



THE
DOCTRINE
OF THE
Two Sacraments.

EPHES. V. 26.

*That he might sanctify and cleanse it
with the Washing of Water by the
Word.*



THE Holy Sacrament of Baptism, as it is our Solemn Entrance and Admission into the visible Church of Jesus Christ, so is the Doctrine of it, with very good Reason, set as an Introduction to that farther Account of
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Christian Faith comprised in our Publick Catechism. And indeed, it seems but Reason that we should begin our Christian Profession where we began our Christian Race ; and that the Doctrine of Christianity should commence at the same Holy Institution where we first took upon us the Name and Title of Christians. I shall therefore, through the Assistance of Jesus Christ, who is *the Author and Finisher of our Faith*, endeavour to explain the Principles of our Religion contained in that brief Summary, the Catechism, beginning with that of Baptism ; wherein (as it is there expressed) *we are made Members of Christ, Children of God, and Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven.*

There are high Encomiums of this Ordinance, and inestimable Privileges conferr'd by it, and to some may possibly seem too lavish ; yet I doubt not but to make it appear, that all these Privileges do appertain unto us according to the Phrase of Scripture, by our being baptized into the Church and Faith of Christ.

I have chosen this Portion of Scripture, to shew the great Influence that Baptism hath upon our Sanctification, by which it is, that *we are made Members of Christ*, vitally joined by an holy Band to an holy Head. The Words are brought in as a
Demon-

the Two Sacraments:

3

Demonstration of the Love of Christ to his Church, which the Apostle gives as a Pattern for Conjugal Love and Amity. *He loved the Church, so as to give himself for it, as it is in the precedent Verse. And the End of this unspeakable Gift we find contained in this Verse, He gave himself for his Church, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the Washing of Water by the Word.*

Not to speak any Thing of the Context, nor to make any laborious and critical Explication of the Words, here be Two Things worthy of our Observation :

First, That one End why Christ was given to the Church is, that he might sanctify it.

Secondly, That the Means to sanctify the Church, is Baptism, and the Word.

As to the former of these, being alien from our present Purpose, let it suffice to note briefly, that Christ hath purchased for us not only Eternal Glory, but present Grace. He who hath called himself both *the Way, and the Life*, gave himself for us, not only to purchase Life, but to lead us in the Way tending to it. He died to procure Heaven for all, if they

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would

would believe; but he died to procure Grace for some, even his chosen Ones, that they might believe and attain unto Heaven and Happiness. For their Sakes, as he tells us, *John 17. 19. He sanctified himself*, that is, he devoted and separated himself to undergo the cruel and accursed Death of the Cross: And for his Sake, God sanctifies us from our Filth and Pollution, thereby preparing us to enter into those Mansions which he is gone before to prepare for us.

But that which more concerns us at this Time to observe, is the Means for effecting this Sanctification; and they are Two, *the Washing of Water, and the Word*. By the former I suppose none will doubt but that Baptism is meant; or if they should, yet so many other parallel Places might be produced, where Remission of Sins, Justification and Regeneration, are ascribed to this Holy Ordinance, as the Effects of it, that it may be sufficient Conviction that Baptism is likewise in this Place understood by *the Washing of Water*. So *Acts 22. 16. Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy Sins*, saith Ananias to Paul; which is no other than being *sanctified and cleansed with the Washing of Water*. So likewise, *Acts 2. 38. Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ,*
for

the Two Sacraments.

5

for the Remission of Sins. And Baptism is called, *Tit. 3. 5.* ἀποθεῖν παλίστασις, we render it, *the Washing of Regeneration*; according to his Mercy he saved us, by the *Washing of Regeneration*; but the Word signifies, *the Bath of Regeneration*, which is that Baptismal Water wherein we are buried with Christ.

But before I can come particularly to shew you what Sanctification it is that we receive by Baptism, and how we are in it made the *Members of Christ, the Children of God, and Heirs of the Kingdom of Heaven*, it is necessary, and I hope will be useful, to vindicate the Practice of baptizing Infants, which some of late have eagerly disputed against. For if the Church be mistaken in the Persons to whom this Ordinance belongs, certainly they can claim no Privilege by Vertue of their having been baptized. And therefore, since Baptism is usually administered to Infants, let us briefly examine whether their Admission to this Holy and Mystical Institution be according to the Precept of the Gospel: For if not, how can they say, as the Catechism directs, that in their Baptism they *were made Members of Christ, Children of God, and Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven*?

The Doctrine of

Herein I shall, *First*, prove to you the Lawfulness of *Infant Baptism*.

Secondly, Answer some Objections that are plausibly urged against it.

Thirdly, Shew you what are the Uses of Baptism, and Ends for which it was ordained.

I shall begin with the Arguments, to prove the Lawfulness of *Infant Baptism*.

The *First* is this: Infants are Members of the Church of Christ, and therefore to be baptized. Two Things are here to be proved, that Church-Members are to be baptized; and then, that Infants are Church-Members. I suppose the former may be evidently demonstrated, because there is no other Way of solemn Admission into the visible Church but by Baptism; and therefore if the Members of the Church ought to be solemnly admitted into the visible Flock of Christ, they ought to be baptized. But clear enough it is, that those who are Church-Members ought to be solemnly admitted into the visible Church of Christ. They are Members of the Church as a King is a Sovereign before his Coronation, or a Soldier is such before his Military Oath: So Baptism is our Publick and Solemn Inauguration into the Kingdom of Christ; it is our Military Oath and Sacrament to
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be Christ's faithful Soldiers and Servants unto our Lives End. It only remains now to prove, that Infants are Church-Members: And that appears, because once they were so, and that Privilege is not repealed. For in the Church of the *Jews*, Infants were a Part of them who entered into Covenant with God. See *Deut. 29. 10, 11, 12. You stand all of you before the Lord, your Little Ones, and your Wives, and the Stranger, that thou shouldst enter into Covenant with the Lord thy God.* It is not, nor indeed can it be denied, that the *Jews* Children were Members of their Church; consequently then the Children of Christians must likewise be Members of the Christian Church, unless it can be manifested, that Christ hath repealed and recalled this Privilege. No such Repeal I am confident can be produced. Nor indeed can the Repeal of such a Privilege, as the being Members of the Church, consist with the greater Mercy and Goodness of God, revealed since Christ's Coming, in Comparison of what it was before. The Children of the *Jews* were Members of the *Jewish* Church before Christ's coming into the World; but if a *Jew* be converted to the Faith, shall not his Children be now Members of the Church of God? If not, they are

in a far worse Condition since Christ than they were before, which is little less than Blasphemy.

Again, that the Infants of Believing Parents are Members of the Church of Christ, appears from this, that they who deny them to be Members of the visible Church of Christ, must of Necessity make them to be Members of the visible Kingdom of the Devil. For there is no Third Estate on Earth ; but the Kingdom of Christ, which is the Church, or the Kingdom of the Devil, divide all Mankind between them. Those who are not of the Church, are of the World, since our Saviour affirms, that *he hath called and taken his out of the World, and that they are not of the World* ; and the Devil is called *the God and the Prince of this World* : Therefore all that are not of Christ's Flock, and of his Church, are of the World, and they belong to the Kingdom of the Devil : And so by a very uncharitable, but yet an unavoidable Consequence, if we deny Infants to be Members of Christ's Church, we must hold, that they are all Members of Satan, Subjects of the Kingdom of Darkness, and in a desperate State of Condemnation.

