

INFANT BAPTISM.

No. II.

Our object in the present paper is to present the reader with some further arguments in support of Pedobaptist practice, and in doing so we shall start with the quotation of a text of Scripture, which to our mind admits of no other than a Pedobaptist explanation. We refer the reader to 1 Cor. vii. 14, "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; else were your children unclean, but now are they holy." Avoiding whatever has not a direct bearing on the question at issue, we confine ourselves to the enquiry, What does the Apostle mean by the words unclean and holy? We suppose our Baptist brethren would answer that these words here mean respectively illegitimate and legitimate, and give us the Apostle's decision of the question, "Shall the believing party depart from the unbelieving?—Does the christianity of the one party annul the marriage contract?" Now in reply to this we observe, First, the words which are here translated unclean and holy, (*akatharta* and *hagia*) never mean and cannot be made to mean illegitimate and legitimate. In the almost innumerable instances in which the words occur in the New Testament and the Septuagint, no instance can be found in which they bear any meaning like this. To attach an arbitrary and unsanctioned meaning to a word, is subversive of every right principle of Biblical interpretation. It is the very principle upon which the Universalist proceeds, when we point him to Matt. xxv. 46. "Yes, he says," "I admit that life eternal does mean a never ending happiness, but everlasting punishment must mean temporary suffering." Indeed we seriously think that the Universalist has the advantage of the Antipedobaptist, because while the word everlasting is sometimes qualified, in limited by the connection, the word here rendered *holy* never occurs in the sense of "legitimate."

But further, apart from the etymology of the word and the sense in which it is used, the idea thus attached to the Apostle's words would be a plain contradiction of matters of fact. If the meaning of the Apostle were, "because the parent is a Christian, therefore the marriage is lawful and the children are legitimate," it would demand the inference that if both parents were heathen, the marriage would be illegal and the issue illegitimate. Now we know that Christianity recognizes the validity and obligation of marriage as a civil contract, whoever are the parties, or however solemnized.

But it might here be objected, "True the marriage was legal according to Civil Law, but these early Christians might question its lawfulness in God's sight, seeing he forbids the union of a believer with an unbeliever." To this we reply; that the objection does not meet the case supposed in this passage, which is that of parties married while both were heathens, but one of whom had subsequently become a Christian.

But even if the case were otherwise—if a believer had married an unbeliever—in no view could it be doubted that the offspring were legitimate, and in no sense could it be said that it was the Christianity of the one party which so legalized the marriage as to make the children legitimate.

As further we take it for granted that none of our readers will suppose that the holiness spoken of in this text is an experimental holiness, we are therefore shut up to the conclusion that the Apostle's meaning is that the children in virtue of the faith of the *one* parent are to be considered federally or ecclesiastically holy. Did our space permit, we might cite many texts of Scripture in which the word holy occurs in this sense, and in which the word unclean is applied to those who are out of the visible church. When therefore the Apos-