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AN

ARGUMENT

BETWEEN AN

ANABAPTIST AND A METHODIST,

ON THE SUBJECT AND MODE OF

BAPTISM.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED

A LETTER TO THE PUBLISHER.

Acts ii. 29. For the promise is unto YOU and to your CHILDREN.

2 THESS. ii. 15. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the TRADITIONS which ye have been taught, whether by WORD or our EPISTLE.

ISAIAH lxv. 23. For they are the seed of the blessed of the LORD, and their OFFSPRING with them.

JER. xxx. 20. Their CHILDREN shall be as aforetime.

PUBLISHED BY A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

WITH AN APPENDIX, CONTAINING SEVERAL

INTERESTING AND WEIGHTY EXTRACTS.

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TO THE

Reverend Mr. DEVEREUX JARRATT, *Rector of Bath Parish, in the County of Dinwiddie, Virginia.*

DEAR SIR,

THROUGH the friendly offices of one whom we both esteem affectionately, I have had the pleasure, though at this distance, of being introduced to you. But an introduction merely, admitting it were even personal, attended likewise with all that benevolence and christian courtesy for which you are distinguished, could not complete my wishes: I would desire to know more perfectly.—I could look upon myself entirely fortunate, *only* in enjoying a continued long acquaintance with the person who had endeared his character to me so much as you have done, by his first kind manifestations of himself.

The men of *our order* and communion, are, at this time, thinly scattered in the land; and, through a difference of opinion, it may be, in some matters that are in a great measure foreign too from our business, and by reason of sundry local circumstances, the *few* there are, enjoy but little intercourse with one another; they feel themselves precluded somehow from strengthening each others' hands; they, possibly, do not enough *endeavour*, in harmonious affectionate conjunction, to carry on the glorious work assigned them by their blessed Master.—I ardently long for an increase of our number; a perfect union of our hearts; a sympathy divine to operate continually within us, as the band of an indissolvable, most sacred fellowship.

The obliging letter you were pleased to write me, not long since, came seasonably to hand; and brought with it no small share of consolation: it breathes not only the tenderness of private friendship, but a general liberality of soul and sentiment, an expansive glow of entire good-will towards all mankind; the heart-felt wish, that our Redeemer's gospel in its life and energy, may every where be published and received, producing morals bright and pure, like the Heaven its doctrines point to.

I do not know indeed what can alleviate our present tribulations, except the symptoms here and there appearing among the people, of life not quite departed;—of penitence reviving;—of reformation and spirituality taking place, in some degree—the *promise*, I would hope, of their spreading deep and far; the *earnest* also of a full preparation for that prosperity which, we trust, the LORD will send us, after the tedious "years wherein we have "suffered adversity."

With you, therefore, I can rejoice in the healthful operations of grace; the rise and progress of unaffected piety, wherever they are found—bearing the most intimate relation to a church, whose purity and excellence we pre-eminently revere; while we regard each faithful Fellow-Minister and member of it with affection peculiarly fervent: this shuts not out from our esteem and love so much as one individual, whether Minister, Teacher, or private person, of whatsoever sect, description, or denomination, who followeth CHRIST JESUS in sincerity.

You have taken notice, I observe, of the introduction of *Methodism* into *Virginia* about seven or eight years ago, by some of Mr. *Wesley's* preachers; and mention your early examination of their principles and intentions; the result of which was, that you found them to be members of the *Church of England*, and averse from a dividing spirit; that although you had, no doubt, your objections and pre-possessions against men's preaching without ordination; yet, upon the whole, after reading and considering Mr. *Wesley's* reasons for this, you acquiesced, and favoured them as much as you possibly could; that ever since the good effects of their labours are apparent and considerable.

My particular acquaintance with this plan and people, is of a more recent date. I view them, however, in the very same light that you do; and take a pleasure in countenancing them. For this cause some, it may be, are offended. But, on what reasonable grounds? Do not both preachers and the people in connection with them, regularly attend the ministrations of the *Church*? Or, is it not a standing order among them so to do? Do they not adhere to the doctrines of the church, approve of, and observe its discipline? Do they not look to us for the ordinances? *They do*

not consider themselves as *a separate sect*; they have guarded against this most cautiously. They cannot possibly fall off from the *Church*, without breaking through their essential fundamental principles repeatedly and publickly declared. Wherefore then should we reject or disown them? Why should we behave unfriendly towards them?

Lately I have been favoured with the sight of a manuscript pamphlet containing, in the form of a Dialogue, a disputation more especially concerning Infant Baptism. The preface closes with the signature of "*A Member of the Church of England.*"—I am informed, and it gives me satisfaction, that my honoured brother, to whom this letter is addressed, is both the *Editor* and *Author*. It was very suitable to conduct the argument in this familiar way—in phrase and reasoning, level to common understandings. The characters brought together on the occasion, are aptly pitched upon; for it seems, that in *your state* particularly, as well as in some parts of *this*, and in sundry other places, the *Anabaptists*, or, as they would rather style themselves, the *Baptists*, are assiduous, now in particular, to press the *Methodists* on this subject.

Thinking that *they*, from principle, or many of them, perhaps from custom merely, hold the validity of Infant Baptism; yet, very probably, have, in general, never attended to the subject, as a matter of controversy; or furnished themselves with polemical reasons for it; when there appears among them a solemn deep concern about salvation; when there is a considerable moving among the people; a spiritual work having been begun, and thro' its efficacy conveyed peace to many souls, and an earnest striving after purity in the *complete* will of God; then cometh one or another of these *zealous* friends, in a public sacred character, at first seeming warmly to encourage the work, declaring, enforcing, the great *essential* truths, in which all are agreed. Having in this way rendered themselves acceptable in their measure as joint-laborers, agreeable to the divine system of grace; presently they step into their favorite grounds—open their distinguishing tenets—and, with other things, suggest, especially to the weak and doubting, the insufficiency of "baby sprinkling;" and

strive to persuade them, that their peace can in no sort be sound, nor their standing comfortable, until they *go yet deeper into baptismal water.*

I look with reverence upon honest zeal, by whomsoever possessed; but pity that which hath not thorough information for its basis; or which principally aims at proselyting to the destinations of a party; or, at the best, spends itself in *non-essentials.*

If, hence, controversy does at times unavoidably arise, I see not what can be done, but to make the best of it; desiring in simplicity and godly sincerity, to find and hold the truth. In the course of such candid enquiry and endeavour, all tenderness and charity should be cultivated towards those who are opponents.

The matters treated in your Dialogue are not merely such as *Methodists* alone are concerned in; they relate, many of them, in particular to the whole Church, with which we are in communion; and the rest, in common with that Church, to almost all the Churches in the world. This consideration, I believe, induced you to become the writer, and hath afforded me the pleasure of being one of your earliest readers.

I am, with most affectionate regard,

Dear Sir,

Your brother in Christ,

and faithful servant,

A Clergyman of the Episcopal Church.

Dover, Delaware State, March 27, 1781.

TO THE READER.

THE following Argument between an Anabaptist and a Methodist, was occasioned by the publication of a late Dialogue between Mr. Traditionist *and* Mr. Scripturist, *on the Subject and Mode of Baptism. I had no intention, at first, of making* this *public, notwithstanding I was* particularly made acquainted with the Discourse *contained herein. But having shewn it to some of my friends, who, believing it might be of use in preserving many well-meaning people from error, were urgent for its being sent to the press; I told them that I had several reasons against what they urged;*—1. *That I had no ambition of commencing an* Author; *but rather an aversion to it.* 2. *I scarcely thought the Dialogue referred to, deserved any reply, much less a public one.*— 3. *I found that when I was answering a* piece, *abounding with so much abuse, vaunting, quibbling and trifling, it required a very strict guard to maintain that temper and decency which becomes the Christian.* 4. *I remembered that the* wise Man *says, "answer not a fool according to his folly, lest thou be like him."*—Prov. 26, 4. *By which words I understood, that it is often best to answer things of a trifling nature, by silence and contempt. And this, at first, I thought the best way to answer that Dialogue. But here again I was put to a stand by the 5th verse of the same chapter, which says, "answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit." By which I understood that there are times, when it becomes necessary to answer trifling arguments, lest he who makes use of them should conceit himself so* "smart" *that no man dares to encounter him, and his arguments so strong that they cannot be answered; and so will interpret silence as a concession of victory; and thus he may be confirmed in error, and others receive ill impressions thereby. For this cause, it is at times necessary to expose the futility, and detect the fallacy of his arguments, and turn them upon him* in his own way; *that so his pride may be mortified, though he should still obstinately persist in his opinion.*

To avoid mistakes, I beg the reader to observe, that I don't mean to insinuate that the real Authors of that Dialogue, (or rather the Authors of the materials of which it is composed) were

men who wanted sense. Far from it: Dr. Gill, Abel Morgan, Philip Cary, &c. *did not want sense. But still their arguments on Baptism are exceeding trifling; and the reason is, because they have no foundation in truth, reason or scripture. And hence it is that you find them turning and twisting every way. Sometimes you will see them running back as far as Melchisedec, Noah, Arphaxad, Lot, &c. and the next time you have sight of them, they are dragging in* poor Uzzah *and the cart; and other things of the same colour, which have no more to do in disproving the Baptism of Infants than the transmigration of Souls. For this reason they are also obliged to raise a dust before them wherever they go; and mingle abundance of raillery and abusive epithets with the rest, in order to supply the place of argument.*

But to return:—I have mentioned four objections I had against publication; which were answered to my satisfaction; and therefore I agreed to send the Argument out into the world, without any apology for its want of a better dress. *They, for whose benefit it is intended, will not find fault because it savours not of* polite literature. *It may appear indeed to the more judicious, that some things are grovelling; but then they will consider, that I could not well rake in the dirt without stooping low.*

Many pious and learned men have written in favour of Infant Baptism; and I think have fully proved the point from scripture, reason and antiquity. Baxter, Flavel, Wall, Bostwic *and others, have done this. But the arguments of many of these authors,* Baxter, Flavel, &c. *though very conclusive, are yet too long and too deep for many capacities. Something shorter, plainer, and more level with common understanding, seems to be still wanting. Besides, no author that I know of, has so far condescended as to answer the Anabaptists* in their own way, *which I think is necessary. For, you will observe, that notwithstanding all their vaunting and boasting of being able to bring such a vast number of scriptures into the field of controversy, sufficient to drive all before them; yet when they come to dispute the point, they keep themselves within their trenches, stand only upon the defensive, and endeavour to keep out of the way of our strokes, or raise a dust that they may not be seen.*

My principal business has therefore been to drag them out of their subterfuges; to oblige them to rally their forces, that we might see their strength, and the numbers they talk of. When I effected this, I stood a little while on the defensive, till the enemy had brought up all his forces to the charge. By this manoeuvre the weakness of our enemies was soon discovered; and fighting them with their own weapons, they were so galled that they were glad to get off in the best manner they could.

Should any pretend to say, I have not answered all the arguments in the Dialogue, because I have not mentioned every word in it, nor rehearsed every particular; to such I would say, if any man can shew me one argument in that Dialogue against *Infant Baptism that I have not answered, let him point it out, and answered it shall be. But I am satisfied I have taken in the whole substance of every objection, which is worthy the least notice. And moreover, because I am made particularly acquainted with the way and manner of the Anabaptists; and the many methods they take in their private conversation and publick preaching, to lead the weak and unwary astray, I have also taken notice of some of these over and above what is in the Dialogue.*

The accurate reader will see the reason why I move so often from place to place, backward and forward. I have to do with a shifting adversary, and I am obliged to follow him or else lose sight of him. Every one acquainted with the way of reasoning adopted by the Baptists, will see that I could not answer them in their own way, agreeably to my design, without condescending to this method.

Hoping the discerning and impartial reader will see how vain the boasting of our antagonists is, how unscriptural all their pretended arguments are, and what a manifest design of deceiving the ignorant, runs through the whole Dialogue; I conclude by subscribing myself

A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.

AN ARGUMENT, &c.

Anabaptist. WELL, old friend, how do you do? I am glad to see you. I hear you have got an *experience of grace* since I saw you.

Methodist. I trust you hear nothing but the truth: I have reason to believe GOD has dealt bountifully with me, and has pardoned my sins.

Ana. It is a great mercy! I should be glad to hear your *experience.*

Metho. I am not ashamed to tell the whole world, what GOD hath done for my soul. However, it might be too tedious, at present, to descend to particulars; let it suffice to say, that being awakened to a sense of my danger, I received the spirit of bondage to fear; and crying to the LORD, he gave me the spirit of adoption: I found rest to my soul; the love of GOD was shed abroad in my heart, and the light of his reconciled countenance was lifted up upon me.

Ana. I love you sincerely: I could freely give you the right hand of fellowship. But *one thing now* and all is well; and when that *one thing* is done, you will be much happier than you now are.

Metho. I am much happier already than ever I expected, or thought it possible to be in this world. But I know I have not only *one*, but *many things* to do yet. I must fight the good fight of faith; watch and pray, to keep myself in the love of GOD; and grow daily in grace and holiness: I must go on to perfection, and not rest in what is already done. And, I believe, when *I love God with all my heart,* and am *sanctified wholly,* I shall be much happier than I am at present.

Ana. How that may be, I can't tell. I know *my* heart

is very *unclean; it is deceitful, and desperately wicked, above all things;* and I expect it will remain so while I live.

Metho. Then, I am sure, you cannot go to heaven, when you die; for no *unclean* thing can enter there. Like must go to like; only *the pure in heart shall see God.*

Ana. For my part, I am a poor sinner: I commit sin *every moment:* but my comfort is, I know I can't fall from grace.

Metho. I doubt you are fallen from grace already. For the scripture says, "the soul that sinneth shall die, and he "that is born of GOD doth not *commit* sin."

Ana. I don't want to talk about this. *That* was not what I meant, when I said, *you have one thing to do yet.*

Metho. What then?

Ana. Baptism. Have you seen no necessity of going into the water?

Metho. Now you have got into your own element. But what am I to go into the water for?

Ana. Does it not lay upon you as a duty to be baptized? Are you not *convinced in Baptism?* I hope you will be, if you are not already.

