

SERMON 24

THE BAPTISTS VINDICATED FROM SOME GROUNDLESS CHARGES BROUGHT AGAINST THEM BY MR. *ELTRINGHAM*, IN A PAMPHLET, INTITLED, *THE BAPTIST AGAINST THE BAPTIST, etc.*' 1756

WHEREIN He represents them as Erroneous, Persecuting, Diabolical, and Guilty of Deism.

A Great deal hath been said, on the Ordinance of Baptism, by many relating both to the Subjects of it, and the Mode of its Administration. And, therefore, it is not to be thought that much new can be offered, on an Argument, which has been so often canvassed. For which Cause, some may think, that I now engage in a needless Undertaking. But, as I have Reasons for it, which are satisfactory to my own Mind, I shall not make the least Apology, for the following Lines.

The Author of a Pamphlet, lately published, intituled, *The Baptist against the Baptist*, etc. proposes to prove, that the Antipaedo-Baptists imagine, that Believers' Baptism, by Immersion, is a Cause of Justification, before God. — That the Mode of Baptism is not dipping, but sprinkling. — That the Antipaedo-Baptists are *sensual, and have not the Spirit*, because they do not admit unbaptized Persons, into Communion with them. — Lastly, that they are Deists, or guilty of Deism. If they are, woe be unto them, and away with them then.

I. He undertakes to prove, that the Antipaedo-Baptists think, that Believers' Baptism is a Cause of their Justification, before God.

His Opinion is, that this is Dr. *Gill's* Sentiment. Strange indeed!

Who would have thought it? I am persuaded, that no Man, who is acquainted with his Writings, will ever think so, besides Mr. *Eltringham*. Let us see upon what Ground it is, that he imputes this Notion to him. In an anonymous Letter, which he now acknowledges to be his, he observes that Dr. *Gill* says, *a Man is to be justified, in renouncing Infant-Baptism, because it is a human Invention*; which evidently means, a Man is to be vindicated, in renouncing an Error, when he is convinced of it. If Mr. *Eltringham*, cannot distinguish this, from the Justification of a Man's Person, before God, others can and will. But if this will not serve his Purpose, he hath something more to offer, to support his Charge, *viz.* The Doctor says of Baptism, *it is of Use to lead the Faith of God's People to his (Christ's) Blood and Righteousness, for Pardon, and Justification*. This, no more than the former, proves what he aims at.

I will not multiply Words, on a Matter, which is so plain, that no intelligent and attentive Person can mistake upon it, however this Writer came so grossly to mistake herein. The Spirit leads, or directs the Saints efficiently; Ministers direct them instrumentally; and evangelical Institutions, as Means appointed, by Christ, unto that important End, lead, or direct Believers to look unto his Blood and Righteousness, for Pardon, and Justification. That is the Cause of Justification, to which the Believer looks, not that by which he is directed to the Act of looking, which is most easy to be conceived of. I shall only observe that Mr. *Eltringham*, through Inadvertency, does *infinite Dishonor* to the Blessed Spirit, in calling him *a Mean in conjunction with the Word*. The Holy Spirit is not a Mean in conjunction with the Word; but an efficient Cause, working by the Word. As the Charge of this Error upon us, is without Foundation, it is needlers to consider the Arguments, which are brought, to confute it. I therefore pass to another very *severe* Charge, which he exhibits against us.

II. He says that we are sensual, and have not the Spirit, because we do not admit those who differ from us, in the Point of Baptism, into Communion. This *extremely harsh* Censure affects only a Part of the Baptists: For some of them, receive such into Fellowship, who are not of their Sentiments, in this Particular. Mr. *Eltringham* is a Member of such a Congregation of Baptists. And, as to those who are not of this Latitude, if they are mistaken in their Apprehensions, I hope they are not sensual and destitute of the Spirit of God. It is great Un-charitableness, to think, merely on this Account, that they are *Mockers, and such as walk after their own ungodly Lusts*. Persons of that Sort only, the Apostle *Jude* intends. This Writer thinks himself unkindly treated, because he hath been charged with Ignorance, Stupidity, etc. But far greater Severity he uses interpretatively, though not intentionally, towards others, who differ from him. A Man may be weak in his Intellects, and, in the Manner of his Arguing, discover much Ignorance, Stupidity, etc. and yet be a real Christian: But *Mockers, and such as walk after their own ungodly Lusts, who are sensual, and have not the Spirit*, they must be utter Strangers to true Christianity. I cannot allow myself to think, that this was his real Intention; but he applies the Apostle's Words, which are plainly expressive of a State of Unregeneracy, unto regenerate Persons, because he is of Opinion, that they have not the Mind of the Spirit, in that Thing, whereof he treats, which if true, they have the Spirit, though not the Mind of the Spirit, in that particular Point. Perhaps, Mr. *Eltringham* himself may not have the Mind of the Spirit, in everything, which he holds; but because he is mistaken, in something, and hath not the Mind of the Spirit in all Things, which he believes, it would be *extremely wrong*, on that Account, to say, that he is sensual, and hath not the Spirit. That would be a *sad* Misapplication of the Apostle's Words; whereof he will do well to think.

He presents us with a View of Mr. *Bunyan's* Reasons against making Baptism, a Term of Communion. It must be allowed, that he was a Person of an *extraordinary*

Genius, had *a curious* Invention, *great* Grace, and a *large Stock* of spiritual Experience; all which, his various Works abundantly terrify. But it is no Detraction from his real Worth, to say, that he was not *eminently* qualified for *polemical* Writing. I cannot but confess, that I think, there is no Disagreement, between the strict Baptists, and others, who differ from them, respecting the Subject and Mode of Baptism, in this Matter; for both make Baptism a Term of Communion. In that they are fully agreed.

Their Difference lies wholly in this: The Baptists, apprehend, that Infant-Baptism is not agreeable, to the Institution of Christ, and, therefore, is invalid. Other Christians think that the Baptism of Infants, is Christ's Appointment, and, therefore, valid. The latter may admit such into Communion with them, who have been baptized in their Infancy, consistently, with their Opinion, of the Necessity of Baptism, in order to Church-Communion. But the former cannot, because they esteem Infant-Baptism invalid. And, consequently, they ought not to be censured by their Brethren, who agree with them, that Baptism is necessary in order to Church-Fellowship, for denying Communion to those, who will not submit to Baptism, when adult, because they are of Opinion, that Baptism in Infancy is invalid. Their Brethren would act as they do, if they thought Baptism in Infancy invalid. For what Reason, therefore, they should be represented as uncharitable, *etc.* I cannot apprehend, at least by those, who think, that Baptism ought to be a Term of Communion.

Their Mistake can only be this, even in the Opinion of their Brethren, that Infant-Baptism is invalid, and not that Baptism ought to be a Term of Christian Communion: For that is also their Sentiment. Mr. *Bunyan's* Arguments, if they prove anything, it is this: That Baptism, infant, or adult, ought not to be made a Term of Communion: Or, that Believers, *as such*, ought to be received by a Christian Church, although they were not baptized, in their Infancy, nor are willing to submit to Baptism, upon their Conversion; which cannot be pleasing, either to Paedo-Baptists, or Antipaedo-Baptists, who think, that Baptism is prerequisite to Christian Communion. If *Saints, as Saints*, are to be received, into, Christian Churches, for which Mr. *Bunyan* pleads, then it is not requisite, in order to their Admission, that they should have been baptized in their Infancy, or when adult, upon a Profession of their Faith. And, indeed, this is the true State of the Care, relating to Communion, *mixt, or strict, viz.*

Whether Persons for, and against Baptism, infant, and adult, may lawfully unite in Christian Fellowship; and not whether such as are for Baptism, in Infancy, and those, who are for Baptism, upon a Profession of Faith, may incorporate together, as a Church. Those of the Paedo-Baptists, who will deny this, are no more for Communion with *Saints, as Saints*, than the Antipaedo-Baptists are, who cannot admit such into their Communion, that have had no other than infant Baptism, because they think that invalid. That Person who will not join in Christian

Communion, with a Believer, who hath not been baptized at all, may pretend, that he is for: having Fellowship with *Saints, as Saints*; but his Practice contradicts that Pretense, for he requires something more than true Grace, in order to it, *viz.* Baptism, either infant, or adult.

A due Consideration of these Things will be sufficient, to prevent an angry Resentment, in unprejudiced Minds, against the Baptists, who cannot join in Christian Communion, with Persons, who have had only infant Baptism, which in their Account is invalid. This Matter hath been improved very much, by many, to their Disadvantage. On account hereof they have been represented, as *narrow, straight-laced, and uncharitable*, and as thinking themselves more holy than other Christians: With what Justice it is not difficult to determine. Those, who thus censure them, think, as they do, that Baptism is necessary to Christian Communion, and, therefore, they cannot justly blame them for that. If they are blamable at all, it is for this, *viz.* thinking that Infant-Baptism is invalid: And as to that, they apprehend, that they are very excusable, because Infant-Baptism, in their Opinion, is destitute of scriptural Proof, and is no Institution of Christ.

If our Author hath been *uncivilly* treated, by some of the Baptists, he is, at least, equally revere, in censuring them: For he says, they are *persecuting* and *devilish*. And he supposes them to be inconsistent, because some of them think, that Baptism ought to be a Term of Communion, and others of them think differently, and, therefore, admit such into Communion with them, who have not submitted to Baptism, upon a Profession of Faith. Herein they are not inconsistent, as Baptists, for they are agreed fully, respecting both the Mode, and Subject of Baptism. Their Difference lies altogether in this: Some of them think, that Baptism ought to be a Term of Communion, and others of them think it ought not. How this Difference proves, that they are inconsistent, as Baptists, it is beyond the Power of my Understanding, to conceive. Inconsistency may, I think, be justly objected to those of the Paedo-Baptists, who suppose, that Baptism is an initiating Ordinance, into a visible congregational Church, and, yet, do not admit many, who are by Baptism initiated, into the Church, unto a Participation of its Privileges, as a Church. In what Manner such can clear themselves of Inconsistency, who say, that Infants are initiated into the Church, by Baptism, and yet deny them a Participation of the Privileges, wherewith the Church is invested, into which they are initiated, I cannot tell, If they shall say, that they are not qualified, to partake of those Privileges; I would ask, Why then are they initiated into the Church? Can it be the Mind of Christ, that such should be initiated into his Church, who are unfit to partake of those Privileges, which he hath granted unto the Church? This seems to me wholly improbable. I think this is such a Difficulty, as can no other Way be solved, than by denying, that Baptism is an Ordinance of Initiation, into the Church: And, yet, I am persuaded, that very few, if any, of the Paedo- Baptists, will deny this. Let it be

proved to the *strict* Baptists, that Baptism is not an initiating Ordinance, into the Church, and I dare say, that they will quickly prevent all Occasion of those severe Censures, which are passed upon them, by admitting those to Communion, who are not of their Sentiments, in the Point of Baptism. And this may be expected to be done, by the Paedo-Baptists, for their own Sakes; because they do not allow a large Number of such to partake of Church-Privilege, who, they think, are regularly baptized. How that can be reconciled, with their initiating them into the Church, by Baptism, for my Part, I cannot conceive.

The *strict* Baptists are uniform, in their Sentiments, and Practice: For, as they think, that Baptism ought to be a Term of Communion, and that it is an initiating Ordinance, into the Church, they admit all who are initiated into the Church, unto a Participation of its Privileges. But the Paedo-Baptists, though, they think, that Baptism ought to be a Term of Communion, and that it is an initiating Ordinance, into the Church, yet they do not admit a Multitude, of those, who by Baptism are initiated into the Church, unto a Participation or its Privileges. This is a Fact too notorious to be denied. They initiate Infants, into the Church, by Baptism, and when they have so done, will not allow them to partake of any Church-Privilege. What Uniformity, therefore, is there, in their Sentiments, and Practice? None, as I think, in this Particular.

