

and to teach them to observe all the Saviour's commands ; but an intermediate act is enjoined, the act of baptizing them. In order to make disciples, they were commanded, 'Go, preach the Gospel to every creature.' When the proclamation of the good news attracted the attention of men, and by the divine blessing so affected their hearts, that they became desirous to follow Christ, they were taught to observe his commandments, and first to be baptized. This ceremony was manifestly designed to be the initiation into the prescribed service ; and every disciple of Christ who wishes to walk in the ways of the Lord, meets this duty at the entrance of his course.

"The design of baptism is further indicated by the clause 'baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' The rendering of our version, '*in* the name of,' makes the clause signify that the administrator acts by the authority of the Trinity ; but the more literal rendering '*into* the name of,' makes it signify the new relation into which the act brings the subject of the rite. He is baptized into a state of professed subjection to the Trinity. It is the public act of initiation into the new service.

"The design of baptism proves its importance. The whole tenor of the gospel forbids the supposition that there is any saving efficacy in the mere rite ; but it is the appointed ceremony of profession ; and profession, we have seen, is, in general, necessary to salvation. As the divine goodness may pardon disciples who fear to make public profession, so it may, and we rejoice to believe that it does pardon those, who do not understand the obligation to make ceremonial profession, or mistake the manner of doing it. But God ought to be obeyed ; and his way is the right way and the best way. Paul argues from the baptism of believers, their obligation to walk in newness of life. The ceremony implies