Metho. I make not the least doubt, but my parents, who professed christianity, took care to present me to GOD in the ordinance of baptism. I was then washed with water in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, whereby I was made a visible member of the christian church: and what occasion have I to be baptized again? Baptism can do no more for me than it has done already.

Ana. I suppose you mean *baby-sprinkling.* What good do you think sprinkling can do an infant?

Metho. I have told you one thing already, I was thereby made a visible member of the church: And, by virtue hereof, since I knew the goodness of GOD, I have been admitted to the communion of the church, by her Pastors or Ministers. But as you seemed to ask me with a sneer, what

good *baby-sprinkling* does? I ask in my turn, with all christian gravity, what good your adult-dipping has done you?

Ana. Nay, I don't say it has done me any good.

Metho. So I thought when you told me how *unclean, deceitful,* and *wicked your heart* still is.

Ana. Well, but it is a duty though, which must be done in obedience: and must we do nothing but what we are to get by. I find you are upon the doing scheme.

Metho. This is not an answer to my question. However, it is all I could ever get from one of your persuasion. Whenever we come to any point, you will fly the way. I frankly told you one thing my baptism did for me: And if your's has done any more for you than mine has done for me, I should be glad to hear what it is. But you know that your *going into the water* only left you where it found you; saving this, you were before in communion with us, but now you are in communion with the Anabaptists; before, you were a man of peace, but now you are a man of strife and contention. And as to your insinuation, that we are upon the doing scheme; I beg leave to assure you, that I know that *salvation is not of works,* as well as you.

Ana. But I think it looks as if the Church of England made a Saviour of baptism; and there are *sufficient grounds to charge this upon* her members. This you will find, if you look into their prayer-book.

Metho. I have a great regard for that book; and I look into it very often. But this strikes wide. We were talking about baptism. Now, if every word in the prayer-book was erroneous, this would make nothing against infant, or adult baptism. But this is a trick of you all, to endeavour to raise a dust, that so you may blind the eyes, and deceive the hearts of the simple. But, Sir, let me tell you, that you have no sufficient grounds, to charge us with making a Saviour of our baptism, from any part of the prayer-book.

Ana. One of our brethren has lately published *a very entertaining piece, written dialogue-wise,* on the subject and mode of baptism, wherein he makes out this charge very plain.

Metho. That is, in your opinion, I suppose; but, in my opinion, the Author, as he calls himself, of that *entertaining piece,* has either spoken evil of the things he does not understand; or wilfully misrepresented them. I have read that piece over and over again.

Ana. And don't you think it a very *smart piece?* How do you like it?

Metho. I don't like it at all. The Author condemns infants.

Ana. Not he. How do you make it out?

Metho. Does he baptize infants?

Ana. No.

Metho. Who then does he admit to baptism?

Ana. "He does not admit any to baptism but such, who in a judgment of charity, are looked upon to be in *a gracious state,* previous to their being *baptized.*" Page 1.

Metho. Then, in a like judgment of charity, it seems, he does not look upon infants to be in that *gracious state.* and therefore, in *a graceless* one, and exposed to wrath eternal. So that in the very beginning of that entertaining piece, he has brought himself to this pass, either to baptize infants, or devote them to destruction. This is very entertaining indeed!

Ana. I have got the piece in my pocket, and I wish you would read it once more. I hope you would have a better opinion of it. You said the Author had misrepresented, or misunderstood something in the prayer-book; I wish you would shew me what it is.

Metho. Look here in the 6th page. "The little one is taught to have such a high opinion of its baptism, as to say, "wherein I was made a member of CHRIST, a child of GOD,

and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." And further, "that being by nature born in sin, and children of wrath, they are HEREBY (i. e. by baptism) made the children of grace."

Ana. And is it not so?

Metho. No; for if you will observe the part of the answer last quoted is made to this question, "What is the inward and spiritual grace?" Or, in other words, what is baptism a sacramental sign of? The answer is, "A death unto sin, a new birth unto righteousness; for being by nature born in sin and children of wrath, we are *hereby* made the children of grace." Now is it not evident, according to the most easy and grammatical construction, that the HEREBY relates not to the *water*, but to a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness?—And, as to the child's being taught to say, "In my baptism, wherein I was made a member of CHRIST, a child of GOD," &c. this can be found fault with by none but such as will not understand it. For it is plain no more is intended here by "a member of CHRIST," than the being admitted into the visible church, which is called *his body*. The 27th article accordingly explains it, *a being grafted into the church*, and the baptismal office, *a being grafted into the body of* CHRIST's *church*.—By being made "a child of GOD, and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven," is meant no more than being formally adopted for such: and the privileges pertaining to their adoption are to be retained, on condition of their *dying unto sin and living unto righteousness*. And the child has reason to thank GOD, *who has called him into this state of salvation*: for is it not matter of thankfulness that we are called out of the darkness of heathenism, and admitted to dwell in a land of gospel light, and within the pale of CHRIST's Church? But are the *little ones taught* to have such a high *notion* of their baptism as to suppose that they have an inadmissible title to the glorified state of Heaven above, by virtue of it? If so,

why does the church teach them "to pray unto GOD that they may continue in the same to their life's end?" Why does she require them "to crucify the old man, and utterterly abolish the whole body of sin?" And "continually to mortify all evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceed in all virtue and godliness of living?" So that in both these instances, your author is guilty of a gross misrepresentation or misunderstanding.

Ana. What does he misrepresent besides these?

Metho. The office for burial. Here, says he, the church orders all her Ministers to declare concerning all who have been baptized, and none but such, that they are surely gone to Heaven, though the greatest of sinners, murderers, drunkards, &c.* This is not truth. For only observe the rubrick before the order for burial, and you will see that this *order* is for none who are excommunicated, &c. And now let us turn to the office for the communion, and we shall see that none who live ungodly, or in any outward sin, are by order of the church to be admitted in anywise to the LORD's Table, and consequently are to be excommunicated. From hence it is plain, that the church never ordered *this* to be read over any wicked man at all, much less does she require her Ministers to declare that drunkards, thieves, whoremongers and murderers are surely gone to Heaven, because of baptism.

Ana. That I did not particularly consider before. Page 6. But it is plain your church calls baptism regeneration: "Seeing now, dearly beloved, that this child is regenerate."

Metho. She does so, and she has the authority of scripture for so doing. See *John* iii. 5. "Except a man be born of water and of the spirit," &c. *Born of water* here is baptism or the outward and visible sign; *born of the spirit* is

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*It is to be observed that I do not always quote an author word for word, but just give his plain meaning, as short as possible, in order to save paper, ink and time.

the inward and spiritual grace. Again, *Titus* iii. 5. "We are saved by the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost." *The washing of regeneration* must allude to the water of baptism, the outward and visible sign; *the renewing of the Holy Ghost*, the inward and spiritual grace. The propriety of calling baptism regeneration appears also from this—it is a very natural, easy and common figure in speech to call the sign by the name of the thing signified. Thus, bread and wine, in the LORD's Supper, are called the body and blood of CHRIST; not that they are so in reality, but as being sacramental signs of them. So, by the same figure, is baptism called regeneration, because this outward washing is a sacramental sign of it.

Ana. If this is all she means, it may be well enough: But I think this is not all. For Mr. *Episcopus Clericus* plainly informs us what he intends, when he immediately adds, "We yield thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy holy spirit." Page 6.

Metho. My dear Sir, I thought you knew that the whole œconomy of the church, whether external or internal, is under the government, direction, and guidance of the holy spirit, for it is the spirit that leads into truth and duty; so that whatever is done by his direction or according to the mind of the spirit, is done by the spirit. The rest is easy: for how often do we hear a gentleman say, "I have ploughed my ground, I have laid by my corn;" when it is evident he means no more than his servants had done this by his direction. Upon the whole, is it not plain to every man, that your author's own design in all he has advanced respecting the church, is to deceive the ignorant, and prejudice the minds of the populace against the church, so that they may dissent from her, and thus fall into the snare he has laid for them?

Ana. Well, let us drop the prayer-book, and go to something else: For, as you observed, let that book be right or wrong, it makes nothing either for or against your opinion.

Metho. But hold! Before we drop it, give me leave to ask, what you think of your author's inference from his own false and injurious misrepresentations of that book.

Ana. What inference?

Metho. That in the 7th page—That every Minister who declares his unfeigned assent and consent to *all* things contained in the *service book* must *stretch his conscience*, or in plain English, be *forsworn*. Does your author think that illiberal abuse and uncharitable censures will make in favour of his cause? Every thinking man will rather judge that it betrays the weakness of a cause, when abuse and slander are from necessity substituted in the place of argument. Your author signifies to us, in the 28th page, that the design of his coming among us is to reform a certain *corruption*, &c. A goodly reformer indeed!—Does he think that reformation is to be effected by a slanderous tongue, or a pen dipped in gall? Or does he think the readiest way to reform men is to fall upon them with abuse? He must bring better proof than this, that ever he was *sent at all*, or, I trust, his pretensions to the office of general *Reformer*, will be but little regarded.

Ana. Well, well, don't say any thing about that?

Metho. It is no wonder you are for hushing up and passing over slightly the most notorious offences, seeing it is one of your tenets, that crimes of the deepest die will never be imputed to you to your final condemnation. You may fall foully, you say, but not finally. What lengths of sin may not men be encouraged to go, by such a licentious principle as this?

Ana. You are getting off the subject now. I want to know whether you have any proof for infant baptism.

Metho. A great deal more than you have against it.

Ana. I suppose you bring your proof from tradition.

Metho. Tradition is twofold, oral and written. St. *Paul* mentions both, II *Thess.* ii. 15. *Therefore stand fast, says he, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epistle.* Now as we are to stand fast and hold traditions, then it follows, that if infant baptism was only handed down to us by tradition, we must hold it fast till it can be made appear that it is an evil in itself, or forbidden by the word of God. But may not a thing be *actually* proved by tradition? And if it can be *actually* proved, can you desire any other proof?

Ana. We are *scripturists*—we will have nothing to do with tradition. There can be no proof from *that.*

Metho. How came your author to know, and so positively to affirm, that giving the Lord's Supper to infants was *actually* in practice from the 4th to the 12th century? Page 8. Your author, I suppose, is not yet fifty years old, and therefore he could not be an eye witness of it. He cannot get it from scripture, nor does he give us any written tradition for it: How then does he know it was *actually* done, but by *mere* tradition? For infant baptism we have the practice of all the primitive churches on our side, and the concurrent testimonies of many ancient fathers and councils; and some of these tell us it was delivered to them from the Apostles: Therefore we may with great confidence believe and declare that it was *actually* practised by the apostles, and the church in all ages from their days.

Ana. "But, my dear Sir, had we not much better abide by what those more ancient Fathers *Peter, Paul, James, John, Jude,* &c. have left upon record?" Page 6.

Metho. Pray, Sir, have these more ancient Fathers left any thing *upon record* against infant baptism? I trow not. But you seem to be insensible that by speaking so contemptibly of the ancient Fathers and councils of the primitive church, and rejecting their authority, you do in effect,

at the same time, reject *Peter, Paul,* &c. and all the writings of the New Testament. To the care and fidelity of these ancient Fathers the sacred records were committed: It was by them that the canonical books of the New Testament were determined and settled. Sundry epistles now read in the New Testament were at first placed among the antilegomina or doubtful pieces, which these ancient Fathers afterwards received into the sacred canon: Nor was this done till a recognition of its controverted books was taken by the council of Laodicea, 330 years after our LORD's ascension. If then, these ancient Fathers were capable of determining what books were the composition of the apostles, certainly they were as able to determine what was their opinion and practice respecting infant baptism.* Now, how ridiculous is it in your author, to reject their authority in this respect, and tell us with a sneer, "that error is never the more to be respected for having *a grey head?*" How ridiculous, I say, when he is indebted to these very *grey heads* for all the knowledge he has of *Peter, Paul,* &c. and their writings. If I did not think the authority of those Fathers was to be depended upon, I must reject *Peter, Paul,* &c. But as I regard their authority and the soundness of their judgment, and put great confidence in their care and fidelity, I am bound to believe that there were such men as *Peter, Paul,* &c. and that the writings ascribed to them are genuine.—And now, Sir, let me assure you that *Peter, Paul,* &c. are the very men that I abide by: and if any of these have left any thing *upon record* which condemns our practice, yea, if our practice be not countenanced by them, and by JESUS CHRIST

* It would be needless to shew the judgment of the ancient Fathers respecting infant baptism, as the author of the dialogue does not deny that they practised it. Many writers have shewn it to be the universal practice in all the primitive churches in every province; and therefore I shall not take time to insert their names here, but would refer the reader to CAVE's lives of the Fathers, the history of the councils, and WALL's history.

the Father of the christian church, as well as by these ancients of the primitive ages of the church, I will be one who will make way for your *Reformer General* to come in.

Ana. You fly too high for me. For my part, I believe infant sprinkling is built upon *a Popish quicksand.* Page 8.

Metho. Your belief is without all foundation. *Irenæus, Origen* and others, who have spoken of infant baptism as practised by the Apostles and delivered to the Church from the Apostles, lived a great while before the darkness of Popery had overspread the christian world; therefore it could not be built upon a Popish quicksand.

Ana. But our author says it *was haled* through the *Church of Rome* though.

Metho. So were the scriptures, and they are not a jot the worse for that. But this is a trick of many disputants when they desire to carry a point, and have neither reason or scripture on their side: What must they do *to help them out at a dead lift?* Why, cry *Popery, Popery,* and the work is done. But I trust the people of our church have more sense than to be scared out of the truth or their duty, by a mere sound.

Ana. But you must own that godfathers and godmothers are a relick of that mother of harlots.

