

1746 vol 32 BRIED 9  
Illustration and Confirmation

Of the DIVINE RIGHT of

# Infant Baptism;

In a plain and familiar

## DIALOGUE

Between a MINISTER and one of his  
PARISHIONERS.

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By JONATHAN DICKINSON, A. M. <sup>K</sup>  
Late Minister of the Gospel at *Elizabeth-Town*, and  
PRESIDENT of the College in *New-Jersey*.

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GEN. xvii. 7. *And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant; to be a GOD unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.*

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First published in 1746; and now re-printed, at the desire of some, for the benefit of the rising generation; especially that they may be established in the present truth. APOST. PETER.

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## P R E F A C E.

**I**T is an awakening direction to the ministers of the word; that they *blow the trumpet in Zion, and sound an alarm in the holy mountain*; to give warning of the danger of every kind of evil which threatens us; whether from Satan, the grand adversary of souls, and of the public good of society; or, from seducers, who lie in wait to deceive and draw off persons, from the faith and order of the gospel; or, from our more general declensions of various kinds; especially in such a day as this; wherein God hath done so much for us, to engage *our stedfastness in the faith, and in the covenant with him and one another*; and *to be a holy people unto the LORD.*

The works of the LORD, (rising into wonders) are great and should be marvelous in our eyes; even his late works of power and mercy, in subduing and humbling our savage, proud and perfidious enemies, as he hath done; to bring them unto terms of peace, in which such great privileges are continued,—and such vast territories ceded to the *English* nation; to the great enlargement of the *British* empire in *North-America*; and (as we hope) to the lasting tranquility thereof, especially of this land.——

Oh surprizing!—the difference in our state now, from what it was, but a few years ago, when our all in this world, was sorely threatened, and began to be laid waste, as in the first of the war.

But behold! *the LORD has turned our captivity, as the streams in the south*, by an astonishing series of important victories, down to the subjecting of the *Havana*;—a glorious close of a victorious war; which introduceth peace, and enlargement to the *British* dominions, beyond what any of the former annals of our nation can boast.

Well now, an't all this train of wonders, which have filled the last five years, the doings of the LORD, whereof we are glad, and which we profess to be thankful for?—But, be it known unto us; answerable fruit is justly expected from us; and surely, *after such a deliverance as this*, we must *not return again to break his commandments*: that will be a return again to folly, with a witness against us, louder than any the thunder, which has been roaring in our ears, for so many years of war and terror.—Ingratitude, unfruitfulness, prophaneness and immorality now, will be awful and ominous:—and is it not too evident to be denied?—that these things, with a great deal of vanity and stupidity, do abound, even in all ages of men; notwithstanding all our salvations from our enemies, and in the midst of all the judgments of God since, in successive summers of drought, and winters of severity, with which he has visited us; more wasting to our substance, than divers years of war.—And indeed, all kinds of declension and iniquity are foreboding some terrible judgment of God, on a people so perverse, as this comes to; very especially, the error and iniquity of *going in the way of Cain*; and following the example of *the gainsaying of Core*; in departing from God's institutions, and without any scriptural warrant, setting up separately themselves.

Let it be here considered, that the *way of Cain*, referred to in *Jude*, was not firstly and chiefly that of his *murder* and outrage on his brother *Abel*; but that  
of

of his *separation* from the church in that day, the practice of *Adam's* house, from the institution of GOD, therein established, (*viz.*) the offering of the firstling of the flock, a lamb for sacrifice; which only could be offered in faith, as *Abel* indeed, offered it,—because, that only had the stamp of a divine institution upon it, and typically looked forward to CHRIST, the Lamb of GOD to take away the sin of the world. Now this kind of sacrifice, which GOD had appointed, *Cain* refused, and neglected to offer, and devised one of his own,—and brought the fruits of the ground; which, it seems, wanted a divine institution for this purpose, and had not any propriatory aspect and reference; and not well pleasing to GOD, to be substituted in the room of this appointment. After *Cain* had offered this, and found the LORD had not respect to him, and his offering, he murdered his brother *Abel*, who had offered to GOD's acceptance, and for the whole, was thrust out from the presence of the LORD, and under his curse; *i. e.* as some observe, was excommunicated from the church. All the mischief that followed his departing from GOD's institution, (*viz.*) the murder of his brother, the curse of GOD upon him, &c. that way of *Cain* led unto:—and the example of *Cain* is here produced, (says Dr. *Manton*,) “because he was the first and chief of them that departed from the true church and pure service of GOD.”

And as for *Core, and his company*, here also referred to in *Jude*, monuments of divine justice and vengeance, held up as a warning to all men, unto the end of the world; their temper and conduct in gainsaying *Moses* and *Aaron*, forsaking of GOD's institutions and ministry, and setting up, by themselves, separate from the church and congregation of *Israel*, provoked the LORD to open the earth, and let them down, shrieking with amazement, into the bowels thereof.

Now

Now these things, so long after the dates of them, the one 3941, and the other 1537 years after, are so plainly referred to and observed, for our admonition and learning, on whom the ends of the world are come. These, I say, we should surely take notice of, for that purpose; and hereby be awed from any thing similar to these dreadful instances of iniquitous conduct, in forsaking GOD's church and institutions, worship and ministry.——

It has been long ago remarked, that when persons, who had a good christian education, and by a solemn profession, a place in the christian church, begin to err, and depart from the faith, once delivered to the saints, and in some things to forsake the institutions of CHRIST, GOD hath judicially left them to go further! Yes, when they have broke over some known rules of the gospel, and orders of GOD's house; have broke covenant with him and his people, separated from the church, the communion and ministry thereof; and especially, if they go so far as to renounce their infant baptism: this is but a bad beginning of something still worse, they are in the road to turn apostates from all scriptural religion; for the way of error and sin is down hill, easy declining; and they seldom stop at some of the first stages. When they have forsaken some of GOD's truths and institutions, they err and sin more and more, to their own wrong, to the prejudice and grief of the church, and with danger to the generations following: they *cast off fear and restrain prayer before GOD*; drop family prayer, discard the christian sabbath, &c. Instances of which there have been in our land above half a century ago, and some similar to those in our day; who began only with separating unjustifiably from the churches, ministry, &c. as was common with them and others; who as yet have proceeded no farther than so: but what many of those others may come

them, is more sensibly feared, than certainly known.—  
 er, are But those who have embraced such principles or erro-  
 dmoni- zeous notions, as at once set them out of the reach  
 world of argument and conviction for their recovery, and  
 notice ranks them with that sort of people of whom  
 m any CHRIST says, *let them alone, they be blind leaders of*  
 iniqui- *the blind*, are in a very dangerous state; in danger of  
 institu- being given up to judicial blindness of mind, and  
 persons, hardness of heart. And if GOD *should send them strong*  
 solemn *delusions to believe a lye*; alas! what follows then?—And  
 begin to do not the late separations, and one separation from  
 to the another, already discover their nature by their fruits?  
 tutions In that, some have by this time apostatised even from  
 go fur- all religion:—while some others are renouncing infant  
 known baptism, and going fast to the like dreadful apostacy.  
 ; have It seems, people do not think in season, what a sinful,  
 parate God-provoking and soul-destroying evil it is, to  
 there break over GOD's institutions:—first, be wavering, un-  
 nounce settled, not stedfast in any right principles, nor in the  
 ing of covenant in which their infant baptism declares them  
 to turn to be; and then, break covenant, and separate them-  
 way of selves, as being, in their own esteem, holier and bet-  
 d they ter than others; they don't realise it when they  
 n they first set out, what a dangerous road they have  
 tutions entered into; it is hid from them, that *evil men and*  
 wrong- *seducers wax worse and worse*; it is hid from them, or  
 d with rather, they will not see that they have fell *into the*  
 cast of *way of Cain*, and are in danger of *perishing in the*  
 prayer, *gainsaying of Core*.

Now, the sorrowful view of these things, in the  
 late spread, and present course of them, hath awakened  
 in some serious persons a desire of re-printing a small  
 tract, written by way of dialogue, *in defence of infant*  
*baptism, &c.* as a testimony of paternal care of pos-  
 terity, to preserve them from dangerous overtures in  
 principle and conduct; as also, to recover from errors  
 therein, (if it might be) such as are already led aside  
 by

by those that seek to *subvert whole houses*.——And also, a desire that this dialogue be introduced a-fresh and recommended by some ministers, acquainted with the occasion hereof; with some additions in marginal notes or otherways, as may be thought proper.—

Accordingly, we the subscribers, complying with this desire, as also to give our testimony for *the present truth*, against the opposite errors; do heartily recommend it, unto our people and others, very attentively to read this dialogue, and weigh the important matters contained therein; hoping, that a piece wrote with so much perspicuity and judgment in the light of scripture, may, by the grace and blessing of God, be of great service for the purposes designed; and commending it to the great author of truth, to give it a prosperous influence; and adding our fervent prayers to this end,—do subscribe ourselves,

*Your servants for CHRIST's sake,*

BENJAMIN LORD,  
 JABEZ WIGHT,  
 BENJAMIN THROOPE,  
 JOHN ELLIS,  
 ASHER ROSETER,  
 PETER POWERS,  
 NATHANIEL WHITAKER.

*Norwich, April }  
 11th, 1763. }*





## A Dialogue, &c.



Man of piety and ingenuity, as well as of considerable reading, having read Mr. *Stennet*, and some other of the *Antipædobaptist* authors, was brought under great difficulty and confusion of mind, with respect to the validity of his baptism ; which gave occasion to the following conference between his minister and him.

MINISTER. Good-morrow neighbour : I am heartily glad to see you. I have for some time wanted an opportunity of conversation with you.

NEIGHBOUR. I conclude, Sir, that I know the reason of your desire of conversation with me, having heard something of it before ; I am now come on purpose to give you an opportunity.

MIN. I am informed that you are inclined to the errors of the *Antipædobaptists* ; that you are upon the point of joining their party ; and of being dipt by them.