From all this it follows clearly, that the Children of Christian Parents are Church-

Church-Members ; and being Church-Members they have a Right to Baptism, which is appointed by Christ to be the Standing Ordinance for solemn Admission into the visible Church. So that when they are in our Catechism said to be *made Members of Christ in their Baptism*, the Meaning only is, that now they are owned and publickly acknowledged to be such by their solemn Admission into the Society of Christians. They are Christians *nati*, born Christians by the Covenant ; Christianity is their Birth-right, and their Native Privilege. That's the first Argument.

Secondly, The Second Argument to prove *Infant Baptism* may be formed thus ; Infants are Christ's Disciples, and therefore they ought to be baptized. That Christ's Disciples ought to be baptized, I suppose none will deny : But that Infants are Christ's Disciples, is most evident from the express Words of Scripture. See *Acts* 15. 5. where it is said, there arose a great Controversy in the Church, because, that certain erroneous Brethren, some converted *Pharisees*, perswaded them that it was still needful to continue the Custom of circumcising their Children. To decide this, a Council of the Apostles and Elders assembled together ; and in *Ver.* 10.

The Doctrine of

we have their definitive Sentence against the Necessity of Circumcision, *Why tempt ye God to put a Yoke upon the Neck of the Disciples, which neither our Fathers, nor we, were able to bear?* Now on whom would these *Pharisees* have laid this Yoke? Was it not on the Disciples? And what was this Yoke? Was it not Circumcision? And who were they whom they would have to be circumcised? Doubtless, all the *Gentiles*, who believed in Jesus Christ, both Men and Children; and in following Ages, especially if not only Children were to have been circumcised, if this erroneous Doctrine had prevailed. Well then, they whom these False Teachers would have to be circumcised, were Disciples: But it is plain, that they would impose this, not only upon adult Persons, but Children; for that they required they should be circumcised according to the Law of *Moses*, as *Verse 1*. Now, according to the Law and Manner of *Moses*, all Children, whether of Native *Jews* or Profelytes, ought to be circumcised the Eighth Day. And this, saith the Holy Synod of the Apostles, is a Yoke, that *neither they, nor their Fore-fathers, were able to bear*. Not that Circumcision itself, although a painful, was yet an intolerable Rite, but only as it was a Sign and Seal

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engaging them to keep the whole Law of *Moses*, which was this pinching Yoke, and this insupportable Burden, that the Apostolical Council decreed should not be put upon the Disciples : And therefore, either Infants are Disciples, or notwithstanding this Decree they may still receive Circumcision as an Engagement to the Observation of the Mosaical Law.

Thirdly, Another Argument may be drawn from the Text ; *He loved the Church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the Washing of Water.* From whence I thus argue : Those for whom Christ gave himself that they might be saved, those he doth likewise intend to bring to Salvation by sanctifying and cleansing them with the Washing of Baptismal Water ; but he gave himself likewise for Infants, that they might be saved ; for he expressly tells us, that *of such is the Kingdom of Heaven*, not only of their Conditions, but of their Condition ; and therefore Infants are ordinarily to be cleansed with the Washing of Water in Baptism. I do not say, that none can or shall be saved without Baptism ; that were too uncharitable an Opinion and Doom upon those who are inevitably deprived of this Holy Institution.

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But this I say, that Baptism is the ordinary Means appointed by God for the sanctifying and cleansing of those for whom Christ gave himself to bring them to Salvation. And though the Children shall not be damned for Want of Baptism, yet (as King *James* said) I doubt whether the Parents of them may not, for their Neglect and Contempt of it.

Many other Arguments might be produced, but these may suffice in a Place where this great Doctrine need not be laboriously proved, especially being such as cannot be sufficiently answered.

Let us therefore, in the next Place, take into Consideration some of the most principal Objections that are made against Infant Baptism, which I would not mention in a Place where this Practice is not contradicted, but that I know the Evidence for it is abundantly superiour to the Cavils against it, and that you may be fortified against the Fallacies of Deceivers hereafter: For in these broken and divided Times, when the Whimsies of Men, and their confident Fancies, have so far prevailed against the Unity of the Church, God knows what they may next attempt; and plentiful Experience hath shewn, that Anabaptism usually follows Separation.

It is objected, 1. That Infants are not capable of the Ends of Baptism, and therefore ought not to be baptized. The End of Baptism is to signify to the Receiver of it, *the Washing away of Sin by the Blood of Jesus Christ*. But Infants, not having the Use of Reason, cannot possibly comprehend this Significancy : And therefore, it being to them an insignificant Thing, it cannot be the Ordinance of Christ that it should be administred to them.

To this I answer ; That altho' Infants are not, as such, capable of all the Ends for which Baptism was ordained, yet it doth not, thence follow, that it is insignificant, and therefore unnecessary or unlawful to baptize them.

For, *First*, Baptism may be administred to those who are capable of some of the Ends of it, though they are not of all. 'Tis true, one great End of Baptism is to be a Sign of the washing away of Sin, and cleansing the Soul ; and why may not this be God's Sign towards Infants, tho' it cannot be theirs towards him ? Certainly the Sacraments are instituted to be the Signs of God's Favour to his Children, as well as Pledges of their Service to him. Again, we find that our Lord Jesus Christ himself was baptized by *John*, whose Bap-

tism was the Baptism of Repentance ; and yet our Saviour had no Sin to be repented of, no Filth to be washed away. By which Instance alone it is sufficiently clear that an Incapacity for some Ends of an Ordinance, where there is a Capacity for others, doth not exclude from a Right of partaking of it.

For, *Secondly*, Another great End of the Institution of Baptism was to be God's Seal to the Covenant of his Grace. Now as a Man may seal a Deed of Gift to an Infant, which shall be valid, though he understand it not, so God may, and doth seal the Promises of his Covenant to Infants ; and yet their Incapacity of knowing it doth not make the Truth and Promise of God of none Effect.

Thirdly, Though Infants cannot perceive the Significancy of Baptism, yet this can be no Reason to exclude them from it : For I suppose it will be granted, that Circumcision was significant, being a Sacrament as well as Baptism. And yet we read and know, that Circumcision was instituted for Infants who were altogether as incapable of understanding the Nature and End of that Ordinance, as our Children are of Baptism. If therefore Circumcision were not an idle insignificant Ceremony to the *Jewish* Children, which

which is Blasphemy to assert, no more is Baptism to the Children of Christians, tho' they cannot understandingly reflect upon the Significancy of it.

But, *Fourthly*, Though at present Infants cannot understand the Significancy of Baptism, yet this Sign may be effectual and operative when they are grown up to the Use of Reason, and they may then be taught (as it is the Duty of all Parents to instruct their Children) what an early Covenant God entered into with them, and they with God. Certainly it is of some avail to have a Child's Name put into a Lease or Deed of Gift, though for the present he understand not the Use of it. It may afterwards be of as much Value to him as all his Estate and Livelihood is worth. The Covenant of Grace is a Deed of Gift made to us by Christ, wherein he promiseth to bestow upon us eternal Life and Happiness. Now as it would be absurd to say, that a Child's Name ought not to be put into any Legacy, or Deed, till he come of Age to understand it; so alike absurd, and far more injurious is it, to leave out our Children from this Heavenly Legacy that Christ hath left his Church; which, tho' for the present they do not understand, yet may it be of infinite Use to them af-

terwards when they are grown up to Years of Discretion, and they may strongly plead it with God with good Success.