Metho. Not at all. These are of long standing. The Jews had sponsers at the circumcision of their infants, and these have never been discontinued in any age of the church: and we think it both wise and good to retain them still. That you may be convinced that they were among the Jews, only read *Luke* i. 57, 63. On the eighth day *they* came to circumcise the child, and *they* called his name *Zacharias* — Who called his name so? Not his father, for he was dumb —Not his mother, for she did not approve of the name; and therefore answered *not so, but he shall be called* John.— And *they* made signs to his father how he would have him called; and he called for a writing table, and wrote, say-

ing, *his name is* John. Now what were *they*, these who gave the name to the child, *and marvelled all*, when they found he was to be called *John* ?—Some of those cousins and relations of *Elizabeth*, no doubt, who we read came to visit her on this occasion, and were now sponsors for the child. And does not this circumstance, relative to the naming of the child, put us in mind of what we often see at the baptism of children in our church ? When the minister asks the name of the child, how often do we see the godfathers and godmothers make signs to the parents how they will have him called ? especially if they have neglected to enquire before hand. So you see how mistaken you are : and that you may see that godfathers and godmothers were also in the primitive church, and were then called sponsors or sureties as we call them now, I shall beg leave to read you a passage from Dr. *Cave's primitive christianity*. When persons were brought to baptism, the bishop asked them, as you see here, " *Dost thou renounce the devil and all his works, powers and service ?* To which the party answered, *I do renounce them.—Dost thou renounce the world, and all its pomps and pleasures?* Answer, I do renounce them.— Next they made an open confession of their faith, the bishop asking, *Dost thou believe in* God. *the Father Almighty*, &c. *in* Jesus Christ *his only Son, who*, &c. *Dost thou believe in the Holy Ghost, the holy catholic church, and in one baptism of repentance for the remission of sins, and life everlasting ?* To all which the person answered, *I do believe.*— This form of interrogation, or questioning, seems to have been very ancient in the church, and the Apostle is justly thought to refer to it, when he styles baptism *the answer of a good conscience towards* God, which can reasonably refer to nothing so well as that common custom of answering in baptism.—" These answers and actions in the *adult*, were done by the persons themselves ; in children by their sponsors, as *Tertullian* calls them, their sureties or undertakers ;

for that both infants and adult persons had those that undertook for them at their baptism, is notoriously known."—Thus far Doctor *Cave*. See Christian Library, 31st vol. 212th page.—See then how widely you are mistaken in this point: And I think it must give great satisfaction to the members of our church to observe, as here, such a strict agreement between us and the ancient christians, not only in the subjects, but in the very rites and form of baptism. And however light some may pretend to make of such authority or agreement as this, yet, I believe, there is hardly a man endued with reason and tolerable sense, who would not be glad to find that his practice is countenanced by the primitive church, and to have such venerable antiquity on his side.

Ana. Well, I would not stand for a child for all the world. I should think I committed a very great sin in it, "to promise things which the event manifests to be false."

Metho. Commit a very great sin! And what of that? Sin cannot hurt *you*. A grievous fall would only make you more humble, and your brethren would like you the better for it. If I mistake not, this is agreeable to your doctrine. But your shyness in regard to standing for children, arises from another of your mistakes. If godfathers, &c. absolutely promised that the child *shall* (as your author misquotes) renounce the devil, &c it would be very absurd indeed. But you know they do not, they cannot promise any such thing. The word is *should*, of the potential or subjunctive mood, which implies a contingency.

Ana. What do they do then?

Metho. They only express the covenanting words and what the duty of every christian is, what he is to believe and do, and what that child in particular, "when he comes to age himself is bound to perform."—And the sponsors duty is expressed in the exhortation at the close of the baptismal office, which is briefly this, "to see that the child be taught

and exhorted to his duty." Certainly this can be no bad thing, but a wise and excellent institution, and nothing in it hard to be performed.

Ana. Ah! but many stand for children that never concern themselves about them, either to teach or exhort them, or any thing else.

Metho. I am apt to think this is too often the case. But what would you infer from hence? If the institution be good in itself, it must not be rejected because some of the persuasion are wicked and careless. At this way of reasoning you might argue the bible out of the world. seeing many profess to believe it, and cry it up as the best of books, containing the most perfect precepts of morality, &c. and yet act quite the reverse of what it enjoins.

Ana. Well, well, drop talking of the prayerbook.

Metho. Just as you please. Indeed I should be glad to drop the subject of baptism at this time; I do not like to dispute at all. I had much rather the conversation should turn upon something more to edification, and which might tend to warm our hearts with the love of GOD, and unite them in love to each other. This would be much better for us both, than thus *turn aside to vain janglings, whereof cometh nothing better than envy, strif and contention.*

Ana. Vain janglings! Why should we not declare the whole counsel of GOD? And is not baptism called the counsel of GOD? *Luke* vii. 30. P. 34.

Metho. The pharisees and lawyers are there said to reject the counsel of GOD, because they were not baptised of *John,* and become his disciples: But I don't know that we are required to be *John*'s disciples now. And is this the *famous Baptist preacher* your author talks of in page 9, and from whom you derive your original? I so, then you ought to *decrease,* and not to *increase.* For *John* said *I must decrease:* And indeed, *John* had humility enough to say, famous as he was, that he that is least in the kingdom of hea-

ven or gospel church, *is greater than he.* Christians then are not the disciples of *John*, for if so, the disciple would be above his master; nor was *John's* baptism and the christian's baptism the same.

Ana. Certainly you are wrong, for CHRIST and his apostles, &c. were all baptists. Page 9. And our author proves it very prettily too: For, says he, "if a baptist preacher baptizes any number of people, they are immediately looked upon to be baptists. But the baptist baptized *them*, therefore they were baptists," and so along.

Metho. Very pretty indeed!—But permit me to ask you one question. Don't you think that your author's intention in that argument was to deceive the ignorant? Certainly it was.

Ana. I think it very smart reasoning.

Metho. Reasoning! It is palpable sophistry to every discerning eye; and it is a sophism of that kind, if I mistake not, which the learned call *ignoratio elenchi*, or, *a mistake of the question.* Every man that baptizes, may so far be called a *baptist*, that is, a *baptiser.* But the question in debate is not whether the apostles and primitive christians were baptized, or whether they did baptize. This we all allow. But the question is, whether they were for or against the baptism of infants: Consequently that *pretty* argument of *his* does not touch the question at all. By chopping logic, after the manner of your author, I could as well prove that a man is a goose, an ass, or any creature you please.

Ana. How could you do that?

Metho. Thus—every goose is an animal—so is every man an animal—therefore every man is a goose. This is just as good logic as that of your author. The question is equally mistaken in both. I have given a more serious answer to this reasoning than was due to it—to mention it is sufficient to confute it.—But I can prove from your author's own

words that *John's* and the christian's baptism is not one and the same.

Ana. How does this appear from our author's words?

Metho. Very clear: In the 5th page he says, "I don't hold with rebaptizing at all; if any one has a *valid* baptism according to the scriptures, I am not for baptism being repeated on such."

Ana. And what of that?

Metho. In the xixth chapter of *Acts*, we read of some who had been baptized with *John's* baptism; and so, to have it your own way, they were *baptists*. But this would not do—therefore the apostle commanded them to be baptized in the name of the LORD JESUS, *i. e.* with the christian's baptism, that so they might be *christians* and not *baptists*. Now if *John's* baptism was the same with the christian's, then here would be a repetition of baptism, contrary to what your author holds: He is not for repeating a *valid baptism; John's* was looked upon to be not *valid*, and therefore baptism was repeated on those certain disciples which the apostle found at *Ephesus*. See *Acts* xixth chap. 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 verses. And if you derive your original from *John*, your baptism is not *valid*. Have I not proved my assertion?

Ana. That I did not particularly consider before. But is not baptism still a counsel of GOD?

Metho. Not if it be derived from *John*—his baptism was antiquated long ago. CHRIST is our LORD and Master.

Ana. You believe it is a counsel of GOD to baptize, don't you?

Metho. You know I do: And I believe it is the counsel of GOD to baptize infants and adults too, if they were not baptized in infancy. But the baptism you contend for and practise, so far from believing it to be a counsel of GOD, that (I speak in the fear of the LORD) I verily believe it is a counsel of Satan.

Ana. Why do you think so?

Metho. Because those whom you baptize have been baptized already, in the name of the LORD JESUS, and you have neither precept nor example for baptizing such over again: And I know of no end it answers but to introduce envy, strife, contentions, bitterness, clamour and dissentions.—And whence do these come but from the evil one?

Ana. You know CHRIST said, "I am not come to send peace, but a sword and division."

Metho. Our LORD well knew that through the wickedness of men and the agency of evil spirits, feuds and contentions would be excited in consequence of the gospel; but you dare not say, you believe this to be the design of CHRIST'S coming, but contrary-wise, to send peace; and therefore is he called the *Prince of Peace,* and the PEACE itself. He says indeed, in a certain place, *It must needs be that offences come,* but at the same time pronounces *a woe on those by whom they come.* But by what we can gather from the temper and spirit of the Anabaptists, we have too much reason to fear, if ever they get strong enough, we shall see a sword and feel it too.

Ana. "If there be any bitterness of spirit, &c. at whose door is it to be laid? The Baptists have no occasion for it, they have scripture enough for their principles." P. 34.

Metho. That is easier said than proved. I said before, and I will maintain it, that you have *neither precept or example for your practise.* Here I set my foot on this single point, and though you should turn and twist all your days, you can get no ground.

Ana. I never could see any warrant for infant baptism, (sprinkling I call it.) I never could see the word *infant baptism* mentioned between the lids of this bible, from the beginning of *Genesis* to the end of the *Revelations.*

Metho. And neither is the word *trinity* to be found there, and yet this is no reason why we should not believe in it.—

Neither are the words *adult baptism* to be found in scripture.

Ana. But I never could see where any infants were baptized.

Metho. That's a pity: but your author says, *none are so blind as they who will not see.*

Ana. I wish you would shew me where infants were ever baptized.

Metho. That is not hard to do.—Look here in the XIIth chap. of *Exodus*, 600,000 *Israelites* went out of Egypt on foot, besides children who could not go on foot. And *St. Paul* tells us, in 1 *Cor.* x. 2. *that they were all baptized unto* Moses, *in the cloud and in the sea;* and thus were they initiated into the religion *Moses* was to teach them. Now here you can't deny that infants were baptized, and they were baptized by *sprinkling* too, and that is more: For they must be baptized by sprinkling, unless you will suppose they plunged themselves or one another into the cloud, and that the sea overwhelmed them, as it did *the Egyptians.* But this would be absurd to suppose.

Ana. This may be so; but how will you prove that infants are to be baptized now?

Metho. The *onus probandi* is always to lie upon my shoulders; I mean I am to prove every thing and you nothing. People might reasonably think that you who set up yourselves for *reformers,* and have come to change the customs and usages of the church in all ages, ought to have acted upon the *offensive,* and not always stand upon the *defensive.*

Ana. To be sure you must prove the infant's right.

Metho. The right of infants to the ordinance of baptism is so clear, that it is no hard matter to prove it to any unprejudiced person: but I insist upon it, that as they are in possession of their *right,* or what almost nine-tenths of the church of CHRIST believe to be their *right,* it lies upon you to prove that their right is not good, before they can be le-

gally turned out of possession; otherwise you might turn me out of possession of any article of property I have.

Ana. How could that be done?

Metho. Suppose you should demand what right I have to such a plantation? I might tell you my father gave it to me. You demand further, But how came your father to have possession of it? I may be able to say, my grandfather gave it to my father. You still go on, But what right had your grandfather to it? I am run out of breath, and must say, I do not know. Now you triumph over me, and say, this plantation may be the property of the Indians for what you know, and your title, at best, depends upon a *mere* tradition, and if you can't prove it to have been purchased of the Indians, it is none of yours; and thus I am cut out of my farm.

Ana. Well, but I ask you how the children of the *Israelites*, being baptized unto *Moses*, will prove that infants are to be baptized now?

Metho. I will try to draw you out of your entrenchment presently. In the mean time I will answer your question. My first design in shewing you those places of scripture, was to let you see where infants were baptized, which you could never see before. This design being answered, I shall prove from the same scripture that infants are now to be baptized unto CHRIST, as they were formerly unto Moses.

Ana. Proceed—I am ready to hear.

Metho. In the 3d chapter of Acts, and 22d verse, we have a quotation from Deut. xviii. 15—18. "*Moses* truly said unto the fathers, a prophet shall the LORD your GOD raise up unto you of your brethren, *like unto me.*" This prophecy is here applied to CHRIST, of whom Moses was a type. CHRIST *was to be like unto* Moses. Parents and their children were initiated into the religion of Moses, and put themselves and their little ones under the government and direction of his laws by baptism. And if this is not to be

the case, *wherein is* CHRIST *like unto* Moses? If CHRIST had excluded infants from baptism, would not the Jews have said, surely you can't be the Messiah or that prophet, for *you are not like unto* Moses, for *he* took *little ones* and all into covenant, and they were *baptized unto him.* In this very thing, the likeness between Moses and CHRIST principally consists. Is CHRIST a ruler and deliverer? So is Moses: Acts vii. 35. *This* Moses *whom they refused, the same did* GOD *send to be a ruler and a deliverer.* Moses delivered the people from *Egyptian* bondage, took them under his care and protection, gave them laws and statutes, and led them on to the earthly *Canaan:* So does CHRIST protect and guide his church, and lead his people to the celestial *Canaan*, which is also a promised rest above, of which the earthly *Canaan* was a type. This argument is very plain, and yet it is not the only argument by many.

Ana. I do not think infants have any right to baptism.

Metho. You don't *think so?* Can you prove they have not?

Ana. Why, what does the prayer-book say is required of persons to be baptized?

Metho. We have agreed more than once to drop this book. I know what that book says both of adult and infant baptism too: It says infants are in anywise to be baptized as most agreeable to the word of GOD. But what signifies this? You don't believe that book; if you did, the controversy would be at an end.

Ana. Well, don't the scripture say, *repent and be baptized; believe and be baptized?* Now how can infants either repent or believe? You know they can't, and therefore they can't be admitted to baptism.

Metho. Fie upon it!—You have broke my head sadly at the first stroke: However, I am glad I have got you out at last; I hope I shall get over the wound presently.—But, my friend, I find I was more scared than hurt, and now discover that you have overshot yourself. Your argument

proves too much, for if put into form, it would stand thus—*All who do not repent and believe can't be admitted to baptism.—Infants have neither repented nor believed, therefore infants cannot be admitted to baptism.*

Ana. Ah, and it follows very clearly.

Metho. Now by the same argument I can prove that all infants shall be damned, and the devils saved. The argument shall stand according to the same mood and figure with that of your's above.

Ana. Well, let us have it.

