides him*. They are applied to him, as they never can be to any other. What the creature has of them, is in a degree so much lower, that they still continue in the language of the *Old and New Testament*, to be the attributes of no more than one. Thus saith *Hannah*, there is none *holy* as the Lord, for there is *none besides him*; 1 Sam. ii. 2. and

Christ himself proclaims, the unity and excellence of the Godhead, there is *none good but one*, and that is God; Matt. xix. 17. and the apostle brings it in, among the heads of adoration, to *God only wise* be glory and dominion for ever. Rom. xvi. 27.

This is the voice of nature, the doctrine of the creation, that the eternal power and Godhead belong to no more than one, and the glory owing to it, is what he will never give to another. To that supreme undoubted article, does the whole revelation of the Bible agree, that there is but one only, the living and true God. We detest the opinion of two or three deities, as much as of three hundred. To suppose that any such error is to be found in scripture, is to make the holy writings devour themselves. They are visibly designed against all idolatry, and can never build up the thing, which they have so heartily destroyed.

I press this matter with fervency, to shew that we are fallen into the hands of wicked and *unreasonable men*, 2 Thess. iii. 2. as they are who have not faith. False witnesses rise up against us, and lay to our charge things that we know not. When any tell us, as a number of vain talkers do, that we are for the tri-theistic scheme, for three conscious minds, against all our declaration for *ONE ONLY living and true God*; it shews that people are resolved, to set their mouths against the heaven, and their tongue runs wild and uncontrolled over the earth. The unity of the divine nature is always a sacred part of our *good con-*

cession, as well as a Trinity of persons. If men are determined to dash the one of them against the other we cannot help it. The scripture has made them consistent, harmonious, and certain. If any are resolved that God shall not be justified in his sayings, they will find, that whosoever falls upon this stone shall be broken to pieces, but upon whomsoever it falls, it will grind him to powder.

2. Though the most high God is no more than one, yet he has revealed himself with a *distinction*, neither greater nor less than that of a *Trinity*. We cannot by all our searching, find out *more* than three, and we must wink hard upon a cloud of witnesses, to make them *fewer*. *Isaiah* the evangelical prophet, and *John* the prophetic evangelist, had their visions much alike. They each of them heard the Cherubims cry out *holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty*. Is. vi. 3. Rev. iv. 8. The same manner of speaking obtains in the Church below; *O Lord hear, O Lord forgive, O Lord, hearken and do*. Dan. ix. 19. There is no occasion to pass off these repetitions, for a pressure of zeal, as if they were a rapture and not an argument, because they agree to the rest of the bible.

We are plainly told of neither more nor less than *three*, that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and that these three are but *one*. 1 John. v. 7. It is much easier to disqualify such a text, than it is to answer it. That was the old trick of Sa-

tan, when he could not over-rule the authority of a command, he disputed its validity; yea, *has God said it?* Gen. iii. 4. And when once he brought our parents to question a revelation, he soon brought them to disobey it.

But is this the *only* form of words, that tell us of one God in three persons? If people are determined not to admit of that verse, has the bible given us no other? Yes, we have the truth, and we have it more abundantly. What sense can we possibly fix upon words, if there is no Trinity in the divine nature? What does the apostle mean by the form of blessing, or our Saviour by that of baptism? The grace of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, the love of *God*, and the communion of the *Holy Ghost*. 2 Cor. xiii. ult. So again, grace be to you, from him who is, was, and is to come; and from the seven Spirits before his throne, and from Jesus Christ. Rev. i. 5. So, you are elect according to the fore-knowledge of *God the Father*, through sanctification of *the Spirit*, and the sprinkling of the blood of *Jesus*. 1 Pet. i. 3.

Thus did the apostles talk to people after their baptism, agreeably to the instructions they had before it. When they entered themselves into the family of God by that ordinance, they were not left to do it in their own words, the form was provided before hand. They did it in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. There is an uniformity in these methods of speaking, that the bible gives us.

Whether we are baptized, or blessed, it is into the name of *three*. The number is never enlarged, and never diminished. If the scripture had not designed we should have spoken of so many, in our professions and adorations, we should never have had their names. But it is plain, that though our surrender in baptism, is to the only living and true God, yet we cannot leave out any single person in the Trinity. I shall endeavour to show you in what regards, the believer gives up either himself or his infant, to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

1. This is done in the name of THE FATHER. Though it is the appointment of our blessed Lord, and a memorial of his authority over the Churches, yet he was not setting up a separate empire. Thus I understand what he says as expressing not a *subjection*, but a *communion* in the Godhead. My Father works hitherto, and I work. The Son can do *nothing of himself*, but what he sees the Father do; for *whatsoever things* he does, these does the Son also. I can of *my own self* do nothing; as I hear, I judge. John v. 17, 19. Every person in the divine nature, has a concern in our salvation; in the council of peace, where it was *laid*; in the publication of the gospel, where it is *revealed*; and in the actual gift by which it is *conveyed*. Eph. iv. 4, 5, 6. Thus we read of one spirit, one Lord, and one God and *Father*. As baptism is a declaration of the hope that is in us, we do it with regard to him from whom it comes. Doubtless thou art

our *Father*, we are called by thy name. Is. lxiii. 16, 19.

Indeed the Father was never incarnate. He is not God manifest in the flesh, nor will he in person judge the world. But yet there is no danger of his being left out in the homage of our worship, who has so great a place in the revelation of the word. John v. 22. Believers cannot overlook him, as some vainly imagine. There is no possibility of adoring the Son above the Father, as it slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we do.*

The Father's being *the fountain of the deity* is a foolish and dangerous expression. The scripture has given us no authority for these similitudes. The great God is the fountain of life, and the fountain of living waters. But to talk of divinity as a thing derived by one, and springing from another, is profane and vain-babbling.

The word *Father*, is plainly relative, and the relative to it is *a Son*: nor is there any priority to be concluded from the use of these words. No being can be a Father till he has a child, and therefore his antecedent existence to it must be fetched from *another name*: that of *Father* does not prove it. Our fathers were men before they became fathers, but will any one dare to carry such an argument into the divine nature?

The ordinance of baptism, agrees to the whole doctrine of the Christian faith. By that we are taught that as our salvation is the work of the most high God, so *every person*

* Mr. Emlyn.

who is known by that name, has a part peculiar to himself in this great affair.

The *Father* sanctified, and sent our Redeemer into the world; John x. 36. He owned him at his baptism, by a title that was never given to any of the angels; for to which of them was it said, thou art *my Son*? Heb. i. 5. The Holy Ghost appeared in a visible form; the *Father* is an audible sound. Matt. iii. 16. A voice came from heaven, which the people thought to be thunder. John xii. 29, 30. He received this honour from God *the Father*, in the mount of transfiguration, who spoke out of the excellent glory. Nay, the works that the *Father* had given him to do, 2 Pet. i. 17. bore witness of him, that *the Father* was in him and he in the father, because *the Father* who dwelt in him did the works. He resigned himself back again in his last prayer, *holy Father* I come to thee. xvii. 11. He was raised from the dead by *the glory of the Father*. He was the same way rewarded and admired for what he had done; *the Lord* said unto *my Lord* sit thou at my right hand. Ps. cx. 1. His deity is proclaimed; his title to universal duty established by the mouth of the *Father*, for it is he that says to the *Son*, *thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever*. Heb. i. 6.

Besides what he does, as the *Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ, he is revealed under a personal friendship to his people. The *God and Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ, has blessed us with all spiritual blessings, in heavenly things. Eph. i. 3. We are elect according to the fore-

knowledge of God the *Father*. 1 Pet i. 2. It is *the Father* who has bestowed this love upon us, that we should be called the sons of God. 1 John iii. 1. It is *he*, who, of his own will, has begotten us again, by the word of truth. Pure religion is a thing before *God and our Father*. Jam. i. 18,—27. This *holy Father* keeps us through his own name. 1 John xvii. 11. Our faith and hope fixes upon *him*, who raised up the Lord from the dead. Rom. iv. 24. Grace, mercy, and peace come from *him*. It is the *Father's* good pleasure to give us the kingdom. Luke xii. 32.

We have no other word than that of *Father*, to express his *personal honour*. To say that he alone is called God, or that he is distinguished by the name *Jehovah* from the Son and Spirit, will so entangle a great number of scriptures, that we shall be hard put to it, to find either truth or sense in them.—Religion has taken care, in all our homage to him, who bought us with his own blood, to preserve a duty to the Father whom no man has seen, nor can see. The apostle *John* calls him anti-christ who *denies the Father and the Son*, 1 John ii. 22, 23, 24, and goes on with his argument, *whoever denies the Son, the same has not the Father*. They have no separate interest or divided glory. *Let that therefore*, saith he, *abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning, remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father*. 2 John 9. And in his second epistle he repeats what he said

in the first ; whoever transgresses and abides not in the doctrine of Christ has not God. He that abides in the doctrine of Christ has *both the Father and the Son*. Truly our fellowship is *with the father, and with his son Jesus Christ*. 1 John i. 2.

2. We are also baptized into the name of THE SON, as plainly as that of the Father. Thus *Peter* exhorted the *Jews*, repent and be baptized *in the name of the Lord Jesus*; Acts ii. 38. Sometimes it is called the name of the *Lord*. Acts x. 48. The jailor was to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and then he was baptized. Acts xvi. 21. His communion in those titles that are used to signify the divine nature, you have often heard. He is called *the mighty God*, the judge of all the earth, the everlasting Father. Isa. ix. 6. This is not to express his personality ; but either to show that he thought it no robbery to be equal with God, or to signify that he is the author of eternal life to men and angels. He is *Jehovah*, the God of *Israel*, to whom every knee shall bow and every tongue confess.

In this ordinance of baptism we are to consider him two ways. First, as *one* with the Father in nature and perfection ; and, secondly, as *distinct* from him in character and operation. He is that *life* who was *with the Father*, and is manifested to us. 1 John i. 2.

The titles that express this difference are chiefly these two; the Word and the Son of God. The former signifies a nearness of communion, the latter an identity of nature.

Though each of these names are used among men, yet, in this case, they are as much above all reason and argument as they are above all blessing and praise. For "who hath ascended up into heaven or descended? who hath gathered the winds in his fists? who hath established all the ends of the earth? who hath bound the waters in a garment? what is his name *and what is his Son's name*, if thou canst tell?" Prov. xxx. 4.

The Father has been pleased to reveal himself, under no other personal name, but what signifies a relation to the Son. The Son indeed goes by *the abovementioned two*; but when he takes them both, it is to show us, that we must not compare spiritual things with carnal. We are not to think, as we speak, after the manner of men. A *word* is nearer to us than a *son*. It is either a principle within us, or the voice that is uttered by us. It is what we either *have* or *do* from ourselves; but it can never be a *person*. It is only our own. The most intimate friend has nothing to do with it. On the other hand, a *son* must be a person as distinct from us as any other man in the world; no nearness of relation hinders a separate subsistence.

These two names can never meet in a creature. It would be ridiculous to call a word a son, for it is not substantial enough. As absurd would it be to call a son a *word*, because he is too substantial for the name. No mortal ever talked of *begetting* a word, or of *speaking* a son. God therefore never designed, in

using this language, that we should confound and entangle it with our own. The very names themselves are *wonderful*. There is not distinction enough between a man, his word, and his spirit, to be called three; and yet there is too much distinction between a father and a son to have them called *one* in person. If Christ had never gone by another name than that of *the Word*, we should not have imagined his distinction from the Father; and if he had never been called any thing but a *Son*, that name would not have signified, the intimate, inseparable, and eternal union, which he has with him. But when he is said to be the *Word of God*, it shows us that he has his nature; and when he is said to be *his Son*, it declares that nature under a personal distinction.

To this *Son*, this *Word*, are we resigned in baptism. We consider him as that Sovereign whose name is called upon us. We desire to be known in our relation to him, and declare the same homage to him, that we do to the Father, for these reasons,

1. This Son has made us; and therefore in baptism we only take our share in that universal duty, that he demands from the whole action. Why do we worship and bow down before the Lord; but because he is *our maker*. We are the work of his hands, and the sheep of his pasture? Ps. xcv. 6, 7. This is said of Christ, if the Apostle has understood *David* right. Take heed, *says he*, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from *the living God*, Heb. iii. 12. 14. for we are made partakers of Christ.

Of this homage, baptism is both an entrance, and an earnest. We read that the *Gentiles* turned from dead idols, to serve the living and true God. How did this appear? The first evidence they gave of it to the world, was their baptism. 1. *Thess.* i. 9. The argument to turn them from their idols was this; that they were now bowing to Gods who never made them, whose offspring they were not; and, that pure religion called for their duty to Him, in whom we live and move and have our being. And it would have been in vain for the apostle, to persuade their taking upon them the name of the only true God, if that name was given to any person who is *not God*.

This is an article of mere revelation. Though the light of nature might tell them there was *one supreme cause*, who by the things that are made; had given proofs of his eternal power and Godhead; *Rom.* i. 22. yet could that ever tell them of *the Son of God*, and that all things were made *by him*? *Heb.* i. 3. *John* i. 3. Would this ever have let them know, that there was a plurality of persons in the divine nature, or have attributed the frame of the Universe, to any more than one? And yet

This is the plain language of the Bible; that *by Christ Jesus* all things were created, whether in heaven or in earth, visible and invisible, thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers; all things were created *by him*, and *for him*. *Col.* i. 16. Therefore, when this doctrine of the scripture was to be overthrown, it was the safest way to write *an appeal*, not to a *Jew* or

a Christian, but to a *Turk or an Indian*. They, to be sure, will give it for the appellant. When the saints come to judge the world, we may guess how the cause will go; but when the world is set in judgment over the saints, we can never think that the christian's God will be *justified in his sayings*. It is our comfort however that he will be true, and every man a liar; for he who calls the ends of the earth to look to him is the Creator of the ends of the earth. Is. xlv. 22. xl. 28.

2. The name of Christ is called upon us from the other right that he has in us; for by him we are *bought* with a price. This was always the argument of revelation in the *Old Testament*, and it continues to be so in the *New*. Moses pleads as Paul does. Deut. xxxii. 6. Is not he thy Father that has *bought* thee? Has he not made thee and *redeemed* thee? And so says the apostle, ye are not your own, but *bought with a price*; therefore glorify God in your bodies and spirits which are God's. 1. Cor. vi. 19, 20. If that God, whose ye are, is not He that has *bought you* with a price, whatever claim he may have to your duty from any antecedent work, yet he has none at all from redemption. You are not to glorify him upon the argument that is here used.

But when Christ gave himself for your iniquity, it was, not only that he might purify a peculiar people, but purify them to *himself*. Tit. ii. 14. They are *his* peculiar people, as he used to say; every one that is called *by my name* I have created him *for my glory*. Is. xl.iii.

7. 21. And, this people have I formed for myself, they shall show forth *my praise*.

The right of redemption lay in him, and all the rights flowing from it, belong to him. We take his *name*, because we are his *purchase*: and therefore an apostate *denies the Lord that bought him*. 2 Pet. ii. 2. He did not buy us for another; because to this purpose he both died and rose again, and revived, that *he might be the Lord both of dead and living*. Rom. xiv. 9. I do not say this (as Christ himself does not) with any exclusion to the Father's interest in the ransomed of the Lord; for, as he speaks, so must we, *all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them*. John xvii. 10.

3. The name of Christ is called upon us, as a token of his *supremacy over all things* to the Church. The Church has no other head of jurisdiction or of influence, but him who has all things under his feet. In baptism we recognise his *authority*, and depend upon his *energy*. The former is *supreme*, the latter is *omnipotent*. He could not be equal to either of these, if he had not the fulness of him who fills all in all. Eph. i. *ult.* From this almighty dominion and virtue are they *quicken*ed, who were dead in trespasses and sins.

You give a testimony in baptism, both to his *government* and to his *quicken*ing; that he not only judges the dead, but that he raises them. He directed you to this solemnity, upon the ground of his having all power both in heaven and earth. If he had *less than this*,

he would never abolish an old ordinance, and bring in a new one. The phrase that this power is *given* him, ought not to be received as an argument against his eternal necessary inseparable title to it. For if it was not in him, antecedent to any grant, the worship paid him will be brought to prove, what we know is impossible to be true, that God has given his glory to another.

3. The name of the Holy Spirit is called upon us in baptism. We have but one word to signify his personal character—Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost. I am not yet got so far into my subject, as to consider his distinction from the Father and the Son. At present I have no more before me than to show, why *his name* is mentioned in the first act, of our professed subjection to the gospel of Christ.

1. This could never be allowed, if he was not, as Christ is, the *Creator* of the universe. Thus we read of him in very distant cases, that *he has garnished the heavens*, and his hands have formed the crooked serpent. Job xxvi. 13. All the hosts above were made by the *breath (or Spirit) of the Lord*. Ps. xxxiii. 6. He was one in that great consultation when it was said, let us make man; Gen. i. 26. for *Elihu* says the *Spirit of the Lord* has made me, and the breath of the Almighty has given me life. Job xxxiii. 4. He moved upon the face of the waters, and said *let there be light*, when darkness was upon the face of the deep. Gen. i. 2. He is the God who *commanded light to shine out of darkness*. 2. Cor. iv. 6.

2. His *equality* and communion with the divine nature, is what the apostle argues from his name. We know that secret things belong to God, and to no creature at all. Deut. xxix. ult. None can know the mind of the Lord. With whom has he taken counsel? And yet *the Spirit* searches all things, yea, the deep things of God. 1. Cor. ii. 10. So that, supposing him to be an agent, the omniscience of God is his *object*; and can we think it is not *his character*? Does he know as much, as *he* does, who knows all things? Nay, he seems to have his name for this very purpose. As no man knows the things of a man, but the spirit of man who is in him, so the things of God knows no man, *but the Spirit of God*. No wonder then, when baptism is a surrender of ourselves to the most high God, that we are called by the name of one, whose *understanding is infinite*. Ps. cxlvii. 5. This is so clear from the language of scripture, that they who cannot deny his perfection, relieve their cause, by turning jugglers, and *casting a figure* upon his personality.

3. It is the Spirit who makes effectual, the whole redemption of the saints. By him they are saved, and therefore by his name they are called. He overshadowed the Virgin in our Saviour's conception. Luke i. 35. It is *the Spirit* who raised up Jesus from the dead; Rom. viii. 11. and he was declared to be the Son of God with power *by the Spirit* of holiness. Rom. i. 4. Converts are *born of the Spirit*. John iii. 5. He convinces them of *sin*, that

is of unbelief ; and in convincing them of it delivers them from it, by showing them a *righteousness* in Christ's going to the Father. And it is by him they have victory, for he convinces them of *judgment* that the Prince of this world is judged. John xvi. 8, 9, 10. As they live, they walk, in the Spirit, Gal. v. 25. and *through him* they mortify the deeds of the body. Rom. viii. 13.

It is *he* by whom the Bible was given, for holy men of God spake as they were moved by *the Holy Ghost*. 2 Pet. 1. *ult.* In reading this, we hear what *the Spirit* saith unto the Churches. It is he who came down upon the apostles with cloven tongues of fire. They were then baptized with *the Holy Ghost*. Acts i. 5. This *Spirit*, who is good, leads us to the land of uprightness. Ps. cxliii. 10. We are baptized for the remission of sins ; and though he, who has purchased this, bestows it, yet it is *the Spirit* who seals it to us, till the day of redemption. Eph. iv. 30.

Baptism is a surrender of ourselves for protection, as well as homage ; and therefore we must have a regard to that *Comforter*, who abides with us for ever. John xiv. 16. It is he who invites us up to the marriage-supper of the Lamb ; for *the Spirit* and the bride say come, and whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely. Rev. xxii. 17.

SERMON V.

A distinction of persons in the divine nature is to be received, though not explained, upon no other evidence than Scripture. The Arians chargeable with Tritheism. The Trinity does not signify three Gods; but it denotes more than three names or powers. The notion of an analogical figurative personality confuted; it is as absurd as the anima mundi. The distinction of persons in names, relations, communion, worship, and operations. Objections answered, viz. that the term person is unscriptural and theatrical; that it destroys the unity of the Godhead; that clear ideas would convince the enemy; that personality is only an eastern figure.

IV. ANOTHER mystery contained in this fundamental article of our religion, is the *distinction* between those three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, into whose individual name we are baptized. We are as much bound upon the authority of mere revelation, to confess a *Trinity* of persons, as to believe an *Unity* of nature, because the word of truth has made an equal declaration of both. To say these two are inconsistent, is no less than refusing the record of God, and making him a *liar*. 1. John v. 10. It is unbecoming those who are but of yesterday, to inquire *how it can be*, when the father of lights has expressly told us, *thus it is*.

He will be adored for perfections that we cannot comprehend, and reports that we cannot explain. We may as well pretend by searching, to find out the *fulness* of his being, as to describe the *manner* of it. Had all his words come down as low as our apprehensions, and revealed no more than man's wisdom teaches, he had not spoken like God. But as his *ways* are not ours, so neither are his *thoughts*. Is. lx. 8. He has told us as much, as he would have us know ; and by saying no more, has thrown a bar upon all foolish and unlearned questions, that we may *not break through to gaze*. Exod. xix. 21. We may say of faith as Christ does of duty, *what is written ? How readest thou ?* and leave all diviners, and dreamers, and *disputers of this world*, to talk like those who know nothing of another.

The question is not whether we should have imagined any *plurality of persons* in the divine nature, or how many of them there are, but what the Scripture itself has told us ; and what the Spirit who searches the deep things of God has bound upon our belief. No matter whether eye has seen it, or ear has heard it ; whether it is to be matched with similitudes and illustrations of our own ; or whether the heart of man is able to conceive it, under clear and distinct ideas. We believe it, because he has said it ; and without a faith so unlimited and absolute, we receive the record of God with no more veneration than we do that of man.

If there are ten thousand difficulties in conceiving, that there should be three persons, they all dissolve in the report of him that *cannot lie*. He has a right to tell us what he pleases, and we can no more pass a judgment upon a doctrine, than we do upon a command. We are doers of the law, and not judges; receivers of the Truth, and not choosers. If he has avowed a Trinity, it is a trial of skill and wisdom with him, when we dare to deny it. If we receive the witness of men, *the witness of God is greater, which he has given of his Son.* 1 John v. 9.

There is a *mystery*, in no more, than one God, and no fewer, than three persons. Because, it is true, we cannot dispute it; because it is mysterious, we cannot explain it. Therefore the only thing, our souls have to do in the whole inquiry, is to examine whether God has said it. How far the distinction of persons reaches, and how much the unity of nature comprehends, is a question above the comprehension of those, who are but of yesterday, and know nothing. But when we read of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we conclude from the very sound of the words, that there is a *difference* between them. There are certain boundaries fixed to the minds of men, that they make it, neither too much, nor too little. We have an open road between two extremes, and can easily tell what is false, though we are not able to fathom all that is true. Let thine eyes look right on, and *thine eye-lids strait before thee.* *Ponder the path of*

thy feet, and all thy ways shall be established.
Prov. iv. 25, 26.

1. It is making the distinction *too great*, to say they are three Gods.

2. It is making it *too little* to say, they are only three names, or powers, and relations.

1. There is nothing in this form of baptism, that will suffer us to wander into the conceit of three Gods. Wicked and unreasonable men have determined to dash us upon one of those rocks, *Sabellianism* or *Tritheism*, but God has thrown us upon neither ; and the faith once delivered to the saints, keeps us clear of both. They are equally our abhorrence. The scripture has poured out a flood of arguments against them : and we need not confront the one with the other, but reject them both at once, as divers and *strange doctrines*.

Indeed the *Arians*, who tell us of one unoriginated God, and of two derived ones ; one supreme, and two subordinate, have made the notion of a Trinity abominable. They are the only people who have made *three Gods*, or rather two and a half ; for as to the Holy Spirit, to show how little he knows of *them*, it is apparent they know nothing of *him*. They have taken none of *his counsel*, nor covered themselves with his covering. Is. xxx. 1.

I call them by the name of *Arians*, though they are somewhat distinguished from them. I would call the *French* by the name of *Papists*, though they do not adhere to all the peculiarities of *Rome*. They have the grossness of their idolatry and their spirit of perse-

cution, whatever degrees they may want of a complete subjection to the man of sin. And so it is here. From these people alone, we have had a plurality of Gods. They are the only faction, that have the confidence to talk of *a repeal of the first commandment.*

Now though this form of baptism, tells us of *those* whose name is called upon us; yet there is no *division* of nature, no *subordination* of existence; for he who is not supreme, independent, and eternal, is not God over all.

(1.) The notion of three Gods, is against the light of nature; I mean as we come to the right use of it, since we had the key of revelation. If any one *delineates* the religion of nature with a bible in his hand, he will make it a quite different thing, from what he finds it in the best of human philosophy.

The greatest attainments that we read of among the *Gentiles* are, first, in the wisdom of *Egypt*, then, in the learning of the *Chaldeans*, and lastly in the polite researches of the *Athenians*: and yet it may be said of them all, the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than they. They never knew the true God; they never adored him as *one*; they paid no deference to his perfections, but rather supposed he might be *worshipped with men's hands*, as though he needed something. Acts xvii. 25. A sheep was the abomination of the *Egyptians*. Exod. viii. 26. *Nebuchadnezzar* had a treasure-house for his God. Dan. i. 2. And the *Grecians* thought that the God-head was like the silver and gold, graven by

art and man's device. Acts xvii. 29. But wherever Christianity came, reason began to open its eyes, and to feel its way; so that a Christian is as unfit to settle the religion of nature as a Pagan is to discover that of revelation.

The *Jews* held out this in the front of their law, that *the Lord their God is one Lord*. Christians in all the parts of the earth, are at a point about this, as a maxim in nature, that there can be no more than one supreme eternal cause, who gives to all life, and breath, and all things. He to the Heathen was an *unknown God*. Acts xvii. 23.

(2.) The doctrine of three Gods is, what the whole revelation of the *Old Testament* is levelled against. When the Lord called *Abraham* out of *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, he drew him away from *inferior Deities*, and took care that his posterity should never relapse into idolatry. And therefore had we been baptized into *three names*, our Saviour had *destroyed the law*, which he came to *fulfil*. Matt. v. 17. But his appeal to *Moses*, his improvements upon him, his connexion of doctrine with him, declare that they both acted according to the pattern in the mount; the one in giving images of things in the heavens, and the other in the *heavenly things themselves*. Heb. ix. 23.

