

BAP
W214
copy 1

76

00 05

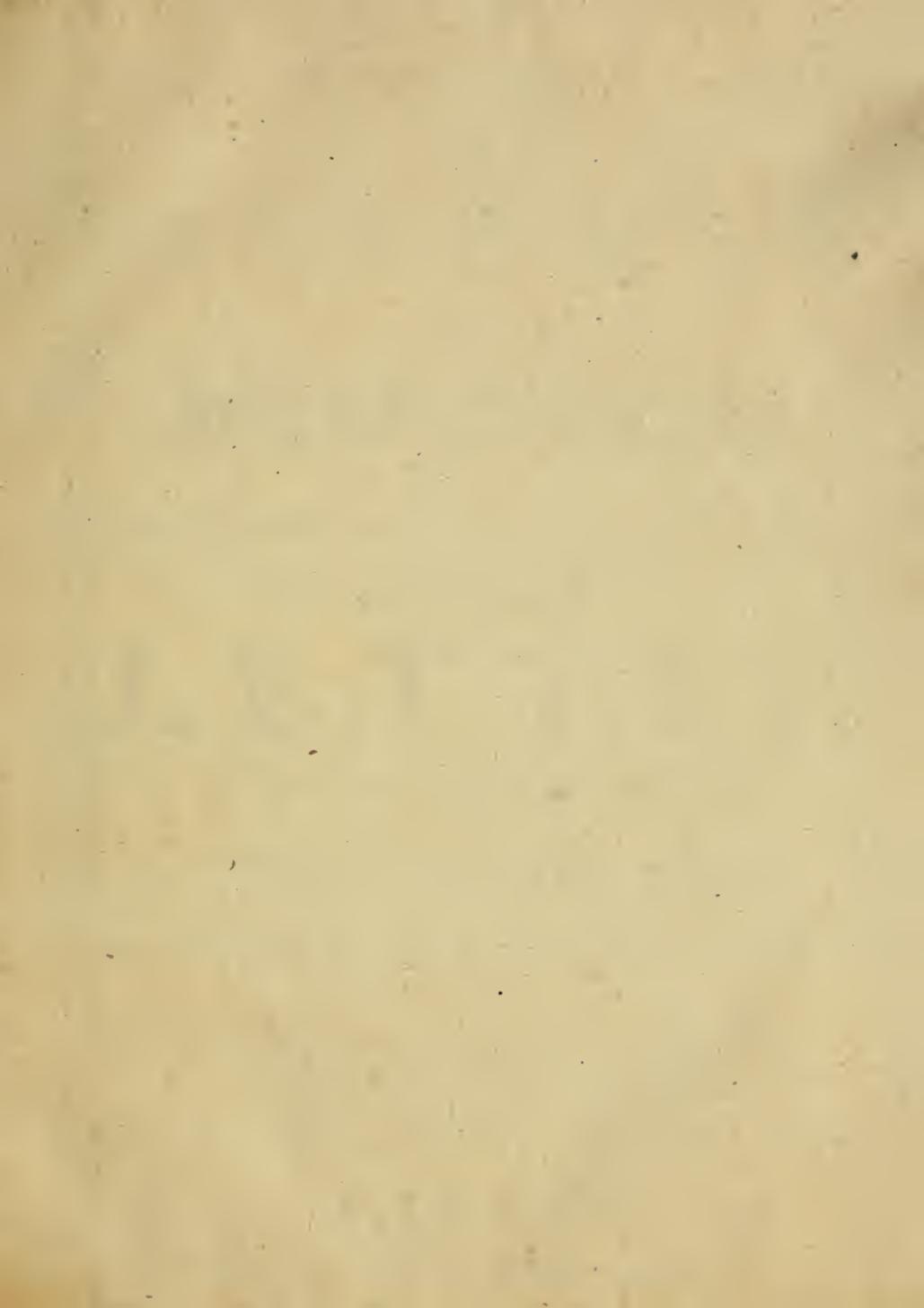
Library of the Theological Seminary,

PRINCETON, N. J.

Presented by Mr. Samuel Agnew of Philadelphia, Pa.

Agnew Coll. on Baptism, No.

SCB
10470



A
D E F E N S E
O F
Infant-Baptism.

In ANSWER to a
L E T T E R
(here Recited) from an
Anti - Pædo - Baptist.

BY
JOHN WALLIS, D.D. And Professor of Geometry
in the University of OXFORD.