Metho. You know the scripture says, "he that believes shall be saved, and he that believes *not shall be damned.* And again, *except ye repent ye shall all perish.* Thus stands the argument.—*All that believe shall be saved: but the devils believe,* (James ii. 19.) therefore *the devils shall be saved.* And with respect to infants, thus stands the argument—*All who do not repent and believe, shall be damned: Infants neither repent nor believe,* therefore *all infants shall be damned.*—Nay, don't start! this conclusion as clearly follows from the premises as your's, Mr. Impartial Enquirer himself being judge.

Ana. That I did not consider before.

Metho. I hope then you will be ashamed of the absurdity of such an argument for the future: since to reason from such general premises, infants would be in ten thousand times worse case than the devils themselves. If you would read your bible, you would see that faith and repentance were as much required to circumcision as to baptism. But this did not exclude infants, and for this good reason, because infants have committed no sin to repent of, and so need no repentance.

Ana. O, but our author says, faith and repentance were not required to circumcision. Page 20.

Metho. You must not take all your author says upon trust. Did not *Abraham* believe before he was circum-

used? And when any were proselyted to the Jews religion, do you think they did not believe in the GOD of *Israel*, before they would submit to be initiated into the church of GOD, by the painful rule of circumcision? That man must have lost his reason who can think otherwise.—See *Exodus* xiith chap. 48 v. But have you any more scripture to bring against infant baptism?

Ana. Yes, I have.—

Metho. Ah, so you have, and I will not give you the trouble to mention it—I will do it for you—It is *teach and baptize.*

Ana. Yes, that is it. CHRIST said, *Go teach all nations, baptizing* them, &c. Here, you see, *teach* stands before baptizing;—Now what can you teach an infant?

Metho. I find you stand much upon a mere sameness and priority of words. But as you are a *scripturist*, you might have noticed that the order of words in scripture, is no certain rule for the order of things.

Ana. No! Why then you must read the scripture backwards.

Metho. I will give you an instance or two of what I said. See *Mark* i. chap. 4th and 5th verses. "*John* did *baptize* in the wilderness, and *preach* the baptism of repentance.—And they were all *baptized* of him in *Jordan*, *confessing* their sins." Here you see *preaching repentance* and *confession of sins* stand after baptism; and which do you think was done first?

Ana. Why, I make no doubt but *John* preached the baptism of repentance first, and they confessed their sins first; both were before baptism.

Metho. But according to the order of words, baptism was first; therefore the order of words can be no rule for the order of things.

Ana. This I did not particularly consider before; for

this is not the way in which the advocates for infant *sprinkling* usually answer this text.

Metho. How then?

Ana. Why, they tell us that Mr. Lexiconist says that the word *teach* should be rendered, *disciple* all nations, *baptizing* them, &c. But our author says this amounts to the same thing, "for it would be an odd sort of a disciple that was made without teaching." Page 29.

Metho. When I read that part of the dialogue, I questioned much whether your author understood the meaning of the word *disciple*. Do you know the meaning of that word?

Ana. Ah, to be sure: It means a person *already taught*.

Metho. It is strange that you, who have been a schoolmaster as well as myself, should not better understand that word. I thought every body knew that a *disciple* is one who is put under the care of a master to *be taught*, and not one who is *already taught*. Every child sent to school is a disciple of the master to whom he is sent: and you must know that children are sent to school not because they are *already taught*, but that they *may be taught*. And that this is evidently the true meaning of the text, appears upon the very face of the words in *Matt.* xxviii. 19, 20. Go *proselyte or disciple* all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost, *teaching* them to observe all things which, &c. Here you see *teaching* is put after *baptizing*. By baptism we are initiated into the church, the school of CHRIST, in which we are to *be taught* and trained up, till having *finished our course* of education here below, we are admitted into the higher forms in Heaven.

Ana. I can't see into it.

Metho. When you used to want a school, what did you do?

Ana. Why, I went out into some neighbourhood to see how many *scholars* I could get, by soliciting parents to send their children to me.

Metho. And did you not get these scholars or *disciples* (the words are the same) before you *taught* them?

Ana. To be sure I did.

Metho. No doubt of it; and you called them your disciples the very hour they were brought into your school, or put under your care, though they did not know one letter in a book. So the apostles made disciples, and then taught them to read the text according to the translation of Mr. Lexiconist, as you call him; the words run natural and easy, Go *disciple* or proselyte all nations, baptizing them, &c. teaching them all things.—But according to Mr. Scripturist, there will be a vain tautology or a senseless repetition; *Go teach all nations, &c. teaching them.*—What pretty sense is this!

Ana. I can't but think this text makes against infant baptism.

Metho. Against it! Surprising! It certainly makes much for it, if it be not an express command for it.

Ana. How so?

Metho. Why, it can't be denied (unless by those who will deny any thing, rather than give up a *party opinion*) I say, it can't be denied that it was a custom among the Jews to baptize the infant children of all who were made proselytes to their religion. This the most learned and candid among the Anabaptists are obliged to own. It was also a common phrase with them to call such infants *proselytes:* for in their writings we meet with such sayings as these: "If with a proselyte, his sons and his daughters be made proselytes, that which is done by their father redounds to their good." And again—"An *Israelite* that takes an heathen child and baptizes him for a proselyte, behold he is a proselyte"* Now, Sir, the apostles, who were brought up in the Jew's religion, could not be ignorant of this custom of baptizing infants

* Wall in his history and conference on baptism, quotes the authors where these phrases are found.

and calling them proselytes: Therefore when our Saviour gave this general commission to go and proselyte all nations, they must of necessity understand him, that infants were included as well as others. This they must understand and do, unless their master had told them otherwise, and excluded infants by name.—Men are to take words in that sense in which they are current, at the time and place in which they are spoken; but baptizing infants was then to make proselytes of them as well as adults; therefore the apostles, without all doubt, must consider these words as an express command for infant baptism.—I could say a thousand things more in favour of infant baptism, but it would be tedious, especially as they have been said already by others. Let me persuade you to read *Bostwic's* sermon on that subject, without prejudice, and I am sure you will see stronger arguments, and more fair and manly reasoning for infant baptism there than you'll find in that dialogue against it; you will see no quibbling or unchristian censures, as you see in that dialogue.

Ana. But I am not satisfied about the text, *teach and baptize* yet. Certainly the apostles did teach people before they baptized them.

Metho. There is no doubt but they taught some before they baptized them. Their commission led them out among the heathens, who never heard of CHRIST or his gospel before; the adults among these they must first teach something of the true GOD, and of CHRIST, &c. before they would be willing that either they or their children should be initiated into the christian religion by baptism, or be made proselytes thereunto.

Ana. But it does not appear that the apostles told them to baptize their children.

Metho. Then they did not act up to their commission: but I think it is fully evident that they did *teach* them this, else how came those who were baptized themselves, so rea-

dily to have their whole families baptized? Did they do this without being taught to do it?

Ana. I suppose you have an eye now to *Lydia*, the *Gaoler* and *Stephanus*: I suppose all the members of their families were grown up to be men and women, and so were taught, repented and believed before they were baptized.

Metho. It must be all supposition sure enough, but it is a very groundless one. The practice of infant baptism has prevailed in all ages of the church;—it has been universal in this colony ever since its first settlement by the English, (Quakers excepted) till within a very few years you have come among us, under the title of *reformers* of this corruption, as you are pleased to call it. Surely you ought to have been better provided with arguments for such an undertaking. You have brought three scriptures, and they all prove just nothing at all, except against you. And seeing you have no more scripture to bring, you are reduced to bare suppositions: but I will spoil your supposition for you; for I can prove, upon your own principles, that the members of *Lydia's* family were not adults.

Ana. Can you so? Let me hear you.

Metho. Is it not one of your principles that you must have express scripture proof or nothing, and that you will admit of no supposition?

Ana. Yes.

Metho. And don't you hold that people adult, must be taught before baptism? Or do you think an adult heathen would be baptized before he was taught and believed? You say no.

Ana. All this we hold.

Metho. Then, Sir, upon your own principles I can prove that *Lydia's* family consisted of infants, or such as were under her control, and so were baptized by her will, and not their own.

Ana. Proceed.

Metho. In the xvith chapter of *Acts* and 15th verse, we have plain scripture that *Lydia's* family were baptized; but I must not say that the members of her family were taught or believed; for this, on your principles, you must deny, because there is not the least shadow of scripture to prove that they were taught or believed. Grown persons, we all allow, would not be baptized without these pre-requisites: it then clearly follows that they must be infants and such as were baptized by *Lydia's* will, and not their own. I am sure you have no scripture to prove that they were either instructed, repented or believed; so that upon your own principles, I have fairly proved the baptism of infants.

Ana. Stay! hold! Not you. Why you know the apostles went out of the city by a river side, and spake unto the women which resorted thither. (*Acts* xvi. 13.) And here they might be taught perhaps.

Metho. Perhaps so, on this supposition, that all *Lydia's* family were *women;* otherwise there is no room even for a *perhaps.* Do you think they were all females?

Ana. It is very possible.

Metho. I allow then that here is proof that the apostles spake to women by the river side. But these could not belong to *Lydia's* family, for the author of the dialogue makes out that the members of this family were all men and not women, since you and he stand so much upon words and literal significations.

Ana. Does he so? How?

Metho. Observe here, in page 30th, where he goes about to patch up a proof that there were no infants in *Lydia's* family, he refers us to the 40th verse, "And they entered into the house of *Lydia,* and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them and departed." Here he insinuates that all these brethren belonged to *Lydia's* family, and that the apostles saw no other. If so, then they must

be males and not females, otherwise he would have said, *and when he had seen the sisters he comforted them*, &c. We must go by scripture, and you know the scripture teaches us to call women *sisters* and not *brothers*. So all your proof is gone again.

Ana. But what does the sacred writer mean by their seeing the *brethren and comforting them?* Our author says these could not be infants, "for every body knows that a good nurse could do more toward comforting a cross child than an apostle." P. 30.

Metho. I believe your author would make a good Merry-Andrew, he is very witty upon us: but such low *wit* and reason seldom go together. But now to the question. You know there was a numerous church planted at *Philippi*, and we have reason to believe that many more were converted on this first visit of *Paul* and *Silas*, than what we have *here* an account of. The rest is easy.

Ana. That I did not particularly consider before.

Metho. Upon the whole, household baptism is as plain in scripture as any truth whatever. This is what our church ministers practise; and therefore they are *right* and you are *wrong*;—and so *you* stand in need of reformation in this respect, and not they.—For your ministers do not baptize households together, as the apostles did, and our ministers, after their example, still continue to do. And now where is all the *scripture* you talk of to *prove your principles?*

Ana. Why, have we no scripture for our practice?

Metho. No, not one single text. Your practice has neither *precept* nor *example* to support it.

Ana. Why, is it not plain the apostles did baptize adults?

Metho. And so do our ministers too; they baptize such adults as never were baptized before, or in infancy. But it is very strange that any man should be so blind as not to see that there is a wide difference between the *present time* and the *time* of the apostles and first planters of christianity

in the world. The apostles went out into heathen nations, with an intent to proselyte those who had no gospel or christian baptism before; nor had they, as we know of, ever heard of christianity before. In this case, the apostles first work was to open their commission, to convince them of the being and attributes of the LORD and his CHRIST, and to persuade them to believe the truths they delivered to them. Now, people in this state, must of necessity be taught such things as these, and believe them too, before they would be baptized into the profession of them. They had no fathers who believed the gospel, to baptize them in their infancy as we have: But is this the case now? No. Many nations are now baptized into JESUS CHRIST:—christianity has long been established among them, and it has been handed down from fathers to their sons, and parents and their children are already baptized into it. And now, Sir, where have you any command to do this over again? Or where have you any example for it? Did you ever read of any one, born of christian parents, baptized at adult years? Have you either precept or example in scripture for such a practice?—You must know you have not; and till you can shew precept and example for *this*, you shew nothing at all to the purpose; and therefore every unprejudiced person must conclude that yours, and not ours, is a *scriptureless practice*.

Ana. Do you suppose that the apostles baptized the infants of those who believed and were baptized themselves?

Metho. I do not only suppose it, but *I am satisfied they did.* Their commission includes them, and their baptizing whole families, just as our ministers do, shews, beyond all shadow of doubt, that they did so. Now in this you do not follow the apostles' example as we do. Did you ever know one instance of your ministers' baptizing a whole household at once? I believe not. Any tolerably consistent and candid interpretation of the 14th verse of the viith chapter, 1st epistle *Cor.* will confirm the same truth. "The unbelev-

ing husband is sanctified by the believing wife; and *vice versa*—else were your children unclean, but now are they holy." It discovers the last degree of stupidity, or the most desperate distortion, for the purpose of defending a bad cause, to explain those terms by *legitimate* and *illegitimate*. Where is there an example in scripture, you who stickle so much for its literal words, where is there an example of *unclean* signifying *illegitimate birth?* Or of *holy* signifying a child born in lawful wedlock? Is not such an explanation suited to tempt a smile at the embarrassment of writers with an obstinate text? But the terms *holy* and *sanctify*, in a multitude of passages in the old testament, imply the separation of any thing to an holy or sacred use; as the vessels of the temple, the victims for sacrifice, or the separation of persons from the rest of mankind, to sacred privileges. So *Israel* was called a *holy* nation, because they were distinguished from the rest of the world, that they might enjoy the privileges of the church of GOD. The *Levites* were an *holy* tribe, because separated to be the priests of that religion. What an easy, natural interpretation of these words is it, in conformity to their frequent use in scripture, to say,—else were your children unfit for the blessed privileges of the gospel church; but now are they *holy*, that is entitled to her privileges, and particularly to the ordinance of baptism, separated from the rest of the world, and distinguished by the enjoyment of this holy ordinance, for the sake of one believing parent?

Ana. Well, whatever you may say about *Lydia's* family, it is certain the Gaoler's all believed and were taught: "for "the scripture says enough to shew that there were no in- "fants in the Gaoler's household, for the apostles, who ne- "ver used to preach to infants, *spake unto him the word of* "*the* LORD, *and to all that were in his house*; and, verse "34, it is said, *he rejoiced, believing in* GOD *with all his* "*house.* So that it is evident that all *believed*, unless some

"*artful person* can prove that there were some in the "house besides the *all* that were in the house." Page 30.

