



Library of the Theological Seminary,  
PRINCETON, N. J.

---

Presented by Mr. Samuel Agnew of Philadelphia, Pa.

---

*Agnew Coll. on Baptism, No.*

SCB  
10236



Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2011 with funding from  
Princeton Theological Seminary Library

THE  
LAWFULNESS  
OF  
Infant Baptism

DEFENDED

Against the Cavils of JOHN TASKER.

ALSO THE

*Doctrine and Practice*

OF THE

PRIMITIVE CHURCH in the  
Three First CENTURIES

CONCERNING

INFANT BAPTISM

Afferted and Vindicated

Against Dr. GALE'S EXCEPTIONS.

---

*A Man that is an Heretick, after the first and second  
Admonition, reject; Tit. iii. 10.*

*Answer a Fool according to his Folly, lest he be wise in  
his own Conceit; Prov. xxvi. 5.*

---

By RICHARD OWEN, Vicar of  
IFORD in SUSSEX.

---

L O N D O N,

Printed by W. B. and sold by W. PARKER, at the  
King's-Head in St. Paul's Church-Yard.

MDCCXXXII.



---



---

T H E

# P R E F A C E.

**A**BOUT nine Years since I published a Treatise to prove the Lawfulness of Infant Baptism, and the Right our Infants have to that Ordinance, by Scripture Arguments; these being the sole Evidences that will be finally admitted by our Adversaries. As they fell into my Way I there examined several Passages in Dr. Gale's Reflections on Mr. Wall's (afterwards Dr. Wall) History of Infant Baptism; and so far as the Rules of Decency would permit, I stimulated Dr. Gale to become my Antagonist in this Controversy; for he being a Man of eminent Learning and Abilities, I expected an Answer, contrived with the same Artifice as I found wrought into his Reflections; but he soon after giving Way to the Laws of Mortality, I was disappointed in that Expectation.

In the Year 1729, a stitch'd Piece came forth in the Name of one J. Tasker, intituled, Plain Reasons for a religious, conscientious, and peaceable Separation from the Communion of the Church of England, as by Law established. *Who this Author is. I know not, whether he be white or black, though some have suggested, that formerly by Profession he was the last, as labouring hard upon the Anvil; and that the Treatise being composed or promoted by a Club and Combination.*

of the Party, they were pleased for some sly Reasons to make it appear under a borrowed Name; as intending perhaps for the Credit of their Cause, and my Disparagement, to make the World believe, that the quondam Blacksmith of Horsham Town, was at a Dispute a proper Match for the Vicar of Iford. Was I sure of this, as I am not, he might possibly meet with a more restless and incommodious Lodgment in my Quarters than he finds at present, though that is not like to be very easy.

But waving any farther Conjectures, I am satisfied it was not published without the Consent and Approbation of the principal Men of the Baptists Persuasion in our great Metropolis; and therefore whatsoever I shall say directly to J. Tasker, I mean it to all that were concerned in that Publication, or have recommended it to the World, as a modest, rational, and necessary Work.

With Gravity and Seriousness I managed the Cause in my foresaid Book, confining myself as well as I could to close and solid Reasoning; nor does it become me to say, what Reception it has had among learned and judicious Men. Yet behold the Treatment I receive from this true or counterfeit J. Tasker: For omitting that in his Pretorian Style; it is but my pretended Lawfulness of Infant Baptism; and that I seem to be a Writer of great Assurance; his Charge against me runs; “ That  
 “ I have sought out Occasion to banter Dr. Gale; do  
 “ envy the Baptists their gracious Indulgence; would  
 “ strip them of it, and incense the Government against  
 “ an innocent People; would have the Dissenters pre-  
 “ sented and prosecuted in the Spiritual Courts, con-  
 “ trary to the Toleration and gracious Indulgence  
 “ granted to them; That through Prejudice and Ill-  
 “ will have drawn Inferences contrary to Dr. Gale’s  
 “ Premises; which I improve with all my Power to  
 “ lessen



“ lessen the Credit of my Antagonist, instead of fairly  
 “ answering his Arguments; and have taken such un-  
 “ generous Methods to batter down the Truth, as tend  
 “ to banter Men out of their Opinions, rather than  
 “ convince their Judgments.”

In all which heavy Accusations, couched within the Compass of two or three Pages, I do positively affirm there is not one single Word of Truth; which I trust to make him soon apprehensive of to his Shame and Sorrow. He has really in his Preface, not only abused me after the grossest rate, but attempted also to palm upon me such palpable Fallacies and Untruths, as if he took me for a perfect Natural, that cannot distinguish between the right and left Hand, in case he hoped they should escape undiscovered and unchastized. Therefore do I crave neither Pardon nor Excuse, if for these Affronts I shall mingle both Irony and Satyr with my Reply; since I do it purposely to correct Insolence, and teach these Writers, not Honesty or Modesty, which is morally impossible, but a great deal more of Reservedness and Circumspection in handling Disputes for the Time to come. For this is not the Usage they should give Divines of the Church of England, which is far their Superior in Dignity, and the Excellency of her Constitution; and scorns to be croak'd at by an ignoble Fry, spawn'd in the twelfth Century by Peter de Bruis, and his Disciple Henry; and again revived at the Reformation by an abortive Brood of Rebels and Enthusiasts.

This Tract of J. Tasker's was transmitted to me as a Present soon after its Publication, by a Teacher of the Sect; but with such fulsome Commendations, as if he had a Mind to burlesque and to banter it. When with much Patience I had read it through, I declare sincerely, that I hardly thought it worth taking up by the way-side, except only for waste Paper; and therefore condemn'd it to perpetual Silence and Contempt. But being  
 since

since inform'd how industrious the Party have been to foist it into Peoples Hands with their usual Boasts of Victory; how meeting with the Brethren in public Places, their Faces have shone, their Heads shook, they hummed and buzzed, and rejoiced over it, as if they had found a Treasure of Goat's Wool; and knowing there are some Animals whose Nature inclines them to feed on Poison rather than wholesome Diet: I have at length alter'd my Purpose, and followed the Advice of Friends, to bestow upon it a little due Correction. And yet the chief Inducement engaging me in this Undertaking, is the Hope I conceive of setting the Doctrine and Practice of the Primitive Church concerning Infant Baptism in the three first Centuries, in a fair Light, by clearing off Dr. Gale's Exceptions.

God knows, I have not the Vanity as to think I can convince the Baptists by any Reasons that may be produced; and shall therefore take no care to accommodate myself to their Tooth and Liking. Settled they are upon their Lees, and fast rivetted in their Opinions by a self-conceited Obstinacy, which impreguably fortifies them against Conviction, and breaks off all the Force of Argument. Unless they strongly doted on their Delusions, how could they, having a Grain of good Sense, take such a poultry Piece of Sophistry, as Tasker's is, for a satisfactory Refutation of my Book? Nothing more proves Love to be blind, than the Love they bear to their fond Errors and Singularities. Wherefore Conviction is not the Benefit I intend them, but rather Desiance and Mortification; which they that are full of themselves do sorely lack, tho' of all Men on Earth, they are most incapable. And if what I have, or shall advance on this Subject, may serve as a Guard and Preservative to other Persons, who are yet untainted with the Infection, they have their Profit, and I my End.

There are few of my Function who have had less Cause than myself to meddle with this Controversy. For being resident on my Vicaridge, which contains two little Parishes,

*rishes, full forty Years, in all that time never a Baptist has inhabited either, till now of late a Servant Maid of that Perswasion is entertained in a certain Family. And never had I concerned myself with the Dispute at all, could some of the innocent and peaceable Teachers of that Set have suffered me to enjoy my affected Retirement and Obscurity, and not importuned me to a private Conference; which nevertbeless they had the Honesty to persuade Dr. Gale, if in a Letter to me he wrong'd them not, that it was not of their seeking: when I, who in that Case know the Truth better than any one now alive, can safely swear, that of their own accord they sought it thrice of me, and two of those Times came for it to my own House, before it was agreed upon. And so without any farther Preamble, I come to consider J. Tasker's Epistle to the Christian Reader.*



---

In my first Book,

**I**N Title-page, *dele*, *Ubi præfedit D. Augustinus*; and consequently in Page 63 of the Book itself, *wherein St. Austin presided*. For I am satisfied, that not *St. Austin*, but *Aurelius* Archbishop of *Carthage* was the proper President in that Council; tho' *St. Austin* for his Learning and Authority, bore a great Sway in it.

And, p. 140. *lines* 14, 15. *dele*, *This is Mr. Gale's way of arguing to weaken the Father's Authority*. For in the MS. 'twas only a marginal Note, which the Printer unadvisedly, or at least in the wrong Place, foisted into the text. And I meant the whole Period there of *Tertullian*.

And l. 22 of the same Page, read *favour* instead of *fa-vour*. Other *Errata* there are in the Book uncorrected; but I pass them over as less considerable.

---

In this Book the Reader is desired to correct the following ERRATA.

**F**OR *Tasber* throughout, read *Tasker*. pag. 5. line 1. read *fear*. *ib.* l. 15. r. *opprobrious*. And l. 16. r. *notorious*. p. 7. l. 10. r. *Suffering*. p. 11. l. 9. r. *his*. p. 12. l. 9. r. *creeping*. p. 14. l. 28. r. *Heads*. p. 18. l. 30. r. *into*. p. 22. l. 30. r. *distinguishing*. p. 25. l. 4. *pressed*. p. 30. l. 18. r. *it is*. p. 48. l. 15. r. *of*. p. 64. l. 6. r. *at all*. p. 74. l. 15. r. *at all*. p. 91. l. 25. *dele* τῶν. p. 95. l. 15. r. *those*. p. 112. l. 22. r. *supposititious*. p. 119. l. 34. r. *in gentibus*. p. 130. l. 4. r. 18. p. 145. l. 18. r. *inregistring*. p. 147. l. 18, 19. r. *in the Primitive Church*. p. 152. l. 9. r. *apostatical*. p. 153. l. 28. r. *as his*. p. 158. l. 27. *dele* p. p. 162. l. 12. r. *Baptisms*. *ib.* l. 16. r. *Agrippinus*. p. 175. l. 29, or 30. *add* he. p. 184. l. 34. r. 78. p. 194. l. 34. r. 359. p. 200. l. 8. r. *those*. *ib.* l. 11. r. *of them*. p. 201. l. 31. r. *venture to give*.

---



---

# ANIMADVERSIONS

O N

## TASHER'S PREFACE.

**A**FTER his empty and vain-glorious Brag in the Title-Page, “ That he has disproved my chief Arguments for Infant-Baptism,” when, like the little corroding Creature, he has only nibbled at two or three of them; he takes care presently to apprize the World what an able Champion he is for the Cause, and how easy it was for him to have blown me up as with a Puff of Wind. For, says he of me, “ when I had read and consider’d his Book, I could hardly forbear drawing up of a Full Answer.” Beholden therefore, it seems, I am to the good Man for his great Clemency in letting me live so long, against the Bent and *Impetus* of a strong Inclination, when it was in his Mind and Power to give me a quick Dispatch. But to quit Scores with him in some measure, I can tell him again, that it had been much for his Credit, and the Interest of his Cause, if he could have forborn for ever; and that I fear not the Man who talks like *Thrafo*, but fights like *Clinias* and *Dametias*.

And why the full Answer is not drawn up at last to a Book which he owns by some to be supposed unanswerable, he gives this admirable Reason, “ That because it has been now published about seven

“ Years, such an Answer may seem needless.” What a fair Handle is here given for Sport and Diversion? Do Arguments wear with Age, and grow out of Fashion like old Clothes, so as to lose their Strength in Process of Time, and confute themselves? Or does Prescription and peaceable Possession, which corroborates other Titles, quite overthrow their Claims and Pretensions? This Reason is undoubtedly an Original; for which alone, was it for nothing else, I must congratulate *Tasber* for the Name and Honour of an Author. Yet, to his great Mortification, I have a strong Fancy that I can help him to a much truer and better Reason; That he is not the Man, nor his whole Party; and if that can do ’em any Service, I will afford them all the Legions of Darknes for their Assistants, that can draw up a full and satisfactory Answer to that Book. Hereby he may perceive, that if my Assurance was full before, it now begins to overflow.

Then giving me a disparaging Stroke or two, which signify just nothing, he proceeds to draw up his Bill of Indictment against me for ill Usage of *Dr. Gale*; and that is exhibited in these three ensuing Articles.

1. Tho’ it be no promising Omen of good Success, he begins with a heavy Heart, as if he was about to cry, and shed some Crocodile’s Tears: And indeed the Man who thinks himself obliged to make an Apology for his Friend, and can make but such a deplorable one as he has done, may have cause enough to cry his Eyes out. But let’s hear the Ground of his doleful Dumps and deep Melancholy, which the compassionate Soul thus expresses, “ I am sorry to find *Mr. Owen* so causelessly taking Offence, and calling the Candour and Ingenuity of *Dr. Gale* into Question, for saying, Too great a part of the Clergy, ’tis notorious, are either open Nonjuring *Jacobites*, or secret, and there-  
“ fore

“ fore more mischievous High-flyers, &c.” Here the Quotation is broken off; tho’ considering the Doctor was then upon the florid, and pursuing the Vein of a gay Encomiast, ’twas unkindly done to conceal from the Reader any of his Elegancies and Embellishments. To supply which Defect, take the Doctor’s Words out to the End of the Period; *Let. II. p. 51, 52.*

“ Too great a Part of the Clergy, ’tis notorious, are either open Nonjuring *Jacobites*, or secret, and therefore more mischievous High-flyers; entirely in the Pretender’s Interest, and as hearty Friends to Popish Tyranny and Superstition, as ever was the *Laudean* Faction.” The last Clause in this Indictment we might probably admit to be true enough in the *Thesis*, but not in the *Hypothesis*, according to the Doctor’s malicious Intention, who supposes us all to be strongly affected to Popish Tyranny and Superstition.

*Laudean* Faction is a Term of Disgrace, to be found also in *Calamy’s Abridgment of Baxter’s Life*: For it contents not these harmless and peaceable People to suck the Blood of Archbishops, as they did that of *Laud* and *Sharp*; but they must be perpetually insulting and trampling on their Ashes, and murdering them for ever in their Reputation, to satiate their implacable Rage against the Order.

How does the Doctor’s Advocate bring him off, and justify him in those reproachful Defamations of the Clergy called High-flyers? Does he deny the Quotation to be right, or try to mollify and mitigate the Harshness of the Expressions by a favourable Construction? Not a Tittle. But he takes a very different Rout, by informing us, that the Doctor abhorred to charge the Church of *England* with the blasphemous and atheistical Fancies, bad Actions, Disloyalties, Corruptions, and pernicious Doctrines of those Clergymen; such are the Doctor’s own

Words: and adds ('tis pity I did not mind it) that he was clearing the Church of those her pretended Sons; for which he produces the Doctor's Expressions. And this is the Substance of his Defence. But here the Advocate falls short, and says too little: For the Doctor was not only clearing the Church of these pretended Sons, but he cleared the World of the Church itself, while he left it neither Truth nor Being; as will be freely granted us in the next Article.

In the mean time a serious Word with *J. Tascher*. Did I in that Paragraph, which is now under Consideration, or any where else, tax Dr. *Gale* with his ill Treatment of the Church of *England*, except only where he was pleased to unchurch her? Did I mention it, did I hint it? Not in the least: For how was that nominal and equivocal thing of a Church, which he left us, so far worth my Regard, that I should either resent any Abuses of, or kindly accept any Civilities to, her? When he had made but a Compliment of our Church, I was no way concerned to mind with what an Air of Gentility and good Breeding he paid his Compliments to the Bawble. Should any Man destroy my Life, and, to make amends, promise to carry it respectfully towards my Picture, I should owe him but little Thanks for that Courtesy. So when the Doctor had destroy'd the Essence of our Church, it matters not how he treated the Ghost and Shadow that remains. It was not therefore the Church of *England* which I there and then charged the Doctor with abusing. And is not *Tascher* a smart Advocate, when he hopes to clear him, by alledging his Kindness to the Church, in clearing her of those Clergy? Had I indicted Dr. *Gale* for killing *Titius*, and his wise Council, to bring him off, should plead, that he killed not *Caius* and *Sempronius*, I fear both Judge and Jury would suspect that his Brain forely lacked to be purged with Hel-lebore;



lebores; or else he might justly bear a Translation from the Bar to *Bedlam*.

Church and Christianity apart therefore for the present: Certain it is, by Dr. *Gale's* Description of the high-flying Clergy, that they cannot have the least Pretence to common Honesty, and are utterly unworthy to enjoy the Benefits of human Society. For two things I laid to his Charge; That he has not only ranked them with professed Nonjurors, who have disowned the civil Government from the *Revolution* downwards, have refused the Oaths, and for the most part renounced Communion with our Church; but has also made them more mischievous: And, again, has fastened upon them most false and notorious Appellations, and affirmed them all to be opprobrious. Not a Word of this Charge does *Tasher* deny, but fetches an idle Tour about the Church, to cast a Mist before the Reader's Eyes.

I openly acknowledge my self to be one of those Clergy that go under the Denomination of High-Church-Men; and also, as the Doctor says, do glory in the Name and Thing too. And because I believe my Tenets, as such, to be everlasting Truths, and know them in some Junctures to be made Tests of Constancy and Integrity, I hope they will be a particular Ground of my Glory in Heaven. Likewise acquainted I am with several Clergymen, who still retain the old Principles; but do not know one among them all that deserves those black and odious Characters, which the Doctor was pleased to give us in the gross. Nor can I forget the Time when the Body of our Clergy, especially the Prelates and Dignitaries, strenuously held and abetted the same Doctrines. Men and Times may change, but Truth never changes. These were the very Divines, as *Calamy* owns, who in a certain Reign made a noble Stand against Popery, when it

threaten'd to break in upon us like a mighty Torrent; while *Gale's* Friends were glaving and fawning in flattering Addreffes upon the Sovereign for a Toleration founded upon the dispensing, that is, upon an arbitrary and despotic Power; and which, with other things, was purposely designed for a *Trojan* Horse, to let *Papists* into Places of Trust and Authority, and thereby re-induce Popery and Slavery into the Nation. Neither must I omit, that these high-flying Prelates were the Men that went to the *Tower*, and were brought to a Tryal, for their Opposition to those Designs: As another of the Order, and of a noble Descent, was suspended for not suspending an eminent Divine of High-Church Principles, for preaching against Popery. Yet, in spite of Truth and Fate; in spite of our Hearts, good Sense, and all Evidences; must we have a hearty Affection to the Tyranny and Superstition of the *Roman* Church! The Lord rebuke thee, *Satan*.

When therefore we High-Church-Men have from time to time taken the Oaths of Allegiance and Abjuration, according to the express Terms and true Intent thereof, without any mental Reserves or Equivocations; when we have constantly pray'd by Name for the Sovereign Princes that fate successively on the *British* Throne since the *Revolution*, together with the Branches of the Royal Family; when we have all along quietly pay'd our Taxes, and behaved peaceably toward the Civil Government as now by Law established, a few Instances at the most excepted; when we have not opened our Mouths against the Right and Title of our Sovereigns to the Crown, which we can never do without exposing our selves for such perjured Villains as our kind Adversaries do represent us; when at our Ordination, we have upon Oath solemnly renounced all the Pope's Jurisdiction in these Realms; when we have voluntarily subscribed to our nine and thirty Articles of Religion,

Religion, read them punctually in the Church during the Time of Divine Service, and declared our unfeigned Assent and Consent to them all under Attestations; when we profess a firm Adherence to the Doctrines contained in our *Book of Homilies*, approv'd by those Articles, whereof many Doctrines in both are levelled directly against Popery; and when, in Times of the greatest Danger, we resolutely withstood and refuted the Popish Errors and Corruptions, even to Sufferance under the high Displeasure of our Sovereign: I say, when all this is undeniably true, and evident from Matters of Fact, what mischievous Spight came into Dr. *Gale's* Head, to stigmatize us all as Persons that are entirely in the Pretender's Interest, and hearty Friends to Popish Tyranny and Superstition? Is not this, as I said, to judge of our Hearts contrary to clear Facts and Demonstrations? And is it not the stale Crimination of those Men, who rake in every Kennel for nasty Dirt to throw it undeservedly in our Faces? Want of Candour and Ingenuity did I call this? I now retract the Words, as abundantly too soft and mild for such an atrocious Practice; and do directly charge the Doctor with downright Falshood, Calumny and Detraction against no inconsiderable Body of Men of a sacred Character: And this Charge will stand as firm against him as the Sun in Heaven, till we be proved guilty of the Crimes laid at our Door in those Aspersions. Let *Tasher* now consider what Advantage he has gained by his awkward and bungling Vindication, except only to widen the Breach, or make several Holes instead of one.

Yet is there something in the Wind that ought to cool and calm our Passions in this Resentment of hard Usage. For who can imagine such a moderate and prudent Author as Dr. *Gale*, would brand us all in the most ignominious manner, without good reason to bear him out in his Accusations? His Vindi-

cator therefore assures the Reader, “ That the Doctor had found some of the pretended Sons of the Church of *England* guilty of blasphemous and atheistical Fancies, and of Popish Doctrines, whereof he has produced Instances.” Hereby *Tascher* would insinuate, that the Doctor has justified his Arraignments of us all, or he says nothing to the purpose: For they are all the High-Church Divines that are in his Libel, without Exception; and against them all he must prove his Bill.

Indeed the Doctor seemed to be a little nettled with his Adversaries Reflections on certain Persons among the *Baptists*: And as the Law of Nations allows Reprisals, he thought to retaliate, and pay him home in his own kind; therefore he drew his Indictment up against all that great part of the *English* Clergy called High-flyers. But how many of their Tribe has he convicted of these criminal Practices and Opinions? After all his Researches, which we may suppose to be very diligent and exact, where so much Reading and Good-will made the Scrutiny, he arraigns no more than a single Clergyman, Bishop *Bramball*; who, notwithstanding he wrote the Papal Jurisdiction clean out of these Realms, and also confuted the ridiculous Fable of the *Nag's-head* Ordination, with more Solidity of Argument than any *Baptist* ever did, or can do, must be still a rank Papist in that portentous Article of Transubstantiation: And why so, but for this one single Expression? “ No genuine Son of the Church of *England* did ever deny the true real Presence.” And to confess the Truth, I am entirely of the same Mind. Had the Bishop in our Name asserted the true carnal or corporal Presence, we had been all undone: whereas now it is only the true real Presence, I conceive we are safe, and out of danger, because that needs import no more than a true spiritual Presence; spiritual Things being no less true and real than corporal,

corporal, tho' not so plain and intelligible to gross Understandings. If this therefore be all the Popery, for I suppose the Doctor took it not either for Atheism or Blasphemy, we have just the same Popery in our Church Catechism, which teaches us, "That the Body and Blood of *Christ* are verily and indeed taken and received by the Faithful in the Lord's Supper." And the very same Popery which our blessed Lord himself delivered, *John vi. 55. My Flesh is Meat indeed, and my Blood is Drink indeed.* Never can this be true, unless, in a spiritual Sense at least, they be truly and really present to the faithful Receivers, because nothing can operate at a Distance.

The Doctor, to justify his Charge, produces another Instance in that most learned Man, Mr. *H. Dodwell*. But we must remember that the Charge is laid against the high-flying Clergy alone; and when did Mr. *Dodwell* enter into Holy Orders? He lived and died a mere Lay-man; and moreover was no constant Communicant with our Church, but went off at first with the Nonjurors; so that we justly except against the Instance. These two are all in the Doctor's Allegations; nor can they ever suffice to prove his Indictment, seeing the only Clergyman he has alledged, is found and orthodox in his Doctrine, and the other Instance is wholly impertinent. But supposing he had found two or three of those high Clergy really guilty of Popish Doctrines, or of blasphemous and atheistical Fancies, it must still be no less unjust and disingenuous, to impute their Reveries to the whole Body of the High-flyers, except these espoused the same Opinions, than it would be to impute the supposed Errors and Misdemeanours of those High-flyers to the Church of *England*. Will *Tasber* now affirm the Doctor's Instances to be solid and substantial Proofs of what he intended? If he does, then will I by as good Logic undertake

undertake to prove the Moon to be a green Cheese, and my Antagonist's Skull to be a *Caput mortuum*. Since these confident oracular Men can argue no better than this comes to, I am resolved to make them ashamed of themselves, if that was possible; at least to make them sensible they have not such a tame and ignorant Fool to manage as they imagine: For a greater Affront can scarce be offered a Man of any Sense, than to treat him like an Ideot, by attempting to impose the grossest Absurdities on his Understanding.

2. The next Article of Impeachment against me for abusing Dr. *Gale*, relates to his charitable Act of unchurching us all every mother's child, that are not of his Persuasion; and this will put me to little Trouble, because the Advocate confesses the Bill, and pleads guilty. I, not well knowing the Baptists avowed and universal Judgment, that they alone, and those that strike in with their Notions concerning the Administration of Baptism, are the only true Church on Earth; but all others, both Conformists and Nonconformists at Home, together with *Lutherans* and *Calvinists*, not to speak of *Romanists*, *Greek Church*, &c. abroad, are false Churches, or rather no Churches at all; had the Imprudence to impute it as a Particularity in Dr. *Gale*, with a few more, that he unchurched us: And to shew the Hardship of this Usage, I borrowed a Comparison from *Micah*, complaining to the *Danites* for robbing him of his Priest and Gods. And really according to the Nature of the thing, we have more Cause to complain than he, if the Generality of our Commentators be right, Dr. *Spencer* and a few more dissenting, that those Utensils and Accoutrements of *Micah* were applied to an idolatrous Worship: In which case, such an imaginary Church and Ministry, as our Adversaries leave us, are full good enough for the Service of imaginary Gods. But as we  
serve

serve the true God, and not Idols, so we think it hard if these great Patrons of Freedom, with whom we now deal, will not give us Leave to express a little Resentment, and make our Complaint, when we are feloniously deprived of a true Church and Ministry.

The Fact being granted, that we are effectually unchurch'd, *Tasber* shuffles and wiggles about, to try if he can bewilder the Reader with idle Amusements. "For the Doctor was induced and obliged  
" to advance his Notions, that he might clear him-  
" self from the Imputation of Schism." Be that true, 'twas none of my Province to regard it, when I considered and affirmed no more than bare Fact; and I hope there are few People of that diabolical Spirit, as to do their Neighbours Mischief purely for Mischief's Sake, or through a mere Frolick, without some Inducement to it of another Nature. Or could a Man of the Doctor's Temper and Discretion, pitch upon no proper *Medium* to defend himself, but run into the wild Extreme of unchurching all the Christian World, besides those few of his own Persuasion? As if a Man engaged in a costly and vexatious Law-suit, should destroy Plaintiff, Family, Relations and all, to rid himself of that Embarrassment. The Comparison cannot be too harsh and odious, if it be allowed that Church and Religion may be as valuable with some Persons, as Life and Property are with others.

"Likewise the Doctor had Truth and Argument  
" on his Side, and consequently a Right to do what  
" he did." A large and honourable Privilege most undoubtedly! Was it not the Point in Question, as depending on the Validity or Invalidity of our Baptism; in determining whereof he as a Party, cannot be permitted to be the Judge.

Being on this Topick, I am perfectly convinced by the Baptists Writings, beside oral Expressions, that

that it is with them a fixed and resolved Case; there is no other Church, except their own, to be accounted true; all the rest being pretended, false, and purely notional. What Advantage then have not these busy and insinuating Men to pervert their unguarded Neighbours? I am told, 'tis their Custom, when they spy out weak, but well-meaning People to Religion, to creep under-hand into their Houses, with a Design of caeeping into their Hearts and Affections also, though this Language highly displeases *J. Tassher* and his Party. Can they have a more prevailing Engine to work with, and gain their Point, than to tell them roundly: They are now joyned in Communion with a false Church, that has no true Ordinations, Ministry, or Christian Sacraments; that all these are only to be had among the Baptists, a most pure and primitive Church, a most conscientious, good and godly People; and that they must come over to them before they can enjoy these great Blessings? When also they express a flagrant Zeal for God's Glory, a passionate Concern for Souls, and to make all seem true or plausible, do ply them hard with their subtle and sophistical Reasonings, how will it startle the honest, but injudicious People, and unhinge the Constancy of their Minds? For what shall the unhappy Creatures do, when they are strongly bore in Hand, that their Church, Ministry and religious Ordinances are quite gone and sunk in the general Corruption of Christianity? Must they not conclude their Religion, Souls and Salvation to be gone with them, except they speedily change Communion?

However therefore my Pulse beats towards Persecution, it shall be a Secret to my Adversaries; yet I ingenuously profess, that if the Power was in my Hands, I would oblige these officious Profelyte Makers under sufficient Penalty, to keep their  
Church-



Church-murdering Sentiments to themselves, that I might prevent the Mischief of Seduction.

But it seems 'tis too late to lie concealed behind the Curtain, seeing I have already too openly discover'd my evil Inclination. For accused I am, "as one that envies the Baptists the gracious Indulgence they do enjoy." Hold there *J. Tasher*, and say not the Thing which is not: For I do assure you I can never envy any body an Indulgence to rend the Body of *Christ*, and commit Sin, which in my Account is no invidious Privilege. But now go on: "A Spirit I discover that would strip them of that Indulgence; but blessed be God, the Government is not in such Hands; and through Envy at the Indulgence I would incense the Government against an innocent People."

The whole Grievance that has disturbed the Saints Rest, and provoked their Spleen, is only this. The great Majority of our Legislators, who first granted, and still continue that Indulgence, were not, are not Baptists, but Members of other Communions. When therefore the Baptists have roundly unchurched them all, I took it to be an uncivil and ungrateful Requital of their Favour, to serve them so very coarsely; and only remarked upon it, This Thanks has the Government, to be quite unchurched for its gracious Indulgence. And if in this Remark I was mistaken, I hope the Mistake is not unpardonable.

Let the Baptists therefore for once have their Wills, and count this Act of theirs to be civil, grateful, every way consistent with good Manners, and if they please, dutiful too. All the Advice I would give them upon it is, that when they shall make their next Application to the Government for any Favours, they would assert it plainly in their Petitions or Addresses; "'Tis our determinate and resolved Judgment, Great Sirs, that you have no

“ true Church to communicate with, but all your  
 “ Churches are false Churches, because they have  
 “ no true Baptism; and consequently, no true  
 “ Ordinations, Ministers and Sacrament; and this  
 “ we think ourselves bound in Duty and Conscience  
 “ to declare unto you, and we hope without Of-  
 “ fence.” What Reception such a civil Address as  
 this would find, I know not, but leave all Men to  
 their Guesses.

Nevertheless a Man of my prodigious Interest  
 with the Government, as well for my favourite  
 Principles according to the present Situation of  
 Affairs, as the Eminency of my Station, being in  
 an obscure Village, promoted to the Skeleton of a  
 Benefice without Fat or Flesh, could never so  
 much as barely mention the gracious Indulgence,  
 either with or without Approbation, though the  
 Epithet Gracious signifies something; but the Le-  
 gislature takes the Alarm, and immediately repeals  
 the Toleration Act: Upon which all the Meeting-  
 Houses are blown up, or pulled down about the  
 Baptists Ears, and a terrible Persecution commences  
 against an innocent People. An Offence in me, I  
 must own, that would vex a Saint, and for which I  
 am sore afraid they will never forgive me.

After such plain Demonstration therefore let me  
 pass for a hot and fierce Incendiary, that have tried  
 to fire the Government over the Baptists Head; yet  
 certainly Dr. Gale must have a Breast full of Cha-  
 rity, and intended us some high Promotion, when  
 he gave us his Recommendatory Letters to the Go-  
 vernment, or to the whole Realm, in these bright  
 and flaming Characters: “ Of being secret, and  
 “ therefore more mischievous High-flyers, entirely  
 “ in the Pretender’s Interest; and as hearty Friends  
 “ to Popish Tyranny and Superstition, as ever  
 “ was the *Laudean* Faction.” And moreover a  
 little lower; “ To be declared dangerous Enemies  
 “ both

“ both to Church and State, by frequently repeated Acts of the Queen and Parliament.” Having this advantageous Testimonial under the Doctor's Hand, the Wonder is not, as he says, “ That we have had the Fortune to worm ourselves into some Share of the Church's Dignities;” but that we have not engross'd to ourselves another sort of Preferment, and according to Merit been all advanced by this Time as high as *Tyburn*.

I know not whether it be worth the Observation, that the Doctor says, “ We are secret, and therefore more mischievous High-flyers;” and yet in the same Paragraph, says; “ We glory in being called High-Church-Men.” For, how we can be secret High-flyers, and withal glory in being called by that Name, is a Mystery I do not apprehend. Any more than I can also apprehend, how 'tis notorious we are High-flyers, and yet are secret High-flyers; by reason Notoriety and Secrecy seem with me to be inconsistent. In other Cases, Disagreement in the Evidence derogates much from his Authority and Veracity: But no matter for that; Contradictions must go glibly down with holy and ingenious Men, so long as the pious Work is carried on, of blackning the odious High-flyers; and Zeal for a good Cause atones for all Faults, and reconciles every thing.

*Tasher* having had such notable Success in his former Enterprizes, begins to assume fresh Spirits, and attacks me next in a bolder Style. For, says he,

3. “ That Mr. *Owen* is not clear of this Temper, (an envious, fiery and persecuting Temper) appears but too evident, in his strange and unaccountable Reflection on those Words of Dr. *Gale*.”

To evidence we will come in good Time with this great Stranger to all Accounts of this Nature; but because he has made my Quotation from the Doctor lame as *Vulcan*, I will set it down again as it was before.

before. Thus therefore the Doctor in his own Words: "Tho' it should be granted, the Church of *England*, like all other Societies, has Power over her own Body, yet she has certainly none over those that withdraw from her Communion." *Let. 2. p. 85.* And a little lower; "The Dissenters, by being out of her Body, are merely, on that Account, out of her Power."

These are general and unlimited Positions, declaring the Nature of all Societies, with their proper Rights, and the Power they have over their own Members or Subjects. They stand by virtue of their Light and Strength on their own Bottom, and depend on nothing that is antecedent or consequent; but found an absolute Claim of Liberty to all Dissenters, that withdraw from Church-Communion; and to all Members that withdraw from Subjection to their respective Governments, or Societies. So I understood those Positions, and so I believe must every one do, who reads and considers them impartially in the Doctor's Book. The bare Act of withdrawing, is the formal Reason he assigns, for exempting the respective Members from the Power of all Societies, both Civil and Ecclesiastical; for merely upon that Account of their withdrawing, they are certainly out of their Power. And I hope the Doctor did not mean by Societies, tumultuous Mobbs, or headless Rabbles, but regular Bodies of Men legally constituted and orderly governed; such as *Cbrist's* Church most unquestionably is by its original Frame and Platform, such as the Church of *England* is, and all other Churches ought to be. This Doctrine of our Author I held to be pernicious to all regular Societies; and therefore drew a natural and necessary Inference from it, and applied it to a supposed Case of Practice thereupon against our own Civil Government; which I can easily justify before the World, and would do it, was it not  
that

that it justifies itself by its own native Evidence.

*Tasber* endeavours craftily to avoid the Stroke, by beating about the Bush to start fresh Game, but shall not escape by that sly Method. His Words I shall not take in the Order he has placed them, but will pick out his Sense and Meaning, as I am able.

Charged I am with drawing Inferences contrary to the Doctor's Premises; and one of those Inferences must needs relate to this particular Case in Agitation. Wherefore, according to *Tasber's* Account, this must be here the Doctor's Premise. "By  
" the Benefit of the Toleration Act and gracious  
" Indulgence, the Dissenters are out of the Power  
" of the persecuting Party of the Church." I grant this Position, or what is equivalent to it, may be found in the Doctor: But then 'tis the Act of Indulgence exempts them from that Power; and not the Act of their own withdrawing, as the Reason of their Exemption is specified in my Quotation; and possibly, both these Reasons notwithstanding, the Dissenters may be still under the Church's Power *de jure*, tho' not *de facto*.

However the Doctor's Words now mentioned concerning the Indulgence, contain but a particular and contingent Proposition; which as it is true now, may be false another Time; from whence therefore such a general Conclusion relating to the Nature and Power of all Societies, as the Doctor's is in my Citation, can never be inferred by the Rules of Logic. The Toleration Act has put the Dissenters out of the Power of the persecuting Party; or angry Party, as *Gale* has it. Pass this for Truth, yet how does it follow? Therefore not only they that withdraw from the Communion of the Church of *England*, but also from Subjection to all other Societies, are certainly out of their Power. The Indulgence has in Fact done the Dissenters this Kind-

ness; but has it also put the Members of all other Societies that withdraw, merely on that Account out of the Power of their several Governours? There is much more in this Conclusion than was in the Premise, and so the Connexion between them both is invisible; which might tempt one to believe, that *J. Tasher* learned to syllogize among the Fairies; and if so, all the World will agree, that the Faculty he acquired by his Education there, will sooner qualify him to be a Fortune-teller than a Logician. I took not that therefore to be the Doctor's Premise, because I was unwilling to make him argue so very illogically; nor can I take it yet for another Reason here following.

In Dr. *Gale's* Positions which I noted, 'twas the Church of *England* as a Society with Power over her own Body, that is expressly named and concerned. But fain would I learn, how in the Time when the Doctor wrote, the angry persecuting Party was the Church of *England*, or a Society of Men with that Power. Full twenty two Years had run out from the Revolution to the Time wherein he published his Reflections; during which Interval, Deaths, Deprivations, and other Incidents had pretty well purged the Church of those Fire-brands; and Men of Temper and Moderation were substituted in their Room. Also at his Writing, the High-flyers had the Fortune to worm themselves only into some Share of the Church's Dignities; who therefore being crept in it as it were *incognito*, like Moles and Vermine working under Ground, could make but a mean Figure there, and durst hardly shew their Faces on the Stage of Action. Nay, all the while they were but pretended Sons of the Church of *England*, of whom also the charitable Doctor undertook professedly to clear the Church; which being a most useful and agreeable Work, we doubt not but

but he did it effectually, according to the best of his Ability.

How then could this diminutive, surreptitious and discountenanced Party, be the Church of *England*, or a Society with Power over her own Body, when they were no such Church, had no such Power, and that Body was not their own? And how could they have spiritual Courts with Jurisdiction to worry and persecute the poor Dissenters, had not the gracious Indulgence intervened to skreen them from their Fury? Now to talk of a gracious Indulgence to exempt People from the Rage of a Church, which is no where in Being, except in *Utopia*, is in my Apprehension to talk perfect Gibberish. And if this was really the Doctor's Meaning, I expect an easy Pardon for mistaking it, since it was not in my Power to understand Nonsense; which if *J. Tasher* is able to do, it must not be through a deeper Penetration of Judgment he has than other Men, but through pure Sympathy, his own Head being stuffed with the like Notions. And thus for his Ironical Sorrow and Pity expressed to me, he finds himself paid in Categorical Language. For though I did not banter *Dr. Gale*, but was with him very serious, yet I never promised not to banter *J. Tasher*. Even the weeping Philosopher could not forbear a Smile, when he saw the ridiculous Animal mumble Thistles.

Here follows the killing Question, with the Scorpion's Sting in its Tail. "What Examination is this which our Author means the Church should have Power to call the Dissenters to?" In Answer to which Question I cannot say without Romancing, my Meaning was to lay Snares for Woodcocks; though besides my Design and Expectation, one of that feathered Tribe has through his own Rashness most unfortunately fallen into my Springs. But it is my Turn to ask this ingenious Querist an-

other Question. Where did I speak one Word, or give the least Intimation, about calling Dissenters to an Examination? Or where of the Church's Power to do it? The express Words both in my Preface and his Repetition of them also, run exactly thus: "Into the Merits of the Cause we must not examine." Now I always thought Dissenters to be Persons, not Causes; and he that knows no Difference between a Person and a Cause, gives strong Evidence that he himself is no Person, because into his Definition such a thing should enter as Rationality.

Nevertheless so wonderful obliging is my courteous Adversary, as to answer for me by another Question of his own: "Is it not to be presented and prosecuted in the Spiritual Courts, contrary to the Toleration and gracious Indulgence granted to them?" Thus has he edified by studying Dr. Gale, who talks about that Matter; and we know the young Cock must crow after the old one. But he that in my Words can espy a little *Iota* of that Importance, must have more piercing Eyes than *Lynceus* had, and those are the Eyes of Malice. Candid Antagonist, I could not mean what you put upon me, without flying in the Face of Authority; a Practice I utterly abhor, and leave it altogether to your Predecessors in *Germany*, from whom the Disciples at Home in the last Century did not degenerate.

To the Reader that understands the Sense of plain and proper *English*, I shall not offer such an Indignity, as to explain the Phrase, of *examining into the Merits of a Cause*. *Tasler* himself, by using soon after, *Merits of the Cause*, in its right Meaning, shews that he understood it well enough; but has discovered the cloven Foot, in that he would not understand it in my Preface. For to take it right there, would have broken his Measures, and



defeated an honest Design on which he was full bent; namely, to abuse a High-Church-Man, and render him hateful to all Dissenters; a most charitable and necessary Work, which must be done hook and crook! Because *Daniel's* Enemies could find no Occasion to ruin him from his Conduct, they were resolved to frame one by their own Contrivance. Likewise *J. Tasher* finding no Handle that would serve his Turn in my Words, pump'd his own Invention, to form a false one. For soundly to reproach High-flyers, these holy Men may look upon as a main Branch of their Liberty of Conscience; and for ought I know we may stand them instead of Physic, to give a full Vent to all the Venom, Spleen and Rancour of their Hearts; which if stifled and kept within, might work itself into Overflowings of the Gall to breed Jaundices, Fevers, and other raging Distempers, to the great Disturbance of their Tranquillity; so that reaping this signal Benefit from us, they should heartily wish we may live long, was it not that they can more safely and honourably enjoy it when we are dead.

Take the Expression, examining into the Merits of the Cause, in its genuine Sense, how did the Spiritual Courts so examine, when they had the Power? Did they hold long Disputes with the presented Dissenters about the Lawfulness of communicating with our Church, and the Unlawfulness of Separation: Or did they set up Con against Non-Con to chop Logic Hours together about the Points in Controversy? If this was their Usage, they had too much Leisure to trifle in, and I fancy Prosecutions could not be so numerous, as some would now make us believe. All the Business of those Courts in this Particular, was to receive Presentments, take Depositions, and pass Sentence according to Allegations and Probations; which was to

judge of Facts, and not to examine into the Merits of the Cause: So that by this Phrase I could not possibly mean what *J. Tasber* would make me mean, unless I had as good a Talent at talking Nonfense as himself. Was *Dr. Gale* alive, I think he must needs blush at such a fumbling Advocate, and with a just Indignation at the Disgrace he has received, disown the Oligation of the intended Favour.