O X F O R D:
Printed by Leon. Lichfield, for Henry Clements, 1697.

Advertisement.

THis Letter in Defense of *Infant-Baptism* (though written some while since,) falling lately into my hands ; and being Recommended by some knowing Persons ; I thought fit to Publish it (with the Author's good leave) for the Benefit of others ; omitting the Name of him, who proposed the Question ; because I do not know, whether or no he be willing to have it made publick.

A

LETTER

FROM AN

Anti-Pædo-Baptist,

TO

DOCTOR *WALLIS*.

Reverend SIR,

I Have read the First Part of your Discourse concerning the Christian Sabbath, and liked it so well, that I was very eager to get the Second: In reading whereof, I could not but admire at the large Measure of Understanding, which the Lord, out of his Goodness, has been pleased to

B

be-



bestow upon you, above many other Pious and Learned Men, that have formerly Treated of the Sabbath, and disputed against the Jewish Sabbath, with so much Weakness, that the Sabbatarians have been greatly thereby encouraged in their Errour. And coming in *pag.* 91. to these words of yours, *You would have had ——— so much modesty, as to think, the mistake may possibly be on your side, rather than on the whole Body of Christians (some very few excepted) who religiously observed the Lord's Day ;* I did reflect on my self, who am perswaded, that Believers Infants are not to be Baptized in their Infancy, contrary to the Opinion of so many Learned Pædo-Baptists in Christendom, yea the Generality of Christians ; and it made me to think, the Mistake might possibly be on my side, rather than on the Body of Christians (some few excepted) who Conscientiously maintain Infant-Baptism. And supposing you, Worthy SIR, by your Communion, to maintain Pædo-Baptism, I took courage and boldness, to write unto your self, for to know your Grounds from Scripture, on which you satisfy your Conscience in that Point.

The main Reason, which satisfies me against Pædo-Baptism, is, because I can find no where in Scripture, either in expresse Terms, or by any natural or necessary Consequence, that it is the Will of God; that Believers Infants are to be Baptized in their Infancy: I cannot find any Precept to Baptize them; nor so much that ever *John* the Baptist, or *Christ*, or his Disciples (that appears) did Baptize any of them.

I know

I know indeed, what Dr. *Hammond*, Dr. *Lightfoot*, and the Athenian Society presume (as to an Institution) from a Custom among the *Jews*, of their Baptizing the Infants of Profelytes, as if Christ out of Condescension to the *Jews*, to win them, did include Infants in his Precept of Baptizing all Nations, Children being a part of them. But I cannot find in Holy Writ any such Custom recorded, or that it had a Divine Institution. And if those Writings from whence they would prove, that there was such a Custom in our Saviour's time amongst them, were of undoubted Authority, yet I cannot see any reason to conclude, that Christ would institute Infant-Baptism to gratify Infidel *Jews*, who were but the least part of *all Nations*, (if intended there by *Nations*.) As *John's* Baptism was from Heaven, and was so singular a thing, that the *Jews*, *Joh. 1. 25.* wondring at it, asked him, *Why baptizest thou then, if &c.* So the Baptism Christ instituted, was not from any Jewish Tradition, or Rudiment of the Jewish World, but from Heaven, and differing from any Jewish Baptism. That *John* Baptist, and our Lord first made Disciples, and then Baptized those Disciples, I think is plain from *Joh. 4. 1.* But I cannot find, that they also Baptized the Children of those Disciples, as if they had been the Children of New Profelytes. As our Lord did thus among the *Jews*, by his Apostles, so he did by them among the Nations; and I can no where in Scripture find, that Believing Gentiles were counted and called Profelytes, because Christians, and that their Children were Baptized for that reason. The Doctor doubtless can

certify me, whether or no it was a Custom among the *Jews* and other Nations, for great Masters to initiate their Disciples by Baptism; and if so, there would be more probability, that Christ instituted Baptism from that Custom, if from any, and that as they did not Baptize the Children of those Disciples too, until themselves became Disciples, so the Children of the Disciples of Christ, the great Prophet of God, and our Master, are not to be Baptized, until themselves also become Disciples. *Goye, and teach all Nations*, is explain'd, *Mar. 16. 15. Goye into all the World, and preach the Gospel to every Creature*; and thus it is by several of the Fathers understood. And by *Baptizing them*, viz. *all Nations*, there is no necessity to understand it of Baptizing all Persons absolutely, for we have the words [*all Nations*] in other Texts of Scripture, where they do not mean all Persons absolutely, but of a capable Condition, as *Adorate eum omnes gentes, & Psallite Deo omnes Nationes, &c.* And if Baptism was the way of Discipling Persons, as some would have it, then the Apostles needed not have first required of them Repentance and Faith, as previous Dispositions and Qualifications for Baptism, but rather have Exhorted them to be Baptized, in order to their being taught Faith and Repentance, with other things commanded by Christ to his Apostles. But as it plainly appears from other Scriptures, that our Saviour herè excludes from being Baptized, those Persons of all Nations, that are not yet qualify'd for it, *i. e.* Not yet become Disciples, or Repenting Believers, tho' capable of Faith and Repentance; so it does not appear to me, that