Metho. This smells a little of the Jack-pudding again. There is a little wit and a little art too in that sentence, but your author has gone from his point. He set out with saying, *there is scripture enough to prove that there were no infants in the Gaoler's household;* and concludes with putting it upon some *artful person* to prove there were not: but it does not require much *art* to shew that the scripture he brings is very far from being *sufficient to prove* what he brings it for.—For, suppose I should say that the Rev. Mr. *A.* preached a sermon at Mr. *B's*, or spake the word of the LORD to all that were in Mr. *B's* house; would this be *enough* to prove that there was not one soul at Mr. *B's* besides his own family, or that Mr. *B.* had not a child in his house, or that Mr. *B's* wife, like *Sarah* and *Elizabeth*, was a barren woman? Do you call this reasoning? It is really trifling. To mention it is *enough* to confute it.

Ana. But you don't take notice of what is said in 34th verse. *He rejoiced, believing in* GOD *with all his house.*

Metho. This does not prove that there was not a child there. For suppose it was said of the Rev. Mr. *A's* congregation at Mr. *B's*, that the sermon had a great effect upon all—that they *all* rejoiced in the LORD, and that the preacher rejoiced *with* them: Is it not easy *enough* to understand this expression, without undertaking to prove from it that there was not one infant there? Or that there was not one woman there who had brought a child to be baptized that day?—It is said in the 33d, that the Gaoler was baptized, *he and all his;* which I think strongly implies that his family or the greatest part of them were baptized by the Gaoler's will and desire; And this is agreeable to *Exodus*, xiith chap. and 48th verse, where it is said of one proselyted to the Jews religion, *Let all his males be circumcised;* and

besides it is not said that the Gaoler's house rejoiced and believed, but only that he rejoice , believing, &c.

Ana. But, " the household of *Stephanus* were the first fruits of *Achaia,* and they addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints. And could *cradle bed* infants addict themselves to the ministry of the saints?" Page 31.

Metho. This argument is of a colour with the rest, and proves nothing at all of what the author of the dialogue would have it prove. For suppose it is said of any family in our church (where all infants are baptized) that it is an exceeding happy family; that all join together in the worship of GOD; that they are all addicted to good works, and are kind to the preachers of the gospel: Would it not be thought exceeding trifling, if some captious person should say, " Why, Sir, you are wrong, there are several infants in the family, and can cradle-bed infants do so and so?

Ana. Well, but " if households must needs be taken as " comprising infants, then that phrase *salute the household* " *of Onesiphorus,* must be taken so too; and what absurdi- " ty were it to tell *cradle-bed* infants that *Paul* the prison- " er remembered his respects to them?" *Ibid.*

Metho. If it be an absurdity to *remember our respects* to a gentleman & his family, the wisest men are guilty of it; for how often do they say, " Please to give my compliments to such a family? Or, please to give my respects to Mr. *N.* and his family?"—Indeed, Sir, such arguments as these are so trifling, that I am almost ashamed to follow your author through them. You must see that his intention in all *this,* is to blind and deceive the ignorant, and to *beguile unstable souls.*

Ana. But I don't think there is any command for infant baptism; and if so, you ought not to baptize them, for fear of the judgments of GOD. " Poor *Uzzah* lost his life in consequence of carrying the Ark upon a cart, instead of carrying it upon mens' shoulders." Page 17.

Metho. We are not to be scared out of our duty by these *far-fetched* stories. I believe it would puzzle a philosopher to find out any connection between *Uzzah's cart* and infant baptism: besides, we have never seen any body lose his life for having his child baptized.

Ana. "This, Sir, is a more spiritual dispensation, and "therefore GOD's judgments are of a more spiritual nature. "For disobedience GOD many times sends leanness into the "soul." *Ibid.*

Metho. If by leanness you mean the want of holiness of heart, and universal love to GOD and all mankind, &c. then I think the leanness appears to be on your side; for your charity is so far from being universal, that it is bounded by the narrow limits of your own party: And by your own confession, your hearts continue very wicked and polluted; and, no wonder, seeing there is so much bigotry and spirit of party to be found among you, and so great a part of your time is taken up in disputing, and so much of your sermons is taken up in abusing all other churches and societies besides your own. It is not strange that you are so *lean*, for the soul can't feed and thrive upon ridicule and abuse.

Ana. Nadab and *Abihu* though were destroyed for doing what the LORD commanded them not. Page 32.

Metho. The Anabaptists, for want of a better, have made great use of this text, *I commanded them not.* The words are found in *Jeremiah*, viith chap. 31st verse, where they evidently mean that the people had done what the LORD had forbidden. The whole verse runs thus, *They have built the high places of* Tophet, *to burn their sons and daughters in the fire, which I commanded them not.* This was murder and idolatry, both of which are absolutely forbidden—But, Sir, can you see no difference between the Jews offering up their sons and daughters to devils, in the fire of *Tophet*, and the christians offering their children to GOD, in the water of baptism?

Ana. But one plain text would have settled the whole controversy.

Metho. But it is your misfortune that you have not got one text on your side, plain or not plain. You can't produce one for your life; and what vaunting is this, for you to pretend that you have so much scripture on your side, and when you are called upon for it, you have none to bring, at least none to the purpose, mere negatives at best.

Ana. You should not interrupt me.—I was going to say, one plain text would have settled the controversy; for if the apostles had said, "Brethren, our divine Master has been "pleased to appoint baptism to succeed in the room of cir- "cumcision, and your infants are now to be baptized in- "stead of being circumcised, it would have done." P. 22.

Metho. It is not our business to prescribe how the apostles ought to have spoken. Infants had all along from *Abraham* been taken into the church with their parents: if therefore it had been the mind of CHRIST that they should no longer be taken in with their parents, but were to be left out under the gospel dispensation, then there would have been a necessity for an express mention of. But our LORD is so far from intimating any such thing, that he declares of *such is the kingdom of Heaven, or of* GOD. But we have reason to think that if the apostles had spoken as you prescribe, it would not have done; for they told the Jews that circumcision was abolished, but they were so attached to their own usages that they still thought it necessary.—It is plain that baptism and the LORD's Supper were ordinances of the Christian church.—The Quakers deny both.—We are plainly commanded to sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.—The Quakers deny all. So you see that those who are given to dispute, will dispute at all events.

Ana. Well, I must be going. Farewell.

Metho. No, no, stay a little longer. As you have drawn me into this dispute, I want to make you sick of it, before I

let you go. I hope it will do you good; for *you* have been so full of disputes lately that all your religion seems to belly in this very thing. So much disputing among professors of religion, has wounded the cause of CHRIST: if I could be so fortunate as to drive this disputing devil from among you, it would be much to your advantage, and contribute towards your happiness. If you have got any scripture against infant baptism, let us have it now.

Ana. I have none but *repent and be baptized, believe and be baptized—teach and baptize.*

Metho. So I thought.—And two of these you quote wrong; for there is no such scripture as *believe and be baptized, nor teach and baptize.* But these texts I have taken notice of already, and have shewn how little they make for your purpose.

Ana. But, "wherever Christ commands the baptizing "believers, there is an implicit prohibition of all others not "so qualified; for every affirmative command of CHRIST "implies a negative." Page 32.

Metho. Before you scare us with your negatives, you ought to produce your affirmatives, for you have not shewn us where CHRIST'S affirmative command for baptizing believers is yet. The text I suppose your author had his eye upon, is that in *Mark* xvith chap. 16th verse. *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.* But I appeal to every person in his right senses, whether that text contains any command at all. It only contains a condition, and that not a condition of baptism but of salvation. This is clear from the promise annexed to *believing*, and the threatening denounced against unbelief. He that believeth, &c. *shall be saved;* he that believeth not *shall be damned.* And as to what your author says, *that every affirmative command implies a negative;* this is not true, for we have a positive command to keep the seventh day of the week a holy sabbath of rest, which, according to your author's divinity, is a

negative command for not keeping the first day of the week; and yet you and I do it. There is also a positive command, *honour thy father and mother:* and if this implies a negative, then it is a sin for us to honour rulers, magistrates, &c. And as to that other scarecrow your author makes out of *Nadab* and *Abihu's* offering strange fire, *commanded not*, I would reply, that this is not a parallel case. The particular fire they were to offer was specified, but they would not do as they were *commanded*. Now, if in baptizing our ministers, instead of using water as commanded, should use brandy, rum or tar, the observation would be something better; but as the case is, every man who is not blinded with prejudice, must see that the author's whole design is to deceive the people with false appearances.

Ana. But if you are *right* with regard to the subjects of baptism, surely you are not *right* in the mode. The apostles did not sprinkle, but plunge.

Metho. That is much easier said than proved.

Ana. O, come, we have scripture *enough* for this.

Metho. Perhaps not—Let us see what you have got.

Ana. John *did baptize in* Jordan, Mark i. 4.—John *was baptizing in* Enon, *because there was much water there*, &c.

Metho. That's nothing to me. I am not *John's* disciple; and if I was, it would puzzle you to prove that *John* had them *all-over* in the water.

Ana. How did *Philip* baptize the Eunuch? *They went down both into the water.*

Metho. They went down out of the chariot, and they might stand in the water, for what you or I can tell; but it is not said that *Philip* dipped him over head and ears in the water: and I am satisfied he did not.

Ana. Why do you think so?

Metho. Because by the best accounts, the water is not six inches deep, and therefore it was not possible for a man to be dipped in it.

Ana. Who says so?

Metho. One Mr. *Saunders*, who was at the very place; and also one *Charles Thompson*, who was there also.

Ana. But we must not take any thing from man.

Metho. But your author takes something from man, and affirms it was *actually* so.

Ana. But does *it* not say we are buried with him in baptism? "And can a man be said to be buried by having a little sand put upon his face?" Page 12.

Metho. Your author says he is sorry any one should take a metaphorical expression as strong proof of any thing. Page 25. Surely *buried with* CHRIST *by baptism into death*, is not a literal but a metaphorical expression, as well as that other expression in the same chapter, and which means the same thing, *crucified with him.* Therefore nothing can be proved from this expression; but if the expression was taken literally, it would make as much or more for sprinkling or pouring, as for plunging. For, in burying, the body is not plunged through the substance of the earth, but the earth is sprinkled or poured upon it. So all your proof is gone again, and you are out at sea as far as ever.

Ana. Why, does it appear to you that the apostles sprinkled those whom they baptized?

Metho. I am satisfied they did. It can admit of little doubt but *Paul* himself was so baptized, and also the Gaoler and all his household, and the 3000 at one time, and 5000 at another, converted and baptized by St. *Peter* at *Jerusalem*, must have been sprinkled.

Ana. Why so? Our author says, "there is one circumstance that puts it beyond a doubt that *Paul* was dipped, in that he puts himself among others, and asserts, *we are buried with* CHRIST *in baptism.*" Page 15.

Metho. The circumstance he mentions does not remove the doubt at all. For, 1. The author misquotes the apostle, inserting *in baptism*, instead of *by baptism into death.*

2. The expression itself, as I said just now, is figurative, and therefore no certain proof can be drawn from it. 3. The meaning of the expression is doubtful, most people believing that it means no more than to express the obligation which lies upon all who are baptized to die unto sin and depart from iniquity, &c. So no certain conclusion can be drawn from doubtful premises. 4. It has not been made appear yet, that the others he puts himself among were dipped. And, 5. If it could be proved that the *others* were dipped, it would not prove that *Paul* was, any more than it can be proved that St. *James* was a curser and swearer, because when speaking of the tongue, he *puts himself among others and asserts*, "therewith curse we men." So that your author's circumstance leaves the matter as doubtful as ever: and as to the 3000 and 5000 mentioned before, it is not at all probable that they were dipped any more than St. *Paul*. Good reasons have been assigned for their being sprinkled, by many writers, but I will only add this.—Mr. *Fuller* tells us, "there were no water mills at *Jerusalem*, because there was no stream large enough to drive them." They had none but the gentle waters of *Siloam;* so that the nature of the place as well as the number of the baptized, renders it plain enough that they were sprinkled.

Ana. The action of baptism is to represent the death, burial and resurrection of CHRIST, and how can these be represented but by plunging?

Metho. It does not appear that the act of baptizing was intended to represent any such things; for the apostles, who baptized during the life of our LORD, knew nothing of it: for after Jesus rose from the dead, it is said that as yet *they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead.* John xx. 9.

Ana. What then do you think the act of baptizing is intended to represent?

Metho. The cleansing from sin is represented by it. Wa-

ter you know is an emblem of purity, and has in itself a cleansing virtue. Cleansing from sin is not effected by the element of water, but by the pouring out of the holy spirit upon us, the sprinkling us with it, and also the sprinkling of the blood of JESUS, all which is represented by water. Hence we read, *Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean,* &c. Ezekiel xxxvi, 25. *So shall he sprinkle many nations,* &c. Isa. lii, 15. This cleansing us from all filthiness and sin, as I said, is not the effect of the water, but of the holy spirit and the blood of CHRIST, which are represented by the water. And those expressions of sprinkling us with the spirit, pouring out the spirit upon us, and sprinkling us with the blood of JESUS, being figurative, they must allude to some likeness in nature, with which we are acquainted; for all our ideas of spiritual things are taken from some likenesses in nature, with which we are acquainted: Then it follows, that the pouring of water is an outward sign of pouring out of the spirit. From hence it may be concluded, that if there is to be a likeness between the sign and the thing signified, then, as sprinkling or pouring water in baptism best represents this, it is the most proper mode. We never read of being plunged into the spirit or into the blood of CHRIST, but of these being *poured* or *sprinkled* upon us. The likeness between the sign and the thing signified would be lost by any other mode of baptism but that of sprinkling.

Ana. Some of your church holds with dipping, and Mr. *Burkett* says it was the manner in hot countries.

Metho. Whatever they might do in some hot countries does not prove that our Saviour has fixed this mode. For my part, I should never be for any other mode but that of sprinkling, and for this reason, there is no command for dipping; and it is at least very doubtful whether ever the apostles practised it in any one instance:—there are the strongest circumstances that they did sprinkle, and as sprink-

ing is the most expressive of the thing signified, therefore I should choose this mode and no other.