III. *He charges us with the dreadful Guilt of Deism, because we say, that Infant-Baptism, or sprinkling Infants, in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is a human Invention.* In his Account this is Deism, because he thinks, that the Infants of the Levites were to be sprinkled, by virtue of a Divine Command. I should not use more than two or three Words, on this Subject, were it not, that I am willing to convince him, of the great Impropriety of his Reasoning on it, if that is possible. We grant, that a Command was given, to sprinkle some of the Levites, with the Water of Purification, but we deny, that they were to be sprinkled in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, which is essential to Christian Baptism: Neither dipping into, nor sprinkling with Water, without that, is Christian Baptism. And, therefore, we do not deny Revealed Religion, when we affirm, that baptizing Infants is a human Invention: For, that Sprinkling was not Christian Baptism; even on this Supposition, that sprinkling is the proper Mode of the Administration, of that Ordinance; for, the *Form* of Christian Baptism was wanting therein; which *Form*, as I have before said, is *essential* to it. Nor is *Immersion*, into Water, or *sprinkling* with it, Christian Baptism, without that *Form*, *viz.*

The solemn Pronunciation of the Names of the Divine Persons, in the Administration of it. Besides, Mr. *Eltringham* should have considered, that this was only a Command to sprinkle the Males of the Levites, and not the *Females*: And, therefore, he hath no Command to sprinkle, or baptize female Infants, unless he can produce

some other. This is none, Why, then, does he plead for the Sprinkling of female Infants? He tells us, that we fulfil *Unrighteousness, or Sin, in dipping Persons*, when we baptize them, because we have no Command for so doing; and that we act as *Nadab and Abihu* did, in offering *strange Fire* to the Lord. Now let him, either produce a Command for sprinkling female Infants, or acknowledge, that he is guilty of that *dreadful Sin*, which he charges us with, and acts just as *Nadab and Abihu* acted, when he sprinkles female Infants. I am sure, that the Males of the Levites only, were commanded to be sprinkled. He will do well, when he engages in Controversy again, to reason with more Caution, perhaps he may, upon a close Review of what he hath wrote, be convinced, that Controversy is more entangling than he once apprehended it to be. Farther, I *flatly* deny, that a Command was given to sprinkle the male Infants of the Levites. God required them, *from a Month old and upward*, to be numbered, with the Adult, even *all the Males* (Numbers 3:15.); and their Number was *twenty and two Thousand, and Threescore and Thirteen* (Numbers 3:43.). Another Command was given to number the male Levites, *from thirty Years old and upward, even unto fifty*, who were to be Assistants to the Priests, in the Service of the Tabernacle: Their Number was *eight Thousand five Hundred and Fourscore* (Numbers 4:47, 48.). This Number, and this Number only, and not the twenty and two Thousand, etc. wherein the male Infants were included, were to be sprinkled with the Water of Purification, by which, and other Rites, they were cleansed, and devoted to sacred Service, as Assistants unto the Priests. Infants of a Month old, and upward, would have been *but very feeble* Assistants to the Priests, in the Discharge of their Work.

The Command to sprinkle the Levites, respected only such of them as were *thirty Years old and upward*, not the male Infants of that Tribe (Numbers 8:22.). Notwithstanding it was more than a Year, since this Writer, in his anonymous Letter, published this great Mistake, he had not discovered it, when he published this Pamphlet, which is an Evidence, that he had not read the Writings of *Moses*, with that Care and Attention which he ought, though he professes to have, and I believe he hath, a great Veneration for them; for, of his real Piety I have no Doubt. Upon the whole, I think, that we may be fairly acquitted of the Guilt of Deism, or of denying Revealed Religion, though we continue to insist upon it, that Infant-sprinkling is a human Invention, unless Mr. *Eltringham* can produce some other Command to defend that Practice; for, here is no such Command, I am confident. It is very kind in him to express a Desire, that we may be convinced, and repent of that dreadful Sin, which he imputes to us, *without going to Hell*. But I must tell him, that we have no Hope of Repentance there, for, we do not take *Hell* to be *Purgatory*. Whether one, who writes in this Manner, is qualified to engage in Controversy, I will not say, but refer it to the Determination of the Reader.

IV. This Author asserts, that we are under the Sinai Covenant. *If any, says he, should ask me, if we be now under the same Covenant that was delivered or manifested at Horeb? I answer, yes, the very identical Covenant, only differently administered.* I imagine but very few, if any, will assent to this. It is, so far as I know, universally agreed, among Christians, that, that Covenant, is become *rid*, and *vanished*: And, I am sure, if they are mistaken, in this Matter, the Author of the Epistle to the *Hebrews*, hath led them into this Mistake, by an express Assertion of it. In my Opinion, a thorough Consideration, of the Nature of that Covenant, may be of *singular* Use to clear up some Points, in Divinity, as well as, serve to let the Subject we are upon, in a proper Light; and, therefore, I will endeavor to explain it, in as full and perspicuous a Manner, as my narrow Limits will allow. And, **1.** The whole Body of the *Jews* were taken into that Covenant, regenerate, and unregenerate, even all that were redeemed out of *Egypt*, and the Seed of both, without the least Distinction, or Difference: *I am the Lord thy God which have brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, out of the House of Bondage* (Exodus 20:1.). The Lord declares himself to be a God to all the *Israelites*, who were the Subjects of this temporal Redemption, to the *graceless* of them, as well as to those, who were *gracious* among them. This Covenant was made with *the Captains of their Tribes, their Elders, and Officers, even all the Men of Israel, their little ones, their Wives, the Stranger that was in their Camp*, etc. and with their *Posterity*, who were not *present*, as well as with themselves, who were *present* (Deuteronomy 29:10, 11, 12, 13, 14.). It is most clear, therefore, that the unregenerate Part of the *Jews*, were taken into this Covenant, no less than the regenerate among them, and the *Seed of both*. The *Elect*, by virtue of this Declaration, and Covenant, could not claim a further Interest in God, or a Right to superior Advantages, either for *themselves*, or their *Seed*, than the *Non-Elect* might claim for *themselves*, and their *Seed*, by virtue thereof. **2.** The Lord, acting in the Character of God to them, required such Obedience from them, as his infinite Perfections, and their absolute Dependence on him, as his Creatures, made it necessary for them to yield unto his holy Will. And, therefore, **3.** He published, in their Hearing, the Covenant of *Works*, with very *awful* and *tremendous* Signs of his infinite Majesty, which struck them with *Amazement* and *Terror*: Whereupon the People *removed and stood afar off, and said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die* (Exodus 20:18, 19.).

4. God took upon himself, the Person, or Character of a King and Ruler over them, as a Nation: And, therefore, their political State is rightly called a *Theocracy*. And the Laws, which he gave them, were most excellent; calculated to promote his Glory, and their Good, as a Nation. They are usually distinguished into three Sorts, *viz. moral, political, and ceremonial*.

(1.) Moral the Laws of this Sort, were summarily comprehended, in the Command to love God, and in the Command to love their Neighbour: Hence our Lord says, *On*

these two Commandments, hang all the Law, and the Prophets (Matthew 22:40.): And for this Reason, the Apostle says, that *Love is the Fulfilling of the Law* (Romans 13:10.). By the Publication of this Law, the People were taught, that *perfect Love* to God, and their Neighbor, and those Acts of reverential Obedience, which flow from Love to the Lord, and those Acts of Benevolence, as well as of Justice, which spring from Love to our Neighbor, that their Relation to God and one another, rendered *meet and fit*. (2.) An excellent System of *political* Laws were given to them, according to which, *every Transgression and Disobedience, received a just Recompence of Reward* (Hebrews 2:2.): But it is to be observed, that a Breach of the moral Law, as it respects the Heart, did not subject them to Penalty, *as Members of the State*: If that had been the Case, not a Man amongst them, would have enjoyed Life; for, every Individual of them was guilty, and worthy of Death, in that View. Besides, their Judges and Rulers, to whom the Execution of the penal Laws were referred, could not take Cognizance of *internal* Acts; only *external* Acts could fall under their Notice. The Lord, therefore, in governing them, as a *State*, took upon himself, and acted in the Person and Character, of an *external* Ruler: *And*, in the Exercise of Rule over them, as a *Body politic*, he proceeded towards them, as an *external* Governor, and not as the *Heart-searching God*. Hence all their penal Laws, respected *outward*, and not *internal* Acts. Some Breaches of the moral Law, were made capital, and subjected the Offender to Death: As *Idolatry, Blasphemy, Murder*, etc. Some very *atrocious* Crimes were not capital: As *Perjury, and Uncleaness*, in one Instance. Every Transgression of the moral Law, both *internal* and *external*, subjected them to Death, before God, *as the Judge of all*; but not as an *external* Ruler of that People, as a *State*, and *Body politic*. This Distinction is necessary to be observed, in order to have a clear, and consistent idea, of the *Jewish* Oeconomy. (3.) A large *Body* of *ritual* Laws were prescribed, which respected *Worship*, in great Part: 1. Those Rites were *carnal Ordinances*: The Matter of them was *Flesh*, *viz.* Beasts offered in Sacrifice; and they had no farther Efficacy, than *sanctifying to the purifying of the Flesh*: None of them could *purge their Consciences from dead Works*. 2. *Carnal, unregenerate* Persons, were let apart to officiate in *Divine Service*. Perfection of *bodily Parts*, and *Freedom from any outward Blemish*, were required, as Qualifications, in their Priests; but *Holiness of Heart* was not (Leviticus 21:17, 18, 19, 20, 21.).

Such who were absolutely destitute of true Grace, might lawfully act in that *sacred* Office, and perform all the Parts of religious Service, for the People. And what they did agreeable to *Divine Appointment*, as to the *Matter* of it, was approved of, by God, in that Character, wherein he appointed those Services, *viz.* that of an *external* Ruler, though not as the *Heart-searching God, and Judge of all*. Faith was then necessary, as it is now; unto the Acceptation of religious Services, with the Lord, in that Character: But it was not, in the *former* Character; or in that of an *external*

Governor to that People. 3. *Carnal, graceless* Persons were admitted to engage in all Acts of religious Worship, which were required by the *levitical* Law: And their Compliance with; and Practice of, what was commanded, respecting Worship, by the Law of *Moses*, was accepted with God, in the Person, and Character, of an *external* Governor, though their Acts of Worship did not proceed from *spiritual Purity, and Holiness of Heart*: Yet they were not approved, by him, in the Character of the *Judge of all, and the Heart-searching God*; because not performed, in Faith, and from a Principle of Love. *Gracious* Persons did not enjoy any *external distinguishing* Privileges, from *graceless* ones, under the *mosaic Oeconomy*. The unholy among them had the very same Right, unto all external Privileges, as the most holy Persons had.

5. Temporal Blessings *only*, were promised, in this Covenant. None of its Promises rise higher, than this World. Nothing *greater, and more noble*, the *Jews* could claim, by virtue of this Covenant, than a safe and peaceable Enjoyment of the good Land (Exodus 20:12.). Neither *Grace*, in this World, nor *Glory and eternal Life*, in the next, were promised therein. Spiritual Pardon, Peace, Adoption, Justification, Regeneration, Grace, and the Perseverance In endless Fruition of God, as the God of all Grace, were not promised in this Covenant. In a Word, *no one Blessing, which springs from electing Love, and which properly belongs to the Covenant of Grace*, was contained, in any of the Promises of the *Sinai-Covenant*. It was made by God, with that People, in the Person, and Character, of an *external* Governor, and, therein, he granted unto them, *only external Privileges and Favors*. *No one Benefit of a spiritual Kind, on the Foundation of that Covenant, could any of that People expect to receive from him*.

6. *Temporal Punishments only* were threatened, and inflicted, for the Breaches of this Covenant. By the Publication of the Moral Law, the *Jews* were taught, that God required *perfect Purity of Heart*, and that all Acts of Sin, as well *internal* as *external*, rendered them worthy of Death, in his Sight, *as the judge of all*. But this Law, was not the Foundation, on which he entered into this Covenant with them, and according to which he proceeded towards them, in the Person, and Character, of an *external* Governor, to them, as a Body politic. If he had so done, they must have been all cut off to a Man; for, every Individual of them was guilty of transgressing that Law, in *Thought, Word, or Deed*, and that *continually*. As he entered into this Covenant with them, in the Character of an *external* Governor, he did not threaten them, therein, with Penalty for the *internal* Acting's of Lust but only for the Eruptions of it, in *outward* Acts of Sin: And. that Punishment which he did threaten, was not *eternal*, but *temporary* and *corporal*, or *civil*, viz. *The Sword, Famine, the Pestilence, and Captivity*, as a Nation (Deuteronomy 29.).

