

CHRISTIAN BAPTISM

A

**SERMON,**

PREACHED IN THE LAL BAZAR CHAPEL,  
**CALCUTTA,**

ON LORD'S-DAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 1812,  
PREVIOUS TO THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE ORDINANCE

of

**BAPTISM.**

*With many Quotations from Pedobaptist Authors.*

**BY ADONIRAM JUDSON, A. M.**

BOSTON:

RE-PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY LINCOLN & EDMANDS,  
No. 53 Cornhill.

**1817.**

**Source:**

<https://archive.org/details/christianbaptismoojuds>

*Formatted, modernized, and annotated by  
William H. Gross [www.onthewing.org](http://www.onthewing.org) Jan 2020*

## PREFACE

The Author of the following discourse was, by education and profession, a Pedobaptist. During his passage from America to India, in the spring of 1812, he began to doubt the truth of his former sentiments. After his arrival in this country, and before he communicated the exercises of his mind to any of the Baptist denomination, he became convinced, that the immersion of a professing believer, into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is the only Christian baptism.

This discourse exhibits the reasons of his present belief. It is committed to the press, in compliance with the request of some who heard it, and through the desire of furnishing his distant friends in America, with a more full and satisfactory statement of the reasons of his change, than could be made in private communications.

NOTE. For many of the testimonies, inserted in this discourse, the Author acknowledges himself indebted to Mr. Booth's *Pedobaptism Examined*.

CALCUTTA, Nov. 1812.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

I chose to modernize the 1817 publication of this work, because of its early conception. In some ways, it's more impassioned than later editions. This is a full-orbed defense of credobaptism by a young man who had just graduated Brown University in 1807. He chose to attend the newly established Andover seminary that same year, though not yet convinced of his own qualifications. From the *History of the Burman Mission*, p. 14:

“But the rules of the institution required evidence of evangelical piety in all who were admitted. Mr. Judson was desirous of entering there, for the purpose of being benefitted by the theological lectures. But he hardly ventured to make application, conscious that he was destitute of the proper qualifications. His ardent desire, however, to become acquainted with the religious students, and to be in a situation to gain religious instruction, overcame every obstacle, and he applied for admittance — at the same time, assuring the Professors of his having no hope that he had been a subject of regenerating grace. He was, notwithstanding, admitted. In the course of a few weeks, he gained satisfactory evidence of having obtained an interest in Christ, and turned his attention to those studies which were most calculated to make him useful in the ministry.”

He applied to be a missionary in 1811, and wrote the sermon on which this treatise is based, during his voyage to Calcutta in 1812. After delivering it, he was encouraged to print it. Dr. William Carey, in a letter to Dr. Staughton, dated Oct. 20, 1812, says this:

“Since their arrival in Bengal, brother and sister Judson have been baptized. Judson has since that, preached the best sermon on Baptism that I ever heard on the subject, which we intend to print. I yesterday heard that brother Rice had also fully made up his mind upon baptism.

“As none of us had conversed with brother Judson before he showed strong symptoms of a tendency towards believers' baptism, I inquired of him what had occasioned the change. He told me that on the voyage, he had thought much about the circumstance that he was coming to Serampore, where all were Baptists; that he would in all probability have occasion to defend infant sprinkling among us; and that, in consequence, he set himself to examine the grounds of Pedobaptism. This ended in a conviction that it has no foundation in the Word of God, and occasioned a revolution in his sentiments, which was nearly complete before he arrived in India.

Judson revised it in *November* 1819. But despite his youth when writing it in 1812, the two editions were substantially the same. In his Preface to the later edition, Judson writes:

“He feels much satisfaction, in finding that, through the lapse of seven years, the authenticity and correctness of the numerous testimonies adduced, have not been questioned in a single instance.

He wishes also to say that, after having seen and heard much that has been urged, both in India and America, against his statements, he sincerely thinks that not one has been disproved, except that concerning persons born of Christian parents, and not baptized till adult age. Finding himself mistaken, in the case of Augustine, he has now suppressed the whole paragraph, not because he doubts that there are such cases on record, but because his present situation deprives him of the means of authenticating them to satisfaction.”

I annotated that paragraph in this 1817 edition. I pray that Judson's evident conviction in writing it, provokes similar studiousness in those who seek the basis for credobaptism, regardless of the conclusions they reach at the close of their investigation.

William H. Gross  
*Jan. 14, 2020.*

## SERMON.

Matthew 28.19.

*Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*

WHEN our Lord commissioned his disciples to proselyte all nations, he instituted the sacred ordinance of baptism.

The words of the institution suggest two inquiries; *What is baptism?* and, *To whom is baptism to be administered?*

### ***I. What is baptism?***

Had the Greek word *baptizo* (βαπτίζω), which denotes the principal action in this ordinance, been translated in the English version of the New Testament, there would probably have been, among English readers, no dispute concerning its import. Had either of the English words, *wash*, or *sprinkle*, or *immerse*, been substituted for the Greek word, an English reader would instantly conceive an appropriate meaning. But unhappily, our translators have retained the original word, and contented themselves with merely changing its termination (*baptize*). By this means, an English reader is deprived of his usual guide. There are no other applications of the word, in his own language, from which he can learn its import. The only expedient, therefore, of which he can avail himself, is to ascertain the import of the original word: and the following considerations may conduce to this end.

1. The primitive word *bapto* (βάπτω) from which the word denoting baptism is derived, signifies *immersion*. This is as much the appropriate meaning of the Greek word, as of the English word *dip* or *immerse*.<sup>1</sup> This word is used in the New Testament, when the rich man entreats that Lazarus may be sent to dip the tip of his finger in water; Luk 16.24 when Christ says, “He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have *dipped* it;” Joh 13.26 and when in Revelation, Christ is represented as clothed with a vesture *dipped* in blood. Rev 19.13 The inspired penmen have used no other word beside this and its derivatives, to convey the idea of immersion; nor have they ever used this word in any other sense.

The word denoting baptism, is derived from the *verbal* of this primitive word, by a change in the termination, which, according to an established principle of the Greek language, never affects the primary idea; but when made on words expressing a quality or attribute, it merely conveys the additional idea of *causing* or *making*.

Thus the Greek word which signifies *pure*, with this change of termination, signifies *to make pure*. The Greek word which signifies *sprinkled*, with this change of termination, signifies *to make sprinkled*, or *to sprinkle*. And the Greek word which signifies *immersed*, with this change of termination, signifies *to make immersed*, or *to immerse*.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Worcester. “Had it been the intention of the Saviour, to confine his followers to dipping or immersion, the proper word to express this ordinance, would not have been βαπτίζω (*baptizo*), but βάπτω (*bapto*).” *Letters to Dr. Baldwin*, Let. xxii. p. 125.

<sup>2</sup> The termination *ίζω* (*izo*) in Greek derivatives, is precisely of the same import as the termination *fy*, in English derivatives, from the Latin *fios* to make; such as

sanctify, *to make holy*, from sanctus, *holy*;

mollify, *to soften*, from mollis, *soft*, etc.

On the same principle, in Greek;

ἀγνίζω, *to purify*, from ἀγνός, *pure*;

σοφίζω, *to make wise*, from σοφός *wise*;

γυμίζω, *to fill*, from γέμω *to be full*, etc.

And derivatives are thus formed, not only from adjectives and neuter verbs, but also from the *verbals* of transitive verbs; such as,

Accordingly, that eminent Greek critic, Dr. Campbell, expressly pronounces the primitive and the derivative to be synonymous. <sup>1</sup>

2. The word which denotes the ordinance of baptism, according to the usage of Greek writers, uniformly signifies or implies *immersion*.

It is the word, used in the Septuagint translation of the Old Testament, to express the action of Naaman, when he *dipped* himself seven times in the Jordan. <sup>2</sup> *2Kng 5.14* It is frequently used by Josephus, to convey the idea of immersion; particularly, in his account of the death of one who was drowned in a pool, by order of Herod. <sup>2</sup>

Numerous instances may be produced from other Greek authors, to confirm this signification.<sup>3</sup>

Nor has any instance been produced in which the word, literally applied, does not denote *immersion*, or *washing by immersion*. In figurative applications, this word, like the English words *dip* and *immerse*, and like all other words, is probably used with some freedom. But if a few instances of this kind were found, would they be sufficient to invalidate the force of evidence resulting from the proper and general use of the word? What law will bind the subject, if he is at liberty to depart from the proper and general interpretation of the principal term, and affix to it a signification which is drawn from some rare figurative application? Had the rite of baptism been prescribed in the English language, and the word *dip* been used to express the action, could we have entertained a doubt concerning the meaning? And in what light should we regard an attempt to prove, that it had no definite import, but signified sprinkling, or any kind of wetting, because Dr. Johnson defines the word, 1. *To immerse*; 2. *To moisten, to wet*; and in proof of the latter meaning, he cites these lines of Milton:

“And tho’ not mortal, yet a cold shuddering dew  
Dips me all o’er?”

If this principle of interpretation is allowed, it will completely destroy the force of every command.

The following testimonies concerning the import of the word βαπτίζω, are given by eminent authors who were professed Pedobaptists; and therefore, whose concessions on this subject, could not have been influenced by attachment to their religious system, but must have resulted from a conviction of truth alone.

BUDDAEUS. “The words βαπτίζω and βαπτισμός are not to be interpreted of aspersion [i.e., *sprinkling*], but *always* of immersion.” <sup>4</sup>

ALSTEDIUS. “βαπτίζω, *to baptize*, signifies *only* to immerse, not wash, except by consequence.” <sup>5</sup>

---

αίρεω, *to choose*; αἰρετός, *chosen*; αἰρετιζω, *to make chosen, to choose*; ἐμφαίνω, *to show*; ἐμφανής, *shown*; ἐμφανίζω, *to make shown, to show*; καθαίρω, *to cleanse*; καθαρός, *clean*; καθαρίζω, *to make clean, to cleanse*; ποω, *to drink*; πότος, *drank*; ποτιζω, *to cause to be drunk*;  
ῥαίνω, *to sprinkle*; ῥαντος, *sprinkled*; ῥαντίζω, *to make sprinkled, to sprinkle*.

And according to the same analogy;

βάπτω, *to immerse*; βαπτός, *immersed*; βαπτίζω, *to make immersed, to immerse*.

<sup>1</sup> *Four Gospels*, Note on Mat 20.22. See also, to the same purpose, Beckmannus. *Exercit. Theolog.* Ex. xvii, p. 257; Burmannus, *Synops Theolog.* Loc. xliii. c. vi. § 2; Suicerus, *Thesaur. Eccles.* sub voce βάπτισμα; Turretinus, *Institut.* Loc. xix. Quaest. xi. § 4; Heideggerus, *Corpus Theolog. Christ.* Loc. xxv. § 21.

<sup>2</sup> *Antiq. Jud.* L. xv. C. iii. § 3. See also *Antiq. Jud.* L. iv. C. iv. § 6; *De Bell. Jud.* L. iv. C. iii. § 3; and, as quoted by Dr. D. Scott, L. i. C. xxii. § 2; L. i C. xxvii. § 1; L. ii. C xviii. § 4; L. ii. C. xx. § 1; L. iii. C. ix. § 3; L. iii. C. x. § 9.

<sup>3</sup> Strabo, L. xii. p. 391. L. xiv. p. 458. Dio, xxxvii. p. 64. xxxviii. p. 84. L. p. 492. Polyb. iii. C. lxxii. V. C. xlvi. Plutarch, *De Superstit.* Tom. ii. Op. f. 166. Diodorus Siculus, L. i. C. xxxvi. C. lxxiii. Heliodorus, L. v. p. 197. Porphyry, *De Styge*, p. 282. Aeschylus, *Prometh. Vincit.* p. 53.

<sup>4</sup> *Theolog. Dogmat.* L. v. C. i. § 5.

<sup>5</sup> *Lexicon Theolog.* C. xii. p. 221.

J. J. WETSTENIUS. “To baptize is to plunge, to dip. The body, or part of the body, *being under water*, is said to be baptized.”<sup>1</sup>

J. ALTINGIUS. “For baptism is immersion, when the whole body is immersed; but the term baptism is *never* used concerning aspersion.”<sup>2</sup>

BEZA. “Christ commanded us to be baptized, by which word, it is certain, immersion is signified. — Nor does βαπτίζω signify to wash, except by consequence; for it properly signifies to immerse for the sake of dyeing. — To be baptized in water, signifies *no other*, than to be immersed in water, which is the external ceremony of baptism.”<sup>3</sup>

LUTHER. “The term baptism is a Greek word. It may be rendered immersion, as when we plunge something in water, that it may be entirely covered with water. And though that custom is now abolished among most (for even children are not entirely immersed, but only have a little water poured on them), nevertheless, they ought to be completely immersed, and immediately drawn out. *For the etymology of the word evidently requires it.*”<sup>4</sup>

CASAUBON. “This was the rite of baptizing, that persons were plunged into the water; *which the very word βαπτίζω, to baptize, sufficiently declares.*”<sup>5</sup>

CATTENBURGH. “In baptism the whole body is ordered to be immersed.”<sup>6</sup>

KECKERMANNUS. “We cannot deny that the first institution of baptism consisted in immersion, and not sprinkling.”<sup>7</sup>

SALMASIUS.<sup>8</sup> “Thus Novatus, when sick, received baptism, being περιχυθείς *besprinkled*, not βαπτίσθεις, baptized. Euseb. vi. Hist. C. xliii.”<sup>9</sup>

DR. CAMPBELL. “The word βαπτίζω, both in sacred authors, and in classical, signifies *to dip, to plunge, to immerse*; and was rendered by Tertullian, the oldest of the Latin fathers, *tingere*, the term used for dyeing cloth, which was by immersion. *It is always construed suitably to this meaning.* Thus it is ἐν ὕδατι, ἐν τῷ Ἰορδανῇ. But I should not lay much stress on the preposition ἐν, which, corresponding to the Hebrew ל, may denote *with*, as well as *in*, if the whole phraseology in regard to this ceremony did not concur in evincing the same thing. — Had βαπτίζω been employed here in the sense of ραίνω, *I sprinkle (which as far as I know, it never is, in any use, sacred or classical)*, the expression would doubtless have been,” etc.<sup>10</sup> — “When, therefore, the Greek word βαπτίζω is *adopted*, I may say, rather than *translated* into modern languages, the mode of construction ought to be preserved so far as may conduce to suggest its original import. It is to be regretted that we have so much evidence that even good and learned men allow their judgments to be warped, by the sentiments and customs of the sect which they prefer. The true

---

<sup>1</sup> *Comment.* ad Mat 3.6.

<sup>2</sup> *Comment.* ad Heb 9.10.

<sup>3</sup> *Epist.* ii. *ad Thom.* *Tilium.* *Annot.* in Mar 7.4, and Act 19.3.

<sup>4</sup> *Opera*, Tom. i. p. 72. Wit. 1582.

<sup>5</sup> *Annot.* in Mat 3.6.

<sup>6</sup> *Spicileg. Theolog.* L. iv. C. lxiv. Sect. ii. § 22.

<sup>7</sup> *System. Theolog.* L. iii. C. viii. p. 369.

<sup>8</sup> For the character of Salmasius, “a man of very extraordinary abilities, and profound erudition,” see the *Panoplist* for Sept. 1808, Art. *Salmasius*. Vol. i. New Series, p. 148.

<sup>9</sup> *Apud* Witsii. *OEcon.* *Foed.* L. iv. C. xvi. § 13.