NEIGH. I am sure, if I know my own heart, I am not inclined to embrace any error ; nor should I have the least disposition to join the *Baptists*, could I be convinced, that they are in an error.—But if you'll allow me to deal freely with you, I must tell you, that the case at present appears to me in a quite contrary light. I am afraid I have hitherto been bred up in error, have

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never

by those that seek to *subvert whole houses*.——And also, a desire that this dialogue be introduced a-fresh and recommended by some ministers, acquainted with the occasion hereof; with some additions in marginal notes or otherways, as may be thought proper.—

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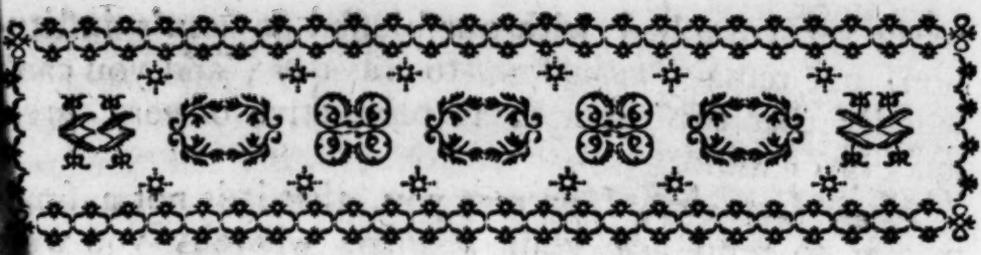
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never yet complied with our blessed Saviour's institution, but remain *unbaptized* to this day; and you can't wonder that this thought is productive of very great anxiety of mind.

MIN. Consider, I entreat you, that it is not a small matter to renounce your *baptism*, whereby you were in your infancy dedicated to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; to renounce all the other ordinances of the gospel, as the ministry of the word, and the sacrament of the LORD's supper, which you have been so frequently favoured with; as you will practically do, if you act up to the principles which you now espouse.

NEIGH. How, Sir, is my doubting of the validity of my *infant baptism*, a renouncing of it? And how is it a renouncing the other gospel ordinances which I have enjoy'd?

MIN. You were in your early infancy, in the most solemn manner dedicated to the sacred Trinity; you either acknowledge yourself devoted to God by that solemn transaction, and under the bonds of that covenant, which you were then brought into, or you do not: If you do acknowledge this, you can have no just concern about any other *baptism*, being already devoted to God, and brought into covenant with him by that holy ordinance. If you do not acknowledge this, you renounce your *baptism*, you vacate the covenant between God and you, by disowning that relation to the glorious God, which you were brought into by *baptism*.

NEIGH. This thought is new to me; I shall endeavour to consider it, and I hope it will have its proper weight with me: But if this reasoning be allowed to be just, I don't see how my seeking *baptism* in the method proposed, is a renouncing the other ordinances of the gospel, such as the ministry of the word, and the sacrament of the LORD's supper; since I acknowledge

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I suppose my *infant baptism* to be a nullity.

MIN. If you are *unbaptized*, you are as to your external and visible relation, a *stranger to the covenant of promise*; and this is not your case only, but (upon the principles you espouse) it is also the case of those of us, who have been the dispensers of the mysteries of the gospel to you; upon your principles it therefore follows, that we of the ministry being *unbaptized*, are not in covenant with God, are not so much as visible christians, and consequently cannot be ministers before we are members of the christian church: And how then can we have any right to administer sacred ordinances?

—And as for you, what right can you have to commemorate that relation to CHRIST which you have never sustain'd, to seal that covenant wherein you have no gospel interest? as you must do, if you partake of the LORD's supper, whilst *unbaptized*.—That in whatever view you consider this case, it will appear, that all the public ordinances of the gospel you have been privileged with, and been a partaker of, are just so much a nullity as your *baptism*, and by rejecting that, you reject them all.

NEIGH. I have (I trust) experienced so much comfortable communion and fellowship with God, in the ministry of the word, and in the sacrament of the LORD's supper, that I dare not renounce them; and were I convinced of the truth of what you have offered, and which I don't at present know how to answer, it would throw me into very great confusion, but would not free me from my present difficulties, with respect to the subjects and mode of *baptism*.

MIN. I hope I shall be capable to offer you full matter of satisfaction upon those points, before our conversation ends; but it cannot be improper to put you in mind, that the whole church of CHRIST for many centuries together, practised *infant baptism*; that you yourself was baptized in your infancy, and

were

were brought up in the enjoyment of gospel ordinances, dispensed by *one* who was likewise baptized in infancy; and therefore greatly concerns you, to consider what contempt you cast upon the great head of the church, to suppose that he has for so long a time, wholly deserted all the churches upon earth, and left them without a ministry, without ordinances upon earth, and left them without the instituted means of life and salvation.—It concerns you also, seriously to consider, how uncharitably you offend against all the generation of God's children, to represent the whole church for so many hundreds of years, and very much the greatest part of it at present, to be in a state of heathenism, without any hope of salvation, but from the uncovenanted mercies of God.—It concerns you to consider, what indignity you offer to the blessed spirit, by practically denying all his divine influences in and by his ordinances, whereby he has so eminently acknowledged those institutions, and improved them for the conversion and edification of such multitudes of precious souls.—It likewise concerns you, solemnly to consider, how you may expect that God will resent your renunciation of your *covenant relation* to him, and of all the public ordinances of salvation, which you have cause with so much thankfulness to acknowledge and improve.—And I will only add, that it concerns you also seriously to consider, how it can be, that the blessed Saviour has fulfilled his promise, that he would be with his ministers in the administration of *baptism* to the end of the world: Or how it is possible there should be any *baptism* at all in the world at this time, either among the *Pedobaptists* or *Antipedobaptists*, upon the principles which you espouse.

NERGH. I am pretty much surprized by the former of those consequences which you have represented; I confess, I don't know how to evade or answer them

but

but the last appears not only new, but without any manner of foundation.

MIN. Well! Let us consider that case something particularly, and see whether that consequence won't force itself upon you.—Don't you acknowledge that *infant baptism* did universally obtain in the church, even from the apostles times?

NEIGH. No! by no means! could that be prov'd, the controversy would be quickly brought to an end.

MIN. At what time do you suppose *infant baptism* did first universally obtain in the church?

NEIGH. I don't pretend to be read in church history; but the authors whom I have read upon this subject, don't suppose this to have happen'd earlier than between three or four hundred years after CHRIST's nativity.

MIN. Had you read the authors on the other side of the question, you would have found undoubted evidence from the ancient fathers, that *infant baptism* constantly obtain'd in the truly primitive church.—I will hint at a few instances of the testimonies from them, which clearly prove this point; though I would be far from laying the stress of the argument, on the testimony of men, it being evidently founded on a divine institution; yet, their testimony, may serve for confirmation; and you own, that if they are clear in this, it will bring the controversy to an end. St. *Cyprian*, who lived about 114 years after the death of CHRIST, being the disciple of St. *Polycarp*, who was the disciple of St. *John* the evangelist, says, in his epistle to Rom. Lib. 5. "The church received a tradition from the apostles, to administer baptism to little children or infants." By *tradition*, the ancients meant the word of God, agreeable to that of the apostle, *Thes.* ii. 15.—iii. 6. So that *tradition*, in their account, was *divine institution*.

*Origen*, one of the Greek fathers, who lived about 90 years after CHRIST, says, "little children are  
"baptized

“ baptized for the remission of sins. Of what sins ?  
 “ or where committed ? or what reason can be given  
 “ for their baptism ? but that, which we are speaking  
 “ of, (*to wit*) that none is clean from pollution, even  
 “ though he was but one day old.”

St. *Augustine*, one of the most learned of the fathers ;  
 and who lived about 340, or 50 years, after the death  
 of CHRIST, is fully on the side of infant baptism ;  
 writing on this subject, he says, “ let none therefore  
 “ so much as whisper any other doctrine in your  
 “ ears ; this, the church has always had, has always  
 “ held.”—And again, he says, “ if when infants are  
 “ brought to CHRIST, (a phrase expressive of their  
 “ being brought to baptism) they are said to have  
 “ no original sin ; why is it not said in the church,  
 “ to those that bring them ?—*take these innocents hence,*  
 “ the whole need not the physician, but they that  
 “ are sick, &c. but this never was said, never will  
 “ be said.”

Now, could that learned father be ignorant of  
 church history, little more than 300 years back from  
 his day ? and would not the *Pelagians*, who denied  
 original sin, and against whom he wrote, have con-  
 futed his arguments drawn from infant baptism, in  
 proof of his point, if they could ? for, he often baffled  
 them with this very argument, drawn from the con-  
 stant practice of infant baptism in the church ; as of  
 divine institution. And though *Pelagius* himself was  
 a learned adversary, and his cause required him to  
 deny the fact ; yet he was forced to own that the  
 apostles, and the whole church still baptize infants.  
 And St. *Augustine*, speaking of another person, says  
 “ he was forced to confess it, *i. e.* the doctrine of  
 “ original sin, because of the baptism of little children.  
 Thus the point is clear from the testimony of the  
 fathers in the early state of the church ; and many  
 more might be advanced in confirmation of the same

truth

truth, and therefore, according to your own concession, this controversy is brought to an end: But I need not insist upon this; let it be supposed to be as late as your authors imagine, before this practice of baptizing infants universally obtain'd; you must upon that supposition allow, that there was more than eleven hundred years, in which the whole christian church came into the united and constant practice of baptizing infants; you can't pretend that this practice was called in question, or made matter of debate in the church, till the madmen of *Munster*, who were the scandal of the reformation, set themselves against this practice, as well as against the other ordinances of the gospel.— You must therefore allow, that from the fourth century to the sixteenth, is more then eleven hundred years:—Now during this long period, what became of our blessed Saviour's promise, to be with his ministers *always*, in the administration of this ordinance?—I now demand of you an answer (if any can be given) to this question; was our blessed LORD with his ministers in the administration of *baptism* during this period, or was he not? If you answer in the affirmative, you acknowledge *infant baptism* to be his own institution; if you answer in the negative, you call his veracity and faithfulness into question.

NEIGH. I am not prepared to answer your question; there appears a difficulty in it, that I don't at present see how to get over; but however this case be, I can't imagine how you draw your consequence from hence, that there can be no *baptism* now in the world.

MIN. Do you think an unbaptized person can be qualified for the sacred ministry, or be fit to administer *baptism* to others?

NEIGH. No, I believe not; it seems necessary that they should be at least visible christians themselves, before they can have either right or authority to act  
in

in the name of CHRIST, in bringing others into his family, vesting them with his name and livery, and inducing them into a covenant-relation to CHRIST, and into the character and privileges of his disciples.