Ana. I doubt you are afraid of the cross. Brother *Harris* and brother *Waller* both say, that "this has frightened many good christians from the blessing attending a submission to this ordinance."

Metho. It is very strange that your brother *Harris*, who so often tells us in his sermons that he has been a Burgess, and a Colonel, a Sheriff, &c. could not write ten lines, after all his preferments, without contradicting himself, for he has advanced a glaring contradiction in terms—"Many a good christian, and yet frightened at the cross." A man cannot be a christian at all who does not take up the *cross daily;* and if your baptism be the *cross*, it should be daily submitted to and taken up.—But what blessing is this that attends this submission?

Ana. Why it is a duty.

Metho. That it is my duty to be baptized a second time, or in other words, to be an Anabaptist, still remains to be proved. The contrary has appeared hitherto, and you have no more scripture to bring to prove it a duty; and therefore I ask, *Who hath required this at your hands?*

Ana. We think it is required, and we believe you *have changed the ordinances and broken the everlasting covenant.*

Metho. You think so; and I suppose the Papists think they ought to baptize *bells* and go *barefoot:* But your thinking so is no proof.—But what ordinances have we changed? The words you allude to are found in xxivth *Isaiah*, and 5th verse. At that time it is beyond a doubt that infants were taken into the church of God. This we have not changed, for we take them in still. And what everlasting covenant have we broken? The everlasting covenant here mentioned, was the same, I suppose, which was made and established with *Abraham*, for an everlasting covenant. *Gen.* xvii. 7. In this infants are expressly named, and required to be en-

seed into it. This we do still. Now who is it, you or we, who have changed the ordinances, and broken the everlasting covenant? For that man who did not enter himself and his seed into covenant, by the seal of circumcision, was to be cut off from among the people: *He hath broken my covenant.* Gen. xvii. 14.

Ana. But we can't allow that baptism succeeds in the place of circumcision.

Metho. No, no, you must take care how you give up that, or indeed allow any thing that is true, though ever so plain: But Doctor *Gill*, the *famous* Anabaptist in *London*, in his Exposition on the Canticles, had like to have forgot himself, and let the truth fall out, before he was aware: However truth enough dropped from him to shew that he looked upon baptism to answer the same end under the gospel, as circumcision did under the law.

Quarto edition, page 135.

Ana. I don't think it did.

Metho. Why, it appears you think so, by your own practice, and I can make you sensible of it.

Ana. How?

Metho. Were any considered as members of the Jewish church under the law, but such as were circumcised? Was not that man cut off from the church, or from among the people, who did not submit to this rite? Were any admitted to the Passover without it?

Ana. All this is right.

Metho. Very well. Then I ask, are any considered as members of your church who are not baptized? Are not all those cut off from among you who will not submit to that rite? Or are any admitted to the sacrament among you without it? I need not wait for an answer, for every body knows that this is your opinion by your practice: and therefore it appears by your own practice, that they answer the same end. This is enough, without going any farther.

Ana. But some of your church have written as if not baptizing infants would abridge their privilege; but what privileges have your *sprinkled* infants which ours have not, though they are not baptized? We have the oracles of GOD, and "I hope that you will allow, Sir, that I have as good a right to put a bible into my child's hand, as you have into your's." Page 31.

Metho. A Jew might have argued in the same manner, What good does it do to circumcise my child? What though he is not circumcised, I hope that you will allow, Sir, that I may teach my child as well as you.

Ana. But can you point out any benefit infants receive by it, which others do not partake of?

Metho. To this I have spoken already, and it will be time enough to answer that question further, when you point out any benefit which you receive by your adult dipping, which we who were baptized in infancy, do not partake of: but this you can't do; nor can you shew one end it answers, but a very bad one, that is to make a schism in the church, the body of CHRIST. Do you expect to be saved by *your* baptism?

Ana. No. salvation is not of works.

Metho. I believe I could produce many witnesses to prove that they have heard some of your preachers often declare, that people could not be saved without submitting to your baptism: and I myself have heard it said by some of you, that they believed every christian would sooner or later submit to it. Now, what is this short of making a Saviour of water, and affirming that none but those of your own sect can be saved, or go to Heaven?

Ana. I believe that all christians will submit sooner or later to our baptism.

Metho. This is uncharitable indeed:—What reasonable man can *swallow* this? Look into all ages of the church, and especially those of which we have the clearest discove-

ry. Where have the most pious and useful men been found? Not in your church or of your persuasion. When popery had overspread so great a part of *Christendom*, was the reformation brought about by Anabaptists? Not at all. *Luther* was the man raised up and qualified by the LORD to bring about this glorious event; but after the reformation was in some good measure effected, then started up the sect of Anabaptists: And this sect did a vast deal of hurt to the reformation, by bringing very much discredit upon it. This was about 235 years ago, and no clear account of your sect can be traced any further back than this period. It has been said by some that the *Waldenses* and *Albigenses* in Bohemia, were of your opinion, at least some of them; but I have lately read the history of the *Waldenses*, *Albigenses* and *Petrobrusians*, and I cannot see that there was any such error among them, as that of denying infant baptism.

Ana. But our author says, page 9, the ancient *Waldenses* and *Albigenses* are charged by the Papists with denying infant baptism.

Metho. It is not at all improbable but the Papists were villainous enough to charge them with this erroneous opinion; for the historian who writes the account of the rise and sufferings, &c. of these good people, says, that "the Popish Monks charged them with many foul and false opinions. From which accusations they, by a publick apology, cleared themselves." (See *Clarke's* General Martyrology, in Christian Library, vol. 6, and page 14.) So that if the Papists did charge them with denying infant baptism, it appears that it was only a wretched and malicious slander, and by their apology they made it evident that it was so, and that no such foul and false opinion was held among them. It is manifest, from Clark's account, that the *Waldenses*, *Albigenses* and *Petrobrusians* were one and the same people, and that they were episcopalians, as our church is: But with respect to the reformation just mentioned, it is

clear that Anabaptists did then make their appearance, because Luther mentions them, and complains of the great hurt they did to the reformation and the christian cause. (See his commentary on the *Galatians.)* And now, Sir, what reasonable man can even suppose that you were sent here to reform the corruption of any established ordinance? *Luther* was sensible that the Anabaptists hung as a dead weight upon the skirts of the reformation, and I believe many pious people believe *you* hang as a dead weight upon the skirts of true religion at the present day; and whatever you may be prompted to believe, from the too great success you have met with in making proselytes to your persuasion, I trust my countrymen begin to see into things, in some good measure now, and will not so easily be beguiled, as too many have been already.

Ana. Ah, now you are persecuting us: but we have always been a persecuted people, and so have the mark of the people of GOD, *Blessed are ye,* says our LORD, *that are persecuted for righteousness sake.*

Metho. Take care, if you are persecuted, that it be for righteousness sake, and not for unrighteousness:—but far be it from me to persecute any man alive. But if it is called persecution in me to speak the truth in answering for myself, and endeavoring to preserve people from error, what must we think of those many abusive, sneering and offensive expressions which are to be found in your author, and in many of your sermons?

Ana. We don't persecute. What expressions do you mean?

Metho. How often do we hear your preachers (who perhaps have not read their bible through since they went to school) declaring in such language as this? viz. "*Infant baptism is a scriptureless practice—a feather of Antichrist's cap—built upon a Popish quicksand—haled through the church of* Rome—*a spawn of the mother of harlots—the*

contrivance of lazy priests, who are afraid of wetting their feet, who rather than do their duty, will lie in bed and call for a cordial:"—that is, in plain English, they are so drunk they can't rise; and many other things too tedious to mention. All this is well, as it comes from you, no persecution at all: but if we say any thing against what you advance, in vindication of ourselves, though in the most inoffensive terms the truth will admit of;—O, this is persecution, we are poor persecuted creatures, and such like.

Ana. O, but you must own that some of the church ministers do get drunk.

Metho. Supposing this to be the case with some, yet, blessed be GOD, they are not all of this stamp; and if they were, this would make nothing against infant baptism.—And how easy would it be for me to recriminate? But I will never return railing for railing—I scorn it.—My cause can be defended easy enough without descending to the low artifice of slander and abuse.—What I have said already, all the Anabaptists in the world can never answer; but I have not said the hundredth part of what might be said, and has been said. If you or any one else should desire further light into this subject, I would advise the reading of *Bostwic*'s sermon on Infant Baptism, *Flavel*'s argument with *Cary*, *Baxter*'s dispute with *Tombs*, *Wall*'s history of Infant Baptism and Conference. Whoever reads these with an impartial eye and unprejudiced mind, will be in no danger of being an Anabaptist.—But I could risque the cause with all the world upon what I have this day advanced in conversation with you.

Ana. Well. I must be going—farewell.

Metho. I wish you well, and I beseech you for the future to pray more and dispute less, and be more anxious to grow in grace than to make proselytes to an opinion which has no more scripture on the side of it. Then you will lead a quiet and peaceable life, in all godliness and christian love.

APPENDIX.

Extract from a Sermon on Baptism, by the Rev. Caleb J. Tenney, *of Newport, R. I. Published* 1808.

TESTIMONIES, well authenticated, give assurance, that Infant Baptism was universally practised by the church in the time of the Apostles and for several centuries after them.

Although this right of infants is not to be maintained by the evidence of history alone, yet if the testimonies of the fathers in the first ages of Christianity are united to support this as an observance of the church, they will establish, beyond all reasonable denial, the transmission of this right, from Christ and the Apostles.

As the concession is general, that the baptism of infants has been practised for several of the last centuries, our present inquiry is into the practice of the church in the time of the Apostles, and of their immediate successors.

Grateful must it be to the Christian world, that more than a century ago, a complete history of Infant Baptism was published by Dr. Wall, a learned and correct historian. Such were the accuracy and merits of this work, that in a general convention, holden February 9th, 1705, the clergy of England "ordered, that the thanks of this house be given to Dr. Wall, for the learned and excellent book, he hath lately written, concerning Infant Baptism." Also Mr. Whiston, a man of extensive learning, and one of the denomination of Baptists, declared to many of them, in a public address, "That Dr. Wall's history of Infant Baptism, *as to facts*, appeared to him, most accurately done, and might be depended on by the Baptists themselves."—From this history, a few testimonies, touching the subject before us, are now to be presented.

After all his assiduous researches, our historian gives the result of the various testimonies, in these words: "For the "*first four hundred* years" after Christ, "there appears "only one man, Tertulian, who advised the delay of Infant "Baptism in some cases; and one Gregory, who did, perhaps, practise such delay in the case of his own children; "but no society of men so thinking, or so practising; or "any one man saying, it was unlawful to baptize infants.

" So in the next *seven hundred years*, there is not so much " as one man to be found, who either spoke for, or practised " any such delay, but all the contrary. And when, about " the year 1130, one sect among the Waldenses, or Albi- " genses declared against the baptizing of infants, as being " incapable of salvation, the *main body* of that people re- " jected their opinion; and they, who still held that opinion, " quickly dwindled away, and disappeared; there being no " more persons heard of, holding that tenet, until the rising " of the German Antipœdobaptists," or Baptists, " in the " year 1522."

Considering the practice of Infant Baptism, through the long period, from the *fourth* to the *sixteenth* century, as universally observed, except by a few who soon dwindled away, and some who denied all baptism by water; we are brought to a careful examination of the subject, during the *first four centuries*.—But through this period, so complete was the union of all Christians in this point, that publications directly upon this subject, either controversial, or historical, were needless. The accounts of the fathers are, of course, detached and occasional. Yet they are sufficiently numerous and decisive, to carry full conviction, that in their day, the church uniformly gave baptism to the infants of believers.

About 300 years after the Apostles, or 400 after the birth of Christ, the *Pelagian Controversy*, upon the subject of *Original Sin*, was commenced, continued long, and engaged the greatest abilities of the age. On one side, Pelagius and his adherents contended, that infants were born free from all sinful impurity.—On the other side, Austin, with his adherents, urged against them the design of Infant Baptism. " Infants are," said Austin, " by *all Christians*, acknow- " ledged to stand in need of baptism, which must be for ori- " ginal sin, since they have no other. If they have no sin, " why are they then baptized, according to the rules of the " church, for the forgiveness of sins? Why are they washed " in the laver of regeneration, if they have no pollution?" By this argument, the Pelagians felt themselves pressed, and deeply perplexed. But had the baptism of infants not been practised by the church, they might, with ease, have asserted this, denied the right, and freed themselves from the whole argument, by which they were so deeply embarrassed. Was this, however, the method which they adopted? Was this their expedient, to secure to themselves a fi-

nal triumph?—Indeed, their conduct was completely the reverse. When some reported, that Pelagius, by denying the pollution of infants, denied baptism to them also, he, in his own vindication, declared: "Men slander me, as if I "denied the sacrament of baptism to infants, and did pro- "mise the kingdom of heaven to any person without the "redemption of Christ: but I *never heard* of *any, not even* "*the most impious heretic,* that would say such a thing of "infants." In opposition to the success of his own argument, and of his favourite sentiment, this man did, thus plainly declare, that he was slandered by those, who intimated, that he denied the baptism of infants, and that it was the universal practice of the church; or that he had never heard of any man, no, not even the most impious heretic, who denied this sacrament to them. But at this period, was Infant Baptism, as some would intimate, generally denied; and still, had Pelagius, who had travelled into all parts of the Christian world, and well knew the general state of all the churches, had he never heard of one, who denied it?—These circumstances, duly considered, must be viewed as almost absolute proof, that, at this early period, Infant Baptism was practised throughout the Christian church.

About 280 years after the Apostles, Austin asserted in his writings, "That Infant Baptism is one of those practi- "ces, which was not instituted by any council, but has *al-* "*ways* been in use.—The whole church of Christ have con- "stantly held, that infants are baptized, for the forgive- "ness of sin." He adds, "That he had *never read, or heard* "*of any Christian, catholic, or sectary, who held other-* "*wise.*"

About 270 years after the Apostolic age, Hierome, Chrysostom and Ambrose touched upon this subject, in their writings. Hierome says: "If infants be not baptized, the sin "of omitting their baptism is laid to the parent's charge." Chrysostom says; "That persons may be baptized, either "*in their infancy,* in middle age, or in old age; and that in- "fants were baptized." Ambrose declares; "That Infant "Baptism was practised in his day, and in the days of the "Apostles." Thus, in the third century after the Apostles, these writers speak of the baptism of infants as not introduced in their age, but as a practice, which had been uniformly observed by the church. We are hence certain, that this practice prevailed earlier than the third century.