<sup>10</sup> The two verbs, rendered *wash*, in the English translation, are different in the original. The first is νουῶνται, properly translated *wash*; the second is βαπτισῶνται, *which limits us to a particular mode of washing*; for βαπτίζω denotes *to plunge, to dip*. — βαπτίζεσθαι says that excellent critic (Wetstein) “est manus aquae immergere, νιπτεσθαι manibus affundere.” *Note* on Mark 7.3, 4.

partisan of whatever denomination, always inclines to correct the diction of the Spirit, by that of the party.”<sup>1</sup>

**3.** There are no instances in the New Testament, which require us to depart from the *etymological* and *established* interpretation of the word.

We must believe that the writers of the New Testament used words according to their usual acceptation in the Greek language, unless the connexion requires some other interpretation. If we suppose that they used words in a manner different from common, established use, without giving sufficient intimation, either expressly, or by the obvious scope of the passage, we must give up our only guide to the meaning of any word, or charge them with a design of misleading. They certainly knew that their readers would naturally and necessarily interpret every word in the usual way, unless taught differently by the connexion.

Let us examine those instances in which it has been supposed that the connexion renders the idea of immersion inadmissible.

It is said that we cannot suppose that the washings (according to the Greek *baptisms*) of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels, and tables, or those ablutions which the Jews practised before eating, were all done by immersion. <sup>Mar 7.3, 4</sup>

With regard to the former, it must be remembered, that the Jews were commanded in their law, to cleanse unclean vessels by immersing them: “whether it is any vessel of wood, or raiment, or skin, or sack, whatever vessel it is, in which any work is done, *it must be put into water.*” <sup>Lev 11.32</sup> What, is it more probable that they abused the first institution of this ceremony, by superstitiously immersing a variety of articles that were not included in the divine command?

It may appear improbable to an inhabitant of the north of Europe or America, that the Jews, on returning from market, immersed themselves before eating; but not to you, my brethren, who are acquainted with the customs of these eastern countries, and witness the frequent ceremonial immersion of the natives.

But that these baptisms were really immersions, and therefore, that the use of the word in these instances, instead of weakening, must confirm the belief that it always means immersion, appears from the testimonies of the learned Scaliger, and an eminent Jewish Rabbi.

SCALIGER. “The more superstitious part of them” (the Jews,) “every day, before they sat down to meal, dipped the whole body. Hence the Pharisee’s wonder at Christ, Luke 11.38.”<sup>2</sup>

MAIMONIDES. “Wherever in the law, washing of the flesh or of the clothes is mentioned, it means nothing else than dipping the whole body in a laver; for if any man dips himself all over, except the tip of his little finger, he is still in his uncleanness.”<sup>3</sup>

“A bed that is wholly defiled, if a man dips it part by part, it is pure.”<sup>4</sup>

It is said, that the three thousand, converted on the day of Pentecost, could not have been baptized by immersion the same day.

Nor is it recorded that they were baptized the same day, but that they were *added* to the disciples. <sup>Act 2.41</sup> On the supposition, however, that they were all baptized the same day, was it impossible for the twelve, assisted by the seventy, and perhaps others, to administer the ordinance by

---

<sup>1</sup> *Four Gospels*, Note on Mat 3.11.

<sup>2</sup> *De Emend. Templ.* L. vi. p. 771. — Luk 11.38 “When the Pharisee saw *it*, he marveled that He had not first washed before dinner.”

<sup>3</sup> *Hilchot. Mikvaol*, C. i. Sect. ii.

<sup>4</sup> *Hilchot. Celim*. C. xxvi. Sect. xiv. See also, to the same purpose, Ikenius, *Antiq. Hebraicae*, Pars i. C. xviii. § 9; and Mr. Stackhouse, *Hist. of the Bible*, B. viii. C. i. p. 1234.

immersion? <sup>1</sup> In the preceding chapter, we are informed that the number of disciples together, was one hundred and twenty.

Another objection is thus stated: “In the dead of night, in the city of Philippi, the *jailer and all his household* were baptized by Paul and Silas. <sup>Act 16.23-34</sup> Is it to be believed that in a city guarded by Roman sentinels, the *prisoners* Paul and Silas, when their jailer had received a strict charge, at his peril, to keep them safe, would nevertheless take him and his family abroad in the night, just after the whole city had been roused by an earthquake, and go to a pond, or a river, to baptize them by immersion?” <sup>2</sup>

This case can present no difficulty to the minds of any of you, my brethren, who may have been within the prison yard in this city, or are acquainted with the fact that prison yards, in the east, as well as the yards and gardens of private houses, are usually furnished with tanks of water.

It is said again, with reference to the rites of cleansing under the Jewish dispensation, that “by the apostle to the Hebrews, <sup>Heb 9.10</sup> these various purifications, or *sprinklings*, are expressly called (δίαφοροις βαπτίσμοις) *diverse baptisms*.” <sup>3</sup>

This might be urged with some plausibility, had no immersions been prescribed in the Jewish ritual. But since these were numerous, as will appear upon examining the Levitical law, <sup>4</sup> the application of the word by the apostle Paul, affords no reason for ascribing to it any other, beside its usual import. <sup>5</sup>

Another instance that is supposed to be objectionable, may be stated thus: Christ promised to baptize his disciples with the Holy Spirit; <sup>Act 1.5</sup> and on the day of Pentecost, he fulfilled his promise by pouring out the Spirit upon them. <sup>Act 2.1-4, 33</sup> Here, it is said, *pouring* out the Spirit is compatible with the supposition that *sprinkling* or *pouring* is baptism, but not with the supposition that *immersion* alone is baptism.

It must be remembered that the literal meaning of a word is not to be ascertained from a figurative application. If pouring out the Spirit proves that *sprinkling* or *pouring* is baptism, then their being *filled* with the Spirit proves that *filling* is baptism.

The pouring out of the Spirit upon them is, however, perfectly consistent with the promise of Christ, that he would *immerse* them in the Spirit. This was the means by which he performed his promise. He poured out the Spirit upon them to such a degree that they were immersed, according to his promise, and even *filled* with the Spirit. This is confirmed by the symbol of the rushing, mighty wind, which is used to denote the Holy Spirit. *It filled all the house, where they were sitting*. <sup>6</sup>

The baptism of the Israelites in the cloud, and in the sea, mentioned by the apostle Paul, <sup>1Cor 10.1-2</sup> has been thought incompatible with the idea of immersion.

---

<sup>1</sup> See VENEMAE, *Hist. Eccles. Secul. i.* § 138; and Buddoei, *Theolog. Dogmat. L. v. C. i.* § 5.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. WORCESTER'S *Lett. to Dr. Baldwin*, Let. xxii. p. 127.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. WORCESTER'S *Letters to Dr. Baldwin*, Let. xxii. p. 128.

<sup>4</sup> See among other instances, Lev 15. Lev 16.26, 28. Num 19.7, 8.

<sup>5</sup> J ALTINGIUS. “Washings, the apostle calls *diverse baptisms*: that is, various *immersions*. — Those Jewish washings were manifold.” *Comment. ad Heb. 9.10*.

<sup>6</sup> Abp. TILLOTSON. “*It filled all the house*. This is what our Saviour calls *baptizing with the Holy Ghost*. So that those who sat in the house were, as it were, *immersed* in the Holy Ghost, as those who were buried with water were overwhelmed, or covered all over with water, which is the proper notion of baptism.” *Sermons*, Sermon. cxvii. See also, to the same purpose, CYRIL, *Cateches. xvii.* § 8, 10; GURTLERUS, *Institut. Theolog. C.* xxxiii; IKENIUS, *Dissert. Philolog. Theolog.* Dissert, xix. p. 325.; LE CLERC, *Remarques sur Nouv. Test.* a Mat 3.1; CASAUBON, in Act 1.5; Mr. LEIGH, *Annot. on Mat 3.11*; Bp. HOPKINS, *Works*, p. 519; Bp. REYNOLDS, *Works*, p. 226.



The apostle, in the context, informs us how they were baptized — not by being sprinkled or washed, but *by being under the cloud, and by passing through the sea*. Is there any impropriety in representing their situation, with the sea on each side, and the cloud covering them, as an immersion in the cloud, and in the sea? Is this not the natural, obvious import of the passage? As to the supposition that they were sprinkled with spray from the sea, and rain from the cloud, it is made without evidence (the 8th and 9th verses of Psalm 68 not alluding to this event),<sup>1</sup> and appears too fanciful, and too evidently contrived for the occasion, to require further remark.<sup>2</sup>

We have now considered the principal instances in the New Testament, which have been thought to attach some other idea beside that of immersion, to the term denoting baptism; and certainly discover no sufficient reason for departing from the etymological and established interpretation.

4. The circumstances attending the instances of baptism, recorded in the New Testament, plainly indicate immersion.

John baptized *in the river Jordan*,<sup>Mar 1.5</sup> and in Enon,<sup>Joh 3.23</sup> *because there was much water there*. Christ was baptized *in the Jordan*, and after the ordinance, *came up out of the water*.<sup>Mar 1.9-10</sup> Philip and the eunuch *both went down into the water*, and after “baptism, *came up out of the water*.”<sup>Act 8.38-39</sup> The phrase, *went into the water*, does not, indeed, imply *in itself*, that the subjects were immersed. It is one thing to go into the water; and it is another thing to be immersed. But the phrase implies *by consequence*, that the subjects were immersed. For it cannot be supposed that John and the primitive disciples resorted to rivers, and went into the water, for the purpose of pouring or sprinkling. Do the advocates of pouring or sprinkling find this the most convenient mode of administering the ordinance?

5. The idea of immersion is the only one which will suit all the various connexions in which the word is used in the New Testament.

The word certainly has *some* meaning, whether more limited or more general; and when used to denote the ordinance of baptism, it certainly has one uniform meaning, which is applicable in every instance. What is this meaning?

Is it *sprinkling*? We must then read, *They were all sprinkled by him in the river Jordan*; <sup>Mar 1.5</sup> *Buried with him by sprinkling*; <sup>Rom 6.4</sup> *They were all sprinkled unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea*.<sup>1Cor 10.2</sup>

Is it *washing*? We must then read, *He will wash you with* (Gr., *in*) *the Holy Ghost and fire*.<sup>Mat 3.11</sup> *Arise and be washed, and wash away your sins*; <sup>Act 22.16</sup> *So many of us as were washed into Jesus Christ, were washed into his death*.<sup>Rom 4.3</sup>

The idea of immersion *always* suits the connexion in which the word is used; or, in the words of Dr. Campbell, the word “*is always construed suitably to this meaning*.” Thus we may read with propriety of sentiment and expression, *And they were all immersed by him in the river Jordan*; *Buried with him by immersion*; *They were all immersed unto Moses, in the cloud and in the sea*; *He will immerse you in the Holy Ghost and fire*; *Arise and be immersed, and wash away your sins*; *So many of us as were immersed into Jesus Christ, were immersed into his death*.

---

<sup>1</sup> See Dr. Th. Scott's *Note on Psa 68.9*.

<sup>2</sup> WITSIUS. “How were the Israelites baptized in the cloud, and in the sea, seeing they were neither immersed in the sea, nor wet by the cloud? It is to be considered that the apostle here uses the term baptism in a figurative sense. — The cloud hung over their heads; and so the water is over those who are baptized. The sea surrounded them on each side; and so too the water, in regard to those who are baptized.” (OEcon. Foed. L. iv. C. x. § 11. See also, to the same purpose, Turretinus, *Disput. de Bap. Nubis et Maris*, § 24; Sir NORTON KNATCHBULL, *Animad. in Lib. Nov. Test*, ad 1Pet 3.20, 21; VENEMA, *Dissert. Sac. L. ii. C. xiv. § 9-11*; GROTIUS, in 1Cor 10.2; BRAUNIUS, *Doctrina Foed. Loc. xviii. C. X. § 7*; Mr. GATAKER, *Adversar. Miscel. Cap. iv*; CAMERO, in loc. BENNELIUS, *Gnomon*, in loc. MARCKIUS, *Bib. Exercitat. Ex. viii. § 12*; Mr. POOL's *Continuators*, Dr. HAMMOND and Dr. WHITBY, on the place.

6. The Greek people certainly understand their own native language, better than any foreigners. We must therefore believe that their practice, whatever it is, affords a correct and indisputable interpretation of the Greek word. Now, from the first introduction of the gospel to the present time, they have invariably practised immersion. This is true not only of the Greek people, but of the whole Greek church — from the southern provinces of Greece, to the northern extremity of the Russian empire — a church which, in point of territory and population, embraces nearly one half of Christendom.

DEYLINGIUS. “The Greeks retain the rite of immersion to this day, as Jeremiah, the patriarch of Constantinople declares.”<sup>1</sup>

Mr. CHAMBERS. “In the primitive times, this ceremony was performed by immersion; as it is to this day in the oriental churches, according to the original signification of the word.”<sup>2</sup>

Dr. WALL. “All the Christians in Asia, all in Africa, and about one third of Europe, are of the last sort” (they practise immersion) “in which third of Europe are comprehended the Christians of Graecia, Thracia, Serbia, Bulgaria, Rascia, Wallachia, Moldavia, Russia, Nigra, and so on; and even the Muscovites, who, if the coldness of the country excused it, might plead for a dispensation with the most reason of anyone.” — “The Greek church, in all its branches, still uses immersion; and except in case of sickness, they hardly count a child well baptized without it.”<sup>3</sup>

7. Not only all the branches of the Greek church, but the whole Christian world, for the space of thirteen hundred years, practised immersion as the only valid baptism. Sprinkling or pouring was never tolerated, except in case of dangerous sickness, or lack of a sufficient quantity of water; and even then, the validity of the application was always disputed. Those who were thus baptized by pouring, were called *clinics*, not *Christians*, and were prohibited the priesthood. Never — by any Christians, in any age — was sprinkling or pouring allowed in common cases, until the council of Ravenna, assembled by the pope in 1311; it declared immersion or pouring to be indifferent. From that time, the latter gradually came into general use. It was not admitted into England, however, till the middle of the 16th century, and not sanctioned till the middle of the 17th. That was when the Westminster assembly decided that “dipping the person in water is not necessary; but baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person.”<sup>4</sup> “This decision, however, was carried by a majority of one, *there being twenty-five for it, and twenty-four against it.*”<sup>5</sup>

As the truth of these assertions concerning the practice of the church, must be established by testimony, independently of argumentation, I hope to be excused for the number and length of the following quotations, from Pedobaptist authors of acknowledged authority.

GROTIUS. “That baptism used to be performed by immersion, and not by pouring, appears both from the proper signification of the word, and the places chosen for the administration of the rite, Joh 3.23; Act 8.38; and also from the many allusions of the apostles, which cannot be referred to sprinkling, Rom 6.3, 4; Col 2.12.”<sup>6</sup>

VITRINGA. “The act of baptizing is the immersion of believers in water. This expresses the force of the word. Thus also it was performed by Christ and the apostles.”<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> *De Prudent. Pastoral.* Pars. iii. C. iii. § 26.

<sup>2</sup> *Cyclopedia*, Art. *Baptism*. Edit. 7th.

<sup>3</sup> *Hist. of Inf. Bap.* Part. ii. C. ix. p. 447.

<sup>4</sup> *Confession*, Chap. 28.3.

<sup>5</sup> *Haldane's Reasons*, Chap. i. p. 17.

<sup>6</sup> *Apud Poli Synops.* ad Mat 3.6.

<sup>7</sup> *Aphorismi. Sanct. Theolog.* Aph. 834.

