

# LETTERS

ADDRESSED TO

M<sup>R</sup>. JOHN GLAS,

IN ANSWER TO HIS

DISSERTATION ON INFANT-  
BAPTISM.

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—See, here is water; what doth hinder me  
to be baptized? Acts viii. 36.

—If thou believest with all thine heart, thou  
mayest. Ver. 37.

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GLASGOW,

Printed by ARCHIBALD M'LEAN, Junior:

And sold there by R. DUNCAN, above Gibson's-  
Wynd, Salt-market; by W. MILLAR, opposite  
to the Guard, *Edinr.* and by G. KEITH, and  
J. ROBINSON, *London.* 1767.

[Price One Shilling.]

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# P R E F A C E.

**T**O assign reasons, or make an apology for the publishing of these letters, is altogether needless. If I have truth on my side, the importance of the subject, and the general inattention paid to it, (especially in Scotland) will sufficiently justify me: if I have not, all apologies are vain.

It is indeed a pretty common observation, That little benefit or edification results from religious controversies. Whatever truth may be in this, with respect to those whose cool indifferency indicates their having nothing at stake, or whose unlimited charity is equally courteous to truth and falsehood;

yet I cannot be persuaded that this observation is without exception. The most important revolution that ever happen'd in the world, was brought about by means of controversy, disputes and contention \*; and afterwards, when Antichrist had slain the witnesses, quash'd the controversy, and curs'd all around him into implicit faith, these horrid chains of darkness were again burst afunder by a free inquiry into the Scriptures, and a contending for the faith once delivered to the saints.

BUT whatever may be said of controversy, it may be presumed, that the person who can stand neutral in all religious disputes, must either have no creed at all, or hold it very cheap.

As the point of believer-baptism has been controverted for these fifteen

\* Acts ix. 22. xvii. 17. and xix. 8, 9.

teen centuries past, I have not the vanity to imagine, that any thing here advanced will finally decide the matter; for I am fully persuaded, that there are other principles of opposition to truth in human nature than simple ignorance.

My controversy is chiefly with INDEPENDENTS, who profess to believe, That Christ's kingdom is not of this world; and that the carnal birth does not distinguish his subjects, nor intitle to spiritual privileges: these, especially will discern the propriety of the arguments and feel their weight.

As for the national church, I have little quarrel with her on this head, it being equally reasonable that the children of the flesh should be counted for the seed, as that a nation of this world should be counted a visible church of Christ. For whilst it is supposed, that the  
kingdoms

kingdoms of this world, which assume the name CHRISTIAN, do, in some sense, succeed the Jewish Theocracy, and are interested in the covenant of circumcision, it will be hard to convince them, that the command to circumcise Jewish infants does not equally warrant the baptizing of theirs.

I hope the reader will not satisfy himself with carping at occasional inadvertencies, but candidly consider the scope and force of the arguments, and especially the scriptures adduced in support of them.

IF what I have advanced in these letters have a tendency to free any of the subjects of Christ from human inventions, and rouse their attention to the unerring rule, my end is gained.

G E N E-

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|--------------|----|--|
| 3            | 7  | For instants, read infants                                   |
| 32.          | 11 | For Colosse, read Philippi                                   |
| <i>Ibid.</i> | 25 | Dele bap-  |
| 48           | 30 | For apostles, read apostle's                                 |
| 53           |    | <i>Note, l. 5. For legitimate seed, read legitimate seed</i> |
| 78           | 19 | For of, read off   |
| 82           | 1  | For thought, read though                                     |
| 86           | 15 | Dele here  |
| 88           | 20 | For believers, read believer's                               |

L E T-

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# LETTER I.

S I R,

**I**T is now a considerable time since I read and considered your excellent Treatise, entitled, *The TESTIMONY of the KING of MARTYRS, &c.* which I take to be a most simple and scriptural illustration of our Lord's good confession, which he witnessed before Pontius Pilate, concerning his kingdom, as distinguish'd from the Jewish Theocracy, the kingdoms of this world, and the false churches that now bear that form. Holding the analogy betwixt type and antitype in your eye, the scripture evidence beams in upon you from every quarter to support the main point, whilst you, unshackled by human systems, admit it in its most genuine and simple meaning.

The reading of this excellent treatise gave me vast satisfaction, and prepossessed me with a favourable bias in behalf of your other writings: supposing you still to pursue the principles upon which you set out, I was unwilling to admit any such sense of your words as seem'd to deviate from them.

B

Thus



Thus you may see with what favourable impressions I proceeded to peruse the rest of your works: and, indeed, I was not disappointed in \* many of your tracts, which contain a plain and scriptural view of the doctrine, order and worship of the apostolic churches, till I arrived at your third volume, where I found a piece on *Catholic Charity*, and a letter, entitled, *The Rule of Forbearance defended*, in both of which you discard all forbearance whatever, as a thing unwarrantable in Christian churches since the finishing of the New Testament revelation, and so confine the apostolic directions, on that subject, to the peculiar disputes that arose betwixt the Jews and Gentiles about the lawfulness of meats and drinks.

When I compared this with what you had advanced before, on that head, in the *Testimony of the King of Martyrs* †, I could not but observe a manifest inconsistency betwixt them. However, I was unwilling to judge rashly in this affair, thinking it unlikely you should publish contradictory principles in one and the same edition of your works.

But, proceeding to your fourth volume §, I found *A Dissertation on Infant Baptism*, which I considered with care and attention; and the rather, as I was never fully satisfied with any thing I had formerly read on that subject; and being desirous of

\* I say, *many*, because there are several things exceptionable, and particularly a little tract in the second volume, entitled, *Salvation to a Believer's House*.

† Page 123, 124.

§ Page 192, — 210.

further light into it; I had some hope you would produce such evidence in its behalf from scripture, as would remove my scruples, establish me in the received opinion, and enable me to bring my infants to baptism in faith. But how great was my disappointment when I found, that your main arguments for the baptism of infants stood in flat opposition to the scriptures, as well as to the most essential points contended for in the *Testimony of the King of Martyrs!* However, it may be allowed, that you have done it as much justice as the bounds of your tract, and the nature of the subject could well permit.

As the subject of scripture-baptism has been but little attended to in Scotland, and as you have contributed your part to thicken the darkness that had overspread the minds of men about it, in so much, that some of your adherents have boasted of this Dissertation as unanswerable; I shall, according to my ability, follow you step by step through the whole of your arguments, and accommodate my answers to the nature and manner of them, without either artfully evading their force, or wilfully perverting their meaning.

I shall conclude this introductory epistle, by stating what appears to me the scripture view of baptism. And,

1. Baptism is an ordinance, instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ, under the new and better covenant, which belongs only to the apparent subjects of that covenant, upon the profession of their faith.

in Christ, and obedience to him ; being a sign and representation to them of the cleansing efficacy of his blood, and regenerating operations of his Spirit, and so of their having communion with, and conformity to him in his death, burial and resurrection, by dying unto sin and living unto righteousness. Matth. xxviii. 19. Acts viii. 37. Rom. vi. 4. Col. ii. 12.

2. The Name into which believers are to be baptized, is that of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Matth. xxviii. 19.

3. The Mode or Manner of Baptism is immersion, or dipping of the body in water, as appears from the proper acceptation of the Greek word, and from the circumstances of our Lord's baptism, Matth. iii. 16. and those of the eunuch's, Acts viii. 38, 39.

Now, whether infants are the proper subjects of this ordinance or not, shall be considered in the subsequent letters. Meantime, I am,

S I R,

Your, &c.

LET-

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L E T T E R II.

S I R,

**I**N the Introduction to your Dissertation on Infant-baptism, you make an observation on several questions and disputes about baptism. But I have no concern with any thing there, excepting the last paragraph, where you observe,

That 'the denying of infant-baptism comes of  
'making the salvation by baptism to lie in some-  
'thing else than the thing signified; even that,  
'whatever it be; which distinguishes the adult  
'Christian from his infant: though our Lord ex-  
'pressly declares, that we must enter his Kingdom  
'even as infants enter it. The first opposition  
'that we hear of to infant-baptism, turn'd salva-  
'tion upon an entire sort of believing, whereof  
'infants are incapable; whereas there is not any  
'true faith; or sincere confession of the faith; but  
'that alone which acknowledges, that salvation lies  
'only and wholly in the thing signified in baptism.  
'And; if we enquire how that thing saves us; our  
'Lord answers, Just as it saves our infants. The  
'denial of infant-baptism must have always pro-  
'ceeded from a disbelief of this.'

*Answ.* 1. If we maintain that elect infants obtain salvation by the sovereign free grace of God;

through the sufferings, death and resurrection of Christ, without regard to any outward ordinance, how does it follow, that their salvation lies not only and wholly in the thing signified to the adult in baptism, but in something else?

2. If we deny infant-baptism, because it is neither commanded nor exemplified in scripture; because we know not who among them are the true Israel; and because it cannot be a sign to them of the thing signified; will it therefore follow, that when they become visible believers, and can discern baptism to figure their salvation by the death and resurrection of Christ; I say, will it then fairly follow, that their salvation must turn upon something else than the death and resurrection of Christ which is represented to them in that ordinance, or upon any thing about themselves distinguishing them from infants? Certainly no: that which gives the answer of a good conscience to the adult believer in baptism, must be the very same thing with that which saves elect infants.

3. If an explicit profession of the faith, a discerning of the thing signified, and an engagement to put off the body of the sins of the flesh, be qualifications which turn the salvation of the adult upon a different footing from that of infants, or the thing signified in baptism; then, by necessary consequence, these qualifications are not to be looked for in adults, either at baptism or the Lord's supper. But if you plead for these things in adults, does it not plainly follow, that both baptism  
and

and the Lord's supper are to them most pernicious ordinances, since they require such qualifications as (according to you) 'make their salvation to lie in something else than the thing signified?' But the contrary is evident from scripture.

4. Though we own, that the thing signified in baptism saves infants just as it saves adults, yet we deny infant-baptism; for we distinguish betwixt the *thing signified* and the *sign signifying*; the former is bestowed upon all the elect of God, whether adults or infants; the latter, on those who appear to be such, and can discern its meaning, who are only the adult. Again, we distinguish betwixt the *objects of God's everlasting love* and the *proper subjects of gospel ordinances*; the first he judges of by the rule of his omniscience; the last must be judged of by the rules of revelation, or the personal characters by which he hath pointed them out in his word. To assert then, That the denial of infant-baptism must have always proceeded from a disbelief that salvation lies only and wholly in the thing signified in baptism, is as untrue as it is confidently asserted.

5. But then this assertion stands true upon your plan, and, like an arrow shot perpendicular, reverts upon your own head: for if 'the denying of infant-baptism comes of making the salvation by baptism to lie in something else than the thing signified,' then infant-baptism is absolutely necessary to salvation; since, otherwise, they must be baptized upon a self-righteous plan, which cannot

not save, but is opposed to the thing signified. I ask then, is not this like placing salvation in something else than the thing signified; even in that, whatever it be, which distinguishes infants from adult believers; and confines the thing signified to their baptism? Perhaps you are not aware of this; but did you really believe, that salvation lies only and wholly in the thing signified; you could never have imagined, that the denying of infant-baptism could any way affect this principle, or make any difference in what saves.

So far were your forefathers from acknowledging, that 'salvation lies only and wholly in the thing signified,' that their main argument for introducing the baptism of infants, turn'd upon a supposed necessity of it to salvation. But they had not then learned to confine the salvation by baptism to that, whatever it be; which distinguishes the infants of believers from those of infidels; though indeed they were at no loss; for the ancient *necessity of baptism to salvation*; is by far a better argument than the modern *covenant holiness*; or *salvation to a believer's house*. Nor can I see how infant-baptism could ever take place upon such arguments as are mostly used by Protestants in support of it, at this day; and therefore I think it very ungrateful in modern Pædobaptists to spurn at that which gave them a being, and which is still tacitely implied in their most refined pleas.

I am your, &c.

L. E. T.

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## L E T T E R . III.

S I R,

**I** Have been carefully considering the first section of your Dissertation, which *contains a scheme of the controversy, and state of the question about scripture precept and example.* You say,

‘ The whole plea against infant-baptism comes to this, That there is neither particular express precept nor indisputable example for it in the New Testament, where baptism is inseparably connected with a profession of the faith, which infants are not capable to make.’

*Ans.* Though our whole plea came only to what you mention, it would be sufficient to overthrow infant-baptism: for when we consider how particular and express God’s injunctions were, with respect to every circumstance of the old covenant rituals, we can never imagine, that such an important ordinance of the new covenant, would be left, as a matter of doubtful disputation, to be gathered only from dark and inconclusive hints, or dubious consequences.

But the truth is, there is neither precept nor example, direct nor indirect, particular nor general, express’d nor implied, in either the Old Testament or the New, in favours of infant-baptism; so



so that our plea against it comes to more than you imagine.

‘ All this (you say) may be owned, at the same time that the inference from it is denied. ’

Here then you give up with express precept and indisputable example; but then you deny the inference, *viz.* That infants ought not to be baptized; because you think, that, by the same argument, we might debar women from the Lord’s supper: for you say, ‘ We can no more shew, by express particular precept, or indisputable example, that Christian women are included in the precept, *Do this in remembrance of me;* and, *Drink ye all of it;* than we can prove, by such precept or example, that Christian infants are comprehended in the precept, *Baptizing them.*’ And then you make no scruple to assert, That we have the same evidence for infants their being members of Christ’s body; as we have of believing women’s being such.

This is such a nonsensical evasion, that it is scarce worth while to take notice of it; but as your whole argument against the necessity of precept and example hinges upon it, it may be observed,

1. That Christian women are manifested to be subjects of gospel ordinances by a personal profession and character, answerable to what the scripture requires; but infants, as they can make no such profession, so the fleshly birth cannot denominate them subjects of baptism, any more than it can evidence their being born again.

2. The

2. The scripture expressly tells us, That there is no distinction of male and female among those who are one in Christ Jesus, Gal. iii. 28. whilst it make a very wide distinction betwixt the natural and spiritual seed, and shews, that the former, as such, have no right to the privileges of the latter, Rom. ix. 6, 7. Gal. iii. 29. Now, if the scripture allows of no distinction of sexes in the one body of Christ, neither ought you to muster up such a *chimerical* distinction in order to confound a *real* one, which still subsists betwixt infants and adult visible believers, with respect to gospel ordinances, as both the visible characters required, and the nature and design of these ordinances, shew.

3. You cannot but be sensible, that the precept, *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat, &c.* (1 Cor. xi. 28.) includes both sexes; for the word there translated *Man*, is not *ανηρ*, which is restricted to the male sex in distinction from the female, but *ανθρωπος*, which answers to the Latin *Homo*, and comprehends both male and female, except where some particular circumstance in the text restricts the sense. Here then the precept for eating the Lord's supper is as expressly directed to Christian women as it is to men. But I might have spared myself this criticism; for I am persuaded, that the weakest woman, that reads her English Bible, can be at no loss to see, that the word *Man* frequently comprehends both sexes.

‘ Now (say you) as soon as we begin to seek a  
 ‘ warrant for any such thing in this manner, we  
 ‘ must depart from the principle that every opposer  
 ‘ of

‘ of infant-baptism sets out upon, *viz.* That such  
 ‘ an express precept, and such a plain example is  
 ‘ necessary to shew the warrant for it.’

*Answ.* So it seems you are obliged to depart from precept and example at the very outset of your journey. Indeed, your wisdom is to be commended; for who would chuse to undertake a journey with such companions as every now and then would be ready to trip up his heels, or plunge him in the mire, when he had most occasion for their assistance? Yet after all, you would have prospered much better in your expedition, could you have taken both precept and example along with you in a friendly manner; they would have saved you many an artful shift which you are obliged to use in your progress.

I am not at all surpris'd you should depart from the principle we set out upon; but it is very hard, that, in so doing, you should be obliged also to depart from the principle you yourself set out upon, in your departure from the national church. In your speech before the commission of the general assembly, you give the following reason for not subscribing the *Formula*, *viz.* ‘ because I cannot  
 ‘ see precept or example in scripture for the go-  
 ‘ vernment of this national church by kirk-sessions,  
 ‘ presbyteries, provincial and national synods.—  
 ‘ And if it should be my opinion, that it requires  
 ‘ precept or example in God’s word for such a go-  
 ‘ vernment, to warrant me to declare that it is  
 ‘ founded in that word;—I see no proposition  
 ‘ in

‘ in the public standards of the church that con-  
demns this \*.’

Now, Sir, I ask, Why do you depart, in stating the controversy about infant-baptism, from that very principle, without which (by your own confession) you have no warrant to declare that it is founded in the word of God?

