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A
LETTER
TO A
QUAKER
IN
NORFOLK,

P R O V I N G

That **Water Baptism** is the Ordinance our Saviour (who came down from Heaven to instruct us in the Way thither) has appointed for *One* of the Means of Salvation; without which, *according to the Terms of the Gospel*, we cannot enter into that Kingdom.

In Meekness instructing those that Oppose themselves; if GOD peradventure will give them Repentance to the Acknowledging of the Truth. 2 Tim. ii. 25.

N O R W I C H :

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A
LETTER
 TO A
QUAKER.

Indeed Neighbour !



I WAS well pleased, that you would be so free as to begin a Discourse of **Baptism** with me of *your own Accord*; but the more, at that good Disposition of Mind which inclined you to declare, That could it be shewn, that *Water Baptism was necessary to Salvation*, you should be willing to take it. I think I can do you no greater Act of Friend-
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ship, than to endeavour to rescue you out of the *fatal Errour* you have so long laboured under, and put you in the right Way of *Salvation*, by demonstrating, that *Water Baptism is the Ordinance our Saviour* (who came down from Heaven to instruct us in the Way thither) has appointed for One of the Means of *Salvation*; without which, according to the Terms of the Gospel, we cannot enter into that Kingdom.

To give you a right Notion of this Matter, it will be convenient to shew you, That our Gracious and All-wise *Creator* has revealed and appointed some *Methods* of Salvation in all Ages, whereby He expected the Race of Fallen Man should approach and reconcile themselves to their Offended GOD, in Order to obtain his Favour here in this, and an happy Station in another World.

Our First Parent *Adam* was placed in a State of Happiness in Paradise, but he despising the Riches of God's Goodness towards him transgressed the Law of his Maker, and thereby forfeited his original Righteousness and Felicity; became Subject to Death, and the Sorrows and Inconveniencies of a depraved
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ved and mortal State. In this sad and deplorable Condition he and all his Posterity must for ever have been, had not GOD out of his own Free-will and Mercy took Pity on him, and proposed a Remedy, which he could never have thought of or effected for himself, *viz.* That *though the Devil by Eve had seduced him, there should hereafter arise from the Seed of that very Woman a Blessed Offspring (even Jesus Christ the Messiah) that should ever break the Power of the Devil, destroy his Kingdom, and be the compleat Saviour of all Men that would believe in, and obey him.* Gen. iii. 15.

And to represent to Posterity this future and great Sacrifice of *Christ* the Saviour of the World, *Adam* was ordered to offer some *outward* Thing to GOD's Glory, to remember him of the Redemption to come, and to nourish him and his Children's Faith in that Promise. Accordingly we find his Two Sons *Cain* and *Abel* making Offerings to the Lord of the several Products of their Stock, and and that GOD by a visible Token accepted and was well pleased with the Design and Way of addressing Him.

This was the *first Method* GOD appointed for the Recovery of Fallen Man.

When the Earth had been overflown and drowned by the Waters for the Iniquity of the Inhabitants, the first Thing *Noah* did after his going out of the Ark was to build an Altar unto GOD, and to offer unto Him upon it *an Offering of every clean Beast*; making it his first Care to restore the Exercise of Religion, and establish the true Worship of GOD. Hereupon it is recorded, That *the Lord smelled a sweet Savour*, Gen. viii. 21. was highly pleased with this Act of Piety and Gratitude, shewed himself appeased, and his Anger to rest.

Though the Worship of GOD was thus settled by *Noah*, yet in Proceſs of Time Men fell away from it, and *Idolatry* ſo far prevailed, that GOD thought fit for the Preservation of the true Religion to call *Abraham* from the City of *Ur* in *Chaldea*, and ingaged him to fear and ſerve Him: Promiſed him, that he *would bleſs him, and his Seed after him, with numerous Increase and wonderful Succeſſes*: That *He would beſtow*

stow upon him the Land of Canaan ; admit him into an everlasting Covenant with Himself : And that in his Seed all the Families of the Earth should be blessed. Gen. xii. 15, 17.

This was the Original of the *Jewish Church*, into which GOD himself ordered a *Rite of Initiation*, viz. *Circumcision*, whereby all faithful People were received into GOD's Family, made Heirs of the *Covenant*, wherein GOD promised to be *their GOD*, and *they his People*. By this *Rite*, every Son of *Abraham* was to bear in his Body the *Seal* of the Inheritance of the Land of Promise, and the *Badge* of Distinction from all other People ; and this *visible Sign* was to make them strive after the *invisible Grace* which it sealed, the Inheritance of Heaven and walking as the Peculiar of the Lord.