7. This Covenant was to remain in Force, *throughout their Generations*; or, so long as they were continued a State, or Body politic; which they were to be until *Shiloh*

came, and their Rejection of him. Then, and not till then, their State was to be shaken all to Pieces, both ecclesiastic and civil: And this Covenant, made with them, as a Nation, was then to be *antiquated*, and *vanish*. This leads me to observe,

8. With respect to its Duration until that Time, it is to be considered, as a *Covenant of Promise*: For, not all the *Idolatry, Impiety, and Corruption*, which took Place among that *perverse and obstinate* People, from Time to Time, could make this Covenant *null*; because its Duration, until the Appearance of the Messiah, among them, relied on, and was secured by, an *absolute* Promise, made to *Abraham*, their Father, that, *in his Seed, all the Families of the Earth should be blessed* which promised *Seed* was *Christ*, as the Apostle tells us expressly (Galatians 3:16.). And, therefore, in the midst of all those desolating Judgments, which were brought, on that People, for their *Idolatry, Impiety, and Profaneness*, the Lord declared, that he would not *cast them off*, nor *make a full End of them* (Jeremiah 31:37, Chap. 4:27.), or suffer their ecclesiastical and political State to sink. But when the Messiah was come, and they had rejected him, it was foretold, that the Lord would shake the *Earth*, and the *Heaven* (Haggai 2:6. Hebrews 12:26.) of this People, *i.e.* their *political* and also their *ecclesiastical* State, wherein their *chief Glory*, above other Nations, consisted, and whereupon they much valued themselves.

9. The *Covenant of Circumcision* made with, or given to *Abraham*, was a Prelude to, and the Foundation of, this *Sinai-Covenant*. And they agree in several Particulars: **(1.)** All the natural Posterity of *Abraham*, were included, in that Covenant, whether *Elect* or *Non-Elect*, *godly*, or *ungodly*, without any *Distinction*, or *Difference*., and not only, while they were in a State of *Infancy*, but when they became *adult*. Thus, all the *Israelites* were taken into this Covenant, as well the *ungodly* as the *pious* among them, and they continued therein through Life, though they perished, in their Sins, at Death.

(2.) The Possession of the Land of *Canaan* was promised, in both Covenants (Genesis 17:8. Exodus 20:12.).

(3.) Circumcision was an outward Sign, of an Interest in each, and a visible Token of a Right to the Enjoyment of the good Land Hence those *Jews*, who were born in the Wilderness, whole Circumcision had been neglected, were ordered to be circumcised, before they took Possession of that Land (Joshua 5.).

(4.) Their Duration was of the Same Extent: Each was to continue in Force, *throughout their Generations* (Exodus 40:15. Genesis 17:8, 12.). So long, and no longer, than they subsisted, as a Body politic, in the Enjoyment of the Land of *Canaan*, were there Covenants to last. Some useful Observations may be drawn from this brief Account of the *Sinai-Covenant*, as the Covenant of Circumcision made with *Abraham* was a Prelude to it, and the Foundation of it.

1. The Church under the *mosaic* Dispensation was *national*.

2. *Regenerate* Persons, and their *Seed*, did not enjoy any *external* Privileges, under that Oeconomy, unto Which *unregenerate* Persons, and their *Seed*, had not, with them, an *equal Right*, by virtue of this Covenant.

3. It was not an Interest in the Covenant of Grace, with *Abraham*, which gave his *Seed* a Right to Circumcision: For,

(1.) *Ishmael* was circumcised, who was not, with him, included in the Covenant or Grace.

(2.) *Esau* was circumcised, although it was declared, before his Birth, that he was not interested in the Blessings of the Covenant of Grace.

(3.) None of his Posterity might be circumcised, until they were eight Days old. If with him they were included in the Covenant of Grace, and *that* was the Foundation of their Right to Circumcision, it would have been lawful to circumcise them before. This Right arose from a positive Command, in an external Covenant, and not from an Interest with *Abraham*, in the Covenant of Grace.

(4.) Circumcision being deferred unto *adult* Age, did not deprive his Posterity of their Right to it, though it was a sinful Neglect of their Parents (Joshua 5.). Now, it can't be thought, surely, that the Body of the *Israelites*, who were born in the Wilderness, and had arrived to *adult* Age, and who were in a State of Unregeneracy, were, with him, included in the Covenant of Grace: Yet, they all had, even then, a Right to Circumcision, and accordingly were circumcised.

(5.) His *Bond-Slaves*, and every Male born in his House, though not of his Seed, were to be circumcised, who cannot be justly thought to have, with him, an Interest in the Covenant of Grace, and, consequently, their Right to Circumcision, did not arise from an Interest in that Covenant: Wherefore, the Covenant of Circumcision, was not the Covenant of Grace; but it was the Foundation, of that Covenant, which God entered into, with the *Jews*, as a Nation, at Mount *Sinai*, wherein no one Blessing, which is proper to the Covenant of Grace, was promised.

4. The *Sinai*-Covenant was both *conditional* and *absolute*, though not in the same Respect. *External* Obedience to its Laws, was required of the *Jews*, as a Condition of the safe and peaceable Enjoyment of the good Land (Exodus 20:12.): But the Duration of their political and ecclesiastical State, until the Appearance of the Messiah, amongst them, and their Rejection of him, was *absolutely* promised (Genesis 49:10.). And it is to be observed, that the Promise of the Messiah, did not properly belong to this Covenant, but the Continuance of their civil and ecclesiastical State, until his coming was absolutely promised therein (Nehemiah 1:9; Deuteronomy 30:4.). And for this Reason, notwithstanding all their dreadful Impiety, and Wickedness, they were continued a Body politic, and in the Enjoyment of the good Land, until that Time. Thus, this Covenant endured throughout their Generations (Leviticus 7:36.).

5. By this Covenant that Nation was separated, from all other People, in the Earth, unto the Worship of God, according to his own Appointment, as to the Mode of it. On this Account they are called *a holy People*, even the whole Body of them. And, because their Descendants were taken into this Covenant, and thus separated to the Lord, from others, of the human Race, in their successive Generations, they are claimed by him, as his own, being born unto him, and are called a *holy Seed*, even though their Parents were *ungodly*, and of profligate Lives (Ezekiel 16:20; Ezra 9:2.)
6. *External* Obedience, without Holiness of Heart, gave them the Denomination of *just* and *righteous*, before God, as an *external* Governor, and entitled them to his Favor and Protection, in that Relation and Character, though not as the Judge of all (Deuteronomy 6:25.).
7. An Interest in the Covenant of Grace, was not the Foundation, whereon any, under the *mosaic* Dispensation, had a Right to those *external* Privileges, which were then granted to the Church. The Right of the godly to those Privileges, was founded on this national Covenant, by virtue whereof, the ungodly among them had the very same Right to all *external* Privileges; which they could not have had, if that Right afore from an Interest in the Covenant of Grace.
8. Many were saved, under that Covenant; but none were saved by virtue of it: For, eternal Salvation was not contained in it, nor promised to any by it.
9. This Covenant, in my humble Opinion, is *improperly* called a Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace; because it contained none of its Promises, nor did it exhibit any of its Blessings, except in *Figure*, and by way of *typical* Representation only; which, I think, is not a sufficient Foundation for calling it a Dispensation of the Covenant
143of Grace. *The Law*, or this whole Covenant, taken together, *had only a Shadow of good Things to come, and not the very Image of the Things* (Hebrews 10:1.).
10. The Blindness of the *Jews* was exceedingly great, who expected Salvation, by virtue of this Covenant. This was their *fatal* Mistake, and that Ground, on which they rejected the Messiah, unto their utter Ruin, as a Nation, and Body politic.
11. The Deists are *very stupid*, in denying, that Moses, and the Prophets, were inspired of God, who predicted, agreeably to the Nature of this Covenant, what would be the State of the *Jews*, for so many Ages, and the dreadful Catastrophe, of that People, when it should cease, upon the Rejection of the Messiah. I fear not to say, that Man is a *Fool*, and to be despised, let him be who he will, that is capable, of calling in question, the Divine Authority, of the Writings of the Old Testament.
12. The *Arminians*, and *Baxterians*, act *impertinently*, in pleading, for the Conditionality of Salvation, or Justification, by our own Obedience; — for the Power of Free-Will, to choose what is spiritually good; — and for a *final* Defection from Faith, from those Addresses of the Prophets, to the People of the *Jews*, which are founded on, and are adapted wholly to the Nature of this Covenant, made with them, as a Nation; for, no Respect was had therein, unto eternal Salvation.

13. This Covenant is antiquated, and vanished. Those Generations are long since gone, with whom it was to continue in force. It entirely ceased with the Jewish, ecclesiastical and political State. There is, therefore, a Change, of the Times, Place, and Mode of religious Worship, and of the Persons, who are to officiate in Divine Service, for the Edification of the Church. The *Jews*, now, have no Ground to claim the Favor and Protection of God, on the Foundation of this Covenant: It is, absolutely, at an End: Nor are they a People separated to God, from others, as their Ancestors were, by virtue of it, though they still remain distinct from others, to answer those holy and wise Designs, which are had in view, in another and *better* Covenant, respecting them, *i.e.* the Elect among them, in the Time appointed of God. And, therefore, it is a Proof of the wretched Blindness of that People, to address the Lord, in their Devotions, as *their* God, and the God of their Fathers, than which, nothing is more frequent with them. Nor is the Cessation of this Covenant, any Reflection on the Wisdom of God, as Mr. *Eltringham* seems to think it is, for his holy Ends, in that Covenant, were fully answered, before the Antiquation of it: And what Mr. *Eltringham* can mean by asserting, that we are under this *very identical* Covenant, I am not able to conceive, unless his Design is to introduce the whole *Jewish* Oeconomy, and to subject us unto that *servile* State, which is entirely inconsistent with Gospel-Liberty.

Lastly, The Argument for Infant-Baptism, drawn from the Right of Infants to Circumcision, even on this Supposition, that Baptism succeeds Circumcision, is invalid. Be it so, *that*, that is true, (this is a Point I will not now contest) yet, Is no Proof at all, that Infants have a Right to Baptism. That is taken for granted, in the Argument, which is not proved, but begged, *viz.* that there is an *external* Covenant, under the present Dispensation, as there was under the former, in which Children, with their Parents, are included, that gives them a Right to Baptism, at least. This, as yet, is only begged, not proved. Let Proof be given of it, and we will instantly yield the Cause to our good Brethren, who differ from us. It was not an Interest in the *internal* Covenant, or Covenant of Grace, which gave the Infants of the *Jews* a Right to Circumcision, but their Interest in an *external* Covenant. And, therefore, if there is not, under this Dispensation, an *external* Covenant, unto which Baptism belongs, and into which Children, with their Parents, are taken, that cannot be a *solid* Proof of their Right to Baptism, even though it should be granted, that Baptism came in the Room of Circumcision. That the Right of *Abraham's* Seed to Circumcision, did not arise from an Interest with him, in the *internal* Covenant, or Covenant of Grace, it is most clear: For, *Ishmael* was not included with him therein; nor was *Esau*; yet, both had a Right to Circumcision: And all the Posterity of *Jacob* had a Right thereunto, even though the greater Part of them were not interested in that *internal* Covenant. Besides, all the *Israelites*, even in *adult* Age, had a Right to Circumcision, though destitute of the Grace of the *internal* Covenant, and never partook of it.

Hence, those who were born in the Wilderness, and were not circumcised in their Infancy, they were circumcised in *adult Age*. The *graceless* among them had the very same Right to it as the *gracious* Part of them had (Joshua 5.): And, therefore, it could not be an Interest in the Covenant of Grace, which was the Foundation of that Right: Nor, could the Covenant of Circumcision be the Covenant of Grace. I suppose that it will be granted, that all who were circumcised were within the Covenant of Circumcision.