You take notice of another troublesome principle of the Baptists, *viz.* ‘ That baptism is inseparably connected in the New Testament with a profession of the faith, which infants are not capable to make.’

You might have answered this as the former, by telling us, That we have no instance in scripture of women making an express profession of their faith before their receiving the Lord's supper; and why should we require it of infants before baptism? But this would be too bare-faced, and therefore you say,

‘ It may be owned, that baptism cannot be administered to any, but upon a confession by which the baptized can be called disciples according to the scriptures: for it can well be said, that infants are to be baptized upon a profession of the faith by which the scripture warrants us to account them disciples with their parents, as well as to look on them, with their believing parents, as holy and of the kingdom of heaven, or the true church, into which all Christians are baptized.’

\* Glas's Works, vol. I. p. 221.

The necessity of a profession in order to baptism, it seems, may be owned: but how can it be owned, without denying baptism to those who cannot make a profession? For this you have a curious *salvo* at hand, without which you would never have own'd it, *viz.* Though infants cannot profess the faith, yet their parents can do it for them; and this warrants us to account them disciples, and baptize them. This is indeed strange reasoning.

Disciples are made by teaching:

Believing parents are taught:

Therefore, Their children are disciples, and may be baptized.

Was ever logic so ridiculous, where a bare assertion, or begging of the question, is palm'd upon us for a just conclusion.

However, by granting that a profession is necessary to infant-baptism, you entirely overthrow what you charge upon us in the introduction, else you are guilty of the same thing. For if you will not baptize infants, without the profession of the parents, then it is evident that you hold something necessary to baptism whereof infants are incapable, even that profession which the parents make in their stead, and that faith of which it is the profession. May we not then, with equal justice, retort, That the requiring such a profession of the parent in order to the baptism of his infant, comes of making the salvation by baptism to lie in something else than the thing signified; even that,  
what.

whatever it be, which the adult Christian must perform for his infants, and which gives them a right to baptism in distinction from the children of infidels.

But I had almost forgot your scripture proof for the discipleship of infants.

‘ For when the Judaizers sought to have the gentile Christians circumcised to keep the law, as necessary to their salvation by Christ, Peter said to them, *Why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples.* But the Judaizers were seeking to have this yoke laid upon the infants of the believing parents; and therefore Peter, who received the command to baptize disciples, took that designation to comprehend infants, and called them disciples with their parents.’

But though it be granted, that the infants of believing Gentiles would be circumcised with their parents, it is by no means evident, that Peter comprehends these infants in the designation *disciples*; for what other manner of expression is it natural to think the apostle would use, upon this occasion, though infants had been excepted in that designation? If we look into the context, we shall find, that those whom he terms disciples, are characterized in such a manner as will not apply to infants; *And certain men which came down from Judea taught the brethren, &c.* (Acts xv. 1.) so they were brethren capable of being taught. *God which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as he did unto us; and put no*

*difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith. Now therefore, why tempt ye God to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, &c. ver. 8, 9, 10. Now, can any thing be more plain, than that the apostle's argument against circumcising the gentile disciples, turns upon the evidence of their having received the Holy Ghost, and of having their hearts purified by faith? The apostle James calls them, those which from among the gentiles have turned unto God. If such then be the account given of those whom the apostle terms disciples, it is plain, infants are not included in that designation, though, (according to the law of circumcision) they might be circumcised with their parents.*

Besides, it was not simply *circumcision*, nor the *keeping of the law of Moses*, which Peter calls a yoke that neither they nor their fathers were able to bear; for both they and their fathers had borne this; but it was the *doctrine of its necessity unto salvation*, which was this intolerable yoke, as appears from ver. 1, 5. 'Twas this which made the law of Moses a killing letter, a ministration of death and condemnation. To this doctrine the apostle opposes *salvation by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ*, ver. 11. But this doctrine could be no such yoke upon the neck of infants, who could not understand it; it could neither please nor grieve them. Therefore it follows inevitably, that infants were not reckoned by Peter amongst those whom he terms *disciples*.

Further,

Further, you may consider how our Lord himself describes his disciples in Luke xiv. 26, 27. John viii. 31. and xiii. 35. and xv. 8. These are characters without which, he says, no man can be his disciple; but these characters will not apply to infants, and therefore the designation *disciples* cannot be given them. Besides, according to the scripture, disciples are made by teaching; for the word, in the original, signifies a *learner*, or *one that is taught*. But infants are incapable of being taught; therefore they cannot be disciples in the scripture stile and way of speaking.

But then you say, ‘ According to the commission in Mark’s gospel to preach and baptize, infants must either be reckoned with the believing or the damned. For as to the believing there connected with baptism, it is expressly said, *He that believeth not shall be damned*: and therefore if we cannot look on the infants of the faithful, dying in infancy, as damned, we must look upon them, according to this scripture, as believing, and so intitled to baptism, here connected with the believing that includes them in distinction from the damned.’

Here, it seems, we are laid under a necessity of judging the state of infants: if they are children of believers, we must reckon them with the believing and saved; but if they are children of unbelievers, we must, by the same rule, reckon them with the unbelieving and damned, according to your view of Christ’s commission. And this reckoning must



be of such as die in infancy; for you own, there may be occasion for another kind of reckoning with respect to those of them who arrive at an adult state. But, dear Sir, are you not as sensible as any, that there is not one syllable in all that commission, either of the infants of believers or infidels, dying in infancy, or otherwise? So that you must go elsewhere to establish this notion.

We must either, it seems, own, that infants are believers, or reckon they are damned dying in infancy; but what if we should neither own the one nor the other? The scripture lays us under no such necessity of determining their state; but on the contrary, shews, that the sovereign purpose of God according to election will stand, with respect to children that have done neither good nor evil, whether they ever in this life arrive at a capacity for knowing and believing the gospel, or not; yea, whether their parents be believers or not: so that we rest this matter upon the sovereignty and good pleasure of the righteous Judge, who *hath mercy on whom he will.* Rom. ix. 18.

But I beg, Sir, you would consider into what absurdities and inconsistencies, your judgment of the state of infants necessarily involves you. As,

i. If you draw the salvation of the infants of believers from these words, *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*; you must also, by the same rule, (as has been observed) infer the damnation of the infants of infidels from these other words, *he that believeth not shall be damned*, both being equally affirmed

firmed in this place. Now whether this be not as harsh and unmerciful a principle, as the popish damnation of unbaptized infants, I leave you to judge.

2. As the scripture informs us, that many of the adult children of infidels have been saved, it follows, that their salvation turns upon something which they have done in their riper years, since (upon your plan) they must have been damn'd dying in infancy.

3. Though you affirm the salvation of the children of believers, dying in infancy; yet you own, that many of them fall short of it when they survive that state\*. I ask then, what kind of salvation must that be, which can only be certainly secured by dying in infancy; which may take wing upon their first reflection, or wear out through length of time? Does that which saves dying infants, lose its whole efficacy on those of riper years; like certain medicines which are prepar'd only for children, but can have no effect on grown persons? Or, are they saved by free grace in infancy, but conditionally when they grow up, and so forfeit their salvation by failing in the terms? If so, I cannot help thinking, that you still hold a difference betwixt that which saves infants dying in infancy, and that which saves those who survive that state. Upon this plan, happy were it for thousands of the children of believers if they never survived this infant salvation, since they never attain the adult one! But dreadful is the case of the children of

infidels,

\* Page 203.

infidels, dying in infancy, who, as they have no infant-salvation, never arrive at the age necessary for attaining adult-salvation !

4. As you found this infant-salvation upon the children's connection with their believing parents, I ask, what kind of connection is it ? If it be the *fleshly* connection, how can spiritual blessings be derived in this manner ? and if they be, what hinders the children from reaping the benefit of this connection in their adult state, seeing they are still the children of believing parents ? But it is evident spiritual blessings come not by the fleshly relation ; for Ishmael was thus related to believing Abraham ; but was he therefore counted for the seed, and a child of the promise as Isaac was ? Esau was thus connected with believing Isaac ; but was he not hated whilst Jacob was loved, and that according to God's purpose of election, before either of them had done good or evil ? If the connection betwixt the believer and his infants be *spiritual*, how comes this to be dissolved when they grow up, so that even an Esau or an Absalom may appear a son of perdition ? Does a spiritual connection, that entails salvation, wear out through length of time ? And when is the precise time that this connection ceases, and the children set up for themselves ?

But after all, perhaps you will say, you are only pleading for that *judgment of charity* which we ought to exercise towards the infants of believers, whilst you do not pretend to judge their *real* state,

as it is in the sight of God. But this cannot be the case. For,

1. The text from which you form this judgment, will admit of no distinction of this nature. It is a real truth in the sight, purpose and intention of God, that *he that believeth shall be saved*; so that if the scripture classes the infants of believers with the believing, they shall all as certainly be saved as the scripture declares it, or as God is true who hath promised it. However we, who cannot know the hearts, may be deceived by mens professions; yet God will never deceive us by his open declarations, which will stand true whether we believe them or not. He does not beg our judgment of charity to his veracity; but challenges our firmest belief upon our highest peril.

2. The judgment of charity respects our fellow men, goes upon plausible appearances, and implies a possibility of mistake. Now if God's open declarations, with respect to infants, be only a foundation for our judgment of charity; then, for any thing we know, we may be mistaken in our judgment from these declarations, and that not only as they respect the state of infants, but as they respect the foundation of our own faith and hope: for it is absurd to affirm, that the scripture enjoins full assurance of faith, whilst it gives us no other foundation for it, that what we have for our charitable view of one another, in which, it shews, we are often deceived. So that you see I must either consider you as determining the *real* state of infants, in  
the

the sight, purpose and intention of God, or as playing fast and loose with the open declarations of the God of truth.

If you should reply, That the scripture enjoins us to look upon infants in the same light with their parents; so that if we were assured of the salvation of the parents, we would be equally assured of the salvation of their children. I answer,

• This is contrary to scripture facts. Abraham was a real believer in the sight of God, and declared to be so; yet the scripture never enjoins us to look upon his son Ishmael in the same light. Isaac was also a true believer, and an heir with Abraham of the same promise; yet we are not allowed to pass the same judgment upon his son Esau. David was a man after God's own heart; yet we are obliged to form another view of his son Absalom.

If it be objected, that these did not die in infancy, and so are foreign to the point. I answer,

1. Does our Lord's commission in Mark's gospel warrant us to believe they would have been saved, had they died in infancy? Or, does any other place in all the scripture give the least hint of this? Are we not expressly told, that Esau was hated, not only in his infancy, but before he was born, having done neither good nor evil?

2. If you believe that the purpose of God according to election will stand, not of works, but of him that calleth; and that infants and adults are saved on the same footing; how can you ever imagine, that

that their dying, or not dying in infancy, makes any alteration here?

3. The utmost that can be pled upon this point is, that as scripture does not determine the state of infants dying in infancy, it is safest to err on the charitable side. And, if this were all you plead for, I should not dispute it; though, for my own part, I think it more eligible to leave them entirely to the judgment of God.

Upon the whole, I cannot but observe a manifest juggling in your argument from our Lord's commission. First, you take it for granted, that infants, and particularly those of believers, are included in that commission, for no other reason, that I can see, but because you would have it so: then, by a wonderful kind of logic, you convert these infants into believers; which is indeed a very great act of charity, since otherwise, you tell us, they would be damned. Infants being thus logically converted and saved, their baptism must follow, for it is there connected with believing. But because you were sensible that both scripture and experience often exposes the deceit of such reasoning, you are obliged to screen yourself by the death of the poor infants; well knowing, that as they cannot expose the fallacy in their non-age; so their death will effectually prevent their ever doing so. Thus you endeavour to wrap yourself in darkness, and, in order to prove infant-baptism, abandon all medium of proof either *pro* or *con*. Those children that survive their infant state, and appear unbelievers,

ers, you have nothing to do with, for two reasons; first, because they did not die in infancy; and secondly, because adult children are not infants, as you inform us afterwards. But all these little *Hocus Pocus* tricks are easily detected, and serve only to shew the weakness of your cause.

I have been the longer on this point, as it is your *dernier resort*, whither you fly for refuge upon every pinching occasion; it may be called your *favourite depth*, or the great *whirlpool* of your whole controversy.

Before I conclude this letter, I would beg you seriously to consider, That as we have no warrant from scripture to reckon particular infants with the believing or the unbelieving, and so to determine their state merely from the judgment we form of their parents; so the scripture is very express, that God, from all eternity, hath elected some to everlasting life; and it is enough for us to know that the elect shall obtain salvation, whether they die young or old; have believing or unbelieving parents; be baptized in water, or unbaptized. Salvation is of sovereign free grace, and takes place not according to our age, situation, or connections in life; but according as we are chosen in Christ before the world began, and the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. Thus in the case of Esau and Jacob; *the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth,*

*it was said, The elder shall serve the younger. As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Far be it. For he saith to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion. So then, it is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that sheweth mercy, Rom. ix. 11,—16.* Thus it appears inconsistent with the sovereignty and freedom of divine grace, to hinge the salvation of infants upon their connection with believing parents; as, on the other hand, to suppose a necessity for the children of infidels their being adults before they are capable subjects of it. and it is no less inconsistent with this rich grace to suppose, that any of its objects will ever fall away. With great propriety then may the Christian sing;

‘ Magnificent free Grace, arise,  
 ‘ Outshine the thoughts of shallow man;  
 ‘ Sov’ reign, preventing, all surprize  
 ‘ To him that neither will’d nor ran :  
 ‘ Grand as the bosom whence thou flow’d,  
 ‘ Kind as the heart that gave thee vent,  
 ‘ Rich as the Gift that God bestow’d,  
 ‘ And lovely like the Christ he sent.  
 ‘ Know then, on no precarious ground  
 ‘ Stands ’ this rich ‘ grace and life to men;  
 ‘ For life now reigns in God’s dear Son,  
 ‘ For us by’ divine ‘ justice slain.’

*Christian Songs, p. 5, 13.*

I am your, &c.



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## L E T T E R I V.

S I R,

**Y**OUR next argument for infant-baptism is drawn from the apostles' *baptizing believers and their houses*, and runs thus;

‘ The apostles, in executing their commission, preached salvation in Christ to a man and his house.’——

*Answ.* They did so; for Cornelius said unto Peter, *We are ALL here present before God, to hear all things that are commanded thee of God.* Acts x. 33. so Peter preached salvation in Christ to them ALL. Likewise, with respect to the jaylor and his house, it is said, *And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to ALL that were in his house.* And they could do no less; for they had a commission to preach the gospel to every creature. Thus far then we agree.

——‘ And, according to this preaching, he that believed on Christ for his own salvation, believed on him also for the salvation of his house; for so his belief answered to that which was preached.’——

† Here is *appropriation* with a witness! Whatever improprieties the popular preachers are guilty of

in their calls to the *appropriating act of faith*, they never, that I could learn, extended the saving benefit thereof beyond the person's self; but, according to you, a man is not only warranted to *appropriate* salvation to himself, but also to his whole house. If we look into the subject of the apostles' preaching, we shall find, that it did not respect any particular man's person or house; but was a declaration of the free grace of God to sinners, through the merits, atonement and resurrection of his Son Jesus Christ; and that whosoever believed this should be saved: but it was no part of their preaching, that a believer's house would be saved upon his faith without believing themselves; and therefore, such a belief was not required of any, nor could it any way answer to that which was preached.

You endeavour to prove, that the apostles preached salvation to a man's house if he *alone* believed, from the following scriptures;—*who shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. Acts xi. 14. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house. Acts xvi. 31.* Here you cull out broken and detach'd sentences in order to avoid the connection, and then perch upon the sound of the words instead of the sense. But it happens very unluckily for your purpose, that we are expressly told these houses believed *themselves* as well as their owners.

The first passage relates to Cornelius and his house, concerning whom we are told, that he was

one that feared God with *ALL* his house. Acts x. 2. He and *ALL* his were present to hear Peter's sermon, (ver. 33.) in which there was not the least intimation, that his house would be saved upon his believing; but the apostle having set before them Christ's life, death and resurrection, he concludes thus; *To him gave all the prophets witness, that through his name, whosoever believeth on him, shall receive remission of sins.* ver. 43. Then it follows; *While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on ALL them that heard the word,* ver. 44. Now, what can we gather from this, but that remission of sins is granted to all that believe; and that the household of Cornelius believed and received the Holy Ghost as well as himself? And was not this the exact accomplishment of what the angel had said to Cornelius concerning the words whereby he and all his house should be saved?