By this Time I may seem to be even with my Adversary, for forcing upon me a persecuting Spirit, without the least Umbrage given; when I am sure he could know no more of my Temper leaning that Way, than the Dog that barks at the Moon, knows of its Nature. Only he rightly took me to be a High-Church-Man; and then I wish it may not be a mortal Sin with these Saints, to suffer any of his Character they have to deal with, go unreproached. If any Divine of our Church has in their Opinion, given the least Countenance to their Cause or Party, towards him they can cringe and fawn, and lavish out their ill-graced Panegyrics; which serve for nothing so well as to ground a Suspicion of Guilt. Had I the Unhappiness to receive a favourable Word from such Pens or Tongues, I should count their Praises to be Reproaches; and looking with Jealousy on myself, cry out with the honest Heathen Sage; O ye Gods, what evil thing have I committed that such a Mouth commends me! Therefore have I now taken effectual Care to put myself clean out of all Danger from that Coast.

Upon the Upshot of all I shall make bold to give *J. Tasber* a little serious Examination. Pray, Sir, who put it in your Heart to suppress my Words, and foist in others in their stead of a quite different Sound and Sense, that you might represent me like the *Apollyon* in the *Revelations*, and thereby intitle yourself to another of his distinguished Characters,

ractions, which is to be the Accuser of your Brethren? When you did this wilfully and designedly for a spiteful End, will you call it Conscience, Charity or Innocency, though it bears a much plainer Aspect of Forgery and Falsification? Really if such a Practice be allowable, and would pass in human Courts, as you may think it will do in the divine, you might as easily hang me for a Traitor, as arraign me for a Persecutor.

You are pleased to tell us in your Preface: "That as you desire quietly to enjoy your Liberty of Conscience, so you freely allow the same Liberty to other Men." We thank you kindly for your Courtesy; but you should have excepted Nonjurors and High-flyers, who have no Liberty allowed them that I can find, but to be soundly slandered and reviled, and to take it patiently if they can. Did Dr. *Gale*, or do you think it impossible for those Men to have a Conscience? The Nonjurors especially, who in pursuance of their Principles relinquished all their Church-Preferments, omitting other Hardships, and cast themselves naked into the Arms of Providence? Was this an Argument that they have no Conscience? Where then are all the popular Pleas for Errors, Mis-persuasions, and Liberty of Conscience, which in other People claim almost a boundless Latitude? Are they the sole Monopoly of Anabaptists? And where are Mercy, Equity, Humanity, and the golden Rule of doing to others as we would be done by? Vanished it seems they are from the Side of Nonjurors and High-Church-Men, who shall have no Mercy, but be hunted down with open Mouths, like Beasts of Prey.

Yet after all this foul Play, my Antagonist can wipe his Mouth clean, saying with the lewd Woman in the *Proverbs*, *I have done no Wickedness*. And then he falls demurely into the old Pharisaical

cal Cant of praising himself and Party, by informing the World, what mighty religious, peaceable, loving, affectionate, forbearing and forgiving a Generation they all are; as if he had quite forgot the wise Man's Rule; *Let another Man praise thee, and not thine own Mouth*; and the Apostle's Censure on those that commend themselves. But Necessity has no Law; and so it must therefore be, where there is a great Scarcity of good Neighbours. "As for our Parts, says he, we shall chuse rather to suffer Reproach, than in the least to be guilty of rendring Evil for Evil, or Railing for Railing." Not in the least. This is home spoken. But what need of that, when he can do Evil where he received none, and rail without being railed at?

However when the Fox preaches, let the Geese beware. Sensible I am these high Boasts of Merit may be somewhat serpentine and ensnaring; as intended for Engines of Insinuation into the Esteem, Love and good Liking of uncautious People, to make a Market of their Souls: And therefore it may be extremely necessary to put in a short but reasonable Caveat, lest any be imposed upon by their artful Wheedlings and Self-commendations. To send these Men a spiritual Physician for their Health is vain, because they are Proof against all his Prescriptions: A hardy Chirurgeon that would lance and probe deep, to drain out the proud Corruption from the Heart, might be exceeding serviceable; But if that fails in the Operation, a skilful Anatomist to dissect and lay them open, if he does them no Good, will be an excellent Preservative to other People, and upon his Office I shall make a slight Attempt.

Suppose we then that the common People who follow their Congregations, are as honest and religious as they can well be in their Way, yet will I not grant the same concerning the Bulk of their  
Teachers

Teachers and Ringleaders, so far as my Acquaintance with their Books or Persons reaches; and perhaps I know them better than they imagine, being preferred into their Acquaintance much against my Inclination. Of them therefore I can safely certify from my own Experience and Observation, that with a few Exceptions, they are not those meek and harmless Lambs they profess to be; but whatever they may have of the Wolf, they have a large Overplus of the Fox; being a sly, subtle, crafty, designing, self-conceited Sort of People, bloated up with a spiritual Pride, which usually springs from the Presumption of an uncommon Sanctity, and is accompanied with a Train of Attendants of its own Complexion. Particularly of their Writers, with whom I have of late been much more familiar than ever I intended or desired; I do sincerely declare, that, Mr. *Stennet* excepted, in handling controversial Matters, we may find as much Honesty among the Jesuits: Only the best of it is for the Prevention of Evil in seducing others, the major part of them have not the natural, much less the acquired Abilities with those famous Disciples of *Ignatius Loyola*. This is my impartial Judgment of the Men, but I will dwell no longer on this ungrateful and invidious Subject.

Such a large Compass as I have fetch'd, was not needful to clear off the Cavils and Calumnies of my Antagonist; but many more Words were necessary to unmask and expose Iniquity stalking about in a sanctified Guise, that something else beside Innocency might appear underneath the Sheep's Skin. Some of a stiff and Saturnine Gravity may perhaps dislike the Facetiousness and Raillery here used; but how could I wave a little Mirth when I had such a Comical Farce acted before my Face? And to make Amends, I promise more Seriousness when I come to Argument, where the Case will bear it. Others

of a meek Temper may think I have been too factyrical in these Animadversions: But what is a little Satyr to one that may deserve the Iambics of *Archilochus*? Our blessed Saviour was not mild in his Language to Scribes and Pharisees, nor his Apostles to Heretics, Schismatics, and Sinners. Yet after this due Chastisement, I do heartily forgive *J. Tasber*, and pray God may forgive him too, though I cannot advise him to be too easy in forgiving himself.

Very probable it is, that the Baptists Meeting-Houses, and other Places of Concourse, if not their Writings, may hereupon ring with heavy Complaints of Abuses to a godly, quiet, charitable and innocent People. If they do, the Ground of all in the Result will amount to no more than this; that they are not permitted to enjoy the sweet Privilege of abusing others with Impunity. And therefore such Complaints will not be much unlike *Fimbria's* Action against his Adversary *Scævola*, for not receiving the whole Weapon into his Body: For I have only done Justice to one who did me notorious Wrong.

And probably too, for some biting Sarcasms to be found here, *Tasber* may be pleased to enter my Name among his Scoffers. He is welcome to that, so long as with an old Prophet called *Elijah*, I scoff neither at Reason or Religion. Let him give me the Title of Droll, Buffoon, Railer, or what he will; I had ten Times rather he should call me by such a Name, than that I should call him something worse, let his Merits be ever so high and claiming. And so I have at length done with his Preface to the Christian Reader, though this undoubtedly required a Christian Writer.

---

A  
R E P L Y  
T O

*Tasber's* Exceptions against  
the Lawfulness of *Infant-*  
*Baptism.*

**F**ROM hence must I travel in a waste howling Wilderness, thro' abundance of Riff-raff, for about thirty Pages together, before I meet with my self again; and when with much Fatigue and Irksomness I am arrived at that Stage, I find the Entertainment there so coarse and homely as to turn my Stomach; there being nothing set before me beside the dry mouldy Bread and clouted Shoes of the old *Gibeonites*. The stale Crambe of Objections and Evasions, is served up a-fresh, which have been oft repeated, and as often baffled; but no notice is taken of the Refutations, because there is no other Shift to support the profligated Cause. Repetitions in Print of the same things please me not, and therefore I shall refer the Reader to my Book for Satisfaction; for the most part as I go on pointing to the particular Places where it may be had. For if any one be so rash as to swallow

low

low Poison, I would advise him also, as he loves his Life, to take the Antidote. Yet where Occasion is given to explain, enlarge, or confirm what is there expressed, I shall take care to do it.

The principal Argument I insisted upon for baptizing Infants, was grounded on the *Abrahamical* Covenant; which I proved in Substance to be the same gracious Evangelical Covenant that we Christians do live under, and which founds the very same Church and covenanted Privileges. In the Patriarchal Families this holy Church, as an organized Body, continued without Alteration for some Centuries, till the *Mosaical* Economy cast it into a different Model, gave it a new Form and Constitution, and made it a National Church. Thus it remained to our Saviour's Time, who discharged it again of the Legal Incumbrances, and restored it in Substance to its pristine State in the Patriarch's Days. Explanations, Enlargements, and, in some external Circumstances, Alterations also, he likewise made, so far as was necessary, to qualify it for an universal Church.

That true Evangelical Church, as it was modell'd in the Patriarchs Times, did, by the proper Ordinance, receive into its Communion the Infants of all professed Believers, who had a natural Capacity for the Operation, according to God's express Command, which we find no where repealed by *Christ* in his holy Gospel; and yet the Repeal ought to be as plain and evident as the Command was, that we may know it to be the Will of the Legislator. From whence we conclude, that the Command is still in force, and that *Christ* left this Matter to stand on the old Bottom, and go on as it was practis'd before in the Church of God.

What our Adversaries imagine of a consequential Repeal, is very arbitrary and fallacious; since they only argue from Terms imposed on adult Persons, to exclude Infants from their antient Privileges: which



which is a most absurd and unequitable way of dealing. For had the same Measures been given to the *Hebrew* Infants, they also must have been barred of Church Privileges and Communion; because Conditions of enjoying that Communion and God's Favour were then imposed on adult Persons, which were utterly incompatible with the State of Infants. This was my main Foundation; and from hence I drew strong, and, as I still believe, unanswerable Inferences for Infant-Baptism.

As I have laid great stress upon this Argument, so it was *Tasher's* Business, either to overthrow the Reasons I used to prove the Patriarchal Church and Covenant to be the Evangelical; or else to shew the Deductions I made from thence in favour of Infant-Baptism, to be invalid: Upon one or both which Topics he should have strenuously exerted himself; but what he has done, will appear in the Sequel.

But before I proceed any farther, I must premise, that he has wilfully or ignorantly mistaken the true State of the Controversy between us in most, or in the most material of his Objections. What we contend for, is, the Lawfulness of Infant-Baptism, and the Right our Infants have to that Ordinance; not the absolute Necessity of Baptism to Salvation: And yet against this Necessity do several of his Exceptions militate, and against nothing else. For thus he is pleased to argue: The *Hebrew* Females, all the righteous Men before *Abraham*, and many afterwards, pleased God, and went to Heaven uncircumcised. Grant that, and see what will follow. Even this Conclusion, or his Instances, make nothing at all against our Doctrine: Therefore it is unlawful to baptize Infants; or, Therefore Infants have no right to be baptized. *Spektatum admissi risum, &c.* For what Inference can be more precarious and ridiculous? Those Persons were never circumcised in their riper Years; and consequently their Case may be alledg'd  
against

against baptizing the Adult, as well as against baptizing Infants, and also against giving them the Lord's-Supper, and against other Christian Institutions; by reason those Persons were, or might be saved without them. This single Observation supercedes all Necessity of replying to his oft-repeated Instances of uncircumcised Females and the rest. For if *J. Tasher* and his Friends cannot understand the Difference between Necessity and Lawfulness, or between Necessity and Right, 'tis high time to leave off writing Books, and drawing Divinity-Schemes, and go again to School to learn the Idioms and Proprieties of their Mother-Tongue,

In *p. 30.* he produces these Words of our Church: "Nothing doubting but that he favourably alloweth this charitable Work of our's, in bringing this Infant to his Holy Baptism." Whereupon is smartly remarked, "That we pretend to find no Precept or Precedent in Scripture for Infant-Baptism." True, when he can prove Love and Law, Charity and Duty to be inconsistent; else his Remark is frivolous, if they are fairly co-incident and agree together. For what Logic is this? 'Tis Charity for a rich Man to relieve a poor one in great Distress, therefore 'tis neither Law nor Duty.

His first Attack upon me is thus formed: "The Command for Circumcision was not given in the Form I mention, of initiating little Children, (which loose way of expressing it gives room for many groundless Fancies) but it was confined to the Males, and to that only Act of Circumcision; and so can be no Commission or Warrant for a Practice so differing from it as that of Infant-Baptism is;" *p. 32.*

I own the Word Initiating is no where in the Scripture; so neither are Incarnation, Trinity, Sacraments, and several others, which nevertheless are of frequent and approved Use among Orthodox Divines.

vines. Let the Things be there, and we are not too scrupulous or solicitous about Words. What is signified by Initiation in these Disputes, is a solemn Entrance or Admission of Persons into the Church and Covenant by the proper Rite; and that Circumcision was once such an initiating Ordinance, is manifest from its Use and Nature. For the Male that was not circumcised on the appointed Day, had broken the Covenant. Was he not then out of the Covenant and barred of its Benefits? But when duly circumcised, within the Church and Covenant he was reputed, and to their Privileges he had an apparent Right. What then initiated or entered him in, but Circumcision; as the blameable Neglect thereof kept him out? And if into the Church and Covenant Circumcision gave him Entrance, what, on this Account, could Circumcision be to him but an initiating Rite or Ordinance? And so in the *Mosaical* Dispensation it gave Profelytes Admittance to the Passover, and consequently to Church-Communion. *Exod.* 12. 48.

But if Reason will not satisfy our Antagonist, let's appeal to Authority; which is the more unexceptionable, because it shall be their own. *D'Anvers* affirms, "Circumcision was a Door into the Church;" *p.* 30. If so, it gave Entrance into the Church, and that was Initiation. And if his Authority be too light, we will produce the great *Dr. Gale*, who while alive, would not give place to *Tasher* for Learning, Judgment, and Skill in Theology. Express is he in the Case: "That Infants were formerly initiated by Circumcision, as we are now by Baptism;" *Let.* XII. *p.* 452. Alas, therefore for the unhappy Doctor, that he should express himself so loosely, and thereby give room for many groundless Fancies! But behold the Ingenuity of these peaceable Men, who rather than want Pretences to cavil at and contradict us, will fall foul on  
their

their own best Friends, and tilt their Heads against one another; and yet to our great Astonishment and Mortification, they are every one of them exactly right in their Notions, maugre the Force of Contradictions!

That the Command for administering of Circumcision was confined to that only Act, is *gratis dictum*, or spoken without Reason or Authority, and is therefore denied as easily as 'tis affirmed. For what he subjoins about the Difference between Circumcision and Baptism, is no Reason at all; that Difference being only extrinsic in the Matter and Manner of Administration, but not intrinsic in the Form, Uses, and Dignity of the Ordinances, nor in the Qualifications of the Subjects, which I proved to be the same; *Book, p. 74, 75.* To the Ordinance of Baptism God can therefore have no more Regard than he had to that of Circumcision. Then it follows, where there is a Parity of Reason in the Nature of things, there ought to be a Parity in the Church's Practice, unless an express Prohibition had interfer'd. For the Church's Custom, grounded on Divine Command, and continued without Interruption for near two thousand Years, must not be changed without an Order from the same Authority that enjoined it. Was there a Rite appointed by a competent Power for incorporating Citizens, or naturalizing Subjects under certain Qualifications, and that Rite should be afterwards altered for another, without specifying any Alteration in the Citizens or Subjects to be naturalized and incorporated, 'twould be Injustice to deny those Persons their antient Privileges, purely for the bare Alteration of the Rite. Yet upon such a Punctilio do the *Anti-Pædo-Baptists* insist for dis-privileging all the Infants of Christian Parents; in which Rigour of Law there seems to be much the same Justice as in the *Skibboleth* of the *Gilgadites*.

Entering into the Merits of the Cause, my Adversary gives out; "Mr. *Owen* offers to prove the Identity of the Patriarchal with the Evangelical Covenant; and also the Continuation of it throughout the Mosaical Œconomy down to *Christ*." I give not his Words, but his Sense. According to this Representation I have attempted two Things, but could not perform; whereas this Prevaricator knows in his Heart, that what I undertook, that I proved beyond the Possibility of a Refutation; and therefore he dares not manfully encounter my Arguments, but only advances against them a few silly profligated Notions, to grin his Teeth when he cannot bite. However I shall attend a little to his idle Suggestions, that he may not grow quite out of Humour by being neglected.

Against the Patriarchal Covenant being the same with the Evangelical, he quibbles upon *Jeremiah's* Words, who calls the Evangelical Covenant New; which implies, says he, that in *Jeremy's* Days it was not in Being, and the Apostle calls it new also. Am I bound to answer such pitiful Stuff as this? For may not the same thing be called new and old in different Respects? As the old Creature becomes new by Regeneration; and yet is old still in one Sense; and as his own simple Objections are old and new, old in *D'Anvers*, *Taylor*, and others, but new as he has wrought them afresh into his own impertinent Tract. But when he says, that *Jeremy's* and the Apostle's Words imply the Evangelical Covenant was not in Being in *Jeremy's* Days, he is a wilful Perverter of the Scriptures; because he does as good as grant me presently after, that the Evangelical Covenant had its Commencement soon after the Fall, and was not that long before the Days of *Jeremy*?

But he infers; "That if my Distinction of the Covenants was allowed, it would be nothing to

“ my Purpōse; because the Covenant of Grace was  
 “ without Sign, Seal, or Ceremony before *Abra-*  
 “ *ham’s* Time, and to Females afterwards; whence  
 “ it follows, that positive Institutions are obliga-  
 “ tory to none but those on whom they are enjoyn-  
 “ ed; and that it is God’s Word and Command,  
 “ not the Nature of the Covenant, which warrants  
 “ our Practice in Things of that Kind.” Herein  
 lies the chief Strength of our Adversaries Pleas  
 against Infant Baptism; and therefore I will answer  
 them once for all, reserving only the last Part  
 for another Occasion, where we shall meet with the  
 same again.

The Instance of Females being uncircumcised, is  
 fetch’d up at every Turn; though I took Care to  
 obviate it in my Book, *p. 75, &c.* and there *Tasber*  
 is as mute as a Fish. What shall we do with such  
 Men as repeat their Objections a hundred Times  
 over, but will take no Notice of our Answers and  
 Solutions? Is not this the Way to wrangle on and  
 make Disputes endless, and after all be little the  
 wiser? His Instance from Females, if it proves any  
 thing, proves too much; and will as soon conclude,  
 that Adult Persons need not be baptized any more  
 than Infants, because Females never were circum-  
 cised. But the true Reason of their being uncir-  
 cumcised, was not the Unlawfulness of the Practice,  
 but their natural Incapacity for the Operation; and  
 when such a Reason as this can be alledged against  
 baptizing Infants, we shall immediately strike, and  
 yield the Cause. Had there a Ceremony of Initia-  
 tion so applicable to Females, as Baptism is to In-  
 fants, been instituted and enjoyn’d in old Times, no  
 doubt but Females would have been as strongly  
 obliged to its Observance as the Males.

To cnervate the whole Force of this Objection, I  
 shall make bold to borrow an Illustration from the  
 Scheme of our modern Politicians about Civil Go-  
 vernment;

vernment; which, whether real or supposed, will equally serve my present Turn. Once therefore in the Infancy of the World, Mankind were in a State of Equality, there being neither Governour nor Subject, Superior or Inferior, nor any instituted Laws, besides what were immured within the Walls of single Families. Then to observe the Laws of Nature, impressed on all Mens Consciences by their Creation, was enough to entitle them to all the Rights and Benefits of Humanity. But in Proccess of Time People having experimented the intolerable Evils of that Nomadical Sort of Life, agreed to associate themselves into larger Bodies under Magistrates, called by the Name of Political Governments. For the better Regulation of those Bodies were the positive Laws enacted, which we call Civil, National, or Municipal. After these received Sanction, 'twas not sufficient for the Subjects to observe the Laws of Nature alone, but they must also submit to the instituted Laws of their respective Societies, before they could expect Protection, and enjoy the Rights of Subjects: And had there been any Ceremonies of Admittance into these Societies ordained by Law, as there are in the Case of Naturalization, to those Ceremonies every one must conform and give due Observance, before he could claim the Privileges of Society. Such is the Custom and Law of Nations.

And now to bring this Case Home to the Point in hand; Mankind at first were bound only to the Laws of natural Religion, a very few positive Commands at most excepted; and a due Observation of those Laws serv'd to recommend them to God's Favour. But as soon as he was pleas'd, to sequester to himself a peculiar People, and of them form a Regular Church, then did he enjoin on them positive Laws and Institutions more or less; to which the Members of the Church were bound to submit,

67 ✓ if they would enjoy God's Love, and the Benefits of Church Communion; for which Ends the Practice of natural Religion alone was not now sufficient. And as God appointed Circumcision for the Rite of Admission into the Patriarchal Church, so has he now appointed Baptism for the same Use in the Christian Church. To Baptism therefore must every one submit and conform himself, so far as lies within his Power, before he can be reputed a Member of the Church, and be duly entitled to God's Favour, and to the Rights and Immunities of that holy Corporation. And this is the real Necessity of Christian Baptism, which we call not absolute, but hypothetical.

As God intended the Christian Church should be universal, so has he now confined Salvation to that Church alone, as I proved from his holy Word: *Book p. 119, 120.* to which nothing at all has been yet replied. Within the Church therefore all must be, or to Salvation they can shew no Title by Scripture-Evidence; and Baptism being the incorporating Ordinance into the Church, baptized they ought to be to insure their Title, and make it apparent. This is the standing Law and Rule; leaving extraordinary Cases entirely to God's Breast, and not meddling with his prerogative Court and uncovenanted Grace, of which we are wholly ignorant.

Wherefore then are *Enoch, Noah*, and those that lived in the State of natural Religion, brought on the Stage in this Dispute? Are they Precedents fit to be imitated under the Christian Dispensation? May we safely build upon their Grounds? If so, all Sacraments, positive Laws, and Religion, may be laid aside as needless; and the Deists triumph in their Unbelief. This is to carry the *Jews* back from *Canaan* into the Wilderness, and teach them they need not be circumcised in the Land of Rest, because they were not circumcised in their Travels thither;



thither; and to send our Statesmen in civilized and regular Communities, to seek for Rules of Government among Barbarians. The Omission of Circumcision in the Wilderness, was not imputed for Transgression to the *Israelites*: But had they refused or neglected to be circumcised in *Canaan*, to Excision they had lain obnoxious for Contempt and Contumacy. Positive Ordinances will therefore yield to Necessity and hard Junctures, but in other Cases must not be slighted or omitted; and it is mere Impertinency, or something worse, to plead the Exemption of the Church from commanded Ordinances, by reason others are exempted to whom they were never commanded; as if *Englishmen* were discharged from our National Laws, because Foreigners are. By this Observation I take the Instances alledged to be quite dispatched, so as never to rise up in Rebellion against us any more, except Impudence can breath new Life into them, and raise them from their Grave again: And what I have now delivered may do good Service against the Deists also, with whom our present Adversaries do but too well agree in their Notions.

My Antagonist goes on: "Mr. Owen offers to prove the Evangelical Covenant made with *Abraham*, to have continued in Being and full Force throughout the whole Mosaical Œconomy down to our Saviour's Time, as a distinct Covenant from the Legal, &c. p. 33." What I offered to prove, that I proved by such Arguments, as none but Infidels, or *Pelagians*, can gainsay. *Book, p. 17, &c.* Against all which Proofs we have some insignificant Seemings advanced, together with a false but positive Affirmation. For, says he, "it may seem from these Words, *The Law was added; And, behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing: And, he is a Debtor to do the whole Law;* which St. Paul

“ delivers as his own Opinion, and not, as Mr. Owen imagines, as arguing on the Principles of the Judaizing Christians only; I say, it may seem from hence, that these two Covenants in the Jewish Dispensation did coalesce and unite in one.” Indeed! then were they as agreeable a Mixture as Fire and Water, or as the Clay and Iron in the Feet of *Nebuchadnezzar's* Image. And if they so lovingly and friendly united in one, how came *St. Paul* in several Places of his Epistles to represent them as diametrically cross and opposite to one another? Nay, what Pity is it such good Friends should be ever parted, seeing that in a joint Harmony and Coalition, they might unanimously have promoted the Work of Salvation? Was not *St. Paul* over-spiteful in falling so foul on the Legal Covenant, as to make it cut us off from Grace and *Christ*, when for 1500 Years it had been entirely one with the Covenant of Grace? How also did the Apostle agree so well with himself, as these two Covenants are said to do, if in one Place he delivers it as *his own Opinion*, (infallible Judgment had founded better from a Christian's Mouth) that Circumcision made Men Debtors to do the whole Law, separated them from Grace, and all Profit in *Christ*; but in other Places affirms, *Circumcision is nothing, and availeth nothing*? But for farther Satisfaction see my Book, p. 36, 37.

Is not *J. Tasher* a notable Disputant, to confront his bare Seemings against cogent Arguments, which he dares not so much as touch in earnest for fear of burning his Fingers? Did *St. Paul* really deliver the fore-mentioned Words as his own Opinion? See then what must follow. Certain it is from *Acts* xvi. 3. that *Timothy* was circumcised by *St. Paul*, or his Order. Did he by that Act cut him off from Grace and all Profit through *Christ*, and so damn his Son *Timothy*? The Council at *Jerusalem* forbade only

only to circumcise the *Gentile* Males, but not the Children of *Jewish* Converts, *Acts* xv. 23. and xxi. 25. Likewise St. *James* rejects it as a false Imputation or Charge on St. *Paul*, that he taught the *Hellenistical Jews*, when profelyted to *Christ*, not to circumcise their Children, *Acts* xxi. 21. And certain it is from Ecclesiastical History, that Circumcision continued in Use at *Jerusalem* among converted *Jews* for several Episcopal Successions in that Church. Wherefore if in St. *Paul's* Judgment it was naturally and necessarily attended with the fatal Consequences and pernicious Effects he mentions, we must not suppose that he had ever tolerated, much less approved the Practice of it among any Christians, but absolutely condemn'd it and forbidden it.

Behold therefore the pious Modesty of Anabaptistical Writers, to make all those Mischiefs in St. *Paul's* Judgment to be the real and inevitable Effects of Circumcision. But away with your ensnaring and insidious Seemings, which would bear us in Hand, that the Apostles Doctrine did contradict their approved Practice. If this be your Way of defending your Cause and gaining Disciples, I would as soon listen to the old Serpent; and do earnestly beseech all People who love their Souls, to take special Heed that they be not choused and wheedled out of the Truth by these innocent, holy, and conscientious Men. More than *Job's* Patience must he have, that can bear with their Profaneness and Effrontery in abusing the holy Apostles, to support their own precarious Notions.

Yet my Adversary, perhaps thinking this Method not to be just and tenable, promises not to insist upon it; and therefore recurs to the grand Topic of a divine Command for baptizing Infants; "Be-  
" cause the Right to Circumcision, and conse-  
" quently to Baptism, depends wholly on the Will  
" and Pleasure of God. p. 34." And here we are

free enough to joyn Issue, but differ about the Degree and Nature of the Evidence; while sound Inferences from Scripture satisfy us concerning God's Will; but the Baptists must have exprefs Command, or approved Precedent. And seeing they are so stiff and restive in this Demand, I shall try to give them such a bitter Pill to swallow, as may quite choak them before it goes half-way down.

Certain it is that they practise Baptism on their Followers, who are born of Christian Parents, and from their Childhood educated in *Christ's* Religion. What I then most reasonably demand on their Principles, is Scripture-Authority for this Practice. Arguments from Circumcision; Deductions from Parity of Reason, Analogies and doctrinal Allusions; Proofs from the Nature of the Covenant; Testimonies from the Primitive Church and Fathers; and all Topics of this kind, they have barr'd against, by rejecting them in us; and nothing but Precept, or Example from holy Writ must be alledged. Now therefore let them produce their Scripture Warrant of this Sort for administering Baptism to the Children of baptized Christians.

If they alledge our Lord's Commission for a Command; that is exprefs and literal for teaching all Nations, and baptizing Disciples newly come over from among Infidels, but gives no Direction for baptizing the Posterity of those Disciples. If they say, we must teach them *to observe and do all Things that Christ commanded*, *Matt. xxviii. 20.* I ask, where did *Christ* ever command them to baptize the Children of baptized Parents? If they affirm, as some of their Sect have done, that *Christ* himself was baptized, though born of *Mary*, who undoubtedly was a Christian: I answer, That he was only baptized with *John's* Baptism, not his own, which were very different; neither was *Mary* a Christian when *Christ* was born; nor can it be proved that she

was ever baptized at all, much less so when he was baptized of *John*, his own Baptism being not then instituted. Or if they fly to the Scripture Examples in baptizing the Faithful, both Men and Women; those were every Mother's Child fresh Converts, from unbelieving *Jews* or *Gentiles*. What more they can say for themselves, I do not foresee, since nothing but a Divine Command, or Scripture Precedent, must be admitted.

How then can they ever justify their own Practice by their Principles? To do which I challenge, dare them, and defy them. And if this they cannot do, wherefore do they keep such a Stir, as to unchurch all Christian Churches beside their own, for want of a true Baptism, when upon their Grounds their own Baptism is unlawful? Quit therefore, Friends, quit your uncommanded, unprecedented, and unexemplified Baptism; and for Shame, if not for Peace, give it up to Quakers and Socinians; except only when you can gain Profelytes from among unbaptized Infidels. And that you may not forget it, or neglect it, I challenge you again to defend your Baptism by your Principles; or else forbear to arraign and condemn your Neighbours, for doing that which you do yourselves, as ye aver.

Mistaken I am if what I have now urged, does not cut the Throat of the Baptists Cause, and cripple their most plausible Argument against the Baptism of Infants; so that they must either give up their Doctrine, or their Practice; and more of this Nature they shall have in the Sequel, where they give me the Occasion.

What I alledged to prove Circumcision was the proper Seal, and initiatory Ordinance to the Patriarchal, or Gospel Covenant, *Tasher* strives to overthrow by the Reasons following:

1. "That

1. "That Circumcision in point of Time did not run parallel with the Covenant of Grace, and is now actually ceased; therefore it is very arbitrary to call it a Gospel Ordinance. p. 34." Then by virtue of the same Reason, Baptism and the Lord's Supper are not Gospel Ordinances, nor can *J. Tasher* belong to the Covenant of Grace, because they did not co-exist and run parallel with that Covenant in all the Periods of its Duration.

2. "That by my own Acknowledgment, Circumcision became annexed to the Legal Covenant, as a particular Precept." What then? Were the Ten Commandments purely and properly Mosaic? Or were all the other Precepts of the Legal Dispensation sealing, covenanting, and matriculating Ordinances to the Law; as Circumcision was to the Patriarchal Covenant; and in that Sense was not of *Moses*, but of the *Fathers*, *John* vii. 22. Also, "It was a Yoke of Bondage, and is opposed to Gospel Liberty, Faith, and a new Creature; therefore it belonged more to the Law than to the Gospel." Concerning this Matter I refer to my Book, p. 38, &c. to which my ingenious Adversary says *Mum*. And yet, if in spite of Truth I should let him have his Will, I doubt he would not live much the longer; because the terrible Thoughts might suffocate him, that *Timothy* and all the Male Children of *Jewish* Converts at *Jerusalem*, and perhaps elsewhere, who were circumcised by the Apostle's Order or Consent, were, according to *Tasher*, by virtue of that Act alone clapp'd under a Yoke of Bondage, and made to stand in a flat Opposition to Gospel Liberty, Faith, and a new Creature; all which they must therefore lose by Circumcision. So very happily did the two Covenants coalesce and unite in one! But if any one lacks to lose his Way to Heaven, I cannot recommend him to better Guides than *Tasher* and his Accomplices.

3. The

3. The Substance of his next Paragraph is: "It can in no wise be granted, that Circumcision always accompanied *Abraham's* Spiritual Seed; or that *Ishmael, Esau* and *Keturah's* Sons were by Right within the Limits of the Covenant, which was appropriated only to *Isaac* and his Seed; and yet does it not follow, that those were reprobated who were out of the Covenant; Election, or the Favour of God being not confined to that Covenant, as the same was signed by Circumcision."

If it be the Covenant of Grace he means, as I did, and proved that to be, I fear their Title to Salvation, who were out of that Covenant, was not much better than the Divinity and Reasoning of our Author. What may be done by a Prerogative Court and Power, is not the Point in Question, but what Men may claim by a Covenant Right and Title. 'Tis the Charter Act gives the Franchises to a Corporation, and to those Franchises all the Members of it, and no others, may lay their Claim. The same it is in the Church of God, ever since it was formed into a regular Corporation or Society. Whoever are legally admitted into that Society, they have an apparent Right to all the Privileges, wherewith God has vested it; and whoever remain without, or are deservedly cast out, have no apparent Right unto the same. To *Isaac* and his Seed it was granted, that from their Stock *Christ* should descend to save the World, and that they should be the *Segullah*, or peculiar People of God; which Favours to other Persons and Nations were then denied. If the Charter Act therefore gave the Denominations of Saints, Holy, Beloved, Elect, and the like; and if it appropriated Salvation to the visible Members of that Society, denying these Favours to all others, to those Rules and Orders we must closely keep in our Accounts.

Accord-

Accordingly *Ishmael*, *Keturab's* Sons, and *Efau*, being admitted by Circumcision into the Church and Covenant, received their Benefits, and join'd in the Exercifes of religious Worship, fo long as they abode in their Father's Families: But when they departed thence, or were ejected, I am no more oblig'd to account for them, than for thofe who excommunicate themfelves, or are juftly excommunicated by the judicial Sentence of the Church, but leave them wholly to a higher Tribunal; though withal while thofe Perfons continued afterwards in the Service of the true God, I cannot fuppose they loft all the Benefit of their Circumcifion. Since therefore God has been pleas'd to make an Inclofure of his Church, and apparently confin'd his faving Grace and Favours to that Inclofure, we fhall not permit any modern Vifionaries to tear up its facred Fences, and turn it into a Wafte and Common; nor fhall they lead us in a wild Chace to feek for Ecclefiaftical Rules and Laws among *Arabians* and *Idumeans*, *Mobabites* and *Ammonites*, as *Tafher* does, any more than to feek for political Laws among the ancient *Scythians*, or prefent *Hottentots*; or to feek for City Immunities among Peafants. For God has given us a Rule to be within his Church, and that we will clofely follow, leaving our Adverfaries to feek out their eternal Fortunes in a loofe Ramble among Deifts, and their uncircumcifed Friends, as they do their unbaptized Children.

But who can underftand what thefe Gentlemen mean by a Spiritual Seed? Two Notions we have of it, whereof one is relative and external only, the other is inward and real by Regeneration, or Sanctification of the Spirit. Wherefore fince they will not allow fuch circumcifed Perfons as *Ishmael*, *Keturab's* Sons, and *Efau*, to be accounted fpiritual by an external Quality or Relation to the Covenant, which is but a titular Claim and Denomination, and

is



is all we contend for now, will they assert them to be spiritual by inward Regeneration and Sanctification of the Holy Ghost? It seems then they shall have all the Grace and Favours of the Evangelical Covenant, who have no Relation to it, no visible Title to demand its Name and Patronage, much less its Benefits, tho' they be marked and signed with its proper Seal. Away then with this trifling, vain, and superfluous Ordinance, seeing it cannot give Men so much as an apparent Right to the Covenant and its sacred Privileges, when, without any Regard at all to it, they may have a full actual Right to all the Benefits of the Covenant. So useless is it to tie up Men even to Divine Institutions! Or if, without any Regard to Spirituality, either by Covenant-Relation, or by New-Birth and real Holiness, they will vote whom they please to Heaven; I am well assured the Gospel of *Jesus Christ* will demur to the Sentence, and more than once give them the Lie in their Teeth.

Yet for our better Instruction we are told; "Circumcision is nothing, &c. nothing of itself, but as it is commanded of God, then it is something. And just so it is with Baptism;" p. 36. But will this Doctrine hold true, that Circumcision is something by God's Command? Or will not this Something dwindle into Nothing, according to *Tasher's* own Account? For in the Page before he has named the Persons, who in no wise must be allowed to be a spiritual Seed, nor so much as by Title be within the Limits of the *Abrahamic* Covenant, tho' by God's Command they were circumcised; while he named others, as the *Moabites* and *Ammonites*, that were in God's Favour, and the Election of Grace, tho' uncircumcised. What then were the first one Jot the better for their commanded Circumcision? Or how did it profit them in the least, when no manner of spiritual Advantage, so much as in outward

ward Appearance, accrued to them thereby; but other uncircumcised Persons stood fairer than they did for God's Favour and eternal Salvation? And just alike it fares with Christian Baptism. Well then might God have spared these useles Ordinances, which bring no peculiar Privilege to those that observe them; but all Divine Favours lie still as open, if not more open, to those that are never baptized or circumcised. I am sensible whither such Doctrines finally tend, and shall take opportunity to note it hereafter.

That Females were reputed to be circumcised in the Males, was only in me a bare Supposition; and if true it was, it would not warrant his Inference, "That Infants may be reputed to be baptized in their Parents:" For then they should not be baptized in their riper Years, any more than Females were circumcised; because that would be giving them two Baptisms, the one Imputative, and the other Real.

4. My Antagonist asks, "What Text of Scripture I can produce, that saith, Circumcision did always accompany those who were *Abraham's* spiritual Seed by Calling and Profession?" Rigid Taskmasters, who will have plain Texts of Scripture for every thing! Sufficient should it be to reasonable Men, that God ordained and commanded it to *Abraham* and his Descendents, to his domestic Servants, and to the Profelytes of Righteousness, but to none others; and that it was, in pursuance to that Command, administer'd constantly to them alone by God's Church till its Expiration, natural Incapacity in Females still excepted. I believe I should gravel my Querist a great deal worse, should I ask him another Question; What Text of Scripture he can produce that saith, Baptism must always accompany the adult Children of baptized Christian Parents? His other Question, "How natural In-

"fants

“ Infants can be called a spiritual Seed?” shall be answered in due time.

Presently after, p. 36. he brings up his Males in Opposition to Females; as if Distinction of Sexes ran most in his Head, and would do his Cause the greatest Service. And because I said, *Christ* had good Reason to change the Seal of the Covenant; he briskly asks, “ Who knows but he had as good Reason to change the Subjects also?” For which I will ask him as good a Question on the other side; And who knows that he had? Or rather, Who knows not that he had none, since he never did it, nor gave the least Intimation of it? Especially since there is no Reason in the Quality of the Subjects, or in the Nature of the Covenant, or in the Dignity, Design, and Uses of the Ordinance, for such a Change. However, let it be proved that such a Change was made, and we insist not upon Reasons, but shall immediately give up the Cause.

He touches also on the trite Objection, “ That if we follow our Rule from Circumcision, Infants should be baptized precisely on the eighth Day.” To which I returned enough, *Book*, p. 64, 65. But that is not to be heeded, lest Quarrels and Cavils should have an End. This Case might be farther cleared by the Instance of the *Sabbath-Day*; which, as is generally believed, was ordained presently after the Creation, and has something in its Nature that is certainly moral, and therefore still obligatory; as is affirmed by the *Baptists*, *Confess. of Faith*, ch. 22. Yet was it changed without express Command, and upon slender Evidence otherwise, from the last to the first Day of the Week in Memory of *Christ*'s Resurrection: Much less have we any Command to keep the *Lord's-Day* with the same Strictness of bodily Rest, and other Particularities, as the *Jews* were commanded to keep their *Sabbath*; but with respect

to it the Christian Law gives a greater Liberty: *Rom. xiv. 5. Col. ii. 16. Gal. iv. 10.*

It would be lost time to pass any Remarks on *Tascher's* two next Paragraphs; because not the Seal; but the Covenant itself, was everlasting: And they were the *Mosaical* Law and Covenant that were changed for better; not the *Abrahamical*, which is the Gospel Covenant, and must be perpetual.

Nor is his next Exception of a better Stamp, "That Infants ought not to be baptized, by reason they are not capable of all the Effects of Baptism, which ought to appear in visible Fruits." Do they so in all adult Baptisms? Or did they so in that of *Simon Magus*, to name no more? Were Infants capable of all the Effects and Fruits or Circumcision, some of which were undoubtedly spiritual? Are they not rational Creatures, because we see not in them the Fruits of Reason? Or are they not Members of Civil Societies, because they discharge not the Duties incumbent on those Members, nor enjoy all their Benefits in the same degree and manner with adult Persons? And ought not our blessed Lord to be baptized of *John*, because he confessed no Sins, acted no Repentance, received no Remission, professed no Faith in *Christ* to come, and was made no Disciple to *John* thereby? All which were comprehended in *John's* Baptism. But to this Point I also spoke, *Book, p. 114.* and still no Regard to that. That Infants may be regenerated by the Holy Spirit, is no Absurdity or Untruth; by reason some are actually so regenerated, by the *Baptists* own Averment, *Confess. of Faith, ch. 10. § 3.* Neither is this in the least minded by *Gale* or *Tascher*.

Would these Gentlemen be pleased to give us a graphical Description of the Holy Ghost's Operations on human Souls, and shew us plainly how far and after what manner he makes his divine Impressions there, in which they may pretend to great Experiences

periences beyond their Neighbours; we should reckon ourselves to be deeply obliged to them for the Favour, and depend upon much greater Illumination than we have yet received. *Christ* teaches us, that the Actings of the Spirit are secret and indiscernible, like the Rise and Issue of the Wind. But these Men seem to know exactly how far he can or cannot act, and therefore make bold to set Bounds to his Operations, and will give him no leave to meddle with the Souls of Infants, they being wholly out of his Province, and out of the Sphere of his Activity. Nevertheless I shall venture to affirm, the complete Work of Grace to be no momentary and instantaneous Action; but the Seeds being first planted by the Holy Spirit at our New-Birth, it proceeds gradually towards Perfection, as the Works of Nature also do. Sufficient therefore it is to us, that we may find the Fruits of Baptismal Grace in Infants, according as in them we find the Fruits of Reason; and then, God be praised, they generally appear as well in our's, as in the adult Baptisms of our Adversaries; and would appear a great deal more, if the first Grace was duly cultivated.

