

THE NUMBER OF THE SACRAMENTS, AND THE NATURE OF BAPTISM.

1 COR. xii. 13.—*For by one Spirit we are all baptised—and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*

MATTH. xxviii. 19.—*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

THE first of these texts, as before explained, holds out the number of the sacraments of the New Testament; and from thence we may draw this doctrine, viz.

DOCT. 'The sacraments of the New Testament are, baptism, and the Lord's supper.'

That this, and only this, is the number of the sacraments, we have the following evidences.

1. These were instituted by the Lord Jesus, and no more, Matth. xxviii. 19. and xxvi. 26—28. No other bear the stamp of divine institution. And none can shew any other holy ordinance instituted by Christ, wherein by sensible signs, Christ, and the benefits of the new covenant, are represented, sealed, and applied to believers.

2. These two fully answer the necessities of the saints in the case of sacraments. Two witnesses are sufficient to one deed, and the great deed and grant of the covenant are sufficiently witnessed unto by these. What more is there for God's elect to expect in this world, but these two things, that they receive life and nourishment, that they be taken into the covenant, and kept in it? Baptism is the sign of the one, and the Lord's supper of the other. The one is the sacrament of our ingrafting into Christ, and the other of our nourishment in him. And there is no special grace whatsoever, but what is signified and sealed by them.

3. The same was the number and nature of the ordinary sacraments of the Old Testament. They were no more but circumcision and the passover. And plain it is, that the New Testament dispensation is not more full of external rites and ceremonies than the Old one was. So that the Papists' seven sacraments compared with the two Jewish ones, must needs shew Popery to be vastly distant from the simplicity of the gospel. Circumcision was the initiating sacrament then, as baptism is now, signifying the putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh, Col. ii. 11; as baptism the washing of them away, Acts xxii. 16; the passover signifying Christ crucified,

1 Cor. v. 7; as the sacrament of the supper also, Matth. xxvi. 26. First they were to be circumcised, and afterwards to keep the pass-over; and so first to be baptised, and afterwards to communicate in the Lord's supper, but no otherwise. Circumcision was never reiterated, but the passover frequently.

4. *Lastly*, As the apostle, in our text, makes these two the bonds of Christian communion, and no more; so he reduces the extraordinary Jewish sacraments, in their uses and ends, to those of our two sacraments. The being under the cloud, and passing through the Red Sea, he calls their being baptised, 1 Cor. x. 2. Their eating of the manna, and drinking the water of the rock, he calls their eating of the same spiritual meat, and drinking the same spiritual drink, as we do in the Lord's supper, ver. 3, 4.

From this point I shall draw a few inferences,

Inf. 1. Good and gracious is our God to his church and people, under the gospel in a special manner, who has instituted two, and but two sacraments, and these easy and clear. Here we have enough for the confirmation of our faith of the promises; and we have no reason to say we are under a heavy yoke. Here none of our blood is to be shed, but Christ's blood is most clearly represented as shed for us.

2. The five sacraments which the Papists have added to our Lord's two, are but bastard sacraments, not the badges of Christ, but of Antichrist. These are, confirmation, penance, orders, marriage, and extreme unction.

Confirmation is the bishop's anointing of the baptised with chrism in the forehead, in the form of a cross, with this form of words, 'I sign thee with the sign of the cross, and confirm thee with the chrism of salvation, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.' This has no manner of divine institution, nor is it at all to be found in the scriptures; and derogates from the sacrament of baptism.

Penance is repentance, discovering itself by external evidences. The matter of this pretended sacrament, they say, lies in contrition of heart, auricular confession, and satisfaction; the form of it in absolution by the priest, as a judge, pardoning their sin, not ministerially, only declaring it. But here is no visible sign at all, necessary to contradistinguish the sacramental signs from the word. No sign at all is administered to the penitent; no promise annexed to a sensible sign here: therefore no sacrament. Besides auricular confession is not instituted at all by the Lord. And judicial pardon is blasphemous, ministerial declaration of pardon being only competent to ministers, John xx. 23.