GOD was so strict for the Observance of this *Rite*, that the Neglect of it was threatned with a severe Punishment, no less than Excision or Cutting off that Soul from his People for *breaking his Covenant*. Gen. xvii. 14. Hence we read of the Lord's meeting *Moses* in the Way, and seeking to slay him for not *Circumcising* his Child ; nor was his Anger

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staid, till *Zipporah* took a sharp Stone and Circumcised him. Exod. iv. 24, 25.

Besides *Circumcision*, the *Jews* had another *Rite*, *Baptizing* or *Washing*. They reckoned they were all of them, at their entering into Covenant with GOD at the Time of their receiving the Law in *Mount Sinai*, washed or baptized. So they understood these Words, *Go unto the People and sanctifie them to Day and to Morrow, and let them wash their Cloaths*, Exod. xix. 10. They understood the Meaning of that Command, by which *Moses* was to sanctifie the People on these *Two Days*, to be the *Washing* of them, and so the Word to sanctifie does commonly signifie to wash in the *Jewish* Law, when it is spoken of a Man Sanctifying other Men. They looked upon themselves as having entered into Covenant by *Baptism*. St. Paul said, *All our Fathers were baptized unto Moses*. 1 Cor. x. 2.

They did never receive any into their Covenant, whether that which was most strickt (to which *natural Jews* and *Profelites of Righteousness* were tied) or that which was more lax (with which *Strangers* and *Profelites*

Profelites of the Gates did comply) without a *Baptism* or *Washing*.

Moreover, that it was in use for Persons who were conscious to themselves of having transgressed GOD's Law, being in GOD's Name invited by some *One* of eminent Authority (a *Prophet* or like a *Prophet*, one Commissioned by GOD) unto Repentance and Amendment of Life, to be *washed* by him, in Testimony of their stedfast Purpose to amend, and in Hope to obtain Pardon from GOD of their past Offences and to be reinstated in his Favour, appears probable by *St. John Baptist* his Undertaking and Success. For if the Manner of his Proceeding had been altogether unusual and unknown, so many would not readily (without any Stir or Obstacle) have complied therewith ; especially among the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, those zealous Adherents to traditional Practice ; who to maintain their Credit and Interest with the People, were so averse from all Appearance of Novelty.

But to put it without Doubt, our *Saviour* himself owned *Baptism* as a *Righteous Ordinance* and *Institution* : For when *St. John Baptist*

Baptist

Baptist refused to baptize him, *Christ* argued with him from the *Fitness* of the Action: For as *He* was to be an *Example* to all others, He said it was his Duty to own every *Divine Institution*, and to shew his Readiness to comply with all *Righteous Injunctions*. *Suffer it to be so now*, (let me be baptized by thee) *for thus it becometh us to fullfill all Righteousness*, Mat. iii. 15. The Word *Us* in this Place, must mean *Me and all the People of GOD*.

Nay afterwards, when there was to be no more Distinction between the Children of *Abraham* and other People, and no one Land more particularized than another; but of every Land or Nation, he that feared GOD and worked Righteousness was to be accepted of him; he took away *Circumcision* the *Badge of Appropriation*, and *Seal of Singularity*, and commanded *Baptism* to be settled in its Room, as the initiating *Rite* or *Entrance* into his Church, and the *Door* of Salvation.

Jesus came and spake unto them (his Disciples) saying, *All Power is given unto me in Heaven and in Earth. Go ye therefore and*

and teach all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

Teaching them to observe all Things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you, alway even unto the End of the World. Mat. xxviii. 18, 19, 20.

You *Quakers* say, *The Baptism* here mentioned is not *Water Baptism*; but the *Baptism of the Spirit or Holy Ghost*. But I hope to make it plain to you, that it was not the *Baptism of the Spirit or Holy Ghost*, but *Water Baptism*; and that *Water Baptism* is the initiating Rite by which all true Believers ought to enter into the Church of Christ, and is made and appointed as the Means of Salvation.

The Baptism commanded Matt. xxviii. was not Baptism by the Holy Ghost.

To be baptized with the *Holy Ghost*, signifies to be endued with the *Gifts* of the Holy Ghost; which Gifts are *Twofold*,

Ordinary and Extraordinary.

'The *Ordinary*, are all those Helps and Assistances which are necessary for the Performance of those Conditions upon which our Salvation depends; *partly* by illuminating our Understandings, in our sincere and diligent Enquiries after Divine Truth; and *partly*, by exciting our Wills to that which is Good, and strengthening our vigorous Endeavours in the Prosecution of it.

The *Extraordinary*, are those whereby we are enabled to perform (not necessary and standing Duties, but) Wonders and Miracles, in order (not to our own Salvation but) to the Benefit and Advantage of others.