CURCELLEUS. “Baptism was performed by plunging the whole body into water, and not by sprinkling a few drops, as is now the practice. — Nor did the disciples, who were sent out by Christ, administer baptism afterwards, *in any other way.*”<sup>1</sup>

WESTMINSTER ASSEMBLY OF DIVINES. “*Buried with him by baptism.* See Col 2.12. In this phrase, the apostle seems to allude to the ancient manner of baptism, which was to dip the parties baptized, and as it were, to bury them under the water.”<sup>2</sup>

CALVIN. “From these words, John 3.23, it may be inferred that baptism was administered by John and Christ, by plunging the whole body under water. — Here we perceive how baptism was administered among the ancients; for they immersed the whole body in water.”<sup>3</sup>

Mr. BAILEY. “Baptism, in strictness of speech, is that kind of ablution or washing, which consists in dipping; and when applied to the Christian institution, so called, it was used by the primitive Christians *in no other sense than that of dipping*, as the learned Grotius and Casaubon well observe.”<sup>4</sup>

Dr. WALL.<sup>5</sup> “We would not know by these accounts” (Joh 3.23; Mar 1.5; Act 8.38), “whether the whole body of the baptized was put under water, head and all, were it not for two later proofs, which seem to me to put it out of question. One, that St. Paul twice, in an allusive way of speaking, calls baptism a *burial*; this allusion is not as proper, if we conceive them to have gone into the water only up to the armpits, etc., as it would be if their whole body was immersed. The other, is the custom of the near succeeding times. — As for sprinkling, I say as Mr. Blake said at its first coming up in England, “Let them defend it, who use it.”<sup>6</sup>

Mr. BINGHAM. “There are a great many passages in the epistles of St. Paul, which plainly refer to this custom.” (i.e., *immersion*) “*As this was the original apostolical practice*; so it continued to be *the universal practice of the church for many ages*, upon the same symbolical reasons, as it was first used by the apostles. — It appears from Epiphanius and others, that almost all heretics who retained any baptism, retained immersion also. — The only heretics against whom this charge” (of not baptizing by *total immersion*) “is brought, were the Eunomians, a branch of the Arians.”<sup>7</sup>

Dr. TOWERSON. “But therefore, as there is so much more reason to represent the rite of immersion as *the only legitimate rite* of baptism, because it is *the only one* that can answer the ends of its institution, and those things which were to be signified by it — and especially so, if (*as is well known, and undoubtedly of great force*) the general practice of the primitive church was agreeable to it, and the practice of the Greek church to this very day. For who can think that either one or the other, would have been so tenacious or so troublesome a rite, were it not that they were well assured, as those of the primitive church might well have been, of its being the only instituted and legitimate one?”<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> *Relig. Christ. Institut.* L. v. C. ii.

<sup>2</sup> Annot. on Rom 6.4. See also, to the same purpose, Bp. PEARCE, *Note* on 1Cor 15.29; and Bp. BURNET, *Expos.* xxxix. *Articles*, p. 374.

<sup>3</sup> In Joan. 3.23. *Comment*, in Act 8.38.

<sup>4</sup> *Dictionary*, Dr. Scott’s Edit. 1772.

<sup>5</sup> In a general convocation of the English clergy, Feb. 9, 1706, it was ordered, “that the thanks of this house be given to Mr. Wall, vicar of Shoreham in Kent, for the learned and excellent book he has lately written, concerning infant baptism.” In Dr. Baldwin’s *Bap. of Believers only*. Part. ii. Sect, iv, p. 91.

<sup>6</sup> *Def. of Hist. of Inf. Bap.* p. 131, 140.

<sup>7</sup> *Origines Eccles.* B. xi. C. xi.

<sup>8</sup> *Of the Sacram. of Bap.* Part. iii. p. 58.

VENEMA. “It is without controversy, that baptism in the primitive church was administered by immersion into water, and not by sprinkling. — The essential act of baptizing, in the second century, consisted not in sprinkling, but in immersion into water, in the name of each person in the Trinity. Concerning *immersion*, the words and phrases that are used, sufficiently testify of it; and that it was performed in a river, a pool, or a fountain. — As to the essential rites of baptism in the third century, pertained immersion, and not aspersion, except in cases of necessity, *and that was accounted a half-perfect baptism*. — Immersion, in the fourth century, was one of those acts considered essential to baptism; — nevertheless, aspersion was used in the last moments of life, on those who were called *clinics*, — and also where the quantity of water was not sufficient.”<sup>1</sup>

SALMASIUS. “The ancients did not baptize, otherwise than by immersion, either once or thrice; except *clinics*, or persons confined to their beds, who were baptized in a manner of which they were capable; not in the entire laver, as those who plunge the head under water; but the whole body had water poured upon it. (Cypr. iv. Epist. vii.) Thus Novatus, when sick, received baptism, being περιχυθεις, *besprinkled*, not βαπτισθεις, *baptized*. Euseb. vi. *Hist. C.* xliii.”<sup>2</sup>

Bp. TAYLOR. “The custom of the ancient churches was not sprinkling, but immersion; in pursuance of the sense of the word (baptize) in the commandment, and the example of our blessed Saviour. Now this was of so sacred an account in their esteem, that they did not account it lawful to receive someone into the clergy, who had been only sprinkled in his baptism, as we learn from the epistle of Cornelius to Fabius of Antioch, *apud Euseb.* L. vi. C. xliii. — It was a formal and solemn question, made by Magnus to Cyprian, whether they are to be esteemed right Christians, who were only sprinkled with water, and not washed or dipped.”<sup>3</sup>

CYPRIAN. (*In reply to the question of Magnus*) “In the saving sacraments, when necessity obliges, and God grants his indulgence, *abridgments* of divine things confers the whole on believers.”<sup>4</sup>

Dr. WALL. “Anno Dom. 251, Novatian was, by one party of the clergy and people of Rome, chosen bishop of that church in a schismatical way, and in opposition to Cornelius, who had been chosen before by the major part, and was already ordained. Cornelius, in a letter to Fabius, bishop of Antioch, vindicated his right, and shows that Novatian did not come canonically to his orders of priesthood, much less was he capable of being chosen bishop. For that, all the clergy and a great many of the laity, were against his being ordained presbyter, because it was not lawful, they said, for anyone who had been baptized in his bed in time of sickness (τον εν χλωη δια νοωον τεπιχυθεντα), as he had been, to be admitted to any office of the clergy.”<sup>5</sup>

CORNELIUS. “He” (Novatian) “fell into a grievous distemper; and it being supposed that he would die immediately, he received baptism, being sprinkled with water on the bed on which he lay, *if that can be termed baptism*.”<sup>6</sup>

VALESIUS. “People who were sick, and baptized in their beds, could not be dipped in water by the priest, but were sprinkled with water by him. *This baptism was thought imperfect, and not solemn* for several reasons. Also, those who were thus baptized, were ever afterwards called *clinici*; and by the twelfth canon of the council of Neocaesarea, *these clinici were prohibited priesthood*.”<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. Eccles. Secul.* i. § 138; Secul. ii. § 100; Secul. iii, § 51; Secul. iv. § 110.

<sup>2</sup> *Apud Witsii OEcon. Foed.* L. iv. C. xvi. § 13.

<sup>3</sup> *Ductor Dubitantium*, B. iii C. iv. Rule 15.

<sup>4</sup> “In sacramentis salutaribus, necessitate cogente, et Deo indulgentiam suam largiente, totum credentibus conferunt divina compendia.” *Epistola ad Magnum*. Edit. Paris, 1643.

<sup>5</sup> *Hist. of Inf. Bap.* Part ii. C. ix. p. 463.

<sup>6</sup> *Epist. ad Fabium*, *apud Euseb. Hist. Eccles.* L. vi. C. xliii.

<sup>7</sup> *Note in Euseb. Eccles. Hist.* B. vi. C. xliii. Camb. 1683.

VENEMA. “Beveridge, on the fiftieth apostolical canon, asserts that the ceremony of sprinkling began to be used instead of immersion, about the time of Pope Gregory, in the sixth century. But he did not produce any testimony in favour of his assertion; and it is undoubtedly a mistake. Martene declares in his *Antiq. Eccles. Rit.* L. i. p. i. C. i., that in all the ritual books, or pontifical manuscripts that he had seen, ancient or modern, immersion is required — except by the *Cenomanensian*,<sup>1</sup> and that of a more modern date, in which pouring on the head is mentioned. In the council of Ravenna also, held in the year 1311, both immersion and pouring are left to the determination of the administrator. And the council of Nismes, in the year 1284, permitted pouring if a vessel could not be had — therefore, only in case of necessity.”<sup>2</sup>

Dr. WHITBY. “It being so expressly declared here” (Rom 6.4) “and in Col 2.12, that we are *buried with Christ in baptism*, by being buried under water; and the argument to oblige us to a conformity to his death, by dying to sin, being taken from this; *and this immersion being religiously observed by all Christians for thirteen centuries*, and approved by our church; and changing it into sprinkling, even without any allowance from the Author of this institution, or any license from any council of the church — being that which the Romanist still urges to justify his refusal of the cup to the laity — it is to be wished that this custom might again be of general use, and aspersion only permitted, as of old, in case of the *clinici*, or someone in present danger of death.”<sup>3</sup>

Mr. STACKHOUSE. “Accordingly, several authors have shown that we read nowhere in scripture, of anyone’s being baptized except by immersion; and from the acts of councils, and ancient rituals, we have proved that this manner of immersion continued to be used, as much as possible, for thirteen hundred years after Christ.”<sup>4</sup>

Dr. WALL. “France seems to have been the first country in the world where baptism by affusion<sup>5</sup> was used ordinarily for healthy persons, and the public administering of it. — It being allowed for weak children” (in the reign of Queen Elizabeth) — “to be baptized by aspersion, many elegant ladies and gentlewomen first, and then by degrees, the common people, would obtain the favour of the priest to have their children pass for weak children, too tender to endure dipping in the water. — As for sprinkling, properly called, it seems it was, at 1645, just then beginning, and used by very few. It must have begun in the disorderly times, after 1641.<sup>6</sup> — They” (the assembly of divines in Westminster) “reformed the font into a basin. This learned assembly could not remember that fonts to baptize in, had been always used by the primitive Christians, long before the beginning of popery, and ever since churches were built;<sup>7</sup> but that sprinkling for the common use of baptizing, was really introduced (in France first, and then in other popish countries), in times of popery. *And that, accordingly, all those countries in which the usurped power of the pope is, or has formerly been owned, have ceased dipping children in the font; but that all other countries in the world, which had never regarded his authority, still use it; and that basins, except in cases of necessity, were never used by papists, or any other Christians whatsoever, till by themselves.*”<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> The Acts of the Cenomanensian Bishops, about the time of Charlemagne (742-814) — WHG

<sup>2</sup> *Hist. Eccles. Secul.*, vi. § 251.

<sup>3</sup> Note on Rom 6.4.

<sup>4</sup> *Hist. of the Bible*, B. viii. C. i.

<sup>5</sup> *Affusion*: baptizing by pouring water on the head. — WHG

<sup>6</sup> “The disorderly times” — the English Civil Wars, also called the Great Rebellion (1642-51). — WHG

<sup>7</sup> When Christianity was legalized in Rome, 313 AD, there was rapid construction of churches, with fountains in the courtyard for baptisms (Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, II, p. 200). — WHG

<sup>8</sup> *Hist. of Inf. Bap.* Part ii C. ix.

“The way that is now ordinarily used, *we cannot deny was a novelty*, brought into this church, by those who had learned it in Germany, or at Geneva. And they were not content to follow the example of pouring a quantity of water (which had been introduced there, instead of immersion) but improved it, if I may so abuse that word, from pouring to sprinkling; that it might have as little resemblance of the ancient way of baptizing, as possible.”<sup>1</sup>

Let me conclude this part of the discourse, with one remark. The question which we have examined, evidently does not relate to the *mode*, but the *nature* of baptism. We have not been inquiring, *how baptism must be performed in order to be valid*; but simply, *what baptism is*. If the several considerations which have been presented, are sufficient to show that baptism is immersion, it is equally clear that the terms *baptism* and *immersion* are equivalent and interchangeable; and that when Christ commanded his disciples to be baptized, he commanded them to be immersed.

## ***II. To whom is baptism to be administered?***

The words of the commission are, *Go, therefore, and teach (or rather disciple) all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*<sup>2</sup> Is there any difficulty in understanding these plain instructions? Didn't Christ obviously intend that the apostles should make disciples from among all nations, and then baptize them? He surely did not intend that they should baptize whole nations indiscriminately; but those of the nations, who would become disciples.<sup>3</sup> This is confirmed by the terms of the commission, as recorded by Mark: “Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believes, and is baptized, shall be saved.”<sup>Mar 16.15, 16</sup>

Notwithstanding the obvious import of the law of baptism, the greater part of the Christian world baptizes the children of believers, on the faith of their parents, or the profession of their sponsors, and refuse baptism to believers, if they have been baptized in infancy. Does their practice appear consistent with the command of Christ? Christ commands those who believe, to be baptized. Pedobaptists adopt a system which tends to preclude the baptism of believers. They baptize the involuntary infant, and deprive him of the privilege of ever professing his faith in the appointed way. If this system were universally adopted, it would banish believers' baptism out of the world. But leaving the evident discordance between the system of the Pedobaptists, and the command of Christ, let us inquire whether infant baptism has any just support, either direct or inferential.

When any practice is proposed and enforced as binding duty, we have a right to examine the grounds of the alleged obligation. It is not sufficient for the proposer to show that the practice is innocent, or even compatible with every other duty: it is necessary, that he prove it is binding. If one were to enforce the ancient custom of wearing white garments for several days after baptism, as the duty of every Christian, it would not be necessary for us to urge one argument against it; nor would it be sufficient for him to prove it is innocent, or even compatible with every other duty. We might reasonably refuse compliance until he proves that we are bound to comply. So, in the case of infant baptism, it is not necessary for us to urge one argument against it; nor is it sufficient for the proposer to prove that every objection is groundless. The thing requisite is clear evidence

---

<sup>1</sup> *Def. of Hist. of Inf. Bap.* p. 403.

<sup>2</sup> According to the Greek.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. CAMPBELL. “Go, therefore, convert all the nations, baptizing them,” etc. “There are manifestly three things which our Lord here distinctly enjoins his apostles to execute with regard to the nations; to wit *μθητευειν, βαπτιζειν, διδασκειν*, that is, to convert them to the faith, to initiate the converts into the church by baptism, and to instruct the baptized in all the duties of the Christian life.” *Four Gospels, and Note on the place.*

Mr. BAXTER. *Go, disciple me all nations, baptizing them.* As for those who say they are disciplined by baptizing, and not before baptizing, they do not speak the sense of that text. — When Christ lays down in the apostolical commission, the nature and order of his apostles' work, it is *first* to make disciples, and *then* to baptize them into the name of the Father,” etc. *Disputat. of Right to Sacram.* p. 91, etc.

that it is a binding duty. The question with every parent ought to be, *Am I under obligation to have my children baptized?* Now, on what grounds is this obligation predicated?

We should naturally expect that the baptism of infants, if enjoined at all, would have been enjoined in the law which instituted the ordinance of Christian baptism. But this law is silent on the subject of infants. Hasn't Christ, however, left some other command enjoining infant baptism? Not one. Haven't the apostles, who were entrusted with further communications of the will of Christ, left some command on this subject? Not one. Haven't they left us some example of infant baptism? Not one. Haven't they spoken of baptized infants, and thus given undeniable intimation of this practice? No, in no instance. On the contrary, whenever they have spoken of baptism, or of those to whom it was administered, their language implies that baptism was a voluntary act of worship, and the baptized are professing believers. "As many of you," said Paul to the Galatians, "as have been baptized into Christ, *have put on Christ.*" Gal 3.27.

But doesn't the baptism of the *households* of Lydia, the jailer, and Stephanas, afford some evidence in favour of this practice?