The other passage relates to the jaylor and his house. In answer to the question, *What must I do to be saved?* it is said, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.* Acts xvi. 31. This by no means implies, that the jaylor's faith would save his house, or that he was commanded to believe for the salvation of his house as well as for his own; but only, that his house would be saved, as well as he, believing on Christ: and this sense is clearly ascertained by the event; for *they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house,* ver. 32. But why to ALL that were in his house, if he could have believed in

in their stead? That all his house, as well as himself, understood and believed the word which was preached to them, is clear from ver. 34. — *he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with ALL his house.* Thus we see how the jaylor and his house were saved. But you proceed;

— ‘ And it is no less evident that they baptized the believer and his house: Thus Paul says, 1 Cor. i. 16. *And I baptized also the household of Stephanas.* And it is said of Lydia, Acts xvi. 15. *And when she was baptized and her house;* and of the jaylor, ver. 33. *he was baptized, he and all his.*’

It is indeed no less evident that these houses you instance were *baptized*, than it is that they *believed*. But the point to be proven is, whether infants or others in these houses were baptized upon the faith of the parent. Unless you can make this appear, the baptism of these houses makes nothing for your purpose.

The baptism of the household of Stephanas will not prove this; for the apostle gives the following account of that household, *I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the first-fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints) that ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us and laboureth.* 1 Cor. xvi. 15, 16. Here it is evident they were adults; since otherwise they could not minister to the saints, or help and labour with the apostles. This is further manifested by

their being the first-fruits of Achaia, concerning which we read, — *and many of the Corinthians hearing, believed, and were baptized.* Acts xviii. 8. These three words express the beautiful order which the apostles observed in executing their commission; they first preached, and when those who heard, believed, they then, and not till then, baptized them.

The baptism of the household of Lydia makes nothing at all for your purpose, unless you can make it appear she had infants, and that they were baptized upon her believing; but this, I imagine, you will not undertake; nor will the scripture account of her and her house admit this supposition; *And a certain woman, named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us; whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized and her house, &c.* Acts xvi. 14, 15. From hence it would appear, either that she never was married, or that her husband was then dead; for she seems to be chief manager in the business of selling purple; besides, it is not usual in scripture to denominate a household by the wife, whilst she is clothed with a husband:—it is most natural then to think she had no infant-children to be baptized. But making the supposition of her having a husband, and children that were infants, (which cannot be proven) is it to be imagined, she would bring these infants along with her all the way from Thyatira in Asia, the place of her residence,

residence, to Philippi in Macedonia, where she appears to have come with design of selling her purple? In ver. 40. it is said, *And they (viz. Paul and Silas) went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them and departed.* Now as we read of no brethren in that city, but the households of Lydia and of the jaylor, so their being *comforted* of Paul and Silas, shews them to be adults and not infants.

Nor will the baptism of the jaylor's house avail your plea; for as it is said, that, believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, he and all his house should be saved; and that *he and all his were baptized*; so likewise we are told, that *they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to ALL that were in his house*, prior to their baptism; and that *he rejoiced, believing in God with ALL his house.* ver. 32, 34. Now, Sir, can you tell me why the word ALL may not be as comprehensive in the latter as in the former? If the jaylor had any infants, they are either excluded from the ALL that were *baptized*, else they must be included in the ALL that *heard* the word, *believed* and *rejoiced*; which last, I think, no rational man will affirm.

✱ Here I would ask, What do you mean by a believer's *house*? Is it made up of infants, or of adults, or of both? If it includes both, then a believer's wife and adult children are saved by his faith, and so may be baptized; upon this footing, as well as his infants. If you say, it includes only infants,  
upon

upon what scripture do you ground this distinction? Did not Abraham's house include adults as well as infants; servants as well as sons; those bought with his money, as well as those sprung from his body? And was not circumcision expressly injoin'd, and actually administered to them all? Gen. xvii. 12, 13, 24, 25, 26, 27. Does not the apostle term these adult persons who ministered to the saints, *the house of Stephanas*? Who would ever imagine, that the saints of Cesar's *household*, who sent their salutations to the church at Colosse, were only a nursery of sucklings? Col. iv. 22. Yet this must be supposed, if your argument have any consistency; else it will follow, that adults as well as infants; infidels as well as believers; wife as well as children; servants as well as sons, must every one of them be baptized upon the single profession of the parent or master; for they are all included in the scripture use of the word *household*.

You conclude your first section by saying, 'If we deny scripture example for baptizing of infants, we must first deny there were any infants in these baptized houses. And as we can plead no foundation in scripture for that, it is too bold to say, that there is no scripture example for baptizing infants.'

Whether, from what has been said above, it appears most agreeable to the scope of these scriptures, to say there were, or were not infants in these baptized houses, I leave you to consider at your leisure: but if ever you should attempt to prove there were

infants

infants in these houses, (which it concerns you much to do) I hope you will guard against all future objections, by proving they also *believed* and were baptized. Meantime, I despair of either of these being done in a hurry, and therefore still affirm with boldness, that there is no scripture example for baptizing infants. I am,

S I R,

Your, &c.

LET



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## L E T T E R V.

S I R,

**I** Now proceed to consider your second section, which shews, *that infants must partake of baptism from their having part in the promise of the Holy Ghost unto which Christians are baptized; and proceeds thus;*

‘ We see in the very first call to those in Jerusa-  
 ‘ lem to repent and be baptized in the name of the  
 ‘ Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, the  
 ‘ promise of the Holy Ghost, unto which they were  
 ‘ baptized, was to them and to their children;  
 ‘ even them who had said, *His blood be on us, and on*  
 ‘ *our children.* Peter said to them, Acts ii. 38, 39.  
 ‘ *Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name*  
 ‘ *of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye*  
 ‘ *shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the*  
 ‘ *promise is unto you (who are presently called,) and*  
 ‘ *to your children (who are connected with you in*  
 ‘ *the condemnation,) and (in like manner as to you*  
 ‘ *and your children, so also) to all that are afar off,*  
 ‘ *even as many as the Lord our God shall call. For*  
 ‘ *as that promise of the Holy Ghost was to as many*  
 ‘ *as the Lord then called in Jerusalem, and to their*  
 ‘ *children; so it must be to as many as the Lord*  
 ‘ *calls*

‘ calls afar off from thence, and to their children.  
 ‘ Now if they who repent be baptized unto the pro-  
 ‘ mise of the Holy Ghost, Acts xix. 2, 3. and if  
 ‘ that promise unto which they are baptized, be  
 ‘ to their children as well as unto them; then cer-  
 ‘ tainly baptism, as far as it is connected with that  
 ‘ promise, must belong to their children as well as  
 ‘ to them.’

It would be a sufficient answer to all this to shew, that this promise of the Holy Ghost was made to their children just as it was made to themselves, *viz.* to as many of them as should *repent* and be *called* of the Lord; for to such the apostle restricts the promise. However, I shall consider more particularly,

1. The promise itself. 2. To whom it was made.

1. The promise which Peter had particularly in his eye is that in Joel ii. 28, 29, 30, 31, 32. *And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy; your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions; and also upon the servants, and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens, and in the earth, blood and fire and pillars of smoke: the sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and terrible day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered; for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance,*

*ance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.*

This prophecy or promise may be considered either,

1. In a literal limited sense ; or, 2. In a more general and extended sense.

1. In its literal and limited sense, it is an Old Testament promise of the Spirit, which was fulfilled in the apostolic age ; as is evident from the miraculous signs which were to attend it, such as their sons and daughters prophesying, the wonders to be shewn in the heavens, &c. and it was likewise to take place before the great and terrible day of the Lord came in the destruction of the Jewish church and state, foretold by our Lord, Matth. xxiv. Mark xiii. and Luke xxi. Yea, the apostle expressly applies it to that extraordinary effusion of the Spirit which began on the day of Pentecost, *This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel,* Acts ii. 16. and then cites the passage. You may likewise see how it is applied in *The Testimony of the King of Martyrs*, p. 57. near the foot.

Peter in his sermon proceeds to shew, in what manner that promise in Joel came to be accomplished, ver. 22,—37. *viz.* That God having raised that same Jesus whom they had crucified (according as it was foretold by David in the sixteenth Psalm,) and being by the right-hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Spirit he had shed forth that which they then saw and heard.

Now

Now these gifts of the Spirit, which were then seen and heard by the multitude, were miraculous and extraordinary, and behoved to cease when they had reached their end, 1 Cor. xiii. 8. And as the promise, in this sense, will not apply to infants, so the apostle could mean no more by the words *your children*, than what the promise itself plainly expresses, *viz. your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, &c.* Nor is it clear, that the apostle applies this promise to any other than the Jews and their children; for he had not as yet learned, that the gentiles should *receive the promise of the Spirit thro' faith.* But,

2. We may consider this promise of the Spirit in a more *general and extended* sense, *viz.* That gift of the Spirit which is absolutely necessary for the regeneration and sanctification of all the people of God in all ages of the world, and which is bestowed upon all that are Christ's, Rom. viii. 9. But how will it apply, in this sense, to all the natural seed of believers? That elect infants may receive the Spirit, I make no doubt; but that all the natural seed of believers obtain this, is manifestly false, and contrary both to scripture and experience. Even those infants who receive the Holy Ghost cannot be distinguished from these who do not, and so cannot be the subjects of baptism, which does not belong to them immediately as elect, or as having the Spirit, but as *evidencing* this in the profession of their faith.

If the promise of the Holy Ghost be made to all

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the

- the children of believers, then it will either be ac-  
 -complished, or not. If it be not accomplished,  
 how can we reconcile this with the character of  
 - God, as a God of truth and faithfulness with whom  
 - it is impossible to lie? If this promise be actually  
 - made good, then none of believing Abraham's po-  
 -sterity could ever have been rejected; for as he  
 had the Spirit himself, so all his natural children,  
 yea, his children's children to the latest posterity,  
 must also have the Spirit, otherwise the promise  
 would fail whenever the succession of this gift was  
 interrupted. But the New Testament demon-  
 strates that the greater part of Abraham's natural  
 seed were destitute of the Spirit and rejected, whilst  
 at the same time it shews, that God's word of pro-  
 mise to Abraham has taken effect, Rom. ix. 6.  
 Experience also shews us that the gift of the Spirit  
 is not hereditary under the New Testament, and  
 that many godly parents have wicked children,  
 which could never be the case had God engaged  
 himself by promise to give them his Holy Spirit.  
 You yourself own †, that the children ' may yet be  
 ' really irregenerate, and when adult appear to be  
 ' so;' and that ' if the children become adult, not  
 ' adhering to the baptismal profession, they have  
 ' no more the character of holy \*.' Now certain-  
 ly you will not affirm, that irregenerate and unho-  
 ly persons have the Spirit.

If it should be said, that the promise is condi-  
 tional, and so may justly be suspended till the con-  
 dition be performed; then it will follow, that no  
infants

† Page 201. \* Page 303.

infants can have the Spirit, for they cannot perform the condition, and (supposing the doctrine of free-will) perhaps never will even in their adult state. But how, upon this plan, could the apostle affirm, That the promise is of grace, that it might be sure to all the seed? Rom. iv. 16.

To affirm then, That this promise belongs to *all* the natural seed of believers, or to *any* of them *as such*, is the same as to affirm, That all of them have the Spirit, which is contrary both to scripture and experience; or that God fails in performing his promise, which is blasphemy; or that the promise is conditional, and then infants, whilst such, can have no interest in it, nor would it thus be sure even to adults.

It remains then that we consider to whom this promise was made.

Nothing can be plainer from the text, than that the apostle restricts the promise of the Holy Ghost to *as many* (of the Jews at Jerusalem, and of their children, and of them that are afar off) *as the Lord shall call*. That is, to as many as the Lord shall call effectually: for those whom he calls according to his purpose, he also justifies and glorifies, Rom. viii. 30. Those whom he calls of Jews and gentiles, are termed *the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory*. Rom. ix. 23, 24.

Such as considered the gospel promise made to Abraham as belonging to all his natural seed, could not but be stumbled at the rejection of the Jews, as if the word of God had taken none effect: but

the apostle solves the whole difficulty, by distinguishing Abraham's seed into *the children of the flesh*, and *the children of God*, or *the children of the promise*, who are counted for the seed, Rom. ix. 8. This distinction he further illustrates in his epistle to the Galatians, under the notion of *the children of the bond woman* and *the children of the free*; the former, as Ishmael was, are *born after the flesh*; the latter, as Isaac was, are *by promise*, Gal. iv. 22, 23, 28, 31. Now the gospel promises were not made to the fleshly seed of Abraham, as such, but only to the spiritual seed chosen in Christ; and they being Christ's, are also Abraham's seed, *heirs according to the promise*,—*blessed with faithful Abraham*,—*and receive the promise of the Spirit through faith*. Gal. iii. 9, 14, 16, 29. As the promise only respected the spiritual seed; so to them it is fully accomplished in every *iota*, and to none else, be they children of whom they may; for natural generation gives no title here. But you proceed,

‘ Though the children could not in themselves  
 ‘ know any thing of repentance or remission at the  
 ‘ time of their baptism, as did their parents; yet  
 ‘ they were even then as capable as they of the re-  
 ‘ newing of the Holy Ghost and saving change  
 ‘ from which repentance flows; and as capable as  
 ‘ they of justification by remission, and by the im-  
 ‘ putation of righteousness without works, &c.’

*Answ.* If the children cannot in themselves know any thing of repentance or remission at the time of their baptism, then, according to the scripture,  
 they

they are not capable of baptism; for the apostle Peter tells us, that *the answer* (or stipulation) of a *good conscience towards God* is necessary to baptism, 1 Pet. iii. 21. But how children can have the answer of a good conscience in baptism, without knowing any thing of repentance or remission you would do well to inform us.

That children are capable of the renewing of the Holy Ghost, justification, &c. I make no doubt: God both can and will sanctify all his elect, whether infants or adults. But what is this to the purpose? The question is not whether infants are capable of these things; but whether are all the natural children of believers actually justified and sanctified? Do they appear to be so either from scripture or experience? Unless you can make this appear, their *capability* is no argument at all upon which to found their baptism. After all, are they more capable of these things than the children of infidels? Is not *God able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham*, though the natural branches should be broken off? The sovereignty of God shines forth in having mercy upon whom he will have mercy, without regard to any advantages of natural birth: and this is plainly exemplified in the rejection of a great part of the natural seed of believing Abraham, and chusing from among the gentiles a people for his name. So that it is but a vain plea for baptism, *we have a believer to our father*, Mat. iii. 9. for if Abraham could not save his



house by his extraordinary faith, much less can any other believer, who never sustain'd his public character as *father of the faithful*.

Upon the whole, the apostle Peter, in order to encourage the convicted Jews to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, gives them to understand, that notwithstanding all they had done, in rejecting and crucifying the Messiah, God was still waiting to be gracious unto them, by granting them the remission of their sins, and the gift of his promised Spirit. And as it could not but cut them in their hearts, that they had not only perpetrated this dreadful action with their own wicked hands, but also wish'd his blood upon their children, the apostle further assures them, that the promise in Joel respected their children (or SONS and DAUGHTERS) as well as themselves; even such of them as should repent and call upon the name of the Lord, inasmuch as it is promised, that *whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance as the Lord hath said; nor is this deliverance confin'd to those in Jerusalem; but extends likewise to all that are afar off, even the remnant whom the Lord shall call.* Joel ii. 32. compared with Acts ii. 21, 39.

This promise was accomplished in the first place to the Jews, as it is said, *Unto you first God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you in turning away every one of you from his iniquities.* From which it appears, that their children as well as them-

themselves behoved to be turned from their iniquities, in as far as the promise or blessing took place upon them.

It may be further noticed, that this promise, as it respected the children, had no dependance on, or connection with the faith of the parents, any more than the promise of Canaan to the succeeding generation had a dependance on the faith of their fathers who died in the wilderness. So that the infidelity of parents could not make this promise of none effect to the children whom the Lord should call.

But how any person can suppose, that a spiritual promise belongs to infants on account of their parents faith, so as thence to infer their baptism, is indeed very strange, and as foreign to the scope of the apostle in quoting the promise, as it is to the promise itself which he quotes. I am,

S I R,

Your, &c.

L E T

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## L E T T E R VI.

S I R,

**I** H A V E been considering the third section of your Dissertation, wherein you endeavour to clear the argument from 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.*

‘ These words (you say) serve to shew, that the  
 ‘ infants of one believing parent are members of  
 ‘ Christ’s church for which he gave himself,  
 ‘ that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the  
 ‘ washing of water by the word, which is the only  
 ‘ church whereof they can be members; and that  
 ‘ therefore they must partake of the washing of  
 ‘ water which belongs to that holy church, and  
 ‘ signifies admission and entrance into it.’