Pray observe the Difference between these *Two*.

A Man cannot be *Just, Temperate, Chaste, &c.* without the *Ordinary* Gifts and Communication of *GOD's Spirit*; but he may practise all those Graces of *Justice, Temperance, Chastity, &c.* without the *Extraordinary*

ordinary Gifts or Communication of *GOD's Spirit*, whereby the *Apostles* and *Primitive Christians* were inabled to *raise the Dead*, *Speak with Tongues*, *heal the Sick*, and do other *Miracles*.

So that every good Christian may receive the *Holy Ghost* in an *Ordinary*, but not in the *Extraordinary* Manner. For the *Baptism with the Holy Ghost*, which in Scripture always signifies the being indued with his *Extraordinary Gifts*, is now wholly ceased, and the *Ordinary* Communication of *GOD's Spirit* only remains. Therefore it must be plain to any impartial Judge, that since the *Baptism with the Holy Ghost* is long ago ceased, the *Baptism* in *Mat. xxviii*, which is still practised, and will continue to the End of the World, was *Water Baptism*.

But let the following Observations sink deep in your Mind: Suppose you could have the *Extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost*, they would be no Hindrance to *Water Baptism*, but rather a Qualification for receiving it; for it is plain, upon *St. Peter's* preaching his Sermon, the *Holy Ghost* fell upon the *Gentiles*, who spoke with *Tongues*,
and

and magnified *GOD*. Whereupon *Peter* appealed to the People, whether this was not a clear Evidence, that *GOD* intended these Men the Blessings of the *Gospel Covenant*, and that having the *extraordinary Gifts*, they might and ought to be *baptized with Water* into the Christian Profession. *Can any Man forbid Water, that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?* And he commanded them to be baptized in the Name of the Lord, *Acts* x. 47, 48. Nay, the Promise of the Gifts of the *Holy Ghost* are through *Baptism*: *Be baptized, and ye shall receive the Gift of the Holy Ghost, Acts* ii. 38.

Water Baptism is the initiating Rite by which all True Believers must enter into the Church of Christ, and is made, constituted, and appointed as the Means of Salvation.

The Church is an outward and visible Society: Our Saviour calls it a City that is set on a Hill, Mat. v. 14. And as it is so, has an *outward and visible Form* of admitting Men into it: For otherwise it would not be known or distinguished from the rest of Mankind ; as a River is lost in the Sea, because

cause it is no longer distinguished from it, but goes to make up Part of it.

When *Christ* sent his *Apostles* to convert all Nations, his Commission to them was to baptize them. Go teach all Nations baptizing them, *Mat.* xxviii. 19. that is, baptizing all those who shall receive your Word. Accordingly it is said, *They that received the Word were baptized*, *Acts* ii. 41, pursuant to what the Apostle had preached to them, ver. 38. *Repent and be baptized.*

And we find it the constant Custom to baptize all those that were converted to the Faith. Thus *Paul*, though miraculously converted from Heaven, was commanded to be baptizd, *Acts* xxii. 16. He baptizd *Lydia*, the *Taylor*, and their *Housholds* as soon as he had converted them, *Acts* xvi. 15, 33. And the *Corinthians*, *Acts* xviii. 8. And the *Disciples of John*, who had not yet been made Christians, *Acts* xix. 5. *Philip* baptizd the *Eunuch*, as soon as he believed in *Christ*; they went down into the Water both *Philip* and the *Eunuch*, and he baptizd him, *Acts* viii. 38. And *Peter* immediately upon the Conversion of

of

of *Cornelius*, and those with him, said, *Can any forbid Water, that these should not be baptized? Acts x. 47.* It was so well known to be the *initiating Rite* into the *Christian Church*, that whoever became a *Convert* immediately requested, whether *Jew* or *Gentile*, *Water Baptism*.

Christ did practise it.

It is written, *And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, He that was with thee beyond Jordan to whom thou bearest Witness, behold the same baptizeth (by his Disciples) and all Men come unto him, John iii. 26.* This Baptism must be with *Water*, because the *Holy Ghost* was not as yet given, untill the *Day of Pentecost* Fifty Days after the *Resurrection of Christ*, *Acts ii.*

It is said, *The Pharisees heard that Jesus made and baptized more Disciples than John, John iv. 1.* How could the *Pharisees* hear it, if it was not an *outward* and *visible* Baptism? And since it was *outward*, it must be *Water Baptism*; for there was no other.

His

His Apostles after Him.

Can any forbid Water, says Peter, that these should not be baptized? Acts x. 47.

Philip baptized the Eunuch with Water, Acts viii. 36.