As the term *household* doesn't necessarily imply infants, these instances, though admitted without examination, cannot be considered as furnishing any certain precedent in favour of the baptism of infants. Do they afford any presumptive evidence?

It appears that Lydia was a woman of Thyatira, residing in Philippi for the purpose of trade. <sup>Act 16.14-15</sup> It doesn't appear, that she had a husband or children. It is more probable that her household was composed of assistants in her business, who following her example, believed, and were baptized. For we are informed that when Paul and Silas left the city, they entered into the house of Lydia, and saw and comforted *the brethren.* <sup>Act 16.40</sup>

In the Case of the jailer, <sup>Act 16.23-34</sup> Paul and Silas "spoke to him the word of the Lord, and *to all who were in his house.*" And he "rejoiced, believing in God, *with all his house.*" <sup>1</sup>

Concerning the household of Stephanas, Paul writes at the close of the epistle, <sup>1Cor 16.15</sup> "that it is the first-fruits of Achaia, and *that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints.*" <sup>2</sup>

Thus, in each of these instances, especially in the two latter, some circumstances appear which lead us to conclude that the members of these households were professing believers. It may therefore be repeated *that there is no precept nor precedent in scripture for infant baptism.*

Let us next examine the inferential evidence adduced in favour of this practice.

*Children, it is said, have been connected with their parents in covenant with God; and in consequence of this connexion, they have received by divine appointment, the initiating seal; their covenant connexion has never been dissolved, nor their right to the initiating seal disannulled.* <sup>3</sup>

It does not follow, that children are connected with their parents in every covenant, because they were connected with their parents in one covenant. The whole strength of the argument now

---

<sup>1</sup> Dr. MACKNIGHT. "Having believed in God with all his house; who it seems were equally impressed with Paul's sermon, as the jailer himself was." *Life of the Apostle Paul*, Chap. v.

CALVIN. — "in which also the grace of God illustriously appeared, because it suddenly brought the whole family to a pious consent." *Comment*, in loc.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. MACKNIGHT. "The family of Stephanas seem all to have been adults when they were baptized. For they are said, chap. 16.15, *to have devoted themselves to the ministry to the saints.*" *Translation of the Apost. Epist.* Note 1st. on 1Cor 1.16.

Dr. GUYSE. "It therefore seems — that the family of Stephanas were all adult believers, and so were baptized upon their own personal profession of faith in Christ." *Note*, on 1Cor 1.16.

<sup>3</sup> See Dr. Worcester's *Letters to Dr. Baldwin*, Let. xxi. p. 3.

presented, rests in the supposition that the covenant of grace, in which Christians now stand, is the same as the covenant of circumcision, in which children were connected with their parents. The latter covenant is recorded in the seventeenth chapter of Genesis.

“And when Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said to him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will multiply you exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face; and God talked with him saying, ‘As for me, behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be a father of many nations. Neither shall your name any more be called Abram, but your name shall be called Abraham; for I have made you a father of many nations. And I will make you exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come out of you. And I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your seed after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to you, and to your seed after you. And I will give to you, and to your seed after you, the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God. And God said to Abraham, You shall keep my covenant, therefore; you and your seed after you, in their generations. This is my covenant, which you shall keep between me and you, and your seed after you: Every man child among you shall be circumcised. And you shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant between me and you. And he that is eight days old, shall be circumcised among you; every man child in your generations; he that is born in the house, or bought with money from any stranger, who is not of your seed. He that is born in your house, and he that is bought with your money, must be circumcised; and my covenant shall be in your flesh, for an everlasting covenant. And the uncircumcised man child, whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, that soul shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my covenant.” The covenant proceeds with regard to Sarah and Ishmael, and closes in the twenty-second verse.

I now ask the Christian parent. Is this the covenant which God has made with you? Has God covenanted to give you *these* blessings? Though he may have covenanted to give you *some* of these blessings, together with many others, the question must be repeated, *Is this the very covenant which God has made with you?* If, on examining the several parts of the covenant, you feel authorized to answer in the affirmative, I reply that you are under sacred obligations to perform your part. You are under sacred obligation to circumcise, or (if you are satisfied that baptism is substituted) to baptize “every man child” “that is eight days old;” him “that is born in the house, or bought with money from any stranger, who is not of your seed.” It is in direct disobedience of the command of God to baptize before the eighth day, or to defer baptism beyond the eighth day. It is an entire departure from the command of God to baptize a female child, or to withhold baptism from one “who is born in the house, or bought with money from any stranger, who is not of your seed.” God has, in no part of his word, released you from your obligation to baptize *on the eighth day*. Nor has he required you to baptize a female child. “Who has required this at your hand?” Nor has he released you from your obligation to baptize the servant born in the house, or bought with money. <sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Gal 3.28. *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.* This passage has been produced both as a declaration of the right of female infants to baptism, and as a repeal of the right of servants.

It is important, in construing scripture, to adopt the very meaning which the inspired writer obviously intended to convey; and not to allow the mind to lay hold on some distant meaning which is contrary to the whole scope of the context, and probably would never have occurred if a hypothesis hadn't needed its support. If the latter licentious mode of interpretation is tolerated, any doctrine, however trifling or contradictory, any practice, however puerile or pernicious, may be proved to be scriptural. In the passage before us, let us ascertain what characters are described, and in what respect they are one in Christ Jesus.

Ver. 26. *For you are all the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus.* 27. *For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.* 28. *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.* Is it not too evident to require any remark, that the apostle is speaking of believers only, those who are the children of God by faith in Christ, and have put on Christ by being baptized?



But I ask again, *Do you really believe, that God has promised to you the very blessings which he promised to Abraham and his seed?* Do you really believe that God has promised to give you the land of Canaan, *even that land in which your father Abraham was a stranger?* If not, then whatever blessings God has promised to you, whatever covenant he has made with you, it is not *the* covenant which he made with Abraham, and in which children were connected with parents.

That the promise of the land of Canaan was at least one principal promise in the covenant of circumcision, appears from the numerous passages in which it is distinguished and presented as the substance of the covenant.

God said to Moses, “I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob — and I have also established my covenant with them, *to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, in which they were strangers.*” <sup>Exo 6.3-4</sup> David exhorted Israel, “O you seed of Israel his servant, you children of Jacob, his chosen ones. — Be mindful always of his covenant; the word which he commanded to a thousand generations; even of the covenant which he made with Abraham, and of his oath to Isaac; and has confirmed the same to Jacob for a law, and to Israel for an everlasting covenant, saying, *To you I will give the land of Canaan, the lot of your inheritance.*” <sup>1Chr 16.13-18</sup> The same sentiment prevailed in the time of Nehemiah. For on a day of fasting, the whole congregation of Israel addressed God in prayer: “You are the Lord the God, who chose Abram — and made a covenant with him, *to give the land of the Canaanites — to his seed.*” <sup>Neh 9.7-8</sup>

The covenant of grace does not contain this promise. When we contemplate two covenants, and see that one principal article contained in the one, is not contained in the other, by what singular process can the mind be brought to the conclusion that these two covenants, so palpably different and distinct, are one and the same?

But it is urged, that “the covenant made with Abraham, is expressly declared to be an everlasting, or perpetual covenant; a covenant to continue to the latest generations.” <sup>1</sup>

And wasn't the land of Canaan given to Abraham and his seed for an “*everlasting possession?*” Even when the covenant is represented as “the word, which God commanded *to a thousand generations,*” the promise of the land of Canaan is brought forward as the chief thing, indeed, as the very sum and substance of this everlasting covenant.

So too the priesthood was confirmed to Phinehas and *his seed*, in an everlasting covenant. <sup>Num 25.13</sup> So also the feast of expiation on the tenth day of the seventh month, was established by a statute which was declared to be an *everlasting* statute. <sup>Lev 16.34</sup>

It is urged that the covenant “comprised all the blessings and privileges ever promised to believers and the church.”

Whether this is true or not, since it comprised one blessing which is *not* comprised in the covenant of grace, it cannot be the same covenant. But is it true?

The two principal promises made to the seed of Abraham, are that God would give them the land of Canaan, and that he would be their God. What is the import of the latter promise?

Is there any absurdity in saying that God was the God, not only of the few pious descendants of Abraham, but of the nation of Israel at large? Was he not the God of the Jews, in a sense in which he was not also the God of the Gentiles? Did he not select the posterity of Abraham in the line of

---

2. The Galatians, through the influence of Judaizing teachers, had imbibed the error that in order to be justified, it was necessary to be circumcised, and to keep the Mosaic law. The chief object of the apostle, in this epistle, and particularly in this chapter, is to show that we must be justified by faith alone; that it is not necessary to become a Jew in order to be justified; for in Christ Jesus, no distinction of nation, outward condition, or sex, is of any avail. In Christ Jesus, there is neither Jew. nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female. *If you have faith in Christ, whatever your descent or condition, you are all on an equality, in point of acceptance with God.*

<sup>1</sup> Dr. WORCESTER'S *Two Discourses*, Disc. 1. p. 27.

Isaac and Jacob, and distinguish them above all other nations? Did he not protect them from their enemies, and grant them a rich abundance of temporal blessings? Did he not give them his law, and establish among them his worship, and the ordinances of his house? Did he not, by these spiritual advantages, furnish them with opportunities which no other nation enjoyed: of obtaining Him as their spiritual portion? Is there any absurdity in saying that, in these respects, He was the God of the nation at large? If not, is there any absurdity in supposing that his promise imported that he would be their God, in these respects?

God is represented in the scriptures, as the God of his people, in different senses. When, in the new covenant, He promises to put his laws in their mind, and to write them in their hearts, and to be to them a God, <sup>Heb 8.10</sup> the promised renewal of heart shows that the latter promise imports that he will be the *spiritual* portion of his people. When in the Revelation, it is promised that God will be with men, and be their God, <sup>Rev 21.3</sup> the connexion shows that the promise imports He will be their *eternal* portion. When, in the covenant of circumcision, he promised to be the God of the seed of Abraham, the connexion of this promise with other promises, and the manner of fulfilment, show that the promise imported that he would multiply and protect them; that he would grant them an abundance of temporal blessings; and that he would distinguish them above all other nations, by spiritual advantages.

The seed, to which the land of Canaan was promised, was most evidently the lineal descendants of Abraham. To the same seed, the Lord promised to be a God. Mark the terms of the promises: "I will give to you, and to your seed after you, the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be *their* God." But he was not their God in a spiritual sense. It appears from their history, that in every age, only a remnant was truly pious.

Those who maintain that he promised to be the spiritual portion of the seed of Abraham, are obliged to explain the promise to mean that God would be the God of *some* of the seed of Abraham. Is this a fair explanation? Isn't it using undue freedom with the word of God? Isn't it indeed a frittering away of the plain import of scripture?

Suppose that a king promised peculiar privileges to a faithful subject and to his posterity; not *all* or *some*, but simply "his posterity." Wouldn't the subject be authorized to expect that all his posterity would enjoy these privileges? Suppose it appeared that the king actually conferred certain peculiar privileges on all the posterity, except those who refused his kindness. Suppose, further, that it appeared the king had selected from among his subjects, a number who were some of the posterity of the faithful subject, and He raised them to nobility. Would there be any doubt concerning the import of the king's promise to his faithful subject? Could it be urged with any appearance of probability, that when He promised particular privileges to the posterity of this subject, he did not intend those privileges which he actually conferred on them, but that *nobility* which he conferred on a very few of them?

God covenanted to give the land of Canaan and his favour, to the *posterity* of Abraham, in the line of Isaac. It had been previously stipulated that his posterity were not to come into immediate possession of the land. <sup>Gen 15.13-16</sup> God faithfully performed his promises. He conferred the blessings promised, on the posterity of Abraham, in the line of Isaac, excepting only those who rejected his kindness. A refusal to accept a promised favour, always releases the promiser from his obligation. Esau and his posterity, as well as many of the posterity of Jacob, refused to accept the Lord as their God. They didn't merely refuse to accept him as their spiritual portion, but they refused to accept him as their God, in the sense promised. They acknowledged and worshipped other gods. The Israelites frequently forsook God; and He as frequently forsook them. But when they repented and returned to him, He remembered his covenant, and delivered them from their distresses. At length, they rejected him in the most decided manner, by rejecting his Son. They would not have him to reign over them. Since that time, God has forsaken them. But when they repent and return,

God will again remember his covenant. The manner, however, in which He will restore his favour, though intimated in the prophecies, can be learned from the event only.

What is the ground taken by the advocates of the covenant of circumcision? Do they say that God promised to be the God of Abraham's seed, in a spiritual sense, *if they accepted the promise*? "This would be a complete abandonment of their argument. For it would place those who claim an interest in the covenant of circumcision, exactly on a level with all others. God has engaged to save all who reverence, worship, and obey him, though Abraham is ignorant of them, and Israel does not acknowledge them."

Do they say that the promise imported that "*on condition of faith and fidelity on Abraham's part, in respect to his children*, they would become subjects of grace, and heirs of the blessings of the covenant?"<sup>1</sup>

But do we have a right to make conditions which God has not made? Do we have a right to take his covenant, and fashion it to suit our preconceived, favourite sentiments? God did not promise, "I will be a God to your seed, on condition of faith and fidelity on your part, in respect to your seed." Neither in this covenant, nor in any of his communications with Abraham, did God inform him that the grand condition on which He would be a God to his seed, was *fidelity on his part, in respect to his seed*.<sup>2</sup>

But it is said that, in this covenant, God required Abraham to walk before him, and to be perfect.

Is this a condition of the covenant? Did God suspend the performance of His promises, on the perfection of Abraham? Surely, then, this was not the covenant of grace. Under the new dispensation, we are indeed commanded to love God with all the heart, and to be perfect in holiness. God requires this of all mankind under every dispensation. It would be derogatory to His character to require less. But this is not a *condition* of the covenant of grace. The blessings of the covenant are not suspended on such a condition. If we are interested in Christ by faith, notwithstanding our imperfections and sins, God will be our God through grace. Yet the author cited above, says, "To become entitled to the blessings of the covenant, Abraham must walk before God, and be perfect."<sup>3</sup> If so, this covenant was certainly not the covenant of grace. It might be expected, therefore, that the advocates of this covenant would, for the sake of their own cause, readily admit, and strenuously maintain, what appears to be the fact that this requirement was not a condition of the covenant, or even a part of the covenant, but merely a preamble or introduction to the covenant. God introduces the solemn transaction, by saying, *Walk before me, and be perfect*. Then follows, *I will make my covenant with you*. Then are presented the terms of the covenant; first, the part which God would perform, consisting in the bestowment of several blessings on Abraham and his seed; and secondly, the part which Abraham and his seed were to perform, consisting in the observance of the rite of circumcision; and lastly, several explanatory and restricting articles, with regard to Sarah and Ishmael and Isaac. That the observance of the rite of circumcision was emphatically *the condition* of this covenant, appears from the manner in

---

<sup>1</sup> Dr. WORCESTER'S *Two Discourses*, Disc. 1, p. 36.