In-

Infants Disciples are here included, tho' neither qualify'd nor capable, as Disciples should be.

Thus when, *Col. 2.* the Apostle tells Gentile Believers, that they were compleat in Christ, seeing they were Circumcised in him by his Circumcision, and Buried and Risen with him in Baptism, &c.

Some will from hence assert, that Circumcision came in the room of Baptism, * and consequently that

* Perhaps he meant to say, Baptism came in the room of Circumcision.

Infants are to be Baptized, as before they were to be Circumcised, which I can no ways see: Nor was ever any such thing pleaded by the Apostles, against the Christian *Jews*, that were Zealous for Circumcision. *John*, and Christ by his Apostle, administered Baptism among the *Jews*; while Circumcision was still a Duty to the *Jews* and their Children. I grant, that it may be proved from hence, that Circumcision was a Figure of the Circumcision made without Hands, in the putting off the Body of the Sins of the Flesh, but not that Circumcision figured Baptism: Which if it could be proved from hence, yet there does not necessarily follow a necessity of observing this Circumstance of Age, any more than many other Circumstances of the Type; as that of the *eighth day*, of the *male sex only*, &c. But the Analogy will hold thus more properly: As Infants in the latter were Circumcised, so spiritual Infants or Babes in Christ, that are become like one of these little Ones, shall be Baptized. Therefore that Argument from the Circumstance of Age, being but a meer Conjecture, proves nothing.

The Argument which is taken from the Action of Christ's blessing Infants, does not prove to me, that it is the Will of God, that Infants are to be Baptized, but rather the contrary, in as much as we cannot learn, but that Christ dismissed them without Baptism.

As for that saying of Christ, *Except a man be born again, &c.* it does no more infer a necessity of Infant's Baptism, than that other of his, *Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, &c.* does infer a necessity of their partaking at the Lord's Table. The Gospel speaks to Persons of Years and Discretion, and it is they whom it ties to Baptism for their Salvation, and the Baptism which saves them, is the answer of a good Conscience towards God in their Obedience to the Gospel-requirements, which Infants are incapable to discharge. And for the Salvation of Infants, God is able still to bestow saving Mercies upon Infants now immediately, as he did before the Institution, either of Circumcision or Baptism. Even as it is in the case of Faith, *He that believeth not, shall be damned*: Now, because Children are no more able to give assent to the Gospel, than to dissent therefrom, shall we from thence infer their Damnation? And if the want of Faith does not Damn them till they are capable of Faith, then much more the want of Baptism will not Damn them, till then, and may therefore be rationally deferr'd till then.

As to the Promise of the Holy Ghost to the *Jews* and their Children, I cannot understand it, but Conditionally, *viz.* To them, if they should Repent and be Baptized, (according to *Peter's* Exhortation

tation to them,) and also to their Sons and Daughters, of the same Capacity to receive the Holy Spirit's Effects on their Natural Faculties, upon their Repentance and Obedience of Faith: For, as the word [*Children*] in Scripture, does not always mean Infants; else it would follow, that there were no Adult Persons in all *Israel*; so I see no necessity to take it here of Infants.

As for the Holiness of the Children of a Believer, spoken of *1 Cor. 7. 14.* (whatever that Holiness be) it does no more necessarily prove, that Infants of Believers are for that reason to be Baptized, than the Holiness of the Unbelieving Parent there spoken of, will prove, that such an Infidel is for that reason to be Baptized. For, that Holiness of the Children, is derived to them from their Believing Parent, as it is to the Unbelieving Parent, and not from the Gift of the Holy Ghost.