MIN. Well! How came the madmen of *Munster*; how came the first *Antipædobaptists* in *England*, by their *baptism*? Had these any other *baptism* than what they received in their infancy? If not, (as it is certain they had not) it must follow, that either *infant baptism* is the ordinance of CHRIST, or they could not have a right to administer that ordinance to others, which they had not received themselves; the administration therefore (according to your own principles) must be a nullity in the beginning, and consequently must continue a nullity ever since.—The *baptism* you pretend to, was (upon these principles) first administered in *England* by unbaptized persons; but such as were not so much as visible christians themselves; by such who could therefore have no claim to the gospel ministry, nor any right to administer sacred ordinances; and consequently, the whole succession of your ministry from that time, must remain unbaptized persons, and there can therefore be no *baptism* among you, any more than among us until there be a new commission from Heaven to renew and restore this ordinance, which is at present lost out of the world.

NEIGH. There were doubtless some *adult baptism* in the church in the period you speak of, though *infant baptism* generally prevailed, as there are now among most of the churches of your persuasion; and therefore *baptism* was not quite lost out of the world, as you express it.

MIN. Were that so, by whom were these adult persons baptized? Was it not by such as were themselves baptized in infancy?—And how therefore will this help your case, unless you can prove a continued succession of *adult baptisms*?

NEIGH

NEIGH. I think I have heard, that the ancient *Waldenses* were in the constant practice of *adult baptism* only; and if so, it will wholly obviate all your reasonings upon his head.

MIN. This is a mere imagination, without any foundation that I know of, and is accordingly to be rejected as a groundless figment; but were that allow'd to be true, how would that help the case, with respect to the English *Antipædobaptists*? did they descend from the ancient *Waldenses*? did the first of this profession receive their *baptisms* from them? if not, (were this chimerical imagination allowed to be fact, yet) this new sect must have been begun in *England* by unbaptized persons, and consequently the whole succession of their churches must remain unbaptized till this day, as I have shewn you before.

NEIGH. Sir, all this conversation serves but to encrease my perplexity, and to throw new difficulties in my way; but in no wise relieves my mind and conscience from the distress I was under before:—this does not shew me a divine institution for *infant baptism*.

MIN. I doubt, you have not well attended to the evidence I have now set before you:—I have shewn you, that our blessed Saviour has promised to be with his ministers in the administration of baptism, *always, even to the end of the world*. Mat. xxviii. 19, 20.—He is faithful, that gave us this promise, and it has certainly been fulfilled; but it has not been fulfilled in the constant continuance of *adult baptism*, and therefore *infant baptism* must necessarily be his own institution, in the administration of which, he has always afforded his divine presence with his ministers, according to his gracious promise.—You dare not suppose the promise violated, and therefore you must suppose *infant baptism* to be CHRIST'S own institution. I have besides shewn you, that *infant baptism* having obtain'd for so many centuries in the whole church of CHRIST, it must be

the ordinance of CHRIST, or there can be no *baptism* in the world; and therefore you can gain nothing by going over to the party you have newly chosen, for *baptism*, since they themselves are all (upon your principles) unbaptized as well as we.—This appears to me sufficient for your satisfaction; if there could be no other argument offered for your conviction.

NEIGH. This reasoning does indeed perplex me, but it does not afford me such satisfaction, as a plain scripture institution of *infant baptism* would do.

MIN. If you consider the covenant of grace, which was made with *Abraham*, and with all his seed, both after the flesh and after the spirit; and by God's express command to be sealed to infants, you will there find a sufficient scripture institution for *infant baptism*;—you will find this covenant in *Gen. xvii. 2, 4, 7, 10, 12. And I will make my covenant between me and thee.—As for me, behold my covenant is with thee; and thou shalt be a father of many nations.—And I will establish my covenant between me and thee; and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and thy seed after thee.—This is my covenant which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee, every man child among you shall be circumcised.—He that is eight days old shall be circumcised among you.* Here we are taught as plainly as words can teach us, that this covenant was made with *Abraham*, as he was the *father of many nations*, the father of the Gentiles as well as Jews; that this covenant was a covenant of grace, an *everlasting* covenant, a covenant whereby the LORD is a God to *Abraham* and all his seed after him; and that this covenant was to be sealed to *infants*, in their early infancy, upon the eighth day, which was as soon as any creature was to be esteemed clean, after its birth, and fit (by the Levitical institution) to be offered to the LORD. *Exod. xxii. 30. Lev. xxii. 27.* From all which it undoubtedly follows, that this covenant was made with

with us, as the seed of *Abraham*, as well as with the Jews; he was the father of the believers in our nation, as well as in theirs; and therefore the obligations of it will remain upon us, to dedicate our infants to the LORD, by sealing this covenant to them as soon as possible.—This argument was accordingly used by the apostle with the first christian converts, as a reason for their being baptized. *Repent and be baptized every one of you: for the promise is unto you and to your children; and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall call.* Acts ii. 38, 39. The promise was undoubtedly the covenant made with *Abraham*; this promise or covenant was urged as a reason why they ought to be baptized; this covenant of promise was also made with their children, and was likewise the reason why they ought to be baptized; this covenant of promise was likewise made with the Gentiles, with them that were afar off, even with as many of them as the LORD our GOD shall ever call into a church state; and is therefore alike reason, why the Gentiles and their children, when called into a church state, should be also baptized.\*

NEIGH:

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\* Let the reader keep his eyes upon the *original act* of God, in favour of *infants*, even of the infants of Gentile believers, for God not only covenanted with *Abraham* and his natural seed; but with him, as the father of many nations, besides that of the Jews. And in this respect fulfilled; that *the blessing of Abraham is come upon the Gentiles*; whose very nations referred to, in the first edition of the covenant. And not only is it so, that the covenant with *Abraham* and his seed, in that extent, has never been repealed; and so, the act of grace to the infant seed of his people, never reversed; but was originally made with this view, never to be reversed; an unlimited and an everlasting covenant never to be broken;—but beside all this, 'tis abundantly ratified and confirmed in a new edition of it, under the gospel:—as in the inspired *Peter's* reply to the *Jews*, in *Acts*, ii. 39. Of set purpose, to argue them into a compliance with the christian rite of baptism, (*viz.*) That their children need not in that case be left out of the covenant, which (it seems) was the great stick with them; but, be included, just as before, the view of which removed the difficulty, q. d. *Repent and*

be.

NEIGH. This argument is (I confess) set in a stronger light than I have before consider'd it ; and yet I have sundry objections against it, which I know not how to resolve ; these I shall take liberty distinctly to propose, that

*be baptized every one of you ;—and object not, that your children will be excluded the covenant, by your embracing of christianity ; in which you know, they are included in the Jewish state. Why ! I tell you (says Peter) just so they are in this christian state ; for the promise is to you, and to your children ; when you embrace christianity, and are baptized yourselves ; just as they are, while you are in Judaism ; and will have equal right to baptism : this new seal of the same covenant, upon your professing the religion of JESUS CHRIST, as they had to circumcision ; where you were according to GOD's will, of the Jewish religion.—Yes, and be it known to you : this blessing of Abraham (implied in the ancient covenant with, and promise to him and his seed) is now come upon the Gentiles, in the full extent of it, on the fathers and the children ; not limited to the parents, who are Gentile converts, and declaring for christianity, but extended to their seed, not capable of any such profession ; for this same promise which is to you and your seed (while Jews, and now, Christians) is also to all that are assar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call : as many of them Gentiles as are, and as fast as they shall be called in, to embrace the christian faith ; their seed with them are taken in, even by virtue of the original promise to, and covenant with Abraham.*

Now, then, let it be seriously considered, what authority any have to deny children a being in the visible covenant of grace under the new dispensation of it ? when by divine grant, they had a place therein under the former dispensation : That there was once, an act of GOD in their favour, is as certain, as that there was any covenant with *Abraham* and his seed. And if this hath not been repealed, it stands good to this day ; yea, it is renewed in the very hands of our Saviour, *suffer little children to come to me, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven* : which cannot be construed in a lower sense, than that they are members of GOD's visible kingdom here, and capable of being heirs of glory.

And if so, the infant seed of professing Christians, certainly have as much right to *baptism*, as the children of the *Jews* had to *circumcision*, for those had their right by virtue of the covenant, they being a covenant seed, and it seems a poor plea, against all such reasoning, to object, that the gospel don't expressly say, that *infants* were baptized, even when *whole houses*, are said to have been baptized : now if there were *no infants* therein, or none *baptized*, why would it not have been enough, and most fair from misunderstanding the account to have said, *every adult person* therein, were baptized.

that it may be seen whether any just answer can be given to them.—My first objection is, that this promise made with *Abraham*, seems to be no more than a promise of temporal mercies; and particularly of his inheriting the land of *Canaan*, as an everlasting possession to himself and his seed after him; as appears from *ver. 8.* of that chapter.

MIN. That this covenant was a covenant of grace, and contained special spiritual mercies in it, is abundantly evident from the tenor of the covenant itself.—It consists of two general articles, which include all spiritual blessings in them: the first is expressed in *ver. 4.* *I will hold my covenant is with thee; and thou shalt be the father of many nations:* The second is expressed in *ver. 7.* *I will establish my covenant between me and thee; and thy seed after thee in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee.*—Was the promise of *CHRIST*'s descending from *Abraham*'s loins; was the promise of the Gentile nations being brought into the faith of *CHRIST*, and thereby becoming the seed of *Abraham* after the spirit, no more than a promise of temporal mercies? and yet this, you will not allow, was immediately intended by the first article of this covenant.—Was the promise that *GOD* should be *Abraham*'s *GOD*, and the *GOD* of his seed after him for ever (according to the second article of this covenant) no more than a promise of temporal mercies? were not all spiritual and everlasting blessings of every kind, contained in his promise? and does not the *apostle*, with reference to this very covenant, strongly persuade us, that *the promise that he should be the heir of the world* (or the father of many nations) *was not to Abraham or to his seed through the law: but through the righteousness of faith?* *Rom. iv. 13.* And does he not further instruct us, that *to Abraham and his seed the promises made. He saith not, and to seeds, as of many: but as of one; and to thy seed which is Christ.*—

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And if we be in Christ, then are we Abraham's seed; and heirs according to the promise? Gal. iii. 16, 29. Does he not, when alluding to this very covenant, likewise teach us, that  *blessing of Abraham is come unto the Gentiles through Jesus Christ. that we might receive the promise of the spirit through faith.* ibid. ver. 14. And that *we, as Isaac was, are the children of the promise.* Gal. iv. 28. I hope by this time you are convinced, that this covenant contains in it something more than temporal mercies; and that it was truly the covenant of grace made with *Abraham*, on behalf of himself and both his natural and spiritual seed, both Jews and Gentiles.