<sup>2</sup> Gen. 18.19. *For I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment; that the Lord may bring upon Abraham that which he has spoken of him*. Much stress has been laid on the auxiliary *shall*, as implying an engagement to the family of Abraham, in consequence of his fidelity in instructing them. In the original, the grammatical construction of the verb *שָׁמְרוּ*, rendered *they shall keep*, is precisely of the same import as the grammatical construction of the preceding verb *יִצְוֶה*, rendered *he will command*. No reason, therefore, can be given, why the verbs should not be constructed similarly in the translation. For the same reason, that the preceding verb is rendered *will command*, the following should be rendered *will keep*. This passage appears to contain a prediction, rather than an engagement. God foresaw that Abraham would be faithful in instructing his family; that they would observe the requirements taught them; and that, with a view to this obedience, both on the part of Abraham, and of his family, He might bestow on them the promised blessings.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* WORCESTER, p. 34.

which it is presented, the conspicuous place which it holds in the covenant, and the penalty attached to its neglect. “And the uncircumcised man child — shall be cut off from his people; *he has broken my covenant.*”

It is a popular and prevailing sentiment, that this promise imports that so many of the seed shall be subjects of grace, that the church will be perpetuated “*in the line of natural descent.*”

Is this hypothesis consistent with facts? Hasn't God transferred the church from the posterity of Abraham, to the Gentiles? Is it said that the Jews were rejected because of unbelief? But doesn't God have the hearts of all in his hand? And on this hypothesis, hadn't he promised that the church would be perpetuated in the posterity of Abraham? Why then did He not perform it? But this is not the *only* transfer. If the Christian church is the same as the Jewish, and if the same promises are made to the former, as were made to the latter, then may it not be asked, Where are the descendants of the once flourishing churches, in the north of Africa? Where are the descendants of all the Asiatic churches planted by the apostles themselves? They are now covered with the darkness of Mahomedan superstition. Surely we are not to look there for the church of Christ. This church is now transferred to the west of Europe, and embraces the descendants of those who were bowing down to idols of wood and stone during the prosperity of the eastern churches.

It is true that God regards the prayers of pious parents for their offspring, and frequently grants his blessing on their religious instructions. We may therefore expect that in places where the truth has prevailed, a pious seed will be preserved for some generations. But a slight glance at ecclesiastical history must effectually *disprove* that this is God's uniform mode of operation, or that he has covenanted to perpetuate the church in the line of natural descent.

Let us next consider several passages in the New Testament, in which it has been supposed that the covenant of circumcision is recognized as the covenant of grace.

On the day of Pentecost, Peter addressed the Jews: “The promise is to you, and to your children, and to all who are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” <sup>Acts 2.39</sup> The expression, *to you and to your children*, resembling the expression, *to you and to your seed*, used in the covenant of circumcision, has occasioned the supposition that this is a repetition of one of the promises contained in that covenant. There were several promises made to Abraham and his seed. Does the context lead us to suppose that Peter intended one, rather than another? Or was one of the promises called, by way of eminence, *the promise*? Is it probable that Peter alluded to one of the promises in this covenant, calling it the promise, when, through his whole discourse, he had not spoken of Abraham, or of any covenant made with him? Isn't it probable — isn't it certain, that he alluded to the promise concerning which he had been discoursing from the first?

The Jews were astonished at the pouring out of the Spirit on the disciples. Peter states the event as a fulfilment of the promise spoken by the prophet Joel: “And it shall come to pass, in the last days, says God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons *and your daughters* shall prophesy,” etc. <sup>Act 2.17</sup>

In the progress of the discourse, he says, that Jesus, having received of the Father *the promise of the Holy Ghost*, has shed forth this; and finally he exhorts them, “Repent and be baptized every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and you shall receive *the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is to you, and to your children*, and to all who are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” More summarily, God thus said, I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh, even on your sons and daughters; Jesus has received this promise, and begun to perform it by shedding forth this on us, his disciples; repent, therefore, and you shall receive the

same gift; the Spirit shall be poured out on you; for the same promise is made to you and to your children, etc. <sup>1</sup>

In the epistle to the Galatians, it is written, “If you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” Gal 3.29

Let us inquire, What is implied in believers’ being the seed of Abraham; and what promise is intended here?

In the context (Gal 3.6, 7) it is written, “Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Know, therefore, it is those who are of faith, who are the children of Abraham.” Abraham believed; therefore, those who believe are his children. This is perfectly in the style of scripture. The unbelieving Jews are called children of the devil because they were like the devil in their character and conduct. On the same principle, the profligate are called children of Belial; and men are called children of light, and children of disobedience, according to their respective characters. It is on this principle, that believers are called the children of Abraham. They are like Abraham in their character and conduct. They have the faith of Abraham. “And if children, then heirs.” Accordingly, the apostle continues, “And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel to Abraham, saying, *In you all nations shall be blessed*. So then, those who are of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham.” And again (ver. 14), “That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles, through Jesus Christ.” And in the last verse, “And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.”

There can be no doubt that the blessing of which believers are heirs, is justification by faith; and that the promise, according to which they are heirs of this blessing, is the *gospel promise* made to Abraham. If, says the apostle, you have the faith of Abraham, you are *therefore* his children; and as Abraham was justified by having his faith accounted for righteousness; and just as the blessing of Abraham has come upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, so those who are of faith, are blessed with faithful Abraham, being heirs of the blessing contained in the promise. In you all nations shall be blessed; you believing Gentiles, according to this promise, are justified by having your faith accounted for righteousness. <sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> In this explanation of the promise, I am happy to agree with WITSIUS, *Exercitat. in Symb. Exercit.* xi. § 19; LIMBORCH, *Comment.* in loc. VENEMA, *Dissertat. Sac.* L. iii. C. iv. § 7, 8; DR. OWEN, *Doct. of Saints Perseverance*, p. 116; DR. HAMMOND, *Works*, Vol. i. p. 490; DR. WHITBY, *Annot.* on the place; and DR. DODDRIDGE, *Note.* on the place.

<sup>2</sup> DR. MACKNIGHT. on Gal 3.16. *Translation.* “Now, the promises were spoken to Abraham, and to his Seed. (See ver. 19) He doesn’t say, And in seeds, as concerning many, but as concerning one person. And in your Seed, who is Christ.”

*Note.* “*He does not say, And in seeds.* So τοις σπέρμασι should be translated, the preposition εν being understood here, as is plain from the promise itself, Gen 22.18. *And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.* (See Act 3.25; also Luther’s *Comment. on Galatians*, p. 307) The apostle having affirmed, ver. 15, that according to the customs of men, none but the parties themselves can set aside or alter a covenant that is ratified, he observes in this verse, that the promises in the covenant with Abraham were made to him and to his seed. The promise to Abraham is the one recorded in Gen 12.3. In you shall all the families, LXX. πασαι αι φυλαι, all the tribes, *of the earth be blessed.* The promise to his seed is the one recorded in Gen 22.18. *And in your seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.* See ver. 19. Now, since by the oath which God swore to Abraham after he had laid Isaac on the altar, both promises were ratified, the apostle reasons justly, when he affirms that both promises must be fulfilled. And having shown, ver. 9, that the promise to Abraham to bless all the families of the earth in him, means their being blessed as *Abraham* had been, not with justification through the law of Moses, as the Jews affirmed. But with justification by faith, he proceeds in this passage to consider the promise made to Abraham’s seed, that in it, all the nations of the earth should likewise be blessed. And from the words of the promise, which are not, *and in your seeds*, but *in your Seed*, he argues that the seed in which the nations of the earth should be blessed, is not Abraham’s seed in general, but one of his seed in particular, namely, Christ — who, by dying for all nations, has delivered them from the curse of the law, so that the blessing of Justification by faith might come on believers of all nations, through Christ, as was promised to Abraham and to Christ.”

DR. GUYSE. “The covenant that I have given a hint of (ver. 8, 9, 14,) relating to the way of our being accepted by God as righteous, consisted of a free promise which, because of its vast comprehension of blessings, and of its being first

The same sentiments are contained in the epistle to the Romans:

“For we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. How was it then reckoned? When he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all those who believe, though they are not circumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also.” Rom 4.9-11

*He received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being uncircumcised.* The meaning of the apostle cannot be that Abraham performed circumcision on himself and family, and thus *sealed his faith*, or attested his faith, as believers seal or attest their faith by solemn acts of worship. It was not his faith, but the *righteousness* of his faith, that was sealed. Man may seal or attest his faith, by acts of worship and obedience; none but God can seal the righteousness of faith. None but God can declare faith imputable for righteousness. Abraham received the sign of circumcision as a divine attestation of the righteousness of his faith; or in the words of Stephen, “God gave him the covenant of circumcision,” Act 7.8 and thus sealed the righteousness of his faith, or declared that his faith was accounted for righteousness.

Still further, God attested the righteousness of that faith which Abraham had *in uncircumcision*, and thus established him the father of all those who believe, though they are not circumcised, that righteousness might be imputed to them also. If the righteousness of *this* faith had not been attested, it might have been doubted whether Abraham was the father of any but circumcised believers, and whether the faith of any others would be imputed for righteousness. But God attested the righteousness of that faith which he had in uncircumcision, and thus proved that it is not so much circumcision, as faith, that makes us children of Abraham. And consequently (for if children, then heirs), that if we have his faith, though we are not circumcised, our faith, like his, will be imputed for righteousness. And thus we become heirs of the blessing of justification by faith, according to the promise made to Abraham, *In you all nations shall be blessed*.

This gospel promise, an ever memorable charter of all the blessings which Jewish and Gentile believers enjoy through Christ, is not contained in the covenant of circumcision. It is in a covenant made with Abraham at the time of his calling, twenty-four years before, and recorded in the twelfth chapter of Genesis. Gen 12.2-3 This covenant was confirmed by Abraham, by an oath, when he offered up Isaac; Gen 22.16-18 “that by two immutable things,” a promise and an oath, “in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation.” Heb 6.18 This covenant was renewed to Isaac and Jacob, together with the covenant of circumcision. <sup>1</sup> This is the covenant which the apostle Peter, “on the bright morning of the gospel day,” presented in these words: “You are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, *And in your seed all the kindreds of the earth shall be blessed.*” Act 3.25 This is the covenant which, being “confirmed before by God in Christ, the law, which came four hundred and thirty years after,” and we may add, the covenant of circumcision, which was twenty-four years after, “cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of no effect.” Gal 3.17

But it will be said that in the fourth chapter of Romans, we find an incontestable application of one of the promises in the covenant of circumcision. The apostle represents Abraham’s being the father of believers, as a fulfilment of the promise that he would be a father of many nations. Rom 4.17

The New Testament writers frequently apply historical and prophetic passages of the Old Testament in a secondary sense, without giving any intimation of their primary import. The Lord said by the prophet Hosea, “When Israel was a child, then I loved him, and called my son out of

---

made to Abraham, and afterwards repeated to him, and to Isaac (Gen 12.3 and 22.18, and 26.4) may be called *the promises.*” Paraphrase on Gal 3.16.

<sup>1</sup> Gen. 26.3-4; 28.13-14.

Egypt.” <sup>Hos 11.1</sup> This is applied by an evangelist, to the return of Jesus from Egypt, without any intimation of its primary import. <sup>Mat 2.15</sup> The Jews were commanded not to break a bone of the paschal lamb. <sup>Exo 12.46</sup> This is applied by another evangelist, directly to Jesus, without any intimation of its primary import. <sup>Joh 19.36</sup> In the case before us, God constituted Abraham a father of many nations. This is applied by an apostle, to Abraham’s being the father of all believers, without any intimation of its primary import and fulfilment.

These instances illustrate the principle on which the New Testament frequently proceeds, in applying events and predictions recorded in the Old Testament. We are to use their application with proper caution. We are not to extend the parallel between the type and the antitype further than we are authorized by the inspired penmen.

When the evangelist represents the return of Jesus from Egypt, as a fulfilment of that which was spoken by the Lord, “Out of Egypt I have called my son,” <sup>Hos 11.1</sup> he recognizes some kind of identity between Jesus and the people of Israel. When the apostle represents the relation between believers and Abraham, as a fulfilment of that which was spoken to Abraham, “I have made you a father of many nations,” he recognizes some kind of identity between the posterity of Abraham and believers. In both cases, the recognition of identity is of the same kind, and to the same extent. But we do not infer from the former application, that Jesus and Israel are the same in any other respect, than that they both are sons of God, though in very different senses, and were both called out of Egypt. Nor from the latter, are we to infer that believers and the posterity of Abraham are the same, in any other respect than that they both have Abraham for a father, though in very different senses — the one on account of natural descent, the other on account of faith. We instantly discover the impropriety of extending the parallel between Israel and Jesus, or of reasoning from the former to the latter: And is it not as evidently improper to extend the parallel between the posterity of Abraham and believers? Or to infer that believers are under the same regulations, or in the same covenant, as Abraham?

The evangelist John presents the fact that the soldiers didn’t break the legs of Christ, as a fulfilment of the prophecy implied in this command respecting the paschal lamb, “Neither shall you break a bone of it.” And thus, in the most unequivocal manner, he recognizes an identity between the paschal lamb and Christ; yet we do not hesitate to infer that the lamb was merely a type of Christ. And we do not feel authorized to reason from the type to the antitype. We do not conclude that Christ is subject to the same rules of treatment as the paschal lamb; or that those who partake of Christ are bound by the Mosaic ritual, to use the same ceremonies as the Jews, in partaking of the paschal lamb. Yet this may be proved by the same kind of reasoning, as it can be proved from the allusion of the apostle — under the consideration that believers are subject to the same regulations, or are in the same covenant, as the posterity of Abraham. But in the words of Dr. Scott, when speaking of another instance of “forcing figurative language into a literal meaning, and so grounding doctrines upon it,” “common sense is usually sufficient to preserve men from such absurdities, when there is no personal or party interest to serve by them.” <sup>1</sup>

Let me now call your attention to the important fact that, with regard to the Gentiles, the token of the covenant of circumcision has been forbidden.

When certain Jews from Jerusalem taught the believing Gentiles at Antioch, that unless they were circumcised in the manner of Moses, they could not be saved, the council of Apostles and elders assembled in Jerusalem under the special direction of the Holy Spirit. They wrote and concluded that the brethren “observe no such thing.” <sup>2</sup> Accordingly, Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “Is any

---

<sup>1</sup> Note on 1Cor 10.4.

<sup>2</sup> Act 15.1-31; 21.25.

man called in uncircumcision, let him not be circumcised;” <sup>1Cor 7.18</sup> and to the Galatians, “Behold, I Paul say to you, that if you are circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing.” <sup>Gal 5.2</sup>

*Isn't the prohibition of the token of a covenant, an explicit declaration that the covenant is abolished?*

God instituted the rite of circumcision to be the token of a certain covenant which he made with Abraham and his seed. And He declared at the same time, that he who did not receive the token, had broken the covenant. Such a token is one species of language. Wherever it appears, it conveys an idea of what it was instituted to represent. The language of the rainbow is, *There will never again be a deluge*. The language of the sign of circumcision is, *Such a covenant exists between the seed of Abraham and God*. After this language has been allowed for several centuries, to apply to the natural and also to the adopted seed, it is finally, with regard to the Gentiles, expressly forbidden. God says, *Let this language no longer be used; let it no longer be said that such a covenant exists between me and any Gentile*.

It is urged that, though the rite of circumcision is abolished, the rite of baptism is substituted as a token of the same import.

But if this is true, shouldn't we expect to find baptism enjoined, when circumcision is forbidden? Shouldn't we expect to find this substitution clearly stated in scripture? Yet, in no instance where circumcision is forbidden, is there any intimation of baptism. Nor is this substitution mentioned in any passage, through the whole of the New Testament. It is not mentioned, nor even intimated, in those instances where, had it been really made, the circumstances render the omission perfectly unaccountable. Notwithstanding that the Judaizing teachers greatly complained that circumcision was not enforced on the Gentiles, the substitution of baptism, which would have furnished a complete answer, was never suggested by the apostles. Notwithstanding that the Galatians had imbibed a belief of the necessity of circumcision, and Paul wrote an epistle to expressly correct their mistake, yet, throughout this epistle, no distant intimation is given of the very thing which must have completely satisfied their minds, and silenced all opposition.

