

purposes of God, and it remains after Israel as a nation has ceased to exist.

The principle of blessing children by means of their parents is not a new one even in the covenant of promise. It lies at the foundation of God's administrations in nature and in providence, as well as in grace. It is the law of nature that, through parents, children should receive the blessings of their heavenly father. "The strong natural affection, planted in the heart of a parent to his offspring, shews, by the light of nature, that our Lord cares for children in this way. Surely He who implanted this affection in the parent's breast, loves the child by the care of the parent. If this be so in a natural sense, is it not equally the case in a spiritual sense? If the love of God be shed abroad in the heart of a parent, by the Holy Ghost given unto him, and if he love his child with this divine love, does it not prove, that, in so far, the Holy Spirit loves the child." * If so, it is acting on a grand principle, universal in God's government, to regard the believing parent as the medium through which, blessing is communicated to the infant,—the sacrament of baptism is the seal of this.

Although the dispensation of Grace is wholly a matter of revelation, yet when revealed, there can be traced in it certain general principles which shew, that the mind which presides over the kingdom of nature and the kingdom of Grace, is One. And it is no small evidence of the truth of revelation, that it is in perfect keeping with the other works of God. To leave children out of a recognized interest in the blessings of salvation into which their parents have been introduced would be *unnatural*. It would be a solecism in the administration of God, at variance with the perfect scheme of heaven's mercy and with the analogies of nature.

But it may still be replied, what spiritual benefit can an infant enjoy? In answer it may be asked, what spiritual benefit, essential to salvation, can an infant *not* enjoy? An infant is capable of justification through the imputed righteousness of Christ and of sanctification by the Spirit of Christ. All other blessings are connected with circumstances which do not exist to children, and they, therefore, neither have them nor need them. The righteousness by which an infant is justified, is the same thing as the righteousness of faith, by which an adult is justified. To say that it is not capable of this, is to say, in as many words, that it is incapable of being saved. If this righteousness cannot be enjoyed without actual believing, then the case of infants is utterly hopeless. Baptism recognizes their capability of having that righteousness *without* faith, which can be possessed by adults only *through* faith. And did infant baptism go no farther than this, it is an ordinance on which every Christian would set the highest value. If it were set aside there would not

* Treatise on Infant Baptism, by James Kidd, D. D.