Orders is the ordination of church-officers; which is instituted,

but not to be a sacrament, it having no promise of saving grace annexed to it. 1 Tim. iv. 14. speaks not of saving grace, but of the official gift, viz. authority to preach.

Matrimony has nothing of a sacrament in it, since it has no visible sign appointed by Christ, no promise of saving grace annexed to it, and is common to all the world as well as the church. It is mis-grounded on Eph. v. 32. where their corrupt translation reads *a great sacrament*.

Extreme unction is the priest's anointing the eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth, hands, reins, and feet of a person thought to be at the point of death, with olive-oil, consecrated by a bishop, using these words, 'By this holy oil, and his tender mercy, God forgive thee all thy sins.' It is built on Jam. v. 14. where the miraculous cure of diseases is spoken of.

3. See the bent of corrupt nature in meddling with God's institutions, the abominations of Popery, and the great mercy of our deliverance from it. We can never be enough thankful to God for the reformation from that grand apostasy, idolatry, and superstition. We ought to hold firmly what we have attained, and stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, that we be not again entangled with any yoke of bondage. Let us steadfastly adhere to all the ordinances and institutions of our Lord Jesus Christ, and vigorously oppose, in our respective stations and places, all deviations from the same, from whatever quarter they may come, or under whatever specious pretexts they may be introduced or recommended. To the law and to the testimony let us bring them; and receive and practise nothing in the worship and service of God, but what is enforced with a *Thus saith the Lord*. And let us ever remember the extreme danger of all usages and innovations not contained in or authorised by the written word; and therefore let us from the heart abhor them.

In the second text we have the institution of baptism. And herein consider,

1. The ordinance itself; baptising in the name of the holy blessed Trinity. This is expressly instituted by Jesus Christ: *Go ye therefore, and baptise, &c.*

2. The administrators of baptism; ye apostles, and your successors, in 'teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded. And lo I am with you alway even to the end of the world.'

3. The subjects of baptism; all nations which are *taught* Gr. *discipled*, made disciples of Christ. First, they are to be discipled, and then baptised.

The doctrine of the the text is,
 Doct. 'The sacrament of baptism is instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ.'

To open the nature of this sacrament, let us consider,

I. The signifying thing in it.

II. The signifying action.

III. The particular uses and ends of baptism.

IV. The subjects of baptism, or those to whom it is to be administered.

V. The efficacy of it.

VI. The necessity of it.

VII. Deduce a few inferences.

I. Let us consider the signifying thing in this sacrament. There is a fourfold baptism spoke of in scripture. (1.) The baptism of light, which is taken for the doctrine, Acts xviii. 25. (2.) The baptism of blood, which is martyrdom, Matth. xx. 22, 23. (3.) The baptism of the Spirit, which is the pouring out of the Spirit, Matth. iii. 11. (4.) The baptism of water, which is baptism properly so called. So,

The signifying thing in baptism is water, Acts viii. 38, 39. Eph. v. 26. And there is no matter as to the water, whether it be fountain water, or river-water, providing only it be pure clean water, Heb. x. 22. And it is an abominable practice of the Papists to add oil, salt, and spittle, to the water in baptism.

Here I shall shew,

1. What is signified by the water in baptism.

2. What is the resemblance betwixt water and the thing signified by it.

First, What is signified by the water in baptism?

1. The blood of Jesus Christ, Rev. i. 5.

2. The Spirit of Jesus Christ, Tit. iii. 5. Isa. xlv. 3.

Secondly, What is the resemblance betwixt these? There is a sweet resemblance betwixt water, and the blood and Spirit of Jesus Christ; the due consideration whereof shews the excellency of the grace exhibited in baptism.

1. Water is a common thing, to be had freely by all those who take it: it is what the poor as well as the rich have access to. So the blood and Spirit of Christ are free to all who will receive the same offered in the gospel, Isa. lv. 1. Christ is not a sealed and closed, but an open fountain, for souls to wash in, Zech. xiii. 1. Cant. ii. 1. And however unclean one be, he is welcome to this water, 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10, 11.