On the contrary, so far were the Jewish converts from believing in this substitution, that even after they were commanded to be baptized themselves, though already circumcised, they continued, under the direction of the apostles, to circumcise their children. The elders at Jerusalem said to Paul, The Jews who are zealous of the law, “are informed about you, that you teach all the Jews who are among the Gentiles, to forsake Moses, saying that they should not circumcise their children, nor walk after the customs. — Therefore, do this that we say to you — *that all may know that those things of which they are informed concerning you, are nothing*.” <sup>Act 21.20-24</sup>

But as the substitution of baptism in the place of circumcision is generally considered absolutely essential to the Pedobaptist cause, you will naturally presume that though the scripture is silent on the subject, and though facts recorded in scripture are adverse to the supposition, still something plausible can be urged in its favour. Let me, therefore, present to your view, accompanied with a few remarks, the four arguments which a late distinguished writer has advanced, in proof of this substitution. <sup>1</sup>

“1. Baptism is now, as circumcision anciently was, an instituted pre-requisite to a regular standing in the visible church.”

Not to question the propriety of calling the Jewish and Christian churches collectively the visible church, it is sufficient here to observe that circumcision was not pre-requisite to a regular standing in the church; otherwise, females were not regular members.

---

<sup>1</sup> Dr. WORCESTER, *Letters to Dr. Baldwin*, Let. xvi.



“2. Baptism, under the present dispensation, is of the same significance as circumcision under the ancient.” “As circumcision signified the renovation of the heart, or regeneration; so baptism signifies the same thing.”

But did circumcision, as it was commanded to be administered among the Jews, signify that the subject was regenerated? Surely not.

In all languages, terms which literally denote sensible objects, are sometimes figuratively used to convey ideas of spiritual objects. But we do not infer that the former objects are signs of the latter. The term *heart*, which literally denotes a part of the body, is figuratively used to denote the affections or the mind. But we do not infer that the former is a sign of the latter. Circumcision, in the literal acceptance, separated the Jews from the Gentile world, and brought them into a state of relative holiness. Hence the term was figuratively used to signify moral separation from the world, and real holiness of heart. But it is preposterous to infer, from this figurative use of the word, that circumcision signified regeneration.

Admitting, however, that circumcision and baptism are both significant of regeneration, it does not follow that *the general significance* of the two ordinances is the same, just because there is a similarity of significance in one particular. Circumcision chiefly signified that the subject was interested in that covenant which God made with Abraham, and of which He expressly declared this ordinance to be the token. Baptism is represented as an act of worship, by which the baptized profess the religion of Christ, and signify their fellowship with Christ, in death and resurrection, and their being washed from sin. How different the leading import of the two ordinances!

“3. Baptism, under the present dispensation, is a seal of the same thing of which circumcision was a seal under the ancient. We have the express declaration of the apostle, that circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith.” — “Baptism is now also a seal of the same righteousness of faith.”

God gave Abraham the sign of circumcision, and thus sealed the righteousness of the faith which he had in uncircumcision. But the *performance* of this rite, though it might seal or attest the faith of an adult subject, could not attest the righteousness of his faith; much less could it attest the righteousness of faith of those who never exercised any faith. It is equally impossible that the *administration* of baptism can attest the righteousness of faith. And it has been scarcely advanced, much less proved, that baptism is an attestation from God of the righteousness of faith.

“4. That baptism has come in the place of circumcision, we are decisively taught by the apostle, in Col 2.10-13. ‘And you are complete in him, who is the head of all principality and power, in whom also you 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, in which you also are risen with him, through faith in the operation of God, who has raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has quickened together with him.’”

In this passage, we are taught that the Colossians were spiritually circumcised in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh, and spiritually baptized by being buried with Christ, and being raised to newness of life. <sup>Rom 6.4</sup> Thus they are represented as having passed the whole process of death, burial, and resurrection. The death, putting off the body, is called circumcision, in allusion to the nature of that rite; and the burial and resurrection are fitly represented in the ordinance of baptism or immersion. But even if some other explanation of the passage were adopted, is it possible, since the apostle is speaking of *spiritual* circumcision and *spiritual* baptism — both of which had been received by the Colossians — to make out an inference that external baptism has come in place of external circumcision?

A view of these *four arguments* may serve to convince you how little can be said in support of a point which, on account of its importance in the Pedobaptist system, demands the fairest and

most invincible proof; and it may lead you to adopt the sentiment contained in the following words of Dr. Emmons:

“Can we justly conclude that it is the duty of believers now to circumcise their children, or even to baptize them, because it was once their duty to circumcise them? The truth is, we must learn the peculiar duties of believers under the present dispensation of the covenant of grace, from the dispensation itself, *which enjoins all the peculiar duties which belong to it.*”<sup>1</sup>

By many Pedobaptist writers, especially by the advocates of national churches, the argument from the Abrahamic or Jewish dispensation, is stated in a manner somewhat different from that which we have been considering.

*Infants, they say, were constituted members of the visible church; they have never been excluded from the church, and consequently, they are now members.*

This argument, when analyzed, stands thus: Infants were constituted members of the Abrahamic or Jewish church; they were never excluded from this church; therefore, they are members of the Christian church. Is this conclusive? The whole strength of the argument rests in the supposition that the Christian church is the same as the Abrahamic or Jewish. How can this be proved?

It cannot be proved by showing that they are founded on the same covenant; for there is no evidence that the covenant of circumcision is the same as the covenant of grace.

Nor can it be proved, by adducing promises and prophecies of the perpetuity of Zion, and her final triumph and glory. Some of these promises and prophecies relate to the final conversion and restoration of the Jewish people. Others evidently belong to the *true church*; to that Zion which includes all the saints who existed before the organization of a visible church, and all the truly pious, whether they have belonged to any organized visible church or not. No one denies the perpetuity and identity of the church of God, to which the promises and prophecies belong. In order to make the application of these promises and prophecies bear on the subject, it is necessary to show that they do not belong to that church which commenced in the persons of our first parents, and will continue to the end of the world — but to a particular organized body, which commenced in the family of Abraham.

Nor can the point be proved from the apostle’s discourse concerning the olive tree, from which the Jews, the natural branches, were broken off, and into which the believing Gentiles were engrafted; <sup>Rom 11.16-24</sup> unless it is shown that the olive tree represents that particular organized body, the Abrahamic or Jewish church, or in the words of Dr. Austin, “the society of Israel.”

It is evident that the olive tree cannot represent this body or society as existing under the Sinai law, for Gentile believers are not introduced into a similar state. And is it not equally evident that, for a similar reason, it cannot represent this body or society as founded on the covenant of circumcision? The engrafted branches are represented as partaking of the root and fatness of the olive tree. But whatever blessings Gentile believers enjoy, they do not enjoy the peculiar blessings secured in the covenant of circumcision. They do not inherit the land of Canaan, even though that was one distinct, principal promise in this covenant. Nor can it be admitted that they enjoy the favour of God, in that sense, and in that sense only, in which it was engaged to the posterity of Abraham.<sup>2</sup> The olive tree, therefore, cannot represent the community of Israel as founded on the covenant of circumcision; nor, for the same reason, can it represent the covenant itself.

---

<sup>1</sup> *Dissertation on the Qualifications for the Christian sacraments.* Chap. ii. Sect, v.

<sup>2</sup> Dr. AUSTIN. “The reinsertion of these broken off branches into the good olive tree (alluding to the restoration of the Jews), can mean no less than their occupying the place which they held before they were broken off. Occupying this place, they necessarily partake of the fatness of the olive tree. This is the blessing, the entire blessing, secured in the promise. But the land of Canaan is expressly a part of this blessing. Their being brought back then under the covenant, must necessarily restore them to the enjoyment of this land.” *View of the Econ. of the Church of God*, Chap. xiv. p. 305.

Christ said to his disciples, "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. *Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, He takes away.*" <sup>Joh 15.1-2</sup> This may suggest the proper interpretation of the symbolic language of the apostle. The olive tree may represent the Messiah, as presented in the gospel promise made to Abraham and in subsequent promises, in which all the pious cordially rested, and in which the Jews, as a nation, professed to rest. They are called natural branches, conformably to the language of the evangelist, "He came to *his own*, and *his own* did not receive him." <sup>Joh 1.11</sup> The natural branches were unfruitful, and therefore, according to the prediction of Christ, they were taken away; or in the style of the apostle, because of unbelief, they were broken off; and in their place, the believing Gentiles were engrafted, and now partake of the root and fatness of the olive tree, the riches of grace in Jesus Christ.

Nor can it be proved that the churches are the same, by showing that they are alike in some respects. Much labour has been expended in exhibiting those points in which the churches are alike. But surely two things may be alike in many respects, and still not be the same. It is granted that they are not alike in all respects. Therefore, the very point that is necessary to be proved, is that they are alike in that respect which concerns the question. To ascertain whether two institutions are alike in any one respect, we must form an idea of each, from all the information we can obtain, and compare the ideas.

On examining the scriptures, with regard to the Jewish church, we find that it was *a select people*, composed chiefly of the posterity of Abraham, in the line of Isaac and Jacob. To be descended from Abraham in this line, was sufficient *to introduce* the subject into the Jewish church. Persons of Gentile extraction also, who were purchased by Jews, or wished to enjoy the privileges of Jews, could be introduced into this church by circumcision. <sup>Exo 12.44-49</sup> Whether any other requisite to admission was appointed by God, we are not informed. This church continued nearly two thousand years. At length, Christ came, and according to ancient prophecies, *set up his kingdom* in the world. <sup>Dan 2.44</sup> He abolished the distinction which had so long subsisted between the posterity of Abraham and other nations, and either in person, or by his Spirit, he selected his followers from both Jews and Gentiles, thus making "in himself, of two, one new man." <sup>Eph 2.15</sup>

On examining the scriptures with regard to this new kingdom, the Christian church, we learn from the formation of particular churches, and the instructions addressed to the members, as well as from addresses made to both Jews and Gentiles, who were outside it, that it is a society composed of *select individuals* professing faith in Christ. Credible evidence of piety is the requisite to admission. We are not informed whether natural descent, or any religious rite, is sufficient to introduce the subject into this church. We therefore have no evidence that, in that respect which concerns the question before us, the two churches are alike.

It has, however, been supposed that the church membership of infants is supported in the following passage: "Suffer little children, and do not forbid them to come to me; *for of such is the kingdom of heaven.*" <sup>Mat 19.14</sup>

In the gospels of Mark and Luke, it follows, "Whoever will not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter it." <sup>1</sup> We cannot suppose that our Lord used words in such different senses, in the same speech, as would unavoidably mislead his hearers. In the latter passage, the kingdom of God denotes heaven; and to receive the kingdom as a little child, is to receive it with the humility and docile disposition which characterize children. This passage explains the former. Of such, says Christ, is the kingdom of heaven. Does he mean, of such in age and size, of such in the moral temper of heart, or of such in humility and docility of disposition? His subsequent

---

If this reasoning is correct, it follows that Gentile believers cannot be considered as engrafted into the olive tree, because they do not inherit the land of Canaan, which is expressly a part of the blessing secured in the promise, and represented by the fatness of the olive.

<sup>1</sup> Mar 10.15; Luk 18.17.

remark determines in favour of the latter meaning (humility). Nor is this a singular application of the phrase. On another occasion he says, "Unless you are converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." <sup>Mat 18.3</sup> He certainly does not mean, Unless you become as little children in age and size — but in humility; for he immediately adds, "Whoever therefore *humbles himself as this little child,*" etc. <sup>1</sup>

The following passage also has been supposed to favour the church membership of infants: "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; *otherwise your children would be unclean; but now are they holy.*" <sup>1Cor 7.14</sup>

The holiness ascribed to the children, cannot be moral holiness, for it is ascribed to the unbelieving parent also. Nor can it be ceremonial or federal holiness, securing a title to church membership, or any church privilege; for though it is ascribed to the unbelieving parent, he is not considered a member of the church, or entitled to any church privilege. Nor is this interpretation consistent with the apostle's reasoning. It appears that the Corinthians had inquired of the apostle, whether it was lawful for believers who were married to unbelievers, to continue the marriage connexion. The apostle determines that it is lawful; for he says the unbeliever is sanctified by the believer, that is, as "every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; for it is *sanctified* by the word of God and prayer." <sup>1Tim 4.4, 5</sup> In this sense, the unbeliever is sanctified, so that it is lawful for the parties to dwell together. Now, if it was not lawful to dwell together, your children would, of consequence, be unclean. But they are not unclean. Therefore, you may be satisfied that your cohabitation is lawful marriage. But to urge the church membership of children, or their title to any church privilege, as proof that the unbeliever is sanctified to the believer, so that it is lawful for them to dwell together, is quite irrelevant." <sup>2</sup>

The question returns. Is there any evidence that the Jewish church and the Christian church are the same? Or that the children of believers are members of the Christian church, as the children of Jews were members of the Jewish church? We cannot believe without evidence. And clear evidence is requisite to support a sentiment which counteracts the first impressions we receive from the word of God; still clearer, to support a sentiment fraught with consequences that are embarrassing and dangerous.

Are we ready to acknowledge the children of believers as members of the church, in the same sense as the children of Jews were members of the Jewish church? Are we ready to acknowledge their right to the Lord's supper as soon, at least, as they are capable of discerning the Lord's body? and the consequent obligation of the church to require their attendance, and to discipline them if they neglect to attend? To consider and treat them as members of the church, until formally excluded; and to consider and treat them as *not* members until formally admitted, are very different things. The latter is the uniform practice of protestant dissenters; only the former is consistent with the principle that the children of believers are church members. But it most

---

<sup>1</sup> Matt. *Suffer little children.* Mark. *Suffer the little children.* Luke. *Suffer little children.* However, it should be observed that in the original, the expression is the same in each gospel. The article is uniformly inserted; though it is omitted by our translators, in the gospels of Matthew and Luke. Without the article, the words of Christ seem to form a general direction concerning little children; but with the article, they evidently form a *particular* direction, concerning *those children* whose approach the disciples were preventing.

<sup>2</sup> The interpretation adopted here, is strengthened by the use of the word ἀγιασμος, in 1The 4.3, 4, 7; and it is approved by AMBROSE, who says, "The children are holy, because they are born of lawful marriage," MUSCULUS and MELANCTHON, in Mr. Tombes' *Exercitation*, pp. 11-13; CAMERARIUS, VATABEUS and CAMERO, in loc. VELTHUYSIOS, *Opera*, Tom. i. p. 801; SUARES and VASQUES, apud Chamieri *Panstrat.* Tom. iv. L. v. C. x. § 50; DIETERICUS, apud Wolfii *Curae*, in loc. See also Dr. MACKNIGHT, who says, "I therefore think with Eisner, that the words in this verse have neither a federal nor a moral meaning, but are used in the idiom of the Hebrews," etc. *Translation of the Apost. Epist.* Note on 1Cor 7.14.

evidently tends to confound the church with the world; and it is to be feared that it is the most pernicious practice that ever infested and laid waste the vineyard of the Lord.

An attempt has sometimes been made to support the practice of infant baptism, on the ground of the Jewish *proselyte* baptism. The argument is this: The Jews were in the habit of receiving proselytes — both adults and infants — by baptism as well as by circumcision. Christ and his apostles being acquainted with this practice, when he commanded them *in general terms*, to teach all nations, baptizing them, he must have intended (and they must have understood him to intend) that baptism to which they had been accustomed — the baptism of infants as well as adults.