2. Another main Objection against *Infant Baptism* is, That neither Christ nor his Apostles, have any where commanded Infants to be baptized. Now it might seem strange that a Matter of such Consequence should be omitted in the Scripture, if it were a necessary Duty.

To this I answer, *First*, The Scripture commands whatsoever may be deduced from it by good and necessary Consequence. Now it is plain in Scripture, that Infants are Disciples; again, it is plain in Scripture, that Disciples ought to be baptized. It is plain in Scripture, that Infants are Members of the Church; again, it is plain in Scripture, that the Members of the Church ought to be solemnly admitted into it by Baptism. And this is plain Scripture-Proof, supposing that the Scriptures were written for Men who have Reason to deduce Consequences from Promises. For it is a known and a certain Rule, That whatsoever is drawn from Scripture by true and solid Reason, is Scripture.

Secondly, I answer, That it lies upon them to shew where Christ hath excluded Infants; not upon us to shew where they are

are expressly admitted: The Reason of it is, because it is clear, that Infants were once admitted to be Members of the visible Church by Circumcision. Now if Christ hath repealed such a Privilege as this, let them first produce this Repealing Act, which they can never do: And next, let them shew what greater and better Privilege Christ hath bestowed on Infants instead of it, or else they will make him to be *darns Deus Infantum*; and that our Children, under the Gospel, are in a far worse Estate than the *Jews* Children under the Law.

Thirdly, It is certain, that the Apostles knew nothing of the Repeal of this Privilege: They could not think that Christ had excluded Infants from being any longer of his Church, when they thought themselves bound to observe the *Jewish* Customs, and to continue all the Observances of the *Jewish* Church; yea, and that after they had baptized many Thousand People.

Yea again, *Fourthly*, We find that those of the *Jews*, who believed on Christ, were yet very much offended at the Neglect of Circumcision. This is clear from that Speech of the *Jewish* Christians to St. Paul, *Acts* 21. 20, 21. They said unto him, Thou seest, Brother, how many Thousands

The Doctrine of

sands of Jews there are which believe, and they are all zealous of the Law: And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses, saying, that they ought not to circumcise their Children. To remove which Prejudice, he himself observed the Rites of Purification, prescribed by the Law of *Moses*, and upon the same Misprision had before circumcised *Timothy*, as we find it, *Acts* 16. 3. So that certainly *St. Paul* thought not any Privileges of the *Jewish Church* to be repealed by their becoming Christians, but that they might, according to the Law of *Moses*, circumcise their Infants, as being Members of the Church; and therefore they ought to baptize them, this being as much required by the Gospel, as the other was by the Law. These Things therefore being well consider'd, we may see Reason and Authority enough to continue our Practice of baptizing Infants, unless they can bring some Place of Scripture that doth exclude them from this Ordinance.

But then again they object, *Thirdly*, That such a Place they can, and do produce; and that is, *Matth.* 28. 19. where our Saviour gives Commission to his Disciples, *To go teach all Nations, baptizing them.* Here it is clearly express'd, that they are first to be taught before they are to be bap-

baptized; and consequently Infants, who are incapable of being taught, are thereby rendered incapable of being baptized.

For Answer to this, you must consider, *First*, That there is a vast Difference between a Church in its first Institution, and a Church in its Progress and Continuation. The Apostles, who received this Commission immediately from the Mouth of Christ himself, were sent to frame a Church out of the Heathen World, who had never known the True God, nor heard of the Name of Christ Jesus, and therefore were to be instructed in his Doctrine before they could be baptized in his Name. It had been a strange preposterous Course, if Men grown up to Years, and the Use of Reason, should be baptized into the Profession of Christ, before ever they had heard who this Christ was, and what was that Belief into which they were baptized. But when once they were thus taught and baptized, it is more than barely conjectural, that their Infants were made Partakers of the same Ordinance, from this, that some whole Families are said to have been baptized; wherein they must be unreasonably bold who will deny there were any Infants, or Children, as incapable to receive the Knowledge of so high a Mystery, as In-

fants are. But now we are not to lay the Foundations of a new Church, but to build upon the old. Indeed, were we to convert an Infidel, Reason and Religion would shew, that we should instruct him before we baptize him. But the Children of Believing Parents are Members of the Church of Christ by their Birth-right; and therefore have a Right to Baptism long before they have a Capacity for Instruction. So saith the Apostle, *1 Cor. 7. 14. That the Children of a believing Parent are holy.* Now to be Holy, signifies to be separated unto God; and certainly if they be separated to God in their State and Condition, they ought to be solemnly dedicated unto him in the Ordinance of Baptism: *For they are not unclean, i. e. they are not in the same State with the Children of Heathens and Infidels: But they are Holy, and therefore Members of the Church (unless we would imagine a Generation of Holy Persons without the Church); and therefore are they capable of being baptized before they are capable of being instructed.*

Secondly, Consider if our Saviour had sent his Disciples to convert the Gentiles to the Law of Moses, what other Words could he have used to them, but go teach

all Nations, circumcising them. If therefore such Words would not imply, but that the Infants of profelyted Heathens ought to have been circumcised before they were taught and instructed in the Law of *Moses*, no more do our Saviour's Words imply, that the Infants of Believing *Gentiles* ought not to be baptized before they are instructed in the Faith of Christ : For if Christ had used such Words, none would have imagined that the Infants of profelyted *Gentiles* were to be excluded by them from Circumcision : And therefore neither can there be any Reason to imagine, from the Words as they lie, that our Saviour did intend by them to exclude the Infants of Christians from Baptism.

Again, *Thirdly*, We must consider what Apprehensions the Apostles, to whom our Saviour speaks, had concerning the Church Estate of Infants in their Time. Did they not look upon them as Members of the Church then ? It is plain that they did, since they were all circumcised. And can we with Reason think, that when our Saviour bade them gather whole Nations into his Church, they should imagine that Infants must now be excluded out of it by a new Example, since they were all included in the Church

under the Dispensation which was in use among them? This is highly improbable. And therefore we have all Reason to conclude, that when our Saviour bids them teach and baptize, they understood no other, but that they were to bring the *Gentiles* into the same State of a Church in which the *Jews* were before, that they might enjoy the same Privileges or greater; the Adult to be taught and baptized, the Infants of these to become Church-Members upon the Faith and Profession of their Parents; just as it was before in the Case of Proselytes: And this very Sense the Word *μαθητεῖν* doth well bear, for it signifies to *make Disciples*, as well as to teach; and, as I have before proved, that Children are Disciples, so it is clear that our Saviour himself chose Disciples before he had taught them, and that Scholars are admitted, not because they have learned, but that they may learn. And this is in Answer to that Objection:

Fourthly, It may be again objected, That Baptism is an engaging Sign: But how can Infants covenant and engage with God?

To this I answer, *First*, That certainly our Children are as much capacitated to enter into Covenant with God, as were the Children of the *Jews*; and that Circumcision

circumcision was as much an engaging Seal of the Covenant as now Baptism is. If therefore they condemn Infant Baptism, because Infants cannot enter into Covenant with God, they do but thereby pretend to be wiser than God, and tell him he may possibly be a Loser by transacting with those, who perhaps hereafter may plead Nonage, and that they could not be obliged by any Thing transacted in their Minority.