Our Author, *p.* 38. boldly concludes the happy Condition of all Infants in another World, from our Lord's Expression, *Of such is the Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of Heaven*; and says of us, "That, as he thinks, we generally grant those Infants were unbaptized." Grant it we do not, because 'tis uncertain whether they were baptized or not; there being as much Gospel-Evidence of their Baptism, as of any other Disciple of *Christ* by Name before the Day of *Pentecost*. However, this is not very material, because they being Children of *Jewish* Parents, were circumcised; and Circumcision was the proper initiatory Ordinance then in force, serving for the same Ends and Uses with Christian Baptism afterwards: Neither did the latter supersede the other

till after our Lord's Passion, and the forming of his Church thereupon into a new Model and distinct Body from what it was before in outward Circumstances. See what I have said to that Sentence of our Lord, *Book, p. 121, &c.* and likewise, *p. 135, &c.* I shew'd, that by the Kingdom of God, or Heaven, in that Place, the Christian Church on Earth, which in the Gospels most frequently goes by that Name, might be very rightly understood; and indeed ought to be, as I am still persuaded by the Scope and Circumstances of the Passage. To all which my favourable Adversary answers not a Word; but runs on headily with his groundless Fancies and Surmises, as if they alone must be Reason, Law and Gospel to every Body.

Moreover, in the same Page says he, "That to baptize Infants would be Will-Worship, and so vain Worship, because it is not their Right and Due from God's Word." But the Truth of this Assertion we will never grant him, let him do his best and worst, by reason we do sufficiently justify Infant-Baptism by the Word of God. Vain Worship is so called with respect to human Traditions censured by *Christ, Mat. xv. 9.* of which I may find a more commodious Place to treat hereafter.

Will-Worship, like the Mystery of Iniquity, is in some Peoples Mouths a Term of universal Use and Service, thrown out at random against all Adversaries, and perhaps hitting all alike, or hitting no Body, because it has a loose and uncertain Application. Once and no more do we read the Word in Scripture; *Col. ii. 23.* where being joined with Humility and Neglect of the Body, which come into the List of Virtues, rather than Vices, it is no more absolutely condemned there than they are. What it means in the Apostle's Account, we may easily learn; but that means nothing of what the *Baptists* mean. For they are only evil and unlawful Practices, such as worshipping of Angels, with a slavish Subjection

Subjection to *Judaical* Ceremonies then abolished, *ver.* 18, &c. but observed by some Christians as necessary Parts of Religion, or under specious Names and Colours; which *St. Paul* there arraigns for Will-Worship, Humility and Neglect of the Body: Which of it self proves no more than that these things may be evil, or innocent, according as they are used and applied. However, allowing that God alone has the Right of prescribing his own instituted Worship in the Substance, we cannot allow that in the Gospel-Dispensation he has actually prescribed and fixed it in all the Circumstances, and Modes of Administration, which fall under a very different Category and Predicament from that of Substance.

But the cramp'd, strait-lac'd and narrow-soul'd System obtruded upon us by a superstitious Affectation to pinion us fast to Scripture in every Punctilio, would reduce the Christian Church into greater Slavery than the *Judaical* was under its Yoke of Bondage. For tho' to curb their fickle, and tame their restive Humours, the *Jews* were strictly bound to observe their stated Ceremonies; yet were they not restrained from appointing some new religious Usages, as various Emergencies did require. *David* of his own Accord, and without any special divine Command, purposed the building of the Temple; and his Design was approved of God, tho' for a particular Reason the Execution of it was devolved on his Son *Solomon*. Only seven Days were prescrib'd by God's Law for the Celebration of the Paschal Feast; but the good King *Hezekiah* has it recorded to his immortal Praise, that in the same Year he continued the Celebration of it seven Days more by common Counsel and Consent; 2 *Chron.* xxx. 23. Also *Esther* and *Mordecai* ordained the religious Festival of *Purim*, to be annually solemnized in future Times; and the *Jews* many public Fasts for the Calamities of their Church and Nation. Likewise *Judas Mac-*

*chabæus* instituted an anniversary Festival for the Dedication of the Altar, which our Lord approv'd, and grac'd with his own Presence. And after the Return from *Babylon*, Synagogues were built, and the whole Scheme of the Ministry and Devotions in them was of human Contrivance and Appointment; in which also were several prescribed Forms of Prayer; as they may be seen in *Dr. Prideaux's Connexion*. And all this was justified by our Lord's and his Apostles joining constant Communion with the *Jews*, in that Service. Wherefore, candid Censors, be not wise nor righteous overmuch; for why should ye condemn God's Church, and your blessed Saviour with his holy Apostles, for what they allowed and practised?

And if ye must do no more than ye are commanded, why yet will you not do as much? Why do ye neglect or lay aside your Lord's and his Apostles Orders, and thereby fall short in point of Duty, when ye are fore afraid of super-erogating and over-doing it? If this be not true, how comes it to pass that ye do not wash one another's Feet, as Christ washed his Disciples Feet, and commanded you to do the same? *John xiii. 14*. How is it that ye do not keep up the Apostolical Feasts of Charity, nor salute each other with a holy Kiss, for which you have your Scripture Precepts and Examples? And, as I think, ye have not that Order of Deaconesses in your Church, of whom *St. Paul* speaks so much; *1 Tim. v.* Should ye not fear as much to disobey your Lord in what he commanded, as fear to do what he commanded not?

Or if this last in your Esteem be the greater Sin, why do ye more than ye are commanded, or have Scripture, Law, and Pattern for? I charged you before with baptizing Children of baptized Parents, which by your own Rules ye cannot warrant from the Scriptures. By these Rules ye will be hard put



to it, to defend your Practice in changing the *Sabbath* from the last to the first Day of the Week, to commemorate our Saviour's Resurrection; for the doing of which, the Scripture Proofs alone are so very weak and insufficient, that a Party among yourselves refuses Compliance with it: Among whom was Mr. *Stennet*, who in my Opinion was the most solid, honest, and fairest Writer ye ever had, tho' Dr. *Gale* might be a Man of more Letters. Neither have ye such Scripture-Evidence, as ye require from others, for administering the Lord's-Supper unto Females. But I now strongly insist on the ensuing Particular, and clear yourselves in it, if you can. A formal and solemn Oath is an Act of Religious Worship, by your own Doctrine; *Confess. of Faith, ch. 23.* and we can easily prove it so to be from the Nature of it, and the Word of God. Now in taking an Oath before a Magistrate, in bearing Witness, and perhaps on some other Occasions, it is your Custom to lay your Right Hand upon the Bible, and to kiss that sacred Book; moreover, ye join in the usual Forms of Words of administering Oaths, and may sometimes repeat those Forms too with your own Mouths, as in the Oaths of Allegiance and Abjuration: My Demand is hereupon for a Scripture Precept or Example to warrant your Practice in these solemn Acts of Adoration. Else, why do you make your devout Appeals and Addresses to God, to judge your Hearts, in Words of Mens Composure, and with Rites of their Institution? Should ye use Forms of Devotion, and uncommanded and unprecedented Ceremonies in your Worship, and so fall into Will-Worship, vain Worship and Superstition?

Wherefore, *J. Tasher*, give me leave to use your own Words: "Either let *Christ* be Lord absolutely, "or not at all." *p. 36.* Have a care of worshipping God after the Traditions of Men. Trust not to fallible and uncertain Consequences, or it may be to

none at all, but to the clear and express Word of God; or else stand afraid of being found guilty, and condemned even by your own Doctrine; and by your dangerous Pattern, teach not your Neighbours and Adversaries to build on such slippery and sandy Foundations. For they will conclude, they have as good Right as yourselves, to infer such Deductions from God's Word as they judge to be rational, and will by no means quit unto you this Privilege for your sole Monopoly. What if our blessed Lord proved the Resurrection of the Dead against the *Sadducees*, by a Text of Scripture wherein there was neither Life, nor Death, nor Resurrection, mentioned? And what if both *St. Peter* and *St. Paul* proved *Christ's* own Resurrection from a Place in *David's Psalms*, which spoke not a Syllable of *Christ*, his Death, or his Resurrection? That may be something to us, who admit this sort of Proofs; but it is nothing to you, who, when you find them make against you, reject them utterly: tho' you would also gladly claim their Benefit, whenever you believe they befriend your Cause, and you have no other Arguments to produce. And if this be the true Case, really, Friends, we have Reason to complain of your double and unequal Dealings.

After this, my Adversary, p. 39. amuses himself with a pleasant Fancy, that he has caught me tripping into a Blunder and Inconsistency with my self; tho' by that Attempt he shall breed no Quarrel between two such loving Friends as we are. For after he had cited my Words to his Mind, he remarks upon them; "These contradictory Reasonings make an uncertain Sound." Very likely with a Man that has a Noise in his Head, when there is none in the Air. Suppose I had plainly affirmed the Children of Christian Parents before their Baptism, to be holy and unholy, spiritual and not spiritual: Here had been a palpable Contradiction in *Tascher's* undi-

undistinguishing Judgment, but not in Truth, when we give different Notions to the Terms, or understand them in different Respects; as it was no Contradiction to call the *Jews* circumcised and uncircumcised at the same time; *Jer.* ix. 25, 26. nor in *St. Paul* to call himself *the least of the Apostles, and unworthy of an Apostle's Name*, 1 *Cor.* xv. 9. and yet to say twice of himself, *I am not a whit behind the chiefest Apostles*; 2 *Cor.* xi. 5. and *ch.* xii. 11. For the unbaptized Children of believing Parents are to be considered in two different States: In that of Nature, as they are destroy'd by *Adam's* Transgression; and in that of Grace, as by a Divine Charter they stand intitled to the covenanting Seal, and all the Privileges thereupon ensuing. This Charter gives them from their Birth an external relative Holiness by Denomination, and a Claim to be actually vested in all the Benefits of God's gracious Covenant by the Initiating Ordinance, agreeably to their present Needs and Capacities: And this it is which so far makes them a holy Seed, and discriminates them from the Children of Unbelievers. Their Birth, under the aforesaid Relation, gives them what the Lawyers call *Jus ad rem*, a Right unto the thing; and the Initiation what they call *Jus in re*, a Right in the thing. As this Distinction is of great use in Seculars, so it may be in Spirituals; the one giving only a distant Right or Claim, the other actual Possession.

Children may be born Heirs to an Estate by a legal Right, which gives them considerable Distinction; and yet receive no Possession before the Father's Decease, or before they come of Age; and in several Cases not before a formal and legal Infeoffment, as it is in Copyhold Tenures. Birth gives the eldest Sons of our *British* Monarchs a Right to the Principality of *Wales*, but no actual Possession before Creation, and the proper Ceremonies requisite for that purpose. So the Infants of professed Believers, by

virtue of a Covenant Charter granted to *Abraham* and his Seed, but never revok'd, are born entitled to the covenanting Seal and Ordinance, which Title affects them outwardly with a relative Quality of Holiness and Spirituality; and yet are they not inwardly sanctified, nor actually possessed of the covenanted Privileges before Regeneration, and a formal Investiture by the initiating Ceremony. And if this be a Difficulty, or Contradiction in our Adversary's Judgment, they have none to blame beside themselves for a slow or wayward Understanding. For it may be, so far as I can see, as impossible to beat good Sense into some Peoples Heads, as to work Honesty into their Hearts.

But moreover in the two middle Passages, quoted by *Tasber* from my Book, to form his imaginary Contradiction, I plainly argued on the *Baptists* Grounds; who grant Salvation to all Infants, but will grant to none of them Christian Baptism. As they are bold to give Heaven unto Heathens, so will we give Christianity to our Infants; and as they give these the Church Triumphant, so will we, pursuant to God's unrepealed Law and Command, give them the Church Militant, with a Fig for all the Cavils or Clamours of our Adversaries. When they dare fasten Contradictions on the Apostles, how should a persecuting High-flyer escape their Imputations?

In the Page following, *J. Tasber*, after *Davey* of *Leicester*, observes, "That the *Pædo-Baptists* have  
 " gone upon different Grounds, and apply'd different Arguments to prove and support Infant  
 " Baptism; some disliking the Methods and Topics  
 " advanced by others for that Purpose, and I dis-  
 " approving the Conduct of them all. Which Dis-  
 " agreement in our Schemes and Proofs, proves  
 " Infant Baptism is built on no solid Foundation."  
 What I disapproved was not Arguments, but the  
 Way

Way of arguing; and that only in one Instance, which was mis-stating the *Abrahamical* Covenant, and not distinguishing it rightly from the *Mosaical*.

But what is here urged, proves not the baptizing of Infants to be an ill-grounded Practice; but that the Intellects of Men are not cast exactly in the same Mould, so as to be of an equal Size, and agree in Opinion about every thing; or it proves that some very learned and judicious Men have not weighed all particular Arguments with the same Deliberation as is done by others. But as I find by one's repeating it after another, this Objection to be counted formidable; so shall I take Care to gag and muzzle it, by shewing that different and cross Accounts of Things or Doctrines, do not in the least affect their Truth; and here would be a pleasant Subject for Mirth and Sport, provided at this I had a good Talent.

By way of Prelude we will have two or three Sketches in Philosophy. That there are Heavens and Earth we are all agreed, and various Motions in the Celestial Bodies; but he that will peruse the Theories of the Learned both ancient and modern concerning them, and reconcile those Theories fairly with one another, shall be my great *Apollo*. We know there is a Motion somewhere, which in every Horizon effects the Revolution of Day and Night within the Space of twenty four Hours. To bring that Revolution about, in old Times they gave this rapid Motion to the Sun, and ran him clean through the heavenly Orbs in that short Compass of Time. Others in these Days, to save him the Labour, twirl the heavy Earth about its Axis in the same Space, and for the same Purpose; and yet I hope this great Difference of Accounts does not prove the Vicissitude of Day and Night to be built on a sandy Foundation. I, who live pretty near the Sea, am ascertain'd by my Senses, that it has its Ebbs and  
Flows

Flows in due Periods of Time; and within these few Years last past, I heard two Virtuoso's eagerly dispute concerning its Fluxes, and the Cause thereof; one attributed them to Attraction, and the other to Trusion; two Words which present very opposite Idea's to my Mind: But still am I perfectly careless, who was right, or who was wrong, so long as by their cross and contradictory Reasonings they have not yet philosophiz'd the Sea out of its Fluxes.

But Instances in Theology being most proper for our present Debate, and having in my Time read some eminent Authors on that divine Science, I discovered a vast Disagreement between them, in proving some of the most fundamental Articles in Religion, as well as Infant Baptism. My Allegation shall be in one Article, which is the Divinity of *Christ*, the eternal Son of God; though I might instance the Resurrection of the Body, the Satisfaction of *Christ*, Original Sin, and several others. To prove that Article, many great Men have insisted on Scriptural Texts, which they thought to be plain, strong and conclusive for the Point; yet have others rejected the same Texts, as weak, frivolous or impertinent; while all still professed to believe the Article; and these last were no lesser Men than *Erasmus*, *Grotius*, and *Le Clerc*, to name no more. Dr. *Gale* himself vindicates *Le Clerc* from the Charge of *Socinianism* by this demonstrative Argument, that he disclaims and rejects the Imputation; because no *Socinian* can prevaricate in his own Defence. Now if that Disagreement in the Proof shakes the Credit of the Article, I am afraid it will go hard with many other Doctrines.

To draw a Step nearer Home to our Antagonists; among them there are, or lately were, those that are called *Particular Baptists*, others *Pelagian* and *Free-will Baptists*; others *Socinian Baptists*; others *Sabbatarian Baptists*; others *Leg of Mutton Baptists*, others

others *Soul-sleeping Baptists*; others *Antinomian Baptists*; and others *Millennian Baptists*. These various Parties hold cross Opinions about the same Things, some rejecting what others maintain, and tearing Scripture Texts all in pieces to defend their several Tenets. Should any Body be so spiteful as to infer from hence; There is no Truth or Certainty in Anabaptistry, but it is all built on a rotten Foundation; how could I disprove him without flying in the Face of this doughty Argument against Infant Baptism?

And yet are they like to have a harder Bone than this to pick. Agreed are they and we, as I suppose, about the Canon of the New Testament, which alone will serve my Turn. Was I to prove the Truth of that Canon, and I believe I should be join'd by Thousands more of good Protestants; I would fetch my principal Argument for it from the concurrent Testimony of the Christian Church in all Ages; which is the same Thing with human Tradition, a Word that *Tasher* and his Friends do mortally hate, even *Cane pejus* & *Angue*. Therefore were they to prove that Canon, they must needs reject Tradition, and found it on different Grounds and Topics. May I now ask this serious Question? Would this Disagreement in our Proofs overthrow the Truth of the Canon, and demonstrate it to be built on no solid Foundation? Surmount the Difficulty, and return a plain Categorical Answer to the Question; or else hereafter for ever hold your Tongue, and advance no more such childish Objections against Infant Baptism. For do ye not know whose Cause ye serve by such Objections? Are ye not Retainers and Under-setters to Papists, Deists, and all Infidels, who very much insist upon the same, the first to run down the Reformation, and the others Christianity? So it is, and do ye not perceive

ceive it? For doubtless ye are quick-sighted enough to see as far as your Noses End.

When *Tasber*, p. 41. comes to my Argument drawn from Original Sin in Behalf of baptizing Infants, he renders the Case as odious as he can on our Side, and as favourable on his own; and clean skips over the *Anabaptists* express Doctrines, on which, together with the Word of God, I grounded my Argument. For, from their Catechism, Confession of Faith, and ninth Article of the Christian Faith, wherein Original Sin, with all the miserable Effects of its damning Nature and Deserts, are strongly asserted, I inferred not the absolute Necessity of baptizing Infants to Salvation, but the Necessity of their new Birth and Sanctification in *Christ*, which since the Institution of Baptism are ordinarily to be had in that Sacrament; and for this let my Book be consulted, p. 109, &c.

Also the Possibility of Regeneration in Infants, and what is more, the Truth and Reality of it in Fact by the Holy Spirit, I made appear to be their own express Doctrine; *Confession of Faith*, Chap. X. § 3. and Chap. XI. § 4. All which *Tasber* has craftily concealed, as if it concerned him not, because he would not apprise his Readers how much his Sectaries do clash and disagree in Principles among themselves, and thereby introduce Confusion instead of Uniformity into their Doctrines. I am persuaded he and his Partisans could heartily wish their Brethren had never published those Doctrines, and so made them their avowed and authentic Acts, to cut the Throat of their rotten Cause, since he and they appear to be of the *Pelagian* Stamp, tho' they are shy of professing it openly.

Be it therefore known unto all Men, that the *Baptists* have more Sorts of cross Christian Doctrines than one, and these drawn up in formal Instruments, printed also, as I suppose. For when in the Conference



Conference at *Glynds*, I alledged their Article about Original Sin against them, they slighted that; and one of their Teachers, *Mercer* by Name, yet alive, openly told me, they had other Articles, but produced them not. Upon this I order'd my Book-feller to write to *London* for them, but there they could not be had; which makes me believe these second Articles are kept as a great Secret and Myftery among the Party. And if so, what Sort of a Church is that, which has Articles against Articles, but to avoid Scandal dares not make them known? We have indeed too much Difference of Doctrines and Opinions among ourselves; but they belong to private and particular Persons, and were never formally drawn into authentic and approved Acts. Of these let the *Baptists* alone glory with their accustomed Assurance and Positiveness in their Opinions.

*Tasber* therefore shutting his Eyes against the Doctrine of his Brethren, veres about, and gingerly minces the Matter of Original Sin, as not relishing well to his Palate. Gibberish and Jargon is what he says to the Point, because the Proofs on which my Argument was grounded he entirely waves, and runs away from them like a Man affrighted; so that I am bound to follow him by no Laws of Disputation, or take any Notice of his Reveries.

For what wretched Stuff is it in him to talk of our reflecting on *Christ's* Undertaking, and God's Goodness and Faithfulness in leaving the eternal Happiness of Infants in the Hands of careless and irreligious Parents with regard to Baptism; when we never affirm the absolute Necessity of Baptism to Salvation, but insist only on its ordinary and necessary Use, as a divine *Medium*, and refer extraordinary Cases to God, who can dispense with his own Institutions when we cannot, and supply as he pleases the Defects of Men? Is not the Christian Edu-

Education of Children necessary to Salvation; and yet left in the Hands of Parents who may be careles and irreligious? And was not Circumcision left in the Hands of Parents, and yet the Neglect of it at the appointed Day precisely, threatened with Excision?

He and his *Pelagian Baptists*, who are the freest in the World to bestow Heaven and God's saving Mercies on Mankind without any Covenant, Right, and Title, and without Authority from God's Word, as strict Scripturists as they pretend to be, may come off well enough from what I am about to remark: But how his Brethren, the *Particular Baptists*, who have the rigid Decrees of absolute, unconditional, and irrelative Reprobation running in their Heads, will be able to clear themselves from it, I cannot foresee. One of these is *Davey of Leicester*, and as I remember, (for his Book I have not by me) he also has urged against us what *Tascher* does here. And is it not pleasant to hear a Man talk of our reflecting on God's Wisdom and Goodness, in leaving the eternal Happiness of Infants in the Hands of careles and irreligious Parents with regard to their Baptism, only as an ordinary Means of their Salvation; when he with his bristly Stoics, has by God's eternal and immutable Decrees, clapp'd many Millions of People, as well in Infancy as Adult Years, under an absolute Impossibility of being saved, or under a fatal Necessity of being damn'd?

What also does it import to say; "No Use of Baptism is found in Scripture to take off the Effects of Original Sin;" as both *Gale* and *Tascher* do, when no such Sin, with the Epithet *Original*, is mentioned at all in Scripture? Is it not sufficient that God's Word teaches all past Sins in general to be remitted and washed away in Baptism? What Sins are therefore excepted from this Benefit, whether they be Actual or Original? Or what Warrant have

have *Anabaptists* to make their Exceptions and Restrictions in Matter of Favour, where God himself has made none? What to stint and limit the Expressions of his Grace, and the Virtue of his Ordinances, without any Licence from his Mouth or Hand? And what to deny that he will forgive Sins of a more favourable Nature and Construction, as Original Sin is in respect of Actual, where he freely forgives Sins of a more heinous and provoking kind? Friend *Tasber*, do you and your Party take this Liberty of retrenching God's Grace and Favour, if you please, as you can enlarge them also when you will; but if therein ye take more than is your Due, beware of the Consequence, lest ye be found guilty of having an evil Eye, when God's is good.

*Gale*, *Tasber*, and others of the Tribe, contend that Original Sin is not remitted in Baptism, because the Effects of it, as a strong Inclination to Sin, Pain, Sickness and Death, remain in baptized Persons. Had they given this Reason; that there is no such a Sin at all transmitted to *Adam's* Posterity, I think they had given us their real Sentiments. And then it will be an undeniable Consequence, what is not, cannot be forgiven. Whence then come those Effects? Not only from Original, but also from Actual Sins, either as their natural Products, or judicial Punishments; and still they remain as well in baptized, as in unbaptized Persons. What then must be the Conclusion, but that no Sins at all, whether Actual or Original, are remitted in Baptism, because all the Effects of Sin still remain after Baptism, and that not only in those who are baptized in Infancy, but in riper Years: And so we have brought Matters to a fine Pass: But, as I conceive, the true Case is this; that Guilt may be remitted, and the reigning Power of Sin broken, though some temporal Effects of Sin remain.

Else what shall we think of *Christ's* Redemption? Every where it is represented, to be our Deliverance from Sin in its Dominion, Punishments and Effects. For these Ends he shed his precious Blood, and offered himself an expiatory Sacrifice on the Cross. But it seems we are not all redeemed and delivered by his Death. Why? Because all the Effects of Sin remain in baptized and unbaptized; who have still a strong Inclination to Sin, and are subject to Pain, Sickness and Death, notwithstanding *Christ's* Redemption. O merciful God! Whither will such Doctrines as these lead us? But if *Christ's* Redemption, or bare Undertaking, once took off these Effects of Original Sin, and they are charged afresh on baptized Infants, I will never baptize an Infant more, by reason I will not do him so great a Mischief.

Again *Tasber*, p. 42. to shew his Dexterity in a Dispute, pretends artfully to turn my Words against myself; but his Skill at that will fail him entirely, till he can disprove my Scripture Arguments for baptizing Infants; and this defies the Power of him and all his Associates.

The *Abrahamical* Model and Platform he next mentions, was not supposed by me, but unanswerably proved, while *Christ's* Variation from it in the Subjects of Baptism, is precariously suggested, and never was, nor can be proved. Whether our Lord having Commission from the Father, might make Alteration in those Subjects without Unfaithfulness, is not question'd; but whether he undertaking to declare and execute his Father's Will, if such Alteration had been made, had not been so faithful to his own Trust, and kind to those whom he came to teach, as to signify the same in plain Language; and not put us to the Hardship of deducing it by strain'd and unreasonable Consequences, as the *Baptists* do, while they argue from the Adult to the  
Case

Case of Infants; which as it is absurd in them, so I still say it is an odd Method of repealing express Laws, of revoking old Charters, and divesting People of valuable Privileges, that were not only of immemorial Prescription, but very near of two thousand Years Possession and Continuance. This takes out the Sting and Venom of *Tasher's* scurvy Insinuation; that we are inclinable to accuse *Christ* of Unfaithfulness, which was purposely laid on a wrong Base, that he might drag it in by Head and Shoulders.

Also the Advantage gain'd by my Acknowledgment, that Infants were not in our Saviour's Thought, but only the Adult, when he commanded, *Go teach all Nations, &c. Matt. xxviii. 19.* is pure Imagination. For what I intended in that, was plainly to break the Force of the Argument raised from thence against baptizing Infants; because if in that pretended Commission for Baptism, his Thoughts were only, or directly at least, upon the Adult, he could not think of excluding Infants, whose Right to Baptism depends on other Grounds: Tho' withal, according to the Laws of Profelytism from *Abraham's* Days, Infants came within the Church and Covenant by the proper Ordinance, under Covert of their Parents Wings, if I may so speak; upon which Account this Text might be urged in Favour of their Baptism. But this is not the proper original Commission for baptizing, that being issued out some Years before, when the Disciples began to baptize by *Christ's* Command: And so it can be only an Extent of it in the Execution from the *Jews* to the Gentile World; as is own'd by *D'Anvers, p. 43.* Therefore must this Text at least stand neuter and unconcern'd, because if it makes nothing for the Baptism of Infants, it can make nothing against it by my Account.

*Tasber* overlooking all my other Proofs for Infant Baptism, makes his last Effort in assailing my Argument drawn in its Behalf from 1 *Cor.* x. 1, 2. where he affirms; “ That I have evidently perverted the Words and Sense of the Apostle in that Passage, p. 43.” And his first Proof of it is; “ That the Apostle speaks not a Word of the *Israelites* being made Disciples to *Moses* in that Baptism.” What then can be meant by their believing *Moses* on that Transaction? And what by their being baptized unto *Moses* in the Cloud and in the Sea? If this does not signify their being made his Disciples, what else can it signify? For sure the Words are not bare and empty Sounds without any Sense: We read in St. *Paul’s* Epistles of People’s being baptized into *Christ*; and if my Antagonist does not understand the Importance of that Expression, I will relieve his Ignorance by the Comments of Dr. *Gale*, who, *Lett.* VII. p. 272. has these Descants on it: “ To be baptized in the Name of *Christ*, is explain’d *Rom.* vi. 3. by being baptized into *Christ*, and into his Death; and *Gal.* iii. 27. by putting on *Christ*: All which must needs imply a Profession of Faith in *Christ*, and his Death, into which they were baptized, as all the Ancients understood it.” And this, as he admits before in the same Paragraph, is to be made *Christ’s* Disciples. And therefore, since the Scripture says on that Occasion, they believed *Moses*, and were baptized unto him in the Cloud and in the Sea, I shall conclude in Spite of Nonsense, they were made *Moses’s* Disciples by that Baptism.

The other Proof is to this Effect; “ That the Example of the *Israelites* is press’d only in the Negative Sense, of avoiding their evil Deeds, as is the Example of *Sodom* and *Gomorrab* in St. *Jude*; but not in the Affirmative Sense, to enforce us to do what the *Israelites* did.” I grant the Apostle urged

urged that in particular, it being what was necessary for his present Purpose, which was to deter the *Corinthians* from Sin; they and their little Children too, as I am persuaded, being baptized already: so that there was then no Need to press them in particular to the Observance of that Sacrament. But baptized were the *Hebrews*, both Male and Female, old and young, unto *Moses* in the Cloud and in the Sea; and by that Act they fell into the Relation of his Disciples, or no Body can tell what the Expression means. This in itself was a good and commendable Act, and I know no more Sin, but rather Duty, in following good Examples, when they are propos'd unto us with Approbation, as here it is done, than in avoiding bad ones. Good as well as Evil, is spoken of the *Hebrews* here, and set before us as done with Praise and good Liking; but in *St. Jude* no Mention of Good at all, but of Evil alone, in the Men of *Sodom* and *Gomorrab*; so that these two Examples do not quadrate, nor run parallel; and consequently, where Good and Evil are equally recorded of the same Persons, and propos'd unto us, I conceive we may safely take the Good for our Pattern, as we are bound to decline the Evil.

But if this will not give Content, I shall once more turn *Tasher* over to *Dr. Gale*, and see how he will gain say that Authority. For the Doctor says, *Let. X. p. 372.* "That the Apostle *St. Paul* makes the "Baptism to *Moses* in the Cloud and in the Sea, "parallel to our Baptism." Does *Tasher* know what a Parallel is? Among the Masters of Science, it was originally a Line which in Point of Distance runs exactly even, or equal with another Line. Thence the Term has been translated to signify and express a punctual Agreement, Equality, or Correspondence between Things and Things. If therefore that Baptism unto *Moses* was a Parallel to our Baptism, and all the *Hebrew* Infants were certainly

baptized unto *Moses* in the Cloud and in the Sea, I think it will inevitably follow from hence, that our Infants also should be baptized unto *Christ*; or else where is the Parallel, or exact Agreement between the two Baptisms? Wherefore, alas again for the unhappy Doctor! that he should evidently pervert the Scripture, by making the Baptism to *Moses* imply Discipleship in the Account he has given of the Phrase, and by making it a Parallel to the Christian Baptism. However, to me it must be some Comfort, that I am not singular in my Calamity; but have in this and several other Cases the ablest Champion of our Adversaries to keep me Company, and bear me out. When the Doctor and I are so far good Friends, what Pity is it we should ever quarrel, as I doubt we shall before we have done?

In the Entrance of my *Book* I observed, that the Mode of administering Baptism ought to be no Ground of a Dispute, or Separation; because our Church, upon a certain Condition, commands Dipping, and prefers it to Affusion of Water; not to Sprinkling or Asperision, which is none of her Order, and as I humbly conceive should not be practised. To this my Antagonist, *p.* 48. like a cunning Sophister, replies by reflecting on our Practice and Opinion, not by denying directly either my Allegation, or my Inference; and withal says, “ This Alteration in our “ fixed Method would be only occasional.” As if we were so mighty fond of their Company in our Communion, as to prevaricate egregiously in sacred things, and lay Snares to trepan their Souls. Whereas our Rubric is express for Dipping, when that is certified to be safe and practicable; as the most eminent Physicians now affirm it is, and recommend it much as good for the Health of weakly Infants. So that if any demand this Method at our Hands, there is never a Minister in our Church can refuse it, except he will run the risque of Censure for disobeying the Church’s Orders.



Orders. And is Immersion now like to be only an occasional Practice, when at every Body's Pleasure and Demand it must be constant?

But we make the Mode of Administration to be a thing indifferent, and change at Pleasure the Form of Gospel-Institutions; therefore with us they cannot communicate. What is that to them how we think or act, so long as they may have their own way, and think it necessary? Will these strenuous Advocates for Liberty erect an Inquisition over our Consciences, and make us stand accountable at their Tribunal for our very Thoughts and Opinions? Neither are we bound to account to them, or they to God, for our Practices either, except they were the Overseers and Guardians of our Souls.

The Case in hand is plainly thus: The Lawfulness of baptizing Infants we can extort and force from them by good Arguments, let them do their utmost. Then with respect to Baptism, the only thing that keeps the Breach open, is the manner of its Administration, either by Immersion or Affusion. According to our Church's Rule, they may among us constantly have their own Mode, and their own Thoughts; but by no means shall we be permitted to have ours, but they will still stand aloof, and take Offence both at our Sentiment and our Practice; as if they did learn this Stiffness and Cross-Purpose from *St. Paul's* Discourse, *Rom. xiv.* and elsewhere. And are not these peaceable Separatists indeed, who tho' they should have their own Will and Way, will not suffer us to have our own, but are resolved to maintain the Quarrel, and never be reconciled? For which end they have now, by *Tasher's* Pen, muster'd up many other vain and ill-stated Exceptions against a Union, which I shall not trouble my Head about; for I never wrote with a Prospect of converting them, but of baffling and confounding them in their Opinion concerning Infant-Baptism.

In my Book, p. 151. I framed an Argument for Infant-Baptism out of *Acts* xv. 10. where I pleaded that the Infants of Christian Parents are called *Christ's* Disciples, and consequently were baptized. To this Argument what I shall here add, may probably give some farther Strength or Evidence. Certain it is from *Acts* xxi. 21. that the Male Children of converted *Jews* were circumcised by the Allowance of the Apostles: and we know those converted *Jews* were strong for circumcising the Children of converted *Gentiles* also; at least till the *Jerusalem* Synod determined that Controversy. As therefore in former Times as high up as *Abraham's* Days, whenever the Fathers were circumcised, it was the Law and Practice to circumcise the Children too; so may we rationally infer, that in the Apostles Days, when the Parents were baptized, it was the Custom also to baptize the Children, unless an express Prohibition had intervened. For why should the Apostles be concerned in what was done to those Children, if they had no Relation to *Christ*, as Disciples and Members of his Body? They meddled not with those that were without the Church, except only to convert them by Instruction and Miracles, which could have no Effect on Children at the Age of their Circumcision. If therefore the Infants of converted *Jews* or *Gentiles* belonged not at all to *Christ*, as his Disciples, why should the Apostles regard it, whether they were circumcised or not; or how, with respect to that, they were treated of their Parents?

They knew Circumcision to be nothing, because it was then *de jure* abolished, and could never hurt those that were out of the Church, nor hinder the Conversion of adult Children unto *Christ*; and then Baptism wash'd off all former Blots, even those of Circumcision, if any it had, as it did in converted Parents. Suppose we therefore those Infants were

none

none of *Christ's* Disciples, nor designed to be till they came of Age to chuse and act for themselves; to *Christ* they were perfect Strangers, as being out of his Church and Covenant: Then the Concern the Apostles had about their Circumcision, seems to me no less absurd and impertinent, than if our *British* Government should intermeddle with the national Affairs of the *Chinese*, or concern itself with what Rites and Ceremonies they might use about their Children.

The Apostles Office was to make Disciples unto *Christ*, and not unto *Moses*; nor had they any thing to do with the legal Ordinances, but to declare their Cessation. As therefore they knew Circumcision to be abolished, and of Right no longer in force; so they taught it carefully to *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and endeavoured to convince them it was out of date. But we no where read, they ever taught that the Infants of converted *Jews* or *Gentiles* should not be baptized. Why then should they all keep such a mighty Bustle about an antiquated Ceremony, and never open their Mouths in behalf of Baptism for their Children, which *Christ* had substituted in the room of Circumcision, and made the covenanting Ordinance, and initiatory Ceremony to Discipleship? The *Jews* were always strong for Ceremonies, and very tenacious of their old Customs, particularly of Circumcision; and had they no Regard at all for Baptism, the new Ceremony of their Lord's Appointment to enter Disciples into his Church, but tamely suffer'd their Children to go unbaptiz'd, and the Children of converted *Gentiles* to have neither Baptism nor Circumcision? Especially when to baptize Profelytes and their Infants had been a former Practice in their Church. All which consider'd, 'tis hardly credible they would keep such a stir about Circumcision for their Children, and be wholly silent on all Occasions about their Baptism, in case they

saw them go unbaptiz'd, and want the necessary Ordinance of *Christ's* Institution to make them Christians, or his Disciples; but as a profane and unholy Seed they were left entirely out of his Church.

Could I really dive into the *Baptists* Sentiments by their Expressions, I have long since thought I could run 'em down into pure Deism, or natural Religion, and charge it justly at their Door. However I shall make a slight Essay upon it, and leave the farther Prosecution of it to those who have better Abilities and a deeper Penetration of Thought than I have.

Taught we are in the holy Gospel, That Salvation was formerly of the *Jews*; which implies a Denial of it to other Nations: That *Christ* is the Saviour of his Body, the Church; and nothing else can the Head in that Relation save: That therefore to the Church they are added, who shall be saved; as if out of the Church there was no Salvation, as the antient Fathers taught with one Consent: That he who has *Christ*, has Life; but he that has not *Christ*, has not Life: And, That the *Gentiles* were without *Christ*, as being Aliens from the Commonwealth of *Israel*, and Strangers to the Covenants of Promise, having no Hope, and being without God in the World. All which appropriates Salvation to the Church and Covenant, and makes them at least to be the necessary Mediums to it in common Account: So that those Persons can have no apparent Right, if any at all, to God's saving Mercy, who are not visibly within the Church and Covenant. For none can claim the Privileges of a Corporation, or of any regular Society, nor without manifest Usurpation seize them into their Hands, who are not acknowledged Members of the Corporation.

Nevertheless, from *Tasber* and his Companions we learn a very different sort of Doctrine. To the  
Scripture

Scripture Texts that confine Salvation to the Church, they answer nothing, tho' I gave them a fair Challenge: But overlooking them, they run out into such a wide Latitude, as attributes Salvation as well to Infidels as Believers; tho' *Christ* clearly teaches in several Places, *That they who believe not on him shall be condemn'd, and have not Life.* But by these Gentlemen, not only all unbaptiz'd Infants are undistinguishedly saved, but Heathens too; provided, as I suppose, since they express it not, they follow the Laws of Morality and natural Religion. For thus we are instructed by these oracular Guides: "The Election of Grace, and the Favour of God, were not confined to the *Abrahamical* Covenant, as it was sign'd by Circumcision; but the *Moa-* *bites* and *Ammonites* (and by as good a Title all other Nations) tho' uncircumcised, belonged to that Election: and both Circumcision and Baptism are nothing but as they are commanded." Mere useless Ceremonies therefore, that might make an external Distinction, but affected not the spiritual and eternal State of Mankind, and brought no Advantage but that of pure Obedience to an idle Rite!

And for Proof of this Doctrine, these Texts are alleg'd, to shew that *Christ's* righteous Undertaking alone has freed Infants from the condemning Effects of original Sin; and in that respect has put all the World upon the level. "For it is the positive Declaration of the Lord by the Prophet, that *the Son shall not bear the Iniquity of the Father, but the Soul that sinneth shall die.* And *St. Paul* saith, *As by the Offence of one, the Judgment came upon all Men to Condemnation; even so by the Righteousness of one, the Free-Gift came upon all Men to Justification of Life.* And, *As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive."* Thus *J. Tasher.* Davey chimes in with him; and several

veral Strokes tending this way may be found in *Dr. Gale*.

Concerning the first Text here produced, let it be consider'd, That not original, but actual Sin; not eternal, but temporal Punishments, are there intended: as evidently appears from the Occasion of God's Declaration, and the rest of the Discourse in the whole Chapter. What then is this to the Purpose? For if only the temporal Effects of Sin, and this actual, are spoken of here; and these, as we are told, do still remain in baptiz'd and unbaptized Persons: how does it appear hereby, that *Christ's* Undertaking has freed Infants from the condemning Effects of original Sin, or indeed from any Effects of Sin all? Beside, this Promise of God; *The Son shall not bear the Iniquity of the Father*, was given to none but the House of *Israel*, and that only as a Rule of Procedure for the time to come; and therefore had been no Rule for the time past. For thus the Words do run: *As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have Occasion any more to use this Proverb in Israel*; Ezek. xviii. 3. which intimates plainly enough, that they had Occasion formerly to use that Proverb about the four Grapes, but should have none thereafter. This Rule therefore was not the constant Tenour of God's Dispensations, even to the House of *Israel*; and how can it be so to all Nations, as it is now extended and applied? Likewise the third Text says nothing of original Sin, but of temporal Death; which is one of its Effects by God's judicial Act, and still remains.

His Quotation from *Rom. v.* proves indeed *Christ's* Redemption to be universal in its Design, but not in its Application; because in Order to this several Conditions are made requisite; so that *Christ's* righteous Undertaking will not perfect the Work of Salvation without Compliance with Terms on our Side;

Side; and to teach otherwise is very raw and dangerous Doctrine.

For his Scripture Texts in his extravagant Acceptation, will prove abundantly more than they are alledged for; even that all Actual Sins, no less than Original, are remitted by the bare Undertaking of our Lord. For that Proposition of *St. Paul* concerning Justification by *Christ's* Righteousness, and the rest of that kind, are general and unlimited, reaching indiscriminately to all Sins and Persons; and so is the Restauration to Life. Are all these Sins remitted, and all these Persons saved, purely by virtue of *Christ's* Undertaking? *St. Paul, Rom. v. 12.* speaks indeed of Original Sin, as introducing Death on all Mankind, through one Man's Offence; but from thence he proceeds to oppose unto him another Man, and to assert the Universality of Redemption by *Jesus Christ*; a Doctrine wherein all Mankind are equally concerned, according to the Intention of redeeming Grace; but he never meant that they are effectually redeemed and saved, without Conditions on their Part. Yet *Tasher's* loose and wild Way of Reasoning, holds good for the Remission of all Sins, and the Salvation of all Souls alike, by *Christ's* sole Undertaking, without any farther Care about the Application: So that Adult Persons stand on the same Level with Infants for those Favours. And have we not here a fair Plan and Groundwork for all Latitudinarian Projectors to build upon?

Whereas Pardon of Sin, and eternal Salvation in Heaven, proceeding purely from an Act of Grace, and being due to no living Soul, but as a free Gift in the Way of Covenant; God might restrain Pardon and Salvation precisely to that Covenant, and bar all Persons whatsoever from those Benefits, who on his own Terms come not within its Bounds and Precincts. And sure we are from his own Word,  
that

that he has actually done it, ever since he gave that Covenant to *Abraham*, and the Christian Church; extraordinary Cases and Prerogative Grace always excepted. As clear and strong an Inclosure in human Appearance, has he made thereby of saving Grace to the Church and Covenant, as any Charter on Earth has made of Corporation Privileges to its own Members. And therefore as God has the sole Right to judge those that are without, so I am sure our Adversaries have no Authority to vote them at their Pleasure into Heaven.

Nevertheless out of this blessed Inclosure, like the Garden of *Eden*, they would lead us about into a wild Desert, to seek for God's Favour and eternal Salvation in an uncovenanted Way among *Moabites*, *Ammonites*, and a Rabble of uncircumcised or unbaptized Heathens: But I am not in the Humour to follow their Steps, and take these Excursions and Exorbitances, seeing I have a much surer and shorter Way to Heaven in the Church of *Christ*.

However, if Salvation may be so easily obtained among the Gentiles, I shall assume the Boldness to ask our Antagonists a few proper Questions. Wherefore then was Revealed Religion given us? Is it not vain and superfluous, if Mankind may be saved without it, as well as with it? And might not the Gospel upon this Supposition, have been as well spar'd as publish'd, and all of us left to the Light of Nature?