Many *ungodly* Persons, in *adult Age*, were circumcised, who it cannot be thought were under the Covenant of Grace, and, consequently, the Covenant of Circumcision was not the Covenant of Grace, but *another* and *distinct* Covenant from that: A Covenant *external*, and not *internal*, as that Covenant is. According to the Reasoning of our Brethren, on this Subject, if a Parent is converted, when he hath several Children, I will suppose two, one thirteen Days old, and another thirteen Years old, both have an equal Right to Baptism with himself. *Ishmael*, who was thirteen Years of Age, was taken with *Abraham*, his Father, into the Covenant of Circumcision, and was circumcised, as well as himself. And, therefore, if Children, with their Parents, are taken into the Covenant of Grace, and for that Reason have a Right to Baptism, then, as *Abraham's* Seed were, with him, taken into the Covenant of Circumcision, and *Ishmael* was circumcised, for that Reason, who was thirteen Years old, in the Care supposed, a Child of a believing Parent, who is thirteen Years old, hath the very same Right to Baptism, as his Child hath, who is but thirteen Days old.

Let me further suppose, a Baptist, who hath several Children, to be convinced of his reputed Mistake, that his Seed have not a Right, with him, to Baptism; in that Case, according to the Arguing of our Brethren, a Child of his, who is twenty Years of Age, hath the same Right to Baptism as his Child hath, who is not more than a Week old: For, the Command in the Covenant of Circumcision, though it required Infants, eight Days old, to be circumcised, yet it did not limit Circumcision to Infancy; if it had, *Ishmael* would not have been circumcised, nor would those *Israelites* have been circumcised, who were born in the Wilderness, whole Circumcision, in their Infancy, was neglected, by their Parents. If the Covenant of Circumcision is to be the Rule of forming a Judgment, who have a Right to Baptism, then not only Infants, but such who are past the State of Infancy, have a Right to Baptism, although they have not a Divine Faith. But what Need was there for me to say this? Our Brethren, themselves, do not think, that the Covenant of Circumcision is to be such a Rule, though they argue for Infant-Baptism, from it: For they, at least many of them, require more than an *external* Profession of Christianity, in the Parents of those Children, whom they admit to Baptism, wherein they certainly depart from that, which is the Ground of their Plea, for their Practice; because the Covenant of Circumcision, required nothing more, than an *outward* Profession of *Judaism*, in the Parents of those Children, who were admitted to Circumcision. That which will defend them, in

refusing to baptize the Children, of such Parents, who only make an *outward* Profession of Christianity, so far, at least, as Infant-Baptism is pleaded for, from the Covenant of Circumcision, will also defend us, in refuting Baptism, to the Infants of *real* Believers. For, nothing can defend their Practice, but a Denial, that the Covenant of Circumcision is to be a Rule to us, in forming a Judgment, who are the proper Subjects of Baptism; which Denial would effectually defend us, and condemn their own Practice, at least, the Practice of many of them; even of all such who refuse to baptize the Infants of *nominal* Christians. The Argument for Infant-Baptism, drawn from the Right of Infants to Circumcision, either proves, that the Infants of all who *barely* believe the Truth of the Christian Religion, have a Right to Baptism, or it cannot prove that the Infants of *godly* Parents have a Right to it; which, I think, is not allowed by our Brethren, in general. In a Word, if there is not an *external* Covenant, that is *distinct* from the *internal* Covenant, or Covenant of Grace, unto which Christian Baptism belongs, the Right of Infants to Baptism can never be proved, from their supposed Interest, with their Parents, in the *internal* Covenant, or Covenant of Grace; because an Interest in that *internal* Covenant, is not the Ground of that Right. The Right of Believers themselves to Baptism, does not arise from their Interest in the Covenant of Grace, but from a *positive Command* of Christ, who is the Head of the Church. The *internal* Covenant, or Covenant of Grace, never did give any Persons a Right to *external* Privileges, of a religious Nature. The Foundation of that Right always was, and ever must be, a *positive Command* of God, or an *external* Covenant, wherein those Privileges are granted. And, consequently, though we should allow, to our Brethren, that the Infant-Seed of Believers are interested in the *internal* Covenant, or Covenant of Grace, their Right to Baptism cannot be proved, without a *positive Command*, or an *external* Covenant, now subsisting, wherein that Right is conveyed, both to themselves and their Infant-Seed. When such a Command for Infant-Baptism is produced, or Proof given of an *external* Covenant subsisting, wherein a Right to Baptism is conveyed unto Infants, I will immediately become a Proselyte, to our Brethren, in this Matter. But I must beg their Excuse, in not granting, that their Argument, for Infant-Baptism, taken from a Covenant, which long since ceased, is *solid*, and *just*. I will not, upon this Occasion, dispute about the Interest of their Infant-Seed, in the Covenant of Grace; because, they may be interested therein, and yet have no Right to Baptism: For, that Right arises not from an Interest in the Covenant of Grace. This is what I shall insist on, until clear Proof is given of the Contrary, which hath not yet been given, and, I think, never will be. If they can maintain the Stability of the Covenant of Grace, consistently with their Opinion of the Interest of their Infant-Seed, therein, they may quietly enjoy that Opinion, without the least Prejudice to that for which I contend, or the least Advantage to the Cause of Infant-Baptism, for which they are Advocates. Their Business, on this Subject, is to do two Things:

One is to prove, that an Interest in the Covenant of Grace, is the Foundation of a Right to Baptism: The other is to demonstrate, that the Infant-Seed of Believers, are interested therein. Until they give a Proof of the *former*, on this Occasion, I will have no Contention concerning the *latter*. Nor is there any Reason why I should: For, if the *former* cannot be proved, it is needless, as to this Thing, to dispute about the *latter*.

V. The Author puts in a short Plea for Infants. So much for the Ceremony, says he; now for the Substance (he means the Subject) of Baptism: Let me put in a Plea for my dear Brethren Infants; it is Ezekiel 36:25. Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you. He grants this is to be understood of the sanctifying Operations of the Spirit; and says, *the Sanctifying of the Spirit, and this one Baptism, are one and the same Thing.* This is very extraordinary Reasoning, if it may be called Reasoning. His Meaning is, the sanctifying Operations of the Spirit is the Ordinance of Baptism. And, *as Infants are capable of being sanctified, by, the Spirit, they are to be baptized:* For the Proof of which he refers us to Numbers 8:7. As to that, it hath been before proved, that Infants were not included, and that *adult* Persons only were commanded to be sprinkled. He hath not yet produced a Command to sprinkle Infants, under the *Law*, or under the *Gospel*: And I think, that he will never be able to produce such a Command, either in the *Old* or *New* Testament. This Plea, for his dear Brethren, Infants, as it is short, so it is *invalid*, and absolutely groundless. On this Occasion, I will consider the Arguments, which are urged, by some others, in favor of Infant-Baptism, particularly by Dr. *Ridgley*, whom I cannot mention, without paying Respect and Honor to his Memory, having had the Advantage and Pleasure of his *improving* Conversation, as well as of his *solid* Labors, from the Pulpit, and the Press, though I cannot but differ from him, in this, and in some other Points also. And, **1.** The Doctor observes, that *Baptism is an Ordinance of Dedication; That Parents may devote their Children to God in Baptism, provided they can do it by Faith.*

Ans. I freely grant, that Baptism is an Ordinance of Dedication: And also, that it is the Duty of Parents, to devote, or dedicate, their Children to God. Nor is it to be questioned, whether pious Parents devote them to the Lord, or not for, doubtless they do, by solemn and earnest Prayer, in their Behalf; even such godly Parents, as dare not dedicate them, in Baptism, because, they think, that they have no Warrant for that. As *Hannah* lent, or gave up, her little Son *Samuel* to the Lord, forever, wherein, it may be, there was something *extraordinary*, and which cannot be supposed to be in *common* Cases, because *Samuel* was to be engaged in *ministerial* Service, whereon her Faith was acted, under Divine Direction: Yet, I say, as she gave him up to the Lord, to be his forever, so godly Parents give up their Children to God, in solemn Prayer, and desire nothing, so much, as that they may partake of Grace, by which they may fear and serve him, in this World, and be fitted for the Enjoyment

of him, in the next. And this is their indispensable Duty. But I deny, that they may lawfully dedicate their Children in Baptism, for this plain Reason; Baptism is a Branch of instituted Worship, and not included in the Duty of the Dedication of ourselves, or ours, to the Lord: But this Manner of Dedication is of positive Appointment, and, therefore, the Divine Command, respecting this Manner of Dedication, is to determine us, who are to be dedicated, after this Sort; and by that Command only are we to be determined, in this Matter; because it is not inferable, from the Duty of Dedication, in general, but is founded on a positive Injunction. And, since God hath no where commanded Parents, in this Manner, to dedicate their Children to him, in so doing they act without his Authority, which they ought not to do, in any Instance. Whatever Degree of Faith and Hope, a believing Parent, may have of the Salvation of his Child, which he dedicates to God, that does not make it lawful for him to dedicate it, in Baptism, because that is a Branch of instituted Worship, and, therefore, it ought not to be performed, upon any Subject, who is not included in the Command, whereby this Branch of Christian Worship is instituted, which Infants are not. Let it once be proved, that they are, and this Dispute will be at an End. The Duty of Believers to devote themselves to God in Baptism, does not arise from their being Subjects of true Grace, but from a Divine Command, in that Manner to dedicate themselves to him: For, without a Command, requiring it of them, it would be an Act of Will-Worship in them. And, as they have no Command to dedicate their Children to God, in Baptism, their Dedication of them, in this Manner, or in this solemn Act of instituted Worship, is absolutely without Divine Authority, and unlawful. How much so ever, therefore, their Faith and Hope may be acted, respecting the Salvation of the Child, who is dedicated to God, Faith cannot be acted, relating to the Manner of its Dedication, in Baptism, because it is done without any Warrant from God. No un-commanded Act of Worship can be performed in Faith, nor be a Branch of the Obedience of Faith. Such is the Baptizing of Infants.

2. The learned Man says, *The Right of the Infant-Seed of Believers to Baptism, may be farther proved, from their being capable of the Privileges signified therein.*

Ans. I freely grant, that they are so: And the Infant-Seed of Unbelievers are also capable thereof; if not, they cannot be saved: Which is what, I hope, none will think is true. This Argument, therefore, as much favors the Baptism of the Infant-Seed of Unbelievers, as the Infant-Seed of Believers. The Infant-Seed of both, are capable of having regenerating Grace, and of being discharged of the Guilt of original Sin, which are those Privileges the Doctor mentions. None will deny that Infants are capable of those Privileges, who think them capable of Salvation. But I absolutely deny, that this Capacity gives them a Right to Baptism, for this clear Reason; Baptism is a solemn Act of instituted Worship, and, therefore, it is not to be performed upon any Subject, who is not included in that Command, by which this

Act of religious Worship is instituted. Until, therefore, Proof is given, that Infants are included in that Command, whereby Christian Baptism is enjoined, which is not yet done, I shall strenuously insist on it, that baptizing them is an Act of Will-Worship, or not commanded by God. The Right of Believers themselves to worship God, in a Submission to Baptism, does not arise from their Faith, but from his Command, which requires this solemn Act, or Mode of Worship, from them. It is certain, that Baptism is a Privilege; but that is not the only Idea we are to have of it, nor, indeed, is it the first and chief: It is an Act of solemn Worship; which latter Idea seems not to be regarded, as it ought to be, in those Debates which are had about a Right to it, as it is a Privilege. This is wholly neglected, by the learned Man, in his Discourse upon it; which is a very great Defect. We ought first to consider it as an Act of Worship, and enquire upon whom God requires this Act of Worship to be performed; for, that is the only true Way of determining who they are that have a Right to it, as it is a Privilege. Those, and only those, have a Right to Baptism, as it is a Privilege, on whom God hath commanded it to be performed, as an Act of Worship, who are not Infants, I am sure, either of Unbelievers, or Believers! but Believers only. All those Arguments brought to prove the Right of Persons to Baptism, as a Privilege, which are irrespective of it, as it is an Act of solemn Worship, must be inconclusive; because, none can have a Right to it, as it is a Privilege, but those on whom God requires it to be performed, as an Act of Worship. And, of this Nature are all the Arguments, which the learned Man produces, to prove the Right of Infants to it, as it is a Privilege. He does not consider it at all, as it is an Act of Worship.

