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The History of Jack Nips.

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AAS copy.

THE  
HISTORY  
OF  
JACK NIPS.

CONTAINING

Arguments in opposition to Infant Baptism—to  
Civil Authority in Religious Affairs—To  
Preaching by Rule, or, Writing Sermons—  
and to the Proceedings of Societies of the  
Standing Order, in a General Taxation, &c.

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T H E

# History of Jack Nips. °

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**I** CANNOT say that my father was an Hittite and my mother an Amonite ; but my father was a Presbyterian and my mother a high-flying, separate New-light. I was as far from being a New-light myself, as men's hearts are from their mouths, or as Old-Darkness is from New-Light : but when any of my schoolfellows got mad at me they would call me a new-light ; and if I asked them what a new light was, they would be as confused in their answers, as if they did not know B. from a bull's foot. Sometimes when I was reading, they would laugh at me for my new-light tone ; once in particular as I was reciting a lesson to a Latin master, he told me not to preach like a new light, but speak like a scholar. This put me upon search into the nature of tones, and I was soon convinced that a holy-tone did not make a holy man ; for some who had the tone would be as hypocritical as Lucifer himself : but the same persons who laughed at me for my tone had a disagreeable tone of lying, swearing and

sneering at all good sense and religion ; yet there was no harm in that tone because it was polite.

Like other boys I wished to be in fashion, and as the Presbyterians were the most fashionable, I applied myself to the study of their books, and was not a little puzzled to reconcile their writings with my boyish thoughts. I could not for my gizzard understand their orthography till I was more than 16 : they would spell thus—CIR *cir* CUM *cum* CIRCUM *SED* *sed*, *baptism*. This, I say, puzzled me greatly, and if I asked any body how they reconciled it, thy would tell me that great, learned and good men said it was right, and it would be presumption in me to call it in question.

I further observed, that sometimes those authors would put the cart before the horse, as for instance; where it is said he that *believeth* and is baptised shall be saved ; they would have it, he that is *baptised* and believeth, shall be saved ; surely said I, this is a Presbyterian tone ; for I did not then know that there was a Papist, a Russian, or an Episcopalian in the world.

Another thing also confounded my youthful thoughts. Men and women would bring their children to the minister to be baptised, if but one of them were believers, and it was supposed that the faith of one parent was sufficient to initiate the child ; but my thoughts would be running thus, “ Is the soul of that child made by God and infused into the body while in the womb, or is it begotten by the parents ? If it is made and infused by God, then the children of wicked parents bring as good souls into the world as children of good parents do. But if souls are begotten in ordinary generation, then regenerate men will beget regenerate souls ; and wicked men beget wicked

ed souls ; and if Adam was regenerate before he begat any of his children, by succession down to this day, we are all regenerate. But as this was to me uncertain, I was casting mine eyes and thoughts on my neighbours. Uncle Benson had married aunt Nancy, by whom he had a son, whose name was Peter. Uncle was a believer but aunt was not. Here I had a great query in my mind, to find from which parent the soul proceeded. Aristotle informed me, that the child, in animalcula, came originally from the mother. Surely then said I to myself, cousin Peter has no right to baptism, for his mother is an infidel. But the European philosophers said that the animalcula, that formed the foetus, came from the father. If so, said I again, then Peter is a christian. But here I was perplexed again : If Peter came into the world a christian, how can he be made a christian by water ? Can a priest and water make him what he was before he was born. Uncle Sam said Peter came into the world a christian, and therefore he had a right to baptism ; but uncle Ned insisted upon it, that it was his baptism that made him a christian, and confirmed his sentiment, by observing that the name given to him in baptism, was his christian name, i. e. a name given him when he was made a christian : but others declared that the child came half from each parent ; then, said I, Peter ought not to have but half his face sprinkled, for half of it came from his heathen mother.