And whereas for an Apostolical Precedent, there is one pretended from Baptizing of *Stephanas's* Household, it is but a bare Conjecture, *first*, that there were little Babes in the Family, and *secondly*, that they were Baptized. It is said of the Ruler at *Capernaum*, that *He believed, and all his House*, but it does not thence follow, that there were Infants in his House, and that they believed as well as he. One seems just as probable as the other.

Now, Good SIR, seeing I can find no Certainty or Demonstration, and I may say, no Probability, in these Arguments, that are usually brought from Scripture for Infant-Baptism; if you can produce any Arguments that carry more Weight and Demon-

Demonstration in them, for that which you believe to be the Truth, and against that which you believe to be an Errour, and I (at present) a Truth, I do earnestly and humbly entreat you, for my Soul's sake, and as you are in Christian Duty and Conscience bound to God, to be so Good as to impart them to me, for to save my Soul from such an Errour. And as your so doing may make much, not only for my Spiritual, but also for my Temporal Benefit, so you will thereby greatly Oblige,

Reverend SIR,

London, Feb. 25. 1696.

Your very Humble,

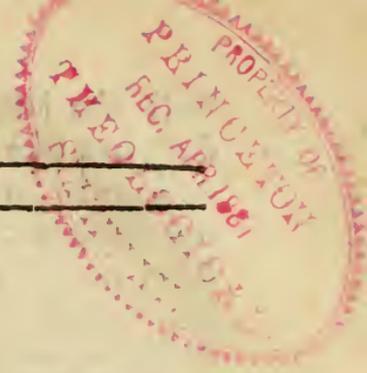
And Affectionate Servant,

C. C.....

Pray Sir, will you be pleased to favour me with some Lines, and to direct your Letter for me, to be left with Mr. ————— at the ————— in *St. Paul's Church-yard*, and there I will call for it, Three Weeks hence, and pay for it. *Vale.*

To the Reverend John Wallis, D.D. and Professor of Geometry in the University of Oxford.

T H E



A N

ANSWER

To the Fore-going

LETTER.

*S I R,**Oxford, Feb. 28. 1698.*

I Received last Night, from I know not whom, a Letter (concerning Infant-Baptism) Dated *Feb. 25.* and Signed *C. C.*..... Whether this be a true Name, or but a feigned one, I am not certain. But guess it to be the latter; because I do not remember that I have ever heard of any Man of that Name.

And, as I do not know from whom; so, neither do I know, how qualify'd: Whether with a modest Desire to be informed; or a captious Humour to quarrel or cavil at a received Truth, as being prepossessed with a Prejudice to the contrary.

C

If

If the latter; I might answer as the Apostle doth in a like Case; *If any man list to be Contentious, we have no such custome, nor the Churches of God.* And the Scripture seems to me to be written in such a stile, not as to gratify the nicely Captious, but to give a reasonable Satisfaction to such as are modestly willing to be taught. *If any man will do his Will, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God.* And, *The meek he will teach his way.* And I do not find that Christ thought fit to comply with those who would be curiously inquisitive for a *Sign from Heaven* (when and in what manner they pleased) to confirm his Doctrine: Or, with the *Rich Glutton*, who would have one *sent from the Dead* to warn *his Brethren*: But would take his own time, and his own way, to satisfy those who were willing to be taught. And, in Matters of Fact, we must content our selves with a *Moral Certainty*, though we have not always a *Mathematical Demonstration*. And if, then, any doubt remain, as to Matter of Fact, we must content our selves with such reasonable Satisfaction, as God thinks fit to give us, what is most likely to be true.

But I am willing to understand the Writer in the other Sense; as content (without cavilling) with a reasonable Satisfaction.

And then, as to this Question, concerning Matter of Fact; Whether Christ and his Apostles, or the Church in their time, did Baptize Infants: 'Tis clear, on the one hand, that we cannot be certain that they did not, (there being no intimation to that purpose;) and it is much more reasonable to think they did; and to practise accordingly.

I shall parallel this with another Question of like Nature. Whether Women did then, and ought now, to partake of the other Sacrament.

If it be objected; that Christ at first did celebrate it with Men only, (the Twelve Apostles;) and the Apostle directs, *Let a Man* (not Woman or Child) *examine himself*, (not her self) *and so let him* (not her) *eat of that Bread, and drink of that Cup*. Nor do we any where, in Scripture, find any express mention of Women receiving it.