Answered it may be, that since it is given and promulgated, we are bound in Duty to believe its Doctrines, to obey its Precepts, and to observe its Ordinances, or we shall not be saved. Granted; and yet in case it had not been given, we had been bound to no such Duties, beside the Moral, and to practise them had sufficed to our Salvation, as it does in the honest and religious Heathens. For God we might know by the Light of Nature, *Rom.*



i. 19, 20. and our Duty too we might know and practise, so as to be accepted to eternal Life, like the *Moabites* and *Ammonites*, and other Nations; therefore no Need of Gospel Light to save our Souls.

But by the Gospel Charter we have far greater Assistances, Encouragements and Obligations to a holy Life than we could otherwise have. Granted also; but withal we have far greater Duty and harder Tasks upon our Hands, while an Evangelical Life is carried up to a much higher Perfection than the Heathen Morality, and for the Gospel's Sake we are often exposed to forer Sufferings, and obliged to more Self-denials and Mortifications; which are Hardships that may counter-balance those Assistances and Encouragements. Therefore no Advantage yet from Revealed Religion, seeing the Heathens might perform the Duties incumbent on them, as we do ours, and stand as fair for everlasting Life. For the Light of Reason, the Powers of Nature, and God's common providential Favours, were full enough for their Purpose, and Gospel Grace is no more for ours. How they might have improved in the Knowledge of God and Duty, and in the Practice of Virtue and Piety, may be seen by the Writings of *Plato*, *Cicero*, and other Philosophers, who lived before our Saviour's Time, and had no Help from the Gospel, or Revealed Religion.

Alledged also it may be, that the Gospel Rules are extremely well calculated for the Ends of Civil Society, and thereby do exalt us to a most virtuous and happy Life on Earth. Granted still; was not an Evangelical Life attended with its peculiar Crosses, Trials, and Difficulties; and did not true Morality do the same. Nor does this prove any more, than that the Gospel is calculated for a happy political Life in this World; not that it is necessary  
for

for the Attainment of eternal Life in Heaven, which our Antagonists freely communicate unto Infidels.

Under a great Mistake I therefore am, if in the Result and Issue their Principles do not directly tend to pure Deism, or Natural Religion. I am not positive, and do offer this only as a bare Essay of what seems to me to be the Truth: And if from this Attempt they can handsomely acquit themselves I shall be well satisfied. But if that they cannot do, wherefore is all this Pother made about a single Ordinance of our holy Religion, when they themselves in my Estimation, make the whole System of it useless and unnecessary to its principal End, eternal Life? For suppose they will allow, that *Christ* undertook the Expiation of our Sins: Then their Judgment is, as their Averment and Scripture Allegations in their Sense import, that his Undertaking alone is sufficient to free us from the Effects of Sin: Nor is there any Need of notifying it to any body, or of binding Men up to such Conditions, as Faith, Ordinances, and pure Evangelical Duties, any more than Heathens, who never heard of *Christ* or his Gospel; and yet are equally saved with the best of Christians by virtue of that sole Undertaking, if they walk agreeably to their Rule, the Law of Nature. And this we may learn from Dr. Gale also; who censures and rejects his Adversary's Doctrine as uncharitable, in saying; "That the only Way, " at least the only known and ordinary Way, to " the Kingdom of Glory, is by being of *Christ's* " Church;" *Lett. XI. p. 411, 412.* The Doctor therefore must know another ordinary Way to Heaven, or to the Kingdom of Glory, for People that are out of the Church. And "an innocent and " most exact Man in all Things else, must not be " barr'd of Salvation; only for want of a Ceremony, (that is, a baptismal Admission into the " Church) which he is utterly a Stranger to, and  
" can't

“ can't attain. And he is sure that neither the  
“ Scriptures, nor the Light of Nature, teach any  
“ such dreadful Doctrines.” *Ibid.* As for the Light  
of Nature, he may take it to himself, and his be-  
loved Deists; but I have shewed already, that the  
Scriptures do not talk in the Doctor's Language,  
any more than the Primitive Fathers; out of whom  
both together his Adversary learn'd this charitable  
Doctrine, as 'tis call'd ironically.

Now can I not understand for my Life, what this  
Church of *Christ*, and the being within it, can at all  
signify; since the Doctor knows another ordinary  
Way to the Kingdom of Glory for all innocent and  
exact Livers by the Law of Nature; for such Li-  
vers the Doctor it seems can easily find; or else  
they have not an ordinary Way to Heaven. Be  
gone therefore, insignificant Church, with thy idle  
Ceremonies; for Men can be ordinarily saved with-  
out thee, as well as in thee, as we are sure by the  
Scriptures and the Light of Nature. To what Pur-  
pose did *Christ* take so much Pains in preaching thy  
Doctrines, and confirming them by Miracles, and  
his own Death? And wherefore did his Apostles  
throw away all their Labours, Sufferings, and their  
very Lives, in Behalf of a Church and Gospel that  
are utterly needless to Salvation, there being another  
ordinary Way of attaining that for honest Infi-  
dels?

Nevertheless these Gentlemen, who are so cour-  
teous and charitable in saving Heathens, must not  
be allowed their extravagant Lengths, but be closely  
kept to their own Principles. The Discourse be-  
tween us concerns Revealed and Instituted Religion;  
such [as the whole Œconomy of the Gospel is, when  
considered as a Scheme of Doctrines, Precepts and  
Theology distinct from all others. Into the com-  
mon Rules of Reason, Equity, and the natural No-  
tions they may conceive of God, they must not  
therefore

therefore be permitted to run in raising and forming their Arguments for Men's Salvation. From this Liberty they bar others, who are not so stiff and hide-bound as themselves, but pin them fast down to Scripture Authority. To their own Boundaries let them also be strictly confined, and we shall soon see how well they can prove the Salvation of Infidels and unbaptized Persons, old and young, by the sacred Records; or else we may demand their Warrant for giving God's covenanted Privileges to his Church, to Heathens and Unbelievers; and so making a Common of his sacred Inclosures.

Long have I been desirous to shake Hands and bid Farewel to *J. Tasher*; but there is something so clammy and glutinous in his Company, as has obliged me to cleave almost inseparably to him hitherto; nor can I yet quit his Society without a hearty Salutation at our parting. This is occasioned by some choice Expressions he has been pleased to drop about Original Sin, *p.* 42. where he thus declares his Mind: "That it is not Baptism, " but the righteous Undertaking of our Lord *Jesus* " *Christ*, that takes off the Effects of Original Sin, " or the condemning Power thereof, whatever " it is."

Poor Man! if he be at a Loss for that, I can easily help him out; for if it be any Thing at all in his Esteem, it is the condemning Power of Original Sin; than which plainer Language can be hardly used, nor more easy to be understood. Somewhat lower in the same Page, says he, " Let the Effects " of Original Sin be what they will." Before they were whatever they were, and now they may be whatever they will. Again; " Whatever is the " Condition of Man in the Fall." Still in the Dark, and most uncertain! And yet even here also can I relieve his Ignorance; because Fallen Man, *quatenus* Fallen, must be in a condemn'd Condition, provided

provided Original Sin has a condemning Power. Not to mention that just before the Effects of Original Sin were all contracted into one; and so a Singular swallowed up many Plurals: For why should Accuracy of Speech be used concerning Things that have no Existence? From all which it appears but too evidently, that *Tasher* with the Cabal of Friends, who join'd in the Composure, or Edition of his Book, have no Notions of Original Sin, but what they learn'd in the School of *Pelagius* their great Grandfather.

For will they really allow Original Sin to have a condemning Power, as this relates to another World? Then must they allow it consistent with all God's glorious and gracious Attributes, to clap Mankind under the Sentence of eternal Death for the first Man's Offence. And if that they allow, then will it follow, that God, if he pleased, might keep them for ever where he once laid them, without any Impeachment of his Attributes. Or if a Release or Deliverance from thence he would vouchsafe them, it will follow that he might restrain it to his own Terms and Conditions; whereunto all Mankind are bound to submit, or else go without the Benefit. And what if one of these Terms since the Death of his Son should be Christian Baptism, to initiate them into his Church and Covenant? Could they except against the Equity and Reasonableness of that Condition? And if not, are they not all obliged to comply therewith, whenever they can; or else abide where they were before? And will not this in Spite of his Teeth infer that Necessity of Christian Baptism which we hold, but *Tasher* and his Friends do stiffly implead?

But since he knows nothing of Original Sin's condemning Power, what Effects of that Sin were taken off by *Christ's* righteous Undertaking? None that were eternal; for he could not take off that which

never was. Did he then take off the temporal Effects of Sin? Not at all, for we are assured in the Paragraph aforegoing, that these remain and prevail as well in baptized as unbaptized Persons. So likewise Dr. Gale. And our own Senses and Observation assure us also, that both these Sorts of Persons have still but too strong Inclinations to Sin, and are subject to Pain, Sickness, and Death, which are acknowledged to be the temporal Effects of Original Sin.

Well, my Friends, we have now at length brought our Accounts to bear on a fair Foot. Original Sin has no condemning Power, or eternal Effect at all, and its temporal Effects do still continue and prevail in every Body, as they always did. No Effect therefore of that Sin, either in this or the next World, is taken off by our Lord's righteous Undertaking.

Mr. J. Tasher, was I discoursing with you Face to Face, I should try your Metal by these or the like Interrogatives. Do you own the condemning Power, or everlasting Effect of Original Sin? Not a Word; for you know not what that Power is, and it may for you be what it will, provided always it be no proper condemning Power; for this you will never grant. Do you then own that it took off the temporal Effects of that Sin? Not a Word yet; for these Effects in their full Force do still remain in all Persons. What Effects therefore of Original Sin has *Christ's* Undertaking taken off? Or will you make him to trifle most egregiously in his righteous Undertaking, by doing in it just nothing? Otherwise come, name the Things, specify the Effects which it took off. What, not a Word still? Why do you hesitate? Why do you hum and haw, as if a Bur, or Choak-pear stuck in your Throat? But guessing at your Distemper, I find I must answer for you, and ease you of your Pain. Some kind of Spirit or other has put it in your Heart to say one  
Thing,

Thing, while you think another ; or rather seem to say it, when you really say nothing ; on purpose to bubble and amuse your Readers. And are you not ashamed of this double Dealing and illusory Conduct?

Adieu therefore for ever *J. Tasher* ; for I can no longer bear to keep you Company, since I find you not a plain and honest Dealer : But take this along with you in your Voyage ; that as you have discovered yourself to have too much of the Free-thinker, so remember you have once in your Life met with a Free-speaker ; who in *Laconian* Language has told you your own, has turn'd your Inside outward, and plainly shewed what you are before the World.

---

THE  
 DOCTRINE  
 AND  
 PRACTICE  
 OF THE  
 Primitive CHURCH  
 CONCERNING  
 INFANT-BAPTISM in the three first  
 Centuries, Asserted and Vindicated against  
 Dr. GALE's EXCEPTIONS.

**A**S I am somewhat far advanced in Years, and my Health of late very much impaired, so I should here proceed no farther in this Controversy, did I not conceive Hopes of doing Justice to some of those ancient Fathers, whom I apprehend Dr. *Gale* to have wronged in their Testimonies for Infant-Baptism. And if in this Undertaking I shall succeed according to my Expectation, the Practice of baptizing Infants will appear to be Primitive and Apostolical; and then



then no just Exceptions can lie against it: For if the holy Apostles and their immediate Successors thought them proper Subjects of Christian Baptism, all our Adversaries Endeavours to disqualify them, will fall to the ground, and prove abortive.

In this Case Dr. Gale's Concessions about the first Fathers, which shall be soon produc'd, are sufficiently large in our Favour. And indeed when the Sense of a Law is disputed by late Posterity, there cannot be a better Method taken to find out the Truth, than to have Recourse to those earlier Times wherein the Law was given, and to those that followed presently after; that we might learn what was the Judgment and approved Practice of the Men that lived in a manner under the Legislator's Eye: And what they then thought, and were allowed to do in pursuance of it, must be admitted for the true and genuine Sense of the Law. If therefore it can be made appear, that the Primitive Church generally practis'd Infant Baptism, and the antient Fathers believed the Practice and Order to be apostolical, the Case will bear no reasonable Objections. For that we will conclude to be the true Sense of our Saviour's Law concerning Baptism, and it will be in vain to criticize and cavil any longer about Words and Terms.

It will be granted, that the Doctor for Learning was a leading Man among our Antagonists, against whose Judgment and Authority in the present Controversy they cannot well except. Necessary therefore it is in the Front of all, to know what his Judgment was of the Fathers who lived in the three first Centuries after our Lord's Incarnation: But here I doubt I shall want an *Œdipus* to unfold his Riddles, he seems to talk so ambiguously and inconsistently with himself. Sometimes he appears to give so great a Deference to their Knowledge and Integrity, as if to them he would refer the Cause, and

be entirely determined by their Suffrages. At other times he expresses himself so much to their Disparagement, as if he was resolved utterly to reject their Evidence and Authority. But we will hear him speak in his own Language.

In *Let. II. p. 86.* he makes this fair and equitable Proposal, as proper to compose our Differences, and to establish Unity and Concord on the Principles of the first Churches. “ In order to this, it would be  
 “ requisite, and I think none can except against it,  
 “ that some fit Persons were chose on both Sides to  
 “ examine the Scriptures impartially, and the Fa-  
 “ thers of the three first Centuries, who followed  
 “ their great Master thro’ Sufferings, and whose  
 “ Writings are undoubtedly by far the best Com-  
 “ mentary on the Sacred Books; and with these  
 “ Helps to collect from the Word of God the true  
 “ Doctrine and Discipline of the Primitive Ca-  
 “ tholick Church: And to what should be thus  
 “ sincerely deduced, every one should resolve to  
 “ conform without Reserve. And I doubt not, if  
 “ a Union were endeavour’d on this Expedient, it  
 “ would be accomplished much more easily than is  
 “ imagined.”

His *Let. XI. p. 395, 396.* expresses his Resentment of Mons. *Daille’s* and other Mens Conduct in running down the Fathers, in these Reflections. “ It  
 “ is an ill Return for the great Lessons and Exam-  
 “ ples of Piety they have given us, and for their  
 “ having been so instrumental in transmitting to us  
 “ the Knowledge of our most holy Religion. And  
 “ there is yet a greater Evil attends this Method;  
 “ for all the Abuses and Affronts put upon the Fa-  
 “ thers of the first Centuries, do in the End reflect  
 “ on Christianity itself, which those great Men have  
 “ handed down, and which therefore must needs be,  
 “ in some degree, of but doubtful Authority, if it  
 “ depends on insufficient Testimony.”

And

And after he had said, it would not be difficult to defend the Writings of those Fathers from the Reproaches of *Daillé*, he thus subjoins; “ I shall therefore only say, that in many Cases the rejecting the Authority of the Fathers is a very wild Extreme which Men are driven to, only because they have nothing better to say for themselves, and cannot brook to see their Opinions contradicted in their Writings.

“ That the Fathers of the first Churches were honest faithful Men, and every way capable to acquaint us with the true Posture of Affairs in their own Churches and Times, and therefore are to be depended on, as far as they relate Facts within their proper Cognizance, must be allow'd on all hands ; and I do not see how their greatest Enemies can have the Face to deny it.”

Thus far the Doctor appears to be in our Interest, by shewing himself a zealous Advocate for the Fathers Writings, and approving both their Testimony and their Doctrine: “ For their Writings are undoubtedly by far the best Commentary on the sacred Books.” Then must they much excel the Expositions of the novel *Anabaptists*, as well as ours. But alas! how long will this good Humour continue? And what Service will these bright Commendations do us, when they come to be accommodated to our present Controversy? I doubt no more than bare Complements ; for in the Paragraphs next following, to our great Mortification, we are entertained with these melancholy Observations.

“ The Fathers of the first Ages gave too many Instances of human Frailty, were Men subject to the like Passions with us ; and therefore no wonder they were sometimes in the Wrong. Nor was their Zeal for God's Honour always according to Knowledge ; whereby it came to pass that they actually admitted several Errors, Ad-

“ditions, and Innovations into the Church; so that  
 “their Testimony can only prove Fact, and not  
 “Right. And if they bore ever so plain witness  
 “to the Baptism of Infants, it might be still but  
 “an Innovation, and not the Institution of *Christ*.”  
 And afterwards hypothetically: “Could they be  
 “guilty of such gross Mistakes, as *Irenæus* is  
 “thought to be about our Saviour’s Age, their  
 “Testimony is not worth a Rush for Facts either  
 “past or present.”

Particularly of their Zeal he affirms, “That tho’  
 “it might keep them from losing the chief thing  
 “our Lord had commanded, it might however ex-  
 “pose them to the Inconveniency of superadding  
 “several things he never authorized.” But if a-  
 mong those several things, we may suppose them to  
 have admitted, or super-added Infant Baptism, con-  
 trary to our Lord’s Institution, I cannot see how  
 they lost not a chief thing of his ordaining, when,  
 as we are now taught, they must lose his Church by  
 that Addition.

However, it is high time to look about us, and  
 enquire, Where are we now? And what will be-  
 come of the unhappy Fathers? Are their Writings  
 undoubtedly by far the best Commentary on the  
 Sacred Books, when with their Writings several In-  
 novations and Errors are interwoven? Or how shall  
 we defend them against the Reproaches of their  
 Enemies? We vouch them to be honest faithful  
 Men; but did *Daille* call them Knaves? Or if he  
 did, will any Christian Soul call him an honest Man  
 for so doing? For my part I cannot tell which is  
 worse of these two Things; To bear Testimony to  
 Falshood in Fact; or, To introduce Falshoods into  
 the Doctrine, and Corruptions into the Discipline of  
 the Catholic Church: Since by these last Acts they  
 must falsify and betray that sacred *Depositum* com-  
 mitted to their Charge and Custody, so often and  
 so

so zealously inculcated by *St. Paul*. But let us attend the Doctor in justifying his Libel against the Fathers for admitting Innovations, and wicked Errors too, into the Church; as you shall quickly perceive by one of his Allegations. For two antient Authorities, and no more, he produces for this purpose; in one of which he will be found defective, as I believe; and in the other I am sure far from honest.

*Tertullian* is the first he alledges; and, as if that Author was scarce to be found, or in that Place hard to be understood, we are recommended to *Rigaltius* for something at the Foot of the Page. The Passage referred to in *Tertullian* is, *Lib. de Coronâ, cap. 3.* where we read of the Renunciation in Baptism, the trine Immerfion, and some farther Responses: Of the tasting of Milk and Honey, and Abstinence from Baths all the Week after: Of receiving the Eucharist from the President's Hands alone: Of Oblations for the Dead, and the annual Celebration of their Birth-Days; (so they then called the Days of their Decease, or Martyrdoms:) Of the Unlawfulness of Fasting on the Lord's-Day, and Kneeling on that Day in their Adorations; the last of which was a Privilege they enjoy'd every Day in the Week between *Easter* and *Whitfuntide*: And, Of their frequent Crossings in the Forehead. Of these, and a few such Usages more, he affirms, They were not commanded by any Law of Scripture, but introduced by Tradition, and confirmed by Custom.

In this Account only two Usages may be shocking and offensive to some Ears; Oblations for the Dead, and the frequent Crossings. But those Oblations were not then designed for Masses to pray the Dead out of Purgatory; of which those early Fathers knew no more than some modern *Baptist* Scribblers, who for Formality sake often fetch up their Names, know of the Father's Works. For they believed the

the Souls of holy Men departed to go immediately into Paradise, their blessed Receptacle; and those of Martyrs into the third Heaven. Charities therefore they only were, given in the Name of the Deceased unto the Poor, or perhaps into the Church's Treasury for their Use, where they really did good, and would do the same at this Day, if the same Usage was in Practice. And then for the Crossings in the Forehead, they were the Gloryings of Christian People in the Cross of *Christ* before Infidels, who had them in Derision for their Faith in a crucified Saviour: And if there was any farther use of them, it was not in those Days without a good Foundation. For if God was pleased then sometimes to express his singular Favours at the Use of a Crucifix, or its Sign, at the Monuments of his Martyrs, or on some other rare Occasions, as Ecclesiastical History records, and as Cures were wrought even by the Application of the Apostles Handkerchiefs and Shadows, for the Confirmation of his Religion, and the Support of his Servants under the Rage of Persecution; how does it follow that these Operations, any more than others that were extraordinary, must be constant and perpetual, and at the Command of every shaveling Priest, or Conjuror in Divinity? Or why should those Instruments be made Objects of our Adoration, any more than the Brazen Serpent for its Cures in the Wilderness, and abundance of things beside?

Wherefore let the Sense and Intention of the Primitive Church in those Usages be rightly stated and understood, and I affirm the Moss will sooner grow on our Adversaries Heads than they can prove 'em to be Popery or Corruptions. Matters they were of an indifferent Nature, neither Good nor Evil in themselves, neither commanded nor forbidden, but perfectly innocent and inoffensive; in which the Church of God has always used a Liberty of Discretion, and I believe will use it to the World's End,  
maugre

maugre all Novellists and fantastic Reformers of what they call Church Abuses. And so no unlawful and corrupt Innovations yet in the Primitive Church from this Authority of *Tertullian*.

The Doctor's other Authority is *Hegesippus*, quoted from *Eusebius*, *Hist. Lib. III. cap. 32.* But I dare boldly say, that never was coarser and fouler Work made with any Author, than is here done with *Hegesippus*. For we must remember, that the Doctor's Design was to prove Innovation on the earliest Fathers, and for this purpose he produces the Testimony of *Hegesippus*; why else should he produce it at all? Of them therefore, according to the Doctor, it must be understood. The *Greek* Words he gives us at the Bottom of the Page, mutilated or abridg'd; yet not so but their right Meaning may be easily taken. That Defalcation is not therefore what I find fault with, but his false Version and Misapplication of the Passage, which he thus translates. "The Church continued all the Apostles times a pure Virgin and undefiled——But when those holy Men were dead——then Errors began to arise thro' the Mistakes of other Teachers." We are only concerned in the last Clause of the Citation, where the *Greek* Expressions run; *τηνικαυτα της των αβελ πλανης την αρχην ελαμβανεν η συσασις δια της των ετεροδιδασκαλων απάτης.* Which I render thus; "Then the Society took the Beginning of wicked Error thro' the Fraud of false Teachers."

In what *Lexicon*, or approved *Greek* Author, did Dr. Gale find that *απάτη* signifies pure Mistake, which is owing to Weakness of Understanding; and not always Fraud or Deceit, which implies Design and Pravity of Will. The Word *σύσασις* has a large Extent of Signification, and may here import Society, Assembly, Body, System, Faction, and the like; and so will comprehend the Cabals and Junto's of pestilent Hereticks, with whom the Church was  
only

only engag'd in the way of Opposition. By rendring *ἑτεροδιδασκάλων*, other Teachers, he regarded the bare Etymology of the Word, and translated it in ambiguous Terms: I wish it was not designedly to give room for Mistake, while, by other Teachers, the Reader may understand any Teachers beside the Apostles, even those of the Catholic Church. But when he gave us Errors without the Adjective *ἀβέβη* in *Hegesippus*, it is impossible to excuse him from manifest and wilful Collusion; because that Word *ἀβέβη*, importing wicked, impious, &c. was absolutely necessary to be left out, by reason it could not possibly suit the Character of his honest Fathers.

Now whosoever will look into *Eusebius*, or even consider but the Doctor's *Greek* Quotation, if he has any Skill in the Language, will easily apprehend *Hegesippus's* true Meaning and Intent. He levels his Words intirely against vile Heretics, who wickedly and wilfully deprav'd Christianity, and opposed the Church, as the Church with all her might opposed them. And was it pardonable in Dr. *Gale* to apply the Passage to his faithful honest Fathers, to justify the Charge of wicked Errors and Innovations upon them? I say, wicked Errors, or Error, because this is in *Hegesippus's* Account, which the Doctor must therefore lay at the Fathers door. The Place in *Eusebius* he had before his Eyes, whereby he might easily know to whom it pointed; and I am certain he understood *Greek* ten times better than this Translation of his imports: On purpose then did he mis-translate and mis-apply his Author. If this be Honesty and Sincerity, as things must have lately changed their Notions, so it is time to change their Names, that we may live no longer in the dark.

*Tasler* in his *Preface* says, "The Doctor is now out of the reach of Envy." Most undoubtedly, for I think the Devil himself cannot envy the most gross Falsifications, except where he sees himself out-done



out-done in his own Trade and Talent: But never will he be out of the Reach of Censure so long as his Reflections live, for his base Perversions of ancient Writers, that he might press them in to serve a rotten Cause, and cast horrid Scandal on those venerable Fathers, whom he histrionically pretended to patronize. Too black a Practice is this to be represented in suitable Language; but something was needful to be offered, to unmask a conscientious, innocent People, and decypher them in their true Figures; for to take them on their bare Word, can be nothing else but to love Delusion.

At length after these Windings and Turnings, whether the Doctor was conscious of his Failure in proving corrupt Innovations on the Fathers; or whether his Heart smote him for offering them wrong, I am uncertain, though I doubt it did not by some Expressions he uses afterwards; yet he seems presently to return to a better Mood, gives them fair Language, and almost engages to stand by their Evidence: I say, almost, because he does it not without his usual Wariness and Reserves in such Cases, lest we should have any Dependence on his Word, and try to take him at a Disadvantage: But what he says, you may take as follows,

For, *p.* 398, 399. he delivers himself in these Expressions: “ Though this (of wicked Errors and Innovations in the first Fathers) might be justly insisted upon against our Adversaries; yet will I give them all the Advantages they can desire; and therefore I will grant, ’tis however probable, that what all or most of the earliest Churches practised immediately after the Apostles Times, had been appointed or practised by the Apostles themselves, and was derived from them; for it is hardly to be imagined, that any considerable Body of those ancient Christians, and much less that the whole, or a great part of the Church  
“ should

“ should so soon deviate from the Customs and In-  
 “ junctions of their venerable Founders, whose Au-  
 “ thority they held so sacred. And besides, new  
 “ Opinions and Practices, we see, are usually intro-  
 “ duced by degrees, and not at once, nor without  
 “ Opposition: Therefore in regard to Baptism in  
 “ particular, a Thing of universal Concern and daily  
 “ Practice, I allow it to be very probable, that  
 “ the Primitive Churches kept to the Apostles Pat-  
 “ tern.” And putting in his Caution here, he adds:  
 “ However I am to suppose here, (as indeed I ve-  
 “ rily believe) that the Primitive Church main-  
 “ tained, in this Case, an exact Conformity to the  
 “ Practice of the Apostles, which, doubtless, en-  
 “ tirely agreed with *Christ's* Institution; and I might  
 “ venture to put the whole Matter on this Issue.  
 “ Nay, farther, since Mr. *Wall* is desirous to have  
 “ it thought impossible the Church should so early  
 “ be ignorant of, or vary from the Practice of the  
 “ Apostles in so notorious an Affair as that of Bap-  
 “ tism, I will for once grant him that too: So that  
 “ now the whole Question is reduced to this, whe-  
 “ ther it can be proved from the authentick Pieces  
 “ of the Primitive Fathers, that the Church used  
 “ Infant Baptism in those early Times.”

Most unjustly might he insist on those corrupt  
 Innovations, except they had been made out abun-  
 dantly better than is done by him. Nevertheless  
 we will accept of what he has given us at last with  
 much ado; for it came heavily out Step by Step,  
 as if against the Grain, and scrued from him by  
 mere Necessity.

But before we join Issue on this Foot, I must  
 premise, that, one excepted in *Cyprian's* Days, the  
 Decisions of Councils are not to be expected in the  
 Case; they being rare in those Centuries, or their  
 Acts lost, and treating of other Matters; nor was  
 there any Need of decreeing Infant Baptism, unless  
 it,

it, or something of near Affinity to it, had been then questioned or disputed. Also the Writings we have of the Fathers in those Times, were mostly employed in Apologies for the Christian Religion, and in the Refutation of Heretics and Schismatics, among whom we then find no *Anti-pædo-Baptists*: But complete Tracts and Systems of Ecclesiastical Discipline and Customs, were not formally composed, in which we might search for all their Practices concerning Baptism; only these were cursorily or occasionally mentioned, without any full Account of the Matter designedly given. Yet this is remarkable, that in all the three first Centuries, we find not a single Author open his Mouth directly against Infant Baptism; and all these Writers that say nothing about it, are to be left out of this Account as Mutes, or dumb Witnesses. Wherefore we come to the Question in Debate.

*Irenæus* Bishop of *Lyons*, who flourished towards the End of the second Century, and as *Baronius* conjectures, wrote his Books against Heresies in the Year of our Lord 180, is the first Father we alledge for Infant Baptism; whose Words being english'd give this Account: "*Christ sanctifies every Age by* that Similitude it bears to himself: For he came to save all People by himself; all I say, who by him are born again unto God, Infants and little ones, and Children, and young People, und Elders. Therefore did he pass through every Age, and to Infants became an Infant, sanctifying Infants, \* &c." By Infants being sanctified and born again, or regenerated unto God, we affirm

\* — Sed omnem ætatem sanctificans per illam quæ ad ipsam erat similitudinem. Omnes enim venit per semetipsum salvare, omnes, inquam, qui per eum renascuntur in Deum, infantes & parvulos & pueros & juvenes & seniores. Ideo per omnem venit ætatem, & infantibus infans factus, sanctificans infantes, &c. *Iren. Lib. 2. Cap. 39.*

their Baptism to be imply'd and signify'd, as shall be discuss'd hereafter.

This, as we take it, being a very home and early Evidence for the Baptism of Infants, never did Man use more Art than *Dr. Gale* has done, to force and extort it out of our Hands. No Stone has he left unturn'd, and no Shift of his critical Talent has he omitted to compass his Design; and yet I trust all his Efforts will prove ineffectual. His Exceptions against the Passage I shall not take in his Method, nor examine them in all their Particulars, that being a tedious and needless Work; but shall endeavour to break their main Strength, and advance against them such Considerations as will overbalance them.

In *Let. XII. p. 476, &c.* he falls foul upon the Translator and his Performance, imputing to them Falseness, Barbarism, and what he pleases of that Nature; and thence infers, that since we have not *Irenæus* in the *Greek* Original, we may not have his right Words and Meaning in the Translation, and consequently can make no Advantage of this Testimony. A most easy Device undoubtedly to overthrow the Authority of many valuable Monuments in Antiquity, which nevertheless are in great Request with the Learned and Unbiass'd.

Extreme Ignorance in the two Languages of *Greek* and *Latin*, cannot be fasten'd on *Irenæus's* Translator, let proud or prejudiced Critics say what they will: And as for Barbarisms, they are not to be found in this Passage; and therefore they affect it not, in case they occur elsewhere; nor do they often corrupt the true Sense of an Author, tho' they destroy the Purity and Elegance of his Style. Then can I see but two Reasons that are apt to corrupt Translations, whereof one is chargeable on obscure Passages in Originals; either when the Expressions are uncommon or equivocal; or when the Meaning

is latent and difficult to be apprehended. The other Reason springs from Doctrines or Tenets, where Affection to a Cause warps the Judgment, and corrupts the Version: Of which the Doctor himself is a remarkable Instance in translating *Hegesippus*, and taking Occasion thereupon to charge the Errors of perverse Heretics on the first Fathers; whereas he might as well have quoted the Alcoran, and impute its ridiculous Fables unto Christians; which must go by a much worse Name than a Slip or Oversight, unless in writing his polemical Letters, he wrote Post, as *ex tempore* Demagogues use to preach.

Now I affirm, that neither of these two Reasons could in this Place corrupt the Translation of *Irenæus*. Not the first; for as the *Latin* Terms are clear and determinate in their Idea's, and the Meaning of the Passage exceeding plain and obvious; so let us suppose whatever Expressions we well can to answer them in the Original Text of *Irenæus*, and they will be fixed and perspicuous in their Notions; nor can the Sense of them all, when put together, be in the least dark, dubious, or difficult to be attained; then it must follow, that a Man of a far more slender Insight into the two Languages than this Translator appears to be, could not mistake their Sense, nor render them wrong through Ignorance or Unskilfulness. And if this will not satisfy, supposing yet the Passage to be genuine, it ought to be specified what Word or Words are obscure or ambiguous; or what are suspected to be mis-translated or foisted in; or what other Scope and Drift the Author pursued and levell'd at, besides what is represented in the Translation. But nothing of this kind has been offer'd at hitherto; and therefore I conclude that these Remarks do effectually obstruct all Exceptions in this Respect.

Nor can the second Reason here take Place, which is Affection to a Cause or Party; because our Ad-

versaries, or any Persons, cannot inform us what it was, or how it came about: Or if they will surmise it, it lies upon them to prove that Attachment, and give some probable Account what Cause the Translator serv'd, what Interest he promoted, and what manner of Temptation he had, to give us a false Version of his Author in this Place. But if herein they fail, then shall I foreclose and stop the Way against all such Evasions for the future, with that most equitable Maxim, which passes current in all Courts by the Law of Nations: Every Man is presumed to be good till the contrary is made appear.

Suppose we then, that in some dark, doubtful, and difficult Places, the Translator has mistaken the Meaning of *Irenæus*, and elsewhere has not rendered him in correct, beautiful, pure and polite *Latin*; yet since neither of these things can truly be alledg'd with relation to the Passage now before us, they are no Exceptions against the Translation of it; or could they prove this, as they never can, they would prove also, that not one single Line in the whole Translation is in the least to be depended on, except where it agrees with the *Greek* Fragments still remaining, and there it is needless to Men of Learning. Wherefore then was it ever printed? And wherefore is it at all perused? Unless it be for the Pleasure and Amusement of reading an old Romance dress'd out in an uncouth and barbarous Style. To this pass are we led and reduced by learned and ill-natured Criticifins.

Was *Irenæus* alive, perhaps he would find no great Fault with his Translator for the Blemishes of his Language, in which he himself was not very curious, if we may take his own Word in the Preface to his Books, where he makes this Profession; “ Expect not from me, who live among the *Gauls*, “ and mostly use a barbarous Language, the Art of  
“ Oratory,

“ Oratory, which I have not learn’d, nor the Faculty of a Writer which I have not affected, nor the Ornament of Words, or persuasive Energy, which I understand not. But what I write to thee in Love, simply and truly, and in a rustic Speech or Manner, do thou receive in Love.”

I cannot perceive by this that the Author was much more elegant and ornamental than the Translator, and it is hardly worth the while for our great Virtuoso’s to raise such hideous Outcries against the last for Solœcisms, Inaccuracies, and Barbarisms of Speech, except they will involve the first also in the like Censures.

2. Another Thing in this Passage controverted by Dr. Gale, is the true Notion of an Infant State or Age; which being so well known to every Body, we should wonder to see it made a Dispute, had he not a singular and dangerous Faculty of disputing all Things that please him not. Upon this Head he runs out into the strangest Exorbitances that much Reading and a luxuriant Fancy could suggest, to stretch the Period of Infancy to an extravagant Length; and yet should he have his Will and Way, it would do him no Service at all, as I hope to demonstrate by this short Remark.

For taking *Irenæus* yet to be our Author, it plainly appears by his Words and Scope, that his Intention was to assert the Regeneration and Sanctification of Mankind by *Jesus Christ*, in all Parts of their Age from their Cradle to their Grave, or from their Birth to their Death: In order to which End he makes our Saviour, while on Earth, to run through all the several Stages and Periods of Age, that by his Pattern and Similitude they might be all sanctified. Was not *Christ* therefore once in the strictest Sense an Infant, not only of a Year, but of a Month or Week old? Did he not then according to *Irenæus* sanctify Infants, who were exactly of his Age, or

of a Month or Week old like himself? If not, where was the Similitude and Correspondence in Age between him and them? Or how did it hold for their Sanctification? Or what Benefit of that Sort did derive to the youngest Infants, from our Lord's being once such an Infant himself? Conclude therefore I must, that *Irenæus* means Infants yet hanging on their Mothers Breasts, as well as those of older Age: Nor can I forbear to say, that the Doctor, to serve an Hypothesis, has notoriously perverted the Sense of the good Father, when, to evade his Testimony, or our Argument from it, he has laboured hard to extend the Period and Notion of Infancy to ten Years or upward; and would have *Irenæus's* Meaning understood in that Extent, on purpose to cut off all the Time of Infancy in its properest Sense and earliest Age. Is this to expound, and not rather to rack and torture his Author, and force him against his Will to speak whatever we have a Mind?

I have not the Vanity to think of silencing everlasting Wranglers, who make it their Business to blind the World with artful Subterfuges, and it may be, are proud of an invincible Talent at Chicanery; but my Aim is to propose such Considerations, as in my Judgment ought to satisfy all reasonable and impartial Men. For the Doctor's Learning I have a just Esteem, and if I bear hard upon him where I find he is much to blame, it is a Force put on my natural Temper; for I think myself bound, pursuant to my Undertaking, to guard against Impositions from those Persons, who arrogate to themselves an uncommon Share of Piety, Conscience, Honesty, and all good Qualities, by laying open the Failures, I am loth to call them Prevarications, of their great, ingenious, and most learned Champion: Which I speak by way of Apology, by reason I must not betray the Cause I undertook to defend,



3. The Notion of the *Latin* Word in *Irenæus*, *Renascentur*, in *English*, are regenerated or born anew, is likewise much contested by the Doctor; and pleaded it is with a great Parade and Ostentation of Reading, that it does not import Baptismal Regeneration, because Baptism and Regeneration are in their Idea's two very distinct and different Things. I grant they are so in Propriety of Speech, when by Baptism we mean no more than the external Ordinance, which is washing with Water; and yet by the Figure called *Metonymy*, they have very frequently interchanged Names both in ancient and modern Writers. Our blessed Lord says, *We are born of Water and the Spirit*: St. Paul calls Baptism, *the Laver of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost*: And is understood by Commentators and Divines to mean Baptized in the Word *Illuminated*, *Heb. vi. 4.* And whoever reads the *Greek* Fathers with any Attention, he will find that they commonly express Baptism by ἀναγέννησις, ἀνακαίνωσις, Φωτισμός, &c. Regeneration, Renovation, Illumination, &c. So to name no more, *Greg. Nyssen. de Baptismo*, p. 221. calls it χάρις τῆς παλιγγενεσίας, the Grace of Regeneration. And to those Terms the *Latins* have Words to express Baptism by, that are equipollent.

The Reason of giving it these Appellations is manifest, because the Ordinance of Baptism is by Divine Institution the ordinary Means and Instrument of those spiritual Operations and Effects, and also the Sign and Seal of God's Grace: Or rather, this sanctifying Grace, which cleanses and renews the Heart, is the inward Form, and therefore the most essential Part of Baptism. Now the Ordinance and the Grace, or the Institution and its Benefits, being by God's Law concomitant, why may not Baptism assume those Names, as well as Circumcision did that of the Covenant, by reason it was the Token, Seal, and Ratification of the Covenant? And

especially why not receive its Name from its own intrinsic Form and most essential Part?

But to dispatch this Article with all convenient Brevity; most undeniably Regeneration in *Irenæus* must have some Signification, and be determined to one certain Sense or other according to his Intention. If therefore it does not signify Baptismal Regeneration or Sanctification, I care not which, it is but civil to put the Question, what else does it signify? Or what other Sort of a Regeneration can you name to suit *Irenæus's* Mind and Purpose, that is more applicable to Infants, and whereof they are more fairly capable? Dr. *Gale* and his *Echo Tassher*, stiffly deny their new Birth by the Spirit of Grace, and assign the Reasons of their Denial. Can Infants then be regenerated by the Means of moral Arguments, such as Doctrine, Instruction, Exhortation, and the like Expedients? Surely this will never be affirmed concerning them in their first and most proper Infant State, of which I have shewed the Term must be understood. What other Regeneration then will you be pleased to grant them? Try your Skill, pump your Wits and Invention to find it out, except you will affirm the honest Bishop talk'd impertinently, and downright Nonsense.

That Infants may be regenerated by Baptism, has been the received Opinion of all *Pædo-Baptists*; *Pelagians* and Men of their Kidney perhaps excepted. The Administration of the external Ordinance to them is certainly practicable; and why the Concurrency and Co-operation of Divine Grace should be denied we know no Reason, since the Impressions of the Spirit on human Souls in (the Manner of his acting, are to us secret and unintelligible. In Infants the Motions and Progress of the animal Life are performed by the Mechanism of Nature, under the Regulation of the Laws fixed and maintained by Providence, while in the Act they are altogether indiscern-

discernible to our Apprehensions; but in all moral or spiritual Operations, Infants can be no more than pure passive Recipients. That the Holy Spirit of God acts on our own Souls, we are fully assured by his sacred Word, and yet can we not describe the Manner how, nor scarce perceive his Actings; so as to distinguish them clearly from our own. May he not then act also on the Souls of Infants after a Manner unknown to us? Or is it not high Presumption to deny the Thing, because we cannot comprehend the Mode? I hope our Adversaries will no longer insist on this Objection, unless they are resolved to give us strong Suspicion, that they are going over apace into the Camp of Sceptics and Unbelievers.

Wherefore, since they will not allow that Baptifmal Regeneration is intended by *Irenæus* in this controverted Place, I call upon them once more to specify the Regeneration which he does or may intend; and not to lose us in a Maze, while they are resolved to dispute away what we justly take to be his true Meaning. Dr. *Gale's* singular Wariness and Œconomy would not permit him to offer at it, as his own Sentiment and Opinion; but having amused and bewilder'd his unhappy Reader in an inextricable Labyrinth of Disputes, he drops him by the way, and either leaves him to his shiftless Conjectures, or else to conclude that Regeneration in the good Father signifies just nothing. Should anyone upon reading the Doctor's Letter, have asked him; Since you will not allow *Irenæus* meant This or That, or the third Thing by Regeneration, pray what did he really mean by the Word? It had been comical enough to hear the Doctor answer much alike as the *Jews* did *Judas*; *What is that to me? See you to that*, and seek it out. And yet, as the Case stands, to such an Answer he must be driven, or stood a Mute in that Exigency: For his wretch-

ed Quibbling or Equivocating, p. 498. will never bring him off.

What was necessary to be done he well understood, but being conscious of his own Disability, he there, to save himself, greedily catches at an empty Shadow from his Adversary's Pen. Mr. *Wall* had said; "That God by his Spirit does, at the Time  
 " of Baptism, seal and apply to the Infant that is  
 " there dedicated to him, the Promises of the Co-  
 " venant of which he is capable; viz. Adoption,  
 " Pardon of Sin, Translation from the State of Na-  
 " ture to that of Grace, &c. on which Account the  
 " Infant is said to be regenerated of, or by the  
 " Spirit." From whence the Doctor, thinking himself relieved, infers somewhat triumphantly;  
 " There is another Regeneration then besides Bap-  
 " tism mentioned by our Lord himself, of which  
 " our Author tells us Infants are capable; and why  
 " might not this be the Regeneration meant by *Ire-*  
 " *næus* without Baptism?"