But, *Secondly*, I answer, It is true that Baptism is an engaging Sign between God and the Baptized, whereby they enter into Covenant with God, and He with them : But though they cannot personally vow nor stipulate, yet they may have Sponsors and Sureties to undertake this for them. For Parents, and those who are appointed by Parents, have certainly a Right to bind and engage Children in this Baptismal Covenant. It is but a natural Right they have over them to bind them to the Terms of any Covenant and Agreement, especially such as shall be for their Benefit and Advantage. I shewed you before out of *Deut. 29. 10, 11, 12, 13.* that they were to enter their Children into Covenant as well as themselves. And though it be the Custom of our Church for those who are not the Pa-

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rents to engage for the Child, yet their Stipulation is in this Case valid and obligatory ; because they are hereunto appointed by their Parents, who have a natural Right over their Children, and make these their Representatives.

But some will say, and it is commonly objected, but not more commonly, than very ignorantly, that these Sureties promise more than they can perform. They promise, that the Child presented to Baptism *shall forsake the Devil and all his Works, and renounce the Poms and Vanities of this World, and continue Christ's faithful Soldier and Servant unto its Life's End.* But this is not in their Power to effect.

To this I answer, It is not they that promise these Things for themselves, neither indeed do they promise that the Child shall do them ; but it is the Child that promiseth these Things by them. It is not their Duty, by Vertue of that Promise, but his. Indeed, they ought to contribute their best Help and Assistance hereunto, and that is all that is incumbent on them : Which, if they have done, and the Child prove notoriously wicked, they have not thereby broken any Covenant, but only he himself ; for in entering into those Holy Engagements they bore the Person of the Infant, and their Stipulation

Stipulation is legally his : So that they leave him obliged to perform what in his Name is promised ; which, if he performs, eternal Life will be his Reward ; if not, eternal Death. They lay this Engagement upon the Child (as Parents, and those deputed by Parents, may do) leaving it to him to fulfill the Covenant, or to transgress it at his own Peril.

And thus, I hope, I have, to all sober and rational Persons, made it sufficiently clear, that *Infant Baptism* is lawfully used in the Church of Christ ; and that those Things which are objected against it, are but of small Moment, being grounded either upon Mistakes or Falshoods.

Thirdly, Let us therefore proceed to the Third General propounded, which was to shew you the various Ends and Uses of Baptism. Its Use is Threefold :

First, It is a solemn Way of entering into the Fellowship of the Church : For whosoever are Partakers of it are reckoned visible Members of the Church, and have an Interest in all the Prayers of the Saints for their Brethren on Earth. And this ought, by every sober Christian, to be esteemed a great Benefit, that his Children, by their being baptized, are wrapt up in the Prayers of all the Saints throughout the World, and so daily presented

sented to God, tho' to them unknown. Baptism is the solemn enrolling our Names in the Register-Book of the Church visible, where we stand listed under Christ *the Captain of our Salvation* ; engaging our selves to maintain a truceless War against all the Enemies of his Glory and our Happiness.

Secondly, Another Use of this Ordinance is to be a Seal added by God to confirm to us the Fidelity of his Covenant of Grace ; that as Circumcision was a Seal of the Covenant to the *Jews*, so Baptism is to Christians : For in this Holy Institution God gives us a visible Sign and Pledge of the Truth of his Promise, that he will as certainly save us if we believe, as our Bodies have been sprinkled with Baptismal Water.

Thirdly, Another Use of it is to be a Sign and a Representation. And thus it represents divers Things.

First, The Original Filth and Pollution of our Natures ; for Washing doth denote Defilement. We all came into the World with fowl and unclean Natures, the Sinks of all Manner of Filth and Pollution. Parents convey a sad and necessary Patrimony of Original Sin unto all their Posterity ; yea, tho' they themselves be sanctified and cleansed, yet their Offspring is

is born with this Native Taint, as a circumcised Father begat an uncircumcised Son, and as pure Grain sown in the Earth produceth Grain wrapt up in Husks and Chaff. And therefore, as they should rejoice that God hath given them to see of the Fruit of their Bodies, so they should mourn to think that they have brought into the World a Creature despoil'd of the Image of God, and thereby wofully inclined to all Manner of Vice and Wickedness ; *a Child of Wrath, and an Heir of Hell.*

Secondly, It signifies to us the purifying and cleansing Virtue of the Blood of Christ, which is represented unto us by the Baptismal Water : For as that cleanseth the Body, so *the Sprinkling of the Blood of Christ cleanseth from all Sin*, 1 John 1. 7. *and purgeth the Conscience from dead Works*, Hebr. 9. 14.

Thirdly, It signifies to us the Nature of sanctifying and renewing Grace ; which, as Water washes away bodily Filth, so this doth the Defilements, the Vices, and evil Habits of the Soul : And therefore Sanctification is often set forth by the Similitude of Washing. *Isaiah 1. 16, 17. Wash ye, make you clean, cease to do Evil, learn to do Well.* And, *Ezek. 36. 25. Then will I sprinkle clean Water upon you, and you shall be*
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be clean from all your Filthiness. And thus in many other Places.

Now, tho' these Significations cannot be of Use for the present to the Infant, because it wants the Use of Reason to reflect upon them, yet they may have very great Influence hereafter, when he is grown up to more mature Age : Yea, and to us who are present, and Spectators of this Holy Ordinance, the very Sight of the Sacramental Action should lively suggest to our Minds these Spiritual Things that are signified thereby, how that *we who have been baptized into Christ were buried with him by Baptism ; that like as Christ was raised from Death, so we also should walk in Newness of Life, as the Apostle speaks, Rom. 6. 3, 4.*

Let us not therefore entertain any slight Thoughts of this great and holy Ordinance. Indeed, 'tis too seldom that we seriously consider what an obliging Covenant we have entred into in our Baptism ; but, as if all the Promises of forsaking the Devil and his Works, of renouncing the Inticements of our own Lusts, and the Allurements of the World, were all written on the Water that sprinkled us, and wiped off together with it, we have lived not only careless of, but even contrary to our Baptismal Vows and En-

Engagement. And to conclude this, whensoever we attend this Holy Ordinance, the Administration of this Sacrament, we ought to renew our Covenant with God; and again, to give up our selves unto him with more unconquerable Resolutions of being his, and wholly devoted to his Service, than formerly. So that though the Seal be not applied to us, yet to us may be confirmed the Benefits of the Covenant by Vertue of that Seal, which in our Infancy was applied to our Body, and is now, by our Faith, applied to our Souls.

Having thus at large confirmed to you the Lawfulness of *Infant Baptism*, and removed those Prejudices and Cavils that lay against it; I shall now return more narrowly to consider the Text, wherein we have (as I formerly told you) two Propositions: The One is, That the End of Christ's giving himself for the Church, was *to sanctify and cleanse it*. And, Secondly, That the Means to sanctify and cleanse the Church, is by *the Washing of the Water and the Word*.

It is the latter of these I shall insist on. Wherein Two Things only require a brief Explication:

First,

The Doctrine of

First, What is meant by the Washing of Water.

Secondly, What by the Word.

As to the *First, Washing of Water*, may be understood either literally or allusively. If we take it literally, so it signifies Baptism; and the Meaning is plainly, that we are *sanctified and cleansed by Baptism*.