Then you anticipate an objection, *viz.* That as the children are said to be holy, so the unbelieving party is said to be sanctified by the other, and, by parity of reason, is also a member of Christ’s church. To which you answer, that the unbelieving wife (for instance) is sanctified, not to herself, but to, or in her husband, for the sake of the children that they may be holy. And a little below you tell us,

‘ When

‘ When Israel after the flesh married strange  
 ‘ wives, it behoved these to be put away ; and like-  
 ‘ wise the children begot upon them by Israelites  
 ‘ were to be put away, as not being members of  
 ‘ the commonwealth of Israel, or as not being a  
 ‘ holy seed, or *seed of God*, but unclean as other  
 ‘ gentiles then were. But, says the apostle, it is  
 ‘ not so in the New Testament church ; for its  
 ‘ members being join’d to aliens in marriage, are  
 ‘ not to be separated from them, who are sanctifi-  
 ‘ to their use in that state ; so that their children,  
 ‘ begot with such aliens, are now to be accounted  
 ‘ holy, as well as the children begot by both be-  
 ‘ lieving parents ; and are to be acknowledged as  
 ‘ well as they, to be these little children whom the  
 ‘ Lord declares to belong to his kingdom in di-  
 ‘ stinction from the world.’

Thus you have clear’d the argument from this  
 text ; but I am afraid that, in so doing, you have  
 thrown dust upon other points of greater concern  
 than infant-baptism. As,

1. If the New Testament require only one pa-  
 rent to constitute the children members of Christ’s  
*true* church, whilst the Old Testament required  
 both parents to constitute them members of the  
*earthly typical* church ; then it follows, that carnal  
 generation is now more effectual to produce a *true*  
 holy seed, than it was formerly to produce a *typi-  
 cal* holy seed.

2. If all the infants of believing parents are  
 ‘ those little children whom the Lord declares to  
 ‘ belong

‘ belong to his kingdom in distinction from the  
 ‘ world ;’ then it plainly follows, that the earthly  
 birth, or that birth after the flesh, availeth as much  
 for the enjoyment of the privileges of the heaven-  
 ly kingdom, as it did formerly for the enjoyment  
 of the privileges of the earthly kingdom.

In your *Testimony of the King of Martyrs* †  
 you clear this doctrine in a quite different way,  
 where you say, ‘ The earthly birth, or that birth  
 ‘ after the flesh, availed much in the state of the  
 ‘ church erected at Sinai, as to the enjoyment of  
 ‘ the privileges of it. But now our Lord says to  
 ‘ Nicodemus, *Except a man be born again (or born  
 ‘ from above) he cannot see the kingdom of God;*  
 ‘ and Gal. iv. 26. *Jerusalem which is above, is free,*  
 ‘ *which is the mother of us all.*’

How you can free yourself from self-contradiction here, I cannot conceive ; for unless you maintain that every one that is born of believing parents, is likewise born from above, the contradiction is still glaring. And if you should endeavour to reconcile matters by making a distinction betwixt the *view* we should have of these infants, in the judgment of charity, and what they may be *really* in themselves, I have answered this ridiculous quibble already ; and shall only add, That the case of infants is different from that of adults, as to the judgment of charity we ought to form of them. Adults may impose upon us by a plausible profession and walk, and as we cannot judge the  
 heart,

† P. 53. Sect. 2.

heart, we must esteem these brethren that have the apparent characters of such; but if we be deceived in infants, they can have no hand in this deception, and consequently it must land upon the rule that directs our judgment of them: and I am rather inclined to father such a rule upon you than upon the scriptures of truth, as I am sure

‘ The faithful true witnesses will never deceive.’

3. If all the infants of believers are ‘ members of Christ’s church for which he gave himself, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water, by the word;’ then they shall all certainly be saved; for as the church you mention is the same with the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, Heb. xii. 23. and as Christ gave himself for this church; so none of its members can ever perish or be plucked out of Christ’s hands.

4. But if ‘ those little children whom the Lord declares to belong to his kingdom, in distinction from the world,’ fall away in their adult state, as you suppose some of them may §, then a person may be a real member of Christ for a while, and afterwards a child of the devil; enrolled in heaven in the former part of his life, and, in the latter part of it, blotted out of the book of life. And if any one of these perish for whom Christ gave himself, why may not all of them? Upon this scheme, what ground has any to hope that all other blessings will be bestowed in consequence of the

the

the gift of Christ? Was the apostle really out of his logic when he argues, *He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?—Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?* If the people of God must not look upon the gift of God as eternal life thro' Jesus Christ, what foundation is left for their hope, unless it be a conceit of something distinguishing about themselves (the work and labour of love, if you please) and after all, who can trust his own heart?

It might likewise be shewn how this scheme militates against the doctrine of election, effectual calling, the stability of the covenant, and the faithfulness of God. And tho' I am far from thinking you intended any such thing; yet, upon reflection, you might easily see, that the shifts you are put to in support of infant-baptism throw the whole fabric of redemption into rubbish and confusion.

Must we then part with all these rich, sweet and refreshing doctrines to make way for infant-baptism? Must we give up with plain scripture truths, to make room for dubious consequences drawn from undefined phrases? Sad exchange indeed!

I shall now consider the scope of 1 Cor. vii. 14.

It is evident from the first verse of this chapter, that the Corinthians had written to the apostle for a resolution of some doubtful cases, amongst which, by the apostles answer, this seems to have been  
one,

one, viz. Whether it was lawful for a believer, join'd in marriage with an unbeliever, to continue in that relation? Whether this doubt arose from a mistaken regard to Moses' law, Deut. vii. 3. and the example in Ezra, chap. x. or from what he had written to them before, 1 Cor. v. 9, 10. is not material to know. However, the apostle decides the matter thus, *If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.* Thus the matter stands determined by the apostle; to which he adds the following reason; *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.* Ver. 12, 13, 14.

Two things offer themselves here to be considered.

1. The *sanctification* of the unbelieving party.
2. The *holiness* of the children in consequence thereof.

By the *sanctification* of the unbelieving party cannot be meant *internal sanctification*, or renovation of mind; for as the heart can only be purified by *faith*, the person, in that case, would be no longer an *unbeliever*. Neither can we understand it of *typical* or *ceremonial sanctification*; for this belonged only to the first covenant, which was then made old. There remain only two senses in which this



sanctification of the unbelieving party can be understood ;

1. *Instrumental sanctification*; or sanctified as an instrument of propagating a holy seed. Or,

2. *Matrimonial sanctification*, whereby the one is enjoyed as a chaste yoke-fellow by the other, without fornication or uncleanness.

The former of these senses you hold, in which you follow Mr. THOMAS GOODWIN; but that sense will not at all answer the apostle's purpose, which was to persuade the believing Corinthians to abide in their marriage relation with unbelievers. For,

1. If the unbelieving wife (for instance) were barren, then she could have no sanctification; for as this sanctification is not for herself, but for the children, in whom it terminates, how can it exist at all if she has none?

2. Though the unbelieving wife should bring forth children; yet if these children should lose the character of holy in their adult state, in what sense can we understand the unbelieving wife sanctified to bring forth holy children? The sanctification is not in herself, she being an unbeliever; neither is it in her children, they being irregenerate. Where then is it to be found? Thus, you see, the apostle's argument would be founded upon something very contingent and uncertain, and would have left the believing Corinthians, in many cases, at liberty to put away their unbelieving correlates.

But it is evident the apostle's argument was not  
found.

founded upon any thing future or contingent; but upon what was certain and present, or rather past, for he useth the preter-perfect tense, *ἡγιασται*, *hath been sanctified*; so that this sanctification must be prior to, and independent of her having children, and of the holiness of these children.

It may be noticed further, that the unbelieving wife is not here said to be sanctified by the *faith* of the husband; but barely this, *by (to or in) the husband*: and as faith is only an evidence of a spiritual relation, there is no ground to think it is here given as a reason for the lawfulness of the carnal relation of marriage; for marriage does not derive its lawfulness from the faith of the gospel, but from the ordinance of God appointing, and the parties mutually agreeing, to be no more twain, but one flesh. Therefore,

The sanctification here spoken of must be of a *matrimonial* nature, and oppos'd to *fornication* or *uncleanness*. This will appear, whether we consider the meaning of the word *sanctification* in several other places of the New Testament, or the scope of the apostle's argument here.

∴ In 2 Cor. vii. 1. we find *holiness* or *sanctification* oppos'd to *filthiness of the flesh*, as well as of the spirit; and when it is said, (1 Cor. vii. 34.) *that she may be holy in body*, must it not be understood of her being *chaste*? In 1 Thess. iv. 3. *sanctification* is oppos'd to *fornication*; *For this is the will of God, your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication*. And in ver. 4, 5. it is contrasted with

the lust of concupiscence; *That every one of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour. Not in the lust of concupiscence, &c.* This sanctification and honour agrees with Heb xiii. 4. *Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.*

Now if the words *sanctification* and *honour* be oppos'd to *fornication, the lust of concupiscence, whoredom* and *adultery*, they must necessarily signify *chastity*. And if marriage be *honourable* (lawful or chaste) *in all*, we may easily see how the unbelieving wife is sanctified in, by, or to her husband, whilst she observes the laws of marriage, and keeps the *bed undefiled*. For though she be an unbeliever, yet being lawfully join'd to an husband, she is *matrimonially holy*, and sanctified to his use, even as the creatures he eats and drinks are, 1 Tim. iv. 3, 4, 5. Therefore, as these are not to be refused, so she is not to be put away.

The apostle backs the sanctification of the unbeliever with an argument drawn from an absurdity that would follow upon the contrary supposition; *Else were your children unclean; but now are they holy*. As if he had said, If the unbelieving party were not a lawful yoke-fellow, then your children, being the issue of an impure junction, would be unclean; but now are they holy. This leads me to consider,

2. In what sense the children are said to be *holy*. What has been already said on the former head, leaves nothing to be done here, but formally to draw

draw the conclusion. No stream can rise higher than its source, nor can any cause produce an effect disproportion'd to its nature. *That which is born of the flesh, is flesh,* and will remain so for any thing that flesh can do. If therefore, as has been shewn, the unbelieving wife be only sanctified in her husband *matrimonially*, so as they may lawfully, chastly and honourably dwell together without fornication or uncleanness; then, all the holiness that can accrue to the children from this sanctification, is only *legitimacy*, as being lawfully begotten; and the uncleanness oppos'd to this, can only be *illegitimacy* or *bastardy*, as being begotten in fornication and uncleanness †.

If it be objected, that this view of the place will apply as well to unbelievers and their children, as to believers and their's. I answer,

In some respects it will. The apostle here sustains the lawfulness of these marriages which were consummated while both parties were unbelievers; for it is more natural to suppose, that they were married before their conversion, than that they should afterwards marry infidels when they had scruples about dwelling with them. He likewise sustains the legitimacy of such children as were begot before the conversion of either parent; for

F 3. he

† If we were to regard the opinion of learned and judicious commentators, such as *Camerarius*, *Me'antbon*, *Musculus*, *Beza*, &c. they all agree in giving the above view of the place; and *Calvin* on Mal. ii. 15. owneth, that *holy seed*, or *seed of God*, is an Hebraism for *legitimate seed*.

he makes no exception here, and that they had such children, we need make no doubt.

It may be further objected, That if the sanctification of the unbeliever be only of a *matrimonial* nature, then the apostle might with equal propriety affirm, that the believing party was sanctified to the unbelieving.

To this it may be answered, 1. This was not the point in question. The apostle is not answering the scruples of infidels, but of Christians; who were not doubting of their own sanctification in that respect, but of the sanctification of their unbelieving correlates; nor of the lawfulness of marriage in general, but only in the peculiar circumstances mentioned; for which they had some colour of reason from the law of Moses.

2. It would not only be improper, but absurd, to say, that the believing party was sanctified to the other; for the party which the law held unclean was the alien, not the Israelite; and so this uncleanness must be shewn to be removed from the party upon which the law, and the consciences of the believing Corinthians had fixed it, and not from the party that was look'd upon as clean already: therefore the apostle says, the *unbelieving* wife or husband is sanctified. But then this sanctification implies no moral or physical change in the unbeliever; but only a relative change, in respect of a law that formerly prohibited such, and in respect of the believer's conscience which is now freed from that law, and so can dwell with them in  
sancti-

sanctification and honour. What the apostle says about the sanctification of the meats prohibited under the law, serves much to illustrate this point; accordingly he classes them together when opposing the doctrine of the false teachers, who forbade marriage, and commanded to abstain from meats which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving. See 1 Tim. iv. 3, 4, 5.

In fine, whether we consider the gospel doctrine, the scope of the apostle's argument, or the sense of the like expressions in several other places of the New Testament, all concur in ascertaining this view of the place, *viz.* That the unbelieving party is sanctified to the other, in as far as he or she is a *chaste* and *lawful* yoke-fellow, according to the ordinance of God appointing them to be one flesh, whom no man ought to put asunder: and their children are in so far holy, as they are begotten in *lawful wedlock*, and not by fornication.

You take notice of this sense, and call it a ridiculous gloss on the text; but add, that 'it will  
' bring us back to the very same thing that this  
' text always served to demonstrate, *viz.* That the  
' children of believers, begot by such aliens, were  
' now to be accounted holy,——and are to be ac-  
' knowledged to be those little children whom the  
' Lord declares to belong to his kingdom in di-  
' stinction from the world.' That is, in short, if  
children are not bastards, but the lawful issue even  
of one believing parent, they thereby appear to be  
born from above, and consequently must be bap-  
tized. I am, Sir, your, &c.

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## L E T T E R VII.

S I R,

**I** Intend in this letter to try the weight of your fourth section, which shews *how baptism comes in place of circumcision*, and proceeds thus;

‘ The argument for infant-baptism from circum-  
 ‘ cision has a foundation in these words of the  
 ‘ apostle, Col. ii. 11, 12, 13. *In whom also ye are*  
 ‘ *circumcised with the circumcision made without hands,*  
 ‘ *in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, by the*  
 ‘ *circumcision of Christ: buried with him in baptism,*  
 ‘ *wherein also you are risen with him through the faith of*  
 ‘ *the operation of God, who hath raised him from the*  
 ‘ *dead. And you being dead in your sins, and the un-*  
 ‘ *circumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened toge-*  
 ‘ *ther with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.*

‘ Here the thing signified in baptism is called *the*  
 ‘ *circumcision made without hands*, the same with the  
 ‘ circumcision of the heart whereof the uncircumcis-  
 ‘ ed in their flesh are now made partakers; and in place  
 ‘ of the circumcision made with hands they are *bu-*  
 ‘ *ried with Christ in baptism*, and so have the cir-  
 ‘ cumcision of Christ. Now if the apostle gives  
 ‘ us baptism with the thing signified in it, in place  
 ‘ of the circumcision of the flesh, and calls it the  
 ‘ circum-

‘circumcision of Christ; then baptism must be to  
 ‘the true Israel who are born of the Spirit, as cir-  
 ‘cumcision was to the typical Israel who are born  
 ‘of the flesh.’——

This conclusion is expressed in such a manner as will bear a double meaning. If you mean that baptism is the *same thing* to the true Israel that circumcision was to the typical Israel, this will not be granted; for circumcision was to typical Israel an external mark to distinguish them from the gentiles, and was typical of internal circumcision; but the design of baptism to the true Israel is, to represent the death, sufferings and resurrection of Christ, and the saints likeness to Christ in them, and their participation of them. Circumcision was hereditary to old Israel, and, by God’s appointment, entail’d on their fleshly seed; not so baptism to the true Israel. Nor can it be proven that baptism comes in the place of circumcision; for baptism took place among the believing Jews a considerable time before circumcision was abrogated.

But if you mean, that baptism *belongs* to the true Israel, even as circumcision *belonged* to the typical Israel, I heartily agree with you, providing you keep clear and consistent the distinction you have mentioned betwixt the typical and true Israel, *viz.* That the former are *born of the flesh*, and the latter, *of the Spirit*. But your very next words confound this distinction, when you say,

——‘And as Peter said to the Jews who were  
 ‘first



‘ first called to be baptized unto the promise of the  
 ‘ Holy Ghost, *the promise is unto you and to your*  
 ‘ *children*, baptism belongs unto the children of the  
 ‘ spiritual Israel unto whom that promise is; even  
 ‘ as circumcision belonged to the children of the  
 ‘ fleshly Israel, who had the promise of Christ to  
 ‘ come in the flesh, and of the earthly inheritance.’