The Words of *Ananias* to *St. Paul* upon the Recovery of his Sight, are very particular in this Matter. And *why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized and wash away thy Sins, Acts xxii. 16.*

The Argument from these Places lies thus; the *Apostles* did practise that *Baptism* which *Christ* commanded *Matt. xxviii.* But the *Apostles* did practise *Water Baptism*, therefore *Water Baptism* was that *Baptism* which *Christ* commanded.

And the Catholick Church after them to this Day.

The publick Nature of *Water Baptism* being an *outward* Matter of Fact, of which Men's *outward* Senses are Judges, it is im-

possible for the World to be imposed upon, nor ever can it be in such a publick Matter of Fact.

As the Practice of the *Apostles* is a most sure Rule to understand the Meaning of that Command they put in Execution, so the Practice of those who immediately succeeded the *Apostles*, who were *Contemporaries* with them, and learned the Faith from their Mouths, is a certain Rule to know what the Practice, and what the Sense of the *Apostles* were.

And thus the Practice of the present Age in the Administration of *Water Baptism* is an undeniable Evidence, that this was the Practice of the last Age; the same Persons being many of them alive both in the last and the present Age. For one Age does not go off the World all at once, and another succeed all of perfect Age together; but there are old Men of the last Age, and young Men and Children growing up to another Age, all alive upon the Earth at the same Time; and Mankind being dispersed into distant Countries and Climates, far asunder from one another, without any

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Correspondence to hold a Cheat, it is morally impossible for any Man or Men to deceive us in what has been the universal and received Practice of the last Age, to which the present Age is so linked, that it is even a Part of it.

All this makes it undeniably plain, that the last Age did practise the same *outward Water Baptism* which is practised in this Age, and that the same was as certainly practised in the Age before the last Age, and by the same Rule in the Age before that, and so onward to the Age of the Apostles. All History of the several Ages confirm the Truth of it; and no one can imagine, but that if *Water Baptism* was an *Human Invention*, or superstitiously either obtruded or continued in the Church, some one would be found in less Time than Sixteen Hundred Years, to have opened his Mouth against it, when Thousands sacrificed their Lives for Matters of much less Importance.

God has commanded us to be baptized with Water as the Means of Salvation.

Our Saviour says, *Except a Man be born of Water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into*

the Kingdom of GOD, John iii. 5. Which plainly shews, that *baptizing* or *washing* with *Water* must be done, before we can have any Hope of Entrance or Admittance into the Kingdom of GOD. You may observe *Christ* reprimanded *Nicodemus* who was a *Master of Israel*, a Teacher and Expounder of the Law, one also of the *Great Council*, that he did not apprehend what every *ordinary Jew* might well understand, *viz.* That they themselves made *Profelites* by *washing* them with *Water*, and then counted them *New-born* Persons.

The Washing of Water upon the *outward* gives us a Title, and is the Means of conveying the Sanctification of the Spirit in the *inward Man*; which effects a new and spiritual Birth upon all those, who being duly disposed receive the *Rite*.

It is our *Saviour's* own Word and Promise, *He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved*, Mark xvi. 16. What Words can be plainer? *Baptism* is here joined with *Faith* itself as necessary to Salvation. He that receiveth and imbraceth the Gospel, and thereupon becomes a Profelite and Disciple
of

of *Christ*, and receives *Baptism* the Seal of the *New Covenant*, shall for all his former Sins receive Pardon, and upon his Perseverance obtain eternal Life. O *Glorious Promise!* O *Blessed Means!* Who can refuse it?

The *Apostles* exhorted all their Converts to be baptized in the Name of the Lord *Jesus*, that they might receive Salvation from him by *that Means*; as we read at large in the *Acts of the Apostles*.

St. *Paul* tells us, That *Christ* loved his Church, and delivered himself for it, that he might sanctify it, purging it with the Washing of Water, Eph. v. 26. meaning, that *Baptism* intitles us to the Graces of the Spirit to purge away the Guilt and Defilement of Sin, without which they both lie upon us, and leave us in the Gall of *Bitterness*, and in the Bond of *Iniquity*. And such (saith he to the *Corinthians*) were some of you, till ye were washed (in the Waters of *Baptism*) justified in the Name of the Lord *Jesus*, and sanctified by the Spirit of our God, 1 Cor. vi. 11. which great Blessings of *Justification* and *Sanctification* are first and chiefly derived on us in our *Baptism*.

St. Peter assures us, that *Baptism doth now save us*, 1 Pet. iii. 21.