If we take it allusively, so this *Washing of Water* denotes to us the Manner of the Spirits sanctifying and cleansing the Soul; for as Water cleanseth the Filth of the Body, so doth the Power of Divine Grace purify the Soul from its vicious Filth and Pollutions: But certainly, the literal Sense is here the best; nor ought we to depart from it, in any Text of Scripture, without apparent Reason and cogent Necessity. For here are Two Means of our Sanctification mentioned, *Water*, and the *Word*: And to make both these effectual, the inward Influence of the Holy Ghost must concur, without which they will never attain their End.

1st. By the *Word*, may be understood Two Things: Either the very Words used in the Form of Baptizing, and prescribed by our Saviour, *Matth. 28. 19.* where

he commands his Apostle *to baptize in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* So that, according to this, the Meaning of the Apostle is, that the Washing of Baptism, joined with the Words of Institution, is the Means appointed by Christ for the sanctifying and cleansing of his Church. And indeed, towards Infants there is no other Means appointed, nor are they capable of any other Ordinance.

Or, *2dly.* By the *Word* here is meant, the Preaching of the whole Word and Will of God : And this I judge most probable ; for so the Sense runs plain, that the Two great Means which Christ hath appointed for the sanctifying of his Church, are the Administration of the Sacrament, and preaching of the Gospel.

Concerning the Influence that the Words hath in our Sanctification, I shall not now speak. 'Tis the Seed by which we are begotten, 1 Pet. 1. 23. *Born not of corruptible Seed, but incorruptible by the Word of God.* 'Tis the Milk by which we are nourish'd, 1 Pet. 2. 2. *Desire the sincere Milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby :* 'Tis the Principle of our Spiritual Being, and 'tis the Spiritual Food of our Souls, an effectual Instrument in the Hand of the Holy Ghost, both to beget, and to increase

increase Grace in us : And therefore our Saviour prays, *John 17. 17. Sanctify them through thy Truth ; thy Word is Truth.*

But the Subject which I now intend to prosecute, is concerning Baptism, and that this Ordinance is appointed by Christ for our Sanctification.

And here observe, that to be sanctified imports, in the proper Signification of it, no other than to be appointed, separated, or dedicated to God. And therefore, in Scripture, whatsoever is set apart for the Use and Service of God, whether Persons, or Places, or Things, they are said to be holy, or to be sanctified to the Lord. So the First-born are said to be *sanctified to the Lord*, *Exod. 13. 2.* And Aaron, and his Sons, to be *consecrated, and sanctified to minister unto the Lord*, *Exod. 28. 41.* And so for Places, Moses was commanded to sanctify the Mountain *Sinai*, that is, to make it Holy, by setting it apart only for God's Appearance on it, and that the People might not come near to touch it, *Exod. 19. 23.* Thus the Tabernacle, and afterwards the Temple, are said to be sanctified, *Numb. 7. 1.* for being set apart only for the Worship and Service of God, they were thereby made relatively Holy. So we read, that the Ground on which *Moses* stood is by God him-

himself called *Holy*, *Exod.* 3. 5. And Mount *Tabor*, on which our Saviour was gloriously transfigured, is by the Apostle called *the Holy Mount*, *2 Pet.* 1. 18. Because of the Special Appearance of God in those Places, which did then hallow and consecrate them. And then as for Things, a Man is said to *sanctify his House to be holy unto the Lord*, *Levit.* 27. 14. and to *sanctify his Field*, *Ver.* 16. when the Rent of the one, and the Profits of the other were devoted unto God, for the Maintenance of his Service and Servants. And so in innumerable other Places, the Word *Sanctify* is thus used, and the import of it is no other, than to signify the Dedication of a Person, Thing, Place or Time unto God.

Now there are Two Ways of Dedication unto God, whereby his Title takes Place, and what is so devoted, becomes his.

The One external by Men, as in the Instances before cited ; whereby there was no Change at all wrought in the Nature of the Thing thus dedicated, but only a Change in the Relation and Propriety of it. As in a Field devoted to God, there was no other Change but only in relation to the Owner ; God himself becoming the Proprietor, and receiving
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the Increase of it by his immediate Servants and Ministers. And thus the Piety of our Ancestors hath sanctified the Tenth Part of the Increase of the Land unto God for the Maintenance of his Worship.

The other Dedication is internal, and wrought by God himself. And thus he is said to separate or dedicate Persons to himself, when by the effectual Operation of the Holy Ghost upon them, he endows them with those Habits which enable them to do him Service. Not to heap up many Places we have both of these, *Acts 13. 2. Separate now unto me Barnabas and Saul, for the Work whereunto I have called them.* Here is their external Separation : They were to be dedicated, to be sanctified, or made holy Persons by the Church. *Separate unto me ;* that is, set these Men apart, and appoint them by a solemn Mission for my Work and Service in the Ministry. Here is likewise their internal Dedication, whereby God had set them apart for himself by the Gifts and Graces of his Spirit wrought in them : *Separate them to the Work whereunto I have called them,* i. e. whereunto I have inwardly both inclined, and fitted, and furnish'd them.

Now as there is this twofold Dedication or Separation, so there is also a twofold Sanctification.

First, There is an External, Relative, or Ecclesiastical Sanctification, which is nothing else but the devoting or giving up of a Thing, or Person, unto God, by those who have a Power so to do.

Secondly, There is an Internal, Real and Spiritual Sanctification : And in this Sense a Man is said to be sanctified, when the Holy Ghost doth infuse into his Soul the Habits of Divine Grace, and makes him Partaker of the Divine Nature, whereby he is inwardly qualified to glorify God in an holy Life. I suppose by this which hath been said, the meanest Capacity may well apprehend the Difference between these Two Kinds of Sanctification or Separation unto God.

Now in applying this Distinction to Baptism, and to shew you how it is that Baptism doth sanctify, I shall lay down these following Propositions.

First, Baptism is the immediate Means of our external and relative Sanctification unto God. By this Holy Sacrament, all that are Partakers of it are dedicated and separated unto him. There are (if I may so express it) but Two Regiments of Men, the one is of the World, the other is of

gion, without which there is no Salvation attainable : So that they do visibly belong to the Church and Kingdom of Satan, who are either trained up in Heathenish Idolatry, *Mahometan* Stupidity, or *Jewish* Obstinacy ; or else those who revolt from the Christian Profession to embrace any of these. Those who are of the World, but yet more invisibly, are all such Persons, who, though they make a Profession of the Name and Doctrine of Christ, yet through Hypocrisy, or other Sins, reject that Christ whom they profess, denying him in their Works whom they own in their Words, maintaining no vital nor spiritual Communion with him.

From this Distinction it follows, 1st, That all that are of the visible Church of Christ Jesus, are taken out of the World ; so that it may truly be said of them, that they are not of the World. I cannot indeed deny but that too many, yea, possibly the major part of the Church visible of Jesus Christ, may still appertain invisibly to the Kingdom of the Devil, which is the World : And if any of those who profess the Name of Christ, fall into any publick and notorious Sin, they ought to be cut off by the Censure of Excommunication; and 'till they give

Satisfaction by Repentance, are to be reputed as Heathens and Publicans. But yet this is certain, that 'till Sentence pass upon them they are to be look'd upon as Members of the visible Church, and not visibly of the World : Yea farther, Excommunication it self doth not absolutely and simply cut Men off from being Members of the Church of Christ. For they who are under an Ordinance of the Church for their Edification, are certainly still Members of the Church. But as those who are outlawed are debarr'd of the Benefits and Privileges of the State in which they live, and of which they are Subjects; so Excommunication, being a Spiritual Outlawry, deprives Persons who lye under it, of the Privileges of the Church, and renders them as incapable of the visible Communion of Christians, as if they did visibly appertain to the malignant Church and the Kingdom of Satan.