In the beginning of this section you told us, the argument for infant-baptism from circumcision was founded on Col. ii. 11, 12, 13. but as that text makes no mention of infants, you are obliged to have recourse to your former argument from Acts ii. where you would have us believe the word *children* signifies *infants* such as were circumcised; and thus by begging and patching your premises, you venture to draw your conclusion. But as the argument from Acts ii. has been answered already, I refer you to it, and shall proceed to consider, what you have advanced from Col. ii.

The controversy being about infant-baptism, the main thing to be considered is, whether the infants of believing parents be the true Israel who are born of the Spirit, and so the antitype of Jewish infants, who were the typical Israel born after the flesh; and if it be made appear that they cannot be view'd in that light, then, according to your own argument from the text, baptism does not belong to infants.

In order to clear this matter, it will be necessary to state more particularly the difference betwixt the typical and true Israel, or the natural and  
 spiritual

spiritual seed of Abraham. This distinction is copiously handled by the apostle Paul in his epistles to the Romans and Galatians, in which he always recurs back to the covenant made with Abraham. This covenant was of a mixt nature, as appears by the promises which it contain'd. For,

1. Herein God gave to Abraham the promise of a *seed* in whom all nations should be blessed, Gen. xii. 3. and xxii. 18. and this seed was Christ, Gal. iii. 16. In this promise the gospel was preached unto Abraham, ver. 8. and in it lay the object of that faith whereby he and his spiritual seed among Jews and gentiles were blessed with him, ver. 7, 9. This is that promise which was confirmed of God in Christ, and which the law could not disannul, or make of none effect, ver. 17. But because God design'd to exhibit by, and among Abraham's fleshly seed an earthly pattern or exemplar of the heavenly things contained in this promise; therefore,

2. He made another promise to Abraham in that covenant, *viz.* That he would multiply him exceedingly, and give unto him, and to his seed after him, the land of Canaan, Gen. xvii. 2, 8. This promise was temporal, and behoved to be accomplished before the other, as it contained the types and pledges thereof. Canaan typified the heavenly inheritance; so the patriarchs understood it, Heb. xi. 8, — 15, and Abraham's fleshly seed typified his spiritual seed of all nations. Gal. iii. 7, 8, 9. even the children of the spiritual promise, who walk in the steps of Abraham's faith. The  
 difference

difference betwixt these two feeds was typified to Abraham by Ishmael and Isaac in his own family, even as the two covenants were typified by Hagar and Sarah, Gal iv 21. Now these two promises laid the foundation of a twofold relation to God; the one spiritual and eternal with Abraham's spiritual seed; the other typical and temporal, betwixt God and Abrahams fleshly seed, which behoved to continue during the period of the typical œconomy, and no longer.

3. The ordinance of circumcision belonged only to the temporal promise, and the temporal typical relation betwixt God and Abraham's seed according to the flesh: for though the covenant to which it belongs be called an *everlasting covenant*, Gen. xvii. 13. yet this must be understood with the same limitation, as the earthly Canaan, promised therein, is called an *everlasting possession*, ver. 8. and xlviii. 4 the Aaronical priesthood, an *everlasting priesthood*, Exod. xl. 15. and the yearly typical atonement an *everlasting statute*, Lev. xvi. 34. These temporal types are called *everlasting* in relation to the antitype, in which this epithet holds true.

Circumcision is indeed called, *a seal of the righteousness of the faith*; but it was a seal only to Abraham of his own faith, even the faith which he had before circumcision. This seal he received in his peculiar patriarchal capacity, and that only as father of the faithful; for the apostle says, Rom. vi. 11, 12. *He receiveth the sign of circumcision, a seal of the*  
the

*the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised: (for what end?) that he might be the father (of whom? of all his fleshly circumcised seed? No: but) of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised;—and the father of circumcision to them (of his natural seed) who are not of the circumcision only, but also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham which he had being yet uncircumcised. i. e. That he might be the father of all that believe, whether circumcised or uncircumcised. Now if Abraham was not a father to his natural seed, as such, in that respect wherein circumcision sealed or confirmed to him the righteousness of his faith; then circumcision was not such a seal to his natural seed; nor could it be such a seal to infants at eight days old, who had not that faith before circumcision; but respected only the temporal promise and relation, which promise and relation had a typical reference to the eternal promise, and the spiritual relation arising therefrom.*

When God proceeded to fulfil the temporal promise, he did it by means of a covenant, even that which he made with the whole nation of Israel, when he took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, Exod. xix. 3.—8. Heb. viii. 9. This is called the *old covenant* (Heb. viii. 13.) on account of the temporal relation betwixt the Lord and that nation, which is now done away.—The *law*, (Heb. x. 1.) on account of the law therein given to them.—And the *first testament*, (Heb. ix. 15.) on ac-

count of the typical adoption, and the temporal inheritance.

It is evident that this covenant, and all its typical œconomy, was founded on the temporal promise made to Abraham concerning his fleshly seed; for all the temporal blessings which Israel enjoyed according to the tenor of the Sinaitic covenant, are also ascribed to that promise. The Lord refers to it when about to give the typical redemption, *Exod. vi. 3,—8.* Their manifold deliverances from the surrounding nations are ascribed to it, *2 Kings xiii. 23.* Neh. ix. 7, 8, and pled from it, *2 Chron. xx. 7.* Yea, their typical relation to God as his people, wherein the very essence of this covenant consisted, is originally attributed to that same promise, *Deut. xxix. 13.* As circumcision belonged to the temporal promise and fleshly relation, it was also ingross'd into this covenant, *Lev. xii. 3.* and so behoved to vanish away with the covenant itself, and all its other typical ordinances.

When the fulness of the time was come, and God proceeded to fulfil the spiritual promise, he did it by means of another covenant, (by the mediation of Christ) with Abraham's spiritual seed of all nations. This is called the *new covenant*, (*Heb. xii. 24.*) in reference to the other, which was made old, and the new spiritual relation betwixt God and that new nation, made up from among all nations, kindreds and tongues.—The *new testament*, (*Heb. ix. 15.*) on account of the true adoption and the heavenly inheritance, of which Christ the first-born is both testator and heir.

These

These are the two covenants of which the apostle speaks in Gal. iv. and Heb. viii. and ix. chapters, and which were both included, by way of promise, in the covenant made with Abraham. The contrast may be more fully stated in the following manner:

ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.

*Old Covenant.*

1. The old covenant was only a *temporal* relation betwixt God and a particular nation, which is now *done away* and come to an end. Heb. viii. 13.

2. The old covenant was *carnal* and *earthly*:

(1.) In its *worship*, which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, Heb. ix. 10.

(2.) In its *sacrifices* of bulls and of goats, which could never take away sin, or purge the conscience, Heb. ix. 9. and x. 4.

*New Covenant.*

1. The new covenant is an *eternal* relation betwixt God and his people from among all nations, and is therefore called an *everlasting covenant*, Heb. xiii. 20.

2. The new covenant is *spiritual* and *heavenly*:

(1.) In its *worship*, which requires a true heart, faith, and a good conscience, and to be perform'd in spirit and in truth. Heb. x. 19,—23. John iv. 23.

(2.) In its *sacrifice*, which is Christ, and which perfects for ever them that are sanctified, Heb. x. 14.

## ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.

*Old Covenant.*

(3.) In its *mediator*,  
*viz.* Moses. Gal iii. 19

(4.) In its *priests*, *viz.*  
Aaron and his sons, who  
were sinful men, and  
not suffered to continue  
by reason of death.  
Heb. vii. 23, 28.

(5.) In its *sanctuary*,  
which was worldly and  
made with hands, Heb.  
ix. 1, 24.

(6.) In its *promises* ;  
they being carnal bles-  
sings in earthly places,  
and respecting only a  
prosperous life in the  
earthly Canaan, Deut.  
xxviii. 1,—15. Isai. i.  
19. Josh. xxi. 43, 45.  
chap. xxiii. 14, 15, 16.

(7.) In its *subjects*, or  
people covenanted ; they

*New Covenant.*

(3.) In its *mediator*,  
*viz.* Christ Jesus, Heb.  
xii. 24.

(4.) In its *priest*, *viz.*  
Christ, who is holy harm-  
less, &c. and abideth  
priest continually, ever  
living to make interces-  
sion for us, Heb. vii. 24,  
25, 26.

(5.) In its *sanctuary*,  
which is heaven itself,  
whereinto our great  
high-priest hath entered,  
having obtained eternal  
redemption for us, Heb.  
ix. 12.

(6.) In its *promises* ;  
they being spiritual bles-  
sings in heavenly places,  
and chiefly respecting the  
life to come, and the en-  
joyment of the heavenly  
inheritance. Eph. i. 3.  
Tit. i. 2. Heb. viii. 6.  
and xi. 16.

(7.) In its *subjects* ;  
they being the spiritual

## ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.

*Old Covenant.**New Covenant.*

being the fleshly seed of Abraham, children of the temporal promise, related to God as his typical people, and to Christ as his kinsmen according to the flesh: which typical and fleshly relation availed them much for the enjoyment of the typical and earthly privileges of this covenant: but as Hagar, the bond-woman, was cast out with her son born after the flesh; so the covenant itself being antiquated, its temporal, typical privileges vanished, its subjects were cast out and disinherited; the fleshly relation upon which they receiv'd circumcision, availed nothing for their partaking of spiritual privileges, nor were they, as children of this covenant, admitted heirs with the

seed of Abraham, typified by the fleshly seed; being chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world; predestinated unto the adoption of children, and redeemed by the blood of Christ. These are the children of the promise, who, in God's appointed time, are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God; being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, even by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever: who have the law of God written in their hearts, and all know him from the least to the greatest. Through this work of the Spirit, they believe in the name of the Son of God, and by the profession of this



## ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.

*Old Covenant.*

children of the free woman, or new covenant. Rom. ix. 4,—9. Gal. vi. 15. and iv. 22,—31.

*New Covenant.*

their faith, they appear to be the seed of Abraham, children of the free woman, and heirs according to the promise, to whom belong all spiritual privileges, baptism among the rest. Eph. i. 4, 5. 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. John i. 13. 1 Pet. i. 23. Heb. viii. 10, 11. Gal. iii. 26; 29. and iv. 28, 31. Acts ii. 41, 42.

From this contrast it appears, that the old covenant made with the whole nation of Israel, and all the things established thereby, were only earthly patterns of things in the heavens, Heb. ix. 23. figures for the time then present, ver. 9. shadows of good things to come, chap. x. 1. impos'd upon the typical Israel, until the time of reformation, ch. ix. 10. under which they were shut up unto the faith that should afterwards be revealed, Gal. iii. 23. So that, abstract from their typical reference, there was nothing spiritual or heavenly in them.

And as this covenant was typical and earthly; so were the covenanted people. Nor was there any necessity of their being regenerated in order to their partaking of its privileges, seeing these privileges were earthly, and suited to men in a natural state:

state: but it was requisite they should be the fleshly seed of Abraham, observe the letter of the law, and have the sign of the covenant in their flesh by circumcision.

Though some of the fleshly Israel were likewise of the spiritual Israel; yet they were not so by their fleshly relation to Abraham, nor by the temporal promise concerning his natural seed, to which circumcision belonged; nor yet by the peculiar typical covenant at Sinai founded thereon: but by an election of sovereign grace, and faith in the notable S E E D of the new covenant, of which their fleshly relation and temporal covenant was but a type or earthly pattern. Rom. xi. 5, 7. Heb. xi. 13, 39, 40.

As type and antitype hold the same proportion with flesh and spirit, shadow and substance, earth and heaven, we must always keep this distinction in our eye, when running the parallel betwixt Abraham's twofold seed, else we will be apt to confound those born of the flesh, with these born of the Spirit. And in this, I perceive, your mistake lies: for your whole argument proceeds upon the supposition, that the fleshly seed of New Testament believers are as really the spiritual seed of Abraham as the infants of old Israel were his fleshly seed.

But it is absurd to suppose, that the infant seed of Abraham born of the flesh, did typify the infant seed of believers born likewise of the flesh; for this would be only one fleshly seed typifying another fleshly seed, and so would not answer to the  
distinc-

distinction that must always be held betwixt the type and its antitype. The beasts sacrificed under the law, were not typical of any other beasts to be sacrificed under the gospel; nor did the old covenant with the fleshly seed, typify, that the new covenant should be with another fleshly seed. Unless then we suppose, that shadow and substance, sign and thing signified, type and antitype, are of the same nature and kind, we must of necessity grant, That the natural seed of Abraham, *born of the flesh* according to the temporal promise, typified nothing less than his spiritual seed, *born of the Spirit* according to the new covenant promise.

As baptism belongs only to the spiritual seed of Abraham, it remains to be considered, what it is that distinguishes them from the world, and gives them a *visible right* to this ordinance.

The fleshly birth sufficiently distinguished the subjects of circumcision; for this was a thing visible, and the highest evidence that could be had of their being the fleshly seed of Abraham, to whom that ordinance belonged; so that Israelitish infants appeared as really to be the typical fleshly seed at their birth, as they could do in any after period of their lives. But this is far from being the case with the spiritual seed: for as regeneration is invisible; so the carnal birth, be it of whom it may, is no proper index of it, nor can they upon that footing receive baptism. Because,

1. That which is common both to the natural and spiritual seed can never distinguish the one from  
from

from the other; but the fleshly birth is common to both; therefore it cannot distinguish them.

2. That which does not amount to the character of the sons of God, cannot denominate the spiritual seed; but the being born of blood, of the will of the flesh, and of the will of man, (as are the infants of believers as well as others) does not amount to the character of the sons of God, John i. 13. Therefore, &c.

3. If the spiritual birth hath no necessary, natural, or fœderal connection with the fleshly birth, then from the fleshly birth we cannot infer the spiritual; but the being born again—from above—of the Spirit—of God, is neither necessarily, naturally, nor fœderally connected with the fleshly birth; therefore it cannot be inferr'd from it. Not *necessarily*; for it is the fruit of sovereign free election. Nor *naturally*; for we are by nature children of wrath. Nor *fœderally*; for the new covenant is not with the natural offspring of believers, as the old temporal covenant was with the fleshly seed of Abraham; nor are we now permitted to know any man after the flesh, 2 Cor. v. 16, or to judge of their spiritual state by their fleshly relation to covenanted parents.

4. The natural seed of believers can no more be counted for the spiritual seed, than the natural seed of Abraham; but the apostle tells us, that the children of Abraham according to the flesh are not the children of God, nor counted for the seed.

5. Though some of the children of believers are  
of

of the spiritual seed, it will not follow they should all be counted so; any more than it will follow, that because some of the fleshly Israel were also of the spiritual Israel, therefore they were all of the spiritual Israel. And if they cannot all be counted for the spiritual seed, then none of them can; for, in infancy, there is no visible distinction betwixt them.

6. If the scriptures demonstrate, that many of the children of infidels are of the spiritual seed, whilst, on the other hand, multitudes of the seed of the faithful are rejected as infidels; then no rule can be fixt for judging of the state of infants from the faith or infidelity of their parents; but both scripture and experience demonstrate the former, as in the case of Ishmael, Esau, and Absalom, and in the rejection of the Jews, and conversion of the gentiles. Therefore, to judge of infants by the fleshly birth, or by the faith of their parents, is not according to scripture rule.

These arguments serve to shew, that the infants of New Testament believers cannot be counted for the spiritual seed, as the infants of old Israel were counted for the fleshly seed; and that therefore baptism cannot be administered to the former, as circumcision was to the latter, who were really the fleshly Israel, and appear'd to be so.

I shall only mention one thing more upon this part of the argument, *viz.* That there was a particular, express divine command for circumcising the fleshly seed at eight days old; but there is nei-  
ther

ther command nor example in all the word of God for baptizing infants, or any but those who appear, by the profession of their faith, to be the spiritual seed.

I shall now follow you through the rest of this section.

——‘ For they [infants] are as capable of being  
‘ born of the Spirit, as they are of being born of  
‘ the flesh : ’——

*Ans.* Their *capability* is no argument. Are they all really born of the Spirit? Does scripture declare it? Does experience shew it?

——‘ For who can deny the operation of God  
‘ upon them, that raised Christ, and begets the  
‘ adult to the faith, to which they contribute as  
‘ little as their infants ? ’——

*Ans.* No one can deny, that *God can of these stones raise up children to Abraham*; but you yourself own, that this operation is not actually exerted on all the infants of believers, just a little below, where you say, ‘ It is true, they may yet be really irregenerate, and when adult appear to be so.’ Scripture and experience both shew, that they are but the fewest number, even of the children of believers, upon whom this operation is exerted. How trifling and weak then is such reasoning, God is able to regenerate infants, therefore they may be baptized! According to this argument, all the human race may be baptized; for God is able to regenerate them.