NEIGH. I did not expect such evidence upon this point, but yet part of my difficulty remains; you have not answered my objection, that this covenant was a promise of the land of *Canaan*, to *Abraham* and his posterity.

MIN. Yes, I have fully answered it, by shewing you that it was a promise of CHRIST and Salvation by him; that it was a promise made to *Abraham*, and to all the believing *Gentiles* in him; and, in a word, that it was the covenant of grace, that covenant by which alone we can have any grounded hope of Salvation: How then could it be a promise of the land of the *Canaan* only? is not this the most trifling pretence in the world? were not the promises of this covenant made to all *Abraham's* seed, both natural and spiritual? are not the believing *Gentiles* heirs of the land of *Canaan* according to this promise?—Nay, were all his natural seed heirs of the land of *Canaan*, by virtue of this promise, were not a fourth part of them (none but the posterity of his grandson *Jacob*) ever possessed it?—Was there no more imply'd in God's being a God to *Abraham* and to his seed after him, than that they should inherit the land of *Canaan*? one would think that no man could seriously talk at this rate.—Evident it is, that the promise of the land of *Canaan* was no part of this covenant; it was but an addition

addition

Additional article of divine favour annexed to it: If *Canaan*, as here promised, be considered as typical of our heavenly inheritance; yet a greater than *Canaan* is here.

NEIGH. Another difficulty before me is, that if this covenant be allow'd to be the covenant of grace, I can't see how it can be prov'd, that *circumcision* was a seal of that covenant.

MIN. It can be prov'd from the express word of the apostle, *Rom. iv. 11. And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, being uncircumcised.*—It being the sum of the cove-

nant of grace, that we are to be justified and saved by the righteousness of faith, where the righteousness of faith is sealed, the covenant of grace is sealed; this text the apostle is therefore express and full to the purpose.

NEIGH. This does (I acknowledge) seem to be full plain evidence, that *circumcision* was a seal of the covenant of grace; but what is this to *baptism*? If God ordered the covenant of grace to be sealed to *Abraham's* infant seed by *circumcision*, how does it appear, he has required it to be sealed to our infant seed by *baptism*?

MIN. This also is evident, by most easy and natural deductions from the word of God, as well as by a just consideration of the nature and reason of the case. The apostle teaches us, *Gal. iii. 27, 29. That as many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.—And if we be baptized into Christ, then are we Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.* Now, how can our putting on *CHRIST* by *baptism* make us *Abraham's* seed, and heirs according to this promise and covenant made with him, if *baptism* be not now a seal of that covenant? I think I can't pretend to shew any other way, in which this possibly be; and if *baptism* be now a seal of that covenant, it must be administred to such, unto whom the covenant requires its seal to be administred; that it must be administred to infants in their early infancy.

infancy.—And if we consider the text before cited, the same consequence will necessarily follow. *Repent and be baptized every one of you.—For the promise is unto you and to your children; and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.* Acts ii. 38, 39. That the promise here mentioned, referred to the covenant made with *Abraham*, is certain from this consideration, that the covenant with *Abraham*, and that only, was a promise both to his natural seed, and to those who were then *afar off*; that is, to those Gentile nations, who shall be called into a church state. It therefore follows that if this promise gives a claim to *baptism*, (as the cited text assures us that it does) then all are to be baptized who are the subjects of this promise; these, the quoted text assures us, were adult professors, and their children; and these, the original covenant or promise assures us, were infants in their early infancy.—*Can any man then forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the covenant of promise as well as we?*—And furthermore, what I would especially infer from this text is, that the covenant of promise made to *Abraham*, could not give a claim to *baptism*, and make it a duty to be baptized, (as the text teaches us that it does) if *baptism* were not a seal of that covenant.—What sense can possibly be made of the apostle's reasoning, (*Repent and be baptized; for the promise is unto you and your children*) if *baptism* were not a seal of that promise? consider you, and see if you can find any other reason than this only, why *baptism* is enjoined on account of our interest in the promise; if you can make no sense of the text in any other view of it, you must allow this to be its natural and necessary meaning. This then is the sum of the matter: *circumcision* is a token or seal of the covenant of grace. (*Gen. xvii. 11. And it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.*) And it is allowed on all hands that *baptism* is a token or seal of the covenant of grace; it therefore follows, that since this ordinance is adm

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gistrated to the very self-same ends that the other was, it should also be administrated to the same subjects.

NEIGH. I cannot, I confess, be fully satisfied with this reasoning, since there appears this great difference in the case; *circumcision* was by GOD'S exprefs institution to be administrated to infants, but there is no such institution with respect to *baptism*; methinks our LORD JESUS CHRIST would have given us some plain direction in this matter, if he had designed *infant baptism* as a standing ordinance in his church.

MIN. I am now proving to you, that the very same institution which requires *circumcision* to be administrated to infants, requires *baptism* to be also administrated to infants, in that each of these ordinances were appointed as a seal of the very self-same covenant, and therefore were needed no new declaration with respect to the subjects of this seal; this was sufficiently provided for by the original institution.—To exemplify this to you, in a familiar light: You hold your lands by patent made to your grandfather, in the reign of King *James* the second, and sealed with a red seal; now should King *George* call in all the patents granted in that reign, to receive a new confirmation, by annexing his great seal to them in white wax, would there be any occasion for a new written declaration, that this seal confirmed the lands to you, and to your children and heirs, when that is expressly contain'd in the very body of the original patent, which is nothing altered, but has only received a new confirmation by the seal annexed to it? The application of this to the present case, is most easy and familiar: The patent sealed by *baptism* is (so to speak) the very same parchment that was given to *Abraham*, and therefore necessarily contains all the same privileges and benefits, and makes these over to the same subjects; there is nothing altered, but the seal only; that was a red seal, this is a white seal.—What necessity can there therefore be of an exprefs declaration, that this covenant

under the gospel dispensation should be sealed to infants, when it is already so fully provided for, by the original patent? I entreat you, however, to remember, that I don't speak this by way of concession, that there is no direction in the New Testament for the baptizing infants: I have shewn you the contrary already, and may have further occasion to illustrate that point; but what I have now offered, is to convince you, that were this really so, we have a sufficient institution of *infant baptism*, from the *Abramitical* covenant.

NEIGH. The *circumcision* of infants was indeed required by the covenant made with *Abraham*; why is it not then continued now, if we are under the same covenant? How comes *baptism* to take place of it, and to be administered by virtue of that covenant which required *circumcision*?

MIN. Circumcision was a bloody rite, and as such was typical of the blood of the great sacrifice; and of consequence must be abrogated upon its completion in the antitype: There could be no propriety in continuing the use of a sacred sign of CHRIST'S blood hereafter to be shed, when his blood had been shed already.—Our blessed LORD has therefore instituted another seal of this covenant, proper to commemorate our redemption by his blood, and to represent to us the cleansing efficacy of that blood, by which we have been redeemed.—By the former seal of this covenant, the faithful were led to look to a Saviour to come and save them by his blood; by the present seal of his covenant, the faithful are directed to look to that Saviour who is already come, and has redeemed them with his blood; and to look to that blood as what alone will cleanse them from all sin.

Thus I have fully proved to you, that the covenant made with *Abraham* was the covenant of grace; that it was made with him and with both his natural and spiritual seed; that the obligations of this covenant extend to the believing Gentiles, as well as to the Jews

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and that one of the obligations of this covenant was, that it should be sealed to *infants* in their earlier infancy: Does it not therefore necessarily follow, though the seal be changed, that it may be adapted to the present dispensation, that yet we are by the tenor of that covenant obliged to have it sealed by the new, as well as by the old seal, to *infants* in their earlier infancy?—does it not necessarily follow, since an interest in the promise of this covenant gives a right to *baptism* (as appears from *Acts*. ii. 38, 39.) that our children who have an interest in the promise of this covenant (as is strongly asserted in the same text) have thereby an undoubted right to *baptism*?—does it not necessarily follow, since the blessing of *Abraham* is come on the *Gentiles* through *Jesus Christ*, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith, (*Gal*. iii. 14.) that sealing the covenant to our infant seed, which was one of the great blessings of *Abraham*, is also come on the *Gentiles* by *JESUS CHRIST*; and that since we receive the promise through faith, that *God would be the God of Abraham and his seed*, we also should seal that promise to our infant seed, as *Abraham* did?

NEIGH. There is (I confess) much more appearance of evidence in this case than I have ever before considered; but yet I seem to want (methinks) some more satisfying evidence, that children under the present dispensation are in the same manner partakers of the external blessings of the covenant, as they were among the *Jews*.

MIN. Don't you think, that sealing the covenant to the natural seed of *Abraham* by *circumcision*, was really a valuable privilege and blessing, to those children who were the subjects of that ordinance? or to use the apostle's question, *What profit was there in circumcision?* *Rom*. iii. 1.

NEIGH. It must be acknowledged, that *circumcision* was a rich privilege and blessing to the infant seed of *Abraham*;

*Abraham*; it was the *token of God's covenant*; it brought them into the relation of God's visible covenant children; it brought them under the advantage (when capable) of enjoying the oracles of God, and the ordinances of God's house; and therefore to the apostle's question, *what profit was there in circumcision?* I must answer as he did, *much every way*.—But how does this affect the state of children under the present dispensation?

MIN. It was under the legal dispensation a great and glorious privilege granted to children, that they should enjoy the seal of the covenant; and I would now demand of you how, why, and when children were cut off from this privilege? They either yet enjoy this privilege, or they are some way and for some reason cut off from it.—Can you find any scripture which deprives them of this privilege? If not, how dare you do it?—Can you imagine that the LORD JESUS CHRIST came into the world to lessen our privileges, or to cut off our children from their covenant relation to GOD? Nay, are we not fully assured from numerous texts of scripture, that these privileges of our children are continued under the gospel dispensation?

NEIGH. What texts of scripture do you refer to?