Secondly, Hence it follows, that all those who are Members of the visible Church may truly be called Saints, and Members of Christ, and the Children and People of God; because, by being taken into the Church, they are taken out of the World, and so become God's Portion, and the Lot of his Inheritance.

Deut. 32. 9. The Lord's Portion is his People, Jacob is the Lot of his Inheritance. Not that they are all so in an Internal, Spiritual, and Saving Manner; would to God they were, and that all that are of Israel were Israel, as the Apostle speaks, Rom. 9. 6. but only because though many of them are Hypocrites, and many more profane, yet they may bear these Titles from the external Relation wherein they now stand to Christ, by making Profession of his Name and Religion. I look upon the Christian Church, now under the Times of the Gospel, to be in the same Capacity, and to stand in the same Relation towards God, as the Jewish Church did under the Law. But now clear it is, that in the most corrupt State of the Jewish Church, God still owned them for his People; Jer. 4. 22. My People is foolish, they have not known me. And, Isaiah 1. 3, 4. My People doth not consider; a sinful Nation, a People laden with Iniquities, a Seed of Evil Doers: And yet notwithstanding these great Complaints of their universal Wickedness, as you find throughout that whole Chapter, yet are they God's People. My People, and yet a People laden with Iniquity; My Children, and yet a Seed of Evil Doers, Children that are Corrupters: Yea, and in the New Testament we find Sancti-

Sanctification and Holiness ascribed to those who were never otherwise sanctified than by their external Separation from the World, and Profession of the Doctrine of Christ. St. Paul directs his Epistle to the whole Church of *Corinth* as to Saints; *to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, and called to be Saints*, 1 Cor. i. 2. and it was the common Beginning of all his Epistles: Yet were there some in this Church of *Corinth* that had not the Knowledge of God, that denied the Resurrection, and were grossly guilty of foul and flagitious Crimes, as he himself witnesseth against them, and for which he sharply reproves them in that Epistle. Saints they are called only because they were visible Church-Members, and made a Profession of the Christian Faith and Name.

Neither is it easy to be conceived that all those Saints, whose Bowels *Philemon* refreshed, whose Feet the Widows or Deaconesses washed, who had Share of the Collections and Contributions of the Church, that they were all such as were internally united unto Christ by a Saving Faith: Or, that when *Saul* persecuted the Church, and shut up the Saints in Prison, his Rage and Madness look'd no farther how to find them out, than
merely

merely by the Profession of the Name of Jesus: For surely he had not then the Gift of discerning between sincere and rotten Professors. *Acts* 26. 10. *Many of the Saints did I shut up in Prison; and who they were is clear: Acts* 9. 2. *All that were of that Way*, that is, who professed the Name of Christ Jesus. Some are said to be redeemed, who yet certainly were never better than Ecclesiastical Saints, for after it is spoken of them, that they *denied the Lord who bought them*, *2 Pet.* 2. 1. And some are said to be sanctified, who yet are supposed to sin unpardonably; *Hebr.* 10. 29. *accounting the Blood of the Covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy Thing*. These Places do irrefragably prove, that in Scripture Language those are called Saints, and sanctified, who were Members of the Church of Christ, and thereby federally or relatively holy.

Again, they are called *the Children of God*, and *the Sons of God*. So *Gen.* 6. 2. *The Sons of God saw the Daughters of Men; that is, they who were of the Church, and made Profession of the true Service and Worship of God, saw the Daughters of those who were of the World profane and wicked Idolaters, by marrying of whom they were also perverted and drawn from the true Worship of God.*

So

So *Dent. 14. 1.* it is spoken to the *Israelites* in general, *Ye are the Children of the Lord your God.* And yet with many of them, saith the Apostle, *God was not well pleased, but slew them in the Wilderness:* There were among them Murmurers, Schismatics, and Rebels, and they were an hard-hearted and a stiff-neck'd People under all the miraculous Dispensations of God towards them, as their Guide and Governour *Moses* often complains. And the Apostle *St. Paul*, alluding to this Place of *Deuteronomy*, tells the *Galatians*, Chap. 3. 26. *Ye are all the Children of God by Faith in Christ Jesus:* And yet the Heresy of holding the Necessity of Judaical Observations, wofully prevailed among them, so that they were generally infected, nay, bewitched with it: And yet an external Profession of the Name and Doctrine of Christ, is, in the Apostle's Judgment, sufficient to give them all the honourable Stile of *the Children of God.* So again, *Rom. 9. 4.* the Apostle tells us, that to the *Israelites*, as they were a Church, *pertained the Adoption.* Now Adoption is making Men Sons of God; yet certainly they did not all of them enjoy the heavenly and effectual Adoption, which would bring them all to the heavenly and glorious Inheritance: But only they were

were the Children of God, being separated from the World, and brought under an Ecclesiastical Oeconomy, and Dispensation of Holy Ordinances.

Again, to be Members of the Church visible, is sufficient to style Men, *Members of Christ*: So our Saviour himself speaks of some *Branches in him that bear not Fruit*, John 15. 2. And so *Rom. 11. 17.* the Branches of the true Olive are said to have been broken off, and others ingrafted in their stead. Certainly *this Vine*, and *this Olive*, is Christ; and these barren, and therefore broken Branches are *Members of his Body*; not indeed living Members united unto him by the Band of a Saving Faith, whereby they might draw Sap and Nourishment from him, for such shall never be broken off, nor burnt; but yet they are in Christ, and belong unto Christ, as his Members by an Ecclesiastical or Political Infiton, as they are Parts and Members of the visible Church.

And thus, I suppose, I have made it sufficiently clear unto you, that all who are taken out of the World into the visible Church of Christ, may, according to the Phrase and Expressions of Scripture, be called Saints, the Children and People of God, and Members of Christ.

But

But now, *Thirdly*, To bring this home to our present Subject of Baptism, from all this it evidently follows, that those who are baptized, may in this Ecclesiastical and Relative Sense be truly called *Saints, the Children of God, and Members of Christ*, and thereupon *Inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven*. Doubtless, so far forth Baptism is a Means of Sanctification, as it is the solemn Admission of Persons into the visible Church, as it separates them from the World, and from all false Religions in it, and brings them out of the visible Kingdom of the Devil into the visible Kingdom of Jesus Christ. For if all that are admitted into the visible Church, are thereby (as I have proved to you) dignified with the Title of *Saints*, and *the Children of God*, then by Baptism, which is the solemn Way of admitting them into the Church, they may, with very good Reason, be said to be made *Saints, the Children of God, and Members of Christ*. But this is only a Relative Sanctity, not a Real; and many such Saints and sanctified Men there are who shall never enter into Heaven, but by their wicked Lives forfeit and lose that blessed Inheritance to which they were called. Many there are who are Saints by their Separation from Paganism and Judaism into Fellowship

ship with the visible Church ; but they are not Saints by their Separation from wicked and ungodly Men into a Spiritual Fellowship with Christ. And yet to such Saints as these, all the Ordinances of the Church are due, 'till for their notorious Wickedness they be cut off from that Body, by the due Execution of the Sentence of Excommunication. Such a Baptismal Regeneration as this is, must needs be acknowledged by all that will not wilfully shut their Eyes against the clear Evidence of Scripture: From which I have before brought plentiful Proofs to confirm it: Yet let me add one more, and that shall be *Gal. 3. 26. 27. You are all the Children of God by Faith in Christ Jesus*, i. e. by believing and professing his Doctrine. *For as many* (saith the Apostle) *as have been baptized into Christ*, i. e. baptized into the Religion of Christ, and in his Name, *have put on Christ*, i. e. have professed him, and thereby put upon your selves his Name, being called *Christians*. And this putting on of Christ in Baptism, the Apostle makes a Ground to assert them to be all *the Children of God*. But still it must be remembered, that this Sanctification, Regeneration and Adoption, conferr'd upon us at our Admission into the visible Church, is Ex-
ternal

ternal and Ecclesiastical : And though it alone will suffice to the Salvation of Infants, because they are thereby as holy as their State can make them capable of, yet it will not suffice to the Salvation of grown and adult Persons, if they contradict it by the Course of a wicked Life. For our Saviour hath told us, that *the Children of the Kingdom* shall themselves, many of them, *be cast into outer Darkness*, Matth. 8. 12.

