

sion, the discipling, the baptizing, or the teaching, I know only one limitation, and that is, the want of ability to execute it. Until some restriction be produced from the New Testament, I maintain, on the terms of the only command to baptize, that to baptize an infant is just as much the duty of the church, and a duty resting upon just the same authority, as to teach a Hindoo. Infants are, unless cause to the contrary can be shown, just as much included in the baptism, as Hindoos are in the teaching. Every argument against infant baptism is an argument to limit the commission, and therefore, by comparison of the words of the commission, it must be tested, and its value determined."

During the early years of my ministry, I held, and adhered strictly in my practice, to the former of these views, but upon a careful re-examination of the subject, have lately been compelled to adopt Dr. Halley's practice, though not basing it altogether upon Dr. Halley's ground. The interpretation of the great commission for which he pleads, may, or may not be the correct one, for while we are unable to answer his argument, our instincts, or possibly we should call them our prejudices, all rebel against his conclusion, so far, at least, as the baptism of *unbelievers* is concerned. We think, however, that we have a safer, and more satisfactory ground for the baptism of infants, irrespective of the faith of their parents, in the teaching of our Blessed Saviour, in regard to their relationship to the Kingdom of God,—“Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.” (Matt. xix. 14.)

Put into the form of a syllogism, our argument is this: All who belong to the kingdom of God are proper subjects for baptism: little children belong to the kingdom of God; therefore, little children are proper subjects for baptism. As to our first proposition, there will probably be no dispute. Our Baptist brethren themselves assert that membership in God's spiritual kingdom alone can entitle one to the rite. If therefore, “such” little children belong to His kingdom, as our Lord declares, they are surely entitled to recognition, and enrolment among the subjects of that kingdom, by the ordinance of baptism. The conclusion we reach is founded, not on the fitness of the child, nor yet on the faith of the parent, but on the inalienable right of the King in Zion, who has bought them with His precious blood. “These are *mine*,” he says; “of such is the kingdom of heaven;” and “He took them up in His arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them,”—imparting to them the grace of which water baptism, even from His Divine hands, would have been but a poor symbol!

To reply, therefore, that our Lord did not baptize them, is only to evade our argument, not to answer it, since the question before us at present is, were they proper subjects for that ordinance? Or, to reply again, that the phrase, “of such,” means, “of persons possessing the disposition of little children,” is to do violence to the language itself, and is altogether inconsistent with the use to which our Lord puts the incident in the next verse. (See Mark x. 15.) A moment's reflection, moreover, should convince any one that to suppose Him to make likeness to “little children” the standard of fitness for His kingdom, while *they* whom He makes the standard, are *themselves* unfit for it, is surely too monstrous to believe! A simple illustration may help to show the absurdity of such a theory. A certain standard is set up for matriculants in the University of Toronto: now, all who are as well up to that standard as A. B., are qualified to matriculation. but A. B. himself is *not qualified*! Could puerility farther go?

The adoption of these views in regard to infant baptism has led us also to modify our belief in respect to the condition in which our children are born. The commonly received opinion, among Evangelical Christians, and the one we had long held is, that they are born, not only depraved in nature, but also in a state of condemnation, “children of wrath,” and, spiritually, of “their father the devil.”

Such a view, however, seems to us utterly at variance with the teachings of our blessed Lord in the passage we have been discussing. “Where there is no law there is no transgression,” and without transgression there can be no condemna-