Without Baptism! Stay there, and suffer your self to be controul'd; for your Author told you expressly, this Regeneration of Infants by the Spirit, was at the Time of Baptism; and is it fair in you to say it is without? Therefore was it precisely in or by Baptism, and such a Regeneration we will willingly accept for *Irenæus's* Meaning: The other Things, namely, Adoption, Pardon, and Translation, are but the Fruits and Consequents of that Baptismal Regeneration which affect us outwardly, but make and leave no inward, inherent and permanent Impressions on the Soul, as Regeneration and Sanctification do; and therefore are they never called Regeneration in Scripture, nor by any good Divines, unless they will speak most improperly. For never are we actually God's adopted Children till we are born anew, nor are our Sins usually pardoned before Baptism, nor are we really translated from the State  
 of

of Nature into the State of Grace, without being first regenerated, which is ordinarily by Water and the Spirit. This works a real Change in the Soul, and together with Sanctification it is mentioned by *Irenæus*; tho' neither of them will go down with *Dr. Gale*, and be granted to baptized or unbaptized Infants in their proper Infancy, because in them he finds not the Effects thereof: And since he utterly rejects this real Regeneration, we cannot give him leave to equivocate in ambiguous Language, and offer us the Shadow instead of Substance.

To this Issue have we now reduced the Matter, if my Judgment deceives me not; that *Irenæus* in the Place before us must by Regeneration mean baptismal Regeneration, or he must mean nothing. In the Notion of Infancy, as I conceive, I have plainly proved that *Dr. Gale* expounded the Father in a wrong Sense; and here in Regeneration he has expounded the Thing, or Meaning, quite away: And is it not hard, that so much elaborate Discourse must be lavished and entirely lost, for want of a Subject for its Application?

4. From these light Velitations we must advance to the main Battle, and try if we shall be able to grapple with the strongest Forces the Doctor has produced against this Passage of *Irenæus*: For it is strenuously maintained, that *Irenæus* was not the true Author of it, nor of the latter part of the Chapter wherein it is; but some shameless Impostor foisted it in, who, not being Master of the Trade, betray'd the Imposture by his palpable Blunders. In Confirmation whereof, we are first refer'd to Cardinal *Baronius*, who, *Anno Christi* 34. *cap.* 142. has unanswerably prov'd the Forgery on the Cheat; nor could the Arguments of that illustrious Annalist be cleared off by the Attempts of *Casaubon* or *Petavius*. And this is the Import of the Objection.

For a gross and manifest Contradiction presents itself in that Chapter of *Irenæus*; in laying which forth the Doctor is no less prolix than the Cardinal was concise: And thus it lies in both their Accounts. The true *Irenæus* dates the Baptism of *Christ* by *John* at the thirtieth Year of his Age, or thereabout; then he enumerates three Passovers after that, in the last of which our Saviour suffered; so that he could not be much above 33 when he died. But in the same Chapter, towards the End, *Christ* is said to be above fifty at his Passion. Therefore must this last Reckoning be discharged from *Irenæus*, because he could not so soon and openly contradict himself.

To which I answer, that the Contradiction is wrongfully charged, and so not real, but imaginary. True it is, *Irenæus* says that *Christ* was baptized at 30, and reckons three Passovers after that, including the last wherein our Saviour suffered: But then I would add, that *Irenæus* does not say there were no more Passovers than those three between his Baptism and his Passion, but that I dare not venture to affirm it yet for fear of being soundly school'd and flogg'd by *Dr. Gale* in the very Language he gave *Petavius* for the same Reason. For that learned Jesuit had suggested, "That because *Irenæus* does not particularly say, the first of these three Passovers did commence with the next after his Baptism, therefore *Irenæus* thought there were several Passovers between his Baptism, and the first of these three that are mentioned." Upon which the Doctor smartly reflects, "That since *Petavius* did not attempt to prove this, 'tis too wild and fanciful a Conjecture to pass, and founded purely on his own Imagination. And the only Reason *Petavius* has to imagine this, he himself tells us, is, because otherwise *Irenæus* contradicts himself; which is very pleasant indeed. For this is the Cardinal's Assertion, and *Petavius* should not  
 " have

“ have supposed the contrary, and then argued  
 “ from his Supposition; for that is only begging  
 “ the Question. In short, *Petavius* allows the whole  
 “ Force of the Cardinal’s Argument, that the Be-  
 “ ginning and End of this Chapter are contradic-  
 “ tory, unless it can be prov’d to be probable, that  
 “ these three Passovers are not the three immediate-  
 “ ly following upon our Lord’s Baptism; which I  
 “ can’t see how any Man will ever be able to do.”  
*Let. XII. p. 466.*

Terrify’d I am not with these strong Words, and fancy the Doctor’s Giant is but a Windmill; while I hope not only to prove it probable, but to demonstrate what he thinks impossible, from the express Words of *Irenæus* himself in this very Chapter. Wherefore at the 30th Year of his Age he says our Saviour was baptized. \* “ Then, or afterwards, he came to *Jerusalem*, having the perfect Age of a Master, Teacher, or Doctor, (*διδασκάλος* probably in the *Greek*) so as to be justly called a Master by all Men.” And from thence the three Passovers are to begin. Plain it is, that in *Irenæus*’s Judgment and Account our Lord had the perfect Age of a Master when he came to *Jerusalem*. And what did the holy Father and Martyr reckon that Age to be? for this alone remains to be known. At the 40th Year complete, according to him, it had its soonest Commencement, the Time just before-going being the Age of Youth. For thus he computes Seniority, being the Age of a Master. † “ At the Age of thirty Youth begins, and is extended even to the 40th Year, as

\* — Triginta annorum Dominus exiens venit ad baptismum; Deinde Magistri ætatem perfectam habens, venit Hierusalem, ita ut ab omnibus justè audiretur Magister. *Iren. lib. ii. cap. 39.*

† Quia autem triginta annorum ætas primæ indolis est juvenis, & extenditur usque ad quadragesimum annum, omnis quilibet confitebitur; à quadragesimo aut quinquagesimo anno declinat jam in ætatem senioem, quam habens Dominus docebat. *Iren. ibid.*

“ every one will confess; from the 40th or 50th  
 “ Year it declines into the Age of Seniority, which  
 “ our Lord attaining to, did teach.” This then  
 was the Age of a Master or Teacher, which our  
 Lord had when he came to *Jerusalem*, and began  
 to teach; for the 40th Year at least was expired be-  
 fore he enter’d on that Office, and upon that the  
 three Passovers follow.

To confirm this, we will observe farther, that  
*Irenæus* affirms those Hereticks, who ascrib’d to our  
 Lord but thirty Years, or a little better, to cut off  
 intirely the Age of his Seniority, and with it the  
 Age of a Master. For, says he, \* “ They who  
 “ affirm our Lord to live not above thirty Years, to  
 “ maintain their own Fiction, forget themselves, by  
 “ destroying his whole Business, and by robbing  
 “ him of the most necessary and honourable part  
 “ of his Age, even that of a Senior, in which he  
 “ taught and governed all Men.” These two  
 Places compared and joined together, do clearly fix  
 the Age of a Senior, and the Age of a Master, to  
 the Expiration of the 40th Year at soonest. All  
 the Favour therefore I now beg of the candid  
 World, is to allow I can prove, that from the 30th  
 Year of our Lord’s Age, till the end of the 40th,  
 ten full Years must needs run out, and consequently  
 ten Passovers, and the Task will be finished which  
 I undertook. So Dr. *Gale*’s Mountain is dwindled  
 into a Mole-hill, and the formidable Contradiction  
 vanished into Smoke.

The proving of three Passovers after our Lord’s  
 Baptism till his Passion, was full enough for *Ire-  
 næus*’s Purpose, to refute those Hereticks, who to

\* Illi autem, ut figmentum suum—affirmant, dicunt uno anno  
 eum prædicasse & duodecimo mense passum, contra semetipfos obli-  
 ti sunt solventes ejus omne negotium, & magis necessarium, & magis  
 honorabilem ætatem ejus auferentes, illam inquam proveciore, in  
 quâ edocens præerat universis. *Ibid.*



prove their thirty *Æons*, affirmed our Lord lived but thirty Years. Therefore *Irenæus* mentions no more Passovers, tho' he must believe more; but supposes a Vacancy of ten Years at least between his Baptism and Arrival at *Jerusalem*, when having attained the Age of a Senior and Master between forty and fifty, he solemnly enter'd on the Doctor's Office to teach the People: Tho' nothing is said by *Irenæus* where he was, what he did, or how many Passovers were celebrated during that Vacancy. But the Age of a Senior and Master, both in this and the next Chapter, is with him precisely stated to the 40th Year completed, and thence upwards. Nor does he say, with the Cardinal and *Gale*, that our Lord at his Crucifixion was fifty Years old, or above, but between forty and fifty, and pretty near the last, as we have it in the Chapter following.

This also I must here observe, that *Baronius* and *Gale* do evidently wrong *Irenæus*, when they represent him to say, that he received the Account he gives of our Saviour's Age from St. *John* the Apostle; but he only says, the *Asiaticks* reported to him, that they were told it by St. *John* and other Apostles, which makes a considerable Difference in the Case; for then the Untruth, if one it was, and possibly their Ears or Memory might fail 'em here, must lie at their Door, and not with *Irenæus*, who undoubtedly spoke no more than he had been told.

Having chased the Contradiction out of the Field, there remains another strong Objection against the last part of this Chapter's being genuine, briefly glanc'd upon by *Baronius*, but largely insisted on by Dr. *Gale*; and that is the enormous Misreckoning of our Lord's Age, who is affirmed to live above forty Years. The Doctor goes about laboriously to demonstrate, that the true *Irenæus* should not, could not be ignorant of our Lord's punctual Age, nor be guilty of such a great and extravagant Mistake; and therefore

therefore that part of the Chapter which gives the Account must be struck out as spurious. It would be a short Cut to tell the Doctor, that our Quotation for Infant Baptism stands at a great distance off from that Mis-reckoning, and is not therefore affected by it, as will be shewn hereafter; but I shall not be so sparing of my Pains, since the Doctor is prodigiously profuse of his own. For to make his Exception plain and irrefragable, he demonstrates with abundance of Literature and Ingenuity, how easy it was to calculate our Saviour's true Age at his Passion from the Date of his Nativity in 41st of *Augustus*, from the time of *Jerusalem's* Destruction, and from the Reigns of the *Cæsars* extracted out of *Josephus*, and is wonderful nice and exact in his Computations on these Topics, for the better Instruction of his Readers and *Irenæus*: Of all which I cannot forbear to say, that it is nothing better than learned and laborious Trifling, because needless; for which the Reader, if he pleases, may find the *Latin* underneath\*. For who knows not that *Irenæus* was greatly mistaken in his Calculation of our Lord's Age, and might have been easily rectify'd by the Evangelist *St. John*, without any farther Help?

But that which spoils this elaborate Scheme of the Doctor in computing our Lord's Age, is, that his Methods came not at all into the Head of *Irenæus*, and it is too late now to work them in. For it evidently appears that the incautious Father, in this Account, went upon very different Grounds, which were a mistaken Text of Scripture in the *Jews* saying to *Christ*, *Thou art not yet fifty Years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?* and the Reports of several *Asiatics*, who were his Seniors and Acquaintance; and he look'd no farther into the Matter by curious

\* *Magno conatu magnas nugas agere. And,*  
*Turpe est difficiles habere nugas,*  
*Et stultus labor est ineptiarum.*

Examinations and Enquiries. And if he be justly blameable for his too much Easiness and Credulity, he was not the only Father, nor the only Writer, that has been imposed upon by his own Judgment, or other Mens Relations, whereof various Instances might be given. When our Lord told *Peter* of *St. John*, *If he tarry till I come, what is that to thee?* it gave but a slender Occasion for the general Persuasion and Report that *St. John* should not die.

As to the Fathers, what strange Narratives about an Altar at *Rome* to *Simon Magus*, about Phoenixes, Cells of the seventy Translators, and other fabulous Stories now exploded, found too much Access to their unsuspecting Minds, and too great an Interest in their Belief? Nor were they singular in very gross Oversight of this kind, but among the Nations also their most exact and sagacious Authors had sometimes their intolerable Slips and Miscarriages; for even *aliquando bonus dormitat Homerus*. Nay, most unaccountable Monstrosities they all embraced in their absurd Religions; so that Errors can be no great Wonders or Exceptions against human Writings.

To omit profane Writers, the holy Scriptures, which we deservedly have in the highest Veneration, are not without their seeming Incoherences, which have exercised the Talents of the ablest Commentators to reconcile them to Truth and their own selves. *St. Matthew*, *ch. xxvii. v. 9.* attributes Words to *Jeremiah* the Prophet, which are not to be found in him, but *Zachariah*. *St. Luke*, *ch. ii. v. 1, 2.* speaks of the Taxing, or Description, made of the *Roman* Empire by *Augustus's* Order at our Lord's Nativity, and executed in *Judæa* as part of the Empire, when *Cyrenius* was Governour of *Syria*; tho' we are assured from other good Authority, that *Cyrenius* was not promoted to that Government before eleven or twelve Years after, when, upon the Banishment  
of

of *Archelaus*, *Judæa* was made a Roman Province. *St. Stephen*, *Acts* vii. 16. says, that our Fathers, meaning *Jacob* in particular, were carried into *Sychem*, and laid in the Sepulchre that *Abraham* bought of the Sons of *Emmor*, the Father of *Sychem*; and yet the Sepulchre which *Abraham* bought was the Cave of *Machpelah* before *Mamre*, of *Ephron* the Son of *Zohar* the *Hittite*, *Gen.* xxiii. and there was *Jacob* buried, *Gen.* l. 13. But the Field which was bought of *Emmor*, or *Hamor*, the Father of *Sychem*, was purchased by *Jacob* himself for the Erection of an Altar, and not for Burial; *Gen.* xxxiii. 19, 20. In the Old Testament we meet with several Differences in Chronology, Numbers, and Accounts which seem irreconcilable; and for a Specimen I will give but this one Instance. *Abaziab*, in 2 *Chron.* xxii. 2. is said to be forty-two Years old when he began to reign; and yet in 2 *Kings* viii. 26. he is said to be but twenty-two at that time.

Nevertheless such Difficulties and seeming Inconsistencies, tho' in Appearance unfurmountable, tempt us not to strike these Passages for Suppositions out of the sacred Volumes, as *Dr. Gale* deals with *Irenæus*; but we bend our utmost Endeavours to bring them to a fair Accommodation, notwithstanding too many Essays of this kind may have prov'd unsuccessful. Certainly the Doctor's acute Criticisms, if turned loose on these Passages, would make foul Work, and abundance more of candid and favourable Construction must be allowed them, than he gives the Authors whom he does not like; tho' I think it became him not to be so severe on such Occasions, considering his own unpardonable Oversight, and particularly that of the great Contradiction in *Irenæus*, the Reconciliation whereof he thought impracticable, tho' in the same Chapter it lay most plainly before his Eyes.

Was the Doctor now in the Land of the Living, I should cut him out as tough Work to make up, as he has done us, which his Seconds if they please may take in hand. This is furnished by *Baronius* in the very next Chapter to that wherein he arraigned *Irenæus*: And I question not but the Doctor saw it very clearly; tho' his Policy and dextrous Menage forbad him to touch or mention it, for fear he should be put to as great a plunge in accounting for his Friend *Tertullian*, as we are now for *Irenæus*. For *Tertullian* is the Offender, and his Offence is this: Assert he does, "That *Christ* suffered in the 15th Year of *Tiberius*, and was as it were thirty Years old when he suffered\*": Here are three whole Years cut off from our Saviour's Age; and tho' in Numbers his Error reaches not up to that of *Irenæus*, yet in its Nature and Importance it rather exceeds. For plain it is that *Christ* was baptized about thirty, and after that three Passovers ran out to his Crucifixion; tho' reckoning that wherein he suffered, I think they were four Passovers: so that he must live at least to thirty-three. Might not, ought not *Tertullian* to have known as much? Could not Dr. Gale have easily taught it him by his Calculations? Or were not these three Years here sunk and discounted, the most active and memorable Part of our Saviour's Life? Whereas *Irenæus* sunk his Vacancy in an absolute Oblivion and Inactivity. And yet, does *Baronius* challenge this Passage in *Tertullian* for forged and surreptitious, by reason of this gross and important Error? Not at all, but he passes it for genuine, and proves it also by solid Arguments.

Neither was *Tertullian* singular in this Mistake, but had too many great Personages to keep him Company: For as the Cardinal affirms *Clemens*

\* Hujus (Tiberii) quindecimo anno Imperii passus est Christus, annos habens quasi triginta cum pateretur. *Tertul. advers. Judæos, cap. 8.*

*Alexandrinus* to have gone before him in that erroneous Account; so he makes no less nor fewer Men to follow him in the same than *Julius Africanus*, *Lactantius*, *St. Jerome*, *St. Austin*, and *Sulpicius Severus*; referring us in his Margin to the particular Places of their Works where that Mis-reckoning may be found.

Was *Irenæus* therefore better able, or more obliged to search out our Saviour's right Age, than *Tertullian* his Cotemporary very near, and all those great Names above mentioned? Or are all the Places where they give that wrong Account, for this very Reason alone, to be expunged as Interpolations or Impositions? *Baronius* does it not, and I believe no Man else will be so hardy as to attempt it. Why then is there so much Partiality expressed in the same Cause? And why so much Rigour shew'd to *Irenæus* for what in effect is the same Fault in other Persons? Wherefore I shall make bold to conclude, that as a palpable Mistake of our Lord's Age does not in the least prove Falsifications of *Tertullian*, or any of the other renowned Authors aforesaid, so it does not at all prove Falsification of *Irenæus*. This single Remark might supersede farther Trouble, and dismiss the Defence, but that I am willing to give it the Overplus and Advantage.

1. To expunge the latter Part of this 39th Chapter in *Irenæus*, will do our Adversaries no Service, as I shall presently shew; therefore to gratify them we must strike out the major part of it. Nor will that suffice, but all the Beginning of the next Chapter following for a considerable Way, must go out also; because *Irenæus* there repeats, enlarges, and insists on the same Account of *Christ's* Age, and names the Scripture Text on which he grounded it, shewing how in his Judgment it was deducible from thence: And that will make a very wide Gap in the Work, if not a Deficiency in the Argument he was pursuing.

pursuing. For the Heretics he there took to task were the *Valentinians* with their thirty *Æons*. All their Theology was Allegorical, Anagogical, or to speak more plainly, elevated Nonsense and mysterious Nothings: And as their Doctrine was, so were their Proofs, perfectly whimsical and fantastic. Whoever will take the pains to read their Vagaries in *Irenæus* and *Tertullian*, will sooner meet with an aching Head or nauseating Stomach, than squeeze a Dram of good Sense from their gypsy Cant and Jargon.

We need go no farther back than to the 38th Chapter of *Irenæus*, to find that they asserted thirty *Æons*, and thought to prove them by our Lord's being near thirty at his Baptism; after which in their Computation he lived and taught but one Twelve-month, which with them was the acceptable Year of the Lord. The next Chapter therefore was the most proper Place for *Irenæus* to obviate and refute their foolish Argument, after he had proposed and said something to it in the 38th; and there he designedly undertakes it, and pursues it closely to the End. The Style is plainly his throughout, according to the Translator's Idiom and way of rendring; the manner of Reasoning and Discourse is also his; and the Connexion of the whole is so close and entire, that the most critical Head-piece would be hard put to it, where to begin and fix the pretended Interpolation, did not the Interest of a Cause point to the Place, and direct him to begin it before the middle of the Chapter. And therefore, if all from thence to the Chapter's end must be discounted from *Irenæus*, his Defence will be lamed and made imperfect.

2. *Irenæus*, lib. iv. cap. 37. which is not denied to be genuine, has in Substance much the same Doctrine with that in this controverted Place. For, says he there, " *Christ* was to be freed, or delivered in

“ *Egypt*, that is, among the *Gentiles*, and to sanctify those who there were Infants, of whom he also completed his Church.\*” The Deliverance in *Egypt* I understand to be from *Herod’s* Persecution. If Infants *Christ* sanctify’d, and of them among others completed or perfected his Church; those Infants must be baptized, or intended to be, because the Christian Church is never constituted of unbaptized Persons. Also a Phrase used in that disputed Place, is, I think, peculiar to *Irenæus*, and used by no other that I know of, concerning *Christ* in that Sense. And the Phrase I mean is this; “ *Christ* came thro’ every Age.” But we have it in him again, *Lib. iii. cap. 20.* towards the end: “ *Christ* came thro’ every Age, restoring to all People that Communion which is with God †.” This necessarily supposes that Communion to be once lost by Persons of every Age; which in Infants could be done no otherwise than by the Transgression of their first Parents. And if to those of every Age *Christ* restored their lost Communion with God, it must be, according to *Irenæus*, by their Regeneration and Sanctification, the Importance of which Words is shewed before. And indeed, let heterodox Teachers imagine what they please, the Scripture acknowledges no other way of restoring Sinners to the Divine Fellowship and Communion. However, this Consonancy between the Passages vindicates them all equally to *Irenæus*, and bespeaks him to be their Author. But farther,

3. That this Calculation of our Lord’s Age belongs of right to him, notwithstanding its being wrong and erroneous, may be well received, if it

\* *Christus*—habebat—liberari in *Ægypto*, id est, gentibus, & sanctificare eos, qui ibi erant infantes, unde & ecclesiam sibi perfecit. *Iren. lib. iv. cap. 37.*

† Quapropter (*Christus*) per omnem venit ætatem, omnibus restituens eam, quæ est ad Deum, communionem. *Ib. lib. iii. cap. 20.*



be considered how liable he was to trip and falter through the Misguidance of other Men. For Matters that were far more absurd, he took upon Trust from lesser Authority, and being through Conscioufness of his own Integrity too credulous towards them, he delivered them to the World for Truths, as he himself really conceived them to be. Hereof I shall give but one remarkable Instance from *Lib. v. cap. 33.* Which, because I cannot find it in my Edition, I profess to borrow it from Dr. *Whitby's* Treatise of the *Millennium* at the End of his *Annotations on the New Testament*, pag. 673, 674. and shall also follow his Translation.

The Passage I shall relate, *Irenæus* says, was deliver'd by the Seniors or Presbyters, who had heard them from St. *John* the Disciple of our Lord, according as our Lord had taught and declared of those Times, that is, of the *Millennium*. And thus it stands :

“ The Days shall come in which there shall be  
“ Vines, which shall severally have ten thousand  
“ Branches, and every of these Branches shall have  
“ ten thousand lesser Branches, and every of these  
“ Branches shall have ten thousand Twigs, and eve-  
“ ry one of these Twigs shall have ten thousand  
“ Clusters of Grapes, and in every one of these  
“ Clusters shall be ten thousand Grapes, and every  
“ one of these Grapes being pressed shall yield twen-  
“ ty-five *Metreta's* (that is, according to the mildest  
“ Computation, 275 Gallons) of Wine ; and when  
“ one shall take hold of one of these sacred Bunches  
“ or rather when one of the Saints shall take hold of  
“ one of those Bunches, another shall cry out, I am  
“ a better Bunch, take me, and by me bless the  
“ Lord \*.” To

\* *Quemadmodum Presbyteri meminerunt, qui Johannem discipulum Domini viderunt, audisse de eo, quemadmodum de temporibus illis docebat Dominus, & dicebat : Venient dies in quibus vineæ nascentur singulæ decem millia palmitum habentes, & in uno*

To omit, says the Doctor, what he says from the same Tradition, of every Grain of Wheat, and of Apples, Seed, and Herbs. And then, by way of Reflection, he asks, Now can any Man be so really bereft of Sense, as to imagine this Stuff could ever come out of the Mouth of an Apostle?

This is the Narrative of *Irenæus*, upon which I shall content my self to propose one Question. Of what an exorbitant Size and Bulk must People be in that chimerical State of the *Millennium*, when a single Person shall be able to grasp and gather a Bunch of Grapes, containing in it about forty thousand Hog-heads of Juice? But I shall dismiss it with the following Remark, which alone is to my Purpose.

✓ He that will allow *Irenæus* could believe and publish such an absurd, romantic, and incredible Story as this is, with others of the like Nature, on the bare Relation of the *Asian* Seniors, without the least Umbrage of holy Writ to give it Countenance; must be strangely prejudiced, or rather intoxicated, if he will not allow *Irenæus* might also believe and publish a wrong Computation of our Saviour's Age on the same Authority; especially when he thought it was likewise supported and warranted by a Text of Scripture, on which he also grounds his Reckoning, and frames his Argument. This blunts the Edge of *Dr. Gale's* Objection, takes off its whole Force, and may boldly look Partiality itself in the Face; and consequently, in spite of Unreasonableness, it will assert the Place, which contains that wrong Computation, to *Irenæus* for its true and genuine Author.

palmitē dena millia brachiorum, & in uno vero palmitē (brachio forsitan) dena millia flagellorum, & in unoquoque flagello dena millia botruum, & in unoquoque botru dena millia acinorum, & unumquodque acinum expressum dabit viginti quinque metretas vini; & cum eorum apprehenderit aliquis Sanctorum botrum, alius clamabit botrus, Ego melior sum, me fume, & per me Dominum benedic. *Iren. lib. v. cap. 33.*

4. After all should we suppose without and against Reason, the latter End of this 39<sup>th</sup> Chapter of *Irenæus's* second Book were to be discharged as spurious, for the gross Error it contains about our Saviour's Age; yet what Advantage can the *Anti-pædobaptists* gain thereby, unless we will also discharge all the largest Part of the Chapter, and when it has no such Fault, make it suffer for the Sake of the latter Part? In my Edition the whole Chapter takes up about a Side and half in Folio; but the false Account of our Lord's Age does not begin till within six Lines of the End; from whence reckoning upwards to the Beginning of our Quotation for Infant Baptism, there are between both about 27 Lines. Wherefore if in the Case there was any Fourberie, why might not the Fourbe begin his Imposture a great way lower, and so the Quotation will be still left to us and *Irenæus*? Then will there be no Rub at all in our way, except that the Author soon after says, that our Lord became a Senior to sanctify Seniors. But the Account of Seniority, stating it at the Age of Forty and upwards, is also near the Chapter's End; and so might be fairly left to the supposed Impostor, and the true *Irenæus* be allowed to fix the beginning of Seniority about the Age of Thirty; which was at farthest the Age wherein the *Aaronical* Priests actually entered on their full Office, to offer Sacrifices, burn Incense, and teach the Law; and in conformity thereunto that was the Age of *Christ*, when he was baptized, and began to teach. And thus our Quotation will be safe enough, without charging that erroneous Calculation on *Irenæus*.

Accordingly *Baronius* was content to have the Close of the Chapter alone expunged, because there alone the Grounds of his Exceptions lay; but Dr. *Gale* without any manner of Reason, but to serve his Cause, must begin his expunging Work a great deal higher, even above the Middle of the Chapter, or else

no Advantage will accrue to his Plea against Infant Baptism; and therefore has he performed nothing with his laborious Essays on this Head, unless he could justify his Design, by proving Forgery also on that middle Part by new Arguments, which the old ones do not in the least affect; and as he has not attempted that, so I am sure it can never be done. Yet to shew his Shift and Cunning, he talks all along as if he would have us believe the Cardinal and he drove exactly at the same End, and were here agreed in every Punctilio; which looks too much like the conscientious Juggling of some sanctified People, to maintain an Hypothesis at any rate, though it can never relish with Men of moral Honesty. And so I trust enough is said to vindicate *Irenæus*, and assert his Authority for Infant Baptism.

But before I quit this holy Father, I am obliged to exchange a few Words more with Dr. *Gale*, who goes about by a reflex and indirect Method to invalidate the Evidence of the first Fathers. For, says he, *Let. XII. p. 465.* "If *Irenæus* was guilty of  
 " so palpable a Contradiction, he must have been  
 " strangely inconsiderate, and not to be trusted in  
 " any Case; and then his Testimony, though ever  
 " so full, is justly contemn'd." And again, *p. 467.*  
 " If the Fathers by Reasoning, or any other Way,  
 " mistake and assert what is in Fact false, their  
 " Testimony can't be relied on even as to Facts." The Doctor being still on the Subject of Infant Baptism, the Application to be made, or the Conclusion to be inferred from these Observations, is thus to be understood. Since the Fathers could admit palpable Self-contradictions, and relate false Matters of Fact, their Credit is entirely forfeited; and then let them declare ever so fully and clearly in Favour of Infant Baptism, as practised and approved in their Days, their Testimony deserves not the least Regard,

From

From Self-contradiction I am sure *Irenæus* is fully vindicated; but as for Parachronisms and Errors in Computations of Time and Ages, I can freely grant the Fathers to be none of the best Calculators or Chronologers. Neither must we depend very much on their Skill in Geography, lest we should give into the enormous Blunder of *Epiphanius*, who ran the River *Gibon* through *Egypt*, *Libya*, and all *Africa*, and at last must mount it over the Streights of *Gibraltar*, to disembogue at *Cadiz*. For those holy Men neglecting the Refinements of polite Learning now in Use, apply'd their Minds to other Studies, which they judg'd more necessary and important. Be it therefore allowed, that *Irenæus* was strangely out in representing the Age of our blessed Lord, it was in a Transaction that past I think seventy Years at least before he was born, and seventy Years more before he wrote; into which also he did not examine so accurately as was requisite, but took it upon Trust, and a mistaken Text of Scripture; will it then follow, that he and other Fathers near his Time, could be mistaken in Facts daily and publicly transacted before their Eyes, and that their Testimony in them must be of no Validity? Baptisms were continually solemniz'd in the Face of the Church, the Fathers themselves being frequently, if not chiefly, concerned in their Administration. If therefore they could but understand the Difference between Infants and adult Persons, they must needs know whether Infants were baptized or not in their Days; and should I add a Century upwards to the Apostolical Age, it would not be unreasonable, unless we take them for mere Ignorants: And also if, as the Doctor says, honest and faithful Men they were, they would never write Untruths concerning Facts they knew; neither durst they do it, if they had any Shame or Circumspection, because every  
Body

Body then alive might easily discover and expose their Falshoods.

Dr. *Gale's* Consequence is therefore this; *Irenæus* and *Tertullian*, to name no more, were grossly mistaken in our Saviour's Age, a Fact that passed about one hundred and fifty Years before they wrote; therefore might they be mistaken also in a Fact of Moment, which they saw constantly and openly transacted with their own Eyes, and in which they themselves were Agents very often, so that in this they deserve no Credit. Here is the Doctor's Logic, and if it be admitted for good, I will never offer to maintain an Argument more with any body, but let him affirm that Snow is black, from me he shall have no Opposition.

And yet has the Doctor barred himself of all Benefit, even from this Consequence, had it any Force, unless he would recal his own Words, that they may not rise up in Judgment against him. For, says he, *Let. XI. p. 396.* "That the Fathers  
 " of the first Churches were honest, faithful Men,  
 " and every way capable to acquaint us with the  
 " true Posture of Affairs in their own Churches  
 " and Times, and therefore are to be depended on  
 " as far as they relate Facts within their proper  
 " Cognifance, must be granted on all Hands." And again, *p. 399.* "he grants it impossible they  
 " should be so early ignorant of the Apostles Pra-  
 " ctice, or vary from it, in so notorious an Affair  
 " as that of Baptism: So that the Issue of the Cause  
 " lies entirely on the Practice of the Primitive  
 " Church in those earliest Times; and the Cause  
 " must be yielded, if it can be proved by authen-  
 " tick Pieces of those Fathers, that the Church did  
 " then use Infant Baptism." This is as ample as we can desire, if the Doctor's Party will stand to his Words; and so between the certain Knowledge, and the honest Fidelity of the first Fathers, we are perfectly

fectly safe at last from being imposed upon in their relating Facts about Baptism, as it was then used from the Apostles Days; and if testify they do that Infants were baptized in those Times, the Cause is yielded to us.

*Irenæus* in this Debate shall be succeeded by *Origen*, who wrote a vast deal in the beginning and middle of the third Century; and whose extraordinary Qualifications for Knowledge and Learning have been never question'd; and as no Man in his Time better knew the Truth of Fact, so his Testimony for the Apostolical Practice of Infant Baptism, is in itself most plain and unexceptionable. And admitting him yet to be the Author, thus it stands in his Commentary on *Rom. Lib. 5.* "The Church received from the Apostles a Tradition of giving Baptism even to Infants\*."

Against which it is strongly objected, that we have only a Translation of that Commentary by *Ruffinus*; and that but a very uncorrect, loose, and unfaithful one, while *Ruffinus* by his own Confession took the Liberty of adding to the Original, and leaving out what he pleased; and his Interpolations were so many, that we know not when we read *Origen*, or when *Ruffinus*: Of which great Complaints have been made by the learned World, whose Authorities are produced for a more abundant Proof.

When disapprov'd Writers lie in some measure obnoxious, Men of Spirit and Animosity never spare to pour out whole Volumes of Censures and Reproaches upon them, and take care to blacken them without Mercy, utterly to ruin their Reputation; and

\* Itaque Ecclesia ab Apostolis traditionem accepit, etiam parvulis dare baptismum. Orig: in Rom. Lib. 5. Note, that in *Origen*, who died Anno Dom. 254. there are two very plain and pregnant Evidences more for Infant Baptism. One Homil. 4. on Luke; and another Homil. 8. on Levit. affirming it in the last to be the Church's Custom.

since I take this to be the hard Fate of *Ruffinus* in particular, I shall before all venture a Touch upon his Character; to give unto which the better Countenance, I shall borrow it entirely from Dr. *Cosins*, Dean of *Peterborough*, and afterwards Bishop of *Durham*, in his *Scholastical History of the Canon of the Scripture*, Chap. 6. N<sup>o</sup> 74. where he cites his Authors for what he says in their own Words at large, but gives this summary Abridgment of their Sense.

“ To St. *Jerome* we may add his ancient and entirely beloved Friend (though afterward his open and professed Adversary) *Ruffinus*; a Man, when Time was, even in St. *Jerome*'s own Account, eminent both for Sanctity and Learning, and not only made equal to him by St. *Augustin*, (who endeavoured to renew their Friendship) but in divers Respects likewise preferred before him by *Gennadius*, who lived not long after them both.” Here is that *Ruffinus*, most shamefully scoundrell'd now-a-days, because he agrees not to all Mens Taste, and because Revilings have been too profusely lavished upon him by his bitter Enemy St. *Jerome*, who was never sparing of his Satyrs when disgusted; though *Ruffinus* in his own Case justly retorted upon him, that he did it thro' Emulation. But to the Objection I return these Answers:

1. Tho' *Ruffinus* took his Liberty in translating *Origen* on the *Romans*, yet can it not be reasonably supposed, but he left as much of *Origen*'s remain in that Commentary, as he inserted of his own. Dr. *Gale* indeed would fain persuade us, that there is more of *Ruffin*'s Additions in that Piece than of the Original; “ For some advised him to entitle it by his own Name, he had added so much of his own unto it, and *Ruffin* does not deny the Charge.” *Let. XIII. p. 526, 527.* We shall perceive whether he does or no, or how far he admits it, by *Ruffin*'s Answer to the Charge, which translated by me, and  
not



not by the Doctor, who could hardly translate any thing without a little artful Turn and Slight of Hand, runs thus Word by Word. “ But I who  
“ have more Regard to my Conscience than to my  
“ Name, though I seem to add some Things, and  
“ supply what are wanting, and shorten what are  
“ long, do not think it right to steal his Title,  
“ who laid the Foundation of the Work, and fur-  
“ nished Materials to erect the Structure.”

Observe it, he grants no more than that he seem'd to add some things, to supply what was wanting, and therefore made it a Point of Conscience not to do wrong by stealing a Title from him, who not only laid the Foundation, but also furnished the Materials for the Building: And was adding, or rather seeming to add some Things, adding the greatest Part? Or if he added this, how could he steal a Title when it was his Due, and he had a better Right to it than *Origen* had, and make it a Case of Conscience not to steal it? And if *Origen* furnish'd the Materials, what need *Ruffin* furnish any of his own, and add new ones, when his only Business was to manage or improve the old, and set them as he thought in better Order? For the Addition of a new Sentence or Doctrine, which was not in before, to assert the Apostolical Tradition of Infant Baptism, was the adding of a very considerable and important Material; and how could *Ruffin* think the Omission of that was a Defect in *Origen*, that ought to be supply'd, if it was a notorious Falshood, and utterly disagreeable to the Judgment and Usage of the Church in *Origen's* Time? Certainly a most unaccountable Way of supplying Deficiencies by filling them up with downright Untruths, which do make themselves the foulest Flaws and Blemishes in any Piece, and for which the Doer must deserve and expect the severest Correction from Men of Probity and Understanding.

Moreover,

Moreover, says the Doctor, that Commentary was miserably interpolated before *Ruffin* took it in hand, as he complains in the Preface. I really know not how to take any Thing barely on the Doctor's Word, and *Ruffin* I have not to consult; else in him I might probably find more Light to give this Difficulty a better Solution than now is in my Power. Might I go on Guesſes and Probabilities, I would say, 'tis not likely there were no correct Copies of *Origen* extant in *Ruffin*'s Time, but all interpolated in so short a Space; nor is it probable the Interpolator would father on *Origen* such a gross Falshood concerning Infant Baptism, if one it was, that might be so easily detected by all People of common Sense; nor can it be imagined what Inducement he could have to insert such a Sentence: Or if he should, *Ruffin* had a more distinguishing Judgment than to take it from his Hand, and pass upon the World such a palpable Untruth under *Origen*'s Name: For he could not be ignorant whether that Apostolical Tradition had run current in the Christian Church for Fact or not; and then if he knew it to be false, he would not join with an Impostor to put such a pernicious Cheat on Mankind, if he had a Grain of Honesty.

But waving farther Conjectures where I am in the Dark, what I would only infer on this Topic is, that since there is as much, and I believe a great deal more of *Origen*'s than of the Translator's in this Commentary, 'tis more than an equal Probability, that the Assèveration of an Apostolical Tradition for baptizing Infants, belongs to *Origen*, and not to *Ruffin*, or any Body else; nor is there any Reason for its absolute Rejection, besides Affection to a Cause. For nothing at all is alledged to prove it an Interpolation from Bias or Interest in the Translator, from its Repugnancy with the Church's Doctrine and Practice in *Origen*'s Time, nor from any other

other Indication or Token of Forgery; but the Objection is founded almost alone on the Liberty *Ruffin* is said to use in this Translation; by virtue whereof every Thing else in this Commentary may be entirely cry'd off as well as this Sentence; so that hitherto the Scale at least hangs even on our Side.

2. In this controverted Testimony of *Origen*, there is nothing odd or singular; but it has other Evidences to corroborate it, and it fairly agrees with the Sentiments of the Christian Church in those Days. *St. Cyprian* very closely followed *Origen* in Point of Time, if they did not for some while live and write together; and certain it is that *Cyprian* and his *African* Bishops were strong for Infant Baptism, and I hope to make it appear hereafter, that the Universal Church in those Days concurr'd herein with that of *Africa*. Towards the End of the next Century following, the same Opinion prevail'd every where, and Infant Baptism without any Contradiction, was believed and declared to be the primitive and general Practice of the Church from the Apostles Times; in which *St. Jerome*, *St. Austin*, the *Pelagians*, and, for ought appears, every living Soul, or very near, were entirely agreed; and hard it must be to charge Dishonesty, or gross Ignorance upon them all. Is it any Wonder then that *Origen* should be of the same Mind? Or why should his Testimony be refused, or impleaded of Forgery, seeing he testified nothing but what the Church in his Time, and in the Age next following, believed and testified also? I doubt Partiality reigns to Perfection in such a Conduct.

3. What I shall now observe ought in Reason to put the Matter clean out of Dispute; and I take the Observation from that learned and judicious Prelate *Dr. Bull*, whose Words are these; “ In translating  
“ most of *Origen's* Books, 'tis certain that *Ruffinus*  
“ added many Things of his own; but as often as  
“ he

“ he used that Liberty, he gave express Notice of  
 “ it to his Reader, as it became an honest Man and  
 “ Lover of Truth to do\*.” And moreover he refers to the Places where *Ruffin* made this Profession; † one of which is in his Peroration to this very Commentary, where he could not so soon forget himself, and neglect his Engagement in an Article of so great Consequence as that Apostolical Tradition is without great Unfaithfulness.

Having not *Ruffin* at my Command, nor knowing where to find him in this Neighbourhood; I wrote to my worthy old Friend at *London*, the Reverend Mr. *Worden*, Schoolmaster of *St. Martin's*, desiring him to search, if *Ruffin* in the Place had given his Reader the foresaid Notice and Admonition, that he himself had added the Sentence in Debate to *Origen*; and Mr. *Worden* returned me Answer, that *Ruffin* is not in that Library, but he would make diligent Enquiry for him among the Bookfellers. But I saved him that farther Trouble as needless, because I am certain that if any such Notice had been there given, to shew that Sentence was *Ruffin's* Addition, it would have been before this Time alledged by Dr. *Gale*, or some other Hand, to give a final Decision to this particular Controversy; for we must never more cite *Origen* for our Author concerning that Tradition.

Now the Averment of Infant Baptism for an Apostolical Doctrine or Tradition, being a most material and momentous Point in this Controversy, never could it be more necessary for *Ruffin* to admonish

\* In vertendis quidem plerisque Origenis libris multa de suo addidisse Ruffinum constat; sed quotiescunque eâ libertate usus fuerit, de eo Lectorem suum, prout hominem probum & veri amantem decuit, ipse expressè monuit. Bull. Defens. fid. Nic. Sect. 2. Cap. 9. § 20.

† Vide Ruffin. Præf. in lib. *περὶ ἀρχαῶν*. & Peror. ad Comment. Origenis in Epist. ad Roman.

his Reader of any Thing, than of his own inserting those Words into *Origen*, in case he had done it, to discharge his Obligation and Engagement. But since he gave no such Notice there, we may be well assured he found that Passage in the Original, and it does therefore challenge *Origen* for its Author.

This then is an Evidence that will pass in Court, and be taken by all impartial Judges, when the Deponent's Credit is not forfeited by former Dishonesty and Prevarications; of which scandalous Practices *Ruffin* cannot be accused, but he bore in his Time a very bright Character of Sanctity and Learning, and had ample Testimonials of it among his Contemporaries and others, one virulent Adversary with his Adherents excepted, who, when disobliged or opposed, was always free in his keen Invectives; and yet in all his Discoveries of *Ruffin's* Faults, he never charged him with the gross Interpolation of *Origen* in the Place before us now. Upon all which Premises, I dare boldly assert *Origen* for a full and express Witness on our Side, and do claim him as the true Author, who in the clearest Terms imaginable has affirm'd, that the Church received a Tradition from the Apostles, of administering Baptism even unto Infants.