A *Jew*, would never dare to be a convert among us, if we put *new Gods* upon him, Gods whom his fathers knew not. Deut. xxxii. 17. They seemed to shake off their idolatry with their last captivity; and does Christianity bring them back to it again? No, no; they

had got enough of subordinate and originated Deities already. The scribe knew that our Lord had taught no such doctrine, when he told him, master, thou hast said the truth, for there is one God, and there is *no other God but he*. Mark xii. 32, 34. And in this confession he answered discreetly, as one not far from the kingdom of God.

(3.) The notion of three Gods, would make our religion a very wrong one, for the conversion of the *Gentiles*; and yet they are to come to our God from the end of the earth, saying, surely our fathers have inherited lies, vanity, and things wherein there is no profit; they had made themselves *Gods which were no Gods*. Jer. xvi. 19, 20. It was their practice and their crime to worship those, who *by nature were no Gods*. Gal. iv. 8. They had Gods many and Lords many, 1. Cor. viii. 4. and would it have signified any thing to tell them, that Christianity reduced the whole number to three?

The prophets of old, used to declare against *Gods who made not the earth and the heavens*, let them be never so few, or never so great. Jer. x. 10. The apostle followed the same clue of argument, that there was but one who created all things by himself. Our gospel calls people from their idols, to the *only living and true God*. 1. Thess. i. 9. When they were baptized, it must have been in the faith of *David*, "among the Gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord *thou only dost wondrous works: thou art God alone*." Psalm lxxxvi. 10.

If they were not able to deliver this form of words in my text, from the notion of one supreme, and two subordinate deities, they had as good have stayed where they were, and never been baptized at all. The dispute was not between *Jupiter* and *Jesus*; who was the mediator; who should have the name of a *titular God*, or who should have the honour of *inferior worship*; but whether there was any more than one God. Whilst they were *Gentiles*, they were carried away to *dumb idols*; 1. Cor. xii. 2, at that time they knew not God. Gal. iv. 8.

(4.) The very form of baptism itself, dashes down all the notion of three Gods. For had there been so many, their different names must have born some proportion to their different natures; but here it is said to be all in *one name*. As *Jehovah* is one, so his name is one. Thus God tells the *Jews*, "behold I send mine angel before thee; beware of him and obey his voice, provoke him not; for he will not pardon your iniquities, for *my name* is in him; thou shalt obey HIS voice, and do all that I speak." Exod. xiii. 20, 21, 22.

It is against all the rules of talking, to say we are listed in the single *name* of the king, the chancellor, and the general of the army. The plurality of characters, under which they are so much distinguished, would have been expressed in another way. But when we read of *one name* only, we must tear the words asunder, and empty them of all their

sense, if we conceive of any more than one being.

(5.) This is contrary to the profession of God's people in all ages. They have *never* owned the *Tritheistic* scheme. Though the *Arians* have charged them with it, I believe it is more than ever the Heathens did. Such *perverse things* were only to be spoke by men that arose from among themselves. Acts xx. 30. Their confessions, creeds, and catechisms, that are so much condemned, will clear them of this charge. It is no great argument of modesty, for any to say of them, that they did not understand themselves.

When Christianity, like the day-star from on high, visited the world so long ago, and the reformation, as a light, sprung out from a cloudy and dark day, were they both conducted by a company of fools, who worshipped three Gods, and did not know it. It is strange that both learned and wayfaring men, who do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with their God, should mistake their way in every act of devotion. What would the most illiterate believer say, if you told him he was resting his soul upon more than one God? He has no hard words to defend his faith; no scholastic dreams to open it; but you would amaze him, to say there is any more than one *Jehovah* spoken of in the bible. This is what I would offer to you, against one extreme of interpretation, that men put upon those words. We are baptized into the name of three, but the whole generation of the faithful, declare with one voice against *three Gods*.

2. As this notion makes too much difference between them, so another makes too little. The *Sabellians* said, that Father, Son, and Spirit, were but three names for one person; that the Father was incarnate, and in that condition took the title of *Son*. It is but giving new rags to an old rottenness, to say that the Son and Spirit are *two powers of the Father*; and that, though these are spoken of, in all the language that belongs to persons, yet their personality is only *figurative* and *analogical*. But,

Are the realities of our faith to be shammed, and the great substantials of the Christian doctrine licked up in a *figure*? When some are robbing Christ of his worship, shall others take away his very being? The *Arians* allow him no more than a *titular deity*, and another scheme brings him down to a *titular existence*? Whither will men go, who do not refrain their feet, but love to wander? Here observe,

(1.) I have as much argument to prove that the Son and Holy Ghost are persons, as we have to prove the *Father* so, in the language of the bible. There was an old foolish piece of philosophy and vain deceit, called *anima mundi*, the soul of the world, of which they who wrote against it, and they who wrote for it too, could make nothing. But it seems, as if they would ascribe *no personality* to the Creator of all things. We in opposition to them, say, that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost made the creation. Now suppose they tell us, that these are not names of persons, but mere fi-

gures of speech for that same *universal Spirit* they talk of; and that the scripture does not mean *personality* in what it says of any them? Really, according to a late notion, their way lies pretty clear; for here is two thirds of the work done to their hands. But,

I must answer those who deny the distinct subsistence of the second and third persons, as I would those who oppose the first. Would it not be a good argument, that the Father is not any property or power of this universal spirit, because he is spoke of as contriving, acting, and declaring? I read of his counsels, his words, his nature, his works. When I hear of one who has laid a foundation, distinguished the rooms, and raised a fabric with height and strength, I conclude with the Apostle, that every house is built by *some man*. Heb. iii. 3. It was not an invisible spirit in the stone and timber that brought them together, but it is done by an agent. So evident is it as the same Aposile says, that *he who built all things is God*. And,

Can the words bear any other sense, when we read of *the Son*, that *he was with God*; John i. 2. that *his goings forth*, have been of old, from everlasting; Mic. v. 2. that at the creation of the earth *he was there*, as one brought up *with the Father*, and rejoicing always *before him*; Prov. viii. 25. [You see, I mention only those things that were antecedent to his incarnation.] When we find that all things were created *by him*, and without *him* was not any thing made, that was made,

John i. 3. why must such an account as this, if it was given of the Father, signify a *person* and when it is said of the Son, be no more than a power or a *quality*?

When the angels fall down to him that sits on the throne, they tell him, that for his pleasure all things are, and were created; Rev. iv. 11. Now, is it possible to understand this, of any other than a person? And when the scripture says of *Christ*, that *by him* were all things created in heaven and earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, dominions, principalities, or powers, all were created by him and for him; and he is before all things, and by him all things consist, Col. i. 16. is this same HE, whose title is carried through the whole story, no more than a *faculty*?

When the *Spirit* is said to move upon the face of the waters, and to garnish the heavens, are not these *personal actions*, as well as giving the *horse his strength*, and clothing his neck with thunder? We are told what Christ says in view of his incarnation. 'I have not spoken in secret, from the beginning; from the time that it was, *there am I*; and now the Lord God and his Spirit hath sent me.' Is. xlviii. 16. Does not the very sound of the words, lead us into some distinction between this *Lord* and his *Spirit*, as if there was a concurrence of two agents? Was it ever said of any that a man and his Spirit gave out a commission, that a king and his soul published a decree?

A late nameless author, in a very little book,

has hung a while upon this argument, *that we are said to fear the Lord and his goodness.* You may guess at the rest of the performance by this passage, and learn not *ex ungue leonem*, but *ex caudá murem*. It is easy for any one to see, that the meaning *there* is, that as the Lord will be adored, so in a particular manner, upon the account of his goodness, in the later days. But whether such an interpretation can be driven into the other scripture, *the Lord God and his Spirit*, I shall leave to every one's judgment; nor should I have mentioned an argument, so very low as this, but only to shew you the men and their communication.

(2.) These three, are distinct in their relations to one another. A Father and a Son among men, are as much two persons as a king and a subject. A Son has the same nature, family, inheritance, and concern. He is nearer to his father in all these than a stranger; but he is as truly existent apart from him, as one who never saw his face. I do not bring you this, as a complete parallel, for to whom shall we resemble God, or *what likeness shall we compare to him?* Is. xli. 18. There is certainly between the first and second person in the trinity, an union, that no human relation does so much as imitate; *I am in the Father, and the Father in me.* John xiv. 10. The Son of man is glorified, and *God is glorified in him*, and God shall glorify him in himself. xiii. 31, 32.

(3.) They are distinct in the communion, that a believer has with them; as you will

see quite through an excellent book, called *Communion with Father, Son and Holy Spirit*, by that steady and uniform writer Dr. Owen, who was rooted and established in the faith as he had been taught, and abounded in it. Our Lord tells the disciples, if any man love me, my Father will love him, and we will come and make our abode with him. John xiv. 23. The opposition made by hypocrites and unbelievers, is to each person. The martyr Stephen charges the Jews with betraying and murdering the holy and just One, and also with resisting the Holy Ghost. Acts vii. 52. And so saith Christ, they have hated both me and my Father. John xv. 24.

(4.) They are distinct in the praises of heaven, and the glory that is possessed there. We read Rev. i. 4, 5. of him who was, and is, and is to come; of *Jesus* the faithful and true witness; and the *seven spirits* that are before the throne, which is a complete title for *one and the self same Spirit*. Blessing, and honour and glory and power, are ascribed to *him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever*. Rev. v. 13. Now is come salvation to our God, and the power of his Christ. Rev. xii. 10. We are kings and priests to God and the Lamb. The Father saith to the Son, *thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever*. Heb. 18. The glory of the Lord is to lighten the heavenly city, and the Lamb is the light thereof. Rev. xxi. 23. The throne of God and of the Lamb is in it, and his servants shall serve him. xxii. 3. I *Jesus* testify these things; and immediately

after, the *Spirit* and the bride say, come. 16, 17. The book is called the revelation of *Jesus Christ*, which God gave to him; and yet it is what *the Spirit* said unto the Churches. Rev. i. 1. and xi. 7.

(5.) They are distinct in their operations. There are several things in promiscuous language, ascribed to every one of them, as the creation of the world, the redemption of a chosen people, their election, sanctification, rising from the dead, and future glory. Each of these are sometimes attributed to the Father, sometimes to the Son, and every one of them to the holy Spirit, which argues an equality of nature. But there are others, that we never read of, in any other language, than as personal actions. The Father does them, and not the Son; the Son, and not the Spirit; the Spirit, and neither Son nor Father.

1. The Father is said, to send his only begotten Son into the world. Sending and coming are indeed only circumstantial to the errand, or the work, but they must be actions of *different persons*. I came *not of myself*, saith Christ; the Father sanctified and sent him into the world. John x. 36. He came from the Father, and came into the world, and again he left the world and *went to the Father*. John xvi. 28. Therefore he argues very justly with his enemies; 'it is also written in your law that the testimony of *two men* is true; *I am one* that bear witness of myself, and the Father that sent me beareth witness of me.' John viii. 17. When

Philip said, show us the Father; in his answer to him he asserts *an unity of nature*; "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father." John xiv. 8, 9. But when the *Jews* ask him the same question, where is thy Father? He answers it upon a *distinction of persons*. Saith he, "ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape." John v. 37. And again, *he that sent me is true, whom ye know not*. John vii. 28.

2. *The Son* did many things peculiar to himself, which are never ascribed either to the Father or the Spirit. He alone was *made of a woman*, and made under the law. Gal. iv. 4. He did *by himself* purge away our sins. Heb. i. 4. He is that eternal life who was *with the Father*: and manifested to us, was looked upon and handled. 1 John i. 2. He is the *first begotten from the dead*. He loved us, and washed us from our sins *in his own blood*. Rev. i. 5.

3. *The Spirit* is said to *move the holy men of God*, before Christ came, and to make apostles and *overseers of the Churches*, afterwards. Acts xx. 28. He is not the Son, but *another Comforter*; he is not the Father, but *sent by him*. We know Christ no more after the flesh, but here is one who shall abide with us for ever. All the three persons are mentioned in that short account, that *Christ* being raised by the right hand of God, had received of the *Father* the promise of the *Holy Ghost*. Acts ii. 33.

Upon the whole, then, I exhort and testify

that this is *the true grace of God wherein ye stand*. 1. Pet. v. 12. This is the faith once delivered to the saints, and must be delivered back again by them, pure and unrebukable, at the coming of Jesus Christ. But as it is our work, both to cast up the highway, and to remove the stumbling blocks out of the way of the people, so let me give you an answer to what has been lately published by some gain-sayers, who are striving to draw away disciples after them.*

Obj. 1. It is a mere spirit of vanity to tell us, that the word *person* is not scriptural, and that it bears an uncertain signification. One would think, it is to show whence their learning comes, and whither their devotion is a going, when they say it is a term taken from the *playhouse*, and that a *person* is one who represents another. But

1. Is not this talking against all the sense of mankind? Has the word *person* been so understood for above a thousand years? It is usually said that the word *knave* once signified only a servant; but I believe none of them would think me excused by any antiquity if I should call him so. The word *villain* imports no more than a *tenant*, but does not every one know what it means? When we talk of *three persons*. we intend by it, that one is not another; that the Father is not the Son, and the Son is neither Father nor Spirit. And there is no great learning shown, by insulting our ignorance of the extent, to which this difference reaches,

* See a book written by a Layman

when it is universally owned, that we cannot tell, what the principle of individuation† is. Let them first determine what it is that makes a distinction of persons among men, before we go any farther.

2. I am sure, that to speak of God and his two powers, that is Christ as the *intelligent cognoscitive power*, and the Spirit as an *intelligent volitive power*,‡ is less scriptural, and a great deal more barbarous. Must the doctrine of three persons in one nature be called *vulgar*, *scholastic*, and *popish* to make room for this rumbling talk.

3. Our way of speaking has long obtained in the Church of God, and till we find a better, we ought to keep it. “Three distinct conscious minds, one person, and two powers, or two principles of operations,” only show that when people will not *consent to wholesome words*, they grow impatient of contradiction, *doting about questions* and strifes of words. This has proved a root of bitterness. From hence we have, as the people of God always had, backbitings, evil surmisings, and *perverse disputings*. 1. Tim. vi. 3. Ministers lived in peace, and Churches were edified, till these *clear ideas*, have thrown a shameful darkness, upon all our glory. I see neither truth nor peace that is got, by seeking out many innovations. The design of God’s people, in all ages, has been to secure the unity of the Godhead, and express the whole of that distinction, which

† Individuation is that which makes an individual.

JOHNSON.

‡ See note at the end of the volume.

the scripture has revealed, between the three that bear record in heaven.

Obj. 2. Without allowing a figurative personality, we cannot secure the unity of the divine nature. I answer,

1. It has been secured without it, 1700 years already, and will be so when their root is rottenness, and their blossom gone up as dust. Ministers have preached, and people have received the love of the truth in greater demonstration of the Spirit, than either you or I have seen, since the arrival of these divers and strange doctrines. I was much affected with a passage in *Dr. Owen*, "Let us, saith that great man, carefully remember the faith of them who went before us in this nation, the professors of the last age. I am apt to think there was not a more glorious profession for a thousand years, upon the face of the earth, than among the professors of this nation. And pray what faith were they of? Were they half *Arminian*, half *Socinian*, half *Papist*, and half I know not what? Remember how zealous they were for the truth, and how little their holy souls would have borne with those public defec- tions from the doctrines of truth, which we see and do not mourn over, but make nothing of, in the days wherein we live. God was with them; they lived to his glory, and died in peace; whose faith follow and example pursue. Remember the faith they lived and died in. Look round about, and try whether any of these new creeds, have produced a new holiness to exceed theirs."

Were these holy men at a loss, either in believing or defending the unity of the divine nature? Had they such *clear ideas* of God's love, and none at all of his being? Yes surely, they stood in *the good old ways*, and so found rest to their souls. As for those who say they will not walk therein, we must leave them to their own crooked ways. It is by the word that we have heard *from the beginning*, that peace shall be upon *Israel*.

2. If I cannot explain the consistence of one doctrine to another, it only proves that *without controversy great is the mystery*. 1. Tim. iii. 16. In revealing deep things which we cannot comprehend, God acts like himself. This objection may be urged, as it once has been against the resurrection of the dead. The apostle asserted no more than the *fact*, and people began to inquire about the *manner* which is only the evasion of unbelief. Thou wilt say, *how* are the dead raised, and with *what body* do they arise? 1. Cor. xv. 35. He gives the man who makes the objection, his proper title, *thou fool*, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die. But he never comes down, into an explication of what is all invisible and future.

Obj. 3. These *clear ideas*, as some have the vanity to call their own imaginations, are to defend the truth and bring over the enemy. I answer,

1. That is to be determined by the issue; and till I hear that one *Arian* is brought over, I must needs think that the Lord has *rejected*

their confidences, and they shall not prosper in them. Jer. ii. 37. Infidelity has got two creeping holes instead of one; and it looks rather like the rallying of error in a new form, after it has been baffled in the old one.

2. By these concessions, the worship of the Spirit is given up and left to human prudence, for a very strange reason, *viz.* because he is represented as dwelling in the believer. Little did I think to hear, that Christ dwelling in *us* as his temple, or that God's being in us, should be pleaded as an abatement to the worship, he is to have from us.

Obj. 4. The personality which the scripture gives to the Son and Spirit, is only an eastern way of speaking. I answer,

1. No matter for that, if it comes from God; it is *a form of sound words*, whatever quarter of the earth it begun in. From the rising of the sun, they first called upon his name, and from them the word has sounded forth to the isles afar off.

2. We may as well make all the attributes of the divine-nature, persons, as his understanding and his power. His justice, holiness, goodness, and truth, are as often personified in scripture. But I refer you for a fuller account of these arguments, to a noble judicious answer to a late book, entitled, *The scripture doctrine of the Trinity vindicated, in opposition to Mr. Watts's scheme of one proper divine Person, and two divine properties, powers, and faculties: by a Dissenting Country Gentleman.*

SERMON VI.

It is only by an open profession of the truth, that people are honest in baptism. Heathens understand the form as we do. The three persons are equal in perfection of nature, as appears by what each of them does distinctly; in their influence upon the saints, as to pardon, holiness, perseverance, communion, resurrection, happiness, and in glory.

V. THE last thing that we profess in the ordinance of baptism, by using that form of words which Christ himself has given us, is that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are ONE in nature, and EQUAL in power and glory. This proposition is not distinct from some of the former, but rather the full result of them all. They are closed by it, they are rolled up in it.

First, I have proved that we cannot, without idolatry, be baptized into any other name than that of *God*. As this baptism is the beginning, the figure, the obligation to all practice in religion, so we dare not offer it to any but the most High. Then,

Secondly, I have shown you, that this God who is owned, either by ourselves or our parents, can be no more than *one*. In so great a work as baptism, we are not whiffling with the name of God, and going about it in sport. To say that one has it by nature and two by title, is to make a jest of the word, and reduce the

sentence that Christ has given us, into vain babbling. The form in which we are baptized, has not led us into any of these distinctions. And shall we dare to come and play the fool, before him that is able to save and to destroy? As one man *mocks* another, do you so *mock* him? Shall we speak *deceitfully* for God, not only in his *presence*, but in his *covenant*?

I have exposed to your contempt, the notion of subordinate deities, as unworthy of all religion, whether natural or revealed. Nor can we be resigned to the Son and Holy Ghost, if they are not one God with the Father, but under the skreen of a *mental reservation*. If we have meanings not agreeable to the words, we make them not a form of *sound words* that cannot be condemned; but corrupt and lying speeches, fit for the mouths of those who lie in wait to deceive. Christ designed by this very *institution* that we should tell the world what we believe; but by such *interpretations*, our profession is hid. At that rate a *Turk* or an *Indian* shall neither know what *we* are, nor what our *God* is. They explain the words as we do, and so reject them. They cannot suppose that we mean one God and two inferior beings, but conclude that baptism pays an *equal* homage to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. They see that there is no subordination in the term; but an undistinguished adoration to no less than *three*. And they must be of this opinion, if the words are to be taken in their proper sense. Shall we give them occasion to think, that the profession we make in the

greatest ordinance of our religion, is not to be understood ?

Thirdly, I have farther proved, that here is mention made, neither of more nor fewer than *three*, into whose name we are baptized. If we conceive of a Godhead without a Trinity, it is not that which the scripture speaks of, or that to which we are surrendered. We have no more authority, to drop the names of Son and Holy Ghost in the administration, than that of the Father. A baptism into no more than one person, may be *Indian* or *Mahometan*; but it can never be *Christian*.

Fourthly, The form we are to use makes it plain, that these three, are *distinct* from one another, or otherwise they would never have been mentioned as *three*. How oddly would it sound, to baptize into the name of the Eternal, the Almighty, and the Omniscient, of the holy One, the Just and the Gracious ? That would be only multiplying words without wisdom. The scripture has given us no such confused and empty forms, that are all sound and little sense. God does not use to speak of himself, and his properties, as if they were thus distinguished ; and especially in a form that is to hold as long as the world does. That which wants explaining wants mending ; and if it was never understood until our age, it is pity that other ages had it at all, or should all along be tempted to take those for *three persons*, whom we have diminished into *two powers*.

Now, as I said before, if all these *four* pro-

positions are true apart, they are true together, and must combine in this that I have made the *first*; that these three persons are the same in nature or substance, and equal in power and glory. For if there is no more than one God, and no fewer than three persons, then we are to consider them as equal,

1. In their own pefections.
2. In their influence over us.
3. In their glory from us.

1. The form of baptism gives us their equality in perfection and nature, as you will see by these two particulars. *First*, They all go by one name; and *Secondly*, The operations by which they are distinguished, do represent each of them, to be God.

(1.) It is apparent, as you have often heard, that we are only baptized into *one name*, by which Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are equally called. Remember the form of words. It is not said baptize them into *names*, as if they were many, which might lead us to conceive of different natures; but as the Lord is one, so *his name is one* in that ordinance, that is to reach all over the earth. Thus is a Christian to speak of him quite through the nations. That the Father is not the Son, and that neither of them is the Spirit, you will soon apprehend from their several titles. What then is the one name, under which our faith comprehends them, but that *glorious and fearful name, the Lord our God?* Deut. xxviii. 58. Though they are three, yet we must some way

or other apply to them as one, and make the first ordinance of the gospel, agree to the first command in the law, *thou shalt have no other Gods before me.*

On which account I see no reason for trine immersion or trine aspersion, either dipping or sprinkling thrice, as the manner of some is. The unity of that name in which we are baptized, does not need it, and I think cannot bear it. In the whole solemnity we are given to no more, and to no other than the great *Jehovah*. Our concern with the Father in this ordinance, is not merely as he is a person, but as he is God. And as the Son and Holy Spirit have this name with him, so it is with a regard to that eternal deity, that we are theirs, as much as his. The believer may say as the prophet does, *I am called by thy name, O Lord of hosts*; Jer. xv. 16. And with the Church, *by thee only will we make mention of thy name*; Is. xxvi. 13. and we will remember *the name of the Lord our God*. Ps. xx. 7.

(2.) I have shown you, that they are distinct in their operations. The scripture affirms some things of the Father, which are never applied to the Son; and some of the Son, which are not true of the Spirit; and some of the Spirit which are peculiar to himself; but every one of them, proves a *Deity* in that person that does it. They are wondrous works that are done by God alone. We are said to be elect, according to the fore-knowledge of God *the Father*, through sanctification of *the Spirit* unto obedience, and the sprinkling of the blood of *Jesus*. 1 Pet. i. 2. Now this

sanctification, this election and sprinkling are what no creature, could ever give us. God has revealed himself as doing all that, *I will take you from among the heathen, I will sprinkle clean water upon you, ye shall be my people and I will be your God.* Ez. xxxvi. 24, 25, 28.

1. It was the Father's appointment, upon which, the Son came into the world; and the very sending of a Saviour can be no other than the work of God. When the fulness of time came, *God* sent forth his Son made of a woman, made under the law. Gal. iv. 14. Blessed be the *Lord God of Israel*, who has visited and redeemed his people, and raised up a horn of salvation. Luke i. 68, 69. The devils themselves owned that he was the holy one of *God*. *Nicodemus*, before he was established in the faith, could say, that no man can do these things, except *God* was with him. Upon this does the blind man pursue a noble argument. "Herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes; if this man were not of *God*, he could do nothing. John ix. 30, 33." Thus does *Nathaniel* make his first profession, "*Rabbi*, thou art the Son of *God*, thou art the king of *Israel*." John xvi. 30. The disciples in full faith acknowledged, "now we are sure, that thou knowest all things; by this we believe that thou camest forth from *God*." John xvii. 8. And to this conviction, does Christ himself give his testimony, "I have given unto them, the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them, and have known surely that I

came out from thee, and they have believed that thou didst send me." He bears witness to this truth among the Jews. "If God were your Father ye would love me; for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me: And again, if I honour myself my honour is nothing; it is my Father that honoureth me, of whom ye say that he is your God!" John viii. 42. 54.

2. The Son has those things affirmed of him, that are peculiar to his person. He alone was a child born, a sacrifice for sin, and the first begotten from the dead. And though these accounts belong to the human nature, yet the redemption that he fulfilled by them, will prove the divine. He who was of the seed of David according to the flesh, must be over all God-blessed for ever. Rom. 1. 2. and ix. 5. None but a God could be incarnate, so as to redeem them that are under the law, that they might receive the adoption of sons. Had an angel been made partaker of flesh and blood, he might have lived and died, but he could never have reconciled us to God. His blood would not have been able, to do away one sin. He could not have trod the wine-press. Christ did that alone. And therefore the seed of the woman, was no other than God manifest in the flesh. 1 Tim. iii. 16. In him was life. John i. 4. The child born was to be the mighty God, the everlasting Father. Is. ix. 6. And though he was really a man both in soul and body, yet the Church is what God has purchased by his own blood. Acts xx. 28.

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In order to the finishing of his great design, *he is to reign* over the house of *Jacob* for ever and ever, and *of his kingdom* there is no end. Luke i. 33. Now, it is true only of God, that his throne is for ever and ever. He was *in the form of God*, and thought it no robbery to be *equal with God*. Phil. ii. 6. He that was the resurrection must be *the life*. John xi. 25. The last *Adam* is a *quickeningspirit*. 1 Cor. xv. 45. Nor was it enough that he loosed the pains of death; but he did it upon this ground, that it was *impossible* he should be holden of it. Acts ii. 24.