2. Water is a cleansing thing, taking out spots, stains, and de-

filement. The blood of Christ cleanses the defiled conscience, Heb. ix. 14. The Spirit of Christ purifies the soul, removing filthy lusts that defile the soul, and so renewing and sanctifying it, Tit. iii. 5. And unless we be thus washed, we have no part in Christ.

3. Water is a refreshing thing, when one is thirsty, or scorched with heat. So is the blood of Christ, and the out-pouring of his Spirit, to the thirsty soul, scorched under the flames of wrath, John vi. 35.

4. Water is a fructifying virtue. So is Christ's blood and Spirit, making the barren soul fruitful in the fruits of holiness, Isa. xlv. 3, 4. The soul lies naturally, under the curse, and so can bring forth nothing but the briers and thorns of wickedness. But the blood of Christ sprinkled on the soul, changes the nature of the soul. The soul is naturally dead, and therefore must wither: the Spirit of Christ brings life, and makes the wilderness to blossom as the rose.

5. Water is most necessary, so necessary that we cannot live without it: so the blood and Spirit of Christ are absolutely necessary for our salvation, Heb. ix. 23. John xiii. 8.

6. *Lastly*, Water must be applied ere it can have its effect: so we must partake of Christ's blood and Spirit, ere our souls can be changed thereby, 1 Cor. i. 30.

II. Let us consider the signifying action in baptism. It is washing with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Here I shall shew,

1. How this washing with water is to be performed.
2. By whom it is to be performed, according to Christ's institution.
3. What is the meaning of the form of words used in baptism?

First, I am to shew how this washing of water is to be performed. The dipping of the person into the water is not necessary: but baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person. The unlawfulness of dipping is not to be pretended, since it is not improbable that it was used by John, Matth. iii. 6. and Philip, Acts viii. 38; but seems to have been used in the ancient church, and in some places is used to this day. But baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water, as we do.

(1.) Because the apostles, at least sometimes, seem to have baptised that way; as when three thousand were baptised in one day, Acts ii. 41; which can hardly be imagined to be done in so short a space of time by dipping; and when some were baptised in the night, as in the case of the Philippian jailor and his family, Acts xvi. 33.

(2.) Because baptising in scripture is used for washing by infusion or sprinkling, as well as immersion, Mark vii. 4. Luke xi. 38.

(3.) Because the thing signified by baptism is called *sprinkling*, and is represented thereby sufficiently, Heb. xii. 24. 1 Pet. i. 2. It is true, we are said to be buried in baptism, Rom. vi. 4; but even the sprinkling of the water, as well as dipping, represents that, according to the ancient way of burying, wherein they were not sunk into the earth, but laid on the ground, and the mould cast over them. Besides that in some cases dipping might endanger the life of the baptised, especially in our cold countries.

Secondly, I shall show by whom baptism is to be performed, according to Christ's institution. By a minister of the gospel lawfully called thereto. For to them only belongs the administration of baptism, to whom it belongs to preach the word, our Lord Jesus having knit these together in the institution, Matth. xxviii. 19. They are the stewards of the mysteries of God, 1 Cor. iv. 1; into which office none can thrust himself with a good conscience, who is not called thereto. And it is the perverse opinion of the absolute necessity of baptism, that makes the Papists and others admit others, even women to baptise in case of necessity.

Thirdly, I shall next show what is the meaning of the form of words used in baptism. It denotes baptism to be administrated by virtue of the authority of God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, but especially that one is baptised into the profession, faith, and obedience of the holy Trinity, for the Greek *en* signifies *into the name*, not *names*, to shew the Unity of the Godhead in the Trinity of persons.

