

receiving these children plainly implied their membership. Why did they come? Why must these parents be gratified in their desire that Christ would bless them? Because says Christ "the kingdom of heaven" is composed of such persons as these. If our Lord intended to teach, as some say, that only adult persons, with a childlike disposition, were to be members of his Church; in that case, he would state a fact; but it would be no reason for the reception and consecration of the children. If the resemblance implied in the word *such*, was merely a resemblance of disposition; then as Matthew Henry asserts, "it might have served as a reason why doves or lambs might be brought to him; but, is not a reason why the children should be blessed, and by the laying on of his hands consecrated to God."

IV. It is evident from the general use of the term "*such*," that it includes both the persons compared, and those to whom they are compared. Take the following passages as a specimen, MARK. iv. 33. "And with many *such* parables spake he the word unto them," including certainly the two parables by which he had just explained to them the nature of the "kingdom of God," and other parables like them. Again JOHN, ix. 16. "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?" including of course the miracle which they had just witnessed, and other miracles like it. When our Saviour then used the term "*such*" in this passage, he evidently included the children as well as those he compared to them.

From the account given by Luke, it is clear that some of those children were infants. It seems equally clear that they were the children of believing parents; for they brought them to Christ in faith, that he would bless them. From our Lord's treatment of them, it is natural to infer that all such children, or in other words, all the children of believing parents, are to be considered members of his Church, which is the only visible representation of his kingdom on earth.

The reason why children are included among the subjects of Christ's Church, is not on account of their "innate goodness." Such an idea would contradict the great fact, of the fall of man, and its consequences—also, many declarations of God's word. "That such as are born of the flesh," said, that "all are shapen in iniquity, and conceived in sin," (PSALM. li. 5. If then the privilege was not bestowed on account of innate goodness; it must have been, on account of the faith of those who brought them. Our Lord did not

baptize these infants, for he baptized none. Nor did he admit them to the Church. They were Jews, and as such members already. The Church under the new dispensation was not at that time organized; but he declared them to be fit subjects of Church membership; and laid down an important rule, that when the Church should be organized, infants should be members of it.

2. The doctrine may be established from the manner in which the Apostles acted.

The great commission under which they acted, was this. "All power is given unto me in heaven, and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, &c. MAT. xxviii. 19-20.] Now, this commission considered in connection with the circumstances in which it was given, goes far to confirm the doctrine of infant Church membership; not because children are expressly named, but because they are not expressly excluded. For how could a Jew, always accustomed to infant Church membership doubt its propriety, without express authority from Christ.

Let us look for a little at the import on the commission. The word "teach" if the 19th verse is not the same at "teaching," in the 20th verse. In the former it means to *disciple* them; and, in the latter, to *instruct* them. As soon as our Saviour's words were understood as extending to the Gentile world, the Apostles must have supposed themselves commissioned to go forth, and make proselytes; baptizing them and their children; and building them up, by instructing them in their most holy faith. For observe:

1. These teachers were all Jews. As such they were accustomed to infant Church membership. Circumcision was uniformly administered to the children, not on account of their *personal* faith, as I have already observed, but because they were born in covenant with God. It was quite a common thing for them to witness the introduction of proselytes into the Jewish Church; in all which cases, (if parents) their children were introduced by the same rite. Now, suppose the Apostles had received a commission to go forth and make proselytes to the Jewish Church, with these words, "Go disciple all nations, circumcising them, and instructing them all the commandments and ordinances of Jehovah;" would any person doubt