3. The Holy Spirit has things said of him, which are not attributed either to Father or Son, in a personal way; such as furnishing out prophets, apostles, pastors, and teachers; sanctifying, comforting, and securing believers. And yet these, do all of them suppose and declare a divine nature. The scriptures of the prophets were given by *inspiration of God*, 2 Tim. iii. 16. and yet holy men of God spake as they were *moved by the Holy Ghost*. 2 Pet. i. 21. The apostles had a greater unction, from *the holy one*, than ever any received before, or I believe shall do again; and it was by *the Holy Ghost's* coming down upon them, that they were endued with power from on high. It is God alone who would give *pastors*, after his own heart, to feed us with knowledge and understanding. This is no other than the Holy Ghost who made them *overseers*. Acts xx. 28. God put words into *Aaron's* mouth; Exod. iv. 15. and the disciples spake as *the Spirit* gave

them utterance. Acts ii. 4. You are saved by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of *the Holy Ghost*, Tit. iii. 5. and yet surely it is a matter above all dispute that God alone can sanctify. He that is born of *the Spirit* is born of *God*. John i. 14. iii. 8. The Spirit abides with us for ever; that is, according to his own promise, God will never leave us nor forsake us: so that we may boldly say, *the Lord* is my helper. Heb. xiii. 5, 6.

He is the Comforter; and yet it is *God* who comforts them that are cast down. 2 Cor. i. 4. The joys of the Holy Ghost are the consolations of God; for when he speaks peace, who can give trouble? You are the temple of the *Holy Ghost*; 1 Cor. vi. 19. that is, *God* dwells in you. By this relation to the third person of the Trinity, you are called the temple of *the living God*. 2 Cor. vi. 16. Your perseverance is owing to the Spirit, who shall guide and lead you into the land of uprightness. This is no other than God's guiding you by *his counsel*, and receiving you up to *his glory*. Ps. lxxiii. 24.

2. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are equal in their *influence* upon the believer; which is supposed, professed, and implored in the ordinance of baptism. The blessings we have in our eye, secured by the everlasting covenant, come from *each person*; as our acceptance and pardon, our sanctification and holiness, our security and perseverance, our communion and fellowship, our resurrection from the dead, our admittance into heaven,

and our entertainment there. These are the blessings of baptism; sealed by it, promised in it, signified and figured in every right use of it. And yet, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are said to do them.

1.) Our acceptance and pardon, which are the great blessings of the new covenant, are equally spoken of, with regard to the *three* that bear record in heaven. It is *God* that justifies, and *Christ* that died. Rom. viii. 33, 34. It is the *Father* who makes us accepted in the beloved. Eph. i. 6. The God and *Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ Jesus. Eph. i. 3. The *Father* himself hath loved you. John xvi. 27.

And is not this said of the *Son*? Forgiveness belongs to him, that he may be feared. It appears by his sovereign way of bestowing it on earth, that it is *he* who pardons iniquity, transgression, and sin.

And though *the Spirit* is not represented either, as shedding the blood of atonement or accepting it, yet it is *he* who sprinkles it upon the conscience. Christ came both by water and blood, 1 John v. 6. and it is *the Spirit* who bears witness, for the Spirit is truth. *Ye are washed, ye are justified, ye are sanctified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.* 1 Cor. vi. 11.

2.) Our sanctification and holiness are derived from each person in the divine nature. None can come to Christ except the *Father* draw him. John vi. 44. The God and *Father* of

our Lord Jesus Christ, according to the riches of his glory, enlightens the eyes of our understanding, that we may know what is the hope of his calling. Eph. i. 18. When *Peter* made that noble confession, thou art the Christ the Son of God; blessed art thou, saith our Saviour, flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but my *Father* who is in heaven. Mat. xvi. 17. And yet,

This work is attributed to *our Lord* in those great words, Heb. ii. 10. both *he that sanctifies* and they who are sanctified are all of one; wherefore HE is not ashamed to call them brethren. When we are said to see *him* as he is, it is immediately added, that he who hath this hope in him purifieth himself even as *he*, that is Christ; is pure; 1 John iii. 3, 3. for it is to be understood of him who was *manifested to take away our sins*. 2 Cor. iii. 18. We behold as in a glass the glory of *the Lord*, that is, of the Lord Jesus, *the Lord of glory*, James ii. 1, and are changed into the same image from glory to glory. 2 Cor. iii. 18. He sent the apostle to turn the *Gentiles* from darkness to light; that, *says he*, they may receive remission of their sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith that is in ME. Acts xxvi. 18.

I need not stay to prove, that *the Holy Ghost* is the author of this change. He convinces of sin, and righteousness, and judgment. He takes the things of Christ, and reveals them to us. It is *the Spirit* who quickens. John vi. 63.

3.) Our security and perseverance are from

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the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; for we are kept by the power of this *God*, through faith to salvation. 1 Pet. i. 5.

Thus runs the prayer of Christ, *Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me.* John xvii. 11. And yet, we are *preserved in Christ Jesus* and called: Jude i. It is the will of him, that sent him into the world, that *he* should lose nothing, but raise it up at the last day. *He* gives to them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of *his hand*. John x. 27. Nevertheless it is *the Spirit* who abides for ever *with us*, and will do so, till we go up, to be for ever *with him*.

These things have no contradictions in them; they only show us the unity of the divine nature. We give thanks to *the Father* who maketh us meet, to be partakers of the inheritance with the saints in light. Col. i. 12. We rejoice in *Christ Jesus*, by whom we have received the atonement. And he who hath invited us to heaven, will prepare us for it; *the Spirit* and the bride say come.

4.) Our communion and fellowship is equally, with the whole Trinity. If any man love *me*, saith Christ, he shall be loved of *my Father*; and *we* will come to him, and make *our* abode with him. John xiv. 23. Verily our fellowship is with *the Father* and with *his Son Jesus Christ*. 1 John i. 3. We pray to our *Father* who is in heaven. Mat. vi. 9. We call on the *Father*, who, without respect of persons, will judge every man according to his works. 1 Pet.

i. 17. And yet, by communion with *Christ*, we taste that *the Lord* is gracious, the Lord who was *chosen of God*, and precious. 1 Pet. ii. 3, 4. By the holy boldness and courage that appeared in the disciples, others took knowledge, they had been *with Jesus*. Acts iv. 13. Now we could have nothing of this fellowship, without *the Spirit*. He helps our infirmities; he makes intercession for us, according to the will of God. Rom. viii. 26. He searches the deep things of God, and reveals them to us, that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God. 1 Cor. ii. 10. By *the Holy Ghost* we are sealed to the day of redemption. Eph. iv. 30. 2 Cor. i. 21, 22. He that establisheth us in Christ and has anointed us, is God, who has sealed us, and given the earnest of *the Spirit* in our hearts.

5.) Our resurrection from the dead is the work of each person. As Christ was raised by the glory of the Father, so must we. Those that sleep in Jesus, will *God* bring with him. 1 Thes. iv. 14. And yet, as the Father quickens the dead, and raises them, even so *Christ* quickens whom he will. They that are in their graves, shall hear the voice of *the Son of Man*, and they that hear, shall live. John v. 21, 28. This is the Lord, who is to descend from heaven with a shout; whom the dead in *Christ* are to meet in the air, and the whole generation of the faithful shall be caught up to; for they are all together to be ever with *the Lord*. 1 Thes. iv. 17.

And yet, *the Spirit* is mentioned as the God

who quickens the dead. Christ himself was declared to be the Son of God, with power by *the Spirit of holiness* in the resurrection from the dead. Rom. i. 4. viii. 11. If the Spirit of him, who raised up Jesus from the dead, dwell in your mortal bodies, he that raised up Christ from the dead, shall quicken your mortal bodies, by *his Spirit* that dwelleth in you. Baptism is an emblem, a token, an assurance of this. In that ordinance you are *risen with Christ*, as a figure of your rising *after him*; and that which makes it so, is not washing with water, but being baptized with the *Holy Ghost* and with fire. This is *the breath*, that is to breathe upon these slain, that they may live. It is *the Spirit of the Lord* that enters into them, and sets them upon their feet; Ezek. xxxvii. 9. and then they shall be numbered among the armies in heaven.

6.) Our admittance into heaven is applied to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Fear not little flock, saith Christ, it is your *Father's* good pleasure, to give you the kingdom. They are invited thither in these terms; come ye blessed of *my Father*, inherit the kingdom prepared for you. Matt. xxv. 34. He is not ashamed to be called *their God*, because he has prepared for them a city. Heb. xi. 16. Christ himself went to his Father and *our Father*, to his God, and our God. John xx. 17. And yet,

It is *the Son* who went to prepare a place for us, and who comes again to receive us to *himself*, that where *he is* we may be also. John xiv. 2 Our robes are made white in *the blood*

of the Lamb, by which alone we have a right to enter through the gates, into the city. Rev. vii. 14. Upon this foundation we are before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple. And yet again,

It is the work of *the Holy Spirit*, who has produced faith in us, so that we die in faith. It is through *the power of the Holy Ghost*, that we are kept in the love of God. He that shows the things of Christ to us here, will show them hereafter, as we find by the apostle's argument; the Lord is *that Spirit*, and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty. We all with open face beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by *the Spirit of the Lord*. 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18. Indeed, these words relate to the great discoveries of the Gospel, as transcendant to those of a legal dispensation. But they will never have their full sense, till we see no longer through a glass, but face to face. And if the Spirit is the author of those visions, by which we are brought into the church below, it is from him we shall have those of a superior kind above.

The whole passage is a quotation from *Exod.* xxxiv. 33, 34. Till *Moses* had done speaking with the children of *Israel*, he put a vail on his face; but when he went in before the *Lord*, he took the vail off. Well, saith the apostle, we do not, as *Moses*, put a vail upon our faces; that was an emblem of the imperfection of their fellowship with God; that the children of *Israel* could not look stedfastly, to the end of

that which is abolished. Their minds are blinded ; for-until this day, remains the same veil untaken away in the reading of the *Old Testament* ; which veil is done away (to us) in Christ. Nevertheless when it [that is *Israel*] shall turn to *the Lord*, then shall the veil be taken away. They are now, as *Moses* was out of the mount ; but they shall be as he was *in it*, with no veil upon them. He went without a veil to see *the Lord*. Now, saith he, the Lord is *the Spirit*, whom they are to see ; and we are changed into the glory of the Lord [or *Jehovah*] the Spirit.

7.) Our entertainment in heaven, is from each person in the divine nature ; from him who is, and was, and is to come, from the seven Spirits that are before his throne, and from Jesus Christ the faithful witness. Rev. i. 4. In that day we shall know that Christ is in the Father, and the Father in him, and he in us. John xiv. 20. He presents us *to the Father* in these words, behold here am I, and the children whom God has given me. Heb. ii. 13, He presents us *to himself* a holy Church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing. Eph. v. 27. We have no higher notion of that happiness, than to *be with Jesus* : Phil. i. 23. for the *Lamb* that is in the midst of the throne shall feed us, and lead us to fountains of living water, and God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes. Rev. vii. 17. And, will not *the Spirit*, who bids us come, make us welcome ? Shall we not have above, what we so often hear of below, the grace of our Lord *Jesus*

Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost? 2 Cor. xiii. 14.

Now, is any one able to suppose, when all the glories of the new covenant are laid down in this promiscuous language, as the gift of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that they are not equal in power? Why should the scripture ensnare us, by making no difference in the direction of our faith and hope, if there was a difference of nature, among the persons upon whom we depend?

3. They are declared to be equal in the *glory* we give them, of which baptism is a part and a pledge. It signifies no less than dependence, worship, profession, and eternal praises.

(1.) In baptism we profess our dependence on that God, by whose name we are called. We give up ourselves or our little ones, to be *the Lord's*. And is this to any less than Father, Son, and Holy Spirit? Do we not desire an union to each of them? In stating the covenant that is ordered in all things and sure, *David* tells us, what *the Spirit of the Lord* spake by him, and what the words were that he put into his mouth. 2 Sam. xxiii. 1.

It is plain, that we are given up to the God and *Father of us all*, who is above all, and with all, and in us all. Eph. iv. 6. And yet, how often is Christ Jesus called *our hope*, 1 Tim. i. 1. which is too great a name for us to give, or for *him* to take, if he is not God. Cursed be the man that makes flesh his arm; Jer. xvii. 5. and blessed alone is he whose

hope is in *the Lord his God*. He is the *hope of Israel*, and the Saviour thereof in a time of trouble. Ver. 13. They used to call God *the hope of their fathers*, and yet the promise of a Redeemer is *that hope*, to which their twelve tribes serving God day and night expected to come. Acts xxvi. 7. Our rejoicing is in *Christ Jesus*, though the salutes are only, to be joyful *in the Lord*. In him we have believed, and are persuaded that *he is able* to keep, what we have committed to him against that day. 2 Tim. i. 12.

It is *the Spirit* we depend on, for that blessing without which, the flesh profits nothing. John vi. 63. What is it that we trust to, for the communion, the holiness, the security, the heaven, that are signified in the ordinance of baptism, but the *Holy Ghost dwelling in us?* *For if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.* Rom. viii. 9. Until he comes and blows upon the garden, our beloved has nothing to invite him thither. If this *Spirit* is vexed, as he was of old, Is. lxiii. 10. he will turn against us, and be our enemy; but where he dwells, though the body is dead because of sin, *the Spirit is life because of righteousness.*

(2.) Worship is another thing signified, performed, and confessed in baptism, and we pay it to all the three. In giving up ourselves, to be the Lord's, we engage to a newness of life, in a perpetual covenant, that shall never be forgotten, that if he *quickens us*, we will not turn back, but call upon his name. Ps. lxxx. ult.

Now, is it not *the Spirit who quickens*? We live and walk in the Spirit; and do we not adore that *God* who works in us both to will, and to do of his own good pleasure? Phil. ii. 14. He that creates us anew does it to good works; and if our works are wrought *in God*, John iii. 19. shall they not be devoted to him? Must he live in a temple, and not be served there? Are you the temple of the Holy Ghost, and is not the Holy Ghost to be worshipped, in places of his own consecration, *in the house that is called by his name*?

We trust in Jesus; we pray to him; we derive from him; we have communion with him; and is not this worship? if not, it is idolatry. Shall we give up ourselves to him, equally with the Father in baptism, and afterwards draw back? Then, his soul will have no pleasure in us. If we take his name upon us, it is the name we are to *call upon, in every place*. 1 Cor. i. 2. He makes the proclamation; look unto *me*, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for *I am God*, and there is none else. Is. xlv. 22, 23. I have sworn by myself, that *to me* every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall swear. The Apostle gives us no other exposition of that passage, than that *in the name of Jesus*, every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, earth, and under the earth, and every tongue confess that *Jesus is Lord* or *Jehovah*. Phil. ii. 9.

(3.) Another glory we pay in baptism, and oblige ourselves to go on with, is a courageous profession of the name we have owned,

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in every article belonging to it. One Greek Testament that I have, represents those words in another manner than our translators have written them, viz. *having our bodies washed with pure water, let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful who has promised.* Heb. x. 22. The person he speaks of is *Christ Jesus*, the High Priest over the house of God, who in another part of that epistle, is called *the High-Priest of our profession*. The profession that we make, is of an equal devotion to him, with the Father and Spirit. This we are to hold fast without wavering. Many would take it from us, or weaken it in us; but we must hold it ἀκλιῶν, without any leaning to the one side or the other; without any inclining to the enemy, or declining from the truth; and to this we are obliged, by having our bodies washed with pure water. A baptized coward is a scandal to his character: an antitrinitarian baptist is a fugitive from his principles. Such as these have *damnation, because they cast off their first faith*. That water, had better have been spilt upon the ground. It is of no service to have it sprinkled on the forehead, if the name of Christ is not always to be read there; and of as little value is a greater quantity, if it is only washing away the filth of the flesh, and not attended with the answer of a good conscience towards God.

(4.) To Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we shall give eternal praises in heaven; as appears by all the accounts, we have of what they do

in that world. The throne of God and of the Lamb is in it, and *his servants shall serve him.* Rev. xxii. 4. There is but *one throne* for both persons; and the honors of salvation and power, glory and strength, are equally ascribed to him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever. It is from thence, that the Spirit speaks unto the Churches; it is there he will be adored, when he has fetched us all up. I shall therefore now conclude, as I hope to begin the work of heaven, with glory to Father, Son, and holy Ghost, as three distinct persons, and one living and true God for ever and ever, *Amen and Amen.*

SERMON VII.

Baptism is the peculiarity and beginning of a Christian profession, and is therefore public. By this we declare who our God is ; which should be done intelligibly, in a certain form of words, and these taken in their natural sense. Baptism obliges to a profession. Faith sometimes the same with hope ; both taken objectively, and both the matter of our profession. Washing with pure water no argument for dipping ; but is an emblem of spiritual benefits. An account of spirit, soul, and body.

HEB. x. 22.

Having our bodies washed with pure water.

As the blessing of God, upon my own family, led me to inquire what baptism was, so I took it, just as the Lord himself has left it. Thus it was once delivered to the saints, baptize them into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. These are the words of our Lord Jesus Christ.

There are *seven* things, to be regarded in that ordinance, whether you surrender yourselves or your children to the Lord.

1. It is *peculiar* to Christianity. It begun indeed to be administered by *John the baptist*, who was ordained a *prophet of the highest*, Luke i. 76, and in all his actions, only prepared the way of the Lord. Matt. iii. 2, 3. The kingdom of heaven was then at hand ; and the in-

stitution was completed, appointed, and established by *Christ* himself, as the result of his having all power, both in heaven and earth.

To fetch it from the *Jews*, and especially from those traditional services, that obtained in their Church, is a wild imagination, and no better than seeking the living among the dead. They had *divers washings* and carnal ordinances, but our baptism was not one of them; for these were only imposed on the people *till the time of the reformation*. Heb. ix. 10. And therefore, as they were all to be abolished, we cannot suppose, that any of those *worldly elements* should be transplanted into our religion, to leave any remains of bondage upon the glorious liberty of the sons of God. *Peter* speaks to those, that knew nothing of that ordinance, as if it was a thing entirely new among them, "repent, and be baptized every one of you;" Acts ii. 38, and it is said *we are baptized into Christ*.* Rom. vi. 3.

* Baptism as a seal of the Covenant is peculiar to the New Testament, as well as the other sacrament. Bread and wine nevertheless had long been used, as appendages to the Paschal supper by the Jews, before the institution of the sacrament of the Lord's supper. It does not however derogate from the solemnity of this ordinance, that the Redeemer took a familiar custom and sanctified it to the Church, as a commemoration of his death. Neither is it disrespectful to the sacrament of baptism, to view it in the same light. The baptism of Jewish proselytes, is not indeed the ordinance of Christian worship; neither is the baptism of John, for the New Testament Church had not in his day been organized. But the Redeemer appears to have selected, the

2. It is the *beginning* of a profession, either active or passive; either in ourselves or our children; for thus runs the promise, they are the *seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them.* Is. lxxv. 23. It is the first thing that a believer does, in a way of public declaration, to tell what religion he is of. They who, in this manner, bring their infants to Jesus, take an opportunity of sounding their faith abroad, and telling mankind what they believe themselves, and by what rule of doctrine, they will bring up their children, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Any who think, that baptism supposes a personal profession, must needs make it the great solemnity of that profession. By that, they give out themselves to be *Christians*, as distinguished from the Heathen, who know not the true God; and from the *Jews* who do not receive the true Messiah. When the *Eunuch*, who had been for some time a proselyte to the *Jewish* religion, became a Christian, he wanted to be baptized. Saith *Philip* to him, *if thou believest with all thine heart thou may-*

whole order of the visible Church, which he erected by the ministry of his apostles, from those practices which were well known already among religious men. From the Synagogue, he took the model of the Church; from the baptism of proselytes and the passover supper, he adopted the two sacraments. We observe these ordinances, however, not because they were Jewish customs, but because they are Christian institutions; and the manner in which we observe them, is not determined by the Jewish precedents, but by their Christian character and use, as signs and seals of spiritual blessings enjoyed in the Covenant of grace.

est; upon this the other answers, *I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.* Acts viii. 37. Therefore,

3. In the nature of it, baptism is a *public ordinance*; appointed on purpose for a *profession of faith*, that it may come abroad unto all men. It is not a thing to be done in a corner. But in giving up, either yourselves or your children, your allegiance to Christ, and your dependence on him, ought to be *seen and read of all*. Your faith should be spoken of, throughout the whole world. Rom. i. 8. Nor is there to a private Christian a greater opportunity of confessing Christ before men, than in the administration of this solemnity.

4. The particular declaration that you make in this ordinance, is of *the God, whose you are*, and whom you serve. It is the thing for which you are baptized, to let the world know the name of the Lord that is called upon you, and to whom you have bound yourselves, by a perpetual covenant, that shall not be forgotten. There are several obligations contained in baptism; but the immediate, the principal, the supreme design of the institution itself, is that you may *mention the name of the Lord your God*. He says, thou art my people, and *they shall say the Lord is my God*. Therefore,

5. This profession is made in such a way, that mankind may *understand it*. If they mistake you, and are not able to tell, whether you worship one God or three; whether three persons or two powers; whether three equals

or two subordinates ; whether as united in one nature, or distinguished into three ; the very end of baptism is lost, and instead of convincing the world, you only confound them.

6. As this is an ordinance of Christ Jesus, it must be administered in that certain *form of words*, that he himself has chosen. With this order he opened out the gospel dispensation ; and as that dispensation will last to the end of the world, so shall this solemnity.

7. The words ought to be taken in their plain and *natural sense*, because they are a lasting form to the end of time. For Christ to give us expressions, that people cannot understand, would be only to abuse them. It is unworthy of him, who is the light of the world, and in whose mouth there was no guile. By this form they must know, to *what God* I surrender either myself or my infant. If the words have not a certain sound, we are only speaking into the air. There are five particulars, contained in them.

(1.) That the name into which we are baptized is above every name, and can be no other than that of *the most high God*. It contains, introduces, and assures, a full surrender of all that we are, that we have, or that we do. This cannot be done to a creature, without injustice, idolatry, and darkness. We owe it only to him that made us, who is the *rock of our salvation*. It is not a tribute to principalities, powers, and dominions in heavenly places ; but to him whose name alone is Jehovah, the most High over all the earth.

(2.) By this form of sound words that we are to hold fast, it appears that this God is no more than *one*; and therefore we are said to be baptized, not into *names* as of many; but we are given up to Jehovah, who is one, and his name one, in all the earth. Zech. xiv. 9. They who call us *Tritheists* are guilty of belieing, both the Lord and his people. If we are so, this sentence will not fit our mouths.

(3.) There are neither more nor fewer than *three*, comprehended in the glorious individual name, that is called upon us. When Christ told them, how it was to be administered, he acted, as it is said in that day he would do. He did not give them *proverbs*, or parables, or rhetorical figures, and words of a dubious meaning, but he showed them plainly from the Father. John xvi. 25.

(4.) These three, are *distinguished* in the divine nature, as persons are in the human. One is not another. There are three that bear record in heaven. 1 John v. 7. It is no objection, that we cannot explain *personality* in God; alas! you know not the principle of *individuation* in any thing.

(5.) It is plain from the whole form, that if there is but one God and three distinct persons, then these three, must be the same in *one nature*, and equal in power and glory. The question is not, whether we are able to conceive of such a being, and much less whether it lies in our power to unfold it; but whether this is the meaning of those wholesome words that the Lord Jesus Christ has given us? Do

not the people that hate our religion, understand them thus? Is not our baptism an abomination to the learned heathen, because the doctrine involved, and established in it, is incomprehensible?

These several propositions I have defended and maintained, as the design of this ordinance, and the perpetual revelation of the bible. This was the profession of faith we made in baptism; and from that period are obliged to hold it fast without wavering, that we do not *profane the covenant of our fathers*. Mal. ii. 10.

The words that I have now chosen, will let us see the glory and importance of that faith, into which you were baptized; and the necessity that is upon us to hold fast, not only the *faith* itself, but the *profession* we have made of it, before all the world.

There are two things, that a little surprise me in our translation.

1. The connexion of the words. That clause, *having our bodies washed with pure water*, comes in at the end of a sentence that we had before, as if it was an argument for drawing nigh to God with a true heart, and a full assurance of faith. And in that view we must range the whole paragraph to this purpose, that this duty is considered three ways; in our encouragement for it, our temper in it, and our obligations to it. And each of these are twofold.

First, our encouragement for this privilege, is derived from two things; 1st, the *suffer-*

ings of Christ ; we have boldness to enter into the holiest of all, through the blood of Jesus ; 2dly, his *exaltation* ; we have an High-Priest over the house of God.

Secondly, Our temper in drawing near to God, includes two things ; 1st, *sincerity* towards him, which is called a true heart. 2dly, *satisfaction* in him, or a full assurance of faith.

Thirdly, The obligation to this work, arises also from two particulars ; 1st. The nature of our privilege in the duty of *prayer* ; we have hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience ; 2dly, the design of the profession that we made in *baptism* ; our bodies are washed with pure water.

This is the disposition that our translators have made of the context ; but I have lately consulted eight or nine several editions of the *Greek Testament*, and I find no more than one of them, that agrees to it. For these words, *having our bodies washed with pure water*, are brought in at the beginning of the 23d verse, and connected, not to what went before, but to what follows, *let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering*.

I shall therefore cast the whole argument into another scheme. We read of the full atonement that Christ made by his death, of which we have the greatest evidence from his being an High-Priest at the right hand of God. Now, there are two things, all along quite through the epistle, deduced from this doctrine ; a liberty of *prayer* before God, and a boldness in *profession* before men.

(1.) From the blood of Jesus upon the cross, and the exaltation of his person in heaven, the apostle pleads in this chapter as he had done in the 4th, that we may *come boldly to the throne of grace*. We do it, as he had said before, in hopes of obtaining mercy, or with a full assurance of faith ; and that we may find grace to help in a time of need ; that is with a true heart, really desirous of this grace.

(2.) The other duty, that he always impressed from these considerations, is a profession of our faith, as you see in the 4th chapter. Seeing that we have a great High Priest who is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us *hold fast our profession*. Here he does it again, hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering. It is not enough, that we may speak *to* God, but we must speak *for* him. The intercession of this great High-Priest, has made the former our privilege, and the latter our duty. He is *our advocate* in heaven, we are *his*, upon earth.