With these two *Greek* Fathers I shall tally two more of the *Latin* Church, and these are *Tertullian* and *St. Cyprian*, the one flourishing in the Close of the second Century, and the other about the Middle of the third. *Tertullian* is a favourite Author with our Antagonists, because he is thought to speak on their Side against baptizing Infants; but I hope to abate something of their Fondness towards him, if not put them quite out of Conceit with their presumed Friend: For as they have laboured hard, and tugged with might and main to run him clean out of his Wits, by forcing him to speak what he never did, and never intended; so will I undertake

to do him that Piece of good Service, as to restore him to himself and his sober Senses.

The Place in him supposed to condemn the Baptism of Infants, is in *Lib. de Bapt. Cap. 8.* rendered into *English* in my Book, p. 138, 139. When the Words are carefully considered, whose Indignation would it not raise, to hear Dr. Gale making this Declaration upon them? “*Tertullian* plainly opposes the Baptism of Infants, because they are incapable of that Sacrament, and because they have no Need of it, and it ought not to be administered to them; and that he makes it therefore useless and unlawful to baptize Infants.” *Let. XIII. p. 512.* These are Words put into *Tertullian’s* Mouth, when the Notions of them never came into his Head, as here they are represented: For persuaded I am he allowed both the Lawfulness and Usefulness of baptizing Infants, as I trust to make it appear in Time, though there must some certain Preludes be first used.

For *Tertullian* only advances prudential Considerations, not against Infants Baptism itself, but against the over-hasty Administration of it to them; I suppose he means where there is no Necessity from the Danger of Death; and no less Reason he affirms to be for delaying Baptism to adult, unmarried Persons: Nor does he affirm Infants to be incapable of Baptism, except in a qualified Sense, or comparatively with others; and is content to propose no more than a limited Inexpediency of hastening their Baptism, with a conceived Danger also to the Sureties. Nay, he admits of a Scriptural Command for Infant Baptism, as good and pertinent, though he advises the Delay of its Execution.

But when he presses the greater Expediency of deferring the Baptism of Infants, than of hastening its Administration, and assigns his Reasons, this must necessarily suppose and agnize their Baptism to be  
then

then in Use; else had he no Occasion to interpose his own Opinion against the Precipitation of it; for vain and needless it utterly is to dispute against Things that are unknown, and no where practised. It was the Custom of administering Baptism too hastily, as he conceived, to some adult Persons, that induced him to plead against it, and it could be nothing but the like Custom that induced him to put in his Cautions against the over-hasty baptizing of little Children; for of the same Conduct, and in the same Case, the same Account is to be given. Hereunto we may therefore accommodate the Rule, which he himself has fix'd for a Standard in another Place: "When Enquiry is made, why any thing  
" is observed or practised, manifest it is in the mean  
" while that that very Thing is observed \*." Manifest then it must likewise be, that Infants in his Time used to be baptized, when he enquires into the Practice, and gives Reasons against the hastening of their Baptism. But if he was utterly against their Baptism, it was not then the Precipitation of it, but the very Administration of it at all to them, which he ought to have impleaded; whereas now he passes that Administration without a Word objected, and only argues against the Manner of doing it over-hastily, in his Opinion.

Yet nothing will stick with Dr. *Gale*, but he roundly affirms, "That at most this Place of *Tertullian* only proves, there were some Persons at that Time, who among many other wild Notions, were about to introduce this of the Necessity of Baptism to the Salvation of Infants, and not that it was the Opinion of the Church, or that they practised Infant Baptism." *Let. XIII. p. 510.*

Is that the Thing which it really proves at most?

\* Porro cum quæritur, cur quid observatur, observari interim constat. *Tert. Lib. de Coronâ, Cap. 2.*

Does *Tertullian* in that Place, or in all the Book, mention any of those many wild Notions some were about to introduce; or give us the least Hint of their introducing the Baptism of Infants as necessary to their Salvation, among those wild Notions? I can assure the Reader, that this is all pure Invention in the Doctor, and a mere Dream of his Imagination. For being mov'd by his Positiveness in the Case, I took the pains to read over *Tertullian's* whole Book of Baptism with this particular View, of finding out what Ground the Doctor had for this Observation; and if there be a Syllable there (or any where else in that Father's Works, as I believe,) that gives the least Umbrage for such Remarks, I dare venture to give any Man leave to cut off my Head. Let who will read, see, and consider, as I have done, and then believe his own Eyes.

One indeed we may meet with, *cap*, 13. who asserts the Necessity of Baptism. But who is the Man? He is *Tertullian's* own self, that asserts it against some execrable Persons (*sceleratissimi* he terms them) who said Baptism was not necessary, because Faith alone was sufficient; and they thought to prove it by this wise Anabaptistical Argument, "That *Abraham* pleased God without the Sacrament of any Water, but that of Faith." Of these two Parties the *Baptists* may take their choice, and make the most they can of either for their own Interest. Now if *Dr. Gale* intended to pass his Remarks for a Gloss and Descant upon *Tertullian*, it was a Comment without a Text; or only for his own Surmise, it was an Imposition, and not *Tertullian*, but he himself must be then our Author; tho' we cannot grant his Authority to be great enough to forge and coin for us antient History.

The Doctor undertook to put Topics in *Tertullian's* Head, and teach him how to argue more nervously, on Supposition our Tenet was true, that the Church,



Church practis'd Infant Baptism from the Apostles Days. There I turn'd his Artillery against himself, and shew'd how vain and unserviceable his Method was, by the Advantage *Tertullian* gave us in advising the Delay of Baptism, not only to Infants, but to such grown Persons also, as it was certainly the Church's Custom to baptize from the Apostles time. But now to be more than even with the Doctor, upon Supposition his Opinion is right, and Infant Baptism was then an upstart Notion, that attempted only to creep into the Church, by the Endeavours of a few wild Innovators, as we are now told; I shall undertake in my turn to teach the World how such a smart Opponent as *Tertullian* was, should have fram'd his Defence against their Attempt with much more Strength and Pertinence than he has done.

For he should have told them plainly, That it was a new, rash, and audacious Enterprize, flatly against our Lord's Commission and other Laws of administering Baptism, and against the Apostles Rules and Practice, who baptized none but adult, faithful, and penitent Persons; that it was never the Church's Usage in former times to baptize Infants; that it perfectly changed the true Subjects of Baptism, and prostituted this holy Sacrament, by giving it to those who were as utterly incapable of it and its blessed Effects as brute Animals; that it would introduce an intire Nullity into that sacred Ordinance, by substituting in its room a Mock-Baptism, which would make none but Sham-Subjects in *Christ's* Kingdom instead of real Christians; and that if it should prevail, it would soon unchurch the whole Family of *Jesus Christ*, and leave it neither Orders, Ministry, nor Christian Institutions. Were our Adversaries Sentiments true in *Tertullian's* Judgment, these and the like were such dead Strokes as would easily have overwhelmed the wild Novellists, and so have crush'd the Cockatrice in the Shell.

But to argue only as he has done, from nothing but the presum'd Danger and Inconveniency of hastening Infants Baptism, when he had store of dreadful Ammunition ready at hand, was nothing better than to dodge and dally, to fight Prizes and play Booty, and thereby betray a Cause of the highest Importance. None that has ever looked into *Tertullian*, can pretend that he wanted Will, Spirit, or Ability to push his Arguments home, and deny that he did not rather out-run his Tally, and over-shoot the Mark, than fall short of his Scope and Level. And therefore in all Probability, it could be nothing but his Conscioufness of the Church's primitive and universal Practice in baptizing Infants, that render'd him so very tame and tender in his seeming Opposition to the Practice. To confirm which, I shall draw more closely to his Words.

In order to understand *Tertullian's* Mind, some Use may be made of the Question he asks, "What need is there to run the Sponsors into danger\*?" I need not say that by Sponsors he means the Sureties or Undertakers that were admitted to answer and engage for Infants at their Baptism; but if this was a very late Innovation, and wild Notion, which some whimsical Persons were just then only endeavouring to introduce, how could *Tertullian* know any thing at all of those Sponsors; especially know that they were necessary for the Administration of Baptism unto Infants? One would think by his Question, that Sponsors were very usual and customary; and if they were, the Baptisms of Infants, to which they were applied, must be usual and customary too. For the requiring of Sponsors was an Appendage to Baptism intirely arbitrary in itself, neither arising from the Nature of the Ordinance, nor from the Gospel Laws, nor any Rule or Practice of the Church in Baptisms

\* Quid enim necesse est Sponsors etiam periculo ingeri? *Tertul. loco prædicto.*

of the Adult, that we can find. If therefore it was not commonly admitted in baptizing Infants, I cannot see how it came into *Tertullian's* Thoughts, unless by mere Fancy and Conjecture, nor what Occasion he had to mention it, since it needed not at all be used, except it had been the Law and Practice in the Case sometime before. We know many in these Days who baptize Infants without any Sureties besides the Parents, who are not meant by *Tertullian* here, as I suppose will be granted me without Proof. Now such Ceremonies and Appendages as are not necessary, nor result from their Nature, are seldom or never added to human Ordinances at their first Institution, but are the Products of Time, Thought, and Contrivance. And therefore if Infant-Baptism was such a late Ordinance, nay, only the present Attempt of a few Innovators, 'tis most likely it would appear without Sponsors, and *Tertullian* could know nothing at all of that Matter, unless by mere Conceit and Imagination: Whence it may be very probably inferr'd, that the Baptism of Infants was somewhat usual at that time, and of considerable standing, seeing it had that known Appendage.

But passing this over as no more than a Probability, I shall apply myself to enquire into *Tertullian's* right Meaning, and then, if we will take his Words in the true, proper, and grammatical Construction, I will engage we shall hear him speak, not against, but in favour of Infant-Baptism. And to proceed methodically in this Enquiry for Perspicuity sake, I shall,

1. Set down what was the End and Design he drove at in this whole Chapter; and by reading it over with the least Attention, we may presently perceive it was to advise or persuade the Delay of Baptism to all Persons whatsoever, whether young or old, whom in general he equally comprehends in that Advice. And tho' he does not so express himself,

yet I will freely grant he might intentionally exempt those that were arriv'd to the Declension of their Age, and married Persons from that general Rule. For he enters upon it with this comprehensive and peremptory Sentence: "But that Baptism is not to be rashly entrusted, they may or ought to know whose Duty it is\*." Then removing one Objection against his Advice, he proposes two more in the Instances of *Philip's* baptizing the Eunuch, and *Ananias Paul* without Delay; to which his Ingenuity furnished him with substantial Answers, there being something extraordinary in both those Cases. But had the immediate Baptisms of three thousand Persons, *Acts* ii. and those of the City of *Samaria* by the same *Philip*, *Acts* viii. with several others, upon their present Conversions, been objected to him, I believe they would have baffled all his Skill and Scope also. Into the Omission of these Instances, and the Solidity of his Reasons for deferring Baptism, I need not examine, since he insisted on the Delay of it to all Persons in general, as well as to Infants in particular.

2. In this Advice we are farther to consider the Sense and Import of his Expressions, with the Application of them to all the Persons they were intended for: And this is the general Rule he sets and fixes for the Administration of Baptism to them all; "Therefore according to the Condition and Disposition of every Person, and his Age also, the Delay of Baptism is more profitable, and especially yet in the Case of Infants †." And then he assigns his Reasons for this Peculiarity in their Case. So his Design in this Rule was plainly to shew the Delay of Baptism in all Persons, according to their

\* Cæterum, baptismum non temerè credendum esse, sciant quorum officium est. *Tertull. ibid.*

† Itaque pro cujusque personæ conditione ac dispositione, etiam ætate, cunctatio baptismi utilior est; præcipuè tamen circa parvulos. *Ibid.*

various Circumstances, was more useful, profitable, and expedient, than the hastning of it.

Here in the Phrase, *utilior est cunctatio baptismi*; *the Delay of Baptism is more useful or profitable*; only the comparative Degree is used, which in speaking of the same Subject or Subjects, does not exclude, but include the positive; else we compare something with nothing, which tho' true, yet is highly improper and impertinent. For should we say, *St. Paul* was a better Christian after his Conversion than he was before, we should say the Truth indeed, but the Comparison would be idle, if not ridiculous, because before, he was no Christian at all. But if by reason of Improvement and Proficiency we should say, he was a better Christian ten Years, than two or three Years after his Conversion, the Saying would be true, and the Comparison proper, and would include also the positive Degree of his being a good Christian, yea, very good, within those two or three Years. When *St. Paul* himself says of some Persons; If they remain unmarried, *they do better*; he does by no means deny that they who marry *do well*, but affirms it clearly, *1 Cor. vii. 38.* In like manner, he that says an Ell is longer than a Yard, or a Pound is heavier than an Ounce, neither denies Length to the Yard, nor Weight to the Ounce, but must needs imply and allow both, and only affirms a Difference of Degrees in the Length and Weight. More Instances for Illustration are entirely needless; but I hope the Reader will pardon these, because in dealing with Cavillers we must be full and plain, and leave no room, if possible, for Exceptions and Evasions. When therefore *Tertulian*, in point of Profit prefers the Delay of Baptism to Infants among other Persons of Maturity in Years, before the hasty Administration of it, how does he by that Preference in the Comparison, deny their Baptism to be at all profitable; and not rather acknowledge its Profitableness in some degree, tho'

not

not equally with the Delay? Should he really mean by that Comparifon what Dr. *Gale* puts upon him to this effect; To defer the Baptifm of Infants is more expedient than to give them a Baptifm of which they are utterly incapable, and which is altogether ufelefs and unlawful; would not the Father make a notable Difcovery? And if every where he fpoke fuch Oracles and pithy Sentences, fhould we not be wonderfully edified by his fage Inftuctions?

All therefore that *Tertullian* can mean in the aforefaid Words, according to Propriety of Speech, and true Grammatical Conftitution, amounts to this, and no more; That to put off the Baptifm of Infants, and of adult Perfons too in moft Cafes, is more expedient than to precipitate their Baptifm. He fpecifies indeed fome particular Reafons for the Delay of baptizing Infants more than others; but that only imports Odds in the Degrees of Expediency, accompanying that Delay; but does in no wife imply a perfect Inexpediency in baptizing Infants, but the contrary. Nay, he fays moreover, alledging his Reafons for it alfo, That the Baptifm of adult Perfons, whom he there nominates, is alfo to be deferred for no lefs Reason than that of Infants; and fo makes both their Cafes by thofe general Exprefions to run parallel.

3. We must keep in Mind the Application of his Advice, as made by himfelf; for he gives and applies the fame Rule for the Delay of Baptifm to Perfons of every Condition, Difpofition, and Age, without any exprefs Exceptions, whatever he might intend. Did he then affirm it to be wholly ufelefs, much lefs unlawful, to give speedy Baptifm to any of thofe Perfons? If it be faid he did, he was no great Friend to that facred Ordinance, and foully reflected on the Conduct of our Lord's Apoftles, who ufed to give prefent Baptifm to their fresh Converts. But if he did not, then it muft follow, that when he ufes the very fame Exprefions concerning  
the

the Delay of Baptism to adult Persons, as he does in the Case of Infants, only enforcing the latter with some special Reasons, he must in the main mean one and the same thing in both Cases. Why then is he so understood, as to make it wholly unprofitable, and unlawful too, to baptize Infants, when he applies the same Terms concerning the Delay of Baptism to adult Persons, as he does to that of Infants? For such a Distinction as he himself neither makes nor admits there can be no Reason, besides the Caprice and Humour of some People, who are resolved to have their Will, because they are enslaved to an Hypothesis.

Should any body have asked *Tertullian* on the Point; Because you hold it more profitable to defer the Baptism of adult Persons than to hasten it, do you therefore believe it utterly unprofitable or unlawful to give them at all present Baptism? Surely *Tertullian* would have answer'd negatively, and own'd that he did not. Then is it an undeniable Consequence, that he thought their present Baptism in some degree and at some times, to be both lawful and expedient. Wherefore had the same Question been put unto him concerning the Baptism of Infants, he must have answer'd in the same manner, if he would speak consistently with himself and Words. This is the necessary Result in the Case; nor can it possibly be avoided, except something more can be deduced from his particular Reasons against the speedy baptizing of Infants; which yet, when they are thoroughly weigh'd and discuss'd, can import no such thing as an absolute Unlawfulness or Inexpediency in the Case: But I think it no hard Matter fully to take off the Force of those Reasons.

And now at last having deduced and settled *Tertullian's* true Sense, agreeably to his main Design in this Chapter, and to the proper and grammatical Construction of his Words, and likewise to his own  
Application

Application of them, the whole will come to this Issue, and no more: Tho' I prefer the Delay of Baptism in regard of Profitableness to adult Persons, and especially to Infants for certain Reasons here assigned, before the hasty Administration of it; yet do I no ways deny, but rather acknowledge, the present giving of it to both sorts of Persons to be lawful and expedient. And if this be the true Meaning and Construction of *Tertullian* in the Place, as I believe all Grammarians of any Note will allow, it makes intirely against the Adversaries of Infant Baptism, and concludes directly in its behalf. When *Tertullian* represents the Delay of it only as a prudential and discretionary Matter, they must not be permitted to make that Delay an Article of Duty and Necessity, nor give it out as from his Mouth, that to administer Baptism unto Infants is an Act altogether useless and unlawful; for there they take abundantly more than their Author gave, or did really intend. Satisfied I am, that to *Tertullian* I have done Justice, and rescued him clean out of their Hands, by restoring him to his right Sense; and shall therefore claim him hereafter as an Evidence for Infant-Baptism, not only as practised by the Church in his time, but as allowed and asserted by himself in the way of necessary Implication; and whosoever will summon him for a Witness against that Baptism, I am certain he will do that antient Writer notorious Injury. In short, his Sentiments seem in Substance to suit exactly with those of *Gregory Nazianzen*, who gave his Opinion for putting off the Baptism of Infants to the third or fourth Year of their Age; and yet, in case of Necessity accruing from the Danger of Death, would have them baptized immediately.

I have not yet quite done with *Tertullian*, but by bringing some Notions of his close together, I hope farther to discover his real Sentiments in respect of Infant-Baptism. And,



I. To Original Sin derived from *Adam*, he declares Infants to be subject; which must place them in the same Condition with *Adam*, as liable to all the evil Consequences of that Sin. This may be partly gathered from one of those Reasons he gives against the hastening of their Baptism. *Quid festinat innocens ætas ad remissionem peccatorum?* “Wherefore does “that innocent Age hasten to the Remission of “Sins?” Innocent it is in regard it has no actual Transgression; but Sin or Sins it must have of another Denomination, or there could be no Room for their Remission. But from other Passages in that Father, the Case will be indisputable. For *Lib. de Anima, Cap. 39.* he was not content to affirm all Births among the Heathens to be unclean, because of their Dedication to Demons and evil Spirits by profane Rites; but moreover he asserts these Things of all Infants whatsoever. “Every Soul is reckoned “and reputed in *Adam*, till it is reckoned anew in “*Christ*, being so long unclean, till it be so reckon- “ed anew. Therefore a Sinner it is because ’tis “unclean, as receiving Disgrace from its Conjun- “ction with the Flesh \*”. And again, he makes this to be its natural Fault. “Therefore the Evil “of the Soul, besides what is superstructed by the “Access and Intervention of evil Spirits, proceeds “from an original Viciousness, being in a manner “natural †.” This I take to be clear enough for the Infection of Infants by *Adam*’s Offence; which brought them into a sinful State, and placed them in the same lost Condition with himself, by ren-

\* Ita omnis anima eousque in Adam censetur, donec in Christo recensetur; tamdiu immunda, quamdiu recensetur. Peccatrix autem, quia immunda, recipiens ignominiam ex carnis societate. *Tertul. de Animâ, cap. 40.*

† Malum igitur animæ, præter quod ex obventu Spiritus nequam superstruitur, ex originis vitio antecedit, naturale quodammodo. *Ibid. Cap. 41.*

dring them obnoxious to all the evil Effects of that Sin. But,

2. Most evident it is, that he sets a very considerable Difference between the Infants of Christian Parents and those of Heathens at their Nativity; for those of Heathens he pronounces to be altogether unclean, and to those of Christians he asserts a Holiness in a qualified Sense; and to that Purpose these are his own Words: “ So scarce is any  
 “ Birth clean, I mean of Heathens. For on this  
 “ Ground it is, that the Apostle affirms holy Chil-  
 “ dren to be procreated from either Parent that is  
 “ sanctified, as well by the Prerogative of Seed, as  
 “ the Discipline of Education. Otherwise, says he,  
 “ your Children would be born unclean, yet as de-  
 “ signed for Holiness, and thereby for Salvation;  
 “ intending the Children of Believers should be  
 “ understood, that by the Pledge of this Hope he  
 “ might patronize Marriages, which he would have  
 “ retained †”. As it appears by this, that *Tertullian* had no Notion of bastard Uncleaness, or legitimate Holiness, so he lays the Holiness of Children born from one or both Christian Parents on quite different Foundations; which are the Prerogative of Seed, and the Discipline of Instruction, or Education: The last of which may be communicated, though it be not so usual, to the Children of Infidels, who at the Years of Discretion may be instructed in the Christian Faith, and then baptized; so that in this there is nothing of an entire Peculiarity. But the Prerogative of Seed, is a pure Privi-

† Adeo nulla ferme natiuitas munda est, utique Ethnicorum. Hunc enim & Apostolus ex sanctificato alterutro sexu sanctos procreari ait, tam ex feminis prerogatiua, quam ex institutionis disciplina. Ceterum, inquit, immundi nascerentur, quasi designati tamen sanctitati, ac per hoc etiam saluti, intelligi volens fidelium filios; ut hujus spei pignore matrimoniis, quæ retinenda censuerat, patrocinaretur. *Ibid.* Cap. 39.

lege of Birth in the Children of believing Parents, that being the Language both of the New and Old Scriptures, and peculiarly belongs to those Children; and what it imports I shall endeavour to shew hereafter. Moreover, his saying, that these Children are designed for Holiness and Salvation, excludes the Children of Infidels, at their Birth at least, from those great Benefits in his Judgment; else there is no Place left for Distinction.

3. Our next Enquiry shall be, what Benefit in *Tertullian's* Judgment derives to the Infants of Christian Parents from this Prerogative of Seed, and what Remedy is provided for them in their sinful and lost Condition. This must not be all resolved into their Christian Education, not only because this is communicable to other Children, but also because he himself distinguishes their Prerogative from their Education. The Prerogative of their Seed plainly is in his Account, that they are designed for Holiness and Salvation. But how does he state that Matter? Is it only by the Discipline of Instruction, which requires Time and Discretion? No, but it is really by their Regeneration, and new Birth of Water and the Holy Ghost. For thus he presently expresses himself upon the Article: "Otherwise the Apostle  
" must have remembered our Lord's Determination;  
" *Except any one be born of Water and of the Spirit,*  
" *he shall not go into the Kingdom of God*; that is, he  
" shall not be holy \*." Shall he not otherwise be holy, nor go into God's Kingdom? Why then he must be born again of Water and of the Spirit; for the Discourse is plainly of the Infants of believing Parents, and this does necessarily pin them down to baptismal Regeneration. For,

\* Alioquin meminerat Dominicæ Definitionis; nisi quis nascetur ex aquâ & spiritu, non ibit in regnum Dei, id est, non erit sanctus. *Tertull. de Anima, Cap. 39.*

4. That he means baptismal Regeneration by those Words of our Lord is manifest, because he compares, or makes them run parallel with his Command, *Matt. xxviii. 19.* For these are his express Words in his Book of Baptism, *Chap. 13.* “The Law of Baptizing is imposed, and its Form prescribed; *Go, and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.* To which Law his Determination must be compared; *Except any one be born again of Water and the Spirit, he shall not enter into the Kingdom of God †.*” And this will be farther confirmed by the Notion he had of Baptism and Regeneration, which he represents to be one and the same Thing. For, says he, “The Soul is reformed by Water, and a divine Virtue or Efficacy\*.” Which is still plainer by what he says elsewhere: “Baptism, says he, would never be administered to the Flesh, or Body, unless by Regeneration it should be consecrated to a Resurrection||.” By all which it appears clearly enough, that *Tertullian* by Regeneration, *Jo. iii. 5.* meant baptismal Regeneration; which is very right when Baptism is taken in its full Sense for the outward Ordinance and the inward Grace, Regeneration by God’s Law and Intent being a necessary Adjunct and Concomitant of Baptism with Water; and the Infants of Christian Parents are the very Persons, to whom he applies that Regeneration in *Christ’s* Words.

† Lex enim tinguendi imposita est, & forma præscripta; Ite, inquit, docete Nationes, tinguentes eas in nomen Patris & Filii & Spiritus Sancti. Huic legi collata definitio illa: Nisi quis renatus fuerit ex aquâ & spiritu, non intrabit in regnum cœlorum. *Id. de Bapt. Cap. 13.*

\* Anima pervenit reformata per secundam nativitatem ex aquâ & supernâ virtute. *Id. de Animâ, Cap. 41.*

|| — Sed nec ipsum Baptisma committi (carni competisset) si per regenerationem, non etiam restitutioni inauguraretur. *Tertull. de Resurrect. Carnis. Cap. 47.*

Most probable it is, that by the Expressions, *Censeri in Adam*, and, *Recenseri in Christo*, *Tertullian* did refer to the *Roman Census*, which, some Antiquaries tell us, was also practised at *Carthage*, which once did emulate *Rome*. What the Office of the Censors was, I need not describe; but as they registred the Names of the *Roman Citizens* according to their several Tribes, Wards, or Centuries, so when any Citizen was removed from one Tribe or Century to another, as from the *Plebeian* to the *Equestrian*, so they must enrol his Name in a new List. What then more likely, than that *Tertullian*, by reckoning the Infants of Christian Parents at their Birth in *Adam*, till they be reckoned anew or again in *Christ*, might mean in Allusion to the Censor's Office and Custom, their Translation by baptismal Regeneration from the State of Nature to the State of Grace; which is the unregistring of them in a new Tribe or Family?

5. I shall go but one Step farther; and this is to shew, that *Tertullian* believed Baptism so necessary to Salvation, that Infants themselves cannot be excepted from that Necessity. I am not bound to justify his Opinion, but to prove what was his true Sentiment, that thereby we may understand the Doctrine and Practice of the Church in his Time. Wherefore in these Words he delivers his Mind: "It is prescribed that none without Baptism shall have Salvation, principally by that Affirmation of our Lord; who says, *Except any one be born of Water, he has not Life* \*." Now to this Doctrine he represents some scrupulous, rash, and most wicked Men to make this Objection: "How then could the Apostles be saved, since we do not read that any of them were baptized with our Lord's Baptism,

\* *Præscribitur nemini sine baptismo competere salutem, ex illâ maximè pronunciatione Domini, qui ait: Nisi natus ex aquâ quis erit, non habet vitam. Id. de Bapt. Cap. 12.*

“ except *St. Paul?* ” This was their Objection, to which *Tertullian* replies, by shewing that either the Apostles were baptized, or that the Want of Baptism could not be prejudicial to their Salvation, because their Case was extraordinary. Now a known Maxim it is, that an Exception does not destroy, but confirm the Rule. Why then was not the Salvation of Infants dying unbaptized, objected by those Men against *Tertullian's* Rule? Or why were they not excepted from it by himself? No Reason, I think, can be given for it, but that the Church's Practice in baptizing Infants left no Room for either.

All these Matters being put together, and duly consider'd, I hope it is evident, that *Tertullian* was for Infant Baptism. To advise the Delay of it in some Cases, and for certain Reasons, was no more than he did to adult Persons, and argued no Unlawfulness, nor absolute Inexpediency, in the Administration of Baptism immediately to either. And indeed, to speak my Mind freely, there is more of Fancy than Solidity in those Reasons; because they are not some conceived Hazards and Inconveniences that will supersede the Use of God's Ordinances; much less can helpless and involuntary Defects bar People of their undoubted Rights and Privileges. Too common it was in those Times with Persons of mature Age to defer Baptism on divers Accounts, whereof some were plausible, but most were bad; of which evil Custom enough may be seen in *Mr. Walker's* Preface to his *Modest Plea for Infant Baptism*. As those Persons put not off their own Baptism, because they thought it unlawful to be baptized sooner; so can we not conclude that *Tertullian* was utterly against Infants Baptism, because he advised the Delay of it to them and others. Spared therefore might the Labours of some learned Men well have been, who with great Diligence have enquired,

quired, whether the Parents of *Constantine*, *Greg. Nazianzen*, *St. Austin*, and others, were Christians or not, when their Children were born, and left unbaptized in their Infancy; and vain are they, who right or wrong alledge against us those Instances, by reason from them nothing can be concluded for their Opinion of Infant Baptism being unlawful, or unpractised in their Times. For we are well assured that it was in Use in those Days, when some People neglected and put off their own.

*St. Cyprian* shall follow his Master *Tertullian*, as he lived after him about half a Century. He, with the *African* Bishops of his Time, are now entirely yielded up to us, as strenuous Patrons of Infant Baptism; though not without very rude and indecent Reflections on their Memory; such is the Reverence and good Manners this Party of Dissenters have for the most venerable Heads that flourish'd primitively in the Christian Church. Among other false Imputations, hardly could that Arch-Rebel, the lying *D'Anvers*, forbear calling *Cyprian*, a notable Factor for *Antichrist*; and to make good his scandalous Libel, was willing to borrow Allegations from spurious Pieces wrongfully father'd on that holy Bishop. And affirm'd it is by others, that he was the first Man that introduced both the Baptism and Communion of Infants into the Church of *Christ*, against all Evidence of Truth and Fact, as I have sufficiently proved in one Case already, and hope to confirm it farther beyond all Exception.

As I intend to make great Use of *Cyprian*, so it might seem necessary before-hand to premise the deserved Commendations of him and his Writings, did they not shine so conspicuously by their own Lustre, and the high Value laid upon them by the Christian World, that it is wholly superfluous. Wherefore to be very short, the Testimonies of the Ancients in Praise of him and his Works, are to be

seen in the Front of the *Oxford* Edition; and among the Moderns, I shall only give the Judgment of those most excellent Prelates who furnished it out to our Hands. Bishop *Pearson* calls him, “A Writer exceeding accurate.” *Annal. Cyprian. p. 18. N<sup>o</sup> 5.* And Bishop *Fell* in his Preface affirms; “Such was the remarkable, and almost singular Happiness of *Cyprian*, that in him are the fewest Things which either fear Censure, or need Excuse.” An Author he really is, that breaths out every where an Apostolical Zeal and Piety, which he also exemplified in a most Christian Life, and sealed with the Confessor’s Sufferings, and the Martyr’s Blood; whose blessed Memory the Church annually celebrated with Festival Solemnities, and erected magnificent Temples called by his Name; and whose pure, nervous, and most edifying Writings will be read with Pleasure and Esteem to the Consummation of all Things, if Learning and Religion continue in Request. Were not such glorified Souls as his all Charity and Forgiveness, they would never admit their foul-mouth’d Revilers into their own blessed Heaven; but as they affect an odd Way thither by themselves, so they should have a separate Apartment allotted them there, to enjoy their cynical, sour, snarling, and unfociable Humours to themselves.

Two foul Innovations are imputed to *Cyprian*, one of which is, that he first brought up the Practice of administering the Lord’s Supper unto Infants; and this is charged upon him for no other Reason, but that he, as far as my Knowledge reaches, is the first Writer who mentions this Practice; and he mentions it only twice in all his Works, which is in his Book *de Lapsis*. On this Article I shall first deliver my Thoughts, for a Reason that will be assign’d hereafter. This Book of the Lapsed is fix’d by the very Learned and Right Reverend Editors



as penn'd in the Year of our Lord 251, when *Cyprian* was returned to *Carthage* from his Retirement under the *Decian* Persecution. In the Year 248, he was made Bishop of that See, and in the Beginning of the Year 250, very early he withdrew from the Rage of that Persecution, but not without a divine Monition before-hand, which to him was a Favour granted somewhat frequently, for better Things I trust than Church Corruptions, and was therefore proscribed for his Non-appearance. In so short a Space as two Years at most from his Promotion to his Retreat and Exile, he could not make many public Acts, much less introduce and settle strange and great Innovations in Ecclesiastical Affairs, which required considerable Time and Contrivance, Settlement and Application; especially when he had several professed Enemies and Opponents on his immediate Advancement to the Episcopal Chair.

In that Book *de Lapsis*, he relates a very strange Occurrent, which happened to an Infant Girl in his Sight and Presence. That Girl, without any Fault of her own, she being too young to understand what was done, had been through her Nurse's Act polluted by an Idol Sacrifice. Being not long after by her Mother brought to Church, while the Bishop and others were ignorant of the Fact, she was impatient at the Prayers, cry'd and wept, and discovered much Perturbation of Mind. But the public Prayers being ended, when the Deacon applied himself to give the Sacrament of our Lord's Supper to the Company present, and others had received it, her Turn and Place came also to receive; but through divine Instinct she turned away her Face, shut her Lips hard, and refused the Cup. Nevertheless the Deacon persisted, and for all her Struggling pour'd of the Sacramental Cup into her Mouth; then followed Sobs, Hicketing, and Vomiting in the Girl. Upon which the holy Father

remarks: “ In a polluted Body and Mouth the Eu-  
 “ charist could not remain, and the Liquor sancti-  
 “ fied by our Lord’s Blood violently broke forth  
 “ from stained Bowels; so great is the Power, so  
 “ great is the Majesty of the Lord!

This is the Narrative, and I dare venture it to the most critical Head alive; yea, though he be extremely partial also, to discover in it the least Trace and Footstep of Novelty, or late Invention; but it carries before it altogether the Face of Custom and Antiquity. The good Bishop was by, and never interfered, or spoke a Word, but on his Part let all Things go on as they used to do. The Mother brought the Infant Child to Church as the Custom was; and the other Solemnities being over, there the Girl was kept and stay’d for the holy Sacrament, which had not been done, unless that was customary likewise, seeing no new Law or Order for it does appear. The Deacon, as his Duty required, gave the Eucharist to all that were present, and when the Girl’s Place came, he offer’d it unto her also; and though she stiffly refused, he persisted in his Act, and even forced it into her Mouth, from whence it went down into her Bowels, but would not there abide. Now I ask, by what new Law, Act, or Order, came it to be the Child’s Place to receive the Sacrament? Or how can it be accounted for, except the Usage of the Church had made it so? Or would the Deacon of his own Accord in the Bishop’s Sight have offer’d it to her, much less been resolute to force it upon her, had it not been his accustomed Duty to give the Lord’s Supper to such Infants as were present? Wherefore all the Circumstances of the Story bespeak a Custom in the Case, that was of some Continuance, was firmly approved, and had got strong Footing in the Church.

Between

Between three and four Leaves higher in the same Book, we find another Passage that relates to Infant Communion. *Cyprian* is there aggravating the Sin of those, who were not content to perish alone, but wilfully entangled other Persons in idolatrous Acts and Apostasy from God; of whom he notes in particular: “ And least any thing should  
“ be lacking to accumulate Crimes, Infants were  
“ either laid or drawn in their Parents Hands (to  
“ the Heathen Sacrifices) and so the little ones lost  
“ what they had gained presently upon their Birth;  
“ (he means the Gift of baptismal Grace.) When  
“ the Day of Judgment comes will not they say;  
“ We have done nothing, neither, forsaking the  
“ Meat and Cup of the Lord, have we of our own  
“ Accord hasten’d to profane Contagions; the Per-  
“ fidiousness of others destroyed us; we have met  
“ with Parricides in our Parents; they denied us  
“ the Church for our Mother, and God for our  
“ Father.”

Here is an undoubted Reference to the Baptism of Infants, as of known Use in the *Decian* Persecution, which was about three Years before the Epistle to *Fidus* upon that Subject was wrote. For nothing else but the Grace of Baptism could Infants presently attain upon their Birth, nor lose again by profane Pollutions, so far as their Parents Act could make them lose it. And as by the Meat and Cup of the Lord his holy Supper must be understood, so Infants forsaking that Meat and Cup through their Parents Fault, does necessarily imply that it was usual with Infants to partake in that holy Sacrament, because there can be no criminal forsaking of a Thing which is not of a common and approved Use. And if any of those Infants could walk and go alone, as there is something in the Expressions seems to import, they must be baptized before *Cyprian* was promoted to his Bishoprick, or had sufficient Time

to enact new Ecclesiastical Laws for Infant Baptism and other Matters.

As the Scene wherein these Things were acted, is principally laid in *Carthage* and *Africa*, yet they seem to have reached through all the Christian World whither that Persecution reach'd, and this was as far as the Limits of the *Roman* Empire did extend. For *Cyprian* in the same Book affirms the Punishments of those Apostolical Practices to be as various throughout the World, as the Multitude of Offenders was numerous. From whence we may probably infer the Case of Infants to be the same every where, as it was in *Africa*, upon Supposition the Practices were the same. But however this be, certain it is that this Book of *Cyprian* was not written and design'd for the *Africans* alone, but also for the Use and Benefit of all Christians; therefore after it was read and approved in a Synod at Home, was it quickly transmitted to *Rome*, as appears *Epist. 54. Edit. Oxon.* but of *Pamelius*, 51. So a proper Course was taken to communicate it to foreign Churches.

Was administering the Lord's Supper therefore to Infants a very late Innovation of *St. Cyprian*? Why then did he take Care to publish it to the Christian World Abroad, and every where divulge his own wicked Presumption in altering the Church's primitive Practice, and profaning that holy Sacrament, contrary to *Christ's* Institution, and the Apostolical Rules, as it is now accounted? Would any Man in his right Senses take such Measures to defame himself, and become liable to foreign Censures? Or was communicating Infants confined to his own Church in *Africa*, and no where used or known besides? How strangely then must the first Mention of it surprize and shock the *Romans* and other Strangers! As if with us in *England* the same Practice was just crept up, our neighbouring Churches would be greatly startled to hear an occasional Hint or two given of  
it

it by any body. For what could they think or say at *Rome* and in other Places upon the Reading of *Cyprian's* Book, and finding those odd Passages and Expressions in it, but something to this Effect? What does *Cyprian* mean by giving the Eucharist unto Infants, and their forsaking the Meat and Cup of the Lord? Where were they ever admitted to that holy Sacrament? And who has heard of such a Thing before? Is it now begun in *Africa*, and has he therefore been so bold and temerarious as to break in on the Gospel's Laws, and the Church's constant original Practice, in giving that Sacrament to none but those who could examine themselves? Or has he introduced a strange pernicious Novelty into his own Church, and now tries slyly and craftily to insinuate it into other Churches? What Sort of a Man is this? What is he driving at? And where will his innovating Humour stop, should he be suffered to proceed as he has begun? Such Questions or Expostulations as these had been natural and necessary, in case the communicating of Infants was a very novel Invention of *St. Cyprian* at *Carthage*, and known or practised in no other Churches Abroad. But not one single Footstep of Surprize, Murmur, or Questioning, was ever known of any body at that time, and upon that Occasion.

In *Cyprian* writing a Book for the Instruction of transmarine Churches as well his own, it was a most improper Method to speak of Infant Communion without any more Guard and Preamble, than if it was a Practice no less known and common among them than it was in *Africa*, had they been really absolute Strangers to it. For I believe no discreet Author will pretend to raise Pleas and Arguments from Topics that are unknown or disallowed, since that can prove and illustrate nothing; but from such as are supposed plain and passable with the Parties concerned; and therefore fit to persuade, or convince

vince their Understanding. And if in the present Case it was otherwise, *Cyprian* was not so ignorant or improvident, as not to foresee the Astonishment he must throw them into, by mentioning a most strange Practice unto them, and pleading upon it as he did: And then it was needful to acquaint them first how Matters stood in his own Country, and afterwards to fence against Surprize and Scandal by some such Apology as here ensues. I am aware it is not your Custom, nor ever has been, to communicate Infants in your Churches, and you know nothing of it; but I have very lately brought it into use among ourselves: And tho' thereby I have changed the old general Practice for what I judge to be much better, yet I hope you will take no Offence at what seems to me to be very innocent, and beneficial too: Or if in that Change you apprehend any Sin or Evil, be pleased to remonstrate, and make it apparent, and then I promise to revert my Act, and reduce this Affair to the antient Apostolical Usage. I must appeal to Judgment, whether such an Apology as this in the supposed Case, had not been necessary; but *Cyprian* never made it, and no Man ever is recorded to take the least Offence or Exception at his Words.

Upon which Considerations I cannot forbear to conclude, that *Cyprian* was not, and could not be the Man, nor the Church of *Africa* in his time, who began the Practice of communicating Infants; but that it was a Custom which then generally prevailed in the Christian Church. And since we find not the least Scruple or Opposition raised against it at any time, and no living Soul can tell by whom, where, or when it was introduced, this inclines me strongly to believe it was of apostolical Usage and Prescription. And if in this Persuasion I am singular, I shall endeavour to assign a probable Ground and Reason for the Practice. . .

Had we no other Evidences, certain it is from these two Passages of *St. Cyprian*, that it was customary with the *Gentiles* very early to devote their Children unto false Gods, and for that end admitted them to the Sacrifices and Rites of their profane Worship. Nay, as *Tertullian* gives full Account, *Lib. de Anima, cap. 39.* they initiated them before their Birth to the Service of their abominable Deities by impious Usages; for which Reason he there peremptorily pronounces all their Births to be unclean.

What I would infer from hence, is, that as the Heathens devoted their Infants to Demons, and put 'em into their Possession by the superstitious Ceremonies of their Religion; so it is probable the Apostles and first Christians might dedicate their Infants to God, and bring them into his special Care and Protection, by giving them both the Sacraments of the Gospel; that thereby they might prevent the future Insults and Machinations of evil Spirits against their Infants. Badges of Profession, Seals and Insurances of God's Favour to Christian People, are those two Sacraments; and by their Administration to Infants God received them into his Protection, as part of his own peculiar Charge, to defend them effectually from all the Attempts of wicked Spirits. Whereupon *Gregory Nazianz. Orat. 40. p. 64.* exciting Parents to baptize their Infants, says, "δὸς  
" αὐτῷ τὴν τριάδα τὸ μέγα ἢ καλὸν φυλακτικόν. Give  
" thy Child the Trinity the great and good Preservative." We know Infants were once circumcised, and, as most believe, did eat of the Paschal Sacrifice; in Analogy and Correspondence to which the Infants of Christian Parents might be admitted to Baptism and the Lord's Table, and so be consigned to God's Love, Service, and Protection by the particular Interest he had in them on that score. Never were the Infants of believing Parents accounted such Aliens to God and his Service, as in these Days they are esteemed

esteemed by some; but that they had their Share and Concern therein, will appear from the Prophet's Summons to a publick Fast and Humiliation, *Blow the Trumpet in Sion, sanctify a Fast, &c. assemble the Elders, gather the Children, and those that suck the Breasts*; Joel ii. 15, 16.