And thus much for the first Position, that Baptism is a Means of our external and relative Sanctification unto God, because by it we are separated from the visible Kingdom of the Devil, and brought into the visible Kingdom of Christ, and are devoted by Vow and Covenant unto the Service of God.

Secondly, Another Position is this, That Baptism is not so the Means of an internal and real Sanctification, as if all to whom it is administred were thereby spiritually renewed, and made Partakers of the Holy Ghost in his saving Graces. Though an External and Ecclesiastical Sanctification be effected by Baptism *Ex opere operato*, by the mere Administration of that Holy Sacrament, yet so is not an internal and habitual Sanctification : And that whether we respect adult Persons, or Infants.

First,

First, For adult Persons, we have a famous and uncontrollable Instance in the Baptism of *Simon Magnus*, who *believed* upon the preaching of the Gospel; for so it is said, *Acts* 8. 13. and upon the Profession of Faith in Jesus Christ, was admitted to the Holy Ordinance of Baptism; yet *Verse* 23. *St. Peter* tells him, that *he was still in the Gall of Bitterness, and in the Bonds of Iniquity*; in the same State of Sin and Misery, and as much a Blackmore when he came out of the Laver, as he was before he entred into it. And,

Secondly, For Infants, it is not easy to be conceived what inward Work can in an ordinary Manner pass upon them: And to feign an extraordinary and miraculous Work there is no Necessity, since their Salvation may be safe without it. What the miraculous Grace of God is able to do, is not fit to be disputed. But surely we have very little Reason to think that there are any real Habits of supernatural Grace infused into the Souls of Infants, since neither are they ordinarily capable of it, nor of exerting any spiritual Acts by it. However, Baptism was not instituted to any such Purpose, that it should be an Instrument of working a real Change upon Infants. For neither

can it work this Change by any immediate and proper Efficiency, since the Washing of the Body cannot thus affect the Soul, nor infuse any gracious Habits into it which it self hath not; neither can it work morally, by way of Suasion and Argument, because Infants have not the Use of Reason to apprehend any such. Again, if this Baptismal Regeneration be real, by the Infusion of habitual Grace, how comes it to pass that the greater Part of those who have received it, lead profane and unholy Lives, and too too many perish in their Sins? They who have the Seed of God in them, shall never sin unto Death; and the Perseverance of those who are inwardly and effectually sanctified, is safe, and certain. For surely, true Grace is saving, and true and saving Grace is the Effect of our Election unto eternal Life, for *whom he did predestinate, them he also called*, Rom. 8. 30. And therefore I judge it unsound Doctrine to affirm, that Baptism doth confer real Sanctification upon all Infants, as well as upon some Adult Persons who are made Partakers of it.

But here may some say, If Baptism doth not confer a real and internal Regeneration to Infants, who partake thereof, how then is it that the Church hath appointed a Prayer in the Office of Baptism, wherein

we bless God that it hath pleased him to regenerate the baptized Infant with his Holy Spirit ?

To this I answer ; That the Baptismal Regeneration of Infants, is External and Ecclesiastical : They are regenerated, as they are incorporated into the Church of Christ ; for this is called *Regeneration*, *Matth. 19. 28. Ye that have followed me in the Regeneration, shall sit upon twelve Thrones, judging the twelve Tribes of Israel.* Where (though some read the Words otherwise, *In the Regeneration ye shall sit upon twelve Thrones* ; meaning thereby the Day of Judgment, and the last Renewing of all Things) ; yet I see no enforcing Necessity to alter the common and usual Reading, *Ye who have followed me in the Regeneration, i. e. in Planting my Church, which is the Renewing of the World : And therefore the Apostle, 2 Cor. 5. 17. saying, that old Things are pass'd away, all Things are become new,* is thought to allude unto the Prophet *Isaiah 65. 17. Behold, I create new Heavens, and a new Earth, and the former shall not be remembred.* And this State of the Gospel was by the Jews frequently called *the World to come* : And so likewise is it called by the Apostle, *Heb. 2. 5. Unto the Angels hath he not put in Subjection the World to come, whereof we speak.* To be
admitted

admitted therefore by Baptism into the Church of Christ, is to be admitted into the State of Regeneration, or the Renewing of all Things, called therefore *the Washing of Regeneration*, Tit. 3. 5.

But how then are Infants said in Baptism, to be regenerated by the Holy Spirit, if he doth not inwardly sanctify them in and by that Ordinance?

I answer; Because the whole Oeconomy, and Dispensation of the Kingdom of Christ, is managed by the Spirit of Christ: So that those who are internally sanctified, are regenerated by his effectual Operation; and those who are only externally sanctified, are regenerated by his publick Institution. Infants therefore are in Baptism regenerated by the Holy Ghost, because the Holy Spirit of God appoints this Ordinance to receive them into the visible Church, which is the regenerate Part and State of the World.

That's the second Position, That Baptism is not so the Means of Sanctification, that all, to whom it is administred, must thereby be made Partakers of the Holy Ghost in his Saving Graces.

Thirdly, It is not so the Means of Sanctification, as if none could be internally and really sanctified, who are necessarily deprived of that holy Ordinance: Yea,

indeed all that are converted from other Religions unto Christianity, must first believe and make Profession of that Faith, before they can be admitted unto the Sacrament of Baptism; and doubtless many Thousands were by the Apostles converted, not only to the Christian Profession, but to a Christian and holy Life, before they were baptized. We well know, that in the Primitive Times very many did delay their Baptism till their declining Age, out of an erroneous Opinion, that all voluntary Sins after Baptism were unpardonable; and yet it would be very uncharitable to judge, that none of these were sanctified, and inwardly renewed by the Holy Ghost. Yea, and perhaps to beat down this misgrounded Practice, some on the other Hand held, that Baptism was of absolute and indispensable Necessity to eternal Life; which was to cure a Mistake in Practice, by a most grievous Mistake in Doctrine; yet this their Opinion they grounded on *John 3. 5. Except a Man be born of Water, and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*: Whence they inferred, that Baptism was as absolutely necessary to eternal Life, as the Renovation of the Soul by Divine Grace; so that they pass'd a peremptory Doom of Exclusion from the Kingdom of Heaven

ven upon all, both Infants and Adult, that died without the Seal of this Institution, although it were through no Default of their own, but by insuperable Necessity; only they excepted such as died Martyrs, whose Baptism, by their own Blood, they thought might serve instead of Baptism by Water. Thus, as St. *Cyprian* in one of his Epistles relates it, was determined by an *African* Council; to which Determination he also gives his Assent. And St. *Austin* (called therefore, *Durus Pater Infantum*) seems, in many Passages of his Works, to be thus rigid in giving Sentence against all who died unbaptized; although probably afterwards the Severity of his Opinion relented. For, in his fourth Book against *Donatus*, he tells us, That not only suffering for the Name of Christ may supply the Want of Baptism, *Sed etiam Fides, Conversioq; Cordis, si fortè ad celebrandum Mystrium Baptismi in angustiis temporum succurri non potest*; “but Faith also, and the Conversion of the Heart to God, if through “unavoidable Necessity we cannot celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism.” But whosoever were the Authors or Maintainers of this Opinion, it is certainly unwarrantable, and uncharitable, and contrary to the Judgment of the higher Primitive