The *second* after the Apostles is, therefore, to be exa-

mined. Not far from 150 years after them, Cyprian, the Bishop of Carthage, and a distinguished martyr, submitted to a council of 66 bishops, or ministers, this question;— "*Whether an infant might be baptized before it was eight* "*days old?*" Upon this question the council was unanimous, that infants might be baptized before they were eight days old. In their reply to Fidus, the Bishop by whom the question was first proposed, they write in the words following; "As to the case of infants, whereas you judge, that "none should be baptized and sanctified, until the eighth "day after their birth, we were *all* in our assembly of a "quite different opinion. For with respect to what you "thought fitting to be done, *there was not one of your* "*mind.*" Testimonies like this are evidence not to be evaded, nor resisted. This council was holden so near the age of the Apostles, that they must have been able to learn with accuracy and certainty the Apostolic practice. When we can ascertain beyond all doubt, the religious sentiments and practices of our fathers, who first settled in this country; when we can look back 300 years, to the days of Calvin and Luther, and determine their faith and practice, could not this council look back through a period of half the length, and ascertain the views and proceedings of the Apostles concerning infants? Is it not unquestionable, that some of the more aged of the sixty-six bishops, had seen and conversed with many, who had enjoyed personal acquaintance with the Apostles and their practice? At least, this council of Carthage must have certainly known, whether Infant Baptism was practised by the Apostles, or were an innovation after their day. But had it been an innovation, it could not, at this early period, have been established through the church universally; nor could it have been established without fixed opposition and severe dissention. Yet, without the least doubts concerning the duty and with unanimous voice, they declare, *That infants may be baptized before they are eight days old.* Either all the members of this council, and all the fathers, (for with them, all the fathers unite,) were confederated to support a known error; or else, the practice of Infant Baptism descended to them from the Apostles. To believe, however, that they were so confederated, requires a stretch of unchristian severity, to which no man can extend himself. The transactions of this council, which Cyprian stated at length in an epistle, written by his own hand, about 150 years after the Apostles, are, therefore, a clear and

invincible testimony to the practice of Infant Baptism in their age. And of history, "*There is no piece,*" says our historian, "*in all antiquity, that can be proved more certain-*" *ly to be genuine, than this.*"

Although we might here rest our enquiries, in full conviction, that the baptism of infants was inculcated by the Apostles, and uniformly practised by the primitive Christians, yet we have other testimonies both explicit and weighty. The evidence is clear, that *Origin* descended of Christian parents; that he was born about 85 years after the Apostles;—that he was a man of extensive reading, and travelled into those countries, where Christianity was first and most generally prevalent.—This man, who was 17 years old when his father suffered martyrdom, must be acknowledged to have been in a capacity to ascertain fully the mind of the Apostles, and the practice of the church, concerning Infant Baptism. And thus saith Origin: "Infants by the "usage of the church, are baptized.—Infants are baptized "for the remission of sin.—The church had a tradition, or "command from the Apostles to give baptism to infants; "for they to whom the divine mysteries were committed "knew, that there is in all persons, the natural pollution of "sin, which ought to be washed away by water and the "Spirit." This testimony, my brethren, is full and incontrovertible. For we are constrained to believe, that by Origin such assertions would not be sent forth to the public, unless true. We are constrained to believe, that had any in his time denied Infant Baptism, they would not have been silent until they had made it appear, that the church received no such command from the Apostles, and observed no such practice. But Origin's testimony stands, without a word from any of the fathers in contradiction, and in all its weight, is transmitted to us, that infants were baptized in compliance with Apostolic command.

A little more than 100 years from the Apostles, Turtulian, and about 150 years after him, Gregory, testified indirectly, but fully, to the practice of Infant Baptism. These two men, our historian declares, as in our first quotation were the only persons to be found during the first four centuries, who so much as advised the delay of baptizing infants. Turtulian, though esteemed a man of learning and veracity, was extravagantly fond of peculiarities, and for heresy was finally ejected from the church. He advised to delay the baptism of children, until they had passed the

temptations of youth. Such delay Gregory observed respecting his own children. But they both speak of Infant Baptism as universally practised. Even their advice for a delay draws the conclusion after it, infallibly, that infants were baptized. Otherwise, there had been no occasion for such advice.

Thus we are assured, that Infant Baptism was not introduced in the second century from the Apostles. For all the fathers mention it as universally observed, not only in this century, but even at an earlier period.—The evidence during the *first* century, therefore, merits our attention.—But in so early a period, the Christians, as they must have known fully the mind of the Apostles, had no ground for controversy, or for leaving their testimony upon the subject. Of course, any thing, which remains, undenied by all the fathers, and from which this practice can be fairly inferred, must be viewed as evidence, in the present case, sufficient and decisive. Such evidence we have.

After the Apostles 67 years, Irenæus in his writings spoke upon this subject. This Irenæus was born before the death of St. John, lived in Asia where the Apostle resided, and was afterward bishop of Lyons in France. He saw and conversed with some who had seen Christ; he was acquainted with, and had attended upon the preaching of Polycarp, who was the disciple of St. John, and probably that angel of the church in Smyrna, whom the Apostle so highly approves in the second chapter of Revelations. Being well acquainted with Polycarp, living so near the Apostles, where St. John lived and died, Irenæus could not be ignorant of the apostolic practice concerning Infant Baptism. According to the custom of the fathers, he spake of baptism by the thing signified in the use of water and called it *regeneration*. But that he intended the external baptism of infants, when he spoke of their regeneration, is certain from his own explanation. In reference to some, who had been baptized, he says, "They are *regenerated* in the same way "of regeneration in which we have been regenerated; for "they are *washed with water*, in the name of the Father, "and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. For Christ says, "Unless ye be *regenerated*, you cannot enter into the king-"dom of heaven." Speaking of Christ, Irenæus says; "He came to save all persons; all, I mean, who by him are "*regenerated*, (or *baptized*,) unto God; *Infants* and *little* "*ones*; and children, and youths, and elder persons.

"Therefore he went through the several ages; *for infants* "being made an infant, that he might sanctify infants; to "little ones, he was made a little one."—This testimony proves, undeniably, that the baptism of infants, as an important duty, was practised in the days which succeeded, immediately, to the Apostolic age.

Justin Martyr, who was born about 4, and wrote about 40 years after the Apostle John, observes in one of his Apologies for the Christians, that, "Several persons among us, "of 60 or 70 years old, who were made disciples to Christ "from their *childhood*, do continue uncorrupt." These persons must have been made disciples in the days of the Apostles, and must afterward have witnessed their practice. From them, Justin, their acquaintance, had opportunity to derive full assurance concerning the Apostles' treatment of infants, and their views of baptism in general. With this advantage he declares, that baptism and circumcision are of the same import, and of course the former must be applied, as the latter formerly was, to infants. Says Justin, "We "have not received the carnal, but spiritual *circumcision*, by "*baptism*. And it is allowed to *all persons* to receive it in the "same way." More than this, from the age and circumstances in which he lived, we could not expect. The testimonies then, of Irenæus and Justin, and equal evidence from the writings of Clemens and Hermes, contemporaries with Paul, and mentioned in his Epistles, have, without contradiction from one of the fathers, descended to us, and are strong and invincible.

The evidence is already clear and plenary, that the practice of Infant Baptism was not introduced in the *third* century after the Apostles; for it is repeatedly mentioned, as universally prevalent in the second. Nor was it introduced in the *second* century after them; for it is mentioned by undeniable and full implication, as universally prevalent in the *first*. Certainly, then, as an innovation, it was introduced in the first century, without a struggle, and unknown to the whole world; or else, as Origin, Chrysostom, and Ambrose affirm, the church had a command, or tradition from the Apostles, to give baptism to infants.

That such an order was given, and that the church practised in conformity, is certain, from the expressed and general belief of the fathers, that baptism comes in the place of circumcision, and is of the same use.—As before quoted, Justin said, "We have not received the carnal, but spiritual

"*circumcision*, by *baptism*." "Dost thou delay, said Basil, "the *circumcision*, made without hands, which is perform-"ed in *baptism*?" In belief, from the evidence we have already considered, that baptism takes the place of circumcision, the fathers must have applied it to infants. This conclusion, no man can doubt. Accordingly, Chrysostom said; "One that is in the very *beginning* of his age, may receive "this circumcision made without hands."

In direct confirmation of the correctness of all the preceding testimonies, we have invincible proof from several historical accounts, written at an early period, and yet extant, of all the different religious sects and practices, which prevailed in the first ages of Christianity. Irenæus wrote his account 76 years after the Apostles. Austin and Philastruis wrote about 280 years after them. Philastruis, who created a distinction into sects for every little difference of opinion, stated the whole number of sects at 100. Theodoret wrote a learned and very particular account of heresies, about 330 years after the Apostles. These writers are full and express; some of them declare, they had named all the sects they had ever heard of in the world, speak particularly of those who deny all baptism by water, and expressly state the different ways, in which water was applied in baptism. But in all their accounts, not the most distant hint is to be found, that any, who believed in any kind of baptism by water, did deny the practice of Infant Baptism. No sect, no, not a man is named. But had there been any, who had denied this, the denial of it, since it was generally practised in the church, would have been a peculiarity sufficient to constitute a distinct sect, and must have been mentioned by these writers. But these writers, and all the men of antiquity, had not the least knowledge of any such sect. Evidence like this must carry conviction to every mind unless shielded by the unchristian armour of obstinacy and prejudice.

To all this may be added, as an argument of importance, a deduction from the *silence* of scripture history, and of the Jews of the Apostolic age. The Jews, who were exceedingly tenacious of their descent from Abraham, and of the relation of their children to the covenant;—who suffered none, unless circumcised, to become incorporated with them;—who were watchful and jealous of every change from their ancient order, and of whatever seemed unfriendly to their distinction and privileges;—who, after the esta-

blishment of Christianity, opposed the admission of the Gentiles into the church without circumcision, until a council was convened at Jerusalem, and declared, that it seemed good unto the Holy Ghost, and to them, not to lay this unnecessary burden upon the Gentile brethren :—the Jews, some of whom were implacable enemies, and urged every possible objection against the gospel; the Jews, had the Apostles severed children from their uniform connection with the church and from the seal of the covenant, would have sounded this innovation far and near, and have viewed it an unanswerable objection against the gospel. But did they ever allege, that Christianity excluded their children from their former standing, or curtailed their privileges? Did the Apostles ever attempt to answer this objection, to remove this stumbling block? In the whole scriptures, not a word upon the subject is recorded. The objection was never urged. But it would have been pressed, had not the Christian dispensation preserved and secured all the privileges and blessings of children. In this instance, the silence of scripture utters a language, which can but be heard, and must secure belief.

On the whole, have we not, my brethren, ample and decisive evidence to support the right and duty of Infant Baptism? Must not all the objections urged against either the right or design of this institution, be merely apparent, circumstantial, and really groundless? Can we desire, could we have evidence more complete? Indeed, this evidence is full, that you may receive and firmly hold, in all their extent and consolation, the gracious words of the Apostle,—THE PROMISE IS UNTO YOU, *and* TO YOUR CHILDREN, *and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.*

The following is extracted from the reverend and pious Bishop Beveridge's "Thoughts on Religion."

ARTICLE X.

I believe, that as God entered into a covenant of grace with us, so hath he signed his covenant to us by a double seal, baptism, *and the* Lord's supper.

AS the covenant of works had two sacraments, viz. the tree of life, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; the first signifying and sealing life and happiness to the performance, the other death and misery to the breach of it:

so the covenant of grace was likewise sealed with two typical sacraments, circumcision and the passover. The former was annexed at God's first making his covenant with Abraham's person; the other was added, at his fulfilling the promises of it, to his seed or posterity, which were, therefore, styled the promised seed. But these being only typical of the true and spiritual sacraments, that were afterwards to take place upon the coming of the Messiah, there was then, in the fullness of time, two other sacraments substituted in their stead, viz. baptism, and the supper of the Lord. And these sacraments were both correspondent to the types by which they were represented.

As to the first, viz. circumcision, whether I consider the time of conferring it, or the end of its institution, I find it exactly answers to the sacrament of baptism in both these respects. For, as the children under the law were to be circumcised in their infancy, at eight days old; so are the children under the gospel to be baptized in their infancy too. And as the principal thing intended in the rite of circumcision, was to initiate or admit the children of the faithful into the Jewish church; so the chief design of baptism now, is to admit the children of such as profess themselves christians, into the church of Christ. And, for this reason, I believe, that as, under the old testament, children had the grant of covenant privileges, and church membership, as really as their parents had; so this grant was not repealed, as is intimated, Acts ii. 39. but farther confirmed in the new testament, in that the apostle calls the children of believing parents holy, 1 Cor. xii. 14. Which cannot be understood of a real and inherent, but only of a relative and covenanted holiness, by virtue of which, being born of believing parents, themselves are accounted in the number of believers, and are therefore called holy children under the gospel, in the same sense that the people of Israel were called a holy people under the law, Deut. vii. 6. and xiv. 2, 21. as being all within the covenant of grace, which, through the faith of their parents, is thus sealed to them in baptism.

Not that I think it necessary, that all parents should be endued with what we call a saving faith, to entitle their children to these privileges, (for then none but the children of such who have the spirit of Christ truly implanted in them, would be qualified to partake of the covenant) but even such, who by an outward historical faith, have taken the name of Christ upon them, are, by that means, in cove-

nant with God, and so accounted holy in respect of their profession, whatever they may be in point of practice. And if they are themselves holy, it follows of course, that their children must be so too, they being esteemed as parts of their parents, till made distinct members in the body of Christ; or, at least, till they come to the use of their reason, and the improvement of their natural abilities.

And, therefore, though the seal be changed, yet the covenant-privileges, wherewith the parties stipulating unto God were before invested, are no whit altered or diminished; believers' children being as really confederates with their parents, in the covenant of grace now, as they were before under the Jewish administration of it. *And this seems to be altogether necessary; for otherwise, infants should be invested with privileges under the type, and be deprived of, or excluded from them, under the more perfect accomplishment of the same covenant in the thing typified; and so, the dispensations of God's grace would be more strait and narrow since, than they were before the coming of our Saviour,* WHICH I LOOK UPON TO BE NO LESS THAN BLASPHEMY TO ASSERT.