III. I proceed to shew what are the peculiar uses and ends of baptism. Besides the general uses and ends of the sacraments, which are common to baptism and the Lord's supper, the particular uses and ends of baptism are these,

1. To be a rite of solemn admission into the visible church. Matth. xxviii. 19. 1 Cor. xii. 13; and so to the visible church privileges, Rom. xi. 17. It supposes the party to have a right to these privileges before, and does not make them members of the visible church, but admits them solemnly thereto. And therefore it is neither to be called nor accounted christening, i. e. making them Christians: for the infants of believing parents are born within the covenant, and so are Christians and visible church members; and by baptism this right of theirs is acknowledged, and they are solemnly admitted to the privileges of church-membership.

2. To signify and seal to the party saving privileges and benefits for his eternal salvation, which it actually doth in all those to whom it is effectual, though it is not effectual to all. These benefits are,

(1.) Ingrafting into Christ, or union with him. Gal. iii. 27. We

are naturally branches of the old Adam, from whom we can derive nothing but sin and the curse. Christ the second Adam is the true vine into which we are ingrafted, or to whom we are united, John xv. 5. The Spirit is the ingrafter, who, by the knife of the law cuts us off from the old stock, Gal. ii. 19. and puts us into Christ, winding us up with the band of the covenant of grace, and causing us to knit with him by faith, Eph. iii. 17. This is signified and sealed by baptism, while so Christ does solemnly take possession of us, being baptised in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

(2.) Partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace. These benefits signified and sealed by baptism are,

[1.] Remission of sins by virtue of the blood of Christ, Mark i. 4. That as the water washes away the stains of the body, so the blood of Christ washeth off guilt; and God, for the sake of his Son, forgives sin. So the apostle prescribes it for the ease of the troubled souls who were pricked and awakened by his sermon, Acts ii. 37, 38. 'Repent and be baptised every one of you (says he), in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins,' that so they might be assured of pardon.

[2.] Adoption into the family of God, Gal. iii. 26, 27. We are by nature out of God's family: but here God's name is called upon us, and we are visibly taken into the visible family of God; and having his Spirit dwelling in us, we are really taken into the family; which is signified and sealed by baptism.

[3.] Regeneration by the Spirit of Christ, signified by water, Tit. iii. 5. The Spirit of Christ in regeneration worketh like water, John iii. 5. cleansing the soul from its impurities and making it holy. This is necessary to our salvation, since no unclean thing can enter the New Jerusalem; and is signified and sealed by baptism.

(4.) Resurrection unto life eternal out of the grave by the same Spirit, Rom. viii. 11. That baptism has an eye to this, appears from 1 Cor. xv. 29. 'Else what shall they do which are baptised for the dead, if the dead rise not?' And it is represented by the water's going off the baptised, though more lively by the coming up out of it in dipping.

3. To signify and seal our engagement to be the Lord's, to be his only, wholly and for ever, Rom. vi. 4. It is a dedicating ordinance, wherein the party baptised is solemnly given up to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. His ear is bored, that he may be the Lord's servant for ever. He is listed under Christ's banner, to fight against the devil, the world, and the flesh. He renounces sin and Satan, these his old masters, as being dead to sin, that he may live in newness of life. And, in a word, it is a declared acceptance of God's covenant offered in the gospel.

IV. I come to shew, who are the subjects of baptism, those to whom baptism is to be administered. 'Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church, till they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to him; but the infants of such as are members of the visible church are to be baptised.'

Negatively, (1.) Not any inanimate things, as bells, which the Papists do thereby horribly profaning the seal of God's covenant. (2.) Nor yet infidels, who are without the visible church, and so strangers from the covenants of promise, who therefore can have no right to the seals, while they continue so, Eph. ii. 12.

Positively, All those, and those only, who are within the covenant, without distinction of nation, sex, or age. This is clear from the institution, of discipling all nations, and then baptising them. So whosoever they are who come into Christ's school, and are members of his visible church, are to be baptised, and none other. So,

1. Those who are of age, whatever they have been before, are to be baptised, upon their making a credible profession of their faith in Christ, and obedience to him: because in that case the church is to look upon them as within the covenant. It is true, if they be not sincere believers, they have not a right to it before God; but their credible profession gives them a right to it before the church. Both of these are plain in the case of the Ethiopian eunuch, Acts viii. 37, 38; and Peter's hearers, Acts ii. 38.

