

recorded by St. Mark. "*Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and he who believeth not shall be damned.*"\* Here the same line of argument is pursued, viz. "*He who believeth and is baptized shall be saved*"—infants cannot believe, and therefore infants are not to be baptized. But this involves a difficulty even greater than the former; and would lead to a conclusion revolting to reason and at variance with the attributes and word of God; that He requires that which we are unable to perform, and will punish the neglect of obligations which it is impossible to fulfil;—for if the deduction be right on one point of the text, it must be on the other, and then it would be, infants cannot be saved because they cannot believe; nay, what is even worse—infants cannot believe, and therefore, infants will be damned. May God deliver you from such an error—opposed, as it is, to the greatness of His mercy and the freeness of His grace.

The other passage which makes repentance necessary admits of the same general reply. "*Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*"† Here repentance was required of all who had committed sin, and could understand and value the grace of God; but this was not to exclude from the Gospel covenant all those who had no present capacity for these things; and lest they should fall into this mistake, the words of the following verse seem to have been added—"*for the promise is to you AND TO YOUR CHILDREN.*" All the demands of the Gospel suppose the capacity to fulfil them, and God expects of us "*only according to what we have, and not according to what we have not.*"‡ We may illustrate this, by the manner we act upon other impracticable precepts. Take, for instance, the passage of the Apostle—"For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." Here industry is required of all, to obtain their daily bread; and yet what parent ever thinks of denying necessary food to an infant, who has no capacity to work for it?

We must not deny—we *do not* deny—that knowledge and faith and repentance are all necessary, *when they can be practised*: they were necessary to every adult convert to the Jewish religion, before he could be circumcised; they would be neces-

\* Mark xvi. 15, 16.

† Acts ii. 38.

‡ 2 Cor viii. 10.