Perfuated were the Heathens, that by the Application of their religious Ceremonies, their Infants as yet in the Womb, were consecrated to their false Gods, and put into their Care and Possession; and I cannot see how it was Superstition or blameable Credulity in Christians to believe that God came into a peculiar Possession of their Infants by the Application of his own gracious Ordinances, which are sure Pledges of his Love, and Instruments of Sanctification in his Hands; since together with them there goes an undoubted Blessing to all Recipients, where no Impediment obstructs their Efficacy. A Concurrence of their Will and active Powers is required in Persons of Age and Discretion for the Advancement of his gracious Work; but Infants, according to their Wants and Capacities, may receive the Benefit of his sacred Institutions without their own Cooperation.

Nor would I have any Precisian, or wanton Wit, to amuse himself with the Thought, that I am now prescribing vain Spells, Charms, and Amulets unto Infants, seeing I am speaking of God's holy Sacraments, who requires in their Use and Virtue no more than our several Abilities can afford: For I can tell such conceited Wiselings of Adult Persons also, who besides their Expectation and Belief have received great Benefit from God's Appointments. *Naaman the Syrian* had certainly but a slender Faith of washing away his Leprosy in *Jordan*. No Faith do we find required by *Christ*, nor expressed by the impotent Man, when by a bare Word he was made whole; *John* v. 8. Our Lord indeed asked him  
what



what was his Desire; but the Man's Answer informs us, that all his Thoughts ran on the Virtue of the Pool, and not on *Christ's* Power. And the Expectation of the Cripple at the Temple Gate was only an Alms, when he received a Cure; *Acts* iii. 5. Faithless and untoward enough were the *Israelites* in all the Miracles and Mercies expressed to them in *Egypt*, at the Red Sea, and in the Wilderness: Nor could the first-born Males among their Infants have any Apprehension of the Deliverance they received by means of the Blood of the Paschal Lamb; and the same it was in the Fruits of their Circumcision. Can it then be any Wonder, if God should work in Favour of our little ones by the means of his own Institutions, and vouchsafe his Grace and Protection to them, when thereby they are brought under the Shadow of his Wing, tho' they themselves can be only passive under his Operations? The antient Church had a strong Faith in God, and a great Veneration for his sacred Ordinances, never holding them to be vain and useless, where positive Wickedness or Disbelief put in no Obstacle; and from the Infidelity of modern Sceptics, of whatever Denomination, we will not take our Measures in these Matters, nor permit them to bar against his gracious Actings by their Faithlessness. And yet after all, the Baptism and Communion of Infants by the Primitive Church on the foresaid Account, being only a probable Conjecture of my own, I am willing it should be received or rejected, as others see Reason; for I cannot be fond of my own Notions.

But the Corollary and Conclusion I shall deduce from the Premises, will be irrefragable. For let the Original of that Custom of communicating Infants, used by the Church in *Cyprian's* time, be fixed where it will, the Custom of baptizing Infants must needs be no less antient, if not previous to it. For it cannot be imagined that the Church of *Christ* would

would ever give the Communion of his Body and Blood to any unbaptized Persons. Hereupon therefore we may safely depend, that whensoever the Church began to communicate Infants, they were always baptized before they were communicated. And this is the very Reason why I have so long debated the Article of Infant Communion; because if it be sufficiently proved, that this was the Usage of the Church before *Cyprian's* Days, it will inevitably follow, he could not be the Author of Infant Baptism. To confirm which Point, I shall now make a farther Progress.

For the Introduction of Infant Baptism is the other corrupt Innovation charged on *St. Cyprian*; and if I cannot prove this to be a gross Mistake, and morally impossible to be true, I shall conclude I am able to prove nothing.

Wherefore to begin, *Cyprian* at the head of sixty five Bishops more, synodically assembled at *Carthage*, Anno 253. has put it clean out of question, that the *African* Church did then entirely allow and practise Infant-Baptism; for thus the Matter of Fact stood. Those Prelates being met together, another absent Bishop, called *Fidus*, wrote to them requesting their Advice and Determination in one particular Circumstance relating to Infant Baptism; as we learn by *Cyprian's* Epistle to him; which is p. 64. *Edit. Oxon.* *Fidus* hesitated not at the Lawfulness or Expediency of baptizing Infants; but a Scruple sprung in his Head from the *Mosaical* Law, or *Abrahamical* Covenant, about the precise Time of administering to them Christian Baptism; whether it should be exactly on the eighth Day of their Age, as the Law was for Circumcision, or a larger Latitude might be taken. This was the only Question in the Case, concerning which he consulted these reverend Fathers; who all agreed immediately and unanimously; not one dissenting, nor so much as doubting, in this Reso-

Resolution; That the precise Day was not to be fixed, but Baptism might be administer'd to Infants at any time soon after their Birth. And of this Resolution *Cyprian* by Letter certified *Fidus* in the Synod's Name.

If any think the Reasons they grounded themselves upon in that Decision are weak and inconclusive; this is not the Business under present Consideration: But we are only now inquiring into the Doctrine and Practice of the Church in those Times as to Fact; in behalf of which the Act of that Synod is strong and clear for baptizing Infants.

Supposing Infant Baptism was not then a common and received Practice in *Africa*, what a strange and shameless thing had it been in *Fidus* to propose to the Council such a Question about the precise Day of its Administration; and not rather to have inquir'd whether it was fit and lawful to baptize Infants at all? For sure the Mode is not to be settled before the Fact is agreed on! Had he a mind to abuse them with a petulant and impertinent Query concerning the Manner of doing a thing which was not in use, and perhaps ought not to be done? Put the Case, that a Synod of our Bishops now sat in *London*, and one of their absent Brethren should send them in Writing a blunt Question to this purpose; At what time is it proper to give the Lord's-Supper to Infants, whether the first, second, or third *Sunday* after their Baptism? Would not this mightily surprize the Synod? For there being no such Usage in the *English* Church, as giving to Infants that holy Sacrament, conclude they must that either their Right Reverend Brother was not rightly in his Senses, or else was resolved to affront and banter them with down-right Impudence. Not one Jot wiser, more modest, or to better effect, had *Fidus's* Question to the *Carthaginian* Synod been, if Infant Baptism was not there a well-known and approved Custom in that time.

Pretended

Pretended it may be, I know, that it was the Lateness and Newness of its Original made *Fidus* dubious about the Day. But if this be suggested, besides that it must admit the Baptism of Infants not to be the Establishment of that Synod, but known and practised some while before, or it could not come to *Fidus's* Knowledge, it ascribes the Doubt of *Fidus* to a wrong Reason, contrary to the clear Account of *Cyprian*, or the Synod, which represents it in express Terms to arise from the Law or Usage in Circumcision: And if any will lay it on another Bottom, they must produce their Records and Authority, or not be heard. Which is all I shall say to that Suggestion, since no more than pure Surmise can be said for it.

For Infant Baptism was *Fidus*, for it was *Cyprian*, and for it was the whole Synod to a Man. Not one stuck a Minute, for ought appears; not one opened his Mouth against it, nor doubted in his Mind; but they all ran entirely into the same Resolution for it, and embraced it heartily and immediately: And whosoever thinks otherwise, let him bring forth his Evidence. How came this sudden and perfect Agreement about, if the Baptism of Infants was a very late Innovation, and had no Footing in *Africa*, much less any where else, till within five Years before, when *Cyprian* was made Bishop, or till that very Synod and Day of Debate, as some would have us believe? What! Never a knowing or judicious Head among them all, to understand better things? Or never an honest Heart, to act with more Integrity than to give an unanimous synodical Establishment to a novel, gross, and pernicious Invention, and make not the least Exception and Demur to the Church-destroying Change of an apostolical Law, and universal Practice of the Primitive Church in a Christian Sacrament? Where were Conscience, Zeal, and Reverence to pure Antiquity in such a Conduct?

Conduct? Yea, where were Modesty, Prudence, or even common Sense, in presuming that sixty-six Bishops, in a remote Part of the Christian World, could speed in an Attempt to blind all other Christian People, to palm upon them a notorious and pestilent Innovation, and give it the Sanction of an ecclesiastical Law? They who can believe such Matters as these, must believe with their Prejudices and Affections, but quite discard their Understandings. For my own part, when I seriously revolve these things in my Mind, and withal consider the Tempers and Carriage of Christian People in such Times and Cases, especially of Bishops, who were then zealously stiff against all Innovations of ill Consequence; I think with myself that the united Endeavours of Mankind cannot persuade me that Infant Baptism was then an upstart Notion; but am strongly convinced, that *Fidus*, *Cyprian*, and the whole Synod, believed it to be the common Practice of the Church from the Apostles Days, and therefore admitted it without any Scruple or Hesitation. And in this Persuasion I am farther confirmed by the ensuing Observation.

This Synod was celebrated *Anno 253*, as I have said before; and that was about five Years after *Cyprian's* Promotion to the archiepiscopal See of *Carthage*. Within three Years next following, *Anno 256*, there happen'd a very great Breach between *Cyprian* and *Stephen* Bishop of *Rome*, which on *Stephen's* side was managed with abundance of Scandal and Animosity. What Use I shall make hereof, will be seen in the Sequel, after Matter of Fact is first related, as by those two Bishops it was transacted.

*Cyprian* with his *African* Clergy had espoused a Notion that the Baptisms administer'd by all Heretics and Schismatics were perfectly null; and ought therefore to be administer'd anew upon their Return to Catholic Communion: But *Stephen* was of a quite contrary Persuasion, accounting the Baptisms of 'em

all to be valid, and in no case to be repeated. Upon cooler Thoughts, and mature Deliberation, about a Century and a half after, the Church, rejecting both Extremes, came to this Temper, as to confirm those Baptisms that were administer'd in the Name of the Ever-blessed Trinity, and to annul those that varied from that Form. But this is not the End I aim at now.

Omitting it therefore, *Cyprian* had many great Authorities to support his Opinion, the major part of the Christian World for a considerable time holding heretical and schismatical Baptism to be entire Nullities; and consequently to be re-administer'd upon Reconciliations to the Church. This had been long before decreed by a Synod of very many Bishops under *Agrippina*, one of *Cyprian's* Predecessors; as *Cyprian* himself affirms, *Epist. ad Jubaian*. And again, *ad Quint*. he says, it was so ordained by his Predecessors. Likewise, *Anno 255*, a numerous Council of Bishops and Presbyters under *Cyprian*, with one Consent decreed the same thing; *Epist. 70*. Which was also confirm'd; *Anno 256*, by another Council of eighty seven Bishops, the biggest in *Africa* for those Times, who gave their consentient Votes every one apart, and *Cyprian* last of all. *Tertullian*, while orthodox, had plainly given his Judgment the same way; *Lib. de Bapt. cap. 15*. And when turn'd *Montanist*, he continued in that Opinion; *Lib. de Pudic. cap. 19*. With them agreed the great *Dionysius* of *Alexandria*; *Euseb. Hist. lib. vii. cap. 7*. And we may reasonably suppose his suffragan Bishops, and other Clergy in *Egypt*, *Lybia*, and *Pentapolis*, to concur with their famous Metropolitan. *Firmilian*, the illustrious Bishop of *Cæsarea* in *Cappadocia*, was strong in the same Interest and Persuasion; as appears in his excellent Epistle among *Cyprian's* Works. Both he and the foresaid *Dionysius* affirm this Doctrine to have been taught and determined long before

fore by two very large Synods, one at *Synnada*, and the other at *Iconium*. And lastly, the Canons called *Apostolical* decreed, That the Bishop, or Presbyter, who did allow and receive the Baptism of Hereticks, should be deprived; *Can. 46.* So far was this Doctrine spread thro' *Asia, Egypt, and Africa*; and so firmly was it back'd and guarded!

Nevertheless, when what *Cyprian* and his Council at *Carthage*, had done in that Affair, *Anno 255*, had in the End of that Year, or the Beginning of the next, reached as far as *Rome*, there it met with a very hot Reception. All in a Flame was *Stephen* upon the News, and so far transported with a violent Passion, that he presently excommunicated *Cyprian*, with his *African* Brethren for their sole Decree of re-baptizing Hereticks. To the Bishops, *Cyprian's* Legates, he denied Audience, or so much as Admission into his Presence; and also forbad all the Christians at *Rome* to receive and entertain them in their Houses. Likewise for the same Reason he threatned to suspend *Firmilian* and the *Asian* Bishops from his Communion; and as that great Man in his Epistle reports, could give *Cyprian* no civiller Names than those of, *False Christ, False Prophet, and deceitful Worker*, on that Account alone. There was Storm and Fury enough.

That *Stephen* was ignorant of what *Cyprian* with his Synod of sixty five Bishops had determined two or three Years before concerning baptizing Infants, cannot with Reason be imagined; and that he knew nothing of his Expressions about communicating Infants in his Book *de Lapsis* transmitted to *Rome*, which also has an implicit Hint of Infant Baptism, I think likewise cannot rationally be affirmed. Passages were those worth the Notice of a *Roman* Bishop, especially if to them he was before a Stranger; for a mighty Noise and a strange Alarm they must give at *Rome*, if with such Customs of baptizing

164 *The Doctrine and Practice of the*  
and communicating Infants, *Rome* till then had been unacquainted.

Suppose we now, as the *Baptists* roundly affirm, *Cyprian* was really the Man who very lately had introduced those two grand and corrupt Innovations into the *African Church*; how came enraged *Stephen* to forget them clean, and pass them over with an intire Silence in his Charges and Reproaches of *St. Cyprian*? Never did he touch upon that String, never drop a Syllable of Accusation against him for those two most gross and mischievous Novelties, while he storm'd and bluster'd against him beyond all measure for the Re-baptization of Heretics, which notwithstanding was none of *Cyprian's* Invention. What was become of *Stephen's*, at least pretended, Zeal for the Cause of Religion? What of his Spleen and Anger? What of his Art and Skill in dressing out an Adversary, and rendering him odious before the World, that he might justify his own violent Procedure against him? The Application of Baptism anew to vile Heretics at their Return to the Church, when their first was counted void, could not be a worse Act in itself than the Application of both Sacraments to Persons that are reckoned no less unqualify'd for those Ordinances, than incapable of their Benefits, so far as to become Profanations and Nullities. Neither could *Stephen* fear stronger Opposition and Enmity in attacking *Cyprian* and his Bishops for those two Innovations, than for the Re-baptization of Heretics; in which last Case he contradicted several Councils, and had to deal with Men of great Figure, such as *Dionysius* and *Firmitian*, and also with the Eastern Church, besides *Cyprian* and his *Africans*; whereas in the other two Cases he acted only against the last, whom he scrupled not to excommunicate, and affront with the utmost Rudeness: And besides, if Matters stood then as they are now represented, he might justly expect



expect all the *Greek* and *Latin* Churches to take his part against the unconscionable Corrupters of Religion.

When the Passions of such fiery and high-spirited Men as *Stephen* are enflamed, and their Hand is once in, they greedily catch at all Opportunities to defame an Adversary, and load him with Reproaches. And was not here a fair Occasion given for the Use of that Method, if *Cyprian* was the Man indeed that brought up those two strange Innovations, of baptizing and communicating Infants? Would not his Heat and Passion presently have broke out upon it into such Exclamations as these? Behold! there is the false *Christ*, the false Prophet, and deceitful Worker, who has lately presumed to introduce two most wicked Corruptions into the Christian Church, and hopes to impose them on us all, or at least that he shall pass unreprieved. For there is the Man, who being not satisfied with re-baptizing Heretics, has moreover within these few Years changed the true Subjects of Baptism from the faithful People to faithless Infants, who are no more capable of its blessed Effects than brute Animals; and has thereby violently broke in on our Lord's Commission, the Apostle's Rules, and the constant Practice of the universal Church down from them to this very Day; and is unchurching of us all as fast as he can, by bringing in false Baptisms, false Ordinations, Ministries, and Disciples to *Jesus Christ*. Neither is this all yet, but there is the Man, who contrary to all Laws, Reasons, and former Customs, has now at last profaned and prostituted the most holy Sacrament of our Lord's Supper, by administering it likewise to unqualified Infants. Judge ye therefore, all the Christian World, who have any Concern for Gospel-Truth and Purity, whether he does not most justly deserve to be suspended from our Communion,

and be had in Abhorrence for these his detestable Attempts and Practices.

Would not such heavy Accusations and stinging Reproaches as these are, if grounded on true Facts, have been natural and obvious on that Occasion, and serv'd wonderfully well to gratify *Stephen's* Spleen and Gall, in blackening his Adversary, and vindicating his own Conduct? But to leave out two principal Parts in three of the Accusation, when by inserting them he would have overwhelmed poor *Cyprian*, and crush'd him to the Ground with their intolerable Weight, is a most unaccountable Management on the former Supposition.

For no where do we read that *Stephen*, or any body else throughout the Universe, ever spoke a single Word, or took the least Exception against *Cyprian* for his admitting Infants to Baptism and our Lord's Supper. Neither did *Cyprian*, or any one of his Friends, offer at an Excuse or Apology for his Doctrine and Practice in those two Articles, as they strenuously defended themselves in the other Point of repeating Baptism unto Hereticks; which I think does invincibly prove that he was never accused, never blamed or gainsayed on their Account. What now could be the Reason of this profound Silence in all the conscientious World both Clergy and Laity; and of this amazing Tameness in so virulent an Enemy, as *Stephen* then was to *Cyprian*, when he had the fairest Handle given him to vent his outrageous Resentments against him, and when *Cyprian's* Resolves, Doctrine and Usage in those Matters were openly publish'd and made known to all? After many a cool and deliberate Thought bestow'd on this Subject, I could never pitch on any probable, or even possible Reason for such a perfect Silence in those two Cases, except this one: That *Stephen* and all other Christians of any Note, knew that Infant Baptism and Infant Communion did not

so late commence in *Africa*, but were in Use at *Rome*, in *Italy*, and every where else in the *Greek* and *Latin* Churches, and had both been so, or at least Infant Baptism, from the Apostles Times. For of this Baptism it was believed and asserted, about a Century and half after *Stephen's* Days, that it was an universal and Apostolical Practice, by Orthodox Fathers, *Pelagian* Heretics, and the whole Body of Christian People, with very little, if any Exception.

Of the Conduct of rational Men a rational Account ought to be given; and if any one can give another besides what I have given of *Stephen's* and the Church's Conduct in the present Case, let it be produced and justified, and I will give up my own: But till that is done, from what is premised, I shall and must conclude Infant Baptism to have been the general and primitive Practice of *Christ's* Church long before *Cyprian* lived, and even quite up to the Apostolical Age, and the Institution of Christian Baptism.

Let us now draw up and sum the Force and Substance of our Evidence. *By the Mouths of two or three Witnesses shall every Word be established, or Cause decided*, say the holy Scriptures, and all human Courts are therein agreed. More than this Number of Witnesses for Infant Baptism within the three first Centuries have I produced in *Irenæus*, *Origen*, *Tertullian*, *Cyprian*, with his sixty five Bishops, besides the consentient Silence, and therefore apparent Approbation of the whole Church in those Times; and, I hope, have justified their Evidence and Allegations. Proper it is here to remember *Dr. Gale's* Concessions, to this Purport; that “ the Testimonies of the first  
“ Fathers being honest, faithful Men, concerning  
“ such notorious Facts, as was the Administration  
“ of Baptism in their own Times, and thence up to  
“ the Apostles Days, should be taken as satisfacto-  
“ ry, because of that Matter they could not be ig-

“ norant, nor would they testify Untruths in Fact;  
 “ neither yet would they innovate and deviate in  
 “ such a weighty Case from their primitive Pattern.”  
 If this be true, how then can our Conclusion be denied us, for the most ancient, early, and Apostolical Practice of Infant Baptism, since to this those Fathers have born their Testimony?

The Doctor has also set it down as an evident Rule; “ New Opinions or Practices, we see, are  
 “ usually introduced by degrees, and not at once,  
 “ nor without Opposition.” *Let. XI. p. 399.* He might very well have spared his cautious *Usually*; for in Matters of this Nature and great Importance, the Rule is unexceptionable. If therefore we may make any Use at all of his plain Rule, I ask; How came Infant Baptism in by Degrees, if in *Cyprian's* Days it was first introduced, and presently overspread the Christian World? Where are the Steps, where are the Evidences of its gradual Introduction? Also, what the least Opposition did it meet with? For who was the individual Person, Friend or Foe, that once mutter'd with his Lips against it? Publish it *St. Cyprian* did at *Carthage*, at *Rome*, and in all Places by his own Writings, that were highly valued and much perused; but what living Soul made any Exception to it? Since *Tertullian* is rescued out of our Adversary's violent Hands, and restored to his true Sense and Meaning, not one approved Writer, or disapproved either as I believe, can be alledg'd, that ever opened his Mouth, or uttered a Syllable against baptizing Infants, throughout the three first Centuries: And consequently, our Witnesses for it, and the Practice itself, we will have in Spite of Fate, by all the Rules of Process among Men, seeing they gave in their Evidence without the least Opposition or Contradiction, and were also back'd and supported in it by a Cloud of Witnesses of all Sorts in the very next Centuries.

Dr. Gale, says *Tasber*, p. 30. "has abundantly shewn, that Infant Baptism was not the Church's Usage for about 250 Years after *Christ*." Then, say I, has the Doctor performed an absolute Impossibility, by making real Fact to be real Falshood, And, says *Davey*, p. 56. "*Cyprian* was the Spring and Fountain-head of Infants Baptism." Magisterially spoken, and Dictator-like! As much certainly as *Davey* is the Fountain-head of Truth, who seems to understand as much of Church-Antiquity, as one of those Infants do, whose Right to Baptism he contradicts. The *Romans* had once their dark Fighters call'd *Andabatae*, and *Christendom* has now its dark Writers call'd *Catabaptæ*; who affirm for Truth they know not what, but follow the Herd according as they are led by their blind Guides, and one after another try to pass their counterfeit Coin upon the World for current Payment: For sure I am *Cyprian* was never the Founder of Infant Baptism; but it was an uncontested Usage of the Church in his Time, and long before. Abundance of *Davey's* Dreams and Hallucinations are but too obvious and apparent; but neither is he or his Lucubrations so considerable as to deserve our serious Animadversions.

'Tis an Intimation of Dr. Gale, that Infant Baptism gradually crept into the Church, after the same manner with other Corruptions; but if we date its Entrance thither after the Apostles Decease, no Man on Earth can point to the Time of its Introduction; no, nor so much as give a probable Guess at that, since *Tertullian* now will do no Service for that End, and never intended to do it, in case he had been rightly understood. In regard therefore that Baptism was a momentous Ordinance in Christianity, and its Administration openly celebrated in the Face of the Church, it was impossible to make such an Alteration in it, as is now pretended, without the Knowledge

Knowledge of every Christian, that knew the Difference between a grown Person and a young Infant; and if Christian People of all Ranks had any Regard to their holy Religion, that Alteration could never begin, much less prevail, as it did in those early Ages, without strong and various Oppositions.

The Doctor also, *Let. XIII. p. 544.* has a pleasant Conceit, that Infant Baptism might come into Use and Vogue much alike as that mighty Prodigy of Transubstantiation did. But would he seriously run a Parallel between the two Cases, without considering the vast Difference between the State and Condition of the Christian Church in those two Periods of Time? The third Century he pitches upon for the Rise and Start of Infant Baptism. That was an Age when the Knowledge and Practice of our most holy Religion flourished in their due Perfection; when the Church abounded with Men of Merit, who were exceeding jealous of all hurtful Innovations, and opposed them vigorously; when she enjoyed her full Liberty from domestic Tyranny, acted freely, and spoke out the Truth without Fear of Controulment; and when Christians sacrificed their Fortunes, Liberties, and Lives, rather than betray the Interests of their Religion. But Transubstantiation grew up in the most corrupt, dark, and slavish Ages of the Church, groaning under Papal Usurpations; when Superstition was predominant, and Errors were become rampant; when Liberty was banished out of the Christian World, and Peoples Wills, Understandings and Consciences were reduced under such a Yoke of Bondage, that Kings and Emperors could hardly call their Souls their own. All which prepared them to receive any Absurdities that should be imposed. Other Protestant Writers almost without Number, have given the Detail, and traced the Monster from its Conception and Birth up to its full Growth and Matu-

Maturity. But if we date the Rise of Infant Baptism any Thing lower than the Apostles Days, it will remain a Mystery; since I have baffled our Adversaries Enterprizes on *Tertullian* and *St. Cyprian*, in whom alone they hoped to discover some promising Footsteps of its Original. Yet in those very Dregs of Time, Transubstantiation could not pass without stiff Opposition, as all Men know who are acquainted with the Transactions relating to *Berengarius*, and those who joyn'd him in his Sentiments. And is this a parallel Case to Infant Baptism? I perceive no comparison can be too wild for Men of Learning to fasten upon, if it do but favour their odd Opinions. And indeed several others of the Doctor's Invention are so mishapen and disproportioned, that they loudly proclaim the Want of a better Limner.

Other Fancies the Doctor has to shew how the Custom of baptizing Infants might begin; but as they are grounded partly on his own Surmises and Prepossessions, and partly on historical Mistakes, so it is not worth my while to expose their Weakness: And if, as I am persuaded, it was really a primitive Apostolical Custom to practise Infant Baptism, all Schemes of its Introduction in After-times must be entirely vain. When Men have working and projecting Heads, they build many Castles in the Air, and are frequently teeming with *Chimera's*.

Some of our Adversaries have the Assurance to challenge the *Pelagians* for *Anti-pædo-baptists*: So does *Davey*, p. 75. though I do not remember that *Dr. Gale* has run into that Extravagancy. 'Tis well known that we cite the *Pelagians* as impartial Witnesses for the Church's Practice in baptizing Infants at all Times down from the Apostles to their own Days; and their Evidence must be unexceptionable for a Reason to be given hereafter; but first we will hear them speak their Minds upon the Subject.

*Cælestius*, as *St. Austin* relates, *de Pecc. Orig. Cap. 5.*  
thus

thus declares: “ We confess that Infants ought to  
 “ be baptized for the Remission of Sins, according to  
 “ the Rule of the Universal Church, and according  
 “ to the Sentence of the Gospel; because our Lord  
 “ hath determined that the Kingdom of Heaven  
 “ can be given to none but baptized Persons, which  
 “ is bestowed by free Grace, and not gain’d by  
 “ the Power of Nature.” *Pelagius* himself, in his  
 apologetical Epistle and Account of Faith, directed  
 to *Innocent* Bishop of *Rome*, who without his Know-  
 ledge was then deceased, writes, “ That he was de-  
 “ famed and slandered, as if he denied the Sacra-  
 “ ment of Baptism to Infants, and promised the  
 “ Kingdom of Heaven to some without *Christ*’s  
 “ Redemption.” And then, according to *St. Au-*  
*stin, de Grat. Christi, Cap. 30.* and, *de Pecc. Orig.*  
*Cap. 17, &c.* speaks thus Home to the Point;  
 “ That he never heard of any wicked Heretic, who  
 “ said this about little ones; (namely, that they  
 “ were not to be baptized) for who is so very igno-  
 “ rant of the Gospel, as to dare affirm this, or  
 “ slightly mention it, or even think it? Moreover,  
 “ who is so impious, that he would have little ones  
 “ excluded from the Kingdom of Heaven, while  
 “ he will not have them baptized, and born again  
 “ in *Christ*? Or forbids them to be regenerated  
 “ to an everlasting and certain Life, who are born  
 “ to a Life that is uncertain?” And likewise *Ju-*  
*lian* in *St. Austin, Lib. 1. Cap. 11. operis imperfecti*  
*cont. Julian.* affirms: “ We so far confess the Grace  
 “ of Baptism is profitable to all Ages, that we  
 “ eternally anathematize all Men who think it not  
 “ necessary even to Infants.” More might be al-  
 ledged, but more is needless, seeing these Attesta-  
 tions are full and clear, and these three Men were  
 the Ringleaders of *Pelagianism*.

Against all which it is objected; “ That we have  
 “ not these Confessions from the *Pelagians* own  
 “ Writings,



“ Writings, but from St. *Austin*, and other Authors, who for the Interest of their Cause, might give us a false Account of the *Pelagians* Notions.” No, *Pelagius* himself says, “ the Slander and Defamation of him was, that he denied Baptism unto Infants.” But this wretched Subterfuge and Suggestion is most unworthy to be heard, because it makes those holy Fathers to resemble our present *Anabaptistical* Writers, who care not what they aver in their own Defence. For when the *Pelagians* own Works were yet extant, and but too common for every one’s Perusal; and when they themselves were still alive, and exceeding industrious to vindicate themselves and Tenets, and to refute their Adversaries pretended Misrepresentations of them; would St. *Austin*, or any body else, be so dishonest, so witless, so shameless, as to write the most impudent Lies concerning them, on purpose to be disproved, exposed, and hiss’d from off the Stage? This is so gross an Absurdity, that none but a Man abandon’d of all good Sense and Modesty, would ever suffer it to come into his Thoughts. And how are they better, who in these Days depending on no Authority at all, besides their own vain Imaginations, do presume to contradict the best Authorities of the Church in the Ages they lived?

But to stop their Mouths, if possible, we have still extant *Pelagius*’s own Profession of Faith to Pope *Innocent*, which in the Name of his Party delivers their Sentiments in these express Terms: “ We hold one Baptism, which we affirm ought to be admitted in the same Sacramental Words to Infants, as it is to those of riper Years.” This Profession of Faith the great *Vossius* proves to be of *Pelagius*’s own Writing and Composure, *Hist. Pelag. Lib. 1. Cap. 4.* And Archbishop *Usher* asserts it also to be genuine, *de Britann. Eccles. Primord. Cap. 10. p. 265.* Two Men, who for Skill in Antiquity, and all good  
Lite-

Literature, are by far preferable to five hundred Dabblers in Church-History among the *Anabaptists*.

Infant Baptism was therefore strongly maintained by that Sect; not indeed for the Remission of Original Sin, which they always denied, but for their Adoption to be God's Children, and Heirs of his Kingdom: And *Cælestius* did but equivocate, or mean something else, when he gave that as an End of their Baptism. Certainly these Men knew their own Minds, and the Primitive Usage of the Christian Church, better than our Adversaries can do at this Distance of time; and their Testimony in behalf of Infant Baptism is of the greatest Weight, because it was very prejudicial to their Cause, and therefore their Principles led them into the flat Denial of it, in case they could. For the main Controversy between them and the Catholics was about Original Sin, which they rejected, and the Catholics abetted; and these last, to prove it, alledged the constant and universal Practice of the Christian Church in all former Ages to baptize Infants for the Remission of that Sin, which they took to be a strong Argument in its Favour. But could the *Pelagians* have proved that Practice to be a novel Invention, of no older Date than about a hundred and fifty Years before, they would have effectually overthrown and baffled the Catholics Argument for Original Sin, founded on that Baptism. Nothing therefore but the glaring Evidence of Truth and Fact, which was too bright for them to gain-say, could have possibly induced them to own and assert that universal primitive Practice of the Christian Church in baptizing Infants, and thereby bear witness against their own Interest. Yet were they Men of Learning and acute Parts, of great Intelligence and Application, and much nearer the Fountain-Head, to know the Custom of the Apostolical Churches in that Affair, than they who now, or in  
later

later Times after *Pelagius*, have opposed Infant Baptism.

With the same Authority from antient Records, that is really with none at all, do the *Baptists* affirm the *Novatians* to be against baptizing Infants, and for this Reason blazon their Escutcheons with high Eulogies; tho' their Schism was founded on the most flagrant Profaneness and Iniquity. *D'Anvers* calls them, "That famous worthy Church and People;" p. 111. *Davey* styles them and the *Donatists*, "Good Dissenting Protestants;" p. 51. And again, "A holy religious People;" p. 68. Such is the Taste and Gusto of our Adversaries, that with them all Merit lies in Separation and Opposition. Two Men, *Novatus* and *Novatianus* founded the *Novatian* Schism, so called from the last. And that the World may perceive what it is that gives Worth and Saintship in the Judgment of our conscientious *Baptists*, and what sort of Patrons or Associates they can glory in, right or wrong, I shall briefly characterize those two Men and their Proceedings in raising up that Sect.

*Novatus*, a Presbyter of *Cyprian's*, was the chief Incendiary in this Faction, to kindle the Fire of Contention. He being conscious of his Crimes, and fearing Censure for them, set himself to cross his Bishop; and in opposition to him procured *Felicissimus* to be ordained Deacon, to head the nefarious Faction in the Mount. His own Father *Novatus* suffer'd to die with Hunger in a certain Village, and after Death left him unburied. The Womb of his pregnant Wife he kick'd so violently with his Heel, as to make her miscarry, and kill the Embryo; and so he murder'd the Fruit of his own Bowels before it saw the Light. Orphans by him were robb'd, Widows defrauded, and the Church's Treasure was embezzled. For these atrocious Facts he would have been most justly deprived and excommunicated, had  
not

not the *Decian* Persecution intervened, and drove *St. Cyprian* from his See; which for that time relieved the heinous Criminal. The rest of his Character I shall describe in *Cyprian's* own Words: “ *Novatus* “ was a Man always fond of Changes and Inno- “ vations, exceeding covetous and rapacious, puffed “ up with the Swellings of an arrogant and fastuous “ Mind, infamous among the Catholic Priests and “ Bishops, as one that was heretical and perfid- “ ious, always curious and inquisitive to betray, “ an egregious Flatterer that he might deceive, ne- “ ver faithful in Love and Friendship, a Tempest “ and Hurricane to cause Shipwreck, and the avow- “ ed Enemy of Quiet, Tranquillity, and Peace;” *Cypr. Epist. ad Cornel.*

Perhaps our modest *Anabaptists*, according to their laudable Custom, may with great Civility impute these to *Cyprian* as Lies and Fictions. A likely thing indeed! when the Facts were notorious to the Christian World, vouch'd by other Witnesses, and published while *Novatus* and his Party were alive and active.

*Novatianus* was a Man of Learning, Eloquence, and Master of a good Style, who had been bred up in the *Stoic* Philosophy. When a Catechumen he was exorcis'd, and being visited with a dangerous Fit of Sickness, he was baptized in his Bed for fear of Death, which made his future Promotion in the Church to be uncanonical; yet at the Bishop's earnest Request, he obtained it with much Difficulty and Opposition, and was at last ordained Presbyter at *Rome*. *Pacian ad Sempronian.* says, He separated from the Church to avoid Persecution, or the Hardship of Confession for the Christian Faith. And when the Persecution approach'd, he blushed not to affirm, that he would rather return to his Heathen Philosophy than suffer Martyrdom; tho' some of his Gang falsely boasted afterwards, that he died a Mar-  
tyr.

tyr. And swear he used to do, that he would never desire a Bishopric. But thus briefly does *Cyprian ad Cornel.* decypher the Man. “ To the Destruction  
 “ of the Brethren he prates with a noisy Tongue, and  
 “ casts abroad the Darts of his poisonous Eloquence,  
 “ being more stern and rigid in the Pravity of secu-  
 “ lar Philosophy, than pacific in the Lenity of the  
 “ Evangelical Doctrine; a Deserter of the Church,  
 “ the Enemy of Mercy, the Murderer of Repen-  
 “ tance, the Doctor of Pride, the Corrupter of the  
 “ Truth, and the Destroyer of Charity.”

When at the Death of *Decius* the Persecution ceased, and *Cyprian* was returning home, *Novatus* to escape Ecclesiastical Censure for his various Crimes, and set the Church in a Flame, sails to *Rome*, where he meets with proper Matter for his Malice to work upon. For there *Novatian*, contrary to his former Oaths not to desire a Bishopric, was highly disgusted for missing that at *Rome*, *Cornelius* being chose by the unanimous Votes of Clergy and Laity. *Novatus* observing his discontented Mood, lays hold on the Opportunity, and persuades him to set up for Anti-bishop to *Cornelius*; the Plot succeeds, and they send into some remote Corners of *Italy*, under a specious Pretext, for three rustic, simple, ignorant Bishops; who being come to *Rome*, and made drunk, were prevailed upon to lay Hands on *Novatian*, and ordain him Bishop of the City against *Cornelius*: Of which Act one recanted, and was restored to Lay-Communion; the other two persevered, and were deprived.

*Novatian*, thus worthily and canonically ordained, as he gave the Lord's Supper to his Sectaries, took their Hands between both his own, and before they communicated, made them swear by the Body and Blood of the Lord *Jesus Christ*, that they would never forsake him, nor return to Communion with

178 *The Doctrine and Practice of the  
Cornelius.* A famous Precedent for Church and Re-  
bel-covenanting!

All the Colour they had to palliate their wicked Schism, and delude the Simple, was, forsooth! no-  
thing else but Purity of Church-Discipline and Com-  
munion. For the Catholicks had decreed to receive  
the Lapsed into Communion after a due and regular  
Course of serious Repentance: To which Act the  
*Novatians*, in their *Stoical* Rigour, utterly refused  
Compliance; but alledged all such Communions to be  
grievously polluting, and therefore would never recon-  
cile and give Peace to the Lapsed, even at the Article  
of Death, tho' ever so deep and hearty Penitents, but  
referred them wholly to God. And this I think,  
not without good Reason, is held by some to be  
their Judgment and Practice in other Sins, which  
they taught to be irremissible, by Men at least, after  
Baptism; and so with a bowelleſs and unrelenting  
Cruelty, they forced them to die out of the Church's  
Pale and Bosom.

But observe it diligently how this Farce was acted  
by the frontless Hypocrites? For before their Sepa-  
ration, both those Worthies were for receiving the  
Lapsed to Communion without requiring the Pre-  
liminaries of Repentance. And *Novatus* in parti-  
cular was at the Head of that ungovernable Faction  
at *Carthage*, who endeavour'd to compel their Bishop  
to it, even against his Will, and (if I remember well)  
not without rude and blunt Threatnings. But after  
the Resolution was fix'd to pick a Quarrel, and break  
off with the Catholicks, the most penitent Sinners a-  
mong the Lapsed might knock in vain for Mercy at  
the Church's Door, and go excommunicated out of  
the World; and whosoever would not submit to *Ze-  
no's* inexorable Laws, but received the Lapsed at all to  
Communion, must be shunned, as defiled and defi-  
ling by a fatal Infection. Hence the *Novatians* took  
the Name of *Cathari*, or Church-Puritans, as the  
*Donatists*

*Donatists* afterwards did for much the same Reason. Thus the *Precisians* rung the Changes, and from one Extreme of Looseness and Licentiousness in Church-Discipline, ran over to the other of an inhuman Starchness. And no less deservedly than sarcastically did *Constantine*, upon his hearing their Principles, return upon one of the Tribe: *Ὁὐὲς ἀλιεῖνα, &c. Fix a Ladder, Aceso, and climb up to Heaven by thyself alone.* Thus began the *Novatian* Sect, good Dissenting Protestants, and a famous worthy Church and People no doubt! where the Devil had a Chapel, and their new Admirers can say, *Amen.*

The *Anabaptists* I own have much better Reason to claim an Interest in the *Donatists* as opposing Infant Baptism on some Account or other, for which we have the Authority of *St. Austin.* But those Sectaries improved into a most wild, freakish, cruel, sanguinary, and murderous sort of People, whose untractable Temper neither Love, Fear, or Argument, Gentleness or Severity could ever mollify; for such a Spirit had they, that they founded a Merit upon, and claimed a Privilege from their own Perverseness, and were fitter for a Mad-house than the Church of *Christ.* He that will know the Men and their Communication, need not read *St. Austin, Optatus,* and the other Antients, but may see enough in their History compiled by *Mr. Long,* who produces his Authors for what he relates. Wherefore, referring to him, I shall only hint at the Original of this most outrageous and deplorable Schism.

Anger brought it forth, Ambition nurs'd it, and Avarice confirmed it; as *Optatus* truly affirmed. *Botrus* and *Celestus* stood Competitors against *Cecilian* for the Bishopric of *Carthage,* and upon the Choice of him, they became fullen and discontented with 'em. With them some sacrilegious Persons, rather than do the Church Justice upon *Cecilian's* Demand and Process against them, struck in; and were all quick-

ly joined by *Lucilla*, a most rich and factious Woman, and highly offended at the Bishop for due Correction. She with her Money and Interest drew *Secundus* Primate of *Numidia*, *Donatus à Casâ Nigrâ*, and others into the Faction. Being thus strengthen'd, they form a Design against *Cecilian*, to accuse him and his Ordainer *Felix*, not sparing his Predecessor *Mensurius*, for Traditors in the Persecution of *Dioclesian*. And assembling first at *Cirta*, some say to the Number of seventy Bishops, a Whim took them to act the Saints, and purge themselves of the Guilt they were wrongfully charging on their Adversaries. *Secundus* calls some forth by Name, and upon Confession bids them go on the other side; but one of their Number, called *Purpurius*, a Man of a bolder Spirit than the rest, would not be so frighten'd upon Examination, but retorts the Accusation on *Secundus* himself, where the same Guilt was also lodg'd. Hereupon taking better Advice, they all agree to be quiet, and very modestly, in a self-denying manner, do as it were by a tacit Consent absolve themselves, leaving all to God and their own Consciences. Then they adjourn to *Carthage*, act vigorously against *Cecilian*, declare his See void, and prefer *Majorinus*, *Lucilla's* Chaplain, to his Bishopric. Here were the demure and sanctified *Puritans*, who carrying Guilt in their own Breasts, were pleased to disgorge it in the Faces of innocent Men, as they afterwards appeared to be, by three fair and impartial Tryals. So they went off as too holy for polluted Communion, and raged about the Christian World with the most fierce and Antichristian Fury. However, as our *Anti-Pædo-Baptists* seem extremely fond of all the pestilent Heretics and Schismatics they can possibly hook into their Interest, so can we freely allow them to pride themselves in such Partizans, and never grudge them their scandalous and ignoble Company.



Be it so likewise, that from the fourth Century downwards, some few Parties and considerable Persons may have shewed their Dislike of Infant Baptism; yet what are they comparatively with those Multitudes for it, which may be confronted against them in all Ages of Christianity, in case Truth went by the Poll and Majority of Voices? And of those learned Men who of late gave in their Opinion once against baptizing Infants, some on maturer Deliberation retracted, as Dr. *Taylor* and *Barlow*; tho' no Notice is taken of that, but their former Sentiments are continually cited. We know the most acknowledg'd and fundamental Doctrines of our holy Religion, have been often disputed, contested, denied, and rejected by some professed Christians or other, as the Scripture Prophecies, and Gospel Miracles are at this Day impiously exposed and ridiculed by Miscreants; but we hope without any Diminution to their Credit and Certainty. And if in like manner, some Men or numbers of Men below the third Century, have from time to time expressed their Thoughts against baptizing Infants, this Opposition only proves that Doctrine and Practice among more of unquestionable Truth and Right, have had their Adversaries, and can yield but poor Relief to the labouring Cause of *Anti-Pædo-Baptists*.