This argument would have some force if there were any sufficient evidence that the Jews in the time of Christ, or in any preceding age, admitted proselytes by baptism. But no evidence has been produced of this. There is no intimation of proselyte baptism in the Old Testament, or in the apocryphal books, or in the New Testament, or in any writings soon after the time of Christ (such as the works of Philo the Jew, and of Josephus, who both wrote concerning the laws and customs of the Jews,) or in the Chaldee Paraphrases, or in the works of the Christian fathers, for the first three or four centuries. The first mention of proselyte baptism is in the Jewish Talmuds,<sup>1</sup> which were composed between the second and fifth centuries. And the manner in which it is mentioned in the Talmuds, shows that it was then a novel and questionable practice.

Dr. JENNINGS. “But after all, it remains to be proved, not only that Christian baptism was instituted in place of proselyte baptism; but that the Jews had any such baptism in our Saviour’s time. The earliest accounts we have of it are in the *Mishna* and *Gemara*; the former was compiled, as the Jews assert, by Rabbi Juda, in the second century; though learned men generally bring it several centuries lower — not till the seventh century. There is not a word of it in Philo, nor yet in Josephus, though he gives an account of the proselytizing of the Idumeans by Hyrcanus.”<sup>2</sup>

Dr. OWEN. “The institution of the rite of baptism is nowhere mentioned in the Old Testament. There is no example of it in those ancient records; nor was it ever used in the admission of proselytes while the Jewish church continued. No mention of it occurs in Philo, in Josephus, in Jesus the son of Sirach, nor in the Evangelical History. This Rabbinical opinion therefore owes its rise to the Tanneroe, or Ante-Mishnaic doctors, after the destruction of their city. — The opinion of some learned men, therefore, about the transferring of a Jewish baptismal rite (which, in reality, did not then exist) by the Lord Jesus, for the use of his disciples, is *destitute of all probability*.”<sup>3</sup>

Dr. LARDNER. “As for the baptism of Jewish proselytes, I take it to be *a mere fiction of the Rabbins*, by whom we have allowed ourselves to be imposed upon.”<sup>4</sup>

On the supposition that the command of Christ to teach, *did not limit his subsequent command to those who were taught*, it is doubtless fair reasoning that when Christ, in general terms, commanded his apostles to baptize, he must have intended (and they must have understood him to intend) that kind of baptism to which they had been accustomed. So far, the argument is good. But there is no evidence that “the baptism to which they had been accustomed,” was proselyte baptism of adults and infants. To what kind of baptism, then, had they been accustomed? We know of none but “the baptism of John.”<sup>Mat 21.25</sup> But John did not baptize infants. His baptism was a baptism of repentance, and the acknowledgment of Him that was to come; and therefore, it was a baptism of adults only. This was the baptism which the disciples of Jesus administered in the

---

<sup>1</sup> The collection of ancient rabbinic writings (commentaries) on Jewish law and tradition (the *Mishna* and the *Gemara*), that constitute the basis of religious authority in Orthodox Judaism. — WHG

<sup>2</sup> *Jewish Antiq.* Vol. 1. p. 136.

<sup>3</sup> *Theologoumena*, L. v. Digress, iv.

<sup>4</sup> *Letters to and from Dr. Doddridge*, Let. lxxxix. p. 275. But for a full examination of the subject, see Dr. GILL’S *Dissertation concerning the Baptism of Jewish Proselytes*.

beginning of his ministry, as it is written that, “Jesus *made and baptized more disciples* than John; though Jesus himself did not baptize, but his disciples.”<sup>Joh 4.1-2</sup> The baptism of *adults* was that to which alone they had been accustomed. And therefore, if Christ, in general terms, commanded his apostles to baptize, he must have intended (and they must have understood him to intend) the baptism of adults only.

The following quotations present to our view the last ground to which Pedobaptists resort.

BOSSUET, *Bishop of Meaux*. “Experience has shown that all the attempts of the Reformed to confound the Anabaptists by the scripture, have been weak; and therefore, they are, at last, obliged to allege to them the practice of the church.”<sup>1</sup>

Mr. CHAMBERS. “As none but adults are capable of believing, they” (the German Baptists) “argued that no others are capable of baptism; especially, as there is no passage in all the New Testament, where the baptism of infants is clearly enjoined. Calvin, and other writers against them, are pretty much embarrassed to answer this argument; and *are obliged to have recourse to tradition, and the practice of the primitive church.*”<sup>2</sup>

Also, the *Oxford Divines*, in a convocation held in 1647, acknowledged that “without the consentaneous judgment of the universal church, they would be at a loss when they are called upon for proof, in the point of infant baptism.”<sup>3</sup>

What, then, is the evidence from antiquity, in favour of infant baptism?

It has been already stated that the writers of the New Testament are silent on this subject, whether recording the formation of the primitive churches, or addressing epistles to those churches. They frequently mention the baptism of believers, but preserve a profound silence on the baptism of infants.

The Christian writers of the first century, who immediately succeeded the apostles — Barnabas, Hennis, Clemens Romanus, Ignatius, and Polycarp (usually called *Apostolic Fathers* by way of distinction) — frequently mention the baptism of believers. But, like the inspired penmen, they are entirely silent on the subject of infant baptism.

The Christian writers of the second century — Justin Martyr, Athenagoras, Theophilus of Antioch, Tatian, Irenaeus, and Clemens Alexandrinus — frequently mention the baptism of believers. But, like the inspired penmen and the Apostolic Fathers, they never mention infant baptism.

There is, indeed, in the writings of Irenaeus, one passage which has been adduced in proof of this practice: “Christ passed through all the ages of man, that he might save all by himself, that is, all who are regenerated by him to God— infants, and little ones, and children, and youths, and persons advanced in age.”<sup>4</sup>

As the word translated *regenerated* in the writings of the Christian fathers, sometimes denotes *baptism*, some have supposed that in this passage, it may also be properly translated *baptized*. The passage would then say that Christ came to save all by himself; that is, *all who are baptized by him to God*, etc.

There are two considerations, which forbid this translation. First: It makes the passage unintelligible. It is intelligible that all who are saved, are *regenerated* by Christ; but what possible meaning can be attached to the assertion that all who are saved, are *baptized* by Christ to God? On what principle of interpretation is it justifiable to reject the natural, common meaning of a

---

<sup>1</sup> In Stennett’s *Answer to Russen*, p. 184.

<sup>2</sup> *Cyclopedia*, Art. *Anabaptists*.

<sup>3</sup> In Lawson’s *Baptismalogia*, p. 116.

<sup>4</sup> *Contra Haeres*. L, ii. C, xxii.

word, when, at the same time, it perfectly accords with the scope of the passage — and to adopt a *figurative* meaning, which renders the passage unintelligible? <sup>1</sup>

Secondly: This interpretation will not accord with the strain of the writer's discourse; or in the words of Le Clerc, "we see nothing here concerning baptism; nor is there anything relating to it in the immediately preceding or following words." <sup>2</sup>

Now, this testimony — uncertain as it must be considered, at best; and given at the close of the second century — is the first testimony that is insisted on by learned Pedobaptists. Dr. Wall admits, "This is the first express mention we have met with of infants being baptized." <sup>3</sup> But though Dr. Wall calls it an *express mention*, it is generally given up, as very uncertain. <sup>4</sup>

MONTHLY REVIEW. "The authorities produced are Justin Martyr and Irenaeus, in the second century. — With respect to the testimony of Justin, it requires very considerable ingenuity to make it, in any view, an argument in favour of infant baptism. There is a passage in Irenaeus more to the purpose; *but the passage is equivocal.*" <sup>5</sup>

The first Christian writer at the beginning of the third century, Tertullian of Carthage, opposed the baptism of infants. In the words of Professor Venema, "he certainly would not have done this, if it had been a tradition, and a public custom of the church, seeing that he was very tenacious about traditions; nor would he have failed to mention it, if it had been a tradition." <sup>6</sup> His treatment of this subject leads us to conclude that infant baptism was then a novel practice, just beginning, and approved by very few. His words, as translated by that learned Pedobaptist, Du Pin, are as follows: —

"Jesus Christ says indeed, 'Do not hinder little children from coming to me;' but that they should come to him as soon as they are advanced in years, as soon as they have learned their religion, when they may be taught where they are going, when they have become Christians, when they begin to be able to know Jesus Christ. What is there that would compel this innocent age to receive baptism? And since they are not yet allowed the disposal of temporal goods, is it reasonable that they should be entrusted with the concerns of heaven?" <sup>7</sup>

Several quotations concerning infant baptism have been made from the writings of Origen, who flourished in the early part of the third century. But his original works are not now extant. These quotations are taken from a very corrupt Latin version, made by Ruffinus — who, as Quenstedius observes, "has used so great a liberty (as he himself acknowledges in his prefaces, and for which Jerome reproves him) that he retrenched, added, and altered whatever he considered as deserving to be cashiered, added, or changed; so that the reader is frequently uncertain whether he reads Origen or Ruffinus." <sup>8</sup> And Grotius also, concerning the sentiments of Origen, says, "Some things ascribed to him were penned by an uncertain author, and some things are interpolated. — What

---

<sup>1</sup> It fits figuratively with what John the Baptist said: "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but He who is coming after me is mightier than I... He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." (Mat 3:11) But the issue is the *sign* of baptism, not the thing *signified*. And the thing signified, is receiving the promised Spirit upon a profession of faith (Act 2:38; 8:15-16; 19:2; Gal 3:2, 14), which infants cannot do. That is Judson's corollary here. — WHG

<sup>2</sup> *Hist. Eccles. Secul. ii. Ann. 180. § 33. p. 778.*

<sup>3</sup> *Hist. of Inf. Bap. Part. i. C. iii. p. 16.*

<sup>4</sup> See particularly, VENEMAE *Hist. Eccles. Tom. iii. Secul. ii. § 109.*

<sup>5</sup> For May, 1784. p. 394.

<sup>6</sup> *Hist. Eccles. Secul. ii. § 108.*

<sup>7</sup> *Lib. de Baptismo, C. xviii;* in Du Pin's *Hist. Eccles. Writers, Cent. iii. p. 80.*

<sup>8</sup> *Dialog. de Patriis Illust. Doct. Script. Virorum, p. 632.*

Origen thought about the final punishment of the wicked, is difficult to assert from his writings, all things are so interpolated by Ruffinus.”<sup>1</sup>

The only passage from the Greek of Origen, which is produced in proof of this practice, contains a clause which represents infants as *desiring the sincere milk of the word*. Therefore, Dr. Wall acknowledges that this “very much puzzles the cause, and makes it doubtful whether Origen there means infants in age, or those Christian men who are endued with the innocence and simplicity of infants.”<sup>2</sup>

This practice, however, no doubt commenced in the latter part of the second century, and gradually gained ground in the third. As the sentiment prevailed that baptism was necessary to salvation, parents became more anxious to have their children baptized, especially when sick and in danger of death.

VITRINGA. “The ancient Christian church, from the highest antiquity, after the apostolic times, appears generally to have thought that baptism is absolutely necessary for all who would be saved by the grace of Jesus Christ. It was therefore customary in the ancient church, if infants were greatly afflicted and in danger of death — or if parents were affected with a singular concern about the salvation of their children — to present their infants or minor children to the bishop, to be baptized. But if these reasons did not urge them, they thought it better, and more for the interest of minors, that their baptism be deferred till they arrived at a more advanced age. This custom was not yet abolished in the time of Austin, though he vehemently urged the necessity of baptism, while with all his might he defended the doctrines of grace against Pelagius.”<sup>3</sup>

SALMASIUS. “An opinion prevailed, that no one could be saved without being baptized; and for that reason, the custom arose of baptizing infants.”<sup>4</sup>

So unsettled, however, was the practice in Africa in the middle of the third century, that Cyprian, bishop of Cartilage, was unable to determine the question whether infants might be baptized before the eighth day, without convening a council of African bishops. In this council, it was determined that baptism need not be deferred. And finally, in the year 418, the Milevitan council, at the instigation of Austin, decreed the necessity of infant baptism, in these terms: “It is our pleasure that whoever denies that newborn infants are to be baptized — let him be anathema.”<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Apud Poli *Synops*, ad Mat 6.14 and 25.46.

<sup>2</sup> *Hist. of Inf. Bap.* Part 1. p. 32.

<sup>3</sup> *Observat. Sac.* Tom. i. l. ii. C. vi. § 9.

<sup>4</sup> *Epist, ad Justum Pacium*.

<sup>5</sup> From this period, every century has presented a succession of witnesses to the truth of the Baptist sentiments, as well as numberless decrees of popes, and kings, and councils, denouncing the severest penalties on this “pernicious sect.”

Cardinal HOSIUS, *President of the Council of Trent*. “If the truth of religion were to be judged by the readiness and cheerfulness which a man of any sect shows in suffering, then the opinion and persuasion of no sect can be truer or surer than that of the Anabaptists; since there have been none, for these twelve hundred years past, who have been more grievously punished, or who have more cheerfully and steadfastly undergone, and even offered themselves to, the most cruel sorts of punishment, than these people.” — “The Anabaptists are a pernicious sect, of which kind the Waldensian brethren also seem to have been. — Nor is this heresy a modern thing; for it existed in the time of Austin.” In Rees’ *Reply to Walker*, p. 220; and apud Schyn *Hist. Mennonit.* p. 135.

Dr. MOSHEIM. “The true origin of that sect which acquired the name *Anabaptists*, by their administering anew the rite of baptism, to those who came over to their communion, and derived the name *Mennonites* from the famous man to whom they owe the greatest part of their present felicity, is hidden in the remotest depths of antiquity; and as a consequence, it is extremely difficult to be ascertained.” *Eccles. Hist.* Vol. iv. p. 439.

See also DANVERS *on Baptism*, REES’ *Reply to Walker*, and ROBINSON’S *History and Researches*.

Concerning Dr. Gill’s supposed concession that he was not able to find any instance of an opposer of infant baptism, from the fourth to the eleventh century, see Dr. BALDWIN’S *Series of Letters to Dr. Worcester*, Let. xxiv. p. 232.



The correctness of these statements concerning the practice of the primitive church, is confirmed by the following testimonies — the first, furnished by an apostle, and the rest, as usual, by Pedobaptist authors.

St. PAUL. “As many of you, as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.” Gal 3.27

ERASMUS. “Paul does not seem” (in Rom 5.14) “to treat infants. — It was not yet the custom for infants to be baptized.”<sup>1</sup>

LUTHER. “It cannot be proved by the sacred scripture, that infant baptism was instituted by Christ, or begun by the first Christians after the apostles.”<sup>2</sup>

M. De La ROQUE. “The primitive church did not baptize infants; and the learned Grotius proves it in his annotations on the gospel.”<sup>3</sup>

LUNOVICUS VIVES. “No one, in former times, was admitted to the sacred baptistery, unless he was of age, understood what the mystical water meant, desired to be washed in it, and expressed that desire more than once.”<sup>4</sup>

Mr. CHAMBERS. “It appears that in the primitive times, none were baptized but adults.”<sup>5</sup>

Bp. BARLOW. “I do believe and know, that there is neither precept nor example in scripture, for Pedobaptism, nor any just evidence for it, for about two hundred years after Christ.”<sup>6</sup>

SALMASIUS and SUICERUS. “In the two first centuries, no one was baptized unless, being instructed in the faith, and acquainted with the doctrine of Christ, he was able to profess himself a believer; because of those words, *He that believes, and is baptized.*”<sup>7</sup>

M. FORMEY. “They baptized from this time,” (the latter end of the second century) “infants as well as adults.”<sup>8</sup>

CURCELLEUS. “*The baptism of infants, in the two first centuries after Christ, was altogether unknown; but in the third and fourth, it was allowed by some few. In the fifth and following ages, it was generally received. — The custom of baptizing infants did not begin before the third age after Christ was born. In the former ages, no trace of it appears — and it was introduced without the command of Christ.*”<sup>9</sup>

RIGALTIIUS. “In the Acts of the Apostles, we read that both men and women were baptized when they believed the gospel preached by Philip, without any mention being made of infants. *From the apostolic age, therefore, to the time of Tertullian, the matter is doubtful.*”<sup>10</sup>

VENEMA. “Tertullian has nowhere mentioned Pedobaptism among the traditions of the church, nor even among the customs of the church, that were publicly received, and usually observed; No, he plainly intimates that, in his time, it was still a doubtful affair. — Nothing can be affirmed with certainty concerning the custom of the church before Tertullian; seeing that there is not anywhere, in more ancient writers, that I know of, undoubted mention of infant baptism. Justin Martyr, in

---

<sup>1</sup> *Annotat. ad Rom 5.14.*

<sup>2</sup> In A. R's. *Vanity of Infant Baptism*, Part. ii. p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> In Stennett's *Answer to Russen*, p. 188.