I know your common Objection to this is from the following Words, *not putting away the Filth of the Flesh, but the Answer of a good Conscience towards GOD*; saying that this *Baptism* in St. Peter is not *Water Baptism*, but the *inward Baptism of the Spirit*, which is the Answer of a good Conscience towards GOD.

But it must be *Water Baptism*, or you cannot make Sense of the Apostles Words, or the Figure alluded unto by St. Peter, who says, *The long suffering of GOD waited in the Days of Noah, while the Ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, Eight Souls were saved by Water. The like Figure whereunto even Baptism doth also now save us*; that is, as the Souls in the Ark were saved by *Water*, so now *Water Baptism* doth also *save us*.

I would have you take Notice, that the Words *not* and *but*, do in Scripture Phrase, frequently signifie *not only, but also*: As
Joseph

Joseph says to his Brethren, *It was not you that sent me hither, but GOD, Gen. xlv. 8.* Now the Scripture tells us expressly, that *Joseph's Brethren lifted up Joseph out of the Pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmaelites for Twenty Pieces of Silver, and they brought Joseph into Egypt, Gen. xxxvii. 28.* therefore it must be interpreted thus; It was *not only* you that sent me hither, *but also* GOD; that is, *GOD's Providence* had a Hand in my Journey as well as *your selves.*

Our Saviour says, *Whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me, Mark ix. 39.* that is, *receiveth not only* me, *but also* him that sent me.

Again, *He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me, John xii. 44.* that is, he believeth *not only* on me, *but also* on him that sent me.

I will mention but *one more, Labour not for the Meat which perishes, but for that Meat which indures to everlasting Life, John vi. 27.* Our Lord means, that we should labour *not only* for the Meat that perishes, *but also* or *principally* for that which indures to everlasting Life.

And thus St. Peter's Meaning is, that the *Baptism* that now saves us, is *not only* that *outward Baptism* or *Washing* with *Water*, which is a putting away of the Filth of the Flesh, *but also* a good Conscience towards GOD. And this will be more evident, if you consider, that the *Baptism* chiefly administered, when this Text was recorded, was to the *Adult*, Persons at their full Age, who were examined, and were to give a good Account of their *Faith* and *Repentance*, and *actually* promised before the People, that they would lead good Lives for the future; and so *Baptism* was said to *save* them, and doth now *also us*, not *merely* as it is the putting away the *Filth of the Flesh*, but as it leads us to the *Answer*, or *Stipulation*, or *Covenant* of leading good Lives. But lest any should mistake St. Peter, and apply *Baptism* (as those of your Persuasion do) to *Works of Righteousness*, St. Paul has in his *Epistle* to *Titus*, told us, that the Mercy of GOD in the *Gospel-Revelation*, was not by any Works of Righteousness, but of receiving Men into the happy Privileges of the *Christian Covenant* by *Baptism*, whereby they partook of the gracious Influences of the *Holy Spirit* attending their Admission into it.

The Kindness and Love of GOD our Saviour towards Man appeared, not by Works of Righteousness which we have done, but according to his Mercy he saved us, by the Washing of Regeneration, and Renewing of the Holy Ghost, Tit. iii. 4, 5. Which Words plainly set forth not only the Benefits, but Necessity of Water Baptism in order to Regeneration; without which our Saviour tells us, we cannot enter into the Kingdom of GOD, either his Kingdom of Grace here, or Glory hereafter.

Both which are intailed only on those who by *Faith and Baptism follow him in the Regeneration*, Matt. xix. 28, and by *Baptism will be saved*, Mark xvi. 16. For as many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ, Gal. iii. 27, and shall obtain Remission of Sins, Acts ii. 38.

Before I dismiss this Subject, I must answer *One Objection* much insisted on by all of your Persuasion, *viz.*

That Water Baptism is ceased, for that John's Baptism was Water Baptism; and his Baptism being ceased, Water Baptism is ceased.

Let it be noted, that there were *Three Water Baptisms* in the World at one 'Time; the *Jewish*, *St. John's*, and our *Saviour's*. The 'Two first are abolished, but the *latter* remains, and will do so by the Promise of *Christ* to the End of the World.