This range of the particulars contained in the text, does not only agree with most of the *Greek Testaments* that I have seen, but seems the most uniform and regular. *First*, the argument is open and clear, why you draw nigh, with a full assurance of faith, because of what is done *within you* ; your hearts are sprinkled from an evil conscience. *Secondly*, your obligation is equal, to hold fast your profession, from what is done *upon you* in the eyes of the world ; *your bodies are washed with pure water*. The former is internal, the operation of the

Holy Spirit ; the latter is external, your own voluntary action. When you were baptized, you made that profession ; and he in whose name you did it, expects you will hold it fast, and not let it go. Keep it, for it is your life.

2. There is another thing, that surprises me in our translation, and that is, the word *faith* ὁμολογία ἐλπίδος, is a profession of *hope*. There is no false doctrine in the alteration ; the thing is altogether the same.

The two graces of faith and hope *may be* distinguished ; but I cannot say, that in the scripture, they always *are so*. They are different names, from one employment of the soul. The object of faith is something invisible ; the object of hope is something future. The glory that *shall be revealed*, is exposed to them both. As it *is not* yet revealed, we believe it ; as it *shall be* revealed, we hope for it ; as it is unseen, our *faith* is employed upon it ; as it is future our *hope* is drawing towards it, *looking for and hasting to it*. 2 Pet. iii. 12.

But the Holy Spirit has not always observed this distinction. Hope is described, as faith should be. Hope that *is seen* is not hope, for what a man *sees* why does he yet hope for ? But if we hope for that we *see not*, then do we with patience wait for it. Rom. viii. 24. On the other hand, faith is the substance of things *hoped for*, and the evidence of things not seen. Heb. xi. 1.

Sometimes they are each of them taken objectively, not for the principle, but the things believed and hoped for. Thus *Paul* saith, he

was an apostle of Jesus Christ, according to the *faith* of God's elect, and the acknowledging of the truth that is after godliness. Tit. i. 1. His labours, his commissions, his qualifications, were agreeable to what he calls elsewhere *ἀναλογία πίστεως*, the analogy, rule, or system of *faith*. And thus he ends that epistle to *Titus*; greet them that love us in *the faith*; that is, in the doctrine that we believe; the matter of our gospel and of their adherence. For as he saith in another place, whosoever is the preacher, so we preach, and so ye believe. 1 Cor. xv. 11.

Thus has the scripture revealed our hope, not only as a grace in the heart, but as an object upon which it fixes. Sometimes Christ Jesus is called *our hope*; 1 Tim. i. 1. and no wonder, when it was the name that the Church of old always gave to the most high God, and to no other. O, thou *the hope of Israel*, or *the hope of our fathers*. Jer. xvii. 13. To this *hope*, saith the apostle, our twelve tribes expected to come; Acts xxvi. 7. and he means the same in that profession, for *the hope of Israel* am I bound with this chain. Acts xviii. 20.

Sometimes this name is given to the joys, and immortality that shall be brought to light. We look for *that blessed hope*, and the glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour. Tit. ii. 13. Nay, it is the title of the happy dispensation we are now under. The law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a *better hope* did; by which *hope* we now draw nigh unto God. Heb. vii. 19. Or it comes to the

same thing, if you understand it of what the dispensation contains and reveals, the person or righteousness of Christ, the assurance of salvation. Thus we flee for a refuge, to lay hold on *the hope* set before us, which *hope* we have as an anchor sure and steadfast, and enters into that within the veil, whither Jesus our forerunner is for us entered.

Several times, faith and hope are names of that doctrine, that we should make known abroad. Thus we read of continuing stedfast in the *faith*. Col. i. 22. We are to be established and stedfast in the *faith*, and not moved away from the *hope* of the gospel. We contend for the *faith* once delivered to the saints. Your *faith* is spoken of throughout the world, *i. e.* not only your believing, but the thing believed; for it would have made a ridiculous story through the world, to have people spoken of as believers, and no mortal to know *what* they believed.

So we read of the *hope* laid up for us in heaven, which brings forth fruit in those who receive it. Col. i. 5. Accordingly, we must be always ready to give a reason of *the hope* that is in us. 1 Pet. iii. 15. In these two verses, he speaks of faith and hope as what should be known, by the boldness that we have through the blood of Jesus. As to faith, there is a *ἁποφασία*, a *full-hearing*; an assurance. It is completely laden. It carries as much as it can hold, in drawing near to God. There is boldness, access, and confidence, through the *faith* of Jesus. Eph. iii. 12. As to hope, there

is a *ὁμολογία*, a *speaking together*, a profession that it makes in common with others. The former of these, we are to have without *doubting*; the latter to hold fast, without *wavering*. So that the subject I am upon, consists of two parts.

1. Here is a needful duty recommended to us; and that is a steady, courageous, uniform, and perpetual adherence, to the *doctrine of three equal persons, in one undivided nature*. Hold fast the profession of your faith without wavering.

2. Here is an argument for it, drawn from the *institution* of Christ, with which we have complied, having our bodies washed with pure water.

But I rather choose to take these particulars in the order, that our text has given them, and shall proceed to a distinct consideration of two things.

1. That which has been the *practice and privilege* of God's people; to be given up to him in baptism; their *bodies are washed in pure water*.

2. Their unavoidable *obligation*, to hold fast the doctrine they owned in baptism; that there is, but one name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that was called upon them.

I begin with the first of these,

Having our bodies washed with pure water.

I do not see that any thing, is to be concluded from these words about *the manner of baptism*. I should think that man's reasoning very weak, who would pretend to prove

sprinkling from the former clause, *your hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience*, for this is mere jingling upon words. And indeed I think the argument no better, if any should attempt to demonstrate, that washing signifies *dipping*. Your concern and mine from those words, and in this ordinance, is about greater things. It is the doctrine engraven and exposed upon our baptism, that we are to contend earnestly for. It signifies nothing, with what quantity of water that man was baptized, who either denies or conceals, the trinity of persons in the unity of the Godhead. If he was *sprinkled*, he carries a lie in his forehead; if he was *plunged*, it had as good have been in the ditch; for his clothes will abhor him.

The word *washing*, denotes no particular way of making clean. It may be done by *sprinkling*, as well as *dipping*. It was a common thing in those ages and countries, to wash the feet of strangers. And I am sure this was once done by *sprinkling*, when the poor woman did it with tears. Luke vii. 38. But I do not love *striving about words* to no profit. Let us join in this, that according to the revelation, God has made of his will to us, we *speaking the same thing*, that is, about the great design of this ordinance.

It will never lead me into any quarrel, if they who call themselves *baptized believers*, take care to approve themselves *believing baptists*; that we may know what is *within* them, by the *acknowledging of every good thing*; and that

they may not be, like the generation who are pure in their own eyes, but are not washed from their filthiness. Washing an *infidel*, is but like washing an *Ethiopian*. However, the phrase in which the Holy Ghost has spoke of baptism, may lead us into several things, that are designed by it.

1. It is a pledge of our justification. Hence we read of the baptism of repentance, for *remission of sins*. Mark i. 4. This is sometimes conveyed to us, under the similitude of water. *Wash me thoroughly*, saith *David*, from mine iniquity, and *cleanse me from my sins*. Ps. li. 9. Thus runs the promise, though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be *white as snow*, though they be red like crimson, they shall be *as wool*. Isa. i. 18. Thus I choose to take the metaphor, as our Saviour uses it to *Peter*, when he went to wash his feet. He tells him, it was an emblem of something, that he should know hereafter; and explains himself thus, if I *wash thee not*, thou hast no part with me. John xiii. 8. That which makes me apply this to his justification, is what he adds, he that is *washed*, needs not save to *wash* his feet, but is *clean every whit*; for this can hardly be understood of their sanctification. Thus he told them in the days of old, Ezek. xxxvi. 25, I will pour *clean water* upon you, and ye shall be *clean*; from all your filthiness and all your idols I will *cleanse* you; *i. e.* from the guilt of them; for we know that the blood of Christ *cleanses* from all sin. 1 John. i. 7. Thus does *Ananias* speak of the ordinance, to *Saul*, why tarriest thou?

Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord. Acts xxii. 16.

2. It is an emblem of our sanctification. We are saved by *the washing* of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. 2 Tit. iii. 5. To call baptism the laver of regeneration is dangerous, false, and foolish. That it is a token, a sign, or a representation of it, is true; but to say that it is the means or the efficient of a thorough change, is wrong, and only serves to make people trust in a lie. However, the external action is spoken of in the same way, with the influence of the Holy Spirit. *Ye are washed, ye are justified, ye are sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.* 1 Cor. vi. 11.

3. It signifies our growth in religion. Though the ordinance is administered but once, yet the obligation arising from it, to a dependence upon Christ, and a derivation from the Holy Spirit, continues all along. We are to be *sanctified throughout* in our whole spirit, soul, and body. These words, in my opinion, carry in them no discovery of *three* parts in us, but rather only of *two*. For the prayer of the Apostle is, that our whole spirit *ὁλόκληρου τοῦ πνεύματος*, our entire frame, which is called *spirit* in honour to the change, that is wrought upon us, and the glorious author of it, who is the Spirit (as the believer is called a *spiritual man*) be preserved. And he distributes what he means by this general word *Spirit*, into two particulars, *καὶ ἡ ψυχὴ καὶ τὸ σῶμα*, both your soul and

even your body. These are to be sanctified every day.

4. It signifies our devotedness to the Lord. It is the badge, the mark, the signature of our subjection to him. By baptism, we declared ourselves to be entered into his service, and into his family.

5. It engages us to a continual attendance upon the means of grace; because he that sanctifies us through the washing of water, does it *by the word*, Eph. v. 26. Baptism is the figure of our being saved; now we are saved by faith, and faith comes by hearing. They that separate themselves, being sensual, and having not the Spirit, have no benefit by their baptism, but are blind and cannot see afar off, and have forgotten they were purged from their old sins. 2 Pet. i. 9. Such as were baptized upon *Peter's sermon continued steadfastly* in the Apostle's doctrine, and fellowship, and breaking of bread, and in prayers.

6. It is an emblem of those joys and comforts, that a believer may hope for. Out of his belly shall flow *rivers of living water*. John vii. 38. A cheerful life and temper, is very properly set out by this figure. Let thy garments be always white, and let thy head lack no *ointment*. Eccl. ix. 8. Baptism represents both, the satisfaction Christ made for our sins by his blood, and the victory he has over them by his grace. And how happy a state is that, "a *fountain* of gardens, a well of living waters, and *streams* from *Lebanon*." Cant. iv. 15.

7. It is an earnest of the felicity above.

There our robes are to be *washed* in the blood of the Lamb. Rev. vii. 14. There our persons are to be sanctified, so as to be without *spot* or wrinkle, or any such thing. There our entertainments are from a pure *river of water* of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. He leads to the fountains of *living waters*, and wipes away all tears from our eyes. Rev. xxii. 3.

Application 1. If baptism contains all this, what need have we to take care that we lose none of it !

2. How great is our obligation to be steady in the doctrine, that is engraven upon this ordinance ? Holding fast the profession of our faith without wavering.

SERMON VIII.

The doctrine of baptism summed up. It is a profession of our hope. We have a hope. This is to be owned, upon certain grounds, an inward persuasion. How far religion is founded on reason, and in what respects contrary to it. Our confession is public, harmonious, intelligible, in a certain form of words, where it is not laid down in consequences. It is the chief doctrine of the ordinance. Fundamental.

HEB. x. 23.

Let us hold fast the profession of faith without wavering.

I HAVE considered baptism, with regard to the *privilege* contained in it ; and am now to open the *duty* arising from it. It is peculiar to the Christian religion ; it is our entrance into it ; it is thus we declare the name of God which is called upon us. This is done with a design, that the world may know, *who he is* ; and therefore we must do it, in such a way as they may understand us.

In order to this, Christ himself, has given us a form of words, that are set up as a monument of *his* authority, and a declaration of *our* belief. But neither of these ends will be answered, if the meaning of the sentence is not open and easy. It would be quite wrong, to make use of figures and *dark sayings*, and oriental idioms, in a confession of faith. If he has not called us, to utter words *easy to be understood*, our doctrine is vain as to *others* ;

and so is the ordinance of baptism as to *ourselves*.

Now, I do not see, how it is possible, that believers or infidels should either deny or forget, that by the plain words which are put into our mouths, we are called to own these five particulars.

1. The supremacy of God.
2. The unity of his nature.
3. A trinity of persons.
4. A distinction among them.
5. Their equality in power and glory.

If any of these are not *right*, the form of baptism is *wrong*. Christ knew that the world would thus understand it ; and, I will venture to say, the Holy Spirit has taken care, his own peculiar people shall do so. *To them that believe, it is precious*, a foundation, a tried corner stone ; to those that are disobedient it is a stumbling block ; but it is certain they *stumble at the word* itself. 2 Pet. ii. 7, 8. Thus the *Mahometan*, thus the *Indian* takes it, and for that, he despises it. Thus the Spirit of grace has opened it, to those whom he teaches in every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. Every one that offers, either himself or his infant to God, if he knows what he does, if he does not bring *the sacrifice of fools*, has made a declaration of his belief, his adherence, and devotion to *three equal persons in one glorious undivided nature*. This is not only, a doctrine that Christ has established in the ordinance, but what he would have all his people to publish *by* it. And therefore,

The apostle having put us in mind, of the first vows of God that are upon us, when our bodies were washed with pure water, lets us know what a perpetual duty arises from it; *hold fast the profession of your faith*, or your hope, *without wavering*, or shuffling, faltering or fainting. Here you may observe these three things.

1. The great trust that is committed to us in baptism; and that is a *profession of faith and hope*.

2. Our temper of mind, or business of life, with regard to it; and that is to *hold it fast*.

3. The manner of doing this, is *without wavering*.

1. Here is a trust committed to us in baptism; and that is the *profession* of our faith and hope. This is the main design of the ordinance. We should never have had it, but for an opportunity of telling the world, what it is we believe and hope for; *who* our God is, and *what* we expect from him.

1. It is here supposed of those who are baptized, and joined to the living in *Jerusalem*, that concerning them, there is *hope*.

2. In the solemnity of baptism there is a *profession* of this hope.

1. Baptism takes it for granted, that there is hope in *Israel*, concerning those whom God has made to be his own, in an everlasting covenant.

(1.) *The grace of hope*, that is, the principle by which we are enabled to lift up our faces before God, is implanted in them. This is

the production of the eternal Spirit ; for if you abound in hope it is by *the power of the Holy Ghost*. Rom. xv. 13. Without his almighty creation, we should lie down in shame. Our hope would be as the spider's web, wrought out of our own bowels, hung upon something, that will not hold it, and brushed away at death. But it is *the God of hope*, who fills us with peace and joy in believing.

(2.) *The thing itself* upon which our hope fixes, and for which it must be working, is an inheritance with the saints in light. Col. i. 5. This is *the hope* that is laid up for us in heaven. 2 Cor. v. 1. The matter of our confidence is, that when this earthly house of our tabernacle is dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Heb. xi. 10. Our whole profession, the main current of life and duty, declares plainly that *we seek a city*, which is an heavenly, whose builder and maker is God. Eph. v. 27. By the ordinance of baptism we tell the world, that ourselves or our children are given up to him, who sanctifies the Church, that he may *present it to himself*, without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing. Tit. i. 2. We do every thing *in hope of eternal life*, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began.

(3.) *The ground of this hope* is the gospel dispensation. There is nothing at all in nature, to tell us of any such portion, or quicken any such principle. Therefore, they who are without Christ, are *aliens to the commonwealth of Israel*.

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Eph. ii. 12. They are not free, nor brought into the glorious liberty of the sons of God. They are strangers to the covenant of promise; to them it does not appertain. Therefore they have *no hope*, and are no better than people without a God in the world. It is only from the incarnation, the crucifixion, and the ascension of a glorious Redeemer, that we have any *hope towards God*. Hence it is said, that we flee for a refuge to lay hold on *the hope that is set before us*. Heb. vi. 18. Though the Holy Spirit gives us the power, of looking and waiting for the great adoption, yet it is with an eye, to the merits and empire of him who was dead, and is alive, and lives for evermore. We are begotten again to a *lively hope*, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. 1 Pet. i. 2. After this resurrection, he appointed baptism; and therefore in that day, declares that we are *prisoners of hope*. And it is thus, that baptism does now save us, not the washing away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God, *by the resurrection of Jesus Christ* who has gone into heaven; angels, principalities, and powers, being made subject to him. 1 Pet. iii. 21, 22.

(4.) This hope is *peculiar* to Christians. They who have *not* that name upon them, cannot *so much* as pretend to it: and they that have *only* the name can do *no more*, than pretend. When the heathen mourn over their dead, they sorrow as those that have *no hope*. 1 Thess. iv. 13. All their imaginations of

future blessedness, are only random thoughts, expectations at a venture. *Our* comforts arise out of things of which *they* never heard. We believe that Jesus died and rose again, and so those that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. To baptize a person, who knows nothing of Christ's abolishing death, and bringing life and immortality to light, is only mocking God and deceiving men. The very ordinance supposes, that he is instructed about that *better hope* by which we draw nigh to God. And when we comply with it, either for ourselves or our children, it is no less than giving the reason of *the hope* that is in us.

2. Of this hope, there is a profession made, when the body is washed with pure water. The word is *ὁμολογία*; and you cannot separate the following particulars from it without garbling the solemnity of baptism, and making it good for nothing.

1. It is supposed, that for this hope, we have certain *grounds*, in the book of God.

2. That of this, our souls are filled with an inward *persuasion*.

3. That the reasons within us, we *declare* abroad for the conviction and establishment of others.

4. That we do this, in *union* with all the people of God. *ὁμολογία* is a speaking together.

5. That therefore, Christians *know* the minds of one another, in this common faith.

6. That there are some wholesome words, to which they *consent*.

7. That this uniting profession, was made

at their baptism. There is but *one faith* in Jesus, and but *one baptism* to declare it.

(1.) If we are to profess, our hope of an eternal life with God, it is supposed there are *certain grounds* for it. These can be no other, than what the scripture has revealed. To say that God is merciful, is true ; but no comfort arises from any schemes, which men talk of, without book. Thousands are damned eternally, who depended on the divine goodness. And yet it is infinitely above, what we can say or think. It is by making, the captain of our salvation perfect *through sufferings*, that the plan is laid, for bringing many sons and daughters to glory. Heb. ii. 11. It is the *blood of the everlasting covenant*, that has opened the way, for the great shepherd of the sheep, to arise himself ; Heb. xiii. 20. and secure the whole train of those that follow him. By his *obedience* to the law, death is disarmed of an awful sting, and the grave prevented of a total victory. By his *deity* he is able to save ; for our salvation is of God. By his *death*, he is worthy to redeem. By his *grace*, he is sure of success. If he was not *the prince of life*, he would not be a saviour, to give repentance to *Israel* and remission of sins. Acts. v. 21.

Thus the reason of the hope that is in us, is that *by one offering*, he has for ever put away sin ; and by that one offering, he will for ever perfect them that are sanctified. Heb. x. 14. Our baptism is a declaration of the confidence we have in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ;

in him, by whom we are elected ; in him, who has made the purchase ; and in him, who has wrought the change. *This our God is the God of salvation, and to him belong the issues from death.* Ps. lxxviii. 20.

They that do not own him, in this distinction of persons and union of nature, are baptized in a name, they know nothing of. They are given up to *an unknown God* ; and though they make mention of the Lord, it is *not in truth and righteousness.* Is. xlvi. 1. They compass him about with *lies and deceit*, and as their profession is *vanity*, so vanity shall be their recompense. They know not him, and he will profess that he knows not them. They have prepared lying words, if they use any form of their own ; or they have perverted the words of the living God.

(2.) It is supposed, that we have an inward persuasion of these grounds, upon which a believer's hope is built. He that believes on the Son of God, has *the witness in himself.* 1 John v. 10. We must be rooted and *settled in the faith*, and *not moved away* from the hope of the gospel. Col. i. 23.

The man that brings his child to baptism, has the same obligations, as if he offered himself. He ought to *know*, in whom he has believed, and examine his confidence towards God. He is to *prove* his own work. Faith and hope are personal things, that he may have rejoicing *in himself* alone, and not in another. Gal. vi. 4. He should be always ready, to give an answer to every man, that asks

a reason of the hope that is *in him* ; and this can never be, unless he searches the Scriptures, because in them alone we have eternal life.

In this sense ours is a *rational faith*. We have *reason*, and argument to support us. Suffer me to explain this. Religion may be supposed rational these two ways.

1st. If we take reason for that *principle*, which is now corrupt, and vitiated with all the other faculties of human nature, we may say that the doctrines of Christianity are *not rational* ; that is, as the Apostle tells us plainly, the natural man does not receive them, they are *foolishness* to him. 1 Cor. ii. 14. The world, by all their wisdom, is not able to know the only living and true God. Their reasons must be sanctified and subdued as well as their will. Thus it was with as learned an infidel as ever lived ; *he thought* that he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Acts xxvi. 9. He was guided by *his reason* in all the blasphemy and persecution of these evil days. His inquiry and free-thinking, his polite attainments carried him in full career, against Christ and his gospel. It is in that sense and *no other*, that we ever asserted the principles of revelation were *contrary to reason*, not only incomprehensible, but opposite. But, if you do not like the phrase, that they are *against reason*, we will change it, and say *reason* is against them*. Of this we have acknowledgements in those that are converted, and notorious evidence in those that are not.

* Corrupt reason.

2dly, By reason we oftentimes mean a *ground of persuasion* ; the argument that gives a bias to our way of thinking. And in this sense, the Christian religion is *the most rational thing in the world*, because it goes upon the record of a God that *cannot lye*. 1 John v. 10. Such a rational religion we are for, and desire to keep it so; and I take this opportunity to affirm, that to look for salvation from a depending or a *created God*, to trust in any one who is not almighty, to believe in a God who is *not a person*, has nothing rational in it.

(3.) At baptism there is a profession ; that is, we *declare* abroad the reason of the hope within us. It is a public ordinance, and that can never be without a *public sound of faith*. Silent meetings are fit for none but those, who are neither believers nor baptized ; who turn the form of the ordinance into spirit, and the spirit of it into nothing. You may be partakers of Christ, without ever being baptized at all ; but Christ has called you to this ordinance, that others may know what you think ; that your light be not smothered in a bushel, but blaze out to the conviction of all men. He has given you a tongue as your glory ; and if you are silent in his doctrine, you turn your glory into a shame. He has mentioned your faith and your profession together, as equal parts of an homage to him, and a care about yourselves. If thou believe that Jesus died, and *confess* that God raised him again from the dead thou shalt be saved. Rom. x. 9.

A dumb believer is like a dumb bell, all lumber and no melody. The reason is given for the one as well as the other, that with the heart man believes unto righteousness, and *with the mouth confession* is made to salvation. He that *confesses* Christ before men, him will the Son of man confess before the angels that are in heaven. Matt. x. 32.

But, this duty I have in a public manner enforced, and taken all the rubbish out of the way that some trifling objections have thrown into it. I have there shewn, how false and wicked it is, to charge it with a denial of Christ's authority, or the sufficiency of the Scriptures; to represent it as a breach of charity, or a ruin of liberty. See *twenty-eight Sermons* concerning offences, revilings, and a confession of the faith.

(4.) This profession, is what we make in union with the people of God. The word *ὁμολογία* signifies a *speaking together*, not in time, but in substance. We are to *speak the same thing*, and be perfectly joined together, in the same mind and the same judgment. With one mind, and *one mouth*, we are to glorify God.

We have our several opinions even about baptism itself, but we are united in one common faith; which is a living diffusive argument, that the Spirit has done his office, by leading believers into all truth. The Churches of the *reformation*, without any concert or management have agreed in the doctrine of the Trinity, and in their several languages begun with that, as fundamental to every oth-

er article. Thus it appears that we are *baptized into one body*, and are made to drink into one spirit. 1 Cor. xii. 13. As for those, who depart from the good old way, in which so many thousands have got to heaven, we know not of what spirit they are. They follow *their own spirit*, and have seen nothing. Ezek xiii. 3.

(5.) If profession is a speaking together, then Christians are to know one another's minds. "I thank my God, saith the Apostle, that *your faith is spoken* of throughout the whole world. I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; that is, that I may be comforted together with you, by *the mutual faith* both of you and me." Rom. i. 8, 11, 12. And when he could no longer forbear, he sent to *know the faith* of the *Thessalonians*, lest by some means the tempter should have tempted them, and his labour be in vain. 1 Thess. iii. 3. I should be very loath to have it said of our faith, that by long hoarding up, the rust and canker of it witnesses against us. A silent believer has no claim to brotherly kindness and charity. He suffers himself to be no greater in the Church, than a heathan man or a publican is out of it. We greet them, that love us *in the faith*. As the end of the commandment is charity, it must be out of a good conscience and *faith unfeigned*. The brethren that spoke of *Gaius*, testified of the *truth* that was in him, as well as bore witness of his *charity*. 3 John iii. 6.

(6.) This joint profession lets us see, there

must be a consent to some whole some words. I do not mean to the rumbling or sound, but to the sense contained in them. How dangerous would it be to use the words of Christ in baptism, as the enemies did his body? *i. e.* hang them upon a cross, strain them in all the cruel ways that can be invented, running their foolish and unlearned questions into them, like so many spears, that bring out nothing but blood and water?

I declare, that when I have baptized a person, I should think myself guilty of deceiving the world, and insulting the Lord Jesus, if I meant any more than one God, or any fewer than three persons. I believe the form that is put into my mouth, reveals both this distinction and their union. If ever this appears to be false, I will revoke my baptism, and renounce the words that discovered the doctrine. This is the plain and natural sense of the words; and therefore, to twine and torture them with conjectures and *may be's*, is making Christ not a teacher, but a *barbarian*, by not uttering words that are easy to be understood. I never did, and never durst baptize any, into three names, because that would have insinuated *three Gods*, one supreme and two subordinate. I can never make *them* equal in devotion, that are not equal in nature. It would be as vile to say, that you are baptized into *one person* and two *powers*, since the form mentions three persons as plainly as one. I know what God does, shall be *for ever*; Eccl. iii. 14. nothing can be put to it, nor any thing

taken from it: and God does it, that men should fear before him. Christ's own words would have done, without any explication, if men had not perverted them. But when four or five schemes are argued from one and the self-same form, it is time to look into the things that we have wrought; this is putting the ark of God into the house of *Dagon*, when men resist the truth, being of corrupt minds, and reprobate concerning the faith.