——‘ When it is asked, how can infants appear  
‘ to

‘ to be of the spiritual seed ? it may then be asked,  
 ‘ how does a parent appear to be such an Israelite  
 ‘ upon the very first profession of his faith, by  
 ‘ which he is admitted to baptism ? ’—

*Answer.* A parent appears to be a true Israelite upon his first profession, only in so far as there is ground to believe, that his profession agrees with the belief of his own heart, and is the index of it: but his profession can never make his infant appear to be of the spiritual seed; because there is no connection betwixt his profession and the spiritual state of his child, any more than there is betwixt the fleshly and spiritual birth. The parent does not profess the faith of his child, but his own faith; and it is certain, that nothing is made visible by a profession, but that which is professed in it. There is no such thing either express'd or imply'd in the scripture, as that infants appear to be the spiritual seed, by their being the natural seed of believers. Abraham had never this honour with respect to his natural seed, though his faith was tried and approved of by God the searcher of hearts: how then can we suppose, that professing gentiles should propagate spiritual children to Abraham by carnal generation, and manifest them such by professing the faith in their stead, when he who was the father of the faithful could do no such thing, unless we count the children of the flesh for the seed, contrary to Rom. ix. 8. Gal. iv. 29. ? Abraham's spiritual seed walk in the steps of his faith, Rom. iv. 11, 12. and do the works of Abraham,

John

John viii. 39. and thus appear to be the spiritual seed.

You say, 'the word of God calls us to acknowledge them the spiritual seed by the parent's profession.' Yet there is no such call in all the word, but rather the reverse: *That which is born of the flesh, is flesh*, John iii. 6. *They are not all Israel which are of Israel, neither because they are the seed of Abraham are they all children*, Rom. ix. 6, 7.

As for the parent's profession, it can never make his infants appear to be the spiritual seed, tho' it makes them appear the fleshly seed of a true Israelite: nor can it make them appear the children of *promise*, who are counted for the seed; for there is no particular promise made to believers (as was to Abraham) that they shall have a seed, and much less a *spiritual* seed. But as you seem to ground this assertion upon their being called *holy*, I refer you back to what has been already said on that head.

In the next paragraph you endeavour to shew, that the baptism of infants will not infer their being admitted to the Lord's supper:

1. Because they are not by this acknowledged as members of any visible church, to which that ordinance belongs; but only of Christ's true church, his body, which is invisible.

2. Because the examples of baptism in scripture always preceded adding to a church. And,

3. Because, in short, they must be capable personally to declare their purpose of heart to cleave

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unto



unto the Lord in a church, before they can be admitted as members.

Now tho' I agree with you in saying, that the instances of baptism in scripture always preceded adding to a visible church, to whom the supper belongs; yet your arguments for infant-baptism, are as strong for admitting them to the supper: For if we esteem infants members of Christ's true church for which he gave himself, &c. why may they not be admitted as members of a visible congregation, which is a representation in miniature of that true church? Are they members of that true church where no unclean thing can enter; and can they not be admitted into a society where many hypocrites have, and still do enter? Do they all partake of the one New Testament altar, and can we refuse them the instituted sign of that altar, the Lord's supper? Is not this something like 'daring to exclude from the privileges of Christ's kingdom, and church communion those who appear to be of the truth?'

When it is asked, how can infants appear to be members of a visible church? It may then be asked, how does a parent appear to be such a member, upon the declared purpose of his heart to cleave unto the Lord in it, by which he is admitted as one? And when it shall be said, That the word of God calls us to acknowledge him as such by that declaration; then it shall also be said (repeating your own argument,) that the same word calls us to acknowledge his infants as such, by that same declaration.

But

But how, of all the world, come you to speak of qualifications in order to partake of the Lord's supper. call it a declared purpose of heart, &c. or what you will? Does not 'this lead us (according to you) to lay the stress of our salvation upon something that we do in the declaration of our purpose of heart to cleave unto the Lord, and some holiness about us whereof infants are incapable?' p. 198. Thus I think you are fairly intangled in your own net; for if you once dispense with that personal profession which the scripture requires in order to baptism, you must likewise give up with that personal declaration requisite to church-fellowship and communion in the supper, notwithstanding of all your distinctions. But you proceed:

— 'Nor if we consider what is now said, (viz. against reckoning the baptized to be members of a visible church) shall we be able to ascribe the corruption of christianity to the baptism of christian infants, as it may be ascribed to the *making of Christians by baptism.*'

*Answer.* Your arguments for infant-baptism will equally hold for their receiving the supper, (as hath been shewn) both which are a corruption of christianity, as there is no foundation for any such practices in the scripture; and if these infants you would have baptized be not *made christians by baptism*, I am sure many of them are never made christians in any other way, as their after conduct glaringly demonstrates.

— 'The corruption of the christian religion

‘ came by departing from the scriptural profession  
 ‘ of the faith upon which baptism was administered  
 ‘ from the beginning to a man and his house, and  
 ‘ by substituting another profession in the room of  
 ‘ it ; a profession that cannot intitle the professors  
 ‘ to the scriptural brotherly love as saints and  
 ‘ faithful in Christ Jesus ; or as the spiritual Is-  
 ‘ rael.’ —

*Answ.* You say right: for to substitute any profession in the room of a personal one, as it is not scriptural, so it can never intitle to brotherly love as saints, and must consequently introduce great corruptions into the christian religion. So that I may safely challenge you or any man, to point out a fitter engine in all the compass of priest-craft, for advancing national churches or nominal christianity, than that of baptizing infants without a scriptural profession, and by substituting the profession of another in its stead.

— ‘ Whereas the true primitive profession of  
 ‘ the faith, gives the professor and his house the  
 ‘ character of holy and admits them to baptism:  
 ‘ And we see unfeigned faith descending from a  
 ‘ parent to her child and grandchild.’ 2 Tim.  
 i. 5.

*Answ.* I have considered the scripture doctrine concerning a believer’s *house* already, as also how his children are said to be *holy*, and have found that it makes nothing for your purpose: but to affirm, that ‘ unfeigned faith should descend from a  
 ‘ parent to her child and grand child,’ is so gross a corruption of christianity, and such a manifest  
 wrestling

wresting of the scripture, that I cannot tell what to say of a point which requires such absurd conceits to support it. The apostles words are, 2 Tim. i. 5. *When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.* Here it is evident the apostle does not mean, that faith descended from Timothy's grandmother to himself, by virtue of her being his grandmother; (for then it would descend like hereditary qualities in the blood) but only that Timothy was enlightened in the knowledge of the gospel by the Spirit of God, even as his mother and grandmother were before him; which might or might not be notwithstanding the fleshly connection, as both scripture and experience plainly evince.

—— ‘ If the children become adult, not adhering to the baptismal profession, they have no more the character of holy; but then they are no more the infants of believing parents.’ ——

*Answ.* The scripture to which you refer for the character of *holy*, is as applicable to them when become adult, as when infants, and while unregenerate as when regenerated: ‘ but then they are no more the *infants* of believing parents.’ Very right, Sir, *adults* are not *infants*; thus far you have discovered truth: but pray, Sir, are not *adults children* in scripture stile, though they be not *infants*? Whether does the place you refer to mention *infants* or *children*? Does a believers house include none but *infants* in distinction from *adult*

children? And whether is this a scriptural distinction, or an imagination of your own brain? How come you then, without a scripture warrant, to divest them of the character of *holy* upon any consideration, as long as they are the *lawful* children of believing parents?

But though their adult state should discover your error as to the *nature* of that holiness, you are very far from owning it as yours; for you say, ‘according to the scripture, we must look upon the children of believing parents, dying in infancy, as dying in the Lord.’ Strange! that you should father such fancies upon the scriptures of truth, when there is not one syllable in all that sacred book that makes the least distinction (with respect to salvation) betwixt those who die in infancy, and those who arrive at maturity. But as you were before obliged to use the distinction of *visible* and *invisible* church, to cut of the connection betwixt baptism and the Lord’s supper; so you are here forced to use the distinction of *infant* and *adult*, to support the credit of that imaginary *holiness*, which you say intitles infants to baptism; but vanishes away in their adult state like a morning cloud which is dispell’d by the rising sun.

Upon the whole, had you entirely dropt the apostolic distinction of the two covenants and adopted the popular plan of their *identity*, you might have handled the argument from circumcision more consistently than you have done.

I am, SIR, Your, &c.

L E T

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## L E T T E R VIII.

S I R,

I shall now proceed to your fifth section, which shews, *that the apostles minding the Lord's admonition as to infants and primitive Christians long after them did not scruple upon baptizing them; and that it was the practice in the first ages.*

In the first part of this section you recapitulate your former arguments, and take it for granted they are conclusive; but as I have answered them already, I shall not stay here upon every particular. You begin thus;

‘ If we believe Christ faithful as a son over his own house, we must take the revelation of his mind and will as he is pleased to give it, without prescribing to him the manner in which he should make his will known.’ —

*Ans.* We are willing to take the revelation of Christ's mind as he has been pleased to give it; but since infant-baptism has never yet appeared to be any part of that revelation, you must excuse us though we do not follow those who take it from you as you are pleas'd to give it; for it is Christ's will and not yours we chuse to regard in this matter. But what connection has the faithfulness of  
Christ

Christ with infant-baptism? Do they stand or fall together? Or does the denial of the latter, imply a disbelief of the former? Or do you think that the obscurity of the revelation about infant-baptism affords ground to question his faithfulness? If so, let you and your brethren see to it, who have given occasion for such doubts: as for us, we still maintain, that the revelation of Christ's mind about baptism is clear, express and particular, and so have no ground to question his faithfulness on that account.

—— ‘ When the same temper from which the  
 ‘ scruples at infant-baptism now proceed, shewed  
 ‘ itself in his disciples, he was much displeas'd at  
 ‘ it: The disciples rebuked those who brought  
 ‘ infants to him, and their reasons for this could  
 ‘ be no other but such as are still used by those  
 ‘ who forbid them baptism, ’ ——

*Ans.* If Christ's disciples, (who even then baptized more than John, John iv. 1, 2.) had it in commission to baptize infants; as, according to you, behov'd to be the case; then their reasons could not be the same with ours, who maintain they had no such commission. Or if you imagine the disciples thought infants incapable of Christ's blessing, and so forbade them to be brought, I hope you will not affirm that this is any of our reasons for withholding their baptism. Wherein then do our reasons agree with those of the disciples?

—— ‘ And in the foresight of their self-righte-  
 ‘ ous

'ous and unmerciful principle touching infants,  
 'forbidding them the first sign of union with him  
 'and his church, out of which there is no salvati-  
 'on, and perverting the scriptures that shew their  
 'church membership, he said, *Suffer the little chil-*  
 '*dren to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of*  
 '*such is the kingdom of God. Verily, I say unto you,*  
 '*Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a*  
 '*little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took*  
 '*them up in his arms, put his hands on them, and*  
 '*blessed them.* Thus he secured the church mem-  
 'bership of infants before his institution of bap-  
 'tism, and thus he prevented the disputes that  
 'have arisen since about infants; shewing himself  
 'as the first patron of their cause against disciples  
 'opposing their being brought to him.'

*Answ.* Here you endeavour to represent the  
 Baptists as self-righteous and unmerciful, and that  
 because they deny baptism to infants: but there  
 can be neither self-righteousness nor unmerciful-  
 ness in denying what was never commanded to be  
 given, and which when given, can be of no ad-  
 vantage to them any more than the Lord's supper.  
 However, we need not be much alarmed at the e-  
 pithet *self-righteous* when applied by you, as it is  
 only one of your cant terms, which like Saul's  
 javlin you often in a pet throw at random against  
 the wall. As for what you say of our *unmerci-*  
*fulness* in forbidding infants the first sign of union  
 with Christ and his church out of which there is  
 no *salvation*; and of our *opposing* their being  
*brought*



*brought to Christ, though there be not the least argument in it; yet it serves to ply and stimulate the fondly feeling hearts of parents for their infants, and secure them by this blind handle to your side. You are sensible, that the generality of people are more influenced by sound than reason, especially in things that take hold of their passions and natural affections; and here you avail yourself of this weakness of human nature, by alarming parents with the unmercifulness and cruelty of denying their infants baptism; as if it were like dashing them against the stones, or depriving their souls of salvation. Methinks I see the fond parent drowa'd in tears at the very thought.*

You confidently affirm, that it was in the foresight of the denial of infant-baptism, that our Lord said, *Suffer the little children to come unto me, &c.* whereas our Lord neither enjoins nor exemplifies their baptism in this place, when there was an opportunity of doing both. But I shall consider the text more particularly.

*And they brought young children to him that he might touch them; and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it he was much displeas'd, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God, Mark x. 13, 14.*

Whether those who brought the little children were their parents or not, is not here said. Their end for bringing them, we are told here, and in Luke, was, *that he might touch them*; or, as Matthew  
hath

hath it, *put his hands on them and pray*: but there is no intimation of a desire they should be baptized.

Next we have the *opposition* of the disciples to their being brought. What their reasons were, we cannot tell. It is likely they were intent upon our Lord's discourse of marriage and divorce, and did not chuse he should be interrupted at that time, being, as they thought, better employed in teaching the multitude; not adverting, that our Lord could instruct by the example of a little child, as well as by any other similitude. But whatever were their reasons, our Lord corrects them, saying, *Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God, or, of heaven, as Matthew hath it.*

By *kingdom of God* cannot be understood any particular visible church; this you will readily grant. It must therefore be understood of Christ's true church for which he gave himself: and that elect infants are subjects of this kingdom, there can be no doubt; for no circumstances of age or parentage can hinder this. But then it must carefully be noticed;

1. That the children of infidels are as capable of being the subjects of this kingdom as the children of believers, for any thing contained in this text.

2. *All* the children of believers are no more the subjects of this kingdom, than *all* the children of unbelievers, as has been already shewn: how then  
can

can the subjects of baptism be distinguished among the children of believers? This place makes no distinction of children, either by their parents, or among themselves.

3. As the children of believers are not all of this kingdom; so many of those who are elected to it, are not *actually* called in infancy; but may spend a great part of their days in the course of this world. Thus Paul, though he was separated from his mother's womb; yet it did not please God to reveal his Son in him, till he was on his journey to Damascus. Now baptism does not immediately belong to the elect, *as such*. (for these are only known to God,) but as *actually called*, and *appearing* to be so.

4. Though Jesus Christ, as the great prophet of his church, can *distinguish* his people amongst infants, as well as amongst adults, and *bles*s them; yet this is no warrant for us to bring the infants of believers *indiscriminately* to baptism, as it is to bring them to him for a blessing.

5. Our bringing them to Christ for a blessing, though a duty; yet it is his to give or withhold, according to his sovereign and righteous purpose; nor can we distinguish who obtain the blessing in infancy; and though we could, it would be no warrant for their baptism, without a divine command or example; for the blessing and baptism are not inseparably connected, as we may see in this place, where the children were bles'd without being baptized.

But if we look a little better into the text we  
 may

may easily see, that our Lord by these words, *of such is the kingdom of God*, does not so much intend the persons of little children, as those who resemble them in dispositions, as is evident from the following words, *' Verily, I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God AS a little child, he shall not enter therein.* And this sense is confirmed by a parallel passage, Mat. xviii. 2, 3. *Jesus called a little child, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily, I say unto you, except ye be converted and become AS little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.* And adds, *Whosoever therefore shall HUMBLE himself AS this little child, the same is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven: And whoso shall receive one SUCH little child in my name, receiveth me: And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones which BELIEVE in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.*

Here it is evident our Lord styles these *little children*, who are converted, and resemble such in *humility*, though they be adults in age; for they are described to be such little ones as *believe* in him, and are capable of being *offended*, scandalized or stumbled: and if we compare this with what the apostle says about offending the weak brother. Rom. xiv. and 1 Cor. viii. we shall find, that though it will not apply to infants, yet it is a necessary caution against offending Christ's *little ones*, or those who are weak in the faith.