With Dr. *Gale* it is a conclusive Argument against the Baptism of Infants, that the Writers of the two or three first Centuries speak of Faith as a necessary Condition or Appendage to Baptism; but of Faith Infants are incapable, therefore of Baptism also they were incapable according to the Judgment of those Writers. On this Argument the Doctor had great Dependence, and so he fetch'd it over somewhat frequently. Was this a necessary Consequence, it must prove abundance more than the Doctor intended, and lead us into a Conclusion, that there has been never a Writer who treated designedly of that

Sacrament, for baptizing Infants, from its first Institution to this Day ; by reason we all make Faith a pre-requisite Condition to the Administration of that holy Ordinance. Hereof some Instances out of Writers, who undeniably were for Infant Baptism, will be proper Evidences : And I shall begin with *Cyprian*, an acknowledg'd Advocate for that Practice.

Thus therefore he expresses himself, “ We give “ the first Baptism to Believers ;” *Cyp. Prefat. de Exhort. Martyrii*, p. 168. He calls that of Water the first Baptism, because there might be a second in the Martyr's Blood. Again, *ad Januar. &c. Epist.* 70. “ The Interrogatories propos'd in Baptism bear witness to the Truth, and they are these ; “ Dost thou believe eternal Life, and the Remission “ of Sins by the holy Church? To which the Person to be baptized was obliged to answer, I “ believe.”

In *Epist.* 69. *ad Magnum*, penn'd about two Years after that to *Fidus* concerning Infant Baptism, Faith is often spoke of as a Qualification in the Candidates for that Sacrament. For treating of the Baptism of *Clinics* by Perfusion of Water, he there says, “ Where “ there is a full and perfect Faith both of the Giver and Receiver, there the Divine Favours “ are wholly bestow'd.” (In Baptism he means.) Again, “ Otherwise is the Believer's Heart wash'd, “ otherwise is the human Mind cleans'd by Faith. “ —Where there is the perfect Faith of Giver and “ Receiver, all is ratified and consummated by the “ Authority of God and Sincerity of Faith.—By “ the salutary Water and due Faith, the Grace of “ *Christ* is obtained.—Let him be accounted a true “ Christian, who in the Church has obtained the “ Divine Grace (of Baptism) by the Law and Right “ of Faith.—Through their own Faith and the “ Lord's Indulgence, they are sanctified by the “ Church's Baptism,—the Holy Ghost being wholly “ pour'd

“ pour’d out upon the Believer;—and Spiritual  
 “ Grace is equally received in Baptism by Believers.  
 “ —In Baptism the Devil is excluded by the Be-  
 “ liever’s Faith.” When in a single Epistle so much  
 is said of Faith in Baptism, why did not Dr. *Gale*  
 remark upon it, as he did of *Dionysius Alexandrinus*  
 for one Expression, that *Cyprian* talk’d like a Man  
 that did not so much as dream of Infant Baptism?

It would be easy to fill a large Volume with such  
 Quotations from later Authors, who are confessed to  
 abet and practise Infant Baptism; but a very few  
 shall serve my turn. Out of St. *Jerom* Dr. *Gale*  
 himself has produced a Sentence requiring Faith in  
 those that come to Baptism. St. *Basil. de Spir. Sancto*  
*prope fin.* has these remarkable Words; “ Faith and  
 “ Baptism are two Means of obtaining Salvation,  
 “ connate and inseparable from one another; be-  
 “ cause Faith is perfected by Baptism, and Baptism  
 “ is founded on Faith.” And a little after, “ Pro-  
 “ fession of Faith goes before, leading to Salvation,  
 “ but Baptism follows sealing our Consent.” St.  
*Austin, de Fide & Oper. cap. 20.* thus teaches; “ The  
 “ Method of the Cure is this, that the Persons to be  
 “ baptized believe in God the Father, Son, and Holy  
 “ Ghost, after the manner wherein the Creed is de-  
 “ livered, and that they act a Repentance from dead  
 “ Works, and doubt not but they shall receive a  
 “ full Remission of past Sins in Baptism.” *Greg.*  
*Nyssen. de Bapt. p. 219.* says, “ All Water is fit  
 “ for the Use of Baptism, if it finds Faith in the  
 “ Recipient, and has the Benediction of the Priest.”  
*Optatus* also somewhere has this Sentence, “ Not  
 “ the Gift of the Minister, but the Holy Trinity,  
 “ operates in the Sacrament (of Baptism) with  
 “ which do concur the Faith and Profession of Be-  
 “ lievers.” And at this Day our own Church teaches  
 in her Catechism, “ That Faith and Repentance are  
 “ required of Persons to be baptiz’d.”

True it is that *Pædo-Baptist* Writers, when they discourse on that Subject, whether they be antient or modern, consider only the general Theory of Baptism, as it was at first instituted, and as it was usually taught and practised upon the Conversion of Infidels; and upon those Views alone they have form'd their Speculations, without descending to the particular Methods of its Application to different Subjects. So they give us its general Idea in its sublimest Height and Administration, and talk of it in the same Language the Apostles did, and the holy Fathers before *St. Cyprian*. The Design of those Fathers was to instruct Persons of Discretion, who came over to them from Unbelievers, and who were then their proper Catechumens, what their Duties were both before and after Baptism; but they had a great deal more Prudence than to prescribe the same Laws and Lessons unto Infants, to be personally executed by themselves: And this unfolds the deep Mystery, which the *Baptists* can never understand, because they will not. Conclude therefore they must, that *Cyprian, Jerom, Austin, Basil, Nyssen, Optatus*, with many thousand more, and the Church of *England* also, are and were entirely against baptizing Infants, for speaking as they do of Faith in Baptism; or else they must confess that the Argument of *Dr. Gale*, and others of their Sect, fetch'd from the first Fathers and the Holy Scriptures, and running on the same Ground, against the Baptism of Infants, cannot weigh so much as a single Feather.

I shall here beg leave to resume, tho' out of Place, a Passage of *Dr. Gale* too slightly past over in my *Reply to Tasher*, p. 36. where I was endeavouring to shew how our Adversaries Principles lead to Deism; for this I now think necessary in order to make a fuller Discovery of their Sentiments, and their direct Tendency to overthrow the Necessity and Benefit

Benefit of revealed Religion. Mr. *Wall* had set down this Position: "That the only Way, at least the  
" only known and ordinary Way, to the Kingdom  
" of Glory, is by being of *Christ's* Church." Upon which the Doctor, *Let. XI. p. 412.* is pleased to advance these Reflections: "As if a Person had  
" no more to do, but to get into the Church by  
" Baptism, and he would be safe enough; for no  
" more can be needful to make him safe, but to  
" get into the only Way. And, as if a Man, on  
" the other hand, though ever so innocent and exact  
" in all Things else, could nevertheless have  
" no Salvation, only for want of a Ceremony, he  
" is utterly a Stranger to, or can't attain. I don't  
" know where our Author learn'd this charitable  
" Divinity; for I am sure neither the Scriptures  
" nor the Light of Nature, teach any such dreadful  
" Doctrines."

Neither do I know what to admire most, whether it be the Craft or Weakness of these Reflections. His Author says, the only Way to Glory, is to be within the Church of *Christ*; and I believe the Gospel says much the same a hundred Times over, or what is all one, makes it necessary; and we know no Door of Entrance into the Church of *Christ's* Appointment besides Christian Baptism. But by what Logic will it follow, that when we are once got into the right and only Way, we have no more to do, but are well and safe in that Posture? Are we to stand still there, and not to travel on, if ever we will come to our Journey's End? If a Man's Work and Business was within an House, and one should tell him standing without, your only Way is to get in at the Door; is the Work done by his Entrance in, and staring about? Did Dr. *Gale* therefore think, that by our saying, You must get into the Church, as your only Way to eternal Glory; we intended nothing at all to be done in the Church,  
but

but to sit still and look about, and we are saved? So *Christ* called the Loiterers into his Vineyard, but did he call them to loiter there, and so receive their Wages? Ought not a Man of the Doctor's Sense to have been ashamed of such pitiful Trifling, or rather wilful Calumniating of our Doctrine?

Neither is this the worst of it yet; but see what material Expressions he has overlook'd, I should have said, designedly left out, to make Room for his spiteful Cavils. His Author had cautiously delivered his Sense; That the only Way, at least the only known and ordinary Way to the Kingdom of Glory, is by being of *Christ's* Church. Why were those little Words, *the only Way*, greedily catch'd and fasten'd upon by the Doctor, while that significant Clause, *at least the only known and ordinary Way*, that came to qualify them, was discounted from the Author, except it was foreseen, it would spoil the Design of a pleasing Descant, contrived to gravel and expose him? Is this an honest Art, to curtail and mangle an Adversary's Sentence, that Trophies may be raised on a Fragment? Dangerous Dealers are such Disputants, who after this Rate may make us speak Ribaldry, Treason, Blasphemy, or whatever they have a Mind. Or was the Sentence dock'd, and those material Words omitted through Inadvertency? Surely the Doctor could not be so blind as not to know what he saw with his Eyes, and just then wrote with his Fingers; therefore shall I not stick to charge him Home with the Consequence of his Doctrine; for if People will undertake to write controversial Books, they ought to have a better Guard on their Thoughts and Pens than this comes to, or else expect to be deservedly lash'd, when they can wrongfully and cruelly lash their Neighbours. And so to prosecute what I intend.

That

That being in the Church of *Christ*, is at least the only known and ordinary Way to the Kingdom of Glory, was Mr. *Wall's* Position. This Dr. *Gale* has rejected and censured as an uncharitable, unscriptural, unreasonable, and dreadful Doctrine. For what Allowance God will make for the Want of a Ceremony, that is not known, or cannot be attain'd, is out of the Question; and is neither the Doctor's nor my Business to enquire into, but closely to follow our own Rules, and leave God alone to judge the World. That Ceremony is not in the Quotation, as here laid down, but we know who dragg'd it in to raise an Odium; though it were easy enough even so to wash it off. The only Question therefore now is, whether being in the Christian Church, is at least the only known and ordinary Way to eternal Salvation? Here we affirm, but the Doctor denies, and tries to load our Notion with odious Circumstances. Now the known and ordinary Way to any Place, is that which is most plain and common, and supposed to carry Passengers with most Conveniency to the End of their Voyage. Such a Way to Heaven is the Church of *Christ*, nor is there a Way more plain, direct, and safe to any Town in *Europe*; upon which Account we affirm it to be the only known and ordinary Way unto Salvation.

Our holy Religion is in some Respects extraordinary, not only for the Excellency of its Nature, but for the stupendous Methods of its Foundation and Establishment: But being once planted and settled, the Belief and Practice of it must be now in spite of Atheism, Deism, and Heresy, the only known and ordinary Course to eternal Life. If there be any other Way to this End, it must be unknown to us, because not revealed; and it must be extraordinary too, because it wholly depends on uncovenanted and prerogative Grace, the Methods and Measures

Measures whereof God has wholly concealed from our Knowledge.

But seeing Dr. *Gale* denies our being in *Christ's* Church is the only known and ordinary Way to the Kingdom of Glory, and clogs the Doctrine with Aggravations, he must have some other Way in his Thoughts that better deserves the Name; and where will he seek that Way out of the Church, except among *Jews, Turks, or Gentiles?* If it be said still to be within the Church in Faith and Christian Practice; this will be nothing but Caption and Cavilling; for being in the Church always implies that, and his Adversary and we do always affirm it necessary in all that have Faculties for the Performance. Wherefore if the Doctor by denying our being in *Christ's* Church to be the ordinary Way to Heaven, must have another Way in his Head that carries People as commonly, safely, and directly thither; the unavoidable Consequence will be this: That in Respect to Salvation People had as good be out of, as within the Church; because they are altogether as safe without, and as near to Heaven. And does not this mightily derogate from the Honour of Christianity and revealed Religion, by opening a Gap to the Latitudinarian Scheme of Infidelity?

There is a Subdivision of the *Baptists*, who have published a Confession of Faith in the Name of an hundred of their Congregations, and upwards, whose Doctrine denies Salvation to all Unbelievers of the holy Scriptures; because, say they, “ The Light  
“ of Nature, and the Works of Creation and Pro-  
“ vidence, — are not sufficient to give that Know-  
“ ledge of God and his Will, which is necessary un-  
“ to Salvation. — But the Scripture makes the full  
“ Discovery of the only Way of Salvation.” *Chap. 1.*  
And *Chap. 10.* “ As they that are not elected —  
“ cannot be saved; much less can Men that receive  
“ not



“ not the Christian Religion be saved, be they never so diligent to frame their Lives according to the Light of Nature, and the Law of that Religion they do profess.” It is superfluous to seek any farther. Granted it must be, that many Millions of Souls since the Gospel was preached, never heard of the Scriptures and the Christian Religion. Might not the Doctor hereupon wonder where his Brethren learn’d this charitable Divinity, that denies Salvation to the most innocent and exact Livers, for want of a Revelation they were utterly Strangers to, and could not attain; yea, and for want of an Election too, which they could no more command than they could remove Mountains? For sure he was that neither the Scriptures, nor the Light of Nature taught them any such dreadful Doctrines. And what is yet harder, innocent Infants also, that are not elected, must come into the same Class of Reprobation and Damnation, according to the Principles of those Brethren. Such is the Agreement in Doctrine between our Adversaries; who, it seems, have two contradictory Sets of religious Articles, that cannot possibly both be true; and therefore I know not whom they were designed for, except the one for *Peter*, and the other for *Simon Magus*.

To bring Scandal and Ignominy on Infant Baptism, our Antagonists try to insinuate into Peoples Heads, that it came into the Church together with Popery, and is therefore of no better Stamp than an Antichristian Corruption. But they who talk after this wild Rate, talk like Men who know not what Popery is, nor when it began; for certain I am it did not begin in the third Century, in which it is falsely affirmed Infant Baptism was introduced, much less sooner. For the Tumours and Fastuousness, the secular Poms, Riches, and Grandeur of After-ages had not then invaded the Pontifical Chair at *Rome*. None of the new Articles in the *Tridentine*

Creed enjoyn'd by *Pius IV*, were then received or known in *Christendom*, nor had Superstition and Idolatry the least Footing, nor was Antichristian Tyranny any where erected in the Church. Confessors and Martyrs *Rome* furnish'd in great Plenty among its Bishops and other Clergy, but no domineering Lords over God's Heritage, beside Heathen Rulers. Holy and humble, mortified and self-resign'd were the Prelates there, confining themselves within the Precincts of their own Diocese and Jurisdiction. Orthodox was their Doctrine, upright and pious their Conversation, strict their Discipline, and moderate the Exercise of their Authority. No Church on Earth could boast of better Rule, Order, and Government, which gave it great Credit and Advantage in the Christian World; and though a *Victor* and a *Stephen* very early presumed to ruffle, and stretch themselves beyond their Line, they received their Slights and Checks, and their Blustering about was imputable to their high Spirits and hot Temper, not to any acknowledg'd Prerogative of their See.

They that will trace up Popery as high as the three first Centuries, forget themselves in ascribing to it a great deal more Honour and Authority than it deserves; and in one Respect give it the Ascendant and Preference to Christianity itself, by dating it beyond the Conversion of the Empire. In defending our Religion against the Church of *Rome*, we bring the Rise of Popery as low as we can, to beat it out of Countenance in its impudent Pretensions to a venerable Antiquity. But the *Baptists* and some others, in their Disputes against our Church, run it up into the first Ages, as if they intended to give it Establishment, and make it almost Apostolical. For they little regard what they say or do to maintain a Party-Cause, or odd Hypothesis. But enough of these Reflections; only the common Observation will be true, that when a Cause issues in  
Reproaches,

Reproaches, 'tis a Sign that Reasons begin to fail.

I have reserved Tradition on Purpose for the Conclusion of this Treatise, and shall now take it into Consideration; for against Tradition our Adversaries clamour, as if we made it our main, if not only Foundation for Infant Baptism; because we recur to the Testimonies of the ancient Fathers, to prove it was the constant Custom of *Christ's* Church in the primitive Times to baptize Infants; and this is branded with the infamous Name of a *Papists* Proof.

To make sure and strong Work on his Side, Dr. Gale alledges the Doctrine of our own Church against Traditions, and the Words of our Lord, arrainging the Scribes and Pharisees in their *teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men, and worshipping God in vain by their Traditions.* And *Let. VI. p. 230.* he passes upon us this smart Reflection: "They will discard Tradition when 'tis against them, but if it serve to support any Doctrine or Usage they are fond of, then it must be admitted."

Our Church indeed, *Artic. of Relig. 6.* declares; "That whatsoever is not read in the holy Scriptures, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any Man, that it should be believed as an Article of Faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to Salvation." But an Article of Faith, like those comprised in our Creed, we do not make of Infant Baptism, nor do we hold it indispensably necessary to Salvation; though we believe it is proved by sound Consequences from the holy Scriptures.

Also the Traditions of the *Roman* Church in Matters of Doctrine controverted and rejected by us, we justly discard; because they are so far from being authorized by Scripture, and the first Fathers for three or four Centuries at least, that most, if not all of them, are manifestly repugnant to the same. But whatsoever Doctrines are solidly deduced from Scripture, and taught by Fathers, or Councils of the first

first Ages, those we receive and embrace; and among them the Baptism of Infants in particular. Could any Doctrine be fully demonstrated to be delivered by *Christ*, or his Apostles, by Word of Mouth, though not written in the sacred Volumes, that Doctrine we would also receive, by reason their Tongues were as authentic and infallible as their Pens, in preaching the Word of God; but as that cannot be done, so we admit of no such Doctrines or Traditions that pretend unto it. Yet in Matters of external Polity, Discipline, Ceremonies, and such indifferent Things, as are no ways determined by holy Writ, we are not so fast pinion'd and tied up, but we can either follow or forsake Tradition, according as we are directed by prudential Rules; for in such Cases we claim the Liberty of Discretion; vested in all free and independent Churches. *Art. 34.* So we discard, or admit Tradition, as Reason guides us to do either.

*Christ* also censur'd and condemn'd Traditions in the Scribes and Pharisees. Very true, but what Sort of Traditions were they which he so censured? Traditions they were which in his own Time were grown abundantly too numerous, and grievous to be born, though afterwards they multiplied beyond all Measure; Traditions which laid aside the Commandments of God, to make Room for their own Observance, and one in particular which directly made his holy Law of none Effect; Traditions which aspired to become essential Parts of divine Worship; and Traditions which *taught for Doctrines the Commandments of Men*; that is, Traditions which claiming a divine Original, did in Point of Authority rival God's Laws, and often aim at a superior Dignity. Such Traditions as these our blessed Lord condemn'd, and we condemn them too.

But was he absolutely against all Traditions in Matters relating to the external Regiment of the Church?

Church? If he was, how came it about that he allowed the Scribes and Pharisees to sit in *Moses Seat*, when they were neither Priests nor Prophets, I mean at least not all of them Priests, and when it will puzzle all the *Baptists* on Earth, to shew what divine Commission advanced them to the Doctor's Chair? And why did he and *St. Paul* acknowledge the Authority of those High Priests, who were promoted and deposed by the arbitrary Pleasure of Civil Governours, though God's sacred Law had from the Beginning made their Function hereditary, and a Settlement for Life? Or was our Lord against all Rituals and Forms of public Devotion, that were of human Invention and Composure? If so, why then did he join in and practise all the Synagogue Worship, which had no other Original or Foundation, but what was human? Will these innocent and conscientious People that oppose Infant Baptism, make our Saviour's Doctrine and Practice to contradict one another, for to palliate and support their own precarious Tenets? When therefore *Dr. Gale* urged the Authority of *Christ*, and of our Church, against all Traditions, he used a notorious Fallacy in Logic, by taking their Sentence in an absolute and unlimited Sense, when they meant them only in a restrained Sense, or in some particular Regards alone; which in the Logicians own Language, is to argue *à dicto secundum quid ad dictum simpliciter*: A Liberty which would sadly pervert the divine Laws, in many whereof Restrictions and Exceptions are necessary to be understood, though they be not expressed. And as I take his Reflections to be as compleat a Piece of Sophistry as has been lately printed, so am I satisfied that was it not for the Help of such pitiful Sophisms as this is which I have now noted, our Adversaries must drop the most specious Topics, wherewith they labour to implead the Baptism of Infants.

'Tis dishonourable, I own, to insult the Ashes of the Dead; but I spared not the Doctor when he was living, with a Design of instigating him to become mine Antagonist, which I wished very heartily. Now he is gone, at length a pert *Myrmidon* is started in his stead, to take up the Gauntlet against me, who talks as greatly as if he alone could storm a Castle, when he acts as weakly as if he was scarce able to kill a Flea. I love to mortify such pragmatical Men for their rude Insolence in abusing their Betters, and presuming to dictate and impose their own Singularities on the Christian World; and to make them know their Master at the Argument. But to return:

Tradition is not among Things which we call *mala per se*, or evil in their own Nature; but is of a neuter and indifferent Kind, that may be good or bad, according as it is used. Surely *St. Paul* did not utterly proscribe all Traditions, when he gave the Church of *Christ* this Injunction: *My Brethren, stand fast and hold the Traditions which ye have been taught, whether by Word, or our Epistle*, 2 *Theff. ii. 15.* Again, says he, *I praise you Brethren, — that you do keep the Ordinances*, (*παράδοσεις*, Traditions in the Greek) *as I delivered them to you*, 1 *Cor. xi. 2.* The whole System of the Evangelical Doctrine was at first a Tradition, as being delivered by Word of Mouth only for some Years before it was committed to Writing, and many Years before the Code of the New Testament was compleatly finish'd.

Nor can I see how *Dr. Gale* himself could be so violently set against all Tradition, except some Words of his already cited, escaped him unawares. For *Let. XI. p. 305.* he thus observes of *Daillé* and others, who ran down the ancient Fathers; “ That  
 “ they made an ill Return to them, for their hav-  
 “ ing been so instrumental in transmitting to us the  
 “ Knowledge of our most holy Religion. And  
 “ there

“ there is yet a greater Evil attends this Method ;  
“ for all the Abuses and Affronts put upon the Fa-  
“ thers of the three first Centuries, do in the End  
“ reflect on Christianity itself, which those great  
“ Men have handed down, and which must needs  
“ be, in some degree, of but doubtful Authority,  
“ if it depends on insufficient Testimonies.”

What is this but in other Expressions to recom- mend Tradition, though he would not directly name the Word, because he bore it a Vatinian Hatred? For our most holy Religion was instrumentally transmitted and handed down by the first Fathers, and the Indignities offered them reflect on Christianity itself, because in some degree the Authority of it must be rendered dubious, if their Testimonies be insufficient, on which it much depends.

He is undoubtedly right in these Notions ; for I think it demonstrable, that all of us have no other solid and substantial Evidence for the Truth of our Religion beside Tradition ; which is the same Thing with the Testimonies of the Fathers, and Church of *Christ* in all Ages, who have bore Witness to it, and transmitted it down to our Hands from Time to Time. What will our Adversaries do then? Will they fly in the Face of all Tradition, traduce and stigmatize it for rank Popery, that they may exclaim against Infant Baptism, as grounded in part on that Bottom, when they shall see their whole Religion chiefly grounded on the same Evidence? However let us have a fair Hearing, and I shall hope to shew, that the Proof of Christianity depends principally at least on Tradition or Testimony, in these two Respects.

1. The holy Scriptures were penn'd in Languages, that are understood by very few Christians in these Days and Regions ; the Old Testament in the *Hebrew* Tongue, and a small Part of it in *Chaldee* ; and the New in *Greek*. What a little Handful of

Christian People in our Parts know any thing at all of these Languages, comparatively with those that do not? Among the *Baptist* Teachers 'tis rare to find a Man who pretends to any Skill in those Original Tongues. Must not they therefore, and Abundance more, take the Words and Sense of Scripture, and consequently the whole Knowledge of their Religion, upon Trust, while they entirely depend on the Translator's Abilities and Faithfulness in rendering those Sacred Books into such Languages as they can understand? And what is this but to receive their Religion by Tradition from other Mens Hands? As they also who cannot read, receive it wholly from other Mens Mouths; and must therefore either hold to Tradition, or be altogether without the Knowledge of Christianity. True it is, that Men who understand the Languages well, have carefully examined the Translations, comparing them with the Originals; and have thereupon given Testimony to the Accuracy and Fidelity of the Translations in the main. But those Examiners are still no more than Men; and so all together can give us no more than a human Testimony. Thus are we always where we were before, and must rely on Men for the Knowledge of our Religion. They deliver it to us, and we receive it at their Hands; and what to make of this beside Tradition, I am not able to apprehend.

2. We never saw the inspired Authors compose and write the several Books attributed to them, and therefore cannot know that they ever penn'd them, but by the Tradition and concurrent Testimony of the Church, especially in the first and earliest Ages. In this Disquisition I shall confine my self to the New Testament only, which will suffice for my present purpose, because in it the Christian Religion is compris'd. The several Pieces contained in that whole Volume must be indicted by Inspiration of the



Holy Ghost, or we can never acknowledge their Divine Authority; and that their Writers were so inspired, they themselves gave ample Evidence in the time wherein they lived and wrote. But that they were really the Persons who penn'd the respective Pieces to which they stand intitled, or that these Pieces were indeed composed by inspired Men, is impossible for us to be assured of at this distance, but by the Testimonies of competent Witnesses who lived in or near those times, and must needs know the Truth of Facts. They bore Evidence to these sacred Writings, which from thenceforth has been handed down by an uninterrupted Tradition to late Posterity. This is the Evidence that ascertains all antient Books and Records to their proper Authors; and they who will not acquiesce in the same for the Gospel Writings, are to be neglected as extremely partial and unreasonable.

Upon this Foundation was that famous Declaration of St. *Austin* grounded; "That was it not for the Church's Authority, he would not believe the Gospel." Whereby he meant only the Authority of her Testimony in bearing witness to the Canonical Books of the New Testament, as written by their Authors thro' Inspiration of the Holy Ghost, tho' the *Romanists* have detorted it into a different Sense; and to that Sentence of the holy Father, as he understood and intended it, I entirely subscribe.

No *Papist* was that extraordinary Man *Gerard Vossius*, who yet in the Preface to his Dissertation *de Geneal. Christi*, declares his Judgment in these words, as I shall render them into our own Tongue: "Whence do we gather those Books which make up the Canon of the Scripture, to proceed from the Prophets and Apostles, but that as among the Nations some held forth a Torch to others, so, and a great deal more surely, the Church, the

“ faithful Guardian of the Scriptures, has delivered  
 “ these same, as from Hand to Hand, to us? Nor  
 “ ought any one to be offended at this, that I speak  
 “ of the Scriptures as Traditions, since these lead the  
 “ van among those things which the Apostles have  
 “ delivered.”

It was the *Laodicean Council*, assembled out of diverse *Asian Provinces*, Anno 364, that settled the Canon of the New Testament, the *Apocalypse* alone being overlook'd, or some way or other left out of the Canon, which how it came to pass, I will not pretend to divine and conjecture; and the Canons of that Council were afterwards received into the Code of the universal Church. Before that time several Pieces that are now Canonical Scripture, were questioned, if not discarded, by some, and admitted by others, till that Council, on good Evidence and mature Deliberation, took them all into the sacred Code, one alone omitted, but not rejected. And this, in Conjunction with the Testimonies of antienter Writers, is the Authority of the Church, upon which the Canonical Books of the New Testament, as composed by inspired Penmen, have been ever since received, and together with them the whole of *Christ's Religion*.

Should we propose to the *Baptists* this Question; How do ye know all the Books of the New Testament to be the Word of God? Or, by virtue of what Evidence and Authority do ye believe they were written by the Persons whose Names they bear, or by any others that were influenced by Divine Inspiration? Perhaps they might return some other Answer, which they could never justify; but I am well assured they could return no rational and sufficient one but this; That those Books are receiv'd all over the Christian World for the infallible Word of God, and have been so in all antecedent Ages. Their Fathers believ'd, affirm'd and recommended those

those Books to them as such, as their Forefathers also did; so do their spiritual Guides; so do their Neighbours, Strangers, and the whole Church of *Christ* believe and affirm; and this has been the stedfast Persuasion and Asseveration of former Ages from the Apostles down to the present times. As I take this to be true Case, what can it be but to receive those holy Volumes upon Trust from the Testimony and Tradition of the Church, and by Consequence, all our Christianity?

I can think but of two ways to evade this Conclusion, and prove all the Gospel Writings to be Divine.

One whereof is, that a Spirit of Enthusiasm possessing some People, they have a short and easy Method to satisfy themselves that the Scripture is of Divine Authority; for the inward Suggestions of the Holy Ghost testify and insure it to their Consciences, and his Testimony is with them the Seal of all Divine Truths. But this Method lies open to Illusions from their own Fancies, from the Attempts of Men, and I doubt also from the Injections of evil Spirits. Had these Men any certain and unerring Marks, whereby to distinguish the Impressions of the Holy Ghost from their own Thoughts, Imaginations, Persuasions, and foreign Impressions, they might possibly have something real to rely upon; but now all these presumed Insurances of God's Spirit may be no more than their own Actings, Sentiments, and Convictions, to omit other Suggestions; and then their inward Evidences will, in the Result and Upshot, amount to no more than this, That they believe the Scripture is God's Word, because they believe it. Or should we grant their inward Insurances to be good and true, yet it would be an Evidence to themselves alone, and to no living Soul besides; because no Body has a Lanthorn into their Hearts, there to read those Impressions, and therefore it is

wholly useles to other Men, and can never prove the Authority of Scripture to Unbelievers, or to any one else that feels not those pretended Insurances in himself.

The other Method of proving the Scripture to be God's Word, I deny not to be rational, provided it would reach the End, and warrant the Conclusion. For conceived it is, there are these intrinsic Characters and divine Criterions stamp'd on the holy Scriptures, and every where interwoven with the Body them, that they do abundantly demonstrate themselves to come from God. Thus the *Baptists, Confess. of Faith, ch. 1.* " The Heavenliness of the  
 " Matter, the Efficacy of the Doctrine, and the  
 " Majesty of the Style, the Consent of all the Parts,  
 " the Scope of the whole (which is to give all Glory  
 " to God) the full Discovery it makes of the only  
 " Way of Man's Salvation, and many other in-  
 " comparable Excellencies, and intire Perfections  
 " thereof, are Arguments whereby it doth abun-  
 " dantly evidence itself to be the Word of God." And with them Dr. *Calamy* strikes in with a squint Eye on our Proof of Diocesan Episcopacy from Tradition, which in the Pride of a true Schismatical Spirit he swells and puffs at, as if with a Blast of Breath he could blow it clean away. Of the inimitable Majesty, and other exalted Perfections of Scripture he talks aloft, as the only true and right Expedient to prove its Divinity, hoping with a magisterial Air, and a few enterprizing Words, to dictate his Sentiments to all the World, and carry the Cause without Contradiction; *Pref. to Sermon at the Aylesbury Ordination*, as I remember; for I lent the Sermon out some Years ago, and could never retrieve it yet.

The Eulogies and Commendations given those sacred Volumes we heartily embrace, and profess our holy Religion to be the most suitable for God to  
 give

give, and Men to receive; which ought to confirm us strongly in the Belief and Practice of Christianity, into the Profession whereof we are already brought by other solid Arguments. Yet can we not admit the Doctor's Topics alone a sufficient Proof of the whole Scripture's Divine Authority to Persons who disbelieve them.

For agreeably to God's Intent, the Christian Religion should be universal; while all Mankind are to be won over to its Profession by such rational and convincing Arguments as will leave them self-condemn'd, if after a full and fair Proposal they be rejected; and of those Arguments we are provided with a large Stock from foreign and extrinsic Considerations, which God has afforded us for Credentials; whereunto intrinsic Arguments also will add their Suffrage, and so come in as a proper Subsidy.

Dr. *Calamy's* Task is therefore to prove those Books to be God's lively Oracles to all Infidels; and would he seriously engage in that noble Undertaking, clearly to demonstrate from their own inherent Worth, the whole Scriptures could never proceed from human Contrivance, but every Piece and Part in that sacred Code must needs be penn'd by Divine Inspiration, so that all Infidels on the Perusal of his Work, must either yield to the Evidence, or be self-condemned for resisting so strong a Light; he would do better Service to the Cause of Christianity than he can otherwise do, in case he might live to the Age of *Methuselah*. And was I a Christian Monarch, I should venture these Men a hundred Years, and a hundred Pounds a Week, to perform the Work, upon Condition of refunding on Failure and Non-performance. Knowing *M. Abbadie's* Principles, I expected in him some Efforts of this kind to give Satisfaction, but came off with Disappointment. Other Arguments he has manag'd well enough; but when he comes to the Proof of the sacred Books by  
their

their intrinsic Characters of Divinity, he flags, and falls into the beaten Track of producing Scripture Passages, and remarking upon them; that such Notions could never enter into Mens Heads, except they had been revealed from above: Which does the Business, and infers the Conclusion indeed, provided we will all stand to his Judgment and Affirmation.

We read, 1 Cor. ii. 9, 10. *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither have enter'd into the Heart of Man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him; but God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit.* Whence it may seem to follow, that the sublime and mysterious things contained in Scripture must needs flow from a divine Original and Revelation, as being quite out of the reach of human Invention, and this proves them to be the Oracles of Heaven, and consequently our Religion to be grounded on divine Inspiration. What it undeniably proves I think is this and no more, That those things could never be revealed and ascertain'd to us for Divine Truths, but by the powerful Demonstrations of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit revealed them indeed, but that which made them the true Objects of our Faith, and riveted them fast in our Minds and Hearts, was the Ratification he gave them by external Testimonials, which certified the Authority of his *Amanuenses*. Lay this Evidence aside, and I doubt the bare Discovery and Publication of them will hardly assure us of their Divinity, since it is most notorious, that very strange and unaccountable Notions may come into the plodding Heads of Mankind; as appears by the Vagaries of the old wild Heretics and modern Enthusiasts, and by the great Variety of Romances, Novels, Travels, *Utopia's*, Worlds in the Moon, and other chimerical Projects of human Invention, to say nothing of the Dreams and Fictions of the Church of *Rome*. I own these things for the  
far

far greatest part are of a very different Nature from those contained in our holy Religion; which proceeds, because the Authors put their Brains to work on different Subjects. But let these be ever so ingeniously wrought and laid together, yet will they not be received for Truths, much less for Divine Oracles, any more than the Stories and Theology of *Hesiod* and the *Alcoran*, because they will always want the necessary Credentials.

God forbid I should ever question the superlative Excellency of the Scripture Revelations, which is their high and peculiar Recommendation; but I cannot take it alone to be a full and sufficient Demonstration of their Divine Authority to Unbelievers. And therefore barely to flourish on the holy Scriptures in loose Harangues, or in high and lofty Expressions, before a Christian Congregation, who are already persuaded of their Truth, recommends and enforces indeed, but proves nothing in the way of close Reasoning. For the Orator's or Encomiast's Office is very different from that of the Logician, and they have no less different Ends in view; the one addressing to the Affections of Men by such Topics as may move and persuade, the other speaking to their Understandings by such rational Arguments as should convince. Reasons therefore must prove the Scriptures to be God's Word, rambling Panegyrics apart till that is done. I am told the *Mahometans* can rhetoricate in high-flown Praises of their *Alcoran*, as we do on the holy Bible, and believe they have Truth to bear them out; yet does this prove no more than their strong Prejudice in Delusion. For Mankind have different Tastes of Worth and Excellency, but right Reason is always uniform.

When the Primitive Church, and the *Laodicean* Council in particular, settled the Canon of the New Testament, they grounded not themselves in that Affair solely or chiefly on Arguments resulting from

from the Contents and intrinsic Characters of the several Books admitted into that Canon; but they relied on the *Autographa*, or original authentic Copies, together with the Testimony of ancienter Writers, in fixing that sacred Canon: For certain it is those *Autographa* were extant in *Tertullian's* Time, as he affirms, *Præscript. Hæret. cap. 36.* And most probable it is, that very many, if not all of them, were preserved till that Council sate, considering the Veneration and high Value laid upon them by the Christian Church in those Days as the most precious Monuments.

Had the Church some time before, and the Fathers then assembled, thro' Mistake received into the Canon the Epistles of *Clem. Romanus*, *Barnaby*, *Ignatius* or *Polycarp*, asserting them to be divinely inspired, seeing the extraordinary Operations of God's Spirit were not intirely ceased when they were written, I believe *Dr. Calamy*, after so long and universal a Reception, would at this time of day be hard put to his shifts to prove them uncanonical, or to demonstrate by intrinsic Arguments from the Epistles themselves, that they ought all and every one be struck out of the Code of holy Scripture. And the same Difficulty he must encounter with to prove by the same sort of Arguments, that certain Parts which are now in the New Testament, but were once rejected or controverted by some very early Writers, ought to be admitted into the Canon, supposing that in all former times they had been left out, and we had now perfect Copies of the same. Certain it is, that those old venerable Heads, which then denied or called them into Question, could see none of those internal, bright, and conspicuous Characters of Divinity in them, which now the Doctor clearly sees with his new Spectacles; otherwise they could never have scrupled their Authority: So that he must either quit his fond Method of proving



ving the Scriptures to be God's Word, or else pronounce those antient Worthies to be stark blind. Were they at this day alive, he could never by his Topics prove unto them those Pieces to be divinely inspired; how then can he by the same Topics prove the Divine Authority of the whole Scriptures unto Infidels?

It can do the Doctor no Service in the Case, to alledge the stupendous Miracles, Accomplishments of Prophecies, and other strange Facts recorded in the New Testament to evince the Divine Authority of its Volumes; because the Credit and Truth of the Records themselves must be first proved before we can believe the Truth of Facts therein contain'd.

Again, I hope the Doctor is for retaining the whole Scriptures, without giving away a single Book, Chapter, or scarce a Verse. Suppose then, tho' it will be hardly granted, he could by his Method prove many Parts or Passages of that sacred Code, to be penn'd by Divine Inspiration; yet since those Passages cannot ascertain all the rest to be of the same Original, how does he know but they may be the Additions of Men, seeing that is a thing but too possible? To skreen himself from this Stroke, he must not have recourse to the Testimonies of former Ages, nor the Vigilance of the Church over the holy Scriptures, by reason that would be appealing to Tradition, and sheltring his Head by human Authority, which he cannot endure for certain Reasons that affect his Cause. Nor must he alledge God's Providence as concern'd in keeping those Volumes pure and intire, because we must be first assured they are the Word of God, before his Providence could be engaged in their Preservation. Neither can I see any Reason why Divine Providence, without the Care and Watchfulness of the Church, should be interested by extraordinary means to keep the Scriptures from being interpolated; any more than

than it is by the same Means to keep our holy Faith uncorrupted by Heretics, or the Church undivided by Schismatics, or the Lives of Christian People untainted by abominable Sins and Vices: For on miraculous Expedients we must not depend, when ordinary Methods are sufficient.

Should Tradition be absolutely disbanded, how could we ever fix the *Æra* of Christianity, which is now laid four Years lower than it ought to be by *Dionysius Exiguus's* Mistake, who first placed it where it is? Never could we come within a Thousand Years of our Saviour's Birth, Life, and Death, was it not for History and Chronological Computations, which are the Devices and Traditions of Men. And in case the Scriptures could be really proved by themselves, yet should we be at a Loss for their true Authors, and quote *Paul* for *Peter*, and both perhaps instead of *James* or some other Apostle, unless we think Names could never be inserted without Divine Inspiration. Nay, we must render all Facts dubious and uncertain from the Creation down to our own Memories, by utterly discarding Tradition; so that this must introduce a most miserable Scepticism into the World; for it is the Tradition of Facts, and not of Doctrines, that is now in Agitation. And innumerable more of Inconveniences must attend the Method of our Adversaries.

But though the Primitive Church and Fathers shall not have the Honour of bearing Witness to the divine Authority of the New Testament, and ascertaining its Composure by inspired Penmen; yet can the Doctor never deny that the whole Bulk and Body of it was conveyed down to us through their Hands, and those of the Church in all intermediate Ages: So we have it still, and all our Christianity with it, by Tradition from our Fathers; to whose Care in preserving them, we are beholden for the  
Fulness

Fulness and Integrity of the Scriptures. For when many other valuable Tracts of Antiquity have been irretrievably lost, and sunk in the devouring Womb of Time, still has the Word of God been safely transmitted to us through the Iron Ages of Ignorance and Barbarism, introduced by the Invasions of the Northern Nations, and Ruin of the Empire, which made way for the Incroachments of the *Roman* Pontiff. And thus far are we certainly indebted to the superstitious and idolatrous Church of *Rome* for the Word of God; and if, as our Adversaries object, it be a Blot and Blemish on our Episcopal Ordinations, that we received them immediately, or rather intermediately, from *Rome*, it must be likewise a Blot on the holy Scriptures and our whole Religion, because they so descended to us through the same Hands.

Easy would it be to add more, but that it is Time to put an End to these Speculations. Would Dr. *Calamy* therefore try his Skill in his own Way, to prove the whole New Testament alone to be penn'd by Divine Inspiration, I am satisfied he might soon find himself intangled in a Labyrinth of inextricable Difficulties; and should we venture to put the Merits of the Cause upon that Issue, and he should meet with a smart Opponent to personate Infidels, and nicely examine his vicious Circle of proving the Scriptures by the Scriptures, as he charitably hopes to prove the Validity of his own Orders, by the presum'd Validity of his Ordainers, and so *idem per idem ad infinitum*, I profess my Heart would tremble more for the Word of God, than *Eli's* did for his Ark, lest it should be given up into the Hands of the uncircumcised *Philistines*, and we should lose, if not all, yet the far greater Part of the Holy Scriptures.

From the Premises therefore I do infer, that the Testimony and Tradition of the Church in all Ages,  
espe-

especially in the primitive, is the only firm and incontestable Evidence we can produce for the divine Authority of the Scriptures, and consequently of our whole Religion; in which Respect the Church must unquestionably be allowed, to be the *Pillar and Ground of Truth*, 1 Tim. iii. 15. as she bears Witness to those sacred Writings: And therefore they, who rejecting and denying this Evidence, do build on more fanciful and precarious Arguments, which can establish no more at farthest than a bare Probability, to evince the Authority of those sacred Books, do mightily shake their Credit, and I fear utterly overthrow the Certainty of our Religion, with Regard to its Proofs and Attestations.

And so to conclude; having sufficient Scripture Warrant, deduced by sound Consequences; and having the Testimonies of the ancient Church and Fathers, without one Orthodox Opponent in their Times, for the Practice of Infant Baptism both in Fact and Right, from the Apostles Days down to the third Century, and afterwards; upon these two Sorts of Evidences in Conjunction, I solemnly declare in the Presence of God, before whose awful Tribunal I must shortly appear to give in my Accounts; That I do as stedfastly believe the Infants of Christian Parents ought to be baptized, as I believe the Holy Scriptures to be the Word of God. Vain therefore, I hope, will be the bold Surmises or Prognostications of some *Baptist* Writers; that the Christian World will strike in Time, and give into their Opinion against Infant Baptism. But may they in this their fond Presumption for ever prove as false Prophets, as I know them to be weak and fallacious Disputants, is my hearty Prayers to God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; to whom in the Unity of Substance, and Trinity of Persons, be Glory, Majesty, and Adoration, World without End. *Amen.*