(7.) This profession, in which we are all united, was made when we entered, either ourselves or our children into the Christian faith. It is the *original contract*. Father, Son, and Holy Ghost is become our God, and we are his people. Cannot any of us tell, whether we were devoted to one God or three? To two *powers* or three *persons*? What a jest will the world make of our religion, if the initial form in which we embrace it, cannot be understood or determined?

May not the *Jews* insult us, and say, "We know that God spake by *Moses*, but as to this *Jesus*, we know not *whence* he is. Excuse us in saying so, for your own writers know not *what* he is. Some of your learned men are offended, as our fathers were, that he made himself equal with God. We called it *blasphemy*, and you call it *rhetoric*; but both sides are agreed in the main, that he has not a strict and proper deity. It is the unity of the Godhead that you contend for, and so do we. We made his words *criminal*, and you make them *figurative*. It is

“pity he had not his free-thinkers, his critical
 “disputants about him then; for their distinc-
 “tions and *dissertations* would have softened
 “his doctrine and saved his life.”

As to the Holy Spirit, if the form of bap-
 tism does not declare both his deity and his
 personality, our Christian religion is no lon-
 ger distinguished from the *Jewish* and the *Ma-
 hometan*; but rather shared between them,
 and like a couple of eagles, they are hovering
 over their prey, to see which of them shall
 have it. For, as I read in Dr. Owen. “All
 “the false apprehensions concerning the Spir-
 “it, may be reduced to two heads: First, that
 “of the modern *Jews*, who affirm the Holy
 “Ghost to be the *influential power of God*;
 “which conceit is entertained and promoted
 “by the *Socinians*, and, secondly; that of the
 “*Mahometans*, who make him an eminent
 “angel, which opinion they got from the *Ma-
 “cedonians*.”

So that instead of having the form of bap-
 tism honoured, we see it used, as its author
 was, crucified between two malefactors. And
 thus those words, that should declare us to be
 Christians, do only distribute us, among the
 two great enemies of our faith. A form of
 words, is no better than a form of godliness,
 if you *deny the power*. It lets us see, that the
 Arian scheme comes not half so well, out of
 the mouth of an *English bishop* as it would
 from a *Turkish mufti*: It is not the lesson of
 the bible, but the Alkoran. And the notion
 of making the Spirit only the *influential power*

of God, is very little becoming a *dissenting meeting house*, but rather smells rank of the *Jewish synagogue*.

But, my brethren, stand by your baptism. *Walk up and down* in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, that name of God that was called upon you. If you either tremble, or trifle in the doctrine of the Trinity, the very badge of your Christianity is gone. This is the main, the adequate, the original sense of baptism. There are indeed several articles of faith, which you may argue, from having your bodies washed with pure water ; as,

1. The supremacy of Christ over his Church. If you comply with this ordinance, upon his authority, you pay him as great a deference, as ever *Abraham* did to the most high God, when he was circumcised. Christ in this acted as a *Son over his own house*. Heb. iii. 6.

2. You may plead from hence, the atonement that he has made ; because baptism is for the remission of sins, from which, he has *washed us in his own blood*. Rev. i. 5. This is he who came not by water only, but by *water and blood*, for without the *shedding of blood* there could be no remission. 1 John v. 6. Heb. ix. 22.

3. Sanctification of the Spirit is another doctrine belonging to this ordinance. Washing is an emblem of *regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost*. Tit. iii. 5. Therefore, all these truths that relate to the necessity and sufficiency of a grace from above, are included in your profession.

4. The resurrection from the dead, is a thing of which baptism is a figure, an earnest, and an introduction. If the dead rise not at all, why are we *baptized for the dead*? 1 Cor. xv. 29. that is, (without any buzz of critical learning) why are we *baptized in hope* of this resurrection?

5. Eternal life is another article of faith, that we may argue from baptism.

These and several more, are not only doctrines of the gospel, but they are resembled and hinted at, in this very ordinance. But a trinity of persons, in the unity of the God-head, is still more conspicuous in the profession that you made, when your bodies were washed with pure water.

1. This is not declared with a train of consequences, but is the plain unassisted interpretation of the words, which it is impossible to avoid. In many Scriptures, we prove the deity and personality of the Son and Holy Ghost by rational deductions, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But in the ordinance of baptism, it is the immediate proposition itself. We do not take any length of argumentation. It comes like the light of the morning, even a morning without clouds. It demonstrates itself, and shines with no other evidence than its own. It needs no chain of thought, no connecting of one thing to another; but it lies open at first look, so that he who runs may read it.

I think, we are obliged by this act of profession, to believe the imputation of Christ's

righteousness, the efficacy of his grace, and the reality of his empire. But these are things afar off, in comparison of the plain and primitive declaration that we have made, of one glorious name, belonging *equally* and *distinctly* to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

2. This is *the only doctrine* that is expressed in the ordinance; and therefore to drop this is to lose all. Others, as I said, are supposed by it, and may be deduced from it; but *baptism* is commensurate to the article of the *Trinity*. It includes no less, and it reaches no farther. It is the whole sense of that solemnity. I think that baptism *may* be pleaded against a *Pelagian* or *Arminian*, but I am sure it *must*, against an *Antitrinitarian*.

The Lord's supper is a showing forth of Christ's death, and a declaration of our hope in his coming again; so that if a person denied either of these articles, he would rather contradict the ordinance, than observe it. These are the particular immediate professions, that we make in partaking of the body and blood of the Lord. In like manner, the truth connected to the other sacrament, is that of one divine nature in three distinct and equal persons.

3. As this doctrine is initial to our profession, so it is *fundamental* to it. Every other truth has its dependence here. You will easily see how vain it is, to speak of our election according to the fore-knowledge of the Father, if we do not lay the ground of all in this, that *the Father is a divine agent*. To ascribe ac-

tions to him, supposes him to be a *person*; to expect a glory from him, takes it for granted that he is *God*. If therefore we should ever doubt either of these; if we make him no more than a power or a faculty, no higher than a creature or a dependent being, all the scheme of his decrees, operations and designs, will fall to the ground. The man who does not own, these two characters in the eternal Father, would be only guilty of building in the air, let him write never so well of creation, providence and grace. We should expect, if any one was to acquaint us with the decrees, the works, the designs, the promises, and laws of the Father, that he should first shew us who this Father is. We could not have communion with an attribute. We could not have salvation from a creature.

And just so it is, when we speak of the Son and Spirit. If the Son is called *God*, and is not a person, he is but the power of the Father, and therefore not distinguished from him. If he is called a *person*, and yet not *God*, he is but a creature derived from the Father, and therefore not united to him. In both these turns, the form of baptism would be impertinent. If either of them be true, I can have no personal communion with him, or no entire dependence on him; because my communion and dependence are not concerned, with any additional glory that he may receive, but with what he is *in himself*, in his own original nature. It is in vain to tell one, of the redemption that he wrought out, and the righteous-

ness that he brought in, if I must not know *who it is*, that did all this. For if he has personality in no other nature than the human, he is a mere man, and has no more divinity, than God might have communicated to any other creature. He is no more a God, than the sanctuary or the temple was, for the fullness of the Godhead, according to such an explication, dwelt in them.

And thus it is, as to *the Holy Spirit*. If he is below the Son in his existence, and the Son himself no more than a derivation from the Father, I dare never trust him, for what, none but the Supreme God can do; and will never give him a glory, which none but the Supreme God should have. He is too low to sanctify a sinner, to preserve a saint, to inspire a prophet, to furnish an apostle, to make a world, and to fill a heaven. Either this scheme saith too little, or the scripture has said too much. If he is only an attribute of the divine nature, I will never distinguish him from the Father, any more than I would his holiness, justice, or mercy; but rather speak of God under *two trinities* instead of one.

So that, until the first profession is settled, all religion is at a stand. We know not who our God is. There ought to be a suspense of baptism; an embargo laid upon the ordinance, or else upon the mouths of those that pervert the doctrine. A person who pretends to rectify the foundation, designs no less than to pull down the building. For *if the foundations are destroyed*, or, if they are rotten and uncertain,

what can the righteous do? Ps. xi. 3. We must begin again.

I am in the next discourse, to show you the duty and necessity, of holding fast this profession without wavering; and shall consider the arguments against it; as,

First, That “it is desirable there should be an union of all the Trinitarian, Athanasian, Arian, and Sabellian schemes.” But let me tell you, that such a medley and jumble as that, is fitter for *Babel* than *Zion*.

Secondly, It is urged that, “we must not continue to lie down in darkness; that this is a polite age; and that men will not be put off with the notion, that a doctrine is incomprehensible.” Such talk as that, savours of too much arrogance and vanity.

Thirdly, It is said that “the primitive Church and the *Jewish* writers take the matter otherwise.” And, again, it is proposed, that men destroy the faith for the sake of charity; but I hope it is not impossible to put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

SERMON IX.

Holding fast the doctrine, supposes that we believe it to be true, upon no other evidence than that of scripture; it is the result of an examination. The story of the Bereans told fairly. We see it, to be our own concern. We go no farther than revelation, without any inquiry about the modus. We profess it, we defend it, in an unity with the saints. All errors come in, with a pretence of clearer ideas. We are willing to run all hazards, in promoting and abounding in the faith.

I HAVE considered the great and awful trust, that is committed to us in the ordinance of baptism, and the vows of God that are upon us. We profess a faith and hope, in regard to which, our bodies are washed with pure water. The matter of this faith, the thing we profess to believe, the reason of the hope that is in us, is no other, than the doctrine of *three persons in one undivided nature*. When any convert took up the Christian name, the world of *Jews* or *Heathen* who were round about him, would not only know what he did, but what he *believed*. Their faith was *spoken of* throughout the whole world. Rom. i. 8.

The *action* of baptism was public, by which they declared their homage to the Lord Jesus. Now this would be only, to glory in a ceremony, unless the *doctrine* of baptism was public too. It was not the water, but the article;

not washing away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience to that awful truth, which is so much above the comprehension of all created nature; that there is but *one name* belonging to Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; that these are *three*, or otherwise they had never been distinguished, since if *one* of them is a person, then *all* are so; that we are given up, to each with equal devotion, dependence, and duty: and yet though they are no fewer in number than *three*, in nature and title, they are no more than *one*. We are not baptized into *three names*, but as the form of sound words tells us, into *one* and no more.

This is the faith delivered to us in the bible; the initial and principal doctrine of Christianity; and therefore engraven upon that ordinance, in which we are given up to be the Lord's. He that is baptized, professes himself in that very solemnity to be a *Trinitarian*. If he does not take the words in their natural sense, and as all other people do, he trifles both with God and man.

The *Jews* hate our baptism, not because it is managed either by sprinkling or plunging. It is not the water that gives them any offence, for they have *divers washings* among themselves. But that which makes it foolishness to them, is our being equally devoted to the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. So that it is upon the *Unitarian* principle, that they object against the very entrance into our religion. They stumble at that *stumbling stone*, which is to us a *foundation*. Rom. 9. ult.

In opposition to them and the Heathen too, we are baptized. That is our visible distinction from them. In this rite, we declare our faith in a doctrine which they cannot receive, an unity of nature subsisting equally in a trinity of persons. It is this that denominates us Christians. This is the profession of faith and hope that we made in baptism.

II. I am now to consider the duty incumbent on us, with regard to this profession of faith; and that includes both the temper of our minds and the business of our lives. We are to *hold it fast*; and must do this, as I shall show you, under the third general head, without wavering; without shrinking back; leaning or inclining to the extremes of error, on the right hand, or on the left. In this affair, above all others, we are to be steady, fixed, and at a point. *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to day, and for ever*; therefore be not carried away with *divers and strange doctrines*. Heb. xiii. 8, 9.

I shall now endeavour to show you, what this holding fast of our profession means. The word *κατέχω* we often meet with, in the *new testament*; and whatever it is applied to, it never fails to signify a resolution, a care, a full purpose of heart, not to lose what we have. It intimates a *possession*; and it expresses a firmness of soul to *keep it*. If you therefore consider, what a person owns to be his faith, when he gives up, either himself or his child to God in baptism; what the profession is which he then makes; what form of words, Christ has

put in his mouth; his *holding* this, *fast* through all the toil and length of life, comprehends the following particulars.

1. It supposes that he knows from the scriptures, the doctrine to be true.

2. That this knowledge, is the fruit of personal trial and examination.

3. That he finds the concernment of his own soul in it.

4. That he binds up himself, within the revelation that is given him. He believes neither more nor less, than the bible has told him.

5. That he will never keep it as a secret; for we do not only hold fast our faith, but the very *profession* of it.

6. That he believes himself obliged, to defend it against all gain-sayers.

7. That in doing this, he preserves an unity with God's people. For the profession we hold fast, is not a private opinion, a spark of our own kindling, but a *ὁμολογία*; we *speak together*.

8. That he will run all hazards in his reputation and interest. The very command to *keep* it, does plainly insinuate that it is no easy matter.

9. That he will spread and promote it to the uttermost.

10. That he will endeavour to be farther established, *abounding in every doctrine* to which he has attained.

This is to hold fast the profession of faith and hope which we made in baptism; and without such a temper of soul towards the doctrine; and such a care of life to maintain it, the

water applied to us, is no better than water spilt upon the ground, that cannot be gathered.

1. It is supposed, both in our making this profession and holding it fast, that we believe it to be true. Thou art to know *the certainty of the words of truth*, that thou mayest answer the words of truth, to them that send unto thee. The argument of this faith, is, not its agreement to human reason. No. I cannot see, that revealed religion, is any more suited to our reason, than it is to our lusts; that is, no more to the lusts of the mind, than to those of the flesh. Imaginations and high thoughts exalt themselves, *against the knowledge of the Son of God.* 2 Cor. x. 3.

I do not speak of reason, as it was before the fall, for there is no such thing in the world. I would be understood of a reason which *we have*, not of one that we have not: *i. e.* a corrupted faculty, which the scripture has called by the name of a *carnal mind*, or the *natural man*, Rom. viii. 7. and of which we are expressly told, that it *receives not* the things of the Spirit of God, because they are foolishness to it, neither *can it know them*, because they are spiritually discerned. 1 Cor. ii. 14. Our understandings are *darkened* by a vanity of mind, being alienated from the life of God through the *ignorance* that is in us, because of the *blindness* of our hearts. Eph. iv. 17, 18. We are mere *darkness*.

To say, there is nothing in the doctrines of the gospel, opposite to a corrupted reason, is talking both against grace and nature. We are

plainly told, that the world *by their wisdom* knew not God. 1 Cor. i. 21. I question, whether the mere light of nature ever taught any after the flood, that there was but one God, or that he alone was to be worshipped. The first commandment of the law, strikes as much at all the sentiments of the heathen, as the first doctrine of the gospel does, *thou shalt have no other Gods before me.* The number of their deities was a growing thing, and indeed they sprung very fast. Some of the best morality that we have among the philosophers, is from those who talk of 30,000 Gods and Goddesses. So wild and wanton was the reason of man, under the least attainments of learning. Least of all, can I think they had any imagination about a *trinity* of persons. The quotations I have met with, from those who studied their writings, are poor, confused, and empty fancies. So that a person who believes, as he is called to do, that there is but one name belonging to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, does not receive it as a thing *that man's wisdom* teaches.

There is no book in all the world that reveals it, but one; and our assent to it, is upon no other ground than the testimony of God. We do not believe it, as we do many things, upon ocular demonstrations; for God is one whom *no man has seen*, nor can see. 1 Tim. vi. 16. Nor is it by rational deduction, and a train of thinking; for canst thou by searching *find out God*, canst thou find out the Almighty to perfection? It is high as heaven, what

canst thou do ? deeper than hell, what canst thou know ? Job xi. 7, 8. But it is the account that God, who alone comprehends his own nature, is pleased to give us of it. And though I would neither have *supposed* it, nor am I able to *explain* it, yet he who cannot lie has said it.

In many cases, the character of the witness depends upon the evidence of the testimony. If he says a true *thing*, we know him to be a true *person*. But here, the evidence of the testimony, depends upon the character of the witness. We cannot prove he says it, *because it is true* ; but it is true, *because he has said it*. We have no ideas of it, antecedent to his testimony. He that receives the testimony, has set to his seal that *God is true*. John iii. 33. His mere authority goes as far, in a doctrine as it does in a command.

I will not let my thoughts loose upon a copious argument, whether the scripture has revealed to us a Trinity of persons in the unity of the Godhead. Keep but to the form of baptism. Here is a man called to this ordinance. He does it in obedience to Jesus Christ, who has all power both in heaven and earth, and is head over all things to the Church. Well ; Christ, in directing him to the practice, has told him what he means by it.

This form must be intelligible. He has given me no explication of it, which supposes that he thought it plain enough. Now if there had been never a syllable, in all the bible

about the equality of the Son and Spirit with the Father, and their distinction from him; the very declaration that I make in baptism, by his own appointment, is enough. I must conclude this is the faith delivered to the saints, because it was so early professed by the saints. If the doctrine is false, Christ has put a *lie* in my mouth; if the words are not easy, he has put a *trifle* there. He has called me to a profession that I cannot believe, and that others cannot understand. But that be far from him. The words of the Lord are pure words. We receive the truth as it is in Jesus. We know that the Son of God is come, and has given us an understanding, that we may *know him that is true*, and we are in him that is true. This is the true God, and this is eternal life. 1 John v. 20.

2. Holding fast this profession, supposes that we know it to be, the doctrine of the scriptures, from a particular trial and examination. Until you have proved all things, you will never hold fast that which is good. The *Bereans* are mightily extolled by some in our days, (I wish they were as much imitated) for taking nothing upon trust. But observe what is said of them, upon which they were more noble, than those of *Thessalonica*. Acts. xvii. 11.

First, That they received the word with all readiness of mind. They were glad to hear it. They did not call the preachers a company of imposters and enthusiasts; or reject the doctrine without inquiry: for though

they received nothing upon *trust*, yet they admitted every thing upon *trial*.

Secondly, They searched the scriptures daily, whether the things were so or not: which is an argument that they looked for no higher authority, and no greater evidence. If they found the doctrines there, they never brought them to the bar of human reason, or strained them upon maxims of philosophy, but were glad to *own* whatever God was pleased to *say*.

We have had, through the gracious hand of providence, the first principles of the oracles of God in a proper light. Ours has been the valley of vision. Our serious parents had the best *catechism* in all the world in their hands,* and it was early put into our mouths; but without any design to diminish the reputation of the bible. The people that say this, are as foolish as they are rude. There is not a child that has learned two answers in that catechism, but is able to confront them. The second answer is, that the word of God contained in the scriptures of the *Old* and *New testament* is the ONLY RULE (not merely a good one, or the best, but the only rule) *that God has given us*, how we may glorify and enjoy him. And therefore,

Men who insinuate, that we set up this form of sound words as a rival to the bible, have taught us not to heed what they say, for it is plain they do not heed it themselves. The several propositions there, have a guard of Scriptures set about them, which every one

* The Westminster catechism.

that reads the book, calls by no other name than *proofs*. The catechism itself is proved and tried, and after this we hold it fast.

I may therefore apply to any one, who was brought up in this nurture and admonition of the Lord, as *Paul* did to *Timothy*; continue in the things that *thou hast heard* and been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them. 2 Tim. iii. 14. And who were these? Not the apostle himself, for he speaks, of what *Timothy* had learned, antecedent to their acquaintance. Though I know the liberty that some have taken with our education, yet *Timothy's* was from his mother and grandmother, 2 Tim. i. 5, for his father was a *Greek*; Acts xvi. 2, and the apostles remind him, that from a child thou hast known *the holy scriptures*, which are able to make thee wise. 2 Tim. iii. 15.

We must be able to speak from personal inquiries, as they did to the woman of *Samaria*. Now we believe, not because of thy saying, for we have *heard him ourselves*, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world. John iv. 42.

That proposition that *there are three persons in the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory*, is commensurate to the form of baptism. If the words are taken in their easy genuine sense, they signify neither more nor less, than that we are baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. If there had not

been three persons in the Godhead, we should never have made mention of them in baptism. If these three were not one God, we should, never have been baptized into *one name*. If they had not been three persons, they would never have been distinguished in the same way of speaking, that three persons always are. If they had not been the same in nature, substance, or essence, then we must conceive of more Gods than one. If they are not equal in power and glory, their inequality ought to be expressed, in the greatest act of surrender that we can possibly make of ourselves or our children.

3. It is supposed, in holding fast this profession of faith, that we find the concernment which our souls have in it. We are *nourished up* in the words of faith and good doctrine. 1 Tim. xv. 6. They are *wholesome words*. 1 Tim. vi. 3. We are not called in baptism to declare, whether the sun or the earth moves, whether some of the stars are not bigger, than either of our great lights; because, though these things may be true, they make us neither better nor worse. But it is of the last importance to my religion now, and my happiness for ever, to know with whom I have to do; whether I am to worship one God or three? I am sensible the latter is idolatry. Whether I am devoted to three persons, or only to one? I see that the latter of these is impiety. I have as much reason to think, that Jesus is the *author and finisher of my faith*, Heb. xii. 2, as I have, that it is only *God who*

works in me both to will and do. Phil. ii. 14. I depend upon the Holy Spirit for light and grace, for comfort and heaven, as much as I do upon the *Father of lights, the God of all grace, the God of all consolations, the Lord of heaven and earth.* James i. 17. 2 Cor. i. 3. Matt. xi. 25. And therefore,

I express, by the very words that Christ has given me, the equal confidence and interest of my soul in all the three. I cannot do without the SON; *if he makes me free I am free indeed,* but if I have not *the Son of God, I have not life.* John viii. 36. 1 John v. 12. Nor can I want the HOLY SPIRIT, *for as many as have not the Spirit of Christ are none of his.* Rom. viii. 10. This one God, these three persons, are revealed as sharers, partners, and equals in the work of my salvation, and yet ever distinguished in the various distributions that are made of it. *Our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.* 1 John i. 1. Take away my baptism, and you ruin the frontispiece of my profession; the thing that I first did under the title of Christian. Take away the doctrine of the *Trinity*, and you sap the foundation of all that I have as a believer, and all that I hope for as an heir of salvation.

4. It is supposed in our holding fast this profession, that we bind up ourselves within the revelation that God has given us; that we believe neither more nor less than the scripture has said. Our faith lies open to any doctrine that is contained there, but not a breath far-

ther. We have nothing to do with philosophy and vain deceit, *the rudiments of the world*, after the traditions of men, and not after Christ. Col. ii. 8. And therefore, those people have a mind to pervert the gospel, who will needs darken this counsel of the Lord by words without knowledge, and only draw us into *new terms*, that they may rob us of the *old ones*. As Satan comes not but to kill, and to steal, and to destroy, so it is a thievish trick in argumentation, first to lead you out of the road, and then to pick your pocket.

The phrase of three persons in one nature, we have been long used to. Each of these are to be maintained by a flood of scriptures; rivers of living waters, and streams from *Lebanon*. But to put it upon mere whims, whether they are *three conscious minds* or one, three *intelligences*, three *powers*, and a great deal more of that language, is all rattle and rumble. And I hope God will defend his Churches, by bringing down this *noise of strangers*, and making the blast of the terrible one like a storm against a wall. Is. xxv. 5.

I must therefore differ from a late projector of schemes, who says there "may be a certain *modus* or manner of expression, wherein it is true;" and goes on to tell us, that "we ought to search it out, and not lie down satisfied in darkness:" and concludes thus, "surely we may venture to say a more clear and intelligible explication of this divine doctrine of the Trinity, would be an unspeakable blessing to the Church and to the

“world.” That *his* attempts this way, have darkened the doctrine, and bewildered the world, may be easily proved.

I am so far from thinking this desirable, that I see the humour for it is dangerous. Thousands have got to heaven without it; and whether they know it *there*, is more than I can tell. If they do, they were never to have it sooner; and if they do not, they are happy enough without it. They are *full of eyes*, and say holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty; but they have each of them six wings; with two of which they *cover their faces*. Rev. iv. 8. Is. vi. 2. It will never be uneasy to them, that God dwells in that light, to which none can approach.

The main question before us is, whether the Spirit has revealed the *manner* of the Trinity. If he *has not*, I believe we may venture to say he *will not*; for I expect no additions to the bible. If he *has*, it is much, that so many vain men who would needs be wise, have got into a wilderness, under no more management than a wild ass's colt. For my part, I desire to be guided by this rule. When the scripture has a mouth, may I always have an ear; when that is silent, let me be so too. *Secret things* belong to God, and so they ought to do. Deut. xxix. ult. He has *held back the face of his throne*. Job xxvi. 9. Things revealed are enough for us and our children. The doctrine of three persons in one nature, has held for 1700 years.

5. Holding fast our profession, signifies

that we will not keep it as a secret. If it had been only said, hold fast your faith or your hope, we might have kept the secret of God with us. But holding fast *a profession*, is continuing to be as open as we begun. There is a faith that we may have *to ourselves* before God; Rom. xiv. 22, but there is one of another nature. The apostle could no longer forbear, but sent to the Thessalonians *to know their faith*. 1 Thes. iii. 5.

Ministers are set up as *lights* in the world, and none, but men of ill designs, will put them into a dark lantern. All Christians are *to hold forth the word of life*. Phil. ii. 16. I own that expression signifies, their doing it in things, but it certainly includes their doing it in words. *We have believed, and therefore have we spoken*, is an inference, that no honest man can deny. But, I have so largely considered the nature of this duty, the necessity that is always upon us to observe it, and answered the angry arguments, the railing accusations that are brought against it, that I must refer you to the 28 *Sermons* upon that subject.

6. Holding fast this profession, calls us to defend it; both the doctrine itself that we believe, and the practice of making it known to others. They that labour in the word and doctrine, are *to endure hardness* as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. 2 Tim. ii. 3. He that comes into the ministry, and forgets that he is in a field of battle, has mistaken his errand, and deceived himself. You do not see in your preachers, *men clothed in soft raiment*. Such

are only to be found in king's houses. But we are, or ought to be warriors, that do not *entangle themselves with the affairs of this life, that they may please him who has chosen them to be soldiers.* 2 Tim. ii. 4.