Nor does this sense of the place make our Lord's phraseology any way uncommon; for it was his usual method to convey instruction by similitudes and metaphors, and to use the sign or metaphor for the thing signified. Thus he took bread, blessed it, and said, *This is my body*; and of the cup, *This is my blood of the New Testament*; or, *This cup is the New Testament in my blood*: So here, *Suffer little children to come unto me; for of such is the kingdom of God. i. e.* They bear an instructive resemblance of that humility, harmlessness and simplicity which become my subjects. And in as much as he blessed them, we are warranted to bring our children to him for the same. But there is no more ground here for the baptism of infants here, than there is for bringing them to the Lord's supper. But you proceed:

'The apostles kept this in mind when they executed his commission to them for setting up his kingdom in the world:'

*Ans<sup>w</sup>.* They kept in mind that his commission to them was first to *teach* (or disciple) and then *baptize* those who were thus taught †.

———— 'For

† The words, *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them, &c.* Mat. xxviii. 19. is indeed a commission to *teach all nations*; but not to *baptize all nations*; for baptism is restricted to the relative pronoun *αὐτοῖς*, *them*, which is of the masculine, and does not agree with *παντα τα ἔθνη*, *all nations*, which is neuter; but to *μαθητας*, *disciples*, which is included in the verb *μαθητευσατε* *teach*, or, *make disciples*. So the sense is, *Teach all nations, baptizing them that are taught or made disciples by teaching.*

—— ‘ For they took in the children with the  
‘ parents, as we have seen. ’ ——

*Anfw.* They took in those who profess'd the  
faith, whether children or parents, as we have  
seen.

—— ‘ They preached salvation by Christ to  
‘ men and their houses ; ’ ——

*Anfw.* They preached salvation by Christ to all  
that had an ear to hear, even to every creature.  
But what is this to the purpose ?

—— ‘ They baptized believers and their houses,  
‘ them and all theirs. ’ ——

*Anfw.* They did so, when their houses believed  
as well as themselves ; for this was exactly agree-  
able to their commission.

—— ‘ And they left christian infants, as holy,  
‘ so in the possession of this privilege of Christ's  
‘ circumcision. ’ ——

*Anfw.* They did not leave them holy in your  
sense of it ; but argued from the received princi-  
ple of their being legitimate, that the marriage of  
their parents behoved to be so likewise. Nor did  
they leave them in the possession of the privilege  
of Christ's circumcision, if by this you mean bap-  
tism ; for as they had not this in their commission,  
so we find they did not practise it in any of the  
instances we have of baptism in scripture : neither  
did they leave any directions about it. And if  
you can argue from Phil. i. 1. that there ought to  
be no officers in a christian church but *Bishops* and

*Deacons*, you cannot, with any good grace, hinder me to gather from Acts viii. 12. that none ought to be baptized but *believing men and women*.

➤ Thus you finish your scripture arguments, in the handling of which you have been obliged to contradict yourself in every thing material: and if I were to judge of your real principles from your practice I would be led to think, that you hold infant-baptism independent of any arguments you have yet advanced: When you receive adult members into your society, who have been baptized in the church of Rome, or in the church of Scotland, (which you esteem little better,) you neither baptize them yourself, nor enquire whether they have been baptized according to what you esteem the scripture rule. With respect to their *parents*, you neither enquire into their faith, nor own them for believers or true Israelites, and so all the arguments drawn from the faith of the parent, salvation to a believers house, the promise being to him and his children, &c. are laid aside here. And as for *themselves*, you did not look upon them as disciples, believers, holy, and of the kingdom of heaven, until such time as they personally profess'd the faith, and apply'd for admission into your society. Thus all your scripture arguments are cut off at once; and therefore, since you hold such baptism valid, it must be upon some other foundation. What occasion, then, for all this wrangling, squeezing, and twisting of scripture to support a point which you can hold independent of it altogether? Had  
you

you been so ingenuous as to have confess'd this, it would have brought the controversy to a speedy issue; for then the only question would have been, whether or not the scripture be the *only* rule. 'Tis true indeed, you told in your first section, that you were obliged to depart from express precept and indisputable example; but who could ever imagine, that you would also practically depart from your own sophistical and wiredrawn consequences, and so abandon scripture altogether?

In short, Sir, I am almost ashamed that I should have mis'd my mark so far as to proceed upon the supposition that you held this point from scripture; since it plainly appears, by your conduct, that you lay no stress upon any thing you have advanced from thence.

I am,

SIR,

Your &c.



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## L E T T E R IX.

S I R,

**H**AVING followed you through your scripture authorities for infant-baptism, I shall, in this letter, make some reply to what you observe from ancient history. You say,

—— ‘ That there was never any scruple moved  
‘ about it till the end of the second century. ’ ——

*Ans<sup>w</sup>.* Because it had no being till about that time, as some of the most learned Pædobaptists, ingenuously confess †.

—— ‘ And when we consider the opposition  
‘ then made to it, we shall see how much it serves  
‘ to confirm it. We shall see that christian infants  
‘ were then in possession of the privilege of bap-  
‘ tism, and that the first objection made to it arose  
‘ out of a manifest departure from what the scrip-  
‘ ture teaches most plainly about baptism, as well  
‘ as from the scripture doctrine of the grace of  
‘ God. ’

*Ans<sup>w</sup>.* If this manner of arguing be of any  
weight,

† See *Vansleb's* History of the church of Alexandria, Part 1. c. 23. *Ludovicus Vives* in his notes on *Augustin. de Civitate Dei*, B. I. c. 27. *Suicerus* in his *Thesaur. Ec. sub Voce Συναξις*. *Curcellus* in his *Relig. Christian. Institut.* Lib. 1. c. 12, and in *Dissert. secunda de Peccat. Orig.* Sect. 56.

weight, then it must recoil upon yourself with double force; for it can easily be shewn, that the ancient arguments for infant-baptism were founded upon a suppos'd necessity of baptism to salvation; that it washed away original sin; that the grace of God must be denied to none; and that the sins of infants were easier forgiven than those of adults, &c.

‘Tertullian, who wrote in the conclusion of the second century, is the first that moves an objection against infant-baptism.’ —

*Answ.* He was amongst the first that had occasion.

— ‘And he does this when pleading for the delay of baptism even to the adult: for he would have the unmarried professors of christianity to delay baptism, whether they be virgins or widows, till they either marry or be confirmed in their continency. He pleads for this delay of baptism from the prohibitions to lay on hands suddenly, and to give that which is holy to swine; —and therefore he would have baptism delayed, according to the condition, disposition and age of each person.’ —

*Answ.* It is not my business to defend Tertullian in all his notions; but certainly the above scripture prohibitions were very much to his purpose against administering baptism to those who did not appear disciples by the scriptural profession of their faith.

— ‘And he insists for the delay, especially as to infants, arguing for it in this manner, ‘What  
“ necessity

“ necessity is there (says he) for bringing the  
 “ sponsors into danger, who being themselves mor-  
 “ tal, may fail of performing their promises, or  
 “ may be beguiled by the growth of an ill disposi-  
 “ tion? The Lord indeed says. *Forbid them not*  
 “ *to come to me.* Let them come then when they  
 “ grow up; let them come when they learn;  
 “ when they are taught to what they should come.  
 “ Let them be Christians when they shall be ca-  
 “ pable to know Christ. Why does the innocent  
 “ age hasten to the remission of sins? We would  
 “ act more cautiously in secular affairs: that to  
 “ whom the earthly inheritance is not given, the  
 “ divine should be intrusted! Let them know to  
 “ seek salvation, that you may appear to have  
 “ given it to one that seeks.’ And for the delay  
 “ of baptism in general, he further says, ‘ If any  
 “ understood the weight of baptism, they would  
 “ rather fear the attaining of it, than the delay.  
 “ Entire faith is secure of salvation.’

‘ Now was not this delay of baptism as expressly  
 ‘ contrary to the scripture example as any thing  
 ‘ can be? and did then the first opposition that we  
 ‘ hear of among Christians to infant-baptism, arise  
 ‘ out of the scriptures, or out of a plain contra-  
 ‘ diction to the plainest scriptures? And did not  
 ‘ the objection of this forefather of the forbidders  
 ‘ of infants to come to Christ, proceed upon the  
 ‘ denial of original sin, and the need of remission  
 ‘ to infants? And did it not plainly suppose, that  
 ‘ our salvation lies in that about us which distin-  
 ‘ guishes us from our infants; and that it hinges  
 upon

‘ upon a knowledge and a seeking of salvation, and an  
 ‘ intireness of faith whereof infants are incapable ?  
 ‘ If it shall be alleged, that he was not in this a  
 ‘ forefather to those few commonly called *free-*  
 ‘ *grace Anabaptists*, who are only to be regarded  
 ‘ in this question: may we not then say, If these  
 ‘ indeed believe, that they cannot enter the king-  
 ‘ dom of God, but as the infants enter, he was  
 ‘ more consistent with himself than they ?’

*Answ.* Though I do not intend to justify Ter-  
 tullian in every thing; as it is a question whe-  
 ther the doctrine of original sin was clearly un-  
 derstood either by him or many of his contempora-  
 ries; yet I cannot help noticing that you most e-  
 gregiously wrest his words; as where you say, he  
 forbids infants to *come to Christ*, when he only for-  
 bids their *baptism*. Pray, Sir, have you not yet  
 learned to distinguish betwixt coming to *Christ*  
 and coming to *baptism*? Or do you think *baptism*  
 is *Christ*? Again where he says, ‘ Entire faith is  
 ‘ secure of salvation,’ you consider him as main-  
 taining, that ‘ our salvation lies in something  
 ‘ about us that distinguishes us from our infants;’  
 whereas he is only pleading for the delay of bap-  
 tism from its not being absolutely necessary to  
 salvation, (as was then alleged) that being con-  
 nected with faith, as we find, Mark xvi. 16. *He*  
*that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved;* in  
 which place, you own †, the stress is laid on *be-*  
*lieving*, and not on *baptism*: so that unless you  
 place salvation in baptism, instead of Christ, and  
 faith

faith in his righteousness, your cavils are most disingenuous.

There are others of Tertullian's arguments which have never got a satisfying answer to this day; such as the danger of the sponsors; the necessity of first *teaching* the persons to be baptized to what they should come, and thus engaging them to desire baptism and seek for it, before they obtain it; in which he seems to refer to our Lord's commission, Mat. xxviii. 18.

But it seems the few commonly called *free-grace Anabaptists* are less consistent with themselves than Tertullian was. How so? Because 'they believe 'they cannot enter the kingdom of God but as the 'infants enter it,' and yet withhold baptism from their infants. But where in all the world, does this inconsistency ly? Have you yet shown these Anabaptists from scripture, that infants cannot enter the kingdom without baptism, or have the *thing signified* without the *sign*? Have you pointed out the *particular* infants that enter this kingdom in *distinction* from those who do not, and then shewn the scripture precept or example for baptizing such? And can you see no consistency at all in affirming, that many enter the kingdom of God, who never were proper or *visible* subjects of gospel ordinances? Once more; Do you think the profession of faith which the scripture requires in order to baptism, turns the professor's *entry into the kingdom of God* upon *another hinge* than the *entry* of infants, who cannot make that profession? If you do, then the inconsistency lies on your side of the question.

question, in requiring such a profession of the adult. But I refer you back to my second letter for a fuller answer on this head.

Now, Sir, as you have been so kind as to point out to the Baptists their original, it will not be amiss to draw your attention a little to that of the Pædobaptists.

That infant-baptism was very early introduced into the church, is evident from Tertullian's opposition to it about the latter end of the second century; but we have no authentic or distinct account of the grounds upon which it was held, till Cyprian's time, about the middle of the 3d century, who writes largely in favours of it in his epistle to Fidus, which epistle was the resolution of him and 66 bishops gathered together in council. The reasons for infant-baptism, (and that too before the eighth day) as exprest in that epistle, are as follow;

‘ That whereas none is to be kept back from  
 ‘ baptism, and the grace of God, much less new  
 ‘ born infants, who, in this respect, do deserve  
 ‘ more of our aid, and God's mercy; because in  
 ‘ the beginning of their birth they presently, crying  
 ‘ and weeping, do nothing else but pray.—The  
 ‘ mercy and grace of God is to be denied to none  
 ‘ that are born of man; for the Lord saith in the  
 ‘ gospel, that the Son of man came not to destroy  
 ‘ mens souls, but to save them; and therefore, as  
 ‘ much as in us lies, if it may be, no soul is to be  
 ‘ lost; and therefore all infants, at all times, are  
 ‘ to be baptized.—If any thing could hinder

‘ from

‘ from obtaining of grace, greater sins should hin-  
 ‘ der men of years from it; now if greater sins  
 ‘ hinder not men of years from it, but that they,  
 ‘ when they believe, obtain forgiveness, grace, and  
 ‘ baptism, by how much rather is an infant not to  
 ‘ be forbidden, who being newly born, hath not  
 ‘ sinned, except in that being born carnally accord-  
 ‘ ing to Adam, he hath contracted the contagion  
 ‘ of antient death in his first nativity, who, in this  
 ‘ respect, comes more easily to receive remission of  
 ‘ sins, because not his own sins, but another’s are  
 ‘ forgiven him.’

Now, tell me, was not this innovation of infant-  
 baptism as expressly contrary to the scriptures as a-  
 ny thing can be? And did the first arguments that  
 we hear of among Christians in its behalf arise out  
 of the scriptures, or out of a flat contradiction to  
 the plainest scripture?

Did it not proceed upon the doctrine of universal  
 grace; that baptism confers the grace of God;  
 that infants deserve this more than adults, as having  
 no sin of their own, but only Adam’s, and there-  
 fore more easily forgiven; that they are eminent  
 in devotion, being continually praying in their  
 weeping and crying, &c. And what is this, think  
 you, but placing salvation in something else than  
 Christ?

If it shall be alledged, that he was not in this a  
 forefather to the numerous nations of Protestant  
 Pædobaptists, who are only to be regarded in this  
 question: may we not then say, If these indeed be-  
 lieve that the salvation of infants lies *only* and *whol-*

ly in the *thing signified* to the adult in baptism, he was more consistent with himself than they. But to proceed regularly ;

About the latter end of the 2d century, an opinion arose, that without baptism there could be no salvation ; whether this error was founded upon a mistaken view of Mark xvi. 16. or John iii. 5. (which were pled afterwards) cannot well be determined. However, this principle being once admitted, (as appears from Tertullian's opposition) parents could not but take the alarm, and press hard for the baptism of their infants, lest they should die and be damn'd before they came to age. But there was one thing that stood in their way, *viz.* the inability of infants to make the scriptural profession of their faith before baptism : but alas ! their infants might perish ere they were capable for this profession, unless some expedient were found out to supersede it. What then could they do in this sad *dilemma*, but find cautioners or sponsors to profess and engage for their children ? For what signified the breach of a divine command, in comparison of the salvation of their infants ; These are the sponsors which Tertullian considers as brought into danger : but the parents were not then admitted as sponsors for their children, unless they abstain'd from the marriage-bed ever after : nor did they as yet baptize all infants, but only such as appear'd weakly and in danger of death §.

About fifty years after this, Cyprian and sixty-  
K six

§ Gregory Nazianzen. Orat. of Bapt.



six bishops gave it the sanction of a council: (for it had then become customary, when any piece of superstition was to be established in opposition to the scripture, to interpose the authority of a council for its more universal reception, though they wanted the civil power to put their decrees in execution.) We have already seen the resolution of this council and the judicious arguments upon which it was founded; and we may be sure they were no way inferior to those used in Tertullian's time, when infant-baptism was first introduced: But it is evident that the arguments of modern Pædobaptists, were not as yet invented, at least those of them upon which they lay most stress.

We find likewise that in Cyprian's time they admitted infants to the Lord's supper, as appears from the story he relates of his giving the communion to an infant \*: and this practice continued in the church for 600 years, till it was at last rejected by the council of Trent; as is confess'd by *Maldmat* on John vi. Herein they were more consistent than the modern Pædobaptists, for their arguments are as strong for the one as for the other.

There is little account of infant-baptism from Cyprian's time, till the beginning of the fifth century, when we find Augustine strenuously maintaining it upon Cyprian's authority and principles, *viz.* That infants are damned by reason of original sin if they are not baptized; that baptism regenerates &c. But it is evident he paid no regard to the faith or intention of those who brought them

\* In his book *De lapsis*; mentioned by Augustine, *Epist.* 23,

them to baptism; for he saith, in his 23d epistle to Bonifacius, ‘ Neither let that move thee that  
 ‘ some do not bring little ones to receive baptism  
 ‘ with *that faith* that they may be regenerated by  
 ‘ spiritual grace unto life eternal; but because they  
 ‘ think by this to preserve or receive temporal  
 ‘ health: for they are not therefore unregenerate;  
 ‘ because they are not offered by them with *this in-*  
 ‘ *tention*; for necessary ministries are celebrated by  
 ‘ them.’