MIN. I have already cited and made some remarks upon *Acts ii. 39. For the promise is unto you and to your children.* To which I may add, *Mat. xix. 14. Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of Heaven.*—How, and which way should we bring our little children to CHRIST, but in the way of his ordinances? If they belong to the kingdom of Heaven (whether we understand by it the kingdom of grace, or the kingdom of glory) they must have a right to the privileges of that kingdom, and a claim to have their title sealed to them by baptism. So likewise, *Mat. xviii. 6. And whoso shall offend one of those little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a*

*mill-stone*

mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depths of the sea. That this little one here refer'd to, was in an infant state, appears, not only because he is here called a *little child*, ver. 2. but also, because we are assured in *Mark ix. 36.* (where we have a narrative of the same thing) that our Saviour took him in his arms. Now then, if such little children are reputed by him who is *the author and finisher of our faith*, to be believers in him, we see here a full anticipation of the common objection against the *baptism of infants*, and a justification of their claim to the seal of the righteousness of faith, as well as a strong declaration of the awful danger of offending these little ones, by denying them the covenant-privileges, to which they have a righteous claim.—We have in like manner the same thing represented to us, *1 Cor. vii. 14.*—*Else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.* If either of the parents be a believer, the children are reputed *holy*, that is, they have a *covenant holiness*, and have therefore a claim to covenant privileges; such children are *holy*, as God's ancient *Israel* are so often called an *holy people*; they are *holy* by virtue of their covenant relation to God, and must therefore have a right to have that covenant sealed in them in *baptism*.—I may add to this, that as the commission to the sacred ministry, *Mat. xxviii. 19.* enjoined the baptizing of *all nations*, whereof infants are a very great part; it also enjoined the baptizing of infants as a part of the nations they were to *disciple and baptize*; and it's plain, that the apostles thus understood our Saviour's meaning, and accordingly baptized *Lycia and her household, the jaylor and all his*, *Acts xvi. 15, 33.* And the *household of Stephanus*, *1 Cor. i. 16.*—I need add but one text more, which must be allowed to be decisivè in the present case: we are assured, *Rom. xi. 17 to 25*, that the Gentile churches are *grafted* into the Jewish stock, are *branches* growing from the root of that *olive-tree*, and partake of the *root and fatness*.

of it; and that the Jews, when converted to the christian faith, will be again *grafted into their own olive-tree*. From whence it is most evident, that since the believing Gentiles are grafted into all the privileges and spiritual blessings of the Jewish church, they cannot be cut off from that great blessing and privilege of having the covenant sealed to their infant seed; and since the Jews are again to be grafted into their own olive-tree, their children will, as formerly, be partakers of the fatness of it, and have the covenant sealed to them. The olive-tree remains the same that it was before; the gospel dispensation manures and cultivates it, and makes it flourish more gloriously, but by no means deprives it of any of its former fatness.—Thus I have shewn you the bright fulfilment of that ancient prophecy in *Jer. xxx. 9, 20.* That under the gospel dispensation, when the church *shall serve the Lord their God, and David their king, whom he would raise up unto them,—their children also should be as aforesaid.*

NEIGH. You have been so long in this discourse that I am almost lost, and can't so well retain the connection and the scope of your reasoning.

MIN. You have acknowledged, that under the legal dispensation, it was a great privilege for infants to enjoy the seal of the covenant; I have demanded of you and must still demand of you an account, how they came to lose this privilege? the infants of God's professing people once had this privilege, and it may either be proved, that they are some way deprived of it, or it must be allowed, that they still enjoy it.—Here then the cause might rest, till you can bring some rational and scriptural evidence, that the coming of CHRIST, and the dispensation of the gospel, has cut off these branches from the olive-tree: but that I might fully satisfy you I have proved to you, that infants are not cut off from this precious privilege: that the covenant promise is still made, and therefore still to be sealed to our children

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That little ones do believe in CHRIST; do belong to the Kingdom of Heaven; have a covenant holiness; are part of the nations whom ministers are required to baptize; do belong to the same olive-tree now, as under the legal dispensation, and should partake of all the holiness of it; and are as *aforetime*; and should therefore have suffered to come to CHRIST, partake of the seal of the covenant, and enjoy all the privileges of the former dispensation.—It therefore concerns you to take heed that you don't *offend these little ones* (by denying them these privileges, which they have never forfeited) *it were better for you, that a mill-stone were hang'd about your neck, and that you were drowned in the depths of the sea.—Take heed that you don't despise one of these little ones,* (by treating them as unmeet or unqualified for a covenant relation) *for I say unto you, that in Heaven their angels do always behold the face of my father which is in Heaven,* Mat. xviii. 10.

NEIGH. The LORD keep me from offending any (though, but the least infant) that belongs to him.—Your reasoning has surprized me, and I dare not attempt to answer it; but, as you have already obviated some of my difficulties, I entreat your patience, while I mention some others, which yet prove too hard for me.

MIN. What are they?

NEIGH. I cannot understand how the commission, Mat. xxviii. 19. enjoins the baptizing of *infants*, as a part of *all nations*, since the ministers of the gospel are required to *teach them* and baptize them; now I cannot understand how infants can be *taught*, previous to their *baptism*.

MIN. You can read *Greek*.

NEIGH. Yes, Sir, I can read and understand something of the Greek testament, but not enough to criticize upon any difficult text, without the help of a *lexicon*.

MIN.

MIN. Well, here take the Greek testament, and see if there be any thing of *teaching*, in the Greek text previous to *baptism*.

NEIGH. I dare not presume to determine, whether the Greek word (*Mathêtéusate*) signifies to *teach*, or not.

MIN. Here's a Lexicon; here are several critics upon the Greek language; read, and see if they do not ever one agree, that the word signifies to *disciple*, or *constitute learners*, and not to teach: the words ought therefore to be read, *go disciple all nations, baptizing them* and it is accordingly rendered in the margin of our English Bibles, *make disciples or Christians of all nations*.

NEIGH. I find, these authors all agree with you, as to the signification of the Greek word; but I do not understand how infants can be made *disciples*, and therefore I cannot understand how the criticism upon the text will help the cause.

MIN. They may be made disciples (or admitted into CHRIST's school, which is the same thing) by *baptism* and so this commission should be understood, as requiring the ministers of the gospel to make all nations disciples, by baptizing them; and none, either adult or infants, are to be consider'd as visible disciples of CHRIST till they are baptized. *Baptism* is the ordinance by which every one is to be entered into the school of CHRIST, and *constituted a learner* of him.

NEIGH. Can you shew me any text of scripture, that gives the denomination of disciples to infants? could this be done, it would, I acknowledge, determine the case.

MIN. Well, this can be done; you may find an instance full to the purpose in *Acts xv. 10*. *Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear: the yoke referred to was circumcision, this was laid upon the neck of infants at eight days old; such infants therefore are the persons here called disciples: and such infants*

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ere then made *disciples* by *circumcision*, but now by *baptism*. If there were some *adult* persons in the then present state of things, upon whose neck the Jewish teachers would have laid the yoke of *circumcision*; yet you must own, that at least the greatest part of those disciples, upon whom they would have imposed this yoke, were young children.—But what need have we enquire, whether the English word *disciple* is expressly apply'd to infants, when the thing signified by it so often occurs in scripture? every text of scripture, which represents young children as belonging to God, and to his sons and daughters, and his children (as the children of his covenant people are stiled, *Ezek. xvi. 20, 21.*) declare them to be *disciples*; for this represents God's special propriety in them, as belonging to God's school, and his obligation to learn of him, which is the true notion of a *disciple*.—Every text of scripture which obliges parents to take care, that *our children which have not known anything, may bear, and learn to fear the Lord* (as *Deut. x. 13.*) *To train up our children in the way they should go* (as *Prov. xxii. 6.*) And to *bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord* (as *Eph. vi. 4.*) obliges parents to constitute them *learners*, or which is expressly the same thing, to make them *disciples* of CHRIST.—In a word, *learners* and *disciples*, are synonymous terms, and have the very same significancy: and therefore, since the youngest *infants* may be put into CHRIST's school, to be scholars of him, they may be made his *disciples*, according to the tenor of the commission before considered.

WEIGH. I am satisfied upon that point; but I have another difficulty before me, that I do not yet know how to get clear of; and that is, how it's possible that infants who know nothing of CHRIST, can be believers in him; faith seems to be considered in the New-Testament as a pre-requisite to *baptism*, and *baptism* to be the seal of our faith in CHRIST; and how then can infants be meet subjects of it?

MIN. Don't you know, that this argument could have been urged with the same force against *circumcision* as it now can against *baptism*? the apostle assures us that *circumcision* was a *seal of the righteousness of faith* Rom. iv. 11. And what answer could have been given to one under the legal dispensation, that should have argued at the rate that you now do? "*Circumcision* a *seal of the righteousness of faith*; but how is it possible that *infants*, who know nothing of a Saviour to come, can have *faith* in him? and how then can they be meet subjects of *circumcision*? shall the *seal* be set to a blank? shall *righteousness of faith* be sealed to those who have it not? to those who are no way capable subjects of it?—Consider, I say, what answer could have been given to such reasoning, under the former dispensation. You must acknowledge, that some just answer may be given to this objection: you must otherwise suppose a positive institution of God chargeable with unreasonableness and inconsistency. And whatever answer to this objection can possibly be devised will serve for answer to yours also: for the case is exactly the same, without any difference.

NEIGH. You have cut the knot, but I would be glad to see it untied; and would willingly be inform'd, how *faith* could either under the old or new dispensation, be sealed to *infants*, who seem not capable of the exercise of *faith*.

MIN. I have already shewn you, that our blessed LORD spake of *infants*, or *little ones*, which believe in him, Matth. xviii. 6. But, I think you don't take the meaning; for, it seems, your mind runs upon a *personal inherent faith*, as necessary to entitle them to *baptism* if baptized they are to be: whereas, the truth is, being the children of visible believers, are by CHRIST reputed such also, and should be so received by us: thus only, is derived their right to *baptism*, whether they exercise *faith*, or have the habit of it.

not, they have a right to *the seal of the righteousness of faith*, (as the covenant is called) and that is it which baptism sealeth; and not any inherent grace, nor any thing else, not contained in the covenant, and not knowable of men: 'tis rather our engagements to be the LORD's, that is sealed by baptism, whether of infants or adult; which is contained in the covenant *ye shall be my people*. This the *adult* are taught when they are baptized, and accordingly do solemnly profess the same: and as for *infants*, they are by their baptism, laid under these engagements; and when arrived to adult age, are to be minded of their obligations to be the LORD's.