2. The infants of believing parents, or visible church-members, one or both, are to be baptised: because they are to be looked upon as within the covenant, since it runs so, 'I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed,' &c. Gen. xvii. 7; Acts ii. 38, 39; and the benefits of the covenant belong to them, Matth. xix. 14; who then can forbid them the seal of the covenant? They were circumcised under the Old Testament, and the grace of God is not narrower now than it was then. They are comprehended under the institution, as making a part of nations, and are reckoned disciples, Acts xv. 10; and so the apostles baptised whole families, as Paul and Silas that of the gaoler, Acts xvi. 15, 33; and Paul that of Stephanas, 1 Cor. i. 16. And it is sufficient if one of the parents be a church-member, though the other be not, 1 Cor. vii. 14.

V. As to the efficacy of baptism, we may observe three things.

1. It consists in effectual sealing and applying Christ and his benefits to the baptised party, 1 Pet. iii. 21.

2. It is not effectual to all that receive it, as appears from the case of Simon, who after baptism remained in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity, Acts viii. 13, 23; and this the unholy lives of many baptised in their infancy do testify.

3. It is not tied to the moment of administration, but though not effectual in the time it is administered, may afterwards be effectual, through the working of the Spirit, John iii. 5, 8.

VI. As to the necessity of baptism, two things are to be observed.

1. It is not of absolute necessity to salvation, as if the simple want thereof could hinder salvation; for God has not made baptism and faith equally necessary, Mark xvi. 16. And circumcision was not to be administered before the eighth day, Gen. xvii. 12;* though there is no reason to doubt but some Jewish infants died before that time.

2. It is necessary by divine precept, as an instituted means of salvation. So that the contempt of it is a sin, and a great one, that will damn men, unless it be pardoned through the blood of Christ, Luke vii. 30; but this contempt cannot be ascribed to the child, before he comes to the years of discretion, and so cannot involve him in guilt; but unto the parents. So that Gen. xvii. 14; is to be understood of the child come to years.†

A few inferences shall conclude this subject.

* The words are, "And he that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you, every man child in your generations." The author, in his manuscript on Genesis, renders the words thus: "And one going on eight days; he shall be circumcised for you; [even] every male, throughout your generations." That is, should one once be going on eight days, then he is bound by this law. Before he is of that age, he is not obliged to be circumcised: but on the eighth day he falls under the obligation to it, which still abides on him thereafter, during his uncircumcision. Compare ver. 14. And every male was to be circumcised for the family of Abraham, or in their name; see the note above, p. 465; and this throughout their generations successively, during the whole time of the being of circumcision as a divine ordinance. By this constitution there would be almost a continual renewing of the seal of the covenant among them; and that respecting not only the party circumcised at the time, but the whole body of the people, men and women. Hence it appears, what ground there is for Christians improving the administration of baptism to infants, time after time, for the confirming of their own faith of the covenant. Compare with this phrase, circumcised for you, 1 Cor. xv. 29; baptised for the dead. Baptism, as often as it is administered according to Christ's institution, doth by his appointment seal the whole benefits of the covenant of grace, not only to the party receiver, but the whole of the body, within the covenant: the resurrection of the dead saints is a special benefit of the covenant, in virtue of it secured to them, even as remission of sin to the living, Mat. xxii. 31, 32; and the church militant and triumphant are but one body, all of them together being embodied in one covenant, Eph. iv. 4 1 Cor. xii. 13; therefore baptism being administered to the faithful for this end, is vain, if there is no resurrection of the dead.

† The words are, "And the uncircumcised man-child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken my covenant." The author, in the aforementioned work, thus translates and comments on the words: "And as for an uncircumcised one a male; who shall not crop, even the flesh

Inf. 1. Baptism is not to be administered to any person oftener than once. This is plain from the nature of the ordinance, Tit. iii. 5; we being but once ingrafted and regenerated.