Though they admitted sponsors to profess the faith; yet the sponsor was not to profess his *own* faith, but the faith of the child *itself*; which was done in this manner: The surety being asked, Doth the child believe? reply’d, He doth believe. Upon which Bonifacius urgeth Augustine to shew, how the sureties could be excused from lying in such an affirmation, and is answered, ‘ He doth  
 ‘ believe, by reason of the sacrament of faith.’ This wretched quibble may sufficiently convince you, that the argument of the parent’s faith was not then invented; but that they held *personal faith* as a prerequisite to baptism, though they admitted a *vicarious profession* of it.

Augustine, as well as Cyprian, admitted infants to the Lord’s supper, and pled for it from John vi. 53. †.

But after all it would appear, that, even in Augustine’s time, infants neither received baptism nor the Lord’s supper but when they appear’d weakly, or in danger of death, and they were administered

† *Lib. 1. de peccat. merit. et remis. c. 20.*

as well for the health of their bodies, as for the salvation of their souls. Augustine's own baptism was deferred till he was upwards of thirty years of age, though educated as a Christian by his mother Monica; and he tells us, 'that being young, and falling sick, he desired, and his mother thought to have him baptized, but upon his recovery, it was deferred †' Nor was his own son baptized till he was fifteen, with many others that may be mentioned at that time.

Whoever considers the authority those forefathers of the Pædobaptists had in the church, and the mysticism, ignorance and superstition of those times, needs not wonder that these idle dreams should spread and be swallowed by whole nations; but it is surprising that it should be carried to the ridiculous length of baptizing whole kingdoms, upon the profession and baptism of their kings, though they still remained baptized infidels. If you say you have nothing to do with such a practice, I reply, that the baptism of whole houses upon the profession of the parent's faith, is perfectly analogous to this, and is nothing but a chip of the same block.

To conclude, as you have no foundation in scripture for infant-baptism; so, though you should rake the whole mire of antiquity, you will find little to support the modern plan of it, which stands chiefly upon conceits that have been hatch'd amongst Protestant Pædobaptists within these 300 years. I am, SIR, Your, &c.

† *Tom. 1. Confess. Lib. 1. c. 11.*

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## L E T T E R X.

S I R,

**I** Now proceed to your APPENDIX, *which contains a dissertation on the manner of baptism and the scripture sense of the word Baptism.* Here you tell us,

‘ The opposers of infant-baptism contend likewise for a different manner of baptism from that which is commonly practised: which according to them cannot be called baptism: because it does not at all signify and represent union and communion with Christ in his death and burial by immersion, or plunging, or dipping in water; nor in his resurrection, by emerging or rising up from under the water: and because it does not at all answer to the very sense and meaning of the word *Baptism*, which signifies dipping, immersing; or plunging.’

*Answ.* I suppose you will not deny that the word, βαπτίζω, *baptize*, primarily and properly signifies to *immerse, plunge under, overwhelm,* and also to *dip*; and that where it is put for *washing*, it is used in a secondary, consequential, and more improper sense. If you deny this, you oppose not only the Baptists, but the best lexicographers

graphers and critics that have ever writ on the Greek language. But then it seems,

‘ This cannot appear from scripture to be the  
 ‘ very sense and use of the word Baptism there ;’  
 How so? ‘ For the best way to find the sense of  
 ‘ this word, as applied to the case of baptizing  
 ‘ christians, is to observe how the scripture applies  
 ‘ it to other cases ; and by this way the scripture  
 ‘ sense of it is found to be *washing*, however that  
 ‘ be done.’ and then you produce instances where  
 the *washing* of hands, cups, tables or beds, &c.  
 is express’d by the word *baptism*.

*Answ.* 1. Though the scripture in some cases should use the word *baptism*, where *washing* must be understood ; yet it will not follow, that the word is so to be understood in *Christian baptism*, any more than it will follow, that because the word *sacrifice* is applied to our *praise thanksgiving* and *good works*, Heb. xiii. 15, 16. therefore we must thus understand Christ’s *sacrifice* : thus you may see where your rule would lead you. But I think you had best keep by the *primary* and *proper* sense of a word till some circumstances in the text lay you under a necessity of understanding it otherwise ; and this you cannot pretend of *Christian baptism*.

2. It is not denied that these things you mention were *washed* ; but the question is, whether were they not *baptized* or *dipped* in the act of *washing* ? if they were, then the word is properly used still ; and I suppose you will not undertake to  
 prove

prove they were only washed by *sprinkling* or *pouring* †.

3. According to your own rule, *baptize* must signify to *dip*; for thus the original theme βαπτω, from whence βαπτίζω is a derivative, is applied in other places of scripture; as in Mat. xxvi. 23. ‘He that, εμβαψας, dippeth his hand with me in the dish,’ &c. Luke xvi. 24. ‘Send Lazarus, that he, βαφη, may dip the tip of his finger in water.’ &c. John xiii. 26. ‘He it is to whom I shall give a sop, when I, βαψας, have dipped it.’ Rev. xix. 13 ‘And he was clothed with a vesture, βεβαμμενον, dipped, in blood.’

Your next argument is, That, ‘in the case of Christian *baptism*, *washing* stands often in the New Testament as another word for it, and as declaring the import and sense of it,’ of which you give instances from, Eph v. 26. Heb. x. 22. Tit. iii. 5. 1 Pet. iii. 21. Acts xxii. 16. 1 Cor. vi. 11. ‘From these (you say) it may appear, that according to the scripture use of the word *baptism*, *immersion* cannot be called *baptism*, any otherwise than as it is a mode of washing with water.’

*Answer.*

† ‘If the Pharisees touched but the garments of the common people they were defiled and needed immersion, and were obliged to it.’ *Maimonides in Misn. chagigah. c. 2. sect. 7.*

‘The more superstitious part of the Jews, every day before they sat down to meat, dipped the whole body; hence the Pharisees admiration at Christ, Luke xi. 38.’ *Scaliger de Emend. Temp. Lib. 6. p. 671.*

In the Jewish Misnah, or book of traditions, it is said, ‘A bed that is wholly defiled, a man dips it part by part.’ *Celim, c. 26. Sect. 14.*

*Answ.* That *washing* stands often as another word for *baptism* may be granted; for a man is washed when he is immerfed or dipped; but that washing in *whatever manner*, is used for baptism, I deny: for the body is not washed with pure water, by *sprinkling* or *pouring* a little of it on the face, as it is by *immersing* or *plunging* it in water. So that though immersion be a mode of *washing* with water; yet it is not for this called *baptism*; but because it is that very mode which is express'd by the Greek word βαπτίζω, and no other. *Washing* is a general word, which includes various modes, and that of dipping among the rest; but *dipping*, by which this ordinance is express'd, is a particular mode, and cannot properly include any other.

‘ The ancients, who added several ceremonies  
 ‘ to the simple institutions of Christ, and found  
 ‘ out spiritual meanings to them, amongst other  
 ‘ rites added to baptism, used this of *dipping thrice*.  
 ‘ But they did not proceed so far, in this way, as  
 ‘ to deny, that washing with water in any other  
 ‘ way is baptism: for they used *clinic* baptism, and  
 ‘ surely baptizing a sick man in his bed, was not  
 ‘ burying him under water. Washing with wa-  
 ‘ ter, then, was from the beginning the sign in  
 ‘ baptism, in whatever way, or after whatsoever  
 ‘ mode it was done.’

*Answ.* 1. What reason have you to find fault with the ancients for *dipping thrice*, since you think any manner of washing will do?

2. Though they likewise used *clinic* baptism, yet  
 they

they did not think it a proper rule for ordinary baptism, as you do; but excused it by the plea of urgent necessity †; and they pretended to no evidence for it from the New Testament, but founded it upon the ceremonial sprinklings of the law, and the metaphor used by the prophet Ezekiel, chap. xxxvi. 25. But still they made a distinction betwixt baptismal washing, and the pouring of water upon the sick \*. However, if you think the ancient superstitious *clinic* baptism a sufficient warrant for *sprinkling* or *pouring*, 'tis at your service, though it be among the other ceremonies, which they added to the simple institutions of Christ.

You tell us, ' the common way of baptizing is ' not by *sprinkling*, as has been always falsely al- ' leged in this controversy, but by *pouring* water ' from the hand of the baptizer on the baptized.' A very curious distinction indeed! but what does this make for your purpose? Why, ' if the scrip- ' ture calls pouring forth the Holy Ghost upon ' men, baptizing them with the Holy Ghost, then ' pouring forth water on men, is baptizing them ' with water, in the scripture use of the word bap- ' tism.'

*—Answ.* So you hold by *pouring*, for its similitude to the baptism of the Holy Ghost: (I shall remind you of this in the sequel) but, according to this manner of arguing, *filling* men with water must be baptism; for they are said to be filled with the Holy Ghost: *giving* men water must be baptism; for

† Cyprian. *Epist.* 69. *ad Magnum.*

\* Cyprian. *ibid.*



for the Holy Ghost is said to be given : and *sprinkling* with water (notwithstanding your distinction) must be baptism still ; for the ordinary baptism of the spirit is by sprinkling the heart from an evil conscience. Thus baptism with water may be explain'd to be any thing, every thing, or nothing.

‘ Christ was baptized with a baptism, which  
 ‘ was at his death ; but that baptism was by water  
 ‘ and blood poured forth from his pierced side up-  
 ‘ on his dead body ; and there was no dipping  
 ‘ there.’

*Answ.* Was the gushing of blood and water from the pierced side of Christ's dead body, the thing he precisely meant by his baptism, and that in distinction from what he endured before he bowed the head and gave up the Ghost ? If so ; it will greatly favour some ancient instances of baptizing dead bodies. But it is evident that the baptism wherewith our Lord was baptized at his death, respected all that he suffered whether in the garden or on the cross ; which sufferings are called baptism, not properly but metaphorically. The Psalmist useth metaphors of the same import, when speaking of Christ's sufferings, Psal lxiix, 1, 2. ‘ Save me, O God, for the waters are come in into my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing : I am come into deep waters, where the floods OVERFLOW me. And was there no dipping or immersing here ? And is not our being buried with Christ by baptism, a fit representation of communion with him in his death and burial, and our rising again from under the water, a proper  
 sign

sign of fellowship with him in his resurrection? Rom. vi. 3, 4, 5. Col. ii. 11, 12, 23. But in opposition to this, you say,

‘ Our communion with Christ, and conformity  
‘ to him in his death, burial and resurrection, is  
‘ by the renewing of the Holy Ghost,’ &c.

*Answ.* True; but if you argue against the scripture mode of baptism, because it is not the thing signified; you may likewise argue against every mode of it for the same reason; and thus you will shake hands with Quakers, who deny baptism with water, because it is not the baptism of the Spirit.

—— ‘ But if we look on the will of the insti-  
‘ tutor express’d in his word as the sole ground of  
‘ the relation betwixt the sign in baptism and the  
‘ Lord’s Supper, and that which is signified by  
‘ them; we will not look for any such similitude  
‘ in these instituted signs as we do in pictures or  
‘ images.’

*Answ.* You have not yet shewn that it is not the will of the institutor there should be a *resemblance* betwixt the sign and the thing signified. On the contrary, you have endeavour’d to shew that there is a *resemblance*, when arguing for the mode of pouring, which you found entirely upon its *resemblance* to the pouring forth of the Holy Ghost upon men: but whether you think it bears the similitude of a picture or image to this, I will not say. In your argument from Col. ii. 11, 12, 13. you affirm, ‘ That in place of the circumcision made  
‘ with hands they [Christians] are buried with  
‘ Christ

‘Christ in baptism ;’ and this you distinguish from the circumcision of the heart, as the sign is distinguished from the thing signified. Now, if there be a burial in the sign, in distinction from the renewing of the Holy Ghost, then that burial must be in water, for the scripture informs us that the sign is water.

— ‘ Shall we say upon it, that the scripture confines us so to one manner of washing, that another way of it cannot be called baptism ?’

*Ans.* You can screw matters even this same length upon other points, and stand to it with boldness : but here it seems your right arm is weakened, and you are willing to make a coalition that will comprehend all the modes of washing that can be thought on, and secure their friendly intercommunity. The only fault you find with *immersion* is its unsociableness and want of charity to its neighbours. Let me tell you, Sir, this is not agreeable to your usual manner of writing when conscious of truth upon your side, which indicates you have some misgiving of heart about your favourite mode. You allow *immersion* to be one mode of washing ; but then you cannot think to be confin’d to any one mode of it : But what have you now made of Christ’s simple institution ? And what can the drift of all your arguments be, but to throw the scripture manner of baptism into ambiguity and darkness, that so you may accommodate the ordinance to the tender state of infants. But what if after all we should still say upon it, that the scripture has determined the manner as well

well as the subjects of baptism ; and that the scripture manner is baptism in distinction from any other manner of washing that you may please to use upon improper subjects ?

‘ The confidence of some in this matter is the  
 ‘ more unaccountable, that they cannot be igno-  
 ‘ rant, it is impossible to shew, from the particular  
 ‘ accounts of the Lord’s baptism and the eunuch’s,  
 ‘ that either of them were baptized otherwise than  
 ‘ by pouring water on them from the hands of the  
 ‘ baptizers. For if it should be inferred from the  
 ‘ eunuch’s going down into the water, and coming  
 ‘ up out of it, (as it is also said our Lord did,)  
 ‘ that he was plunged ; the same must also be said  
 ‘ of Philip the baptizer ; for the words are, *They*  
 ‘ *went down both into the water, both Philip and the*  
 ‘ *eunuch ; and he baptized him. And when they*  
 ‘ *were come up out of the water.*’ If these words,  
 ‘ say any thing of dipping the baptized, they say  
 ‘ full as much of dipping the baptizer. But to a-  
 ‘ ny man that is capable of understanding words,  
 ‘ these words plainly say, That being baptized  
 ‘ with water is another thing than going down in-  
 ‘ to the water, and coming up out of it.’

*Answ.* This paragraph is of a piece with the rest, tending to shew, that there is no certain rule in scripture for the mode of baptism ; and this you do by throwing dust upon these circumstances by which the scripture mode is determined, whilst at the same time, you can pretend to no foundation in scripture for the mode of *pouring* at all : so that your argument proves nothing ; but is an attempt

to invalidate all proof whereby the manner of baptism can be determined either one way or another. But this whole paragraph proceeds upon a gross mistake; for we do not affirm, that *going down into the water* is the same with *baptism* or *immersion*: Philip and the eunuch might go to their necks in water, and yet not be baptized. But I ask, why went they down into the water? Was it that the eunuch might have a little of it pour'd upon him from the hand of Philip; Certainly no: for this might have been done at the brink, without wetting the soles of their feet, or the eunuch might have been thus baptized in his chariot by a small quantity of it in a vessel. It is evident then that the eunuch was not baptized by pouring of water from the hand of Philip; but in such a manner, whatever it was, as required a depth of water, to obtain which, we find, they went both down into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and this, though it was not baptism, yet it was a necessary step in order to it.

Though Philip went down into the water as well as the eunuch, yet he was not thereby baptized; (as he certainly would, had any manner of washing been baptism) but he went down to perform that action upon another. What kind of action then must this be that Philip performed upon the eunuch, and that required they should go both into a depth of water? Can we think the Holy Ghost, in relating these circumstances, had nothing in view but what was accidental and superfluous? No surely; they all concur to ascertain,  
that

that the action was *immersion*, as they could be requisites to no other mode; accordingly it is said, *εβαπτισεν*, *he immersed him*, Acts viii. 38. which action required, that Philip should take hold of the eunuch, bury him in the water, and raise him up again from under the water. Thus you may see that the circumstances of the eunuch's baptism, tally exactly with the sense of the word *βαπτίζω*, *to dip, immerse or plunge*.

Nor were these circumstances any way singular; for our Lord was baptized in the river Jordan, having gone down into it; as is evident from Mat. iii. 16, Mark i. 10. where we are told that, after his baptism, he came up out of the water. Baptism (or immersion) requires *much water*; and John also was baptizing in Enon, near to Salim, because there was much water there, John iii. 23. Whereas, had he used the mode of sprinkling or pouring, he had no occasion to make choice of such a place.

To conclude, the most learned and judicious of the Pædobaptists, ever since this practice took place, have ingenuously confess'd, that the scripture mode of baptism is *immersion*, and the main plea they have for *sprinkling or pouring*, is its suitability to the tender bodies of infants. Thus we see one deviation from the scripture rule introduces another, till at last the law of God be made void by mens vain traditions.

I am,

SIR,

Your humble Servant.