Nor is this great Neglect in him to be wondered at; for, if he had done that, it would have effectually enervated the Force of his Arguments to prove the Right of Infants to Baptism, as it is a Privilege, unless he could have proved, that God requires it to be performed upon them, as it is an Act of Worship. He adds,

3. *It appears, that the Infant-Seed of Believers are to be consecrated, or devoted to God, in Baptism, because they are included in the Covenant wherein God has promised, that he will be a God to his People, and to their Seed; who are, upon this Account, stilled holy .* By this Covenant, he understands the Covenant of Circumcision, made with, or given to *Abraham*, and refers to it. I admire the great Caution, which he uses, in his Mode of speaking, on this Subject, that he might not give any Advantage to those, who advance Doctrine which is inconsistent with the Stability of the Covenant of Grace. The Doctor does not say, as some have said, that this Covenant was the Covenant of Grace; nor, that the Seed of Believers, are, with them, included in the Covenant of Grace. All he pleads for, is an *external Covenant-Relation*; not a Title to the saving Blessings of the Covenant of Grace; which external Covenant-Relation, and a Right to external Privileges, on that Foundation, were true, of all the Descendants of *Abraham*, in the Line of *Jacob*, Elect and Non-Select, and

that not only while they were in a State of Infancy, but when they arrived to *adult* Age; yea, through their whole Lives, though they never partook of any Blessing, which is promised in the Covenant of Grace. And, this external Covenant-Relation gave them the Denomination of *holy*, when they were *adult*, although they were absolutely destitute of *internal spiritual Purity* (Ezra 9:2.). This Argument, therefore, no more proves the Right of the Infant-Seed of Believers, to Baptism, than it proves the Right of the Infant-Seed of Unbelievers, to that Ordinance; for, the Seed of both had the Honor of standing in this external Covenant-Relation, and had the very same Right unto all external Privileges; on that Foundation. Let it once be proved, that there is now an external Covenant subsisting, which gives a Right to the Seed of Believers unto the external Privileges, which are granted to the New Testament-Church, as there was an external Covenant, which gave the *Jews*, in common, a Right to external Privileges, and we will make no further Opposition on this Head. The Doctor argues, that *the Children of Believers are called holy*, 1 Corinthians 7:14. and by that, he thinks, is meant, that *they are included in the external Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace*: Upon which I observe,

(1.) Here is nothing *peculiar* to the Infant-Seed, or that belongs to the Children of Believers, while they are Infants, and which may not be said of them when they are past their Infant-State: And, therefore, they are not *unclean*; in the Apostle's Sense, when they are *adult*, even though they remain in an unregenerate State. And, consequently,

(2.) If this *Holiness*, which stands opposed to *Uncleanness*, gives the Children of Believers a Right to Baptism, it is as lawful to baptize them, when they are part the Age of Infancy, on that Foundation, as it is while they are in their Infant-State.

(3.) The Children of *nominal* Christians are included in (or are under, which, I think, is the same) the external Dispensation of the
151Covenant of Grace, yet, our Brethren will not allow, that they have a Right to Baptism.

(4.) The Sanctification of the unbelieving Husband, and of the unbelieving Wife, is to be understood in a *civil*, and not in a *religious* Sense.

(5.) The Apostle does not say, that the unbelieving Husband is sanctified by the Faith of the believing Wife, or on account of her Faith, but barely this; that he is sanctified by his believing Wife, without assigning her Faith as the Cause of that Sanctification.

(6.) The Holiness of the Children is not inferred from the Faith of the believing Parent, but from the *Sanctification* of the unbelieving Parent, by the believing one. And, therefore,

(7.) The *Holiness* of the Children is not to be understood in a higher Sense than the *Sanctification* of the unbelieving Parent is, from which that Holiness is inferred. The *Sanctification* of the unbelieving Parent does not mean a Right to evangelical Privileges, in consequence of the Faith of the believing Parent; nor does the *Holiness*

of the Children intend a Right to those Privileges, in consequence of the *Sanctification* of the unbelieving Parent, by the believing one. This *Sanctification*, and this *Holiness*, are to be taken in a *civil*, not in a *religious* sense. This, I think, will clearly appear, if the Design of the Apostle is duly considered: For,

(8.) That is to prove, that the believing Wife ought not to depart from her unbelieving Husband, and that the believing Husband ought not to put away his unbelieving Wife; because Faith, neither, in one, nor in the other, dissolves their conjugal Relation, or renders it unlawful for them to cohabit together, in the matrimonial State; which was the Point that the *Corinthians* wanted Information about. They scrupled the Lawfulness of a Believer cohabiting with an Unbeliever, in a married State, and were inclined to think, that a believing Wife might depart from her unbelieving Husband, and that a believing Husband might put away his unbelieving Wife. To rectify this Mistake, the Apostle very *appositely* observes, that the unbelieving Husband is *sanctified* by the believing Wife, and that the unbelieving Wife is *sanctified* by the believing Husband; whereby is meant, that which united them together, as Husband and Wife, and rendered it lawful for them to dwell together, as such; which was not Faith, but the Act of taking the Man for a Husband, and the Act of taking the Woman for a Wife. Now, as this Scruple wholly respected the believing Wife, and the believing Husband, it was *strictly* proper to observe the Act of the believing Party, rather than the Act of the unbelieving Party, by which the Marriage-Relation was constituted; and to show, that Faith did not free the believing Party from that Obligation, which arose from her own, or his own voluntary Act, previous unto it. As a Servant is not freed from his Obligation to his Master by becoming Believer; so Wife, or a Husband, is not freed from that Obligation, by becoming a Believer, she is under, as a Wife, or he is under, as a Husband; and, therefore, it is not lawful for the believing Wife to depart from her unbelieving Husband, nor for the believing Husband to put away his unbelieving Wife. This is plainly the Apostle's Sense; and he enforces it, by observing, *Else were your Children unclean, but now are they holy*: That is to say, they are not *spurious*, but *legitimate*; because your Marriage-Relation still continues, and it is lawful for you to cohabit together, as Wife and Husband, and as Husband and Wife, notwithstanding one of you remain in a State of Unbelief.

(9.) Whatever may be understood, by that Holiness, which the Apostle attributes to Children, it cannot give them a Right to Baptism, if they are not such Subjects as Christ requires that solemn Act of Worship to be performed upon; which Infants are not, I am sure. None but those can have a Right to Baptism, as it is a Privilege, on whom he requires it to be performed, as it is an Act of Worship. And, therefore, since he hath not commanded that Ordinance to be performed upon them, as it is an Act of Worship, they cannot justly be supposed to have a Right unto it, as it is a Privilege. As the Command given to baptize, limits the Administration of that Ordinance to

Ministers, so it confines it to such, who are described in the Commission, to baptize, which Dr. *Ridgley* grants are *Believers only*, or such *as are taught*: For, the Reason of both is the same. None may lawfully baptize, but Ministers, because the Command to administer Baptism is given to them, and to them only; and none but such as are taught may lawfully be baptized, because their Commission to perform this solemn Act of Christian Worship, only authorizes them to perform it upon those who are first taught. If the Commission does not confine Baptism, to that Sort of Persons, who are mentioned therein, how can it limit the Administration of it to Ministers? Why may not a *Midwife*, in a Case of Necessity, baptize a Child? for which the Papists plead. Mr. *Eltringham*, indeed, hath a very *uncommon* Way of reasoning, which, if allowed, will prove, that every Man, and every Woman, may both preach and baptize. It is this: *All Duty belongs to the Law: All Men are under the Law: Therefore, what is the Duty of one, is the Duty of all*. Women, as well as Men, are under the Law, and, therefore, it is the Duty of Women, to preach and baptize, as much as it is the Duty of Men. This is a *notable* Argument, in favor of Women's Preaching; for which the *Quakers*, if they are not ashamed of it, may do well to give him their Thanks.

4. The learned Doctor argues for the Right of Infants to Baptism, from its being an *initiating Ordinance, as Circumcision was, under the legal Dispensation: And, that as Infants were devoted to God, by Circumcision, then, so they are, now, to be devoted to him, by Baptism*.

Ans. 1. This Argument proves too much, if it proves anything, viz. That the Infants of *nominal* Christians have the same Right to Baptism as the Infants of *real* Believers have, which he would not allow a His Caution here also is remarkable; for, though he speaks of Baptism as an initiating Ordinance, yet, he does not say, into what Infants are initiated by it: Whether it is the Covenant of Grace, or the Church. The former, indeed, he could not say, because he had before pleaded for their Right to Baptism, from their being included in the Covenant, wherein God has promised to be a God to his People, and to their Seed: Nor even there does he assert, *that*, that Covenant is the Covenant of Grace; so very great was his Caution, left he should give any Advantage to those, who advance Doctrines, which are incontinent with the Stability of the Covenant of Grace. And, by declining to say, that Baptism is an Ordinance of Initiation into the Church, he was not obliged to acquaint us, whether Infants are initiated into a *national*, or *congregational* Church. The New Testament-Church, he well knew, is not *national*: And, he did not care to say, that Infants are, by Baptism, initiated into a *congregational* Church, I suppose, because he could not allow, that they have a Right to those Privileges, which Christ hath granted to such a Church: And, therefore, he *barely* speaks of Baptism, as an initiating Ordinance, without letting us know into what Infants are initiated by it. 3. If Baptism is an Ordinance of Initiation into the Christian Church, as Circumcision was into the

Jewish. Church, and Baptism succeeds Circumcision, as it was such, then Infants ought not to be baptized, because they are not fit Materials for a Christian Church, nor have any Right to those Privileges, which Christ hath granted to it, for Edification, and spiritual Improvement. 4. Without Circumcision, none might lawfully join with the *Jewish* Church, in any external Acts of Worship. *Circumcision in the Flesh*, though *not of the Heart*, was required, in order to that (Ezekiel 44:7, 9.): But Baptism is not required, in order to enjoy the Advantages of attending on that Worship, which is performed in the New Testament-Church; if it was, the Children of Unbelievers, not being baptized, could not be allowed that Advantage; which is what, I think our Brethren will not agree to. 5. The Infants of ungodly Parents were initiated into the *Jewish* Church, by Circumcision; why therefore, may they not be initiated into the Christian Church, by Baptism, if that succeeds Circumcision as an Ordinance of Initiation? 6. Christian Baptism is a very *solemn* Act of Worship, which Circumcision was *not*; and, therefore, though it should be granted, that it succeeds Circumcision, as an *initiating* Ordinance, it will by no means follow, that Infants have a Right to Baptism, because they had a Right to Circumcision; for this clear Reason: No Act of religious Worship may be performed, upon any Subject, who is not included in the Command, by which that Act of Worship is instituted. Infants are not included in the Commission, which Christ gave his Disciples, to baptize; and, consequently, it is not lawful to perform that Act of religious Worship on them. I am determined not to take any Advantage of our Brethren; but will allow them their Reasoning, as far as can fairly be expected, which I may do, without the least Prejudice to the Cause, wherein I am engaged, if they cannot prove, that Infants are included in the Command, by which Baptism was instituted, they will never be able to prove, that they have a Right to it, as it is a Privilege: For, those only have a Right to Baptism, as it is a Privilege, on whom Christ hath commanded it to be performed, as it is an Act of Worship, who are not Infants, I am sure; but only such as are *taught*. Thus, much in answer to those Arguments, which Dr. *Ridgley* brings to prove, that the Baptism of Infants is lawful. I hope they may be allowed to be sufficient and full.