It will be proper here to shew you, what it is that makes the *Difference of Baptisms*; not the *outward* Matter in which they are administered; for all outward Baptisms were *Water Baptisms*, as the Word *Baptism* *Washing* signifies; but they differ,

1st, *In the Ends for which they were instituted.*

2^{dly}, *In the Form in which they are administered.*

1st, The *End* of the *Christian Baptism* is highly distant and different from the *Ends* of other Baptisms. The *End* of the *Jewish Baptism* was to give the Baptized a Title to the Privileges of the *Law of Moses*: And the *End* of *John's Baptism* was to point to *Him* who was to come and to prepare Men by Repentance for the Reception of the *Gospel*

Gospel. But the *End* of *Christ's Baptism* was to instate us in all the unconceivable Glories, and high eternal *Prerogatives* which belong to the *Members of his Body, of his Flesh, and of his Bones*, Gal. iv. 5. *Henceforth no more Servants, but Sons of GOD!* and *Heirs of Heaven!*

These are the *Ends* so far transcendent above the *Ends* of all other *Baptisms*, that, in Comparison, other *Baptisms* are not only *less* but *none at all*; like the *Glory* of the *Stars* in Presence of the *Sun*, they not only are a *lesser Light*, but when he appears, they become altogether *invisible*.

2dly, As to the *Form*: Persons were baptized unto those whose *Disciples* they were admitted by their *Baptism*. Thus the *Proselytes* to the *Jewish Religion* were baptized unto *Moses*; and Men were made *Disciples* unto *John* by his *Baptism*: But the *Christian Baptism* alone is administered *in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*. This is the *Form* of the *Christian Baptism*, and which distinguishes it from all other *Baptisms* whatever.

Christ's Baptism could not be *John's Baptism*, for *Christ* made Disciples to himself not to *John*; he lessened *John*: *John* himself owned, *He* (that is *Christ*) *must increase, but I must decrease*, John iii. 30. But if *Christ* did baptize with the *Baptism of John*, then *John* still increased, and *Christ* decreased. Again, all the *Jews* who had been baptized with *John's Baptism*, did not turn *Christians*, but those that did, were baptized over again in the Name of *Christ*, of which there is a remarkable Instance in *Acts* xix. to Verse 7.

But that *Water Baptism* did not cease with *John* is undeniably evident, for after *John's* Death, most of the remarkable *Baptisms by Water* recorded in the *Acts of the Apostles*, and *St. Paul's* Epistles, were performed; which plainly shews, that *Water Baptism* did not cease with *John*, but was continued after his Death.

Having now shewn you, that in the several Ages of the World, our gracious *GOD* did appoint some *Method* and *Condition* of Salvation, that he constituted a *Church*, made *Circumcision* the *initiating Rite*, till the coming

coming of the *Messias*, when our Saviour and Redeemer changed it into *Water Baptism*, which *He* practised by *his Disciples* all the Time he was upon Earth; his *Apostles* after him; and the *Catholick Church* to this Day.

Having shewn you, that our Saviour's *Baptism* could not be the *Baptism of the Holy Ghost* only, because the *Baptism* instituted by *Christ* was to last to the End of the World, but the *extraordinary Gifts* of the Holy Ghost are long ago ceased; that even when they were in Being, they did not abolish *Water Baptism*, but the better disposed those that had the Gifts for it; nay, all that had them were afterwards *baptized with Water*, and the Promise of the *Holy Ghost* was made through *Baptism by Water*.

Having also shewn you, that our Saviour commanded *Water Baptism* to be received by his Adherents as the *Condition* of Salvation, and the *Means* of Entrance into the Kingdom of GOD; that this *Water Baptism* did not cease with *John*, but continued to be used after his Death even to this Day;

Let

Let me now argue friendly with you upon this Account.

As our Saviour came down from Heaven on Purpose to shew and lead us the Way thither, why should weak, short-sighted Man pretend to be wiser than *Wisdom Itself*? Why should we find fault with his *Institutions*, as being too much upon the *outward*, and think he can and may spiritualize them finer, and make the *Way* shorter than he has done?

I must say unto you, as *Naaman's* Servants said unto him, *2 Kings* v. If *Christ* had bid thee do some great Thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much rather when he saith unto thee, wash, be baptized, and be clean. And as necessary as the Waters of *Jordan* were to the cleansing of *Naaman*, so necessary are the Waters of *Baptism* to the cleansing our Souls. None dare say, that *GOD* could not have cleansed *Naaman* otherwise: But *GOD* having by his Prophet appointed *that Means*, if *Naaman* had neglected it, you must believe he had not otherwise been cured. So also, I would not be understood, as if *GOD* had tied Him-
self

self so far as not to save, if he pleases, without *Baptism*: His Power is infinite, and his Mercy over all his Works. He preserved the Bodies of the *Israelites* in the Wilderness without the Staff of Bread, the common Support of them; and saved their Souls without *Circumcision*, the Seal of the Covenant for that End. But we must distinguish between the *ordinary* Methods of Divine Providence, and Cases *extraordinary*. The former are to be the Rules and Directions of our Duty, though the latter may not always be despaired of, or depended upon. It would be a vain Presumption for any one to refuse his daily Bread, because GOD can and hath supported some without it; so is the Folly and Danger no less to neglect the *Waters* of *Baptism*, because GOD is able to save as well *without* as *with* them. As he has made them the *Condition* of Salvation, and *commanded* us to use them, whoever *willfully* neglects being *so baptized* after several Remonstrances of his Duty, cannot have any Grounds for Hope of Salvation by the *Gospel Covenant*: Because he *willfully* neglects a *Positive* Precept, the *Observance* of which our Saviour *has commanded*.

