

This may be argued from our Lord's commission to his Apostles, "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things, whatsoever I have commanded you, Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. "Go ye into all the world, and teach the Gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved," Mark, xvi. 15, 16.

To understand the force of these words of our Lord, it must be observed that the gate of "common salvation" was only now for the first time going to be opened to the Gentile nations. He himself had declared that he was not sent but to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel;" and he had restricted his disciples in like manner, not only from ministering to the Gentiles, but from entering any city of the Samaritans. By what means, therefore, were "all nations" now to be brought into the church of God, which from henceforth was most truly to be catholic or universal? Plainly, by baptizing them that believed the "good news," and accepted the terms of the new covenant. This is apparent from the very words; and thus was baptism made the initiatory rite, by which believers of "all nations" were to be introduced into the church and covenant of grace; an office in which it manifestly took the place of circumcision, which heretofore, even from the time of Abraham, had been the only initiatory rite into the same covenant. Moses re-erected circumcision; our Lord not only does not re-erect it, but, on the contrary, he appoints another mode of entrance into the covenant in its new and perfected form, and that so expressly as to amount to a formal abrogation of the ancient sign, and the putting of baptism in its place. The same argument may be maintained from the words of our Lord to Nicodemus, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." By the kingdom of God, our Lord, no doubt, in the highest sense, means the future state of felicity; but he uses this phrase to express the state of his church on earth, which is the gate of that celestial kingdom; and generally, indeed, speaks of his church on earth under this mode of expression, rather than of the heavenly state. It then he declares that no one can "enter" into the church but by being "born of water and of the Holy Spirit," which heavenly gift followed upon baptism when received in true faith, he clearly makes baptism the mode of initiation into his church. In this passage as in the last quoted; and in both he assigns the same office as to circumcision in the church of the Old Testament, whether in its patriarchal or Mosaic form.

A farther proof that baptism has precisely the same federal and initiatory character as circumcision, and that it was instituted for the same ends, and in its place, is found in Col. ii. 10-12: "And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power; in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, buried with him in baptism," &c. Here baptism is also made the initiatory rite of the new dispensation, that by which the Colossians were joined to Christ, in whom they are said to be "complete;" and so certain it is that baptism has the same office and import now as circumcision formerly,—with this difference only, that the object of faith was then future, and now it is Christ *as come*,—that the Apostle expressly calls baptism "*the circumcision of Christ*," the circumcision instituted by him, which phrase he puts out of the reach of frivolous criticism, by adding exegetically, "*buried with him in baptism*." For, unless the Apostle here calls baptism "*the circumcision of Christ*," he asserts that we "*put off the body of the sins of the flesh*," that is, become new creatures, by virtue of our Lord's own personal cir-

cumcision; but if this be absurd, then the only reason for which he can call baptism "*the circumcision of Christ*," or Christian circumcision, is, that it has taken the place of the Abrahamic circumcision, and fulfils the same office of introducing believing men into God's covenant, and entitling them to the enjoyment of spiritual blessings.

But let us also quote Gal. iii. 27-29: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ; there is neither Jew nor Gentile, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female, for ye are all one in Christ Jesus; and if ye are Christ's," by thus being "*baptized*," and by "*putting on*" Christ, "then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

The argument here is also decisive. It cannot be denied that this was by circumcision believingly submitted to, that "strangers" or heathens, as well as Jews, became the spiritual "*seed of Abraham*," and "heirs of the same spiritual and heavenly promise." Put the same office in this passage is ascribed to baptism also believingly submitted to; and the conclusion is therefore inevitable. The same covenant character of each rite is here also strongly marked, as well as that the covenant is the same, although under a different mode of administration. In no other way could circumcision avail any thing under a different mode of administration. In no other way could circumcision avail any thing under the Abrahamic covenant, than as it was that visible act by which God's covenant to justify men by faith in the promised seed was accepted by them. It was therefore a part of a federal transaction; that outward act which he who offered a covenant engagement so gracious required as a solemn declaration of the acceptance of the covenanted grace upon the covenanted conditions. It was thus that the Abrahamic covenant was offered to the acceptance of all who heard it, and thus that they were to declare their acceptance of it. In the same manner there is a standing offer of the same covenant of mercy wherever the Gospel is preached. The "*good news*" which it contains is that of a promise, an engagement, a covenant on the part of God to remit sins, and to save all that believe in Christ. To the covenant in this new form he also requires a visible and formal act of acceptance, which act, when expressive of the required faith, makes us parties to the covenant, and entitles us, through the faithfulness of God, to its benefits. "He that *believeth* and is *baptized* shall be saved;" or, as in the passage before us, "As many of you as have been *baptized* into Christ, have put on Christ; and if ye be Christ's then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

We have the same view of baptism as an act of covenant acceptance, and as it relates to God's gracious engagement to justify the ungodly by faith in his Son, in the often quoted passage in 1 Peter ii. 20: "Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. The like figure whereunto *even* baptism doth also now save us, (not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.)"

When St. Peter calls the baptism the "*figure*," an antitype of the transaction by which Noah and his family were saved from perishing with the ungodly and unbelieving world, he had doubtless in mind the faith of Noah, and that under the same view as the Apostle Paul, in Heb. xi.: "By faith, Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which" act of faith "*he condemned the world*, and became heir of the righteousness which is by

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