Why do they give themselves to reading and exhortation? What are all the pains they take, to have their minds furnished with learning? Why do they turn over so many volumes? Is it only to say, how much they have *done*, and not to care, how little they have *got*? Are all the arguments they lay up, from antiquity, criticism, observation, and reasoning, to lie by, like so much rusty armour, that is only to be looked at? No, no. If they are faithful, they will have occasion for it all. And so will all the people of God. There is not any believer, but as he has the instruction of the Spirit for his own establishment, so he is in some measure, qualified to plead the cause of his great Redeemer. God has ordained strength out of the mouths of *babes and sucklings, to still the enemy and the avenger.* Ps. viii. 2.

Human learning is very useful, and it has been wonderfully blessed, to the securing of this fundamental truth. My heart is towards those great men in *Israel*, who have willingly offered themselves among the people. But still the success has sometimes gone along, by demonstration of the Spirit and power. The story is so frequently told, that it must be commonly known, of a cunning philosopher, who had baffled some of the greatest doctors

in Christianity, until a plain illiterate man attacked him. Then, as himself tells the matter, says he, "I could oppose reason to reason, learning to learning, and authority to authority; but now as I could oppose nothing to the Spirit, I yielded to him at once."

You are not called, to dispute about the *cognoscitive* and *volitive* powers of God; about three conscious minds; about a numerical or specific identity; or indeed about any thing, which neither you nor the adversary can understand. But I trust you are established, and have many Scriptures within reach to maintain, namely, that

There is but one living and true God: That this great name, and the works peculiar to it, are equally affirmed of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: that there are as properly, three persons as there is one; that I need no other arguments that the Son and Holy Ghost are persons, than those which are owned, to prove the Father so. If the question is, whether these things are to be *explained*? Tell them no. It is impious to attempt it. If the question is, whether they are *revealed*? Tell them yes. It is impious to deny it.

7. In holding fast your profession, you preserve an union with the people of God; not only in your own age and country, but in all those afar off, either as to place or time; nay, with them that come after. *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.* Heb. xiii.

8. The opposition now made to the truth, and the shuffling arts that are used against it, are

what *they* have met with, *who* were of old time before us. Men have tried their several ways, to embarrass this doctrine, and not one of them with any other pretence, than to give *clear and distinct ideas*, and to secure *the unity of the Godhead*. But still after these troubled waters have cast forth all their mire and dirt, the truth has refined and settled, just in the same way.

The faith we contend for, is not a thing yet unknown; a futurity, a reserve for some politer age, and some inquisitive genius; but it is *once* delivered to the saints. The word *ἄρα* signifies, both that it is delivered *already*, and *at once*. We have not this doctrine, as some others, like the light of the morning, shining more and more; but the Spirit gave it in perfect day. The Church of Christ has got no farther in this article, than they did at the beginning, and I hope never will. Therefore for persons to be pleased with imaginations of some discoveries that are yet to come, looks as if they thought the secret of God was with them, and they had restrained wisdom to themselves. May I never deliver any thing, but what you have heard *from the beginning*. We write no other things to you than what you read and acknowledge, and I trust *shall acknowledge to the end*. 1 Cor. i. 13.

I observed, that the word profession *ἁπολογία* signifies a speaking together. It would be all confusion, for every one to have a psalm, every one a doctrine; so to do reflects on the Scripture as imperfect, and on the Holy Spirit as

deficient in his work. But what God has done shall be for ever; no man can put to it, nor any man take from it. There is nothing, that the Holy Ghost has expressed more of his contempt against, than the humour of those who would be thought the wise, the scribes, the *disputers* of this world, 1 Cor. i. 20. or the *inquirers* οὐκ ἰσχυροὶ, who are always *doting about questions*. 1 Tim. vi. 4.

And because there are some, who value themselves upon an inquisitive searching humour, let me only put you in mind of what the scripture itself has said, against those who seek out many inventions. "The things that thou hast *heard of me* among many witnesses, *the same* commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach *others also*." 2 Tim. ii. 2. We read of some, who creep into houses, and lead captive silly women laden with sins, and led away with divers lusts: ever learning, and *never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*. Now, as *Iannes and Iambres* did resist *Moses*, so do these also resist the truth; men of corrupt minds, and *reprobate concerning the faith*. But they shall proceed no farther, for their *folly* shall be manifest. But thou, says the apostle to Timothy, hast *fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, charity, &c.* Evil men and *seducers* shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived. 2 Tim. iii. 6—14. If we, or an angel from heaven, preach *any other gospel* than that we *have* preached, let him be accursed. As we said before, so

say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel to you, *than you have received*, let him be accursed. Gal. i. 8, 9. A bishop is to hold fast the faithful word *as he has been taught*, that he may be able by *sound doctrine*, both to exhort and convince the gain-sayers. Tit. i. 9. Whoever denies the Son, the same has not the Father. Let that therefore abide in you, *which ye have heard from the beginning*. If that which ye have heard from the beginning, shall remain in you, ye shall *continue in the Son and in the Father*. 1 John ii. 23, 24.

8. If we hold fast our profession, we must run all hazards both in our reputation and interest. The man who is not content to be called a fool or an enthusiast for Christ's sake, has more of fleshly wisdom in him, than the grace of God. All who will live godly in Christ Jesus *shall suffer persecution*. 2 Tim. iii. 12. A timorous cautious temper, that makes us afraid to speak what we think, and to testify what we know, does but prove that men are *lovers of themselves*.

There are riches, not only in the person and doctrine, but in the *reproach of Christ*. Moses thought so, when he had no other choice before him, but either of a palace or a brick-kiln. Heb. xi. 26. And the apostle took pleasure in infirmities, *in reproaches*, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. 2 Cor. xii. 10.

It is a plausible excuse, but it will scarce ever hold, in a day of temptation, that we are to live in peace. Christ tells us, nay; he came

into the world to send *division*; Matt. x. 35. that is, if men will separate you from their company, and speak all manner of evil against you for his sake, let them go on. Commit yourselves to him that judges righteously. I have been pleased with a passage in *Dr. Owen*, and hope I can adopt it in my own case. “ I can freely say, that I know not that man in *England*, who is willing to go farther in forbearance, love, and communion with all that fear God, and hold the foundation, than I am; but this is never to be done by a condescension from the exactness of the least letter of gospel-truth.”

9. Holding this fast, is promoting it to the uttermost. This is what you owe to Christ by way of homage, and to the souls of men by way of pity.

10. Endeavouring to be more established in it. We ought *often* to hear of those truths which we are *always* to use. This is like your daily bread. There is not a prayer that you put up, but it must regard three persons in one glorious nature. Thus, as ye have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built-up in him, and established in the faith, *as ye have been taught*, abounding therein with thanksgiving. Col. ii. 6, 7.

SERMON X.

The principles upon which people waver in the faith. A conceit of our capacity to discover more of God than others. A modern instance of this in our scheme-makers. A fancy that we have found out the great secret. Human inventions as bad in doctrine as in worship. Calvin and Dr. Owen, compared with another author. A supposition that God wants our help to clear up his revelation. A love of praise. An ungodly charity. A wrangling humour. An indifference. An Independence upon divine teaching.

III. THE Apostle has told us with what an unity of conduct, what temper of mind, and stability of soul, we are to hold fast this profession of our faith and hope. It must be done *ἀκλιῶν* without wavering. We are not to waver either about the *faith* itself, that God has delivered to us, or the *profession* in which we deliver it to others. The faith is to be kept pure and uncorrupted; our profession of it open and unconfounded. Each of these, are to be held fast with steadiness and resolution. Watch ye, *stand fast in the faith*, quit yourselves like men, be strong. 1 Cor. xvi. 13. It is in profession as it is in practice; we have but one rule for them both. Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eye-lids look straight before thee; ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established; *turn not to the right nor*

to the left ; remove thy foot from evil. Prov. viii. 25, 26, 27.

You see by this caution, that it is not enough we do not deny the truth. We are to *hold it fast*, without any posture of cowardice ; not like the double-minded man, who is *unstable in all his ways* ; James i. 8. not allowing ourselves in the least, an appearance of a departure from the things we have received and been assured of.

There are several ways of shuffling and wavering, that do not amount to a gross infidelity, (*i. e.* there are *hypocrites* as well as *unbelievers*) but they bring us into the danger of going farther. A man may indulge himself in the humour of a *querist*, so long until he grows an *apostate*. There are *profane and vain babblings* that will increase to more ungodliness. 2 Tim. ii. 16. The principles by which many are defiled, you see in the following collection.

1. A conceit of our own capacities, as if by searching, we could find out the Almighty unto perfection. This boldness makes us venture, where humility would make us tremble, to unravel mysteries, and arraign the things of *faith* at the bar of *reason*.

2. Another root of bitterness is, an opinion that we have found out the *great secret* of knowledge, which other ages have laboured at in vain.

3. There is the vanity to suppose, that God stands in need of our help, to make what he says, more *easy* and evident.

4. There is a love to carnal ease and *worldly reputation*; a delight in the praise of men.

5. There is a false *ungodly charity*; a strange fire that proceeds not from the Lord; a charity that gives up the honour of religion, merely because we will not be at the pains to defend it.

6. There is the pride of a *wrangling humour*; as if the *Church of Christ* was only a stage of battle, and *his name* no more than an engine of reputation.

7 Above all there is an *indifference*, or obduracy of conscience to the great doctrines of godliness, by which they lose their own nourishing quality, and turn all into phlegm and choler.

8. There is an insensibility of the need we are under, to be *taught of God*, enlightened with the Spirit of truth, and trained up in what we have attained to.

These are the things that make us waver, either in the *faith* itself that is revealed to us, or in the *profession* that should hold forth the word of life. You will easily see upon them all, that when religion comes to be our own concern, when it is experimental, practical, and inward, when *the heart is established with grace*, when we receive *the love of the truth* in order to be saved, then are we *rooted and grounded* in the faith, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel.

1. One principle that keeps us wavering, is a conceit of some capacity in ourselves, to make *greater discoveries* in the divine nature.

This is what they, who feared the Lord, have never dared to attempt ; or if they did, they soon came out of it, with shame and sorrow.

How vain is it, to set about any curious searching into the being of God ; to speak of *his* nature with a resemblance to *our own*. We know that clouds and darkness, are round about him. Ps. xcvii. 2. *Job* is accused of pressing too deep with these inquiries ; though he seems to examine no farther, than into the windings of Providence. He said nothing so gross about the perfections of the deity, as all our *scheme-makers* have done. But it is plain, he took a length of imagination that did not become him. I ground this not only on the complaint of his friends, but chiefly on his own confession. God has charged him with *darkening council*, by words without knowledge ; and he charges himself with uttering *things that he knew not* ; things too wonderful for him that he understood not. Job xxxviii. 2. xlii. 3. He comes out of his *free thinking*, with the blushes and pains of a penitent. Behold I am vile, what shall I answer thee ? I will lay my hand upon my mouth. Once have I spoken, but I will not answer, yea twice, but *I will proceed no farther*. He ascribes it to God as a prerogative, I know that thou canst do every thing, and that *no counsel can be withholden from thee*. Job xl. 4, 5, & xlii. 2.

The psalmist wanted to have *clear ideas* of the divine conduct ; and, no doubt of it, during the operation of his fancy, he thought himself wise and humble. But afterwards he calls

it all folly and ignorance, and says he was no better than a beast. He attempted to know it, but it was *too painful* for him. Ps. lxxii. 22. He gets more by one hour in the sanctuary, than by all his speculations in the closet. Ps. lxxii. 16, 17. *Agur* speaks with indignation at himself; surely I am more brutish than any man, and have not the understanding of a man. I neither learned wisdom, nor have *the knowledge of the holy*. Prov. xxx. 2, 3, 4. By the particular invisible things of God that he mentions afterwards, we may suppose what subjects he had been dabbling with. Who has ascended into heaven or descended? Who has gathered the wind in his fists? Who has bound the waters in a garment? Who has established the ends of the earth? *What is his name, and what is his Son's name, if thou canst tell?*

Solomon said he would be wise, but it was far from him: that which is exceeding deep, *who can find it out?* The apostle *Paul*, when he was caught up to the third heaven, heard things there, which he never heard upon earth; but they were both *unlawful* and *impossible*, to be uttered in any other place. 2 Cor. xii. 4. Touching the Almighty we *cannot find him out*. Job xxxvii. 23.

Let us bring this observation to the great *doctrine of baptism*, the profession of faith that we made, when our bodies were washed with pure water. The form of words then used, was of our Lord's appointing. We have no authority, to make them more or less. The sense of them is so easy and unincumbered,

that he thought them sufficient, to tell both *Jews* and *Greeks*, into what faith we are baptized. If there was never another sentence in the bible, that declared who the Christian's God is, every one that hears his confession will understand it, though the whole world of infidels will condemn it.

By this form we learn, that the Lord is *one*, and his *name* one, in all the earth. We are baptized into no more than a single name.

It is also plainly said, that there are *three*; neither more nor fewer, that are known by this name, and adored in this ordinance.

These three, by their personal titles of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, are personally *distinct*. They are not spoken of as attributes, powers, or properties; and yet,

They are *equal* in the revelation made to us, and the surrender made by us.

This is the account, that the great God has been pleased to give us of himself. And all that we have to do, is to examine whether he has done so or no. If he has given us an explication, let us have it; if he has not, let us wave it. He has told us, as much of his nature as he designed we should know; and will, by no means, suffer us to become so *vain in our imaginations* with the bible, as the heathen have been without it.

People that talk of "the divine nature's being *communicated* from one person to another, *in some unknown moment of eternity*," are stretching themselves, beyond the measure of the line. The perfections of God are peculiar

to himself; not one of them being given to any other. There is none *holy* as the Lord, for there is *none beside thee*, neither is there any rock like unto our God. 1 Sam. ii. 2. See now, *says he*, that I, even I, AM, and there is *no God with me*. Deut. xxxii. 39. Is. xl. 18. To whom will ye liken God, and what likeness will ye compare to him! Matt. xix. 17. There is *none good but one*, and that is God: He *only* has immortality. 1 Tim. vi. 16.

It is easy to show, that the old *musty* schemes which are revived in this projecting age, are only, so many high thoughts and carnal imaginations, so many guesses in the dark, at things that we never heard. If this is *wisdom* it is being wise, *above what is written*. The *Arians* tell us, that though the Son, is both above and before the creation, yet there was a time when *he was not*; that he was not *in* the beginning, but *after* the beginning; that the Father produced him by a voluntary act. And to show, how much their foolish heart is darkened, they keep rambling on, and say that the Father and Son together, made the Spirit, though of *his original* the scripture has not said a word; so that their scheme may be called the *book of the generation of the Son and Spirit*. Heathen authors can give us the genealogy of their Gods, but after the glorious gospel of Christ is committed to us, I thought we should never have taken up, the *very names* of derived and originated deities, into our lips: The Gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. Jer. x. 1.

The other scheme, that condemns the *Arian* for talking of any time, when *the Son was not*, yet dares, with the same confidence, to make a partition of the Deity. They are bounding, what the Scripture has called *infinite*. They allow him to be eternal, and yet derived; to have *received* a beginning, and yet always to have *had it*; to have proper deity without independence; divine perfections, and yet not absolute sovereignty; that he has divinity in *some* of its distinctions, and yet not with *all its essentials*; that is, they will pretend to adjust the rights of empire between Father and Son. But where has the most High called them thus, to divide the inheritance of unsearchable glory? May it not be said, *vain man would be wise?*

Though no man can teach the Spirit of the Lord what he shall *do*, yet here is a generation that venture to tell him, what he shall *have*. They will rush into the light wherein he dwells, a light to which none can approach. We know no farther what he is, than as he himself has told us. And shall we presume to tell him the period, bounds, and extent of his nature? And indeed the very language of all these schemes, lets us see that the authors are not employed, in declaring what God has said of himself, but in guessing out a Deity; *making Gods to themselves*, which by their own description are *no Gods*; setting up in their heads, *the likeness of things* in heaven above.

I will give you the words of one among ourselves,* who professes that "he cannot al-

* Dr. Watts.

“ low a proper personality of the Son and Spirit, without destroying the unity of the God-head ;” though by all the generations of the faithful, these things were equally believed and owned. Therefore he draws out a plan only of things that MAY BE, when the whole revelation of the Bible is of no other, than *things that are*. But it is apparent, according to this way of talking, that we are yet to seek for our God. We are got no farther, than starting fancies and *doting about questions* ; as if the truth, in which our souls are to be established and edified, was only a work upon the wheels, and not yet prepared to receive the finishing hand of the maker.

I will give you his own scheme in his own words ; † “ May we not suppose the *Logos*, or Word considered as something in the God-head, analogous to a power or virtue, to be infinite, uncreated, co-essential, and co-eternal with God the Father, as being of his very essence, and in this sense true God? May not this sometimes, be represented in a personal manner, as distinct from the Father? May we not suppose also, that in some *unknown moment of the divine eternity*, God by his sovereign will and power, produced a glorious Spirit in an immediate manner, and in a very near likeness to himself, and called him *his Son*, his only begotten Son? Might not this be that *Logos* of the ancient *Jews* who was called the first-born of God, the eldest archangel, the man after God’s own

† Dr. Watts’, Arian invited to orthodox faith.

“ image, and may not this be the soul of our
“ blessed Saviour?”

“ Supposing farther, this angelical spirit to
“ be assumed, into personal union with the di-
“ vine *Logos*, from the first moment of his ex-
“ istence, may he not be called the Son of God
“ also upon this account? may it not be said,
“ that the true *Godhead* is communicated to the
“ Son of God in this manner, by the free will
“ of the Father.” This supposes as much as
ever the *Arians* wanted, that Christ *might* have
been produced, or that this union of the divine
attribute to him, *might* have been given.

A grosser expression I do not remember
ever to have met with, than what follows:
“ Though the *Godhead* of the *Logos*, or di-
“ vine wisdom, be essential to the nature of
“ God, and eternally independent, yet it
“ *might be communicated*, that is *united to an*
“ *inferior spirit* by the will of the Father.”
That is, God can make an inferior spirit like
himself, and give his glory to another.

He goes on, “ Might not this *Logos*, in the
“ complex character of God and a creature,
“ or the Son of God, inhabited personally by
“ eternal wisdom, in the fulness of time, as-
“ sume human flesh and blood into union with
“ himself.” Had the scripture told us of these
things, there was no need to put them into
the form of *maybe's*. But nothing so vain or
bold is to be found in that book, as that *attrib-
ute inhabits a spirit personally*.

Far be it from my soul, to ask what I know
no humble creature will dare to answer, or

examine what the great God *may be* or *may do*. If these are secret things, they belong to him. Revealed things only belong to us. Believing is acting upon a *report*, and not upon a *supposition*. Solomon wrote that we might know *the certainty* of the words of truth, and be able to give an answer to those that inquire of us. *Foolish and unlearned questions* are always about things out of our reach, and these are what *gender strifes*, as we both read and feel.

This then is one principle of wavering, and will be so, until that God who knows the thoughts of men to be vain, makes *us* know them, to be so too. Under the power of his grace, we shall not exercise ourselves in things *too high for us*. Then our hearts will not be haughty, nor our eyes lofty. They who intrude into things that they have not seen, vainly *puffed up in their fleshly minds*, do not hold the head, Col. ii. 18, 19. We may wish upon these occasions, as *Zophar* did; thou hast said *my doctrine is pure*; but oh that God would speak, and open his lips against thee, and that he would show thee, *the secrets of wisdom*, that they are double to that which is. Job xi. 4, 5. Who shall *declare the generation* of the Son of God, or pretend to dig up the *unsearchable riches* of Christ?

The best way to be of the same mind with one another, is what the apostle directs to, *not to mind high things*, or *be wise in our own conceit*. Let us not like children be tossed to and fro, and carried about *with every wind of doctrine*, by the slight of men, and

cunning craftiness of those who lie in wait to deceive. Eph. iv. 14. May I speak the words, not only of *truth* but of *soberness*. Acts xxvi. 26.

2. Another principle that makes us waver, is a fancy that we have found out the great secret of knowledge; that which so many ages have sought in vain. This is *the snare of the devil*; and therefore the person who is a *novice*, νεοφυτος, newly planted or engrafted, is in danger of being *lifted up with pride*. I Tim. iii. 6. The pretences, upon which people indulge themselves, in the humour of endless inquiries, I may hereafter consider. At present, let me only take notice, that the scripture has barred our way, by cautions, commands, and reproofs in abundance. This the apostle said to every man among them, not to think of himself more highly, than he ought to think, but to *think soberly*, as God has given to every man *the measure of faith*. Rom. xii. 3. If any man thinks he knows any thing, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. This is the *knowledge that puffs up*. We know that all the persecutions in the world have arose, from men's driving in their own inventions; and these are as bad in *doctrine* as they are in *worship*.

There are two great men, whose names will be dear to the Churches, wherever their works are read, of whom we have a different character. One is *Calvin*. His vast reading, his quick judgment, his capacious memory, his lively fancy, and harmonious language, made

him as capable of seeking out many inventions, as any of the age that he lived in; and yet he had no *nostrum*, no opinion peculiar to himself, as he often professes. The writer of his life observes, there was not one article, in which he differed from the reformed Churches. Whether the persons who love to hear and speak *some new thing*, have exceeded him, in the whole furniture of a scholar, a divine, and a Christian, I shall take no pains to inquire, because it takes no time to determine it. He continued in the things that *he had learned from the beginning*, and held fast the faithful word, *as he had been taught*.

The same thing is true of Dr. Owen. Those principles that he received at first, he maintained to the last. And if any will say, it was for want of critical learning, impartial thought, or sufficient capacity, I believe you and I, will think such a man, either *above* confutation, or below it.

Each of these holy persons had all the temptations, that are supplied by wit and vanity; but God withdrew them from their purpose, and *hid pride* from the men. He trained them up for his service, through the discipline of severe convictions. They bowed under the terrors of the Lord, in a heavier way than many do; and therefore were taught by feeling, never to talk *new things*, about the guilt and corruption of human nature, or the person and satisfaction of Jesus Christ. They studied the truth, not to receive glory from men; but what they found in the *word* they

found in their own souls. It was not their business to puzzle and entangle the Churches with a new gospel, but to stand in the good old way. Every reader may behold the steadfastness of their faith. As they received Christ Jesus the Lord, so they walked in him, rooted and built up in the faith, as they had been taught. Col. ii. 5, 6, 7.

The greatest humility becomes us, in speaking of what is our own. When grievous wolves creep in, they spare not the flock, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Acts xx. 29, 30. I scarce ever knew an author who had a *nostrum* in divinity, a contrivance of his own, but he was more impatient to promote that, than the great fundamentals of Christianity. He could argue against the man who denies the truth, with more temper than against one, who is afraid of his scheme. There can be, the meekness of a lamb to the former, but the fury of a bear to the latter, who would rob them of their whelps, which are only lovely, because they are their own. Elishu thought it dangerous that the great men about him should say, we have found out wisdom. Job xxxii. 13.

I fear it is too much, that a certain author has said of his scheme. "If we suppose the
"Messiah or Logos in his pre-existent state,
"as well as after his incarnation, to be a com-
"plex or compounded person; and that di-
"vine Logos, eternal Word, assumed a super-
"angelic or inferior nature, called also Lo-
"gos, into union with himself, before he

“took flesh upon him: this would *reconcile* all the ideas which seem inconsistent, and scatter the darkness that hangs over the ancient writers, and over the scripture itself, if this opinion is not admitted.” To this I cannot forbear to answer, in the words of *Eli-phaz*. Art thou the first man that was born? Or wast thou made before the hills? Hast thou heard the secret of God, or restrainest thou wisdom to thyself? What knowest thou that we know not, what understandest thou that is not with us? Is there any secret thing with thee? Why does thine heart carry thee away, or what do thine eyes wink at? Job xv. 7, 12.

By this account, the *divinity* of Christ is only an attribute: his *person* is a creature; his *human soul* is an angelical spirit. He has no more of God than a *property*, and no more of man than *flesh and blood*. This *Logos*, as we are often told in that book, is the *essential power of the deity*, and has no more than a *figurative personality*.

We are bid to consider “to what a superior height, this doctrine advances the whole person of Christ.” But the little fling that follows, might have been spared. “Let not those who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, be afraid to hear of his various glories.” They who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, delight to hear of his being humbled, and made in all things like to themselves. They think that the human nature, consists of a human soul as well as body.

We are farther told, that “this scheme lays a foundation, for *reconciling the contentions*

“ that have troubled the Church in all ages.
“ And as it would be a mighty happiness, if
“ there was any possibility of uniting, the con-
“ tending parties into one scheme of Trinita-
“ rian doctrine; so the author says, *he knows*
“ *no hypothesis bids so fair for it, as this.*” And
yet,

At the end of his book, he falls off from *this same confident boasting*, and says, that “ he is
“ not so vain as to think, this hypothesis will
“ immediately relieve every difficulty, that at-
“ tends the sacred doctrine of the Trinity.”
Thus he leaves us, as confused and undeter-
mined as he found us. Alas! for those who
trust in a covering, which the very man that
brought it owns to be *too narrow*.

3. Another principle of wavering, is a vain
supposition that God stands in need of our
help, to make what he has said, *more easy or*
evident. I think the words made use of, in the
form of baptism are plain enough. Christ
either designed to set them out, in the light of
one of these schemes, or he did not. If he
did, why has he not given it himself? If he
did not, why are we to have it from others?

All our dispute, is about the plain meaning
of a sentence. I am sure, here is nothing in
the terms of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, to
make us think of one agent and two *powers*,
or of one God and two *creatures*. No mortal
upon the face of the earth would suppose, that
we intended by it, any other than *three per-*
sons, who are distinct, and yet who are equal.

God appointed, when they made him an
altar, it should not be of hewn stone; for

which he gives this reason, that reaches to every thing in revelation; *if thou liftest up thy tool upon it, thou hast polluted my altar.* Exod. xx. 25. But with these tools is the great altar of all, polluted.

4. Sometimes we are tempted, to waver from carnal ease and a love of reputation. How can ye believe, who receive *honour one from another*, and neglect the honour, that comes from God only? John v. 44. Many of the rulers believed on Christ, but because of the Pharisees, they did not confess him, for they *loved the praise of men more than the praise of God.* John xii. 42, 43.