5. I will now consider another Argument for Infant-Baptism, which a learned Man thinks, is by *far the most solid*. It is this, as he states it: *All the Infants of all Believers, during Infancy, are in a relative State of Grace, in their Parents, by a certain special Oeconomy, or Appointment, of God. By the State of Grace, I understand, says he, a Right unto the Benefits of Grace and Glory, and, therefore, unto Remission of Sins, Sanctification, and Glorification, or eternal Life: Yet he apprehends, that they do not actually partake of these benefits, while they are in this relative State, but upon its being changed into an absolute State; which Change is either by Death, or the Use of Reason. Those whom Death removes in this relative State of Grace, they must all necessarily pass into an absolute State of Grace. Hence, as many Infants of Believers*

as die in Infancy, none excepted, are blessed with Grace and Glory, and so are saved, the relative State of Grace being graciously changed into an immortal and absolute one. Of this Opinion was the late learned Dr. Watts, which he delivers in his *Ruin and Recovery*. In my Answer to that Book, I did not take it into Consideration, because I thought it not a proper Place: But, as I have Reason to think, that this Sentiment obtains, and this Occasion offers for an Examination of it, I will now attend unto the Consideration thereof. *Venema* observes, that *when Children come to the Use of Reason, the Relation to God by their Parents ceases, and they no longer enjoy a Right to the Benefits of Grace and Glory, on that Foundation, by which they enjoyed it through their Infant-State. A new Dispensation of Grace takes Place with the Adult, which, under the Condition of Faith and Repentance, conveys, not only a Right, but also the Benefits themselves: Wherefore, Infants who after embrace Christ with a sincere Affection, are brought into an absolute State of Grace: On the Contrary those whose Minds are alienated from Christ, stand in a State of Wrath.* This Hypothesis cannot be true, because it is inconsistent with various Doctrines of the Gospel.

(1.) It necessarily supposes that Divine Love is mutable. All such, who have a Right to the Blessings of Grace and Glory, are Objects of the Love of God, for that Right springs from thence, as the original Cause of it: And, therefore, the Loss of that Right infers a Change in Divine Love, from which it flows, as the Origin of it.

(2.) If this Hypothesis is true, then some must be supposed to have a Right to saving Benefits, whom God never intended to save, or whom he did not choose to Salvation. Right to Salvation cannot be of larger Extent, than the Decree of Salvation is; for, to what Purpose are any invested with a Right to Salvation, who are not included in the Decree of Salvation? Can such be thought to have a Right to Salvation, whole Salvation is not designed by God? Besides, none are invested with a Right to Salvation, in the Persons of others, (of Parents, for Instance, which the learned Man supposes,) but in their own Persons; as none were chosen to it, in the Persons of others, but in their own.

(3.) None have a Right to Salvation, but those who are the Sons of God: *If Children, then Heirs, Heirs of God, and Joint-Heirs with Christ.* The Relation of Sons to God cannot cease: If, therefore, all the Infants of Believers are the Children of God, they will always be so, and cannot be deprived of that Right to Happiness, which belongs to them, as such; which effectually overthrows this Hypothesis.

(4.) Right to Salvation is founded in Justification, by the Imputation of Christ's Righteousness: *Being justified by his Grace, we are made Heirs, according to the Hope of eternal Life.* Now, if it is true, that all the Infants of Believers have a Right to Life, they are all justified by Christ's Righteousness, and shall certainly be all glorified, even those who arrive unto adult Age, except some of them, may be justified by Christ's Righteousness, while in their Infant-State, and cease to be so,

or lose their Interest, in his Righteousness, when they are adult, which cannot be. (5.) Christ obtained, by his Death, a Right to Faith, for all those on whose Account he laid down his Life; and, therefore, if he died for all the Infants of Believers, which the learned Man supposes he did, then they shall all be blessed with Faith, and, consequently, none of them, when they become adult, can perish. Indeed, he says, *Christ did not so much obtain Faith for Men, as Grace and Glory, for them who believe.* But that is a false Principle, which he begs, in order to support his Hypothesis. I think it needless, to offer more Particulars, to evert this Opinion; those mentioned are sufficient to that Purpose. The learned Man endeavors to prove his Hypothesis, from the Words of our *Lord*, concerning Children, who were presented to him, and blessed by him; of whom he said thus: *For of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.* Three Things he observes:

(1.) That *they were young Infants.*

(2.) That *they were brought to Christ by their Parents, who believed, etc.*

(3.) That *for this Reason Christ admitted them to him, and in this Relation declared them Heirs of his Benediction, and of the Kingdom of God.* I allow, that these Children were Infants: But it is not said, that they were brought to Christ by their Parents: Nor is any Respect had unto those, who presented them to our Saviour, whether they were their Parents, or others; nor to their Faith, whoever they were: And, therefore, the Hypothesis receives no Support at all, from hence. He apprehends, that 1 Corinthians 7:14. fully proves it: His Discourse on this Place is very prolix: After rejecting various Interpretations given of the Text, by *Erasmus Schmidius, Chrysostom, Elsner, Lightfoot, Knatchbul, Hammond, and Dodwell, etc.* he proceeds to deliver his own Sense concerning it; and, in order to that, observes, that the *Scruple which was railed concerning Believers, joined in Marriage before Conversion, lay in this; Whether, if a Husband or Wife, should continue in Heathenism and Idolatry, the Believer might abide in the matrimonial State, entered into, or contracted before Faith, and the Holiness of Marriage be preserved? In the Opinion of the Ancients, the conjugal Relation had a spiritual Respect to Christ, which represented the Union of Christ with the Saints, and raised up a Seed to Christ. If now either of the married Parties was an Alien from the Faith, that seemed to destroy the Holiness of Marriage, and the mystical Relation to it. The Apostle, answering to this Scruple of Conscience, affirms, that Infidelity of the other married Party did not binder, but that the Marriage might be holy; for here the Unbeliever is not at all reckoned by Christ, but he asserts, that he is in this Matter esteemed in the believing Party; so that the Marriage, notwithstanding the Impurity of the one married Party, will still remain, and be approved of by Christ.* In this Observation some Things are supposed, which are not proved, and may not be granted: 1. That the Marriage-Relation, itself, is not a Representation of the Union of Christ with the Saints; or, that it may not be considered, as an *Emblem* of it, unless either the

Husband, or the Wife, is a Believer; which is not true: For, the Apostle speaks of the Marriage-Relation, in itself, as such an *Emblem*, without any Respect to Faith, in the Husband, or the Wife. 2. That Faith constitutes the Marriage-Relation *holy*. This is a Mistake: Marriage, indeed, is *honorable*, as it is appointed of God, and is subservient to the Accomplishment of his wife and holy Designs; but Faith, in the Parties married, makes not the Relation *holy*. Farther, 3. It is supposed, that the *Corinthians* thought, that Children born of Parents, who were both Believers, were holy, and a Seed raised up to Christ; but the Children, born of Parents, one whereof was an Unbeliever, were not so; and, therefore, they scrupled the Lawfulness of a believing Wife, to cohabit with an unbelieving Husband, and the Lawfulness of a believing Husband, to cohabit with an unbelieving Wife: Of the Truth of which there is not the least Appearance, in the whole Context. Indeed, they scrupled the Lawfulness of a Believer's cohabiting with an Unbeliever, not for the Reason here assigned, but because it seemed to them unfit, that a Christian, and a *Heathen*, should dwell together, as Man and Wife; and, therefore, they thought it might be lawful for a believing Wife, to depart from her unbelieving Husband, and for a believing Husband to put away his unbelieving Wife; which it could not be, unless Faith dissolves the Marriage-Relation, and frees the Subject of it, from that *civil* Obligation he is under, arising from his own voluntary Act; but that it doth not: And, therefore, the Apostle *pertinently* observes, that the unbelieving Husband is sanctified by the believing Wife, *etc.* which Sanctification must be understood in a *civil* Sense, because it is assigned, as a Reason, and Proof, of the Continuance of the Obligation, on the believing Party, whether Wife, or Husband, still to dwell with the unbelieving one; and, consequently, the Sanctification of the unbelieving Party, arises not from the Faith of the believing one, but from that which makes it unlawful, for the believing one, to depart from, or put away the Unbeliever; which can be no other, than the Act of taking the Man for a Husband, and the Woman for a Wife. As this Doubt of the *Corinthians* wholly respected the believing Party, whether Wife, or Husband, it was *strictly* proper, to observe the Act of that Party, rather than the Act of the other Party, whereby she, or he, became obliged unto the unbelieving Party. The Matter under Consideration, was not the Lawfulness, or Unlawfulness, of those Parties marrying; for, there could be no question of its Lawfulness, they both being, at the Time of Marriage, in a State of Infidelity: But the Point to be determined was this; Whether it was lawful for a Believer to continue in the State of Matrimony with an Unbeliever? And the Apostle determines it is; because the unbelieving Party was *sanctified* by the believing one. That, therefore, in the believing Party, which sanctified the unbelieving one, made it not only lawful for, but also binding on the believing Party, to abide in the married State, with the unbelieving one; which could not be Faith; it must be the voluntary Act of that Party, in the Contraction of Marriage, and nothing else: For which Reason, the Apostle does not say, that, by the

Faith of the believing Wife, the unbelieving Husband is sanctified, etc. but *barely* this; the unbelieving Husband is sanctified by the believing Wife, etc. without assigning Faith, as the Cause of that Sanctification; nor is that deducible from the Words. That, and that only, is the Cause of this Sanctification, which makes it lawful for a Believer, to continue in the married State, with an Unbeliever; and that cannot possibly be Faith; it must be that which constituted the Marriage-Relation, on her, or his Part, *viz.* her, or his, voluntary Act, in contracting Marriage. Wherefore, it is clear, that this *Sanctification* of the unbelieving Party, is not to be understood in a *religious*, but in a *civil* Sense: And the *Holiness* of the Children, which is inferred from the *Sanctification* of the unbelieving Parent, is not to be understood *in a religious*, but in a *civil* Sense likewise.

The *Sanctification* of the unbelieving Parent gives no Right to *religious* Privileges, and the *Holiness* of the Children does not entitle to such Privileges. Most evident, I think it is, that this Hypothesis, receives not the *least* Proof from any Part of the Apostle's Reasoning, in this Place. The learned Man begs, and takes for granted, what he ought to have proved, and then interprets the Text, in such a Way, as might serve to countenance his Opinion. But, if this Hypothesis was true, it would not prove the Right of Infants to Baptism, though he says, it is, *by far the most solid Foundation of Infant-Baptism*; for two Reasons: One is, this Holiness is not predicated of the Children of a believing Parent, *as Infants*, in Distinction from her, or his Descendants, who are past the State of Infancy. It is spoken of, and attributed to them, as her, or his Descendants, whether Infants, or not: And, this Holiness is not lost when they become *adult*, nor are they then *unclean*, in the Apostle's Sense, though they remain in an unregenerate State. He takes it for granted, that the Apostle speaks of Infant-Seed, in Distinction from Adult, of which there is not the least Intimation, in the whole Context: So that, *Holiness* must mean *Legitimacy*; for in no other Sense can it be said, that an *adult* Child of a Believer is *holy*, who remains unregenerate: And, this *Holiness* is attributed to the Children of a believing Parent, without any Respect to their Age, whether *infant*, or *adult*. The other Reason is, if this *Holiness* is to be understood in a *religious* Sense, Baptism being a solemn Act of instituted Worship, it is not lawful to perform it upon any Subject, who is not included in the Command, by which it is instituted, (as I have before said,) which Infants are not: And, consequently, this *Holiness* can be no Proof of their Right to Baptism, even though it should be allowed, that it is to be taken in a *religious* Sense. None can have a Right to Baptism, as it is a Privilege, but those, on whom Christ hath commanded it to be performed, as it is an Act of Worship, who are not Infants, I am certain.

Having answered the Arguments advanced by our Brethren, for Infant- Baptism, I will now briefly state our Objections, against it.