And now, is it not more fit and safe to tell persons, who were baptized in infancy, that in their baptism, they were solemnly given up to GOD in covenant, and that their *engagements* to be the LORD's were sealed; rather than to tell them, that their *faith* was sealed: if they were baptized upon the presumption that they had grace in heart?—would not this lead them to think, that their baptism was regeneration? which might be a prejudice to their fulfilling their baptismal engagements; or seeking after the grace of GOD to persuade them to believe in CHRIST, &c. Verily 'tis not their inward real, but *visible federal holiness*, that gives a right to baptism; as appears from the passage 1 Cor. vii. 14. that you have been minded of being holy. That phrase, *else were your children unclean, but now are they holy*; cannot mean, else were they *unregenerate*, but now are they *regenerate*. Nothing more absurd than this! And what cou'd the *children of parents*, when *only one* was a *visible believer*, be declared *holy* for, if not to shew *their* right to baptism; when *this same visible holiness* was *the all*, requir'd of the seed of *Abraham*, to entitle them to circumcision?

Well then, upon the whole, is it not evident, that the *infant seed of visible believers*, are *visible believers* in the sense of the covenant, and so have a right to baptism?

baptism? which being publickly administred, declares to the world, that they belong to the kingdom of Heaven; to the visible church; while inherent holiness is quite out of the question, as to their covenant right to an outward privilege.

But yet, as the covenant of grace, has a relation to eternal life, as GOD's visible kingdom hath to the kingdom of glory:—therefore, it must be supposed, that these infants are capable of being made the subjects of eternal life, and if we can't tell how, or do not know how to conceive of it, that is no matter of objection against their being eternally saved. GOD knows how to approach the mind he has formed, and to sanctify it to himself. He that declares them visible believers, members of the kingdom of GOD here, knows how to give them faith in CHRIST, and make them heirs of glory.—You cannot imagine (*Neighbour*) that because they don't seem to you, capable of the exercise of faith, &c. that therefore, all infants, who die such, must be doomed to final perdition! you would not indulge carnal a thought, and so much against the dictates of revelation! well then, they who die in infancy, and yet are saved, must be some way united to, and interested in CHRIST; for, there is not salvation in any other. But this is not the labouring point with respect to baptism: not any which need to be known or necessary in itself, in order for that; but they are capable and fit subjects thereof, as they are a covenant seed, and are federally holy, and that is enough to this purpose; because GOD has said it is, and requires it not of us to seek for more.

NEIGH. This reasoning seems to carry some force in it, but a difficulty still remains; for the scripture says *Abraham received circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith he had, being uncircumcised*, which seems to show that it was a seal of his faith, his own act.

MIN. The apostle is here shewing, that as in God's  
 covenant with *Abraham*, he was not the God of the Jews  
 only, but of the Gentiles also, and that it is one God which  
 will justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncircumcision  
 by faith. So *Abraham* our father, our covenant father,  
 is in that covenant, the father of the Gentiles as well  
 as of the Jews; as it is written, *I have made thee a  
 father of many nations*. Therefore having spoken of the  
 blessedness of being justified by free grace, through  
 faith; he says, *cometh this blessedness then upon the circum-*  
*cision i. e. Jews only? or upon the uncircumcision, i. e.*  
*Gentiles also? for we say, that faith was reckoned to*  
*Abraham for righteousness*. How was it then reckoned,  
 when he was in uncircumcision, or in circumcision? this  
 question, he immediately answers thus; *Not in circum-*  
*cision, but in uncircumcision*. Then follows the words you  
 refer to: *and he received the sign of circumcision, a seal*  
*of the righteousness of the faith which he had, yet being*  
*uncircumcised*. And then gives the reason why God  
 considered it to be so, with respect to *Abraham*, viz. *that*  
*he might be the father of all them that believe, though*  
*they be not circumcised, that righteousness might be imputed*  
*to them also*; but he don't pretend, that his seed received  
 this seal of the faith they had, while uncircumcised,  
 before they were eight days old. Neither was there  
 the same reason, why they should have faith before, for  
 they were none of them to be the covenant fathers of  
 the uncircumcised, as *Abraham* was: moreover, though  
*Abraham* was truly a believer, and justified by faith,  
 before he was circumcised; or before God had entered  
 into this explicit covenant with him and his seed; yet  
 no argument drawn from that, for the inherent grace  
 of those that are baptized, because it was not *Abraham's*  
 personal faith, that was sealed by his circumcision,  
 but the righteousness of faith, as the covenant is called;  
 because this righteousness is so great a thing contained  
 in the covenant. The truth is, 'tis the object of faith,  
 the

the righteousness that comes by faith, and also our obligations to faith that are sealed; but not our actual believing: it is our visible ingrafting into CHRIST, that is sealed; for that is essential to the covenant, and our obligation to believe in CHRIST, and with all the heart to become members of his mystical body, that is sealed by baptism: but not that *we have believed*, and are actually united to CHRIST by faith; for that is not contained in the covenant; therefore, if GOD has made a covenant with our children, and the promise is to them while unbaptized, why may they not have the covenant and promise sealed to them by baptism, *the seal* GOD has now affixed to his covenant?

NEIGH. If it can be proved, that our infants are in covenant with GOD, it would go far indeed towards clearing the point.

MIN. This I have already proved to you from scripture. I have shewn you that the covenant made with *Abraham*, was a covenant of grace, and that the promise made to him and his seed, is made to us and our children, and to all afar off, who shall be called into church-state, and to their children: and that just so, the blessing of *Abraham* is come upon the Gentiles, through JESUS CHRIST; and that *Abraham* is our covenant father, as truly, as he was the covenant father of his natural posterity: and therefore, if his children were in covenant, so are ours.—But I will add one thing more, (*viz.*) the covenant of works included the children of *Adam* (and so doth every covenant explicit, that we have an account of in the scripture:) now then, if *Adam's* posterity were taken into, and considered, as in the covenant of works, can you think GOD leaves out the children of his people from the covenant of grace?

NEIGH. I acknowledge, that I am bound to submit to the force of all this reasoning. There is yet another difficulty upon my mind, which (though perhaps it may appear to you light and trifling) is matter of great

perplexity

plexity to me; and that is, how can *baptism* succeed to *circumcision*, when this was administered to the *males* only, but that is administered both to *male* and *female*? and how can we be now obliged to administer the seal of the covenant both to our *male* and *female infants*, by virtue of that institution, which required the administration of it to the *males* only?

MIN. *Circumcision* was a seal of the covenant of grace, both to the *male* and *female* children of *Abraham*, though the *males* only bare the sign in their flesh.—This appears from the original institution. *And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee,* (meaning both *male* and *female*) *in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed (thy whole seed) after thee. This is my covenant, which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed (all thy seed) after thee: every man child among you shall be circumcised.* Gen. xvii. 7, 10. I think, you dare not pretend, that the *females* of *Abraham's* posterity were not in covenant with God: and it is certain, that you cannot pretend, this covenant was sealed to the *females* any other way, than by the *circumcision* of the *males*. But though *females* were not capable subjects of that typical seal of the covenant, the case is altered under the present dispensation: and the apostle tells us, *Gal. iii. 27, 28, 29.* that *as many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ:* And that none of the *distinction* of the ancient dispensation now remain; *there is neither Jew nor Greek,* the one in covenant, and the other not; *there is neither male nor female,* the one personally to receive the seal of the covenant, and the other not: *for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.* The covenant has been sealed according to the nature of the respective dispensations. According to the legal and typical dispensation, it was sealed to the seed of *Abraham* after the flesh, while the *Greeks* or *Gentile* nations were excluded;

it was sealed to *all* his seed, in the persons of the *male* only, who alone were capable subjects of that bloody typical rite. But now under the gospel-dispensation this middle wall of partition is broken down, and none of these legal distinctions remain. *As many as are baptized into Christ, whether they be Jew or Greek, bond or free, male or female, are all one in Christ Jesus, all Abraham's seed, all heirs according to the promise, according to that promise which was made to us and to our children.*

NEIGH. You have fully removed this difficulty also and yet I must entreat you to bear with me while I propose one objection more.—There are some who suppose the *promise*, mention'd *Acts* ii. 39. (which you have several times taken notice of) instead of being as you suppose the *promise* made to *Abraham*, is the *promise* of that effusion of the spirit predicted by *Joel*, and apply'd to that extraordinary descent of the Holy Ghost, with his miraculous gifts upon the day of *Pentecost*: this *promise*, you know, is mention'd by the apostle in the 16th verse of that chapter; and why should he not refer to the same *promise* in the 39th verse, which he had been speaking of but a little before?

MIN. Do you seriously think, that those miraculous gifts predicted by *Joel*, are the matter of that *promise* which gives a claim to *baptism*? if so, none have a right to *baptism*, but they who have the gift of *prophecy*, who see *visions*, and *dream dreams*.—Do you seriously think, that this *promise* of miraculous gifts was made to all the christian *Jews* and *their children*, and to *all* that are *afar off*, to all the *Gentiles* whom *the Lord our God shall call* into a church-state? or has that *promise* ever been fulfilled to them? The mere mention of such trifling supposals is a sufficient refutation of them.—I have already shewn you, that there is no other *promise* made both to *Jews* and *Gentiles*, which can give a right to *baptism*, but only the *promise* which was made to *Abraham*.—

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This *promise* was of such vast importance, so well known, and so much consider'd, that when mention'd by the apostles, it is emphatically called *the promise*, without any special declaration, what *promise* is meant: this very frequently occurs in the New Testament, with respect to the promise made to *Abraham*; but I have not observ'd it ever to occur with relation to any other *promise* whatever. To this purpose, see *Rom.* iv. 14, 16. *Rom.* ix. 8. *Gal.* iii. 17, 19, 22. *Gal.* iv. 28. *Eph.* ii. 12. *Heb.* ix. 15. and many other places.—By all which it evidently appears, that the *promise* referr'd to, must be the *promise* made to *Abraham*, and in him to all christians and their children, whether they be *Jews* or *Gentiles*; and to them, to all of them, it gives a just claim to *baptism*.