Times; who, if they had thought that no Person could possibly be sanctified or saved without Baptism, would not certainly have stinted the Administration of it to their *Dies Baptismatum*, two special Seasons of the Year, *Easter* and *Whitsunday*; nor would many of them have deferr'd their own Baptism to the End of their Days: For how could they be sure that no Casualty should in the mean Time intervene, and cut off all Opportunities of receiving it? Baptism then is not of such absolute Necessity as a Means, that none can be saved without it; neither doth our Saviour in those Words so assert it: For we must distinguish between being inevitably deprived of the Opportunity of Baptism, and a wilful Contempt of it. And of this latter must the Words be understood. He that contemns being born again of Baptism, and out of that Contempt finally neglects it, he shall never enter into the Kingdom of God. But for others, who are necessarily depriv'd of that Ordinance, the Want of it shall not in the least prejudice their Salvation; for it is a stated Rule, *Non absentia, sed contemptus Sacramentorum reum facit.*

Fourthly,

Fourthly, The *4th* and *last* Position is this, That Baptism is an ordinary Means appointed by Christ for the real and effectual Sanctification of his Church : For this is the great End of all Gospel-Ordinances, that through them might be conveyed that Grace which might purify the Heart, and cleanse the Life. And though I do not affirm, that Baptism doth effect this in all to whom it is rightly applied, (not in Infants, who while such are incapable of that Work ; nor in many Adult Persons, who, though baptized, may remain still in the Gall of Bitterness, and Bond of Iniquity ;) yet this I do affirm and maintain, that there is no Reason to doubt the Salvation of any, who, by this holy Ordinance, are consecrated unto God, until by their actual and wilful Sinning they thrust away from them those Benefits which God intends them by it. And indeed, who so doth but seriously consider the Vows that are upon him, and the solemn Engagements he hath made to be the Lord's, will find a pressing Force upon his Soul, unless he be lost to all Modesty and Ingenuity, urging him really to fulfil what he hath so justly and so sacredly promised. No Argument can be more prevalent to enforce an holy Life, than

when the Spirit of God shall bring home to our Considerations the Oath that we have taken to be God's, and to oppose all the Enemies that oppose his Glory, and our Salvation. When we shall be reminded, that as long as we continue in a State of Sin, we live in Perjury, having given our most serious Promise to God to yield Obedience to his Will and Laws, and to live as becomes his Servants and Soldiers.

I beseech you therefore, O Christians ! consider seriously with your selves, what Bonds and Obligation lies upon you, that you have vowed and covenanted to be the Lord's ; a Vow that is binding upon your Souls, and which, if you do not fulfil, will bind you over to everlasting Condemnation. Sit down, and think with your selves, what you stand obliged to, and either renounce your wicked Life, or renounce your Baptism. Deal ingenuously, rescind the Deed, and profess to all the World, that you look not upon your selves as listed under Christ's Banner, nor engaged to be his Servants and Soldiers, or else live as becomes Christians. What shall your Names be in the Register of Christ, and yet your Souls be in the Hands of the Devil ? Will you carry his Ensign
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in your Forehead, and yet fight against him in his own Camp? This is not only Hostility, but Treason: And as Rebels and Traitors are more severely dealt with than Enemies, so shall you; and believe it, the Flames of Hell burn the more furiously for being sprinkled with Baptismal Water.

From all this that hath been said on this Subject, I shall draw this one Deduction, and so conclude. Hence we may learn what to judge, and what to hope concerning the State of Infants who die baptized. Certainly, since they are in Covenant with God; since they are the Members of Christ, being Members of his Body the Church; since they are sanctified and regenerated so far forth as their Natures are ordinarily capable of, without a Miracle; we have all the Reason in the World comfortably to conclude, that all such die in the Lord, and are for ever happy and blessed with him. With very good Reason therefore, and upon very clear Evidence, hath our Church determined, that it is certain by God's Word, that Children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual Sin, are undoubtedly saved: *Rubrick after Baptism.* For what should hinder? Actual Sins they are supposed to have none, and
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the Guilt of their Original Sin is pardoned to them by Vertue of God's Covenant ; wherein he becomes their God, and takes them for his own Children. Baptism is the Sealing of this Pardon, *Acts* 2. 28. Be baptized for the Remission of Sins, and certainly the Grant is made where the Seal is added ; and since they cannot forfeit it either by Hypocrisy or Profaneness, without doubt they enjoy the everlasting Benefits of it. Yea, let me add, that not only Infants baptized, but all Infants of believing Parents, tho' they should unavoidably die before Baptism, yea before they see the Light, are in the same safe and blessed Condition, for they are in the same gracious Covenant. For since the Promise is made to Believers, and to their Children, God will not falsify his Promise where they break no Conditions : Since the Children of believing Parents are holy with all that Holiness that their Condition is capable of, this is sufficient to make them capable of Heaven, into which no unclean Thing can enter. Therefore if they be excluded, it is because they are unclean ; which the Apostle expressly denies, *1 Cor.* 7. 14. And Lastly, Since they are Members of Jesus Christ, being Members of his Church, he will certainly be the

the Saviour of his Body, and present his Church holy and unspotted to his Father: And since they cannot, either by Hypocrisy, or any other Sin, debar themselves from the Privileges of God's Children; they shall certainly enjoy them in their largest and utmost Extent. We may therefore well comfort our selves for the Death of such : For there is far more Ground to be assured of their Salvation, than of any other Persons in the World, because here can be no Danger of Hypocrisy, nor close Dissimulation, which might make our Charity, or their Souls, miscarry. Upon this account, *David* comforts himself for the Death of his spurious Child, 2 *Sam.* 12. 23. *I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.* Did *David* only mean, that he should go to the Grave to him, there were as little Comfort in that, as there is Sense and Enjoyment in Death. But the Consolation was, that he should go to that State of Bliss and Happiness, where the Soul of this Infant was made perfect : And that it was so, he could have no other Assurance, but that his Child was born within the Pale of the Church, born in the Covenant, and had the Seal of the Covenant apply'd to him. The like Consolation may we have when ever God takes from

us any of our Infant-Children, that they dying in the Bosom of the Church, in Covenant with God, and consecrated to him by Baptism, are received to that heavenly Felicity by vertue of God's Promise and Covenant, to which we ought to aspire by a continued Course of Faith, Patience, and Obedience.

Tertullian calls Fidelium Filios Sanctitatis Candidatos, & Sanctos tam ex Seminis Prærogativâ. Lib. de Animâ.

JOHN