<sup>4</sup> *Annotat. in Aug. de Civ. Dei*, L. i. C. xxxvii.

<sup>5</sup> *Cyclopedia*, Art. *Baptism*.

<sup>6</sup> *Letter to Mr. J. Tombs*.

<sup>7</sup> *Epist. ad Justiim Pacium. Thesaur. Eccles.* sub. voce Σουαξις, Tom. ii. p. 1136.

<sup>8</sup> *Abridg. Eccles, Hist.* Vol. i. p. 33.

<sup>9</sup> *Institut. Relig. Christ.* L. i. C. xii. *Dissert. Secund. de Pecc, Orig.* § 56.

<sup>10</sup> In Stennet's *Answer to Russen*, p. 74.

his second apology, when describing baptism, mentions only that of adults. — I conclude, therefore, that Pedobaptism, cannot be certainly proved to have been practised before the times of Tertullian; and that there were persons in his age who desired that their infants might be baptized, especially when they were afraid of their dying without baptism. Tertullian opposed this opinion, and by so doing, he intimates that Pedobaptism then began to prevail. These are the things that may be affirmed with apparent certainty, concerning the antiquity of infant baptism, after the times of the apostles; *for more things are maintained without solid foundation.*"<sup>1</sup>

GROTIUS. "It seems to me that the baptism of infants was, of old, much more frequently practised in Africa than in Asia, or in other parts of the world; and with a certain opinion of the greater necessity of it. For you will not find in any of the councils, a more ancient mention of this custom, than in the council of Carthage [held Sept. 256]." <sup>2</sup>

EPISCOPIUS. "Pedobaptism was not accounted a necessary rite, till it was determined to be so, in the Milevitan council held in the year 418." <sup>3</sup>

Dr. DODDRIDGE. "It is indeed surprising that nothing more express is to be met with in antiquity upon this subject." <sup>4</sup>

Several well authenticated instances of Christians, eminent in the church, who though born of Christian parents, were not baptized but on their own profession, prove that, even in the third and fourth centuries, infant baptism was not the universal practice of the church.

Bp. TAYLOR. "There is no pretence of tradition that the church, in all ages, baptized all the infants of Christian parents. It is more certain that they did not always do it, than that they did it, in the first age. St. Ambrose, St. Jerome and St. Austin, were born of Christian parents, and yet they were not baptized until the full age of a man and more." <sup>5</sup>

DAILLE. "In ancient times, they often deferred the baptizing both of infants and of other people, as appears by the history of the emperors, Constantine the Great, of Constantius, of Theodosius, of Valentinian, and of Gratian, in St. Ambrose; and also by the orations and homilies of Gregory Nazianzen, and of St. Basil, upon this subject." <sup>6</sup>

Gregory Nazianzen was born of Christian parents, in the year 318, and was not baptized till between twenty and thirty years of age. <sup>7</sup>

Chrysostom was born of Christian parents, in the year 354, and was not baptized till about twenty-one years of age. <sup>8</sup>

Augustine, bishop of Hippo, commonly called *Austin*, was born the same year as Chrysostom. His mother Monica was a Christian at the time of his birth, and ordered those ceremonies which it was then customary to perform on the children of Christians. <sup>9</sup> At one time, in his youth, he was seized with a dangerous illness, and earnestly desired to be baptized. His mother was hastening to comply, when he recovered, and his baptism was deferred. Nor, according to his own account,

---

<sup>1</sup> *Hist. Eccles.* Tom. iii. Secul. ii. § 108, 109.

<sup>2</sup> *Annotat.* in Mat 19.14.

<sup>3</sup> *Institut. Theolog.* L. iv. C. xiv.

<sup>4</sup> *Lectures*, p. 522.

<sup>5</sup> *Liberty of Prophecy*, Sect. v. p. 84.

<sup>6</sup> *Right Use of the Fathers*, B. ii. C. vi. p. 149.

<sup>7</sup> See GROTIUS *Annotat.* in Mat 19.14; Du Pin's *Eccles. Hist.* Cent. iv. p. 159; *Gen. Biog. Dict.* Art. *Greg. Naz.*

<sup>8</sup> See GROTIUS *Annotat.* in Mat 19.14; Du Pin's *Eccles. Hist.* Cent. v. p. 6, 7.

<sup>9</sup> "I was then signed with the sign of his" (Christ's) "cross, and was seasoned with his salt, as soon as I came out of my mother's womb, who greatly trusted in you." *Confessions*, Book i. C. xi p. 17.

did he receive baptism until he professed the Christian religion at the age of thirty years. <sup>1</sup> Believing that he had suffered from this delay, he became “afterwards a strenuous asserter of the expediency of an earlier baptism.” <sup>2</sup>

It has been strongly urged [by the Pedobaptists], in support of the antiquity of infant baptism, that in the Pelagian controversy, Austin adduces this practice in proof of the doctrine of original sin: “The whole church practises infant baptism; it was not instituted by councils, but it was ever in use.” <sup>3</sup>

Did Austin mean that infant baptism was *the universal practice* of the church? The indisputable facts that he himself, though born of a Christian parent, was *not* baptized in infancy, and that he found it necessary through the whole of his life, to strongly oppose the prevailing and, as he deemed it, criminal delay of this ordinance, render this interpretation [that it was the *universal practice* of the church], entirely inadmissible. <sup>4</sup>

We must conclude that infant baptism, though not yet considered a necessary duty, was generally tolerated in the time of Austin; nor was it ever refused to those parents who desired it for their children. It is not possible to stretch the meaning of Austin further than this, without making him contradict his own confessions and his own conduct.

That Austin would suppose this practice had been “ever in use” is not strange, when we consider that, in the words of Hospinianus, “in the time of Austin, it was commonly believed that whatever was received by the church as a devotional custom, proceeded from apostolic tradition, and the doctrine of the Holy Spirit.” <sup>5</sup>

It may still be urged that, although there is no evidence of infant baptism in the first two centuries, the prevalence of this practice in Africa during the third century (as appears from the proceedings of the council of Carthage in the year 256), and its general prevalence through the whole of the Christian world during the fourth and fifth centuries (as appears from the testimonies furnished by the Pelagian controversy), afford sufficient proof that it must have been of apostolic origin. And this proof is greatly strengthened by the consideration that, if not apostolic, it could not have been introduced without violent opposition.

The case of *infant communion* furnishes a full reply to this. The same evidence can be adduced in favour of the antiquity of infant communion, as of infant baptism. And in the article of opposition, infant communion has the advantage of its sister practice. For while there appears to have been some opposition to the introduction of infant baptism — by Tertullian, Gregory Nazianzen, and others — nothing of the kind appears in the case of infant communion.

These points, if established, must in the minds of those who *reject infant communion*, completely invalidate the argument from antiquity, which are in favour of infant baptism. And as these points must be established by testimony, independently of argumentation, permit me to introduce the following quotations.

SALMASIUS and SUICERUS. “Because the eucharist was given to adult catechumens when they were washed with holy baptism, without any space of time intervening, this was also done to infants *after Pedobaptism was introduced.*” <sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> See “Augustine’s Confessions Abridged,” in Milner’s *Hist. of the Church*, Vol. ii. Cent. v. C. ii.

<sup>2</sup> MILNER’S *Hist. of the Church*, Vol. ii. p. 302. Note. — Judson dropped this paragraph in his 1819 revision, not being able to verify it while in the field. — WHG

<sup>3</sup> In Dr. WORCESTER’S *Letters*, Let. xxi.

<sup>4</sup> *i.e.*, pedobaptism wasn’t *universal*, because Augustine opposed the “prevailing” practice of credobaptism. — WHG

<sup>5</sup> *Illust. Sacram.* L. ii. p. 41.

<sup>6</sup> *Thesaur. Eccles.* sub voce Συναξις.

BUDDAEUS. “It is manifest that, in the ancient church, it was usual to give the eucharist to infants. This custom arose about the third century, and continued in the western church to the beginning of the twelfth century, as Quenstedius shows. This custom seems to have prevailed first in the African church, and to have been propagated from there to other churches of the west. Certainly, we nowhere find it more frequently mentioned than in the writings of Cyprian, of Austin, and of Paulinus. The error seems to have arisen from a false opinion concerning the absolute necessity of the eucharist; and it has been observed by learned men, that this arose from the words of Christ in Joh 6.53,<sup>1</sup> not being well understood.”<sup>2</sup>

HOSPINIUS. “The Lord’s supper was given to the infants of believers in the times of Pope Innocent the First, of Cyprian, and of Austin; in Europe as well as in Asia and Africa; as being necessary to salvation. — Jerome, Austin, and other fathers testify that those who were baptized, not only adults but also infants, without any delay, received the Lord’s supper in both kinds.”<sup>3</sup>

CHILLINGWORTH. “St. Augustine, I am sure, held the communicating<sup>4</sup> of infants to be as much an apostolic tradition, as baptizing them. — The eucharist’s necessity for infants... was taught by the consent of the eminent fathers of some ages, without any opposition from any of their contemporaries; and it was delivered by them, not as doctors, but as witnesses; not as their opinion, but as apostolic tradition.”<sup>5</sup>

Dr. PRIESTLEY.<sup>6</sup> “It is remarkable that, in all Christian antiquity, we always find that communion in the Lord’s supper immediately followed baptism. And nothing occurs, such as any person having a right to one of these ordinances, and not to the other.”<sup>7</sup>

VENEMA. “In the ancient church, those two sacraments” (baptism and the Lord’s supper) “in respect to the subjects, were never separated, one from the other. — In the thirteenth century, baptized infants ceased to be admitted to the eucharist because it began to be administered under one kind.”<sup>8</sup>

Dr. WALL. “— The Roman church, about the year 1000, entertaining the doctrine of transubstantiation, let fall the custom of giving the holy elements to infants; and the other western churches, mostly following their example, did the same, and on the same account; but the Greeks, not having the same doctrine, continued (and still continue) the custom of communicating infants.”<sup>9</sup>

Let me conclude this part of the discourse by inquiring, Why don’t the advocates of infant baptism, become advocates of infant communion?

Is the scripture silent concerning the latter ordinance? It is equally silent concerning the former. Infants are incapable of remembering Christ, of examining themselves, and of discerning the Lord’s body, which are required of those who receive the supper. They are equally incapable of repenting and believing, which are required of those who receive baptism. Every argument which is brought to prove that the requirement to repent and believe does not exclude infants from

---

<sup>1</sup> Joh 6:53 Then Jesus said to them, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.”

<sup>2</sup> *Theolog. Dogmat.* L. v. C. i. § 19.

<sup>3</sup> *Hist. Sacram.* L. ii. C. ii. p. 51.

<sup>4</sup> “communicating infants” partake of communion. — WHG

<sup>5</sup> *Relig. of Protest.* Answer to Pref. § 10, and Chap. iii. § 44.

<sup>6</sup> Joseph Priestley (1733-1804) English Separatist theologian, natural philosopher, chemist, grammarian, educator, and political theorist; credited with the discovery of oxygen. — WHG

<sup>7</sup> *Address on giving the Lord’s supper to Children*, p. 10.

<sup>8</sup> *Hist. Eccles. Secul.* ii. § 100; Secul. xiii. § 164.

<sup>9</sup> *Hist. of Inf. Bap.* p. 517.

baptism, will equally prove that the requirement to examine one's self and discern the Lord's body, does not exclude them from communion. Every argument which is urged in support of the one ordinance, may also be urged, with equal plausibility, in support of the other.

— Should infants be baptized because, under a former dispensation, they were circumcised? Then, because they partook of the Passover under a former dispensation, they should now also be admitted to communion.

— Should they be baptized because they are connected with their parents, in covenant with God? For the same reason, they should, with their parents, be admitted to communion.

— Should they be baptized because they are members of the visible church? For the same reason, they should be admitted to communion.

— Should they be baptized because Christ commanded little children to be brought to him, and declared that of such is the kingdom of heaven? For the same reason, they should be admitted to communion.

— Should they be baptized because they are not unclean, but holy? For the same reason, they should be admitted to communion.

— Does it lessen the privileges which the church anciently enjoyed, to withhold baptism from infants? And does it not equally lessen those privileges to debar infants from communion?

— Is it harsh and injurious to exclude infants from baptism? And is it not equally harsh and injurious to exclude them from communion?

Accordingly, Dr. Williams (the opponent of Mr. Booth) inquires, "Are not the same reasons which are brought for infant baptism, in like manner, applicable to infant communion? And won't the objections against the latter, allow the same answer as those against the former?"<sup>1</sup>

The reasons stated in both parts of this discourse, lead us to the conclusion that *the immersion of a professing believer into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is the only Christian baptism.*

"He that believes and is baptized, will be saved; but he that believes not, will be damned." Mar 16.16 To believe in Christ is necessary to salvation; and to be baptized is the instituted method of professing our belief. It is therefore not only an infinitely important question to all men, whether they believe in Christ; but it is also a very important question to all Christians, whether they have been baptized.

If you love Christ, you cannot consider this question unimportant. You will desire to discover the will of Him whom you love, and to testify your love, by joyfully obeying. "If you love me," said Jesus, "keep my commandments." Joh 15.15 "You are my friends, if you do whatever I command you." Joh 15.14

If, when your mind adverts to this question, you fear the consequences of an examination, and dread those sacrifices which a discovery that you have been mistaken, may enforce on your conscience — or if you feel the influence of long established sentiments, or you imagine that the subject is too dark and intricate for your investigation — look to the Son of God, who did not hesitate to make the greatest sacrifices, and to endure the most painful sufferings for you. And look up to the Father of lights, to send the Holy Spirit, according to the promise of his Son, to guide you into all truth.

Especially, my brethren, diligently use the means of discovering the truth. Put yourselves in the way of evidence. Indulge free examination. Though the sun shines with perfect clearness, you will

---

<sup>1</sup> Notes on Mr. Morrice's *Social Relig.* p. 78.

never see that light which others enjoy, if you confine yourselves in a cavern which the beams of the sun cannot penetrate. Be assured that there is sufficient evidence on this subject, if you seek to discover it. But if your love for truth is not sufficiently strong to make you willing to seek and strive for the discovery of evidence, God will probably leave you to be contented with error.

Therefore, in order to stimulate your minds to candid and energetic research, prize truth above all other things. Be impressed with the conviction that nothing can compensate you for the loss of truth. "She is more precious than rubies; and all the things you can desire, are not to be compared to her." <sup>Pro 3.15</sup> She will keep you in the right way, the way of duty, of usefulness, of happiness. She will lead you to heaven. Seek her, therefore, as silver, and search for her, as for hidden treasures.

Finally,

*"If anyone desires to do the will of God,  
he shall know about the doctrine,  
whether it is of God."* <sup>Joh 7.17</sup>