And, upon this ground, I believe, it is as really the duty of christians to baptize their children now, as ever it was the duty of the Israelites to circumcise theirs; and therefore, St. Peter's question, *Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?* Acts x. 47 may very properly be applied to this case. Can any one forbid water, that children should not be baptized, who are in covenant with the most high God as well as we? For what is it, I pray, that the right to baptism doth depend upon? Surely, not upon performing the conditions of the covenant; for then none should be baptized, but such as are true believers in themselves, and known to be so by us; and, by consequence, none at all; it being only God's prerogative to search their hearts, and to know the truth of that grace, which himself hath been pleased to bestow upon them. But children's right to baptism is grounded upon the outward profession of their believing parents; so that as a king may be crowned in his cradle, not because he is able to wield the sceptre, or manage the affairs of his kingdom, but because he is heir to his father; so here, children are not therefore baptized, because they are able to perform the conditions of the covenant, which is sealed to them, but because they are children

to believing parents. And this seems yet to be farther evident, from the very nature of seals, which are not administered or annexed to any covenant, because the conditions are already performed, but rather that they may be performed: and so children are not baptized, because they are already true christians, but that they may be so hereafter.

As for a command for infant-baptism, I believe, that the same law that enjoined circumcision to the Jewish enjoins baptism likewise to christian children, there being the same reason for both. The reason why the Jewish children were to be circumcised, was because they were Jewish children, born of such as professed the true worship of God, and were in covenant with him: and there is the same reason, why christian children are to be baptized, even because they are christian children, born of such as profess the true worship of the same God, and are confederates in the same covenant with the Jews themselves. And, as there is the same reason, so likewise the same end for both, viz. that the children might be actually admitted into the same covenant with their parents, and have it visibly confirmed to them by this initiating seal put upon them: so that circumcision and baptism are not two distinct seals, but the same seal diversely applied; the one being but as a type of the other, and so to give place to it, whensoever, by the institution of Christ, it should be brought into the church of God. And therefore, the command for initiating children into the church by baptism, remains still in force, though circumcision, which was the type and shadow of it, be done away. Hnd for this reason, I believe, that was there never a command in the new testament for infant-baptism, yet, seeing there is one for circumcision in the old, and for baptism, as coming into the place of it, in the new, I should look upon baptism as necessarily to be applied to infants now, as circumcision was then.

But why should it be supposed, that there is no command in the new testament for infant-baptism? There are several texts that seem to imply its being practised in the first preaching of the gospel, as particularly in the case of *Lydia* and the *keeper of the prison*, Acts xvi. 15, 33. who had their whole families baptized, and we no where find, that children were excepted. On the contrary, St. Peter exhorting the converted Jews to be baptized, makes use of this argument to bring them to it, *For the promise*, says he, *is unto you, and to your children*, Acts ii. 38, 39. which may as reason-

ably be understood of their infants, as of their adult posterity. But, besides, it was the express command of Christ to his disciples, that they should *go, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,* Matth. xxvii. 19. The meaning of which words I take to be this; go ye, and preach the gospel amongst all nations, and endeavour thereby to bring them over to the embracing of it; that leaving all Jewish ceremonies and heathenish idolatries, they may profess my name, and become my disciples, receive the truth, and follow me; which if they do, I charge you to *baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost:* for the word *mathetensate* doth not signify *to teach,* but *to make disciples,* denoting the same here, that *mathetas poiein* doth upon the like occasion, John iv. 1.

And this is the sense that all the ancient translations agree in; nor, indeed, will the text itself bear any other; especially, not that of teaching; for though the apostles should have taught all nations, yet they were not presently to baptize them, unless they became disciples, and professors of the doctrine that they were taught. A man may be taught the doctrine of the gospel, and yet not believe it; and even though he should believe, yet unless he openly professes his faith in it, he ought not presently to be baptized. For, without this outward profession, the very possessing of Christ cannot entitle a man to this privilege before men, though it doth before God; because we cannot know how any one stands affected towards Christ, but only by his outward profession of him. It is the inward possession of Christ's person that entitles us to the inward spiritual grace: but it is the outward profession of his name only, that entitles us to the outward visible sign in baptism: so that a man must, of necessity, be a professed disciple of the gospel, before he can be admitted into the church of Christ. And hence it is, that the words must necessarily be understood of discipling, or bringing the nations over to the profession of the christian religion; or else, we must suppose, what ought not to be granted, that our saviour must command many that were visible enemies to his cross, to be received into his church; for many of the Jews were taught and instructed in the doctrine of the gospel, who, notwithstanding, were inveterate enemies unto Christ. They were taught, that he was the Messiah, and saviour of the world, and that *whosoever believed in him, should not perish, but*

have everlasting life; and they had all the reason in the world to be convinced of it: yet, I hope, there is none will say, that the bare knowledge of, or tacit assent unto, these things, are a sufficient ground for their reception into the church.

Now, as it was in the Jewish church, when any one became a proselyte, not only himself, but whatsoever children he afterwards had, were to be circumcised; so in the church of Christ, whensoever any person is brought over into the profession of the christian religion, his seed are all equally invested with the outward privileges of it with himself, though they be not as yet come to years of discretion, nor able, of themselves, to make their profession of that religion they are to be received and baptized into. For, so long as children are in their infancy, they are (as I before observed) looked upon as parts of their parents, and are therefore accounted holy, by the outward profession which their parents, under whom they are comprehended, make of it: and in this sense, 1 Cor. viii. 14. *the unbelieving husband* is said to be *sanctified by the believing wife, and the unbelieving wife by the believing husband,* that is man and wife being made one flesh, they are denominated, by the better part, holy, and so are their children too.

And hence it is, that I verily believe, that in the commission which our saviour gave to his apostles, to *disciple and baptize all nations,* he meant, that they should preach the gospel in all nations, and thereby bring over all persons of understanding and discretion to the profession of his name, and in them, their children; and so engraft both root and branch into himself, the true vine, by baptizing both parents and children in the *name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*

The main objection against this is, that infants are not in a capacity either to learn and understand their duty in this covenant, or to stipulate and promise for their future performance of the conditions of it. But this difficulty is easily removed, when I consider, that it is not by virtue of their own faith or knowledge, but that of their parents, that they are admitted to this sacrament; nor is it required, that they should stipulate or promise in their own persons, but by their godfathers or sponsors, who enter into this engagement for them, and oblige them, when they come of age, to take it upon themselves; which accordingly they do. And this engagement, by proxy, does as effectually bind them to

the performance of the conditions, as if they were actually in a capacity to have stipulated for themselves, or sealed the covenant in their own persons. For these spiritual signs or seals are not designed to make God's word surer to us, but only to make our faith stronger in him; nor are they of the substance of the covenant, but only for the better confirmation of it.

From the Commentary of Doctor Adam Clarke.

Note on Matthew, 3d chapter, 6th verse.

In what form baptism was originally administered, has been deemed a subject worthy of serious dispute. Were the people *dipped* or *sprinkled?* for it is certain *bapto* and *baptizo* mean both. They were all *dipped*, say some. Can any man suppose, that it was possible for John to dip *all the inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judea, and of all the country round about the Jordan?* Were both men and women dipped, for certainly *both* came to his baptism? This could never have comported either with safety or with *decency*. Were they dipped in their *clothes?* This would have endangered their lives, if they had not with them *change* of raiment: and as such a baptism as John's (however administered) was, in several respects, a *new* thing in Judea, it is not at all likely, that the people would come thus provided. But suppose these were *dipped*, which I think it would be impossible to prove, does it follow, that in all regions of the world, men and women must be *dipped*, in order to be evangelically baptized? In the eastern countries, *bathings* were frequent, because of the heat of the climate, it being there so necessary to *cleanliness* and *health;* but could our climate, or a more *northerly* one, admit of this with safety, for at least three fourths of the year? We may rest assured that it could not. And may we not presume, that if John had opened his commission in the North of Great Britain, for many months of the year, he would have *dipped* neither man nor woman, unless he could have procured a tepid bath? Those who are *dipped* or *immersed* in water in the name of the Holy Trinity, I believe to be evangelically baptized. Those who are washed or sprinkled with water in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, I be-

lieve to be equally so : and the *repetition* of such a baptism, I believe to be *profane.* Others have a right to believe the contrary, if they see good. After all, it is the *thing* signified, and not the *mode,* which is the essential part of the sacrament.

Note on Mark, VII *chapter,* 16 *verse.*

Then, though *little children,* they were capable of receiving Christ's blessing. If *Christ* embraced them, why should not his *church* embrace them? Why not *dedicate* them to God by *baptism?* whether that be performed by *sprinkling, washing,* or *immersion;* for we need not dispute about the mode : on this point let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind. I confess it appears to me grossly heathenish and barbarous, to see parents who profess to believe in that Christ who loves children, and among them those whose creed does not prevent them from using infant baptism, depriving their children of an ordinance by which no soul can prove that they *cannot* be profited ; and through an unaccountable bigotry or carelessness withhold from them the privilege of even a *nominal dedication* to God ; and yet these very persons are ready enough to fly for a minister to baptize their child when they suppose it to be at the point of death ! It would be no crime to pray, that such persons should never have the privilege of hearing *my father !* or *my mother !* from the lips of their *own* child.

Concluding Note.

It is easy to carry things into extremes on the right hand and on the left. In the controversy, to which there is a very *gentle* reference in the preceding observations, there has been much *asperity* on all sides. It is high time this were ended. To say that *water baptism* is *nothing,* because a *baptism of the Spirit* is promised, is not correct. Baptism, howsoever administered, is a most important rite in the church of Christ. To say that *sprinkling* or *aspersion* is *no gospel baptism,* is as incorrect, as to say *immersion* is none. Such assertions are as *unchristian* as they are *uncharitable ;* and should be carefully avoided, by all those who wish to promote the great *design* of the gospel—*glory to God, and peace and good will among men.* Lastly, to assert that *infant baptism* is *unscriptural,* is as rash and reprehensible as any of the rest. Myriads of conscientious people choose to dedicate their *infants* to God, by *public*

baptism. They are in the RIGHT! and by acting thus, follow the general practice both of the Jewish and Christian church—a practice, from which it is as needless as it is dangerous to depart.

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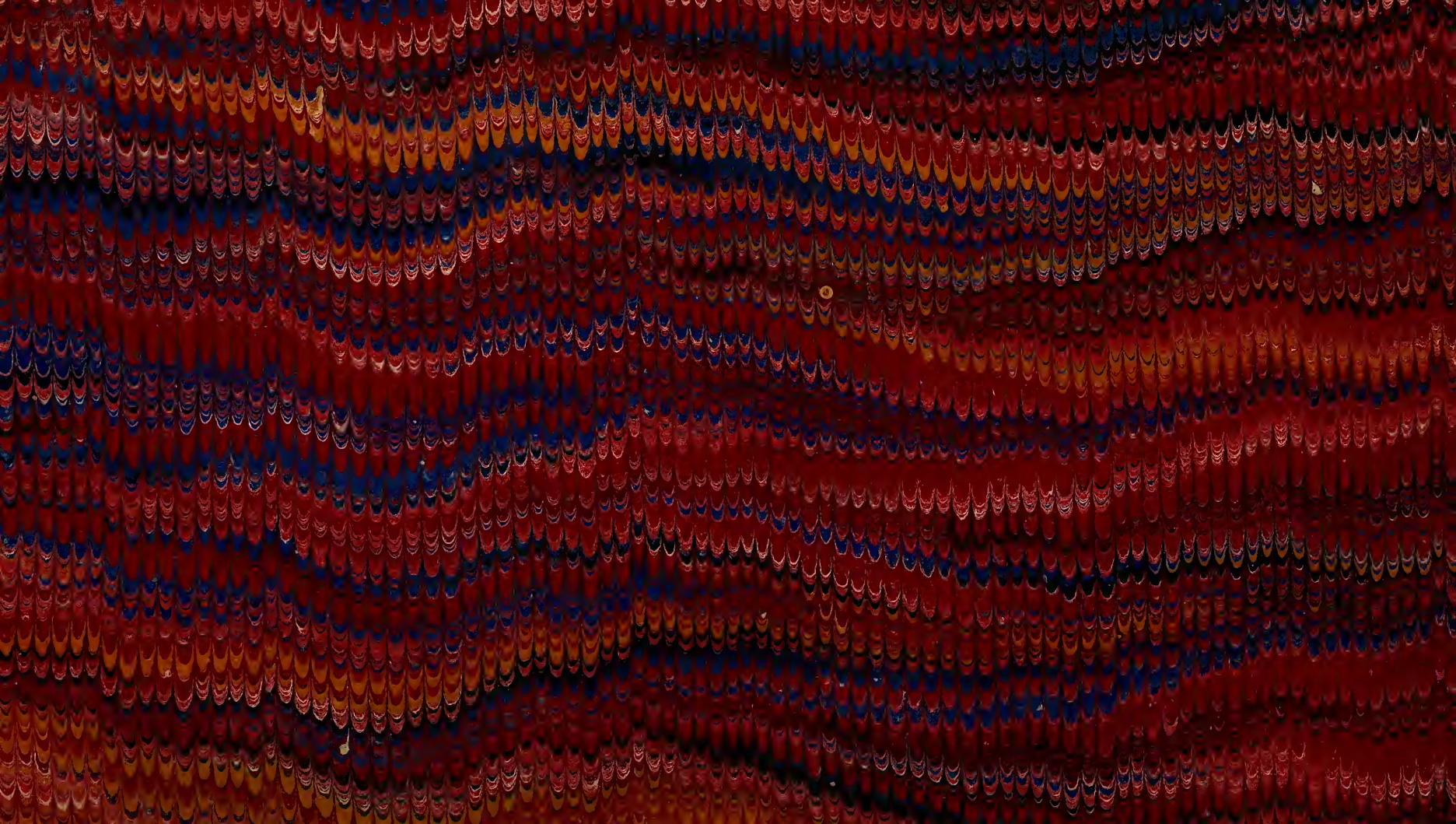

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