While I was thus as full of thoughts as Don Quixote was of projects, I went to meeting ; and how was I surprised, to see a man and his wife stand in the broad alley, owning the baptismal covenant, as they called it. I had read of bap-

tim being a command—a fulfilling of righteousness—the answer of a good conscience ; but never heard it called a covenant before. What wind next, said I within myself. But here I soon found that neither the man nor his wife were believers ; that they had never given themselves to God, and yet were offering their child to him. This made me think of uncle Tim, who would never give any of his own interest to any body ; but when he was at another man's house he would be as liberal as a prince in giving to every one that came in. If those people, said I, loved their child as well as they do themselves, they'd never trust it where they durst not trust themselves. But after the priest had read what he had written for them, and they had consented by a bow and curtsy, he declared that they had a right to all the privileges of the church except the Lord's supper.

The thought that rose in my mind was this : they have a right to all the privileges of that church ; but have they a right to all or any of the privileges of CHRIST's church ? If by the innocence of the children—the confession of their parents, or the faith of one or both of them, they have a right to baptism, why not to the eucharist ? Here I remembered to have read an account of Cyprian the African bishop ; who, in the middle of the third century first introduced infant baptism, and to be consistent with himself, he introduced infant communion at the same time.

I could not but observe what force and violence were used on the occasion : the little candidate, who never proposed himself ; nor indeed had sense enough to know any thing what was going on, was taken by force, and notwithstanding all his struggles and screams, had the name of the trinity

called over him, and was some how or other shut up in the pales of the church. Is this christian liberty, thought I more than an hundred times.

About this time, my father, schoolmaster and minister took much pains to teach me the catechism : where it is observed that baptism is not to be administered to any who are out of the visible church, ~~tho~~ they profess their faith in Christ, and obedience to his revealed will. What in the world of wonders, thought I, do these people mean? The man and his wife now in the broad alley, do not profess to be believers, and yet they claim baptism for their child, contrary to that oracular catechism, composed by so many double DD's, and MA's. Here my zeal broke over all bounds ; and turning to old neighbour Turnpie, said I, do these people hold to the Westminster catechism? Yes, said he, but they are constantly gaining more light, and therefore altering their modes ; but still are the same people. This made me think of the Irishman's knife, which he kept for antiquity's sake, and which had been his grand-father's, his father's and his own, and altho' h it had worn out two or three blades, and thee or four handles, yet it was the very knife that his grand-father first bought.

After pausing a while, I remembered that the article concluded thus, "that the infants of those who are members of the visible church are to be baptized. You lie, Rev. sirs, said I. What ! first tell us that baptism is not to be administered to any out of the church, and then tell us it is ; and think boys and men too will believe your contradictions !

Here I should have proceeded, but a man in the seats not only began to knock his black staff,

but really came and took me by the hand—What now, said I. He replied I am a tythingman to keep order. Here a thousand thoughts rushed in to my mind, some of which were as follows : Did Jesus or his apostles ever appoint tything men to keep boys or men in order ? did they ever give orders to civil rulers to make laws to force people to meeting once a month, or pay a fine ? Did they ever institute black staves and stocks to prevent disorder in religious worship ? Have these people New-Testament authority to establish creeds for others, and go contrary to them themselves, and punish others if they cannot receive their glaring inconsistencies and absurdities ? Some say the laws of men are the sinews of the gospel : but are they not rather the sinner's gospel ? is not every kind of cruelty and oppression executed under the pretext of civil law ? have not the majority in every part of the world christened all their madness and self-will, by the names of civil law and good order ? These things are so said I in my heart ; but durst not speak, for the tythingman held me by the hand. After meeting was over, and I had escaped the black staff, I returned home resolving to read for myself.

: Carefully reading the New Testament, I found that the word *baptize* with its various declensions, occurred about 100 times ; but in none of those places did it countenance baby-baptism : And as I had made some proficiency in Greek, I searched the Greek Testament and Lexicon, where I found that *baptizo* came from the Greek word *baptizo* ; and that the word *sprinkle* came from the Greek *ranizo* : so that sprinkling could not be baptizing.



The Greek *baptizo* in a few places is translated *wash*; but as bodies, cups and platters cannot be washed well, by sprinkling a few drops of water upon them, I concluded that all who undertook to baptize by sprinkling, were religious fluts.

About this time my father was often telling me that he designed me for the gown; that I was of a weakly constitution, not able to get a living out of the ground, and if I could furnish my mind with letter and theological knowledge, I might be inducted into a parish, where I might receive a good benefice.