These vile principles, can easily cover themselves with the names of temper, charity, moderation, and forbearance; but those glorious things are not to be confounded, with lukewarmness, self-seeking, laziness, or ignorance. The *fearful* and *unbelieving* go together. Rev. xxi. 8. Such professors as these, Christ is sick of, and therefore threatens to *spue them out of his mouth.* Rev. iii. 17. As there is a *cloak of covetousness*, so there is a *cloak of fear and cowardice*: and you are to be stript before you are tried. Not he who commends himself is approved, but he whom the Lord commends. The Pharisees were they who *justified themselves* before men, but God knew their hearts; for what is highly esteemed among men, is an abomination in the sight of God. Luke xvi. 15.

Many of us, could have been easy in *Zion*, as well as our brethren, and given up the name of *Christ*, to have preserved our own. There

is no pleasure in reproaches, and being separated from the company of men. These are trials that we would have kept out of, if it could have been with a clear conscience. But I believe Christ never designed that a *Christian preacher* should be an *Arian favourite*. The man whom the enemy admires, is some way treacherous. There is no communion between *Christ and Belial*; nor between him that *believes* and an *infidel*. 2 Cor. vi. 16.

5. There is a false ungodly charity, that gives up the honour of religion, merely because it will not be at the pains to defend it. You are never to make peace with men, at the expense of any truth that is revealed to you, by the great God; because that is offering up *his* glory in sacrifice to *your own*. Let us aim at the *praise*, that is not of men, but of *God*. And therefore, let no man deceive you with vain words. Rom. ii. 29.

Do not dismember the Christian religion, but take it all together. Charity was never designed to be the tool of unbelief. See how the Spirit has connected, both our principles and duties. Follow *peace* with all men, and *holiness*, without which, no man shall see the Lord. Heb. xii. 13. Seek after the things that make for *peace*, and those wherein one may *edify* another. Rom. xiv. 19.

We are to please all men, in all things *to their edification*. But there is a seeking to please men, which is inconsistent with our *service to Christ*. Whether it is possible, or indeed desirable to find out a scheme, that will reconcile

the contending parties, *Arians, Sabellians, Athanasians,* and *Socinians,* is what I shall consider in another sermon.

6. There is the pride of a wrangling-humour, which I take to be very dangerous, because it is usually carried on, without any reverence or godly fear. By some books that are lately printed, we should be led to think *the New Testament doctrine of the Trinity,* to be the most impertinent and volatile speculation, that ever the mind of man could be diverted with. They will argue with a thousand times more gravity, about the motion of the earth or the sun, the cause of the tide, the world in the moon, and several other subjects, that make a man neither wiser nor better.

In order to set out the article of one God in three persons, to the ridicule of the world, they dress it up, in barbarous questions, about conscious minds, specific and numerical identity; and then having turned a *windmill* into a *giant,* they begin the battle. Whereas after all the rumbling and moulding, they are able to give the doctrine, the practical view we must have of it is this:

Is Christ to be *worshipped,* as the most high God or no? If not, what is the length of our duty to him? How far must it go, and where shall it stop? Has the scripture encouraged me, to bow down before any more gods than one? And yet is it not plain that upon *Christ,* I am called to rest, and depend, that I may be saved?

Is it an indifference, whether I adore the

Holy Spirit as an attribute of the Father, or a distinct person from him? Is it the same thing whether I own him as a super-angelic Spirit, or as the most high God? If he is more than the former, I must be guilty of *irreligion*, if he is less than the latter, I must be guilty of *idolatry*.

7. Above all, there is an *indifference* or *chillness* of conscience, to the great doctrines of godliness. What signifies it to a man who lives in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries, whether Christ is a God or a creature? He owns no God but *his belly*. What is the Deity or derivation of the Spirit, to one who despises all his influence, from the first conviction of sin, quite up to faith in dying, and perfection in heaven? When men cast off fear and restrain prayer before God, then any new scheme may serve as a bauble for the conscience, to keep it at *play*, because they dare not keep it at *work*.

8. We begin to waver, when we grow insensible of our necessity to be taught of God, and enlightened with the Spirit of truth. Our best way to keep *out of* danger, is still to believe that we may be *in it*. The prudent foresees the evil and hides himself, but the fool rages, and is confident. It is the office of the Spirit, to lead into all truth; and if we think there can be any advances this way, without him, he may leave us to the vanity of our own experiment.

With such principles as these, we do either *waver* in the faith, or *shuffle* in a profession.

SERMON XI.

People waver from unsteadiness and ignorance, pride and vanity, an inclination to error, fear and cowardice. The pretensions answered, of our living in a polite age, that will allow nothing mysterious. But it is an age in which, the Protestant religion and practical holiness are sinking. Our obligations to grow in the knowledge of Christ. This does not suppose new schemes, but a steadiness in the old ones, for our faith is bounded. Clearer ideas. The unity of the God head. The reconciling of all parties. Antiquity pleaded in vain.

I HAVE shown you, what those principles are, that lead men to waver in the great articles of Christianity which we profess in baptism. And by the account you have had, it is easy to see that there may be a *wavering*,

1. From *unsteadiness* and ignorance. They who ought to be teachers of others, have need to be taught again *the first principles* of the oracles of God. Heb. v. 12. God complains, my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Because thou hast *rejected knowledge*, the Lord has rejected thee, that thou shalt not be a priest to him. Hos. iv. 6. It is a good thing, that the heart is established with grace, and not with meats, Heb. xiii. 9. *i. e.* with doctrines of the gospel, which are called *the grace of God* bringing salvation, Tit. ii. 11. and not in those opinions about meats or

drinks, which, whether they are right or wrong, have not profited them who were occupied therein.

What is it to the good of my soul, to the pardon of my sins, the peace of my conscience, or the compass of my duty, whether it be lawful to eat blood? Not but that every one ought to be fully persuaded in his own mind; and happy is he, who condemns not himself in the thing, that he allows. Rom. xiv. 22. There should be no strain upon conscience; as the apostle says, I know and am persuaded, that there is nothing unclean of itself, but to him who esteems any thing to be unclean, *to him it is unclean.* Rom. xiv. 14. But whether my opinion be right or wrong in this matter, it neither promotes holiness, nor hinders it. As the error is of no great danger, so the truth is of no great value. It is not one of those things in which I am either *accepted of God*, or approved of men.

But what is this, to the deity of *the Son* and Spirit, which are *doctrines* that my soul is to be *nourished up* in? The godhead of the Son makes him the object of my reverence, the strong hold of my faith, the hope that is set before me. From his divinity, and from nothing else, do I argue the satisfaction he has made, the intercession that he now pursues, and indeed his capacity of saving to the uttermost. It is because *he continues for ever*, that he has an unchangeable priesthood. Heb. vii. 24. It is from this, that he brings in *an everlasting righteousness*, and becomes head over

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all things unto the Church, because he has the *fulness of him who fills all in all.* Eph. i. ult.

I am therefore baptized in the name of *the Holy Ghost*, that I may depend upon him, as the God who restores my soul; the father of lights, the fountain of consolation; *he of whom I am born*, and by whom I am secured and prepared for eternal life.

What signifies all the orthodoxy in the world, to a man who wavers in the foundation? And therefore, they who are more zealous, in commanding to *abstain from meats*, than they are for the grand inherent of baptism, the truth that enters into the soul of it, only *make a God of their belly*; as if what is to be offered *there*, was a thing of more importance, than the real divinity and distinct personality of those three, to whom we are equally devoted. What signifies it to make a noise about the blood of beasts and fowls, whilst the blood of the covenant is a common thing? Heb. x. 29. But we have not *so learned Christ*, if so be we have heard him, and been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus. Eph. iv. 20, 21. Besides this, there is a wavering that arises.

2. From *pride* and vanity. Men love to have something of *their own*. But where is the wise, where is the scribe, where is the *disputer of this world*? Has not God made foolish the *wisdom of this world*? 1 Cor. i. 20. There is no reputation got, by standing in the good old way. And therefore they fall a *doting about questions*, and striving about words, to no profit. 1 Tim. vi. 3. But shall we *speak*

wickedly for God, and talk deceitfully for him? Job xiii. 7, 8. Is it good that he should search us out, or as one man mocks another, do we so mock him?

Has Christ appointed a form of words 1700 years ago, by which he designed his people should *own*, and all the world should *hear*, that there are three persons in one nature, and must they have a new sense put upon them in our age? Are we desirous of *Gods whom our fathers knew not*, derived Gods, figurative persons? Deut. xxxii. 17. Are we for more, than one Lord, one faith, and one baptism?

That all who went before us were *fallible men*, is true; and I do not see, but they who come after, may take the liberty to throw *us* into the number. We are not better than our fathers. But does that prove, they were *actually deceived*, in the greatest article of their faith, and the perpetual dependence of their souls? Did they live in a mist, and die in a dream? Are *ancient land-marks* to be removed, which they of old time have set? Had the Spirit who leads into all truth, no favour towards them? Is it but *in our days*, that he has begun to do his office?

I may take the liberty to repeat what has been formerly published. It is a passage that I read with an awe, a great many years ago, and I hope it has been like ballast to my soul. It is calculated for them, who become vain in their imaginations, by professing themselves to be wise. I found it among the directions that *Dr. Owen* gives to those, who are engaged

against *Arians*, *Socinians*, or any other enemies to the deity of the Son and Spirit. “Above all things,” says he, “take heed of the snare of Satan in affecting eminency by way of singularity. We should strive to excel in knowledge and light, as well as holiness and obedience. To do this in the road, is difficult. *Ahimaaz* had not outrun *Cushi*, but that he took a by-path. Many finding it impossible to emerge into any consideration, by walking in the beaten path of truth, and yet not being able to conquer the itch of being counted *τινες μεγάλοι*, turn aside into by-ways; and turn the eyes of all men to them, by scrambling over hedge and ditch, where the sober traveller is not at all regarded.” He takes notice, “that the doctrine of the reformed Churches, was raised some time ago, to a great height, as to the evidence given for it, and great perspicuity in the manner of making it known, which some that came after could not imitate, and therefore took new ways of their own contriving.” Again, there may be a wavering,

3. From an inclination to the adverse party. *Inviting* them over, or striving to bring them in, by any other methods than a plain manifestation of the truth, will never do. As *Dr. Owen* observes, “these *reconcilers* seldom fail to be taken *captives*, and leave the principles with which they first set out; until, by degrees, instead of winning others, they lose themselves.” There is also a wavering,

4. From *fear* and cowardice. The fear of man brings a snare. Prov. xxix. 25. On this account, some people will think it charity, not to *turn a sinner from the error of his way*, James v. *ult.* but let him go on with it. These *prudent men* will keep silence, in an evil day; and if they hold fast the faith, they hold it in unrighteousness; they do not hold forth the profession of it, before men. They have a love for the truth, but a greater love to themselves, and quit *the reproach of Christ*, that they may have the treasures of *Egypt*. Heb. xi. 26.

In our day, we have had several arguments thrown into the world, to unsettle the minds of men, from the foundation that God has laid, and upon which they themselves, pretended to build. I can scarce suppose, but you must have read them or heard them, if you converse either with books or men. To answer them, at large, is such a prostitution of the pulpit as a minister of the gospel comes into, with pain. Were it not for your establishment, you should never hear from me, such heaps of ignorance and deceit. But we are to take the foxes, yea, even *the little foxes*, that spoil the vines; for our vines have tender grapes. Cant. ii. 16.

1. It is pleaded, "that we live in a polite age, which professes to receive nothing; that is called mysterious." This is speaking out for every *high thing*, that exalts itself, against the knowledge of God.

2. It is also said "that we are to grow in the knowledge of God our Father, and Christ our Saviour."

3. Here is a pretence of giving us “*clearer ideas* of the doctrine” than former times were blessed with.

4. It is urged “that we have no other way of securing the unity of the Godhead than either by making the second and third person *inferior*, or making them figurative.

5. This is proposed as “a means of reconciliation among the contending parties.”

6. Every one of these new schemes, lays a claim to the great names of those, who either lived in the primitive times, or have been men of note since the reformation.

7. Some people would endeavour, to give us a shock in our faith, with *the piety and learning* of the men, who bring in divers and strange doctrines; and determine to make every defence of the truth in which we are baptized, to be an *ill usage* of them that oppose it.

I should hope indeed, that the naming of these objections, which are so weak and trifling, would be enough to confute them. Exposing them to light, is exposing them to shame. But as they are the best the cause can afford and the party can bring, so we are to take them as we find them. They must be *children* indeed, that are tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, every little puff of vanity, by such reasons as these. But it is the will of God, that we put to silence the *ignorance of foolish men*.

1. Can any thing be more confident and airy, than to talk of these *polite days* in which we live? Could we ever think, that persons ac-

quainted with the holiness and learning of former times, and who have prepared themselves to the search of *their fathers*, should suffer such words to go out of their mouths? One among us rejoices that "he lives in a day" when men are returned to the scriptures." And another says, that "in this enlightened age of search and inquiry, men will not be satisfied, to hear us make use of inexplicable and mysterious terms, and tell them that the sense in them is never to be known: they will not think that doctrine, can be of so much importance to us, which must be wrapt up in perpetual darkness, and can never be understood." But can any one think, the riches of Christ are the worse for being *unsearchable*, or the joys of heaven for being *unspeakable*! To this I answer,

(1.) As to the greater attainments in *learning* that are now pretended, I am of the opinion of those, whose vast compass of reading makes them more able to defend it, that we are far below the men, whose praise has so long been in all the Churches of Christ. *Calvin, Usher, Jewel, Cartwright, Goodwin, and Owen*, are not much exceeded, as far as I can find. The lights that the Holy Spirit kindled up at our reformation, and whom he employed, either to begin or defend it, have made this land to be the valley of vision for above 200 years. The volumes they writ, the care and strength with which they argued, and above all, the religion that animated both their books and their lives, has given them an everlasting re-

membrance. These were *elders* that served the Lord, and had *seen all the works that the Lord had done for Israel*; but when that generation were gathered to their fathers, *another generation* rose after them which knew not the Lord, nor the works that he had done for *Israel*. Judges ii. 10. But

(2.) If this age, will not allow any thing that is *mysterious*, we cannot help it. We say, without controversy, *great is the mystery of godliness*. To some it is given to know *the mysteries of the kingdom*, and to others it is not given. Matt. xiii. 11. We preach *the revelation of the mystery* that was kept secret since the world began. Rom. xvi. 25. We speak *the wisdom of God in a mystery*, even the hidden wisdom that God ordained, before the world unto our glory. 1 Cor. ii. 7. We are to make all men see, what is *the fellowship of the mystery*, that from the beginning of the world, has been hid in God. Eph. iii. 9. Pray for us, that utterance may be given to us, that we may open our mouths boldly, to make known *the mystery of the gospel*. You are to acknowledge *the mystery of God*, and of the Father, and of Christ. Col. ii. 2. Deacons are to hold *the mystery of faith* in a pure conscience. 1 Tim. iii. 9. Let a man so account of us, as ministers of Christ and stewards of *the mysteries of God*. 1 Cor. iv. 1. We desire to cry out, as the apostle does, O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! Rom. xi. 33.

The article of the Trinity is not the only thing that we must believe, and yet cannot explain. If the objection is of any value here, we may carry it quite through the gospel. I believe the resurrection of the dead, Job xix. 26. that *in my flesh* I shall see God, and yet that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom. 1 Cor. xv. 50. But when mortality is to be swallowed up of life, what there will be of this body to make it my own, and what those changes are, by which it becomes glorious and spiritual, are things of that nature that I shall never know until I have them. And therefore, if some man does say, *how are the dead raised up?* And *with what body* do they rise? I must answer him as the apostle does, *thou fool*, that which thou sowest, is not quickened except it die.

3 This polite age, that is supposed to outdo all that went before it, has plainly betrayed and weakened *the protestant religion*. The glory is departed from our land, both in worship and doctrine. That simplicity of devotion, in which the cause was opened, is over-run with superstition, formality, and the commandments of men. And the truth, as it is in Jesus, which our fathers maintained with the sweat of their brows, and sealed with the blood of their hearts, this is *changed into a lie*.

The great pillar and ground of truth, that they set up against the *man of sin*, was *justification* by the merits of Christ. They who bring in any other righteousness than this, are going back into *popery*. If we build again the

things that we have destroyed, we make ourselves transgressors. As many as seek to be *justified by the law*, are fallen from grace. And so, the necessity of almighty grace, to change our natures, the witness of the Spirit to revive our souls, the stability of the covenant, the perseverance of the saints, were the *glories* that dwelt in our land; and yet these are gone into contempt and darkness. There is a cry of all sorts against them.

In our fathers it was *fanaticism*, in us it is *enthusiasm*. These are the weeds, that sprung up since our last liberty. And whether they, who have all gone aside, from what we were taught about the justification of a sinner, the renewal of his nature, and the acceptance of his person; whether they who have destroyed, *the whole peculiarity* that we have as *protestants*, are to give us a new foundation, on which we are to build as *Christians*, I must leave to the end of all things.

(4.) That in this age, there is a *decay of religion* in families, a want of integrity in conversation, a departure from the simplicity which kept our fathers unspotted from the world, is not to be denied. Whether greater light is to be struck out of prayerless houses, and better notions can be expected from worse people; whether they who take liberties, at which their parents would have trembled, are to be the instructors of the world, will soon be determined. If throwing away their time, at home in cards and dice, and giving up that abroad to plays and taverns, are means of critical learning, we shall have it.

But among these men who *seem to be somewhat*, what I would now observe, is their notorious *hypocrisy*, trampling on every principle which they have once maintained, as if they were not ashamed to declare that *gain is godliness*. 1 Tim. vi. 5. The doctrine of the Trinity they have refused to own. Subscribing to it, they have loaded with as hard names, as are owing to the greatest wickedness. It has been made rebellious, against the authority of Christ, and the sufficiency of the scriptures. It is called an inquisition, a breach of charity, a yoke of bondage.

And yet how easily, has *the tail of the dragon*, Rev. xii. 4. drawn down these stars of heaven to the earth, and made them do the very action they abhorred; own the very principle they denied; build up again the things they have destroyed, upon no other motive than preferment, the *gross wages of unrighteousness!* Woe unto them, for they have gone in the way of *Cain*, and ran greedily after the error of *Balaam for reward*. Jude II. As if in the most literal sense of the word, they would carry *a lie in their right hand*. This is a politeness, which would have kept our fathers out of jail; but they chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. They had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea moreover of bonds and imprisonments.

There was no need for them, to quit the pompous advantages, that they who despise

them are stretching to, if they could have acted with such a mastery over conscience: but destruction from God was a terror to them. And whatever indifference they are treated with, may my soul be found at last, among the generations of the faithful, and have no portion in either world with *hypocrites* and *unbelievers*.

2. Another argument, is taken from our obligations to *grow in the knowledge of Jesus Christ*. That this is what we are bound to, cannot be denied; but that it ever should be pleaded, as a reason for our *wavering* in the faith, is matter of trouble and wonder. You shall have the objection, in the very words of the man that made it, "Since the scripture bids us grow in the knowledge of God our Father, and of Christ our Saviour, this age will not count it a profane thing, to attempt to turn aside the vail of ignorance; and endeavour at least in some measure to know God, and understand what they are required to believe concerning him." I answer,

(1.) Growing in the knowledge of Christ, requires no new *schemes*, any more than growing in grace implies new *principles*. It is supposed that we do know him, in his nature and his person. We are not waiting for another Jesus distinct from what we have *received*; or another Spirit besides what we have *accepted*. The apostle *John*, who preached up love and charity, made conscience to declare nothing, but what they had heard *from the beginning*. 1 John i. 1. But if we are to be unsettled with

new schemes, contrary to the doctrine, that *we have learned*, it is not growing in knowledge, but in ignorance. Therefore, be not carried about with *divers* and *strange* doctrines, for *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever.* Heb. xiii. 7, 8.

(2.) The Scripture has put a great honour upon steadiness in the faith, which therefore cannot be inconsistent with our growth in knowledge. It shows us, that we are not to see things in another light, but know them to a better purpose; to have the *fellowship* of those doctrines, and feel their power in our own souls. *Timothy* is directed to hold faith and a good conscience, which some having put away concerning *faith*, have made *shipwreck*. 1 Tim. i. 19. The apostle tells him, that in the latter times, some shall *depart from the faith*, giving heed to seducing spirits; 1 Tim. iv. 1. and yet, there never was any of these who did not pretend to a growth in knowledge. But he is charged, keep *that which is committed to thy trust*, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and the oppositions or wranglings of a science, a knowledge, falsely so called, which some professing, have *erred concerning the faith*.

Nay, he calls the unfeigned faith that dwelt in him, the very same that had dwelt in his grandmother *Lois*, and his mother *Eunice*. 2 Tim i. 5. We have been insulted, for adhering to the doctrine of a catechism, that was learned in our infancy. Indeed had this been one of our own making, we ought to put it

away among other childish things. But our parents had these principles of the oracles of God as *Timothy's* grandmother and mother had theirs. They knew of whom they had learned them.

Again, he is ordered to charge some, that they teach *no other doctrine*, nor give heed to fables, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying that is in the faith. And he tells him, that some have *swerved from the faith*, and turned aside to vain jangling, understanding not what they say, nor whereof they affirm. So, in another place it is said, that they who *consent not to wholesome words* are proud, knowing nothing; they give occasion to strifes, railings, and evil surmisings. And, as if he could not be too abundant upon this head, he bids him commit the things, that *he had heard of him* among many witnesses, to *faithful men*, who shall be able to teach others also.

Some indeed tell us, with a heaviness of thought, as well as anger, that "the stability
" I am pressing you to, will do very well for
" those, who do not give themselves the trouble of much thinking;" but it is an ill sign upon any, that they are *ever learning*, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. This is waxing *wanton* against Christ, and brings damnation, because they have *cast off their first faith*. *Timothy* is ordered to continue in the things that he had heard, and been assured of. I Tim. v. 11, 12.

Nor does he write in another way, to *Titus*, whom he calls his own son after *the common faith*. Tit. i. 4. He would have a bishop hold fast the faithful word, *as he had been taught*. Tit. i. 9. And thus writes another apostle; for they had not their several schemes, but one and the self-same spirit guided them; if that abide in you *which ye have heard from the beginning*, ye shall continue in the Father and the Son. 1 John ii. 24. The anointing teaches you all things, and even *as it has taught you*, ye shall abide in him, and not be ashamed before him, at his coming. From these plain declarations, I conclude, that there is a *form of sound words*, a proportion or *analogy of faith*, by which we are to judge of every doctrine, whether it be of God. I marvel, that several are so soon removed, from him that called them, to another Gospel. There are some that would trouble you, and pervert the gospel of Christ; but though we or an angel from heaven preach *any other gospel, than that we have preached*, let him be accursed.

(3.) At this rate, we shall never have our faith bounded, but left uncertain to the end of the world. If authors take a liberty of varying from themselves, believers will be like a weather-cock, blown about by every whiff, that rises in a projecting fancy. I could never have thought, that a certain minister,* should deny *the proper personality of the Son and Spirit*, who but five years before, has given us

* Dr. Watts

this as the supreme degree of blessedness, that *there are THREE GLORIOUS PERSONS in the trinity*; the title of the sermon is *blessed Saints, blessed Saviour, and blessed Trinity*. He might as well make them all figurative, as the last of them.

In that discourse, he speaks of “their ineffable union and communion in one God-head. That *they* are eternally one God, and therefore eternally blessed. He tells us, *each sacred PERSON* possesses an unknown pleasure.” And adds these words, “besides the general glories of the divine nature, we may suppose that a full and comprehensive knowledge of the sameness, the difference, the special properties, and the mutual relations of **THE THREE DIVINE PERSONS** (which he allows to be utterly incomprehensible to mortals, and perhaps far above all created minds;) this is *the incommunicable entertainment of THE HOLY TRINITY.*”

He then owns, that “in reference to this mystery, God may be said to dwell in *thick darkness* or light inaccessible. We are lost in this glorious and divine abyss, and overcome with dazzling confusion. But **THE EVER BLESSED THREE** behold their *unities* and *distinctions* in the clearest light.” At that time it was no objection, that the doctrine is *wrapt up in darkness*. Nay,

He supposes “the Blessedness of the *sacred THREE* to consist of mutual love, an eternal approach to *each other* with infinite complacency, an eternal embrace of *each other*,

“with arms of inimitable love and with sensations of unmeasurable joy.” On the propriety of all this rapture, I shall pass no judgment. But if the Son and Spirit have only a *figurative personality*, I am sure these are great swelling words of vanity, all noise and no meaning.

He goes on to say, that “the *blessed* THREE “have an unknown communion in the God-“head, and an unspeakable nearness to *one* “*another’s* PERSONS, inconceivable in being “and in dwelling in *each other*.” And there he acknowledges, that “in vain we run through “all the names and powers of nature and art, “to seek the *resemblance* of the blessed “THREE.” And that our faith may be either *said or sung*, (after his usual manner) he closes with a little hymn.

But oh what words, or thoughts, can trace
The blessed *Three in one* !
Here rest my spirit, and confess,
The *Infinite unknown*.

Why his spirit did not rest there, after such melodious advice I cannot tell. Nay, he goes farther than any that I have met with, “in sup-“posing *some distinctions* in the divine being “of *eternal necessity*, in order to complete the “blessedness of the Godhead;” and concludes upon the whole, that “the difference, which “we call *personal distinctions*, in the nature of “God, are as *absolutely necessary* to his blessedness, as his *being* or any of his perfections.” That after all these flights and bold assertions, the personality of the sacred THREE

should in less than two years be sunk into a *mere figure*, an eastern form of speech, (that is into nothing) is unaccountable.

3. There are none who draw you off from the common faith, but they pretend to *clearer ideas* of the doctrine. To which I answer, that,

(1.) Distinguishing the Trinity into one person and two powers *cognoscitive* and *volitive*, is only a rumble of words without knowledge. If any one is enlightened by this sort of talk, I own it is more than I am. Nor do I wonder, that the tattling advocates of the author, and his scheme tell us, that very few understand it. If so, there is no great *clearness* in those *ideas*; it is far from being so plain, that way-faring men, though fools, shall not err therein.

(2.) These terms are *new* in the world and in the Churches. We have not proved them. The truth has been believed, defended, relished, and adored without them. Therefore, if I should begin to talk about the Trinity in this language, I shall be a barbarian to all my bearers, and they to me. We desire to use *great plainness of speech*.