2. Improve your baptism agreeable to the nature of it, and the ends of its institution. It is a gross neglect, that we are not often putting the question to ourselves, Into what was I baptised? Alas! many make no more use of their baptism rightly, than if they had never been baptised. Though ye were but once baptised, ye should be improving it all your life long, and particularly when you see others baptised.

(1.) Improve it for raising your hearts in thankfulness to God, that ever ye were sealed with the seal of God's covenant, and had his name called on you, while many in the world are utter strangers to the covenants of promise.

(2.) Improve it for your strengthening against temptation, considering that you are the Lord's, not your own, and are under the most solemn and awful engagement to God, to resist the devil, the world, and the flesh; and also drawing strength from the death, and resurrection of Christ, into whom they were baptised, Rom. vi. 4.

(3.) Improve it for your humiliation under your sins and miscarriages, considering them as sins against the grace of baptism, and your engagements to God therein; remembering that sins after solemn engagements to the contrary, are highly offensive to God, and attended with more aggravating circumstances, than if they had never been baptised, and such solemn engagements entered into by

of his foreskin;" i. e. a male, whether of Abraham's own seed, or born in the house, or acquired by money; who being come to the years of discretion (the Jews say the thirteenth year of his age), his circumcision having been neglected by his parents or master, shall not then see to his own circumcision, effectually, he shall be liable as follows:—"Than in that case that person, even that, shall be cut off from his people whatsoever," i. e. Such a one is guilty, and of whatsoever people he be, he shall be cut off from his people, by death; which he shall be put to, for his contempt, whether by the hand of the magistrate, or otherwise.—Even my covenant he hath made void, i. e. He hath thrown it away, or trampled it under foot, as refuse. The punishment to be inflicted is not more severe than the crime is atrocious. The criminal had free access to the covenant of grace, with the righteousness of faith, and all the other benefits of it; whether he was of Abraham's seed or not; being incorporated with Abraham's family: he was under the obligation of a law to receive the covenant personally to enter into it; and in token thereof, to receive the seal of it, ver. 11, 12, 13; he is come to years, and capable of judging for himself; and the hazard of refusing is told him. But he contemns the seal; he will not circumcise himself. Thus he makes void the covenant; making the device of heaven for salvation useless and of none effect to himself by his obstinacy: he contemptuously throws it away from him as empty husks, dregs, and refuse, in which there is no force nor energy, no sap, no savour; and treads it under foot. Compare Heb. x. 28, 29.

you. The vows of God are upon you; break them not, and go not about after vows to make inquiry.

(4.) Improve your baptism to the strengthening of your faith and confidence in Jesus Christ, especially in downcastings under a sense of guilt; for it is a sign and seal of remission, adoption, &c. and so may answer the question to an exercised soul, How can I be put among the children?

(5.) Improve it to the vigorous exercise of, and growth in holiness, since thereby ye are engaged to newness of life, as ye are raised from the dead, Rom. vi. 4. Were ye dedicated unto God, does not that say ye should be holy in heart, lip, and life? As God is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of life and conversation; remembering that without holiness no man shall see the Lord.

(6.) *Lastly*, Improve it to the increase of brotherly love, even love to all the saints, who are all baptised into one body, 1 Cor. xii. 13. It is as unnatural for saints not to love one another, or to quarrel with one another, as it is for the members of the natural body to be at war with each other. Then love one another, as Christ hath loved you.*

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OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

1 COR. xi. 23, 24, 25.—*I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner, also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.*

THESE words afford us the answer to that question, 'What is the sacrament of the Lord's supper?' and declare to us the nature of that holy ordinance which we are now in expectation of, and now falls to be explained? For which we shall consider,

- I. The author of it.
- II. The signifying things in it.
- III. The signifying actions.
- IV. The uses and ends of it.

* See more of this subject in the author's sermons on church-communion, first printed in 1737.