

and those that seek me early shall find me?" does he consider it his bounden duty to exhibit sin before them as "exceeding sinful," and, like Abraham, command his children after him? does he endeavour to train them up in the way they should go, and by his instructions and example aim to beget within them a love for that holy book by which alone they can cleanse their way, and by all possible means strive to allure their feet into wisdom's ways?—so does the latter. Indeed, it were invidious to pursue the comparison further, since it is obvious that *all* parents fall short of the discharge of their duty in this particular; but till it can be shewn that the Baptists are more deficient than others, the insinuation should not be thrown out against them, since they refrain from the practice because they cannot view it as an ordinance of Jesus Christ, and believe it has tended more than anything else to introduce that nominal Christianity, and the consequent amalgamation of the church and the world, which their brethren in common with themselves so bitterly bewail.

And are they less concerned for the welfare of the children of others than their brethren of any other persuasion whatsoever? let their numerous schools in England and Ireland bear witness—yea, let the thousands of children instructed by them in India testify. If it be contended that children are by this ordinance laid under an obligation to "yield themselves unto God" when they come to years of discretion, so are they without it, and the reading or hearing the word lays them under obligations *much stronger*; but then, surely not, till they can comprehend it.

When Hamilcar was about to invade Spain, having sacrificed to his gods for success in the arduous undertaking, he enquired of Hannibal (who was then about nine years of age) if he would accompany him, when he instantly found that the youthful mind of his son had already caught a spark of that fire which glowed with so much ardour in his own bosom; and, in order to increase and perpetuate it, he took him to the altar of his god and made him swear that he would never be in friendship with the Romans. Anterior to this, nay, even from his infancy, we may well suppose that his father had instructed him in the art of war—had told him of the perils he had endured, of the battles he had fought and the victories he had won; and often, doubtless, had he heard the martial trumpet summoning the hosts of Carthage to battle, and seen its armies march forth flushed with hope, and return crowned with laurels: and now that he had attained to an age to choose for himself, he makes common cause with his father—vows perpetual hatred to his enemies—buckles on the armour, and goes

forth to the combat. And we find, subsequently, that after urging other arguments to Antiochus to remove his doubts, but in vain, he refers to this transaction, rendered solemn and obligatory by his own concurrence, in attestation of the implacable enmity he bore to a people who were then pushing their conquests on every side. Now, if this circumstance possess any interest, it is derived from the fact that it was *Hannibal's own act and deed*; for what would it have availed, had his parents or had sponsors engaged him to the work when a mere infant? To this fact in ancient history allusion is often made, as illustrative of the benefits to be expected from dedicating children unto God; but whether it be most analogous to infant or believers' baptism, let the reader judge, bearing in mind, that we do not insist on the subject's being an adult, for it matters not what the age may be, provided there be but "faith in Christ and repentance towards God." And, Oh! that our children were as easily prevailed on to accept the invitations of the gospel, as this youth was to comply with that of his father! but here lies the difference, the one was congenial with the innate disposition and bias of the mind, whereas, to wage war with sin and Satan can only be effected by the implantation of a Divine principle.

In the affairs of this life, men usually wait the development of the faculties and predilections of their children, before fixing them in any trade or profession, and shall the noble science of religion be the only thing to which children shall be bound, before it is seen whither their desires tend? and that which, *above all others, requires a personal and internal fitness*. "Verily, the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light." Just so do the Baptists judge it should be in reference to the momentous subject of religion, where nothing can be acceptable to a God of knowledge, by whom actions are weighed, and who trieth the reins, unless the heart be engaged therein. We are truly anxious that our children should enlist under the banner of Immanuel, and swell the ranks of the great Captain of our salvation; but then, we wait till the Saviour is pleased to inspire them with love to himself and zeal for his cause, and then they are enabled to declare irreconcilable war with the powers of darkness—to "put on Christ" in the ordinance of baptism, and thus throw down the gauntlet in the face of his and their enemies. Then commences a warfare, which ceases not till they are commanded to put off the armour by a "voice from the excellent glory, saying unto them, Come up hither." God is sometimes pleased to "perfect praise out of the mouth of babes and sucklings," and when any such are heard to say,