I have

I have read that a worthy *Divine* arguing with an *Atheist*, told him, he ran the most foolish Hazard imaginable in denying a Deity, and *ſo* leading a looſe and vicious Life: For if there was *no GOD*, a ſober, virtuous, and regular Courſe of Life would lengthen and heighten his preſent Happineſs; but if *there was a GOD*, in what a miſerable Condition muſt he be, when he finds his Miſtake? I may with a ſmall Variation apply this Argument to *you*. That there is a *Baptiſm* to be uſed, even thoſe of your Perſuaſion allow as well as we; but the Queſtion is, Whether *Baptiſm* by the *Spirit* or *Water*; and ſince there is a *Doubt*, why ſhould you not ſecure yourſelf by uſing *Water Baptiſm*, which was never known in the Record of Scripture to hinder, but in many Places to bring the Bleſſings of the *Spirit* upon the Uſe of it? Should it not be required, it can be no Harm to you; but if *it ſhould*, as Reason and Scripture ſeem to urge, what fatal Conſequence muſt the Neglect of it bring? He that deſpiſed *Moſes's Law* died without Mercy: How much ſorer Punishment, ſuppoſe you, ſhall he be thought worthy, who treads under Foot the *Inſtitution of the Son of GOD*, and counts it a *needleſs Thing*?

Was

Was you about the Purchase of an Estate in Land, the Title whereof would be *doubtful* without a *Fine*; would not Prudence direct you to have it sued out? Let the same Wisdom guide you in settling your *spiritual* Estate?

Water Baptism cannot be a *sinful* Act, for our *Saviour*, who was without Sin, required and submitted to it; his *Apostles* followed him, and if you follow them, what Inconveniency can possibly attend you? The closer you follow such illustrious Patterns, the nearer you will surely come to Perfection.

Nor is it against *Reason*; for you know the Spirit of GOD moved at first upon the Face of the Waters, *Gen. 1. 2.* to impregnate them, and makethem fructifie, and gave a miraculous *Virtue* to the Waters of *Jordan*, of *Siloam*, and *Bethesda*, for healing of the *Flesh*; why should we then doubt, that the same *Spirit* can and will *sanctifie the Waters of Baptism* to the mystical *Washing* away of Sin?

Consider how the Men of this World manage their *Temporal* Affairs. You your-
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self are a *Man in Trade* and do know, that for the better carrying on of worldly Business, Men form themselves into distinct *Companies* and *Societies*, according to their several *Professions, Trades, and Occupations*. The *Scholars* enter themselves into some *University* or *Inn of Court*; the *Mechanicks* and *Traders* become *Apprentices*, and all of them are intitled to the Benefit and Privileges of the several *Societies* to which they are joined and entered, and from which others are excluded. And will you not allow our *All-wise Director* to be as prudent for our *Spiritual Welfare* as Men are for their *Temporal*? Our *Saviour Christ* has constituted a *Church*, invited all Men into it to partake of the Privileges of it, *viz. the Remission of Sin, and the Promise of eternal Life*: Has appointed *Water Baptism* as the initiating *Sign and Seal*, whereby Men are to be made Members of his *Church*, and incorporated thereinto: And whatever you may think, until you have *thus* in a *publick* Manner entered yourself into the Congregation of Christ's *Flock*, and by the *Sign or Seal of Water Baptism* been admitted into his *Church*, you can plead no Claim to the Promises of the *Gospel* which are annexed to *that very Sign*

Sign or Seal. You cannot even call yourself a *Christian*. You have no Right or Title to that Name, till you have made yourself *Christ's Disciple* in the *Manner and Way* which he has prescribed, appointed, and commanded, which is *Water Baptism*.

You may remember, you urged very much your Opinion, that let Men talk what they would of *Ordinances* or *Institutions*, a good *Life* was all in all; whoever led a good *Life* would be saved, whether *baptized* or *not*.

I must tell you, there is a most flagrant Instance recorded in Scripture against this Opinion. *Cornelius* was undoubtedly a good *Licer*: His Prayers and Alms came up to Heaven, and were had in Remembrance in the Sight of GOD. And in Token of his Acceptance with GOD, GOD thought it worth the while to send an *Angel* to him, whose Errand was, that he should send for *Peter*, who should tell him *what he ought to do*. And when *St. Peter* came, he preached up *Christ*, and commanded him to be *baptized with Water*, particularly mentioning the Word *Water*, Acts x.