Object. 1. There is no Command for, nor any Precedent of Infant-Baptism, in the New Testament. I cannot but think, that this is a very strong Objection; because, as no Mode of Worship is lawful to be practiced, which is not commanded, or recommended to us by the Example of Persons, acting under Divine Direction; so no Act of religious Worship, may lawfully be performed upon any Subject, without Authority for it, from God, either by his Command, requiring it, or, by the Example of some Person, acting under his Direction, therein, from whence it may be concluded, that it is agreeable to the Divine Will: Neither of which, in this Case, is pretended, except by some *less skillful* Advocates, who argue, that *whole Households* were baptized, wherein, they seem desirous to have it sup-posed, that there were Infants, without any Evidence of it. They are willing to beg, what they cannot prove: But this Cause is of too great Importance, to allow of such Liberality to them. Dr. *Ridgley*, in answering to this Objection, observes, that *consequential* Proof is sufficient. This is a *tacit* Acknowledgment, that *direct* and *express* Proof cannot be given: And, as to his consequential Proofs, they have been before considered, and found *invalid*. I freely grant, that consequential Proof of Doctrines is sufficient; because they are capable of such Proof: For, as there is a Connection between Principles, and one is inferable from another, express Proof being given of any Principle, wherewith another is connected, and from which it is justly inferable, that Proof is direct and explicit, respecting the Truth of the former Principle, and it is a consequential Proof of the Truth of the latter, which is a Deduction from the former. But I cannot allow, that the Mode and Subject of instituted Worship, are capable of consequential Proof, because they are not inferable from anything, but that Command, by which the Act of Worship is instituted, or they are not deducible, from any Principle whatever, but are wholly of Divine Appointment, if legal; and, therefore, they will not admit of consequential Proof. The Proof of the Legality of the Mode and Subject of instituted Worship, must be *direct* and *express*, or it is none. He farther observes that *Baptism was in use with the Jews, and that they baptized Children with their Parents, who became Proselytes; and, therefore, there was no Need for Christ to give particular Direction to his Disciples, to baptize Infants, because they would conclude upon that, from the Custom of the Jews, who baptized the Children of such as became Proselytes.* It does not appear, by anything expressed, either in the Old or New Testament, that this was the Practice of the *Jews*, before, or in our Saviour's Time; and, therefore, I confers, that I am not very forward, to give Credit to the Testimony of *Jewish* Rabbies, concerning the Antiquity of that Custom. Nor can I think that a Command given to the *Israelites*, to wash their Clothes, was an Order to wash their Bodies, which *Jewish* Masters say it was. Besides, if this was Fact, and the Disciples of our Lord did conclude upon the Right of Infants to Baptism, from thence, it is reasonable to think, that they would have given some Intimation of it, either in Words, or by their Practice; whereas they have

not. There is not the least Ground for a Pretense, that they had any such Apprehension.

Our Brethren, therefore, upon being asked, Who hath required the Baptism of Infants, at your Hands? will never be able to answer, that Christ, by whom this *solemn* Act of Worship was instituted, requires it of them.

Object. 2. Several Things in the Commission, by which Ministers are authorized to baptize, evince, that Infant-Baptism is unlawful: *Go ye therefore, 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.*

(1.) Teaching ought to precede Baptism; and being taught is required, as a Qualification for Baptism, than which nothing can be more evident: For, Christ's Command to baptize, only respects them who are taught; not any, or all, in all Nations, but those, and only those, in all Nations, who are instructed. And, therefore, Infants not being capable of Instruction, they are not capable Subjects of Baptism, nor can be qualified, as Christ requires those should be, whom, it is his Pleasure, that his Ministers should baptize. And, this Instruction must be effectual for ingenerating Faith, which appears, not only from the Sense of the Word, in the New Testament (Acts 14:21.), but also from what *Mark* expresses, in his shorter Account of the Commission; *He that believeth and is baptized.* Hence, it is most clear, that Christ intends such Instruction, as is productive of an Act of Faith; which entirely everts that Sense, which some have given, of the Command to teach, *viz. Disciple, by baptizing,* without Instruction first given; and, which Dr. *Ridgley* acknowledges, is not defensible.

(2.) The Form of Baptism will not allow us to think, that Infants are the proper Subjects of it. That Form is the Pronunciation of the Names of the Divine Persons; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; without which, neither dipping into, nor-sprinkling with Water, is Christian Baptism. This, therefore, is as solemn an Act of Worship, as was ever instituted by God. Now, that only can be a sufficient Authority for a Minister's performing this Act of Worship, which gives him express Direction, on whom to perform it: And, since Infants are not included, in that Direction, but such only who are *taught*, performing this *solemn* Act of Worship (than which none is more so) on them, cannot be lawful. Besides, it is reasonable to conclude, that it is the Will of God, that both the Parties, who are concerned in this Act of Worship, should be capable of adoring him, therein; not only the Administrator of the Ordinance, but also the Subject on whom it is administered; which Infants are not. That Proof, I am sure, ought to be *very clear* and *strong*, which may justly demand our Assent to this; that it is the Will of God, that *any such* shall be Parties concerned in his Worship, who have not the Use of Reason.

(3.) Christ requires his Ministers to teach those, whom they have baptized, to *observe all Things whatsoever he hath commanded them*: And, therefore, if they baptize any, who are incapable of receiving such Instruction, and of yielding Obedience to Christ's Commands, therein, they act without his Authority: Consequently, Infant-Baptism is unlawful.

(4.) Our blessed Lord promises his Presence: *Lo, I am with you always, even to the End of the World*. This gracious Promise is intended, not for the Encouragement of Ministers only, who administer the Ordinance of Baptism, but also for the Encouragement of those, on whom it is administered: And, therefore, Christ designed this Institution, for the *present spiritual Advantage and Edification* of those, on whom it is his Will that it should be administered; of which, I suppose, none will say, that Infants are capable. His gracious End in its Institution cannot possibly be answered, in them. It will be impossible to prove, that it is the Will of Christ, that Infants should be baptized, without denying, that he intended that Institution for the *present Edification* of those on whom it is administered: And, such a Denial would come with a very *ill Grace*, from any one, who professes Faith in that precious Promise, which is here expressed, for the Encouragement of both the Administrator of Baptism, and of the Persons who are baptized. Upon the whole, I think, that it may be fairly concluded, from the Commission, that the Baptism of Infants never came into the Mind of Christ.

Object. 3. The Baptism of Infants is not lawful, because it cannot be the Answer of a good Conscience. This Objection is drawn from what the Apostle *Peter* says of Baptism; whole Words are there: *The like Figure whereunto even Baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away the Filth of the Flesh, but the Answer of a good Conscience) by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ* (1 Peter 3:21.). I suppose, it will be allowed, that in this Place, either the Baptism of the Spirit, or the Ordinance of Water-Baptism, is intended. Let us enquire which. The Baptism of the Spirit means, either his sanctifying Operations, or the extraordinary Effusion of his Gifts, upon the Apostles. There is Reason to think, that *John* designs the latter, when he says of Christ, *He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with Fire*; because, he speaks of it, as a Thing *future*, and not *present*, the *Holy Spirit not being yet given*, in that extraordinary Way. *Now*, if the Baptism of the Spirit is to be understood of that, it cannot be designed in this Place, because this is a Privilege common to the Subjects of Salvation; whereas, that is not: *And*, if the Baptism of the Spirit designs his sanctifying Operations, it cannot be meant here; for, his Work of Grace upon the Heart, is not a *Figure*, which this Baptism is; nor, was it needful to say of that, *not the putting away the Filth of the Flesh, i.e.* external Defilement, since that Work is not outward, but inward, and the Heart is the Subject of it. The Apostle means a Baptism which is *external*; and asserts, that its outward Effect, *viz.* cleansing from *external* Defilement, is not what he hath in view, but the *Answer of a good*

Conscience, therein, which is *internal*, and properly opposed unto, the cleansing from outward Defilement, or putting away the Filth of the Flesh: And, therefore, it is not the Baptism of the Spirit, taken in either Sense, that is designed, but the Ordinance of Baptism. I have another Reason to offer, for not understanding it of the Baptism of the Spirit; which is this: Infants cannot be the Subjects of it; for, there cannot be the Answer of a good, or bad Conscience, in them, because they have not the Use of Reason. This Answer respects not the Principle of Grace, but the Acts of it. Infants are capable Subjects of a Principle of Grace, but not of gracious Acts. Such this Answer of a good Conscience is. If, therefore, it is allowed, that Infants are capable Subjects of the Baptism of the Spirit, that cannot be here meant, because they are incapable of the Answer of a good Conscience. I may be censured, as *cruel* to Infants, because I think they ought not to be baptized; but I would not, for the World, give into any Opinion, that supposes them incapable of Salvation, which they must be, if they are incapable of the Baptism of the Spirit, as it is taken for his sanctifying Work on the Heart, and if that Work necessarily includes in it, or is the Answer of a good Conscience.

Wherefore, it seems most clear to me, that it is the Ordinance of Baptism, which is here meant, and not the Baptism of the Spirit. Baptism is said to be the Answer of a good Conscience, because Enquiry is, or ought to be made of every Candidate for it, concerning his Faith in Christ; as *Philip* examined the *Eunuch*, concerning his Faith, when he proposed to be baptized by him, saying, *Here is Water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?* *Philip* answers him, *If thou believest with all thine Heart, thou mayest:* Wherein this Question is implied; Dost thou believe with all thine Heart? Unto which he replies, *I believe, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God* (Acts 8:36, 37.). This was the Answer of a good Conscience; whereupon *Philip* baptized him. Since the Apostle plainly supposes such an Answer, in Baptism, it may fairly be concluded, that he was unacquainted with the Baptism of any, who were naturally incapable of giving such an Answer. The Baptism of Infants was not practiced in his Time, so far as he knew, nor ought it to have been since, because it is impossible it should be the Answer of a good Conscience, which he asserts Baptism is.

Object. 4. Infant-Baptism is not lawful, because Baptism is a Branch of Righteousness, which the People of God ought to fulfil. This is evident, from the Words of our Lord to *John*, concerning it; *Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us, to fulfill all Righteousness* (Matthew 3:15.): Wherein it is plainly supposed, that, not only the Person, who administers Baptism, fulfils Righteousness, but also the Party, on whom it is administered, fulfils it. And, therefore, such as are naturally incapable thereof, which all will allow, that Infants are, cannot be the *legal* Subjects of Baptism. And, those Parents who offer their Infants to Baptism, and, when they are grown up, endeavor to make them believe, that it is not necessary they should be baptized, upon their Conversion, do what in them lies, to hinder their Children

fulfilling a Branch of Righteousness, which God most certainly requires them to fulfil, as Followers of the Blessed Jesus; whereof our good Brethren, who differ from us, in this Point, would do well seriously to consider. How they will be able to defend themselves, in this Matter, I cannot tell. If the Opinion of the Right of Infants to Baptism, were to obtain *universally*, there would be but a very inconsiderable Number of Persons left, in a Christian Nation, from whom this Branch of Righteousness could be expected to be fulfilled. Christ, in that Care, would *scarcely* have *any Followers*, in this Act of holy Obedience; which ought to be well weighed by our Brethren, for it is a Matter of great Importance. They only plead for the Right of the Infants of Believers to Baptism; and, therefore, one would think, that they should conclude, that it is the Duty of the Children of Unbelievers to be baptized, when they believe, although they may know, that they were baptized in their Infancy; but, if I am not mistaken, very few, if any of them, put them upon a Submission to Baptism, when they are converted, thinking their former Baptism sufficient, though, according to the Principles from which they argue, they then had no Right unto it. Thus they endeavor, as much as they can, to prevent Christians yielding Obedience to the Will of God, in this Branch of Righteousness, which all his People ought to fulfil, after the Example of Christ, upon an Apprehension, that Infants have a Right to Baptism, as it is a Privilege; not considering, that none can have a Right unto it, as it is a Privilege, who are *naturally* incapable of submitting to it, as it is a Branch of Righteousness, which God expects his People to fulfil.