NEIGH. You will perhaps think me impertinent, if I should desire a fuller and plainer solution, of the common objection, that there is no express mention of the *baptism of infants* in the New Testament.

MIN. I have already shewn you, that by a divine perpetual institution, the covenant of grace is to be sealed to *believers*, and to their *infant seed*.—It therefore lies at your door to prove, that the coming of our blessed Saviour, and the more excellent dispensation of the gospel, has cut off *infants* from this most precious and valuable privilege; and that the gospel is a *less glorious* dispensation with respect to *infants*, than the former dispensation was; that instead of bringing them any new advantages, it has depriv'd them of those which they formerly enjoy'd.—This, I think, you won't attempt to prove, and therefore you must allow, that their perpetual right to have the covenant of grace sealed to them, still remains, by force of the original institution, and is by no means vacated.—You require express New Testament proofs, that *infants* are to be *baptized*; and I require of you express New Testament proof, that *women* should partake of the *Lord's supper*:  
 F prove

prove the latter by what argument you please, and I will prove the former by the same.—Are *women* in covenant? So are the *infants* of believing parents.—Are *women* believers? So are some *infants*.—Are *women* disciples of CHRIST? So are some *infants*.—Are *women* part of the nations, to whom the ministers of the gospel are commissioned and sent? So are *infants*.—Have *women* a claim to have the covenant sealed to them? So have the *infants* of believing parents likewise.—All these things with respect to *infants*, I have fully proved to you already; and what would you have more? And I have also shewn you, that *Lydia* and her *household*, that the *jaylors* and *all his*, and that the *household* of *Stephanus*, were baptized; and there is no room to doubt, but that in those families (at least in some of them) there were such children as were not capable, personally and explicitly, to have the covenant for themselves.—Is not here matter of sufficient satisfaction to any unprejudiced person, that is not resolved against conviction?

NEIGH. Sir, I heartily thank you for your pains upon this head. If now you can remove my difficulties about with respect to the *mode* of administering the ordinance, I shall be fully satisfied.

MIN. I hope, this may easily be done: can you find any thing like an institution for *dipping* or *plunging*, in the New Testament?

NEIGH. Yes, Sir, the original *commission*, which requires the ministers of the gospel to *baptize*, requires them to *dip*; it being the natural signification of the Greek word, *baptizo*, to dip, to plunge, or overwhelm with water.

MIN. There can be nothing more chimerical, than this pretence. I have never seen one single *lexicographer* or *critick* upon the Greek language, but what agrees that tho' the word *baptizo* sometimes signifies to *dip*, it also naturally signifies to *wash*; and that *washing* (in any mode whatsoever) is the native signification of

word *baptismos*.—Here are *Scapula, Stephanus, Schrivelius, Passor, Martin, and Leigh*, (the books you but now look'd into upon the other verbal debate) search them, and see if they don't every one of them justify my explication of the words *baptizo* and *baptismos*.

NEIGH. They do (I confess) all of them explain the words in your favour.—How strange a thing is this, that learned men should so strongly and confidently contradict one another in an affair of this nature! Which way can we come at any certainty in this important inquiry?

MIN. The directest method to be ascertained of the true meaning of these words, is, to consider how they are used in the New Testament; the inspired writers certainly knew in what sense the words were used by our blessed LORD, and in what sense they themselves understood them.

NEIGH. This seems indeed to be the surest and most satisfying method of inquiry into this matter: you'll therefore oblige me, by giving me a just view of the use of these words in the New Testament.

MIN. It would take too much time to enumerate all the places where these words occur; or to make particular remarks upon such passages as I shall enumerate: I shall only propose some brief hints, which will be sufficient to clear this case beyond any just matter of doubt or objection.—The descent of the Holy Ghost in cloven tongues, like fire upon the *apostles* and company, and upon *Cornelius* and company, was called *baptizing*, Acts i. 5. and chap. xi. 16. You can't pretend that here was the least allusion to, or resemblance of *dipping*, or *plunging*, in this use of the word.—Our blessed Saviour's persecution and crucifixion, is called *the baptism he was baptized withal*, Mark x. 38, 39. I think, you will readily allow, that being buffeted, spit upon, and lifted up upon the cross, bears no resemblance, nor can have any allusion to *dipping*, or *plunging*.

It is said of the *Pharisees* and all the *Jews*, that *when they come from the market, except they wash* (baptifontai) *they eat not.* And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the *washing* (baptifimous) of *cups and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables* (or BEDS, as the original word properly signifies, and ought to be translated.) I think, this is an unexceptionable instance of these words signifying *washing*, without *dipping* or *plunging*: for you yourself can hardly suppose, that they *dip* themselves under water every time they came from the market, or that they *dip* their BEDS every time they sat or lay upon them. We are told, 1 Cor. x. 1, 2. that *all the fathers were under the cloud, and were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud.* I think I need not seriously undertake to convince you, that the fathers were not *dip* in the cloud; but that the rain from the cloud bore a much greater resemblance to *sprinkling* or *affusion*, than to *dipping*.—I shall only add, that the apostle speaking of the ceremonial dispensation, tells us, that it *stood only in meats and drinks, and diverse washings* (baptifimous) and *earnal ordinances*, Heb. ix. 10. The principal of these *washings* (or *baptisms*) of which the ceremonial dispensation consisted, the apostle exemplifies to us in the 13th verse, to be the *blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean.* Here therefore the word cannot, with any appearance of modesty, be explained in your favour. From all this it therefore necessarily follows, that the words *baptize* and *baptism*, do not from their signification make *dipping* or *plunging*, the necessary mode of administering the ordinance.

But now let us turn the tables, and see if you can find any one place in the New Testament, where these words necessarily carry *dipping*, or *plunging*, in their signification: If you can't (as I am confident you can't) find one instance of this kind, you have reason to be forever silent upon that head.

NEIGH. Well! whatever be the signification of these words, you must acknowledge that *dipping* was the *first mode*

of administering the ordinance of *baptism*: there is a variety of instances of this kind, that seem to carry the matter beyond doubt.

MIN. I must acknowledge my very great ignorance of the matter be as you represent it: I have with very diligent application look'd into this case, and could never find one single instance of that mode of administering the ordinance, in all the New Testament.—There are, I confess, some passages in our *English* translation of the Bible, which have that appearance: but if you will look into the original *Greek*, you will find, that none of those passages will necessarily prove, that any one person was baptized by *dipping*, either by *John Baptist*, our blessed Saviour, or his *Apostles*.—But then on the contrary, there is a variety of instances of the administering this ordinance, which give us sufficient evidence, that *dipping* was not, could not be, the mode of administration.

WIGH. This is surprising! don't we read, *Matth.* that *they were baptized of John in Jordan, confessing their sins*? How could they be baptized in *Jordan*, if they were not *dip*t in that river?

MIN. Don't we read, *Job.* ix. 7. that the blind man was directed to go and wash his eyes in the *pool of Siloam*? may I not as justly argue, how could he wash his eyes in the pool, if he did not *dip* himself in it?—don't we read, *2 Chron.* iv. 6. that *Solomon made ten lavers; five on the right hand, and five on the left, to wash the king's feet*? may I not again as justly demand, how could he wash his feet in those basons, without *dipping* in them?—do we commonly wash our face and hands in a basin or tub of water, without *dipping* in it?—If those words there cited by you, are understood according to the usual and approved mode of speaking, they will afford no argument at all for *dipping* in *baptism*.

WIGH. We are told, *Job.* iii. 23. that *John was baptized in Enon, near to Salim, because there was much water there*. What occasion had he for much water, if not for the multitudes that resorted to him? MIN.

MIN. The words in the original are (*budata polla*) *waters*; which implies many *springs* or *brooks* of *waters* suited to the necessity and conveniency of the multitudes that resorted to *John*, as a supply of *drinking* for themselves and for the horses or camels which rode upon, as well as for their *baptism*: here is no appearance of *dipping* in the case.---Had *John* baptized these multitudes by *dipping*, he must have stood almost continually in water up to his waste, and could not have survived the employment but by miracle.

NEIGH. We read, *Matth. iii. 16. And Jesus when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water.* In *Acts viii. 38, 39.* that *Philip* and the *Eunuch* went *into the water*; and came up out of the water. Which plainly intimates, that our blessed *Saviour* and the *Eunuch* were baptized by *dipping*.

MIN. As to the first of these instances, there is more in the original, than that our *Saviour* went *straightway* (*apo*) *FROM* the water. I think you will allow, that the Greek preposition (*apo*) always naturally signifies *FROM*, but never *OUT OF*; and therefore that instance can stand you in no stead.

NEIGH. I believe, your remark upon that text is true. But how will that affect the second instance?

MIN. I have the same remark to make upon the second instance also: there can be no more proved from this text, than that *Philip* and the *Eunuch* went *into* the water, and came up from it; the preposition (*eis*) there rendered *into*, naturally signifies *unto*, and is commonly so used in the New Testament. Thus, *Matth. x. xv. 24. UNTO the lost sheep.* *Joh. xiii. 1. UNTO the Jews.* *Joh. vii. 8. UNTO the feast.* *I Thes. i. 5. Our Lord came not UNTO you, &c.* See likewise *Matth. xv. 24. Luk. ii. 22. Chap. ix. 53.* In all which and many other places, the preposition is used in the sense I please, and cannot with any modesty be rendered *INTO*. I will add one instance more, which I am sure you must know.

know

nowledge to be altogether unexceptionable: it is in  
*John xx. 45. And the other disciple did out-run Peter,*  
*and came first to the sepulchre (eis to mnemion) yet went*  
*not in.*--I hope, by this time, you are satisfied, that  
 there is no evidence from this text, that the *Eunuch* was  
 baptized by *dipping*.

NEIGH. But did they not both come up out of the  
 water? how could they come out of the water if they  
 were not in it?

MIN. The Greek preposition (*EK*) here rendered *out*  
 properly signifies *from*; as might be illustrated to you  
 innumerable instances. (See to this purpose *Luke*  
*35. Acts xvii. 33. Acts xviii. 1.—2 Pet. i. 18. Rev. xiv.*  
*7, &c.*) But I need not multiply quotations, since  
 every Greek *lexicon* and *critick* agree to this significa-  
 tion of the preposition.--Thus you have hitherto failed  
 in producing one single instance, that will conclude in  
 your favour, and make it evident, that *baptism* was  
 ever administered by *dipping*, in the beginning of the  
 gospel dispensation.