But if the most pious Liver upon Earth says *He hath no Sin, he deceiveth himself and the Truth is not in him,* 1 John i. 8. Holy David pleaded with *GOD not to enter into Judgment with him,* for the most innocent Man's Life could not stand the Trial: *In his Sight no Man living can be justified,* Psal. cxliiii. 2.

Though you believe yourself baptized with the Spirit, and may think you have lived in upright Conversation hitherto; yet were all your *evil Thoughts, idle Words,* and *corrupt Deeds* laid together before you, (as to be sure they are registred in *GOD's* Book) you would behold such a dark Scene, as would make you tremble at the dismal Sight, and cause you to own the *Necessity* of a *Mediator* and *Redeemer* to plead and atone for you. But how can you expect to reap the Benefit of his Redemption, if you will not use the *Means* your *Redeemer* has ordered and appointed? If you will not be *baptized with Water,* be ingrafted into *Christ's Church,* and become an *outward* Member of it, and a *Professor* of *Christianity*?

It is written, *Rom. x. 10. With the Heart Man believeth unto Righteousness, and with the Mouth Confession is made unto Salvation.* The Belief of the Heart is *necessary* to make us Righteous before GOD; but the *outward Confession of the Mouth* is likewise as *necessary* to Salvation: As *Christ* said, *Matt. x. 32. Whosoever shall confess me before Men, &c.* We must *outwardly* and *before Men* confess to *Christ* by the due Performance of his *outward Ordinances*, without which our *inward* Belief in him will not be sufficient to Salvation.

Baptism is an *outward Badge* of Christianity, by being the *outward Form* appointed to admit People as Members of the *Church* of *Christ*, and whereby they own themselves to be such *before Men*. But those who will not wear this *Badge* as a Confession to *Christ* before Men, *Christ* will not confess them before his *Father in Heaven*.

And thus having set forth the *Folly* and *Danger* of neglecting this *Condition* of Salvation; let me now turn the *comfortable Side* towards you, and shew the *Benefit*
and

and *Advantage* you especially may reap by receiving *Water Baptism*.

Know assuredly, that if you will come before the *visible Church* of GOD, and profess unfeigned Sorrow for thy past Sins, promise Amendment of Life for the future, and declare thy sincere Belief, that our *Saviour Jesus Christ* is the *Son of GOD*, the *Messiah* sent into the World for the Redemption of Mankind; that he suffered for our Salvation, and is now set down at the Right-Hand of GOD interceding for us; that he planted a *Church*, into which thou desirest to be admitted; as soon as thou art made *Member* thereof by the *initiating Rite* of *Water Baptism*, All thy Sins which thou hast committed from thy Youth up to that Day, shall be forgiven thee. Thy Pardon will be sealed and conveyed to thee in the Ordinance of *Water Baptism*. Our Saviour has promised it to Thee by his Apostle St. Peter, who says, *Repent and be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the Remission of Sins, and ye shall receive the Holy Ghost. For the Promise is to you, and your Children, and to all that are afar off,* Acts ii. 38, 39.

Observe

Observe these Words *particularly*. You cannot gainsay, but the *Baptism* here mentioned must be *Water Baptism*, for upon the Reception of this *Ordinance*, the Promise of Remission of Sins was made, and the Gifts of the *Holy Ghost*, which they had not before, were conferred and given. Follow thou the Converts upon this Sermon; *Save thyself from this untoward Generation, gladly receive the Word of GOD, and be baptized*, Acts ii. 40, 41.

I am sensible you suffer much under the Prejudice of *Education*, but let not a long Continuance in an ill-grounded Opinion influence you beyond *Reason* and *Scripture*. Let *St. Paul* be your Pattern; he had been educated longer and stricter in the *Jewish*, and had more to say for himself, than you can have in *your Way*; yet he gloried in his Conversion, and became the more Zealous afterwards. Your Example may influence many poor Souls to their Salvation, and then what *Happiness*, what *Blessings* will not the GOD of *Mercy and Consolation* pour down upon *thy Head*; who not only submittest to his *Institution thyself*, but by
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thy Example addest unto his Church *such as shall be saved.*

As I have wrote this unto thee with an honest Intention, weigh the *Contents* with a good Disposition, and an humble Mind, free from Prejudice or Partiality ; and may the *Spirit of Truth* influence *Thee* to do *thy Part*, as I trust, He has *Him*, who is in all Sincerity,

Thy Christian Monitor

and Faithful Friend

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