VI. Mr. Eltringham undertakes to prove, that the Mode of Baptism, is not dipping, but sprinkling. In his Letter, he says, the Word *baptizo* may signify to dip, or wash all over, for any thing I know to the contrary; and adds, but that it signifies to dip in Water always, is a most glaring Absurdity. When it is used to express the Action of dipping into some other Liquid; dipping in Water is not there meant; I suppose that none will think it is. But his Meaning, I imagine, is this, *viz.* That it does not always signify dipping, when it is used to express the Action of making a Person, or Thing, wet, with Water. Our Brethren do not deny, that the Word ($\beta\alpha\pi\tau\iota\zeta\omega$) baptize, properly, and primarily, signifies to *immerse*, *plunge*, or *dip*, though they say it also signifies to wash, where dipping cannot be intended: But then, as learned *Stockius* observes, the Word is not used, in its proper, but in a *tropical* Sense. I am determined, in this Matter, to ask no more, than must be granted, for the Cause I am to defend, does not at all oblige me to it. Be it so, therefore, that the Word does not always signify to dip, but some-times to *sprinkle*, or *pour*; What is proved by it? Not that Baptism ought to be administered by sprinkling, or pouring of Water, on a Person. The utmost which can be pretended from hence is, that Baptism may be administered, either by dipping, or sprinkling, as the Administrator and the Subject shall choose, because it cannot certainly be determined, in what Manner it is the Will of Christ it should be performed, by reason of the Ambiguity of the Word. It must,

therefore, be allowed, that, at least, it favors us *Dippers*, as much as it does *Sprinklers*. Is it reasonable to think, that this is the real Fact? Can it be thought, that Christ hath left us to perform this solemn Act of. Worship, in what Manner we ourselves shall like best, without any plain Direction, respecting the Mode of that Act of Worship? We cannot think so, without charging upon him, a Want of Uniformity, as the Institutor of New Testament-Worship. In all other Instances, he hath given us plain Directions, respecting the Mode of Worship, either immediately, or by his Apostles, in Words, or by their Practice, under his Direction: And, I cannot be persuaded to think, that, in this Particular, he hath not acted like himself; which he hath not, if there is that Ambiguity, in this Affair, that is pretended, and it is lawful for us to administer Baptism, either by dipping, or sprinkling, as we please. Let us, therefore, *impartially, and seriously enquire*, whether there is not some Medium, by which we may arrive at a Certainty, concerning the Mind of Christ, in this *momentous* Affair? And,

1. I cannot but be of Opinion, that the Import of the Word (βαπτίζω) baptize, notwithstanding it is said to be *ambiguous*, is sufficient to that Purpose. It is a Rule with Divines, that Words ought to be taken, in their *proper*, and *primary* Sense, though they are sometimes used in a different one, except there are some Circumstances in the Text, which will not admit of that Sense. This is a good Rule: And, I am sure, a Departure from it would be attended with very dangerous Consequences, on some of the *most important* Doctrines of the Gospel; which those must know, who are at all acquainted with *Socinian* Controversies. If this Rule may be allowed to hold good, in other Points, why should it not be allowed in this? If it may, then we need not look any further, than the Commission, to adjust the Matter under Consideration; because, our Brethren grant, that the Word, *properly*, and *primarily*, signifies to *immerse, dip, or plunge*, though, they say, it is sometimes used to express sprinkling, or pouring. And, since there are no Circumstances, in the Text, which will not admit of the Word being taken in its *proper*, and *primary* Sense, it is reasonable to interpret the Commission, as a Command, to administer Baptism, by *dipping*.

Wherefore, *dipping*, in Baptism, is commanded, and is not an Act of Will- Worship, which Mr. *Eltringham* affirms it is.

2. We may next consider the Circumstances of, and the Places wherein, the Baptism of the primitive Christians was performed, in order to settle this Matter. Our Brethren, here also endeavor, rather, to puzzle the Cause, than to discover Truth, by criticizing on the *Greek* Prepositions, (ἐν ἀπό ἐί; in, out of, and into,) which are used, on this Subject: Yet, I doubt not, but to oblige them to acknowledge, that our Translators have rendered them very rightly, or compel them to confers, that it is not to be proved, that Christ was baptized, in or with Water, or, that his Apostles ever practiced Water-Baptism. Perhaps, the Reader may be somewhat startled at this, and

be afraid, that Countenance will be given to *Quakerism* by it. I must say, that I delight not to act this Part, on the sacred Scriptures, nor would I by any means do it, but to confirm Truth, and to shew our Brethren the Tendency of their Criticisms, on *Greek* Prepositions. I allow, that *εν* does not always signify in, but sometimes *near to*; that *απο* signifies *from*, as well as *out of*; and, that *εις* means *to*, as well as *into*. This is granting as much as can be desired. Now let us see what Use can be made hereof, on this Subject. To begin with the first Preposition; it is said, And *were baptized of him*, (*εν τω Ιορδανη*) *near to Jordan* (Matthew 3:6.). Who can say with what they were baptized, (the Text does not inform us,) if the Preposition is to be rendered *near to*, instead of *in*? Thus also, we shall not be able to determine with what our Blessed Lord was baptized, if the second Preposition must be translated from, as it is used, on the Subject of his Baptism. When he was baptized, he *straightway came up* (*απο του Υδατος*) *from the Water*, or *up the rising Ground* (Matthew 3:16.); as Dr. *Guise* says. *John* might baptize Christ with *Wine*, or *Oil*, for ought the Text expresses, if He was not in the Water before, and in order to his Baptism, and so came up out of it when he was baptized. Likewise, the third Preposition, which is used concerning the Baptism of the *Eunuch*, will be attended with the same Obscurity, and we shall be left at an Uncertainty, with what *Philip* baptized him, if the Phrase (*εις Υδωρ*) is rendered *to the Water*, instead of *into the Water*. Our Brethren, in thus criticizing upon, or *playing* with these Prepositions, make not the least Advance towards the Discovery of Truth. If this is of Service to anything at all, it is *Quakerism*. The whole Amount of their Endeavour, on this Subject, is, rendering it *uncertain* what the Mode of Baptism is, and what *Liquid*, whether *Water*, *Wine*, or *Oil*, was used, by the Apostles of Christ, in the Administration of that Ordinance; for which, the Papists may think themselves obliged unto them; because it is said, that they sometimes baptize the Children of great Persons with *Wine*: And who can say, that *John* did not baptize Christ with *Wine*?

Or, who can prove, that the *Eunuch* was baptized with *Water*, if he did not go down into the Water, in order to his Baptism, and come up out of it, when he was baptized. If he, with *Philip*, only went to the Side of the Water, before his Baptism, and, after it, came from the Side of the Water, how can it certainly be concluded, that he was baptized with *Water*? For both might be done, and, yet, be not be baptized with *Water*. Indeed, it may be argued, that *Philip* had recommended the Baptism of *Water* to him, and also informed him, that it was usual to administer Baptism, in Places where a considerable Quantity of *Water* was; because he says, upon coming *unto a certain Water*, *See, here is Water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?* But that will not prove the Certainty of his being baptized, with *Water*, if he did not go down into it, in order to his Baptism; because the Account of his Baptism no further proves the Use of *Water*, therein, than it expresses his going to, or into the *Water*, in order to

be baptized, and his coming up from it, or out of it, after the Administration of the Ordinance upon him. Going to the Side of the Water, in order to be baptized, and coming from it, when he was baptized, is not a certain Proof, that Water was used in his Baptism: But, if he went down *into* the Water, with an Intention to be baptized, and, accordingly, was baptized, *in* the Water, and if he came *up out of* the Water, after being baptized in it, no Doubt can be admitted, concerning the Use of Water in his Baptism; because, it is unreasonable to suppose, that he went *down into* the Water, to be baptized with *any other Liquid*: Nor could going to the Side of the Water be necessary, in order to be sprinkled; for, doubtless, his Attendants were able to supply *Philip* with a sufficient Quantity of that Water, for sprinkling him, if they had any Vessels with them, in travelling; which is not to be doubted of. He, therefore, certainly went *down into* the Water, as the *Greek Phrase* (εἰ το Ὑδωτρ) properly imports, and came *up out of* the Water, as the original Phrase (εκ του Ὑδατό) properly signifies. Dr. *Doddridge* says, *considering how frequently Bathing was used, in those hot Countries, it is not to be wondered, that Baptism was generally administered by Immersion, though I see no Proof, that it was essential to the Institution. It would be very unnatural to suppose that they went down to the Water, merely that Philip might take up a little Water in his Hand to pour on the Eunuch. A Person of his Dignity had, no doubt, many vessels, in his Baggage, on such a journey through so desert a Country; a Precaution absolutely necessary for Travelers, in those Parts, and never omitted by them. See Dr. Show's Travels, Pref p. 4.* It seems the Doctor thought, that Baptism may be administered, either by *dipping*, or by *sprinkling*. A credible Person, now living, informed me, that when he applied to the Doctor for Communion, he acquainted him, that he apprehended it was his Duty to be baptized, by *Immersion*; to which he answered, that he had no Objection to it, and, that he could freely do it for him, only he thought it might not be well taken by his Friends, whose Mind, and Practice, were different. But, surely, the Mode of so *solemn* an Act of Worship, is not left *undetermined* by Christ; which it most certainly is, if the Reasoning and Criticisms of our Brethren are just; nor can it be certainly proved, that the Apostles used Water in Baptism. All they do, and attempt to do, in this Matter, is to reduce us unto an Uncertainty, respecting the Mode of Baptism, and what Liquid was used in the Administration of it, whether *Water, or something else*. They prove nothing; nor is their Manner of arguing calculated to prove anything; which sufficiently discovers the great Impropriety of It. The Circumstances of Baptism, as administered by *John*, and by the Apostles of Christ, and the Places wherein it was administered by them, will not allow us to think, that they administered it by *sprinkling*. *John* baptized the *Jews* in the River *Jordan* (Matthew 3:6.): But Dr. *Guyse* thinks, that he *could not baptize, by Immersion, the prodigious Multitudes who came to him.*

A large Number, indeed, being excited by Curiosity came to hear him; but that vast Multitudes were baptized by him does not appear. If such prodigious Multitudes were baptized by him, as the Doctor supposes, what became of them? Were they Believers? If Believers, where were they when Christ was risen? We have no Account of such a *prodigious* Number of Disciples after Christ's Resurrection: And yet, doubtless, some were converted by his Ministry, and the Ministry of his Apostles, and of the seventy-two Disciples. Therefore, there is no Necessity for supposing, that *they stood in Ranks, near to, or just within the Edge of the Water*, and of *John's* passing along before them, and casting Water upon their *Heads*, or *Faces*, with his Hands, or some *proper Instrument*, which the Doctor imagines he did, not to *John's* Honor, nor to that of the Ordinance, which certainly requires far greater Solemnity, than such a Manner of Administration would admit of; for, Baptism is a very *solemn* Act of Worship, and ought not to be administered in such a *huddling* Way. Besides, those whom he baptized made *Confession of their Sins*; How, therefore, could *John* baptize *many, Thousands in a Day*? which the Doctor supposes he might: If he did, there was but *little Solemnity, in their Confessions*, and in his Manner of baptizing them, after they had confessed their Sins.

3. Christ calls his Sufferings a Baptism. I *have*, says our Lord, *a Baptism to be baptized with* (Luke 12:50.); whereby his dolorous Sufferings are intended. Now, the Administration of Baptism, by *sprinkling*, or *pouring a little Water* on the Face, cannot be thought *a fit Emblem* of his *overwhelming* Sorrows; but Baptism by *Immersion* may justly be accounted such. And, therefore, we have solid Reason to conclude, that *dipping into Water*, and *not sprinkling* with Water, is that Mode of Baptism, which Christ instituted.

4. Baptism is a Representation of the *Burial* and *Resurrection* of Christ: *Buried with him in Baptism, wherein also you are risen with him, through the Faith of the Operation of God*. I suppose it will be granted, that Baptism here means, the Baptism of Water, or the Baptism of the Spirit. The latter cannot be meant, if it be understood of the *extraordinary* Effusion of the Spirit, because this is *common* to all Believers, but that is *not*: Nor can it be meant of the Communication of the Spirit, in Regeneration, because it is *through Faith*; for Faith follows upon that, and is not acted in it. And, therefore, Water-Baptism is intended; which, when it is administered, by *Immersion*, is a proper Representation of Christ's *Burial* and *Resurrection*, as Bishop *Davenant* observes, with whole Words I shall conclude: *This Burial of the Body of Sins, or of the Old Man, is represented in Baptism, when he who is to be baptized is put into Water, as the Resurrection is when he is brought out of it; for, in the ancient Church, they not only wetted, but plunged those in Water, whom they baptized.*