NEIGH. What reason can be assigned for such express  
 mention in the cited texts, of *going to the water, and*  
*coming from the water*, at the administration of *baptism*,  
 if the ordinance was not administered by *dipping*?

MIN. It is remarkable, that there is no mention of  
 going to, or coming from the water, when the ordi-  
 nance was administered in a *city* or *place of habitation*, but  
 in the *wilderness* only, where there was probably no  
 convenient vessel, to bring water for the sacred solemnity.

NEIGH. The Apostle tells us, *Rom. vi. 4. That we*  
*were buried with Christ by baptism into death.*--Now what  
 resemblance is there in *baptism* to a *burial*, unless it be  
 administered by *dipping*?

MIN. We are also taught in the foregoing verse, that  
 we are *baptized into Christ's death*: Now what resem-  
 blance is there in *baptism* to CHRIST'S dying upon the  
 cross, if we are baptized by *dipping*? was there any  
 thing

thing like *dipping*, in our Saviour's crucifixion?—If we consider the words cited by you, what is it, that baptism (upon your acceptation of the words) must resemble according to the *letter* of that text? Is it not CHRIST being *buried into death*? This (if any such resemblance be designed) is plainly the thing to be imitated, according to the express words of that text. And was CHRIST indeed literally *buried into death*? was his *burial* the cause of his death? or would you have such a manner of death resembled in *baptism*, by drowning men whom you baptize them? could the apostle, by the words before us, design to communicate any such idea as this? no certainly!—It is most evident, that this text has no reference at all to the imitation, either of CHRIST's death or burial, or to any particular mode of administering that ordinance; but the plain manifest scope of the words, is, to shew us our obligation by *baptism*, unto a conformity to the death and resurrection of CHRIST by *dying unto sin*, and *rising again unto newness of life*. And the same answer will serve for the parallel text, *Col. ii.*

NEIGH. I must acknowledge, that you have indeed answered my objections; and sufficiently prov'd, that we cannot certainly conclude from the instances cited by me, that *baptism* was administered by *dipping* or *plunging*. But still does it not look *probable*, that this was the mode of administration? and the more so, because there is no appearance of evidence in the whole New Testament to the contrary?

MIN. Either you or I are in a great mistake in the matter.---We read, *Acts ii. 41.* That there were *three thousand* baptized at *Jerusalem* in one day (most certainly towards the close of the day) and was there any probability (I had almost said, possibility) that they should all be *baptized* by *dipping* in so short a time? or is it probable, that they could so suddenly find water sufficient in that city, for the *dipping* of such a multitude; especially, while they were yet so firmly attached to the

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ceremonial institution, which made it unlawful for two persons, to be *dip*t in the same vessel of water?---- The narrative of *Paul's baptism* makes it appear to be administered in his *bed-room*, where he had lain three days blind, without meat and drink; but upon *Ananias's* speaking to him *received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.* Acts ix. 9, 18.—The words of the text seem plainly to contradict the *dipping* of *Cornelius* and his household. Acts x. 47. *Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized?* certainly the apostle did not speak of *forbidding* the water to run in the river, or to remain in any other receptacle or reservoir of water: and therefore must speak of bringing water for their *baptism*; the words must in any other sense be altogether unintelligible.----The *jaylor* and his household were *baptized* in the dead of the *night*, in the same hour of his conviction by the earthquake: and therefore there was no probability (nor indeed possibility) of their going to any depth of water, for that purpose. Acts xvi. 33. *And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.*---These instances are sufficient to convince any unprejudiced person, that the ordinance was not administered by *dipping*, in the apostolick times.

NEIGH. As *dipping* was the mode of the *greatest purification* among the *Jews*, in that typical dispensation, does it not make it look probable, that the *same* mode would be continued in that ordinance, which is to represent our *purification* by the blood of CHRIST, and by the influences of the blessed spirit?

MIN. This query is founded upon a great mistake. For the blood of bulls, and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer (or the water of purification) SPRINKLING the unclean, was the greatest purification among the Jews. Lev. xvi. 14, 16. Numb. xix. 2, 17. Heb. ix. 13. Accordingly our cleansing by the blood of CHRIST, and by the influences of the blessed spirit, are frequently repre-

sented by *sprinkling*, but never by *dipping*. Thus, 1 Pet. i. 2. Thro' sanctification of the spirit unto obedience, and SPRINKLING of the blood of JESUS CHRIST. Heb. xii. 24. and to the blood of SPRINKLING, that speaketh better things than that of Abel. Ezek. xxxvi. 25. I will SPRINKLE clean water upon you; and ye shall be clean. So likewise, Isa. lii. 15. So shall be SPRINKLE many nations.---In like manner the influences of the spirit are represented by *affusion*. Prov. i. 23. I will POUR my spirit unto you. See also Isa. xlv. 3. Joel ii. 28, 29. Acts ii. 17, 18.---I may therefore justly retort your argument. Since *sprinkling* was the greatest purification amongst the Jews, and the blood of CHRIST and the influences of the Holy Spirit are frequently represented by *sprinkling*, and by *affusion*, but never by *dipping*; it is a natural and just conclusion, that our mode of administering the ordinance of *baptism* is a more lively emblem of what is signified and represented by it, than *dipping* or *plunging* can be supposed: and therefore that ours is the most proper mode of administration.

NEIGH. Sir, you have, beyond my expectation, removed all my difficulties, and given me full satisfaction. I heartily thank you for your pains; and entreat your prayers, that I may no more be *like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind, and tossed*.---I have already robbed you of too much of your time, and must therefore take my leave.

MIN. Farewell, neighbour: I heartily rejoice, that I have been so successful in my endeavours to convince you of your mistake, and to reduce you to the acknowledgement of such an important truth. I pray GOD, that you may not only acknowledge, but live answerable to the obligations of your baptismal covenant.



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# APPENDIX:

way of address to the fathers of the present generation, and their adult children.

YOU see in the foregoing Dialogue, the divine right of infant baptism, set in a fair, strong, and most convincing light; especially from the *covenant with Abraham and his seed*, and the divine grant in favour of infants, published in said explicit covenant of grace, in the first and second edition, in the Old Testament, and in the New: Yea, in form and manner never to be reversed. If so; then the renouncing of infant baptism, and excluding the poor little ones, (whom CHRIST calls *little ones*) from the covenant of grace, must be, not only a great injury to them, robbing them of the right to baptism, which GOD has given them, and made their baptism, but, a great affront to GOD, a reflection on his goodness, wisdom, and authority: as if he were not so passionate enough to regard infants with covenant favour; or not wise enough to know how consistently to do it; or, as if his authority was not equally good, and equally to be obey'd, under *the old dispensation* of the covenant, and *the new*. Can it be justly thought, that GOD's regard to the infant seed of his people, is not manifested

manifested in the days of *Abraham* and the Jewish church is ceased in the days of CHRIST and the christian church? An't it rather very absurd to suppose, that God of all grace, so various, or uncertainly gracious, as not to be equally tender of his people and their seed under the present, and new, and clearest dispensation of grace, as under the former one, wherein were types and shadows of good things to come? Surely, *his mercy endures for ever*, and *he is ever mindful of his covenant* and no perfection or authority is wanting to carry out the designs thereof into execution. Our Saviour, (it seems when he came into the world, remember'd the ancient covenant with *Abraham* and his seed, and exactly agreeable unto it, says, *suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of Heaven*) Who then, after this, might dare to forbid the CHRIST esteem'd *those little ones*, as *believers*, visibly? And, now, is it Christ-like to cast them off, as if not belonging to the visible church? is this Christ-like to neglect them as to their right unto a covenant privilege?

Alas! what are those people a doing, who are excluding infants from the visible church? Are they not taking some direct course to destroy the church, by plucking up the seed of it? like as destroying a nursery, committing a waste on *the orchard*. And now, many fathers of this generation, and their adult children, (who will be the fathers of the next) seriously consider, whether such a principle and conduct as the denying of infant baptism, doth not militate against the promise of CHRIST with respect to his church, in *Matth. xvi. 18*. where he says, *Upon this rock, I will build my church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it*. These powers of God's will, by various engines, attempt it; and one of them may be endeavouring to exclude infants from the church and baptism, but shall not prevail; for the covenant faithfulness of God, is guarantee for the church. Yes, the covenant of God, established in the hands

The Mediator, is the security thereof. CHRIST himself, the Messiah, is the seed of *Abraham*, in the line of *Isaac*, and promised in the covenant with *Abraham*: and is not this same CHRIST, with the precious truths and promises of the covenant, *this rock* on which his church is built; and this very promise *that the gates of hell shall not prevail against it*, connected with the covenant made with *Abraham and his seed*, to all generations? securing among the rest, this part of the visible church, viz. the infant seed of his people; and if so, then surely the covenant, in this extent of it, as taking in Gentile believers, and their seed is not to be exploded.—It seems, that in this view of it, GOD, our Saviour, makes great account of it; and don't he, in this view of it, allow his people to plead it, in the language of *Psal.* xxiv. 10. *Have a respect to the covenant, for the dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty!* By the connection here, and the argument used with GOD, to have respect to his covenant, it seems, as if the covenant was pleaded with respect to *the very blessing of Abraham, (as the father of many nations) and to come upon the Gentiles*. Now then, if GOD hath respect to, and remembers his covenant, in this extent of it, then let us, and our children not forget it, and despise it! but let the fathers teach their children, and their children, teach their children after them, this extensive gracious reach of the covenant; teach them to keep up the practice of infant baptism in the church, and by no means be diverted from it. Be ye then, (the fathers and adult children) persuaded in this view of the covenant (as well as in any other) *to be stedfast in the covenant, from generation to generation*. And now, may the GOD of *Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob*, most graciously remember his covenant with them, and remember the land and nation, in all our great and important interests, and pour out his spirit upon his people and their seed, to put his spirit within us, and our seed; and cause us to walk in  
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## APPENDIX.

*his statutes, and to keep his judgments to do them; that  
may dwell in the land that he gave to our fathers,—and which  
now is with such wide extent, ceded to us in the late  
peace;—and that glorious word be fulfilled, as the sum-  
mary of the covenant, and ye shall be my people, and I will  
be your God. ——— A M E N.*



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