INFANT CHURCH-MEMBERSHIP, OR THE RELATION OF BAPTIZED CHILDREN TO THE CHURCH

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 $In fant\ Church-Membership,\ or\ the\ Relation\ of\ Baptized\ Children\ to\ the\ Church\ by\ William\ A.$ Stearns

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WILLIAM A. STEARNS

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RELATION OF BAPTIZED CHILDREN

TO

THE CHURCH.

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TO THE MEMBERS

OF THE

SUFFOLK NORTH ASSOCIATION;

TO THE

CONGREGATIONAL CLERGYMEN OF NEW-ENGLAND;

AND TO ALL

PARENTS IN COVENANT WITH GOD;

THIS VOLUME

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED

BT

THE AUTHOR.

** a a gift Tappan Paret, ass. 3-1-1932

> If temporal estates may be conveyed By covenants, on condition, To men and to their heirs, be not afraid, My soul, to rest upon The covenant of grace, by mercy made.

Do but thy duty and rely upon't,
Repentance, Faith, Obedience,
Whenever practised truly will amount
To an authentic evidence—
Though the deed were antidoted at the font.

STNAGOGUE.

PREFACE.

This treatise is presented to the churches under a deep sense of religious responsibility. It was not prepared in a controversial spirit. Nor was it intended as an attack upon that large and respectable denomination of Christians who differ most widely from the leading sentiments it contains. It has been the author's design simply to reaffirm and establish one of those great doctrines of puritan and primitive Christianity on which he believes, the perpetuity, stability, and progressive piety of the New-England congregational churches greatly depends.

He was led to the undertaking by providential circumstances, and without the most distant expectation of making his views public. Infant baptism, and the relation of baptized children to the church had been exciting increased attention for several years. Pastors and parents deplored the fact, that "the seed of the church" should be accounted, and educated, in so many instances, as those who are confessedly