4. I need only name another argument, and answer it by denying the fact; that "without supposing a figurative personality in the Son and Spirit, we cannot maintain the unity of the Godhead." All the heresies in the world, have set out with a zeal upon this head. The *Sabellians* thought there was no other way to assert only one God, than by making Father, Son, and Spirit, to be three names of the same person. *Arius* saw, they were too

distinct for such a notion, and therefore his scheme for the divine unity, was placing the Godhead only in the Father, and making the Son and Spirit to be subordinate beings. But all these enemies must own, that they are contending for what is never denied; for there are none whom they call *Trinitarians* in a way of reproach, that are not *Unitarians* as much as themselves.

5. It is pleaded that "a scheme may be found out, for the reconciling of all contentious parties." And one author among us, thinks he has got a sight of it. He shows the *Arians* and *Semi-arians*, that in his notion there is the same exaltation of the Son as a super-angelic Spirit which they contend for. He tells the *Socinians*, that there is such an union of the divine attributes to him, as makes him the object of worship. And yet ventures to assure the *Athanasians*, that here is a proper deity given him; though he knows, and so do all the world, that these last contend, for three equal proper persons in one undivided nature. But,

(1.) The event proves they are not united. We have only new strifes with every new scheme; full of backbitings, whisperings, swellings, and tumults.

(2.) I do not know that such an union is desirable. There must be heresies that they who are approved, may be made *manifest* among you. There is no communion between truth and error, light and darkness, *Christ* and *Belial*, one that *believes*, and an *infidel*. The

Scripture has directed us to no such agreements. If any man consent not to *wholesome words*, from such withdraw thyself; 1 Tim. vi. 3, 5. from such turn away. 2 Tim. iii. 5. He that knows God, hears us; he that is not of God hears not us; hereby know we the spirit of *truth* and the spirit of *error*. 1 John iv. 6.

6. As to the pretence, that this is a doctrine of antiquity, and that some great men of late are gone into it, I am amazed that it is talked of; because it is arraigning the sincerity or capacity of those learned persons, who have so lately proved the contrary. An author, among ourselves, has quoted Dr. Goodwin (whom he calls a learned inquirer) as in his scheme. I read him with all the care I could use, and do aver that I cannot find one passage that looks like it, but above a hundred quite the other way. I may therefore be excused from believing what he says of those that I have not read, when he makes a sham-boast of those that I have. Did any of these great ministers ever deny the personality of the Son and Spirit? If they stretch beyond their line; in guessing at the *manner* how the Father, Son and Spirit are *one*, and how they are *three*, let what they spoke without light, be covered with darkness. But they never imagined that any of *their successors* would bring them in either as shuffling or trifling in the first article of our religion.

One passage of Dr. Owen I will now take leave to give you, from his second volume upon the *Hebrews*, p. 40. He had proved, that

by the eternal word of God we are to understand a *person* ; and then brings in a quotation from some of the *Socinian* writers, who would have the scriptures that he mentions, taken in a figurative sense, as so many *prosopopæias*, upon which the Doctor has this remark, “ that
 “ the pretence of a *prosopopæia*, or a fiction
 “ of person, is of great use to the Anti-trinita-
 “ rians. By this one engine they presume to
 “ despoil the *Holy Ghost* of his deity and *per-*
 “ *sonality*. Whatever is spoke of him in Scrip-
 “ ture they say is by a *prosopopæia* ; those
 “ things being assigned to a quality or acci-
 “ dent, which really belong to a person only ;”
 but, says the learned author, “ as to what con-
 “ cerns the Holy Spirit, I have elsewhere taken
 “ this engine out of their hands, and cast it
 “ to the ground, so that none of them alive
 “ will erect it again :” Little did he imagine,
 that after this triumph over the *Socinians* one
 of *his own successors* should do it for them.

7. As to their endeavour, to unsettle us from the piety, learning, and humility of those, that are spawning out their new schemes, it is not worth an answer. If comparisons upon this head were proper, they are not impossible. There is so much vanity in the pretence, such a contempt of those whose memories will be ever blessed, and so false a turn given to the course of thinking, that we shall leave the argument to take the fate of a sudden vapour ; to appear for a while, and then vanish away.

I have shown you what *the faith* is, that you professed at baptism, and the necessity of hold-

ing it fast ; let me only give you two directions about it.

1. That Christ, whose deity you plead, is able to carry you through all the *dangers* of this cause, and into all the *glory* of it. He is faithful who has promised. It is he, who keeps you from falling, and will present you before his glory, with exceeding joy. The trial of your faith, which is much more precious than that of gold that perishes, will be found into praise and glory at his appearing.

2. Depend on the assistance of that person in the divine nature, by whom you were first enlightened, and are to be established. We have not received the Spirit of this world, but the Spirit which is of God, that we may know the things that are freely given to us of God. Thus stand fast in the faith, that we lose not the things we have wrought ; but in the day of Christ Jesus may rejoice, that we have not preached in vain, nor run in vain.

FINIS.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The Copy from which this edition is printed was very inaccurate. Care has however been taken, that our corrections should not affect, in the least degree, the Author's peculiar style or sentiments.

NOTE, referred to in page 77.

IN order to observe profitably the Christian Sacrament of Baptism, it is necessary to observe it *with the Spirit and the understanding also*. "Without faith," whatever may be our opinions, "it is impossible to please him," who will have all men to worship him *in Spirit and in truth*. How far piety may be consistent with misunderstanding, it is not our province to decide; but the scriptures assure us, that ignorant devotion has no fellowship with the Father of light. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not the truth. 1 John i. 6. If there was no danger, that any person should ever imagine, that he was truly pious, and did enjoy communion with God, while yet he practised an ignorant devotion, there would have been no need of this caution. We are therefore bound to bring to the test of the law and the testimony, every part of our religious exercises.

It is impossible that in Baptism we *walk in the light as he is in the light, and have fellowship one with another*, unless we understand both its peculiar nature and design. Compliance with the letter of a sacred institution, does not profit, if we be ignorant of its spirit. But this is, unquestionably, in a great measure, the case with the Anabaptists. They do not correctly understand the doctrine of Baptism as a *Sacrament of the New Testament*, however well meaning they may be in their practice. Mr. Bradbury discovers, indeed, the benevolence of his own disposition, in his conciliatory remarks upon the controversy about the *mode* and the *subjects* of this divine ordinance: And yet we must not conceal the fact, that the Anabaptist Churches completely misunderstand its *peculiar nature and design*. Its general character, and those objects which it answers, in common with every other ordinance of the Sanctuary, they appear to understand. But every divine institution has, besides its general character, a specific end to answer;

and the principle which characterizes Baptism, and renders it distinct from every other part of religious worship, cannot be understood, by those who consider as essential to it, that infants be excluded, and that a quantity of water, sufficient to cover the whole body at once, be employed in its administration.

It is of no importance that they are able to talk and to write *about* baptism, unless what is said or written be pertinent. That it is an ordinance of Christ, that it is of permanent obligation on the Church of God, that it is highly instructive, and that it is one of the means appointed to prepare us for the heavenly kingdom, is certainly true: but these characters equally belong to all the institutions of the Gospel. We may accordingly descant freely upon this subject, without having any knowledge whatever of its peculiar nature and design. Much truth may be uttered, in an argumentative style, without ever touching the point in dispute. In order to think correctly, however, it is necessary to consider Baptism as *one of the Sacraments*, and as *specifically distinct*, not only in the visible act, but in the end and design, from the other sacrament. This view of the subject, no Anabaptist can consistently take.

A Sacrament differs from every other ordinance of Christian worship, in this, and in this only, that it is a sensible sign of certain spiritual benefits, applied as a seal of God's covenant with the church, and as a mark of distinction from the world. Whoever does not know this principle, therefore, does not understand the subject; and the ignorant observance, even of a divine institution, is not worshipping the Father in Spirit and in truth. It is by this criterion we try every ordinance to ascertain whether it be a sacrament or not; and it is upon this principle that the Protestant Church rejects the five bastard Sacraments of Rome. It is upon this principle that we acknowledge there are two Sacraments of the New Testament, and only two, Baptism and the Lord's Supper. This great Protestant principle is a death-blow to the whole Anabaptist scheme.

A Sacrament, then, is *the application of a sensible sign of Spiritual benefits as a seal of our covenant with God*; and is accordingly the outward mark of our separation from the world. In it, God calls us, by his name put

upon us, and we take the oath of allegiance to him. In violation of this principle, the Church of Rome made *Ordination, Marriage, Confirmation, Penance, and Extreme Unction, Sacraments*. And the reformed Churches rejected these, solely, upon the principle, that in none of them, is there an application of a sensible sign of spiritual benefits divinely appointed to seal our Covenant with God. If this principle is rejected, as it certainly is, in the writings of the Anabaptists, these five spurious Sacraments may be again restored. There is none of them destitute of all that Anabaptists require in the case of Baptism. Precept or example is all that they demand. When we offer them *arguments*, every man or woman among them exclaims, give us *precept or example*, without arguments. For the Ordination of Ministers, there are precepts and example in abundance; but is it therefore a Sacrament? For Marriage there are precepts and examples in abundance; and is marriage a Sacrament? For the laying on of hands in order to confer the miraculous gifts of the Holy Ghost, there are precepts and examples; is confirmation therefore a permanent Christian ordinance, or a Sacrament of the Church? For Confession of Sin, and expressions of repentance, the New Testament furnishes numerous commands and examples; and shall we restore Penance to the Class of Sacraments? Even for anointing the sick with oil, there is positive precept, James v. 14. and approved examples, Mark vi. 13. And is extreme Unction therefore to be practised as a Sacrament of the New Testament? The truth is, if the Rules of Argumentation adopted by the Anabaptist writers are to be admitted, we must, for the sake of consistency, so far return to the Church of Rome, as to adopt her five once discarded Sacraments.

But we must not suffer ourselves to be thus deceived. We must employ the understanding, with which God hath endowed us, in proving all things, that we may hold fast that which is good. We must employ arguments, and be able to render a reason of our Christian hope. We must learn to discriminate, and have our senses exercised to discern both good and evil. Let us then distinguish temporary directions, from permanent institutions; and all other permanent institutions from the Sacra-

ments of the New Testament. This cannot be done without reasoning. It cannot be done without examining the principles, upon which precepts and examples proceed. Unless the first principles be laid correctly, we cannot go on unto perfection. Heb. vi. 1.

By our definition of a Sacrament, we distinguish it from all other Christian ordinances. Let us also distinguish the one Sacrament from the other. The Covenant which they both seal is one; and the Church which they both distinguish from the world is also one. The difference between them lies in the sensible object employed as the signs and in the special benefit thereby signified. And from these, all the differences, in the circumstances of administration, spring.

The elements employed as signs, are such as the Redeemer prescribes—in the one, water; in the other bread and wine. Any alteration or omission, is disobedience to the commandment of Christ. We reject accordingly from Baptism, the Chrism, and the Oil, and the Cross; and we require in the Supper, the cup as well as the bread.

There is a difference between the two Sacraments; 1, in the sign employed. In Baptism, it is *water*. Acts x. 47. Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized? In the Lord's Supper, it is *bread and wine*. 1 Cor. xi. 28. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that *cup*. Mat. xxvi. 29. This fruit of the vine.

2. They differ in the special benefit signified and sealed to us. In Baptism it is our *entering into Covenant* with God—our *union* with Christ our Head. In the Supper, it is our *communion* with our Covenant God—fellowship with the Father and his Son Jesus Christ. These are the appropriate objects of the Sacraments. In each of them, we have, indeed, an exhibition of the whole system of Grace—a summary of the everlasting Gospel. But the specific object of each Sacrament, demands particular attention; because this produces the difference which should be admitted into the circumstances of their administration. This object is definitely marked in the written word. 1 Cor. xii. 13. For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body—and have been all *made to drink into one Spirit*. In this

text, the Apostle Paul refers, 1st, to baptism, as the sign of our union with Christ, as members of his body the Church: And, 2dly, to the Lord's supper, as signifying our communion with him in the fulness of the blessings of the Gospel. Gal. iii. 27. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. 1 Cor. x. 16. The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? In these words also the distinct nature and object of each sacrament are declared.

Baptism, is the *act* by which we put on Christ, in our *profession* of Christianity; it is the *sign and seal* of the *union* by which we put on, for justification, *the righteousness of Christ which is unto and upon all them that believe*. Rom. iii. 22. The Supper, is the visible act, by which separated from the world we sit down together and eat and drink with God; is the *sign and seal* of our *spiritual feasting* upon the blessings purchased by the sufferings of the Saviour, God manifested in the flesh.

From this difference in the special nature and end of these Sacraments, it follows, that baptism is *once* only applied, and the other sacrament is *often* administered to the same persons. *Union* with the Redeemer, as a covenant Head, never takes place but *once* with each person; therefore, the seal is once only applied: but communion with God, in the enjoyment of spiritual blessings, may be frequent; and, accordingly, the eucharistic feast, is *often* administered, in the Church, to the same communicants. There is in the Christian system, an inseparable connection between the principles of Grace and the exercise of Godliness; and a similar connection exists, in the exterior dispensation, between correct doctrinal principle and regular practice. The fact, that Baptism is only once administered, while it confirms the Doctrine of the Saints' perseverance in Grace, proves that it is the special end of this Sacrament, to signify and seal our indissoluble union with the "Lord our righteousness." Once, united to Christ by his Spirit, we are ever afterwards his members. Those who maintain the doctrine of falling from Grace, corrupt the Doctrine of baptism: And in order to be

consistent, this ordinance should be administered as often as the fallen are restored. It is therefore, impossible, that any one, should, both believingly, and intelligently, observe this sacred institution, who admits that doctrine. The Scriptural principle is, *once* united to Christ, *always* united to him. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance; and Baptism is not to be repeated, because it is impossible for those who were *once* enlightened, if they shall fall away, to renew them *again* unto repentance. God has made provision for uniting the soul only once into the Saviour. If it were possible (and blessed be the Lord it is not) to break this union, it would be impossible ever to renew it.

Baptism then, is that Sacrament which signifies and seals our engrafting into Christ, our partaking of the benefits of the Covenant of Grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's. Destroy this principle, and you destroy the ordinance. Attend to the practice of Baptism upon any other principle, and you do not attend to the ordinance of God at all—You do not worship the Father in spirit and in truth. Baptism is certainly a very significant rite, and shews forth many of the principal doctrines of the Gospel; but it is not, merely, on account of the illustrations of doctrines which it affords, that we esteem it a standing sacrament of the New Testament. Many ceremonies have been introduced into the worship of God, which in the hands of ingenious men appear very significant, and yet do not deserve to be recognized as ordinances of religious worship. Such are the numerous superstitions of the church of Rome. Baptism was practised by the Redeemer and his Apostles; but we do not esteem it as a sacrament, merely because they baptized; otherwise we should also practise washing the disciples' feet and leaning on a couch at the communion. The primitive Church baptized, but the bare example is not the foundation upon which we rest this ordinance; for upon the same principle, should we restore into the class of sacraments extreme unction.

It is absolutely necessary to be well established in first principles in order to understand this subject. Reasoning from fixed principles is not so easy as declamation; but he, who would understand the doctrine of Baptism, must not run uncertainly, nor fight as they

that beat the air. We consider Baptism as a sacrament of the New Testament, because upon a careful examination of the word of God, we find that Jesus Christ has appointed a washing with water in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to be perpetually observed in his church, to signify and seal our union with Christ, and our engagement to be the Lord's.

That Baptism is a positive institution, and is not, independently of positive appointment, of any moral obligation, we do not pretend to deny. But every part of the doctrine for which we contend is supported by positive authority.

1. Christ has commanded his apostles to apply water in the name of the Trinity.

2. The obligation to this duty is not temporary but perpetual.

3. The use of water to the body is not the end of the commandment.

4. The water itself has no effect whatever on the Soul of man.

5. The water religiously applied is a visible sign and seal of union with Christ.

6. All persons in covenant with God and his church are to be baptized.

Every one of these assertions is capable of positive proof. Indeed, it is not expected, that any Anabaptist will be hardy enough to deny this. And yet the admission is death to the Anabaptist scheme. It is essential to that scheme, to exclude entirely such considerations. Its defenders cannot with safety admit even that Baptism is a sacrament. And they find it much better policy to divert the attention of ill-informed inquirers from the principle which we have been endeavouring to establish, by furnishing them with other objects of thought. They accordingly play upon words; but rarely discuss the doctrine. The true state of the question is very seldom introduced to notice in their controversial writings.

The subjects in dispute are all comprehended in the following propositions.

1. The Redeemer hath appointed two sacraments for the new testament Church.

2. Baptism is that sacrament which, by the application

of a sensible sign, seals our entrance into covenant with God.

3. The whole church of God is in covenant with him, and every member has an immediate right to the seal of Baptism.

4. Infant children are included along with their parents in the Church of God.

These are the principles upon which the controversy with the Anabaptists depends. And it is impossible that any man can intelligently take either side of it, without having his judgment made up respecting every one of these four propositions.

We do not blame the Anabaptists for refusing to baptize infants who do not belong to the Church of God. We do the same ourselves. It is a common duty. We do not blame Anabaptists for going into the water or under the water. It is an innocent exercise, if prudently practised. But we do blame them for what we believe to be, their ignorance of the dispensation of grace; and their transgression of the good order of the Church of God. We cannot be reconciled to that violation of the constitution of our Redeemer's kingdom, which renders all our infant children "strangers and foreigners." We cannot be reconciled to the practice which withholds the seal of God's covenant from the children of the covenant. We cannot admit that doctrine of Baptism which denies it to be a symbol of our ingrafting into Christ; and we must display our testimony against every corruption of the doctrine of the sacraments of the New Testament. These are all pernicious principles; and we must oppose them. Had the practice of the Anabaptist Churches no connection with such principles we should be disposed to consider it as somewhat harmless. But as it is, we most earnestly, warn every man to examine these principles attentively, and to regulate his practice accordingly.

The practical questions respecting baptism, so far as the controversy with the Anabaptists is concerned, are only two. They are both of easy solution to him who understands the *principles* which we have stated.

1. Who appear to have that covenant union which is signified and sealed in Baptism, or, in other words, who belong to the visible Church?

2. What quantity of the element of water is necessary to the constitution of a sensible symbol ?

These are, in fact, the questions in dispute. Whether infants are to be baptized or not, whether believers are to be baptized or not, depends entirely upon the former; and whether baptism is, by pouring water upon the face, or by dipping the body in water, depends entirely upon the latter.

1. Who, according to the constitution of the Church of God, are to be considered its members? These when ascertained are to be baptized. We wish this question examined. We are confident, that no man in his senses, would refuse Baptism to any one who is fully recognized as a member of the Church. And we are equally confident that whether a believer or not, no man would admit to baptism any one whom we would not also admit as a member of the Church, without being guilty of gross inconsistency. The phrase "believer baptism," is a mere catch-word, fit only to answer party purposes. It deceives the hearts of the simple, it promotes spiritual pride, it encourages hypocrisy, and it is, in the present use of words, a falsehood. The Anabaptist churches must be persuaded too, that this phrase is not characteristic of *their* Baptism.

1. Because, they cannot judge the heart, and they know that, even by themselves, Baptism is frequently administered to hypocrites. But is hypocrite-baptism believer-baptism? It was the baptism of Simon Magus. True, it is said, Acts viii. 13. Simon himself believed also. But is this the sense in which the Anabaptists use the word *believer*. If it is, then, is that word employed, by them, in a sense, which, in the present use of language, cannot but deceive.

2. The phrase "believer-baptism" must be confessed by the Anabaptists to convey, as employed by themselves, an untruth, because *they* will not baptize all believers. A pious man who would not hear their ministers, and join in their communion, who would not consent to their form of government, and modes of worship, in short, who would not become a member of their churches; such a man, though a true believer, would not be baptized by them. It is therefore evident that

the only question in dispute is, who belongs to the visible church?

That infants belong to the church of God, along with their parents who make an intelligent and consistent profession of true religion, is capable of the most unequivocal proof. It is not a matter of remote or indirect inference. There is no part of the order of God's church more clearly revealed in the only rule of faith, the Holy Scriptures. Under every dispensation of divine grace this has been the case; and it is still and ever will be the case. Before Moses, it is not denied to have been the case. For 1500 years between Moses and the Apostles, it is not denied that infants were, together with their parents, included in the church of God. And so careful was the head of the Church to prevent mistakes respecting the children, that by an express declaration he himself confirms their birthright. Matt. xix. 14. "Of such is the Kingdom of Heaven." Who then shall dare to cut off from his kingdom, those whom he peremptorily declares to belong to it? Mr. Booth, upon this text, quotes four different writers, and makes a very uncandid use of their commentaries upon the words. He represents them as giving up the cause; because they acknowledge that these words do not directly prove infant Baptism. But we go further. We admit, that the text does not prove infant baptism or any baptism at all. We do not quote it for that purpose. But it declares what Mr. Booth denies—what Anabaptists deny. It declares most positively the church membership of infants. It is for this purpose alone that we quote the text. *Of such is the kingdom of heaven.* The kingdom of heaven is the church, the kingdom of Christ—The peculiar empire of the Redeemer. And such little children are said to belong to it. Let them not therefore be prevented from approaching its King and Lawgiver. Every other explanation of the passage charges our Lord with using a very fallacious mode of reasoning.

Is the meaning of the passage, "pious people are of a child-like humble disposition?" Then does our Lord employ a false argument. "Suffer little children to come unto me, for every Saint must be humble." We dare not ascribe such reasoning as this to him who

taught with authority and spake as never man spake. Would not the Anabaptists themselves, laugh at *us* for using a similar argument, to this one, which they are pleased to ascribe to an *infallible teacher*? Should we say, "Suffer little children to be *baptized*, for every *believer* has a childlike disposition," they would certainly despise us. Why then ascribe to the Redeemer what they esteem so unworthy? Again in the meaning of the passage, *Those who die in infancy shall be saved*? The argument is no better. Were we even disposed to admit, what is certainly not taught in divine revelation, that all who die in infancy shall be saved, we could not admit it to be the doctrine of this text. Because then, the argument would stand thus, "Suffer *living* children to come unto me, for those children who *die* shall be admitted into heaven." We cannot ascribe such a mode of reasoning to him, in whom, are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And we are perfectly confident that the Anabaptists would reject a similar argument if employed by *us*. Were *we* to say, "Let *living* children be admitted into the church on earth, for all children who *die in infancy* shall be admitted into heaven;" although, it is the same kind of reasoning, which they are not ashamed to ascribe to our *Lord Jesus Christ*, they would not be slow to proclaim *us* superficial reasoners for having made use of it.

The church membership of infants is therefore settled by the positive authority of the Head and Redeemer of the church. Nay, more. Lest the practical question, relative to those cases of mixed families, in which only one of the married pair belongs to the church, should be answered unfavorably to the infant claims, the Holy Ghost positively decides it in their favour. 1 Cor. vii. 14. "Else were your children unclean; but now are they holy."

2. What quantity of the element of water is necessary to the constitution of a sensible symbol?

One would suppose that this question could never admit of any disputation. That Baptism is not a literal, but a symbolical washing; not a bodily, but a spiritual cleansing, is no less evident from the whole doctrine of the Sacrament than the express assertions of Holy writ. 1 Pet. iii. 2. *The like* FIGURE *whereunto* *Baptism* *doth*

also now save us, not the putting away of the FILTH OF THE FLESH, but the ANSWER OF A GOOD CONSCIENCE toward God. 1 Cor. xii. 13. For by ONE SPIRIT are we all baptized into one body. Were this ordinance designed to wash the body clean, then indeed, the nature of the case would direct us in the manner of performing it so as most effectually to answer the end intended. And, seeing the external actions are figurative, the nature of the ordinance must, itself, teach us what quantity of the water, which constitutes the symbol, should be used. There is no possible ground of debate unless we pervert the doctrine of Baptism, and reduce it from being a spiritual washing, to be a putting away of the filth of the flesh.

As the first practical question, respecting church members, receives its reply from divine revelation where alone the constitution of the church is to be found; so the second, respecting the quantity of water which constitutes a visible sign, receives its reply from common sense; because it is impossible to give to this question, when fairly stated, any answer but the true one.

What quantity of the element of water suffices for a sign and seal of our union with the Redeemer? The answer is obvious. Any, even, the least, sensible quantity is sufficient.

Note referred to page 171.

These lofty words are borrowed from the vain philosophy of the dark ages. As they are applied here, they are mere sounds without meaning. *Cognoscitive* signifies capable of receiving knowledge. An intelligent cognoscitive power, is, therefore, nothing more than the knowing faculty which is capable of knowledge, a barbarous circumlocution. *Volitive* signifies, capable of willing or choosing; and the *intelligent volitive faculty* is, really, nothing more than the *Will*. The whole explanation then is this. Christ is the understanding and the Holy Ghost the will of God. A shew of wisdom, which darkens counsel by words without knowledge.

The following is a list of the books published by the author.

The Quality and Work of a glorified Redeemer, in seventeen sermons, printed 1703.

The Joy of the Christian in finishing his course, 1705.

The Justification of a Sinner, in eight sermons, 1716.

Twenty-eight sermons, concerning offences, revilings, and confession of the faith, 1723.

The Power of Christ over plagues and health and his Name as the God of Israel, in several sermons, 1724.

Thirteen sermons on the Duty and Doctrine of Baptism, 1749.

Three sermons against profane swearing.

Two on contending for revealed religion.

Six on Heb. vi. 12. "Be followers of them who through faith and patience," &c.

Four in the Lime-street Lectures, on the Sufferings of Christ.

Two on Acts xx. 32. "I commend you to God, and the word of his grace."

Two on the death of Mr. Bragg, and another on a funeral occasion.

Three vols. 8vo chiefly of his public sermons, were collected and published after his death, by his colleague Mr. Winter, to the amount of fifty.

What took up most of his time, and gave him the greatest pleasure, (as he says himself,)

Books published by the author.

was the **Mystery of Godliness**, in sixty-one sermons.

He also wrote prefaces and recommendations to the following works of others : Three volumes of Mess. E. and R. Erskines sermons; the **Gospel Sonnets** by R. Erskine ; and to a work of Maurice, on the warrant of a sinner as such to believe on the Saviour, entitled, *The Modern Question proven.*