But here my foolish heart kept running thus: my father intends me to be a minister; but does God; Those who are sent by men to preach, must look to men for pay; but those who are sent by GOD must depend on him.

If I have but a weakly constitution, why should a runt of a family be imposed on a parish to eat more than he can work? If a benefice tempts me to preach, I shall preach for filthy lucre, and not out of love to God and souls. If I learn to preach by rule, I shall fall upon the plan of others, of long prayers and short sermons, to save the trouble of writing much. And when I have my sermons all penned down, I shall have to pray, not for God's assistance, but for good eye-sight.

Upon the whole, I concluded that the religion I had been acquainted with, was little more than a state trick, or court intrigue; and was therefore resolved to study politics. By this time I had gained my 22d year; and being fired with ambition to know what other men did, I first purchased me a book containing the several constitutions of government, adopted in the different states. Now thought I, I shall be a wise man.

I had such profound reverence for the men who framed these constitutions, that I concluded it would be presumption and almost blasphemy, to call in question a single word : but attending to their structures I found there was not two of them agreed. What, said I, do great men differ ? boys, women and little souls do, but can learned, wise patriots disagree so much in judgment ? If so, they cannot all be right, but they may all be wrong, and therefore Jack Nips for himself : and what encouraged me to search and judge for myself, was this : When I was a small boy, I fancied that I stood in the middle of the world, and that the earth extended no further than my eye-sight explored ; but people told me that I was wrong in my judgment ; but after a few years study, I found I was half right. That the earth exceeded my eye-sight, I soon found by experience, herein I was wrong. But that I am always on the centre spot of the surface of the globe, is an undeniable truth. And as mature experience convinced me that my boyish thoughts, were some of them right, I concluded it might be so with my study in politics.

The Massachusetts constitution declares, that "one denomination of Christians shall have no pre-eminence above another ;" and yet it allows of a general assessment. The largest denomination in a town may tax all the rest, and put them to the trouble of getting certificates to draw back their money, after they have paid it. What under heaven comes here said I ; first say that one denomination shall not have any pre-eminence above another, and then say that it shall. This is as bad as the catechism. Here I made a pause : and the words of David rushed into my mind :

**“All the foundations of the earth are out of course:”** and Solomon, “If thou seest oppression in a province, marvel not at it.” Surely, said I, they frame mischief by law. The people generally confess in this state that religious liberty is a right and not a favor. The standing order, which is the most numerous in the towns in general, say, they do not wish to tax the members of other churches, if they will produce certificates to inform them who they are. These things kept running in my head, as dreams do when I have been eating onions; but after some time, an affair between two of my neighbours, explained the whole to my satisfaction.

Old Mr. Domineer Bigot, and Mr. Love Freedom, lived so nigh together, that their lands almost joined: each of these gentlemen built him a park, and caught a number of deer and put therein. Now says Mr. Bigot, to Mr. Freedom, You ~~may~~ possess all the deer in your park, provided you will mark and bell them, and give me a yearly account of their number: but if any deer from the thicket jump into your park, it will be counted stolen unto you, until you have marked it, and given me an account thereof, and I also inform you, that you behave beneath the christian and the man, if you hunt in the forest within five miles of my park. Here Mr. Freedom withstood him, and said, what right have you to the wild deer, more than I have? and why should I be forced to give you an account of my number any more than you should to me? “Because,” said Mr. Bigot, “all the deer in my park, and all that are in the woods, have an annual tax upon their heads, which they are obliged to pay to me, unless you catch them in hunting, or they volunta-

rily jump into your park, and bear your mark.

Said Mr. Freedom, it may be so in law, but it cannot be so in justice; and therefore I shall hunt where I please, without asking your leave; and all that I catch, and all that come in at the gate of my park to lick salt, I shall mark; but sir, I shall give you no account of my numbers.

This circumstance, I say, opened the mystery to me; and I saw plainly, that covetous priests were at the bottom of that law; who had seduced the rulers, and flattered them to fix that article in the constitution as it now stands.

F I N I S.

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