Yet I am satisfy'd, notwithstanding this Objection, (and so, I hope, are you) that they did then, and ought now to receive it. Because there is no intimation of the contrary; and there seems to be the same reason for the Women, as for the Men, and the like benefit to each; And Women were Baptized (though not formerly Circumcised;) and did (as we have reason to presume, though I do not remember that it is expressly said so) eat of the *Pass-over* (notwithstanding it be expressly said *Exod. 12. 48. No Uncircumcised Person shall eat thereof*;) The words *House* and *Household* being reasonably supposed to include *Women and Children* also; and that the *whole Family* is to be reputed as a *Circumcised Family*, wherein all the Males are Circumcised. And, the Practice of the Church, (which is a great Presumption) hath been always consonant, to admit Women, as well as Men, to the Lord's Table.

And, in many other cases, particular Circumstances may be presumed to be supplied (from the Reasonableness of the thing, and parallel Cases,) though not distinctly expressed in the History of the

Fact; as may be amply shewed, if that were necessary.

Now (to apply this to the present Case) we are first to consider, what Baptism is. It is a solemn Rite, appointed by Christ, for the solemn Admission or Incorporation, of the Person Baptized, into the Christian Church; (as Circumcision was, into that of the *Jews*;) and, a Consecration or Dedication of the Person Baptized, to the Service or Worship of the Father, Son, and Holy-Ghost. And consequently, those who have right to be so admitted, and so dedicated, have right to the solemn Rite of such Admission, and Dedication.

Next we are to consider, that the Children of *Christians* now, have as well a right to be reputed Members of the Christian Church, as the Children of *Jews*, of the Jewish Church; and consequently to be solemnly received into it: that is, into God's visible Church, both of them; and both a like Obligation to be offered or dedicated to the Service of the True God.

And it is not reasonably to be supposed, that God would so often, and so emphatically make Promises to the Righteous, *and their seed*, if there was not somewhat of peculiar Preference intended them, beyond those of the Wicked, or those that are out of God's Visible Church.

For if no more be intended, than such a Conditional Promise, *If they repent and believe*; this is equally true of the Children of the most Profligate; and of Heathens, as of Jews or Christians. How great that is, I will not now dispute; but what Preference did then belong to the Jews, I think is now common to Christians. Other-

Otherwise, Christ's Coming would render the Condition of Children, worse than before. And particularly, those very Children, who in the Jewish Church were Members of the visible Church of God, must have ceased to be so, when the Christian Church took place.

Contrary to what Christ seems to intimate, in that of, *Suffer little Children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.* Which intimates a Capacity in Children of an Interest in Heaven hereafter, and in the visible Church here; (especially if by *Kingdom of Heaven*, be here meant, *the Gospel Church.*)

As likewise to that of, *Else were your Children unclean, but now are they holy.* Which implies a certain Holiness, as to the Children of One, though not of both, Believing Parents; which they would not have, if neither of the Parents were Believers. Which seems to me so clear an Evidence, of some relative Holiness, or Interest in the visible Church, or Dedication to the Service of God; as is not easy to be avoided.

And that slight Evasion, as if it were meant as to *Bastardy*, is so weak, as (with me) bears no weight at all. For, though both Parents were Heathen, the Child would not be a Bastard.

And it is to be considered, that, in all Religions, the Children are reputed as of the same Religion with the Parents (while under their Care) till they do by some act of their own manifest the contrary. The Child of a Jew is reputed a Jew; of a Christian, a Christian; of a Heathen, a Heathen; of a Papist, a Papist; and so of others.

Now

Now what belongs to a Church, as a Church, doth equally belong to the Jewish and Christian Church, and needs no new Institution : And consequently, that of having their Children in the visible Church-Communion with themselves ; and the Blessing appertaining to that visible Communion ; as that of, *I will be a God of thee, and of thy Seed* : And this *Blessing of Abraham*, is come upon the *Gentiles also*.

And though it is true, that this doth not presently intitle them to Heaven (unless their Life be answerable, as neither did that of being the Seed of *Abraham*;) yet it is to be reputed a real Advantage, as putting them into a fairer Prospect of Heaven, and in a greater Probability of obtaining saving Grace, than if out of the Church.

And this *Advantage of the Jew above the Gentiles* which they then had ; the Apostle tells us, is *much every way* : (Yet not so, but that a Believer, though not a Jew, might be saved by Faith ; and an Unbeliever, though a Jew, would be damned without it.) And what Advantage was then to the Jews, (as God's visible Church,) is now common to the *Gentiles also*.

So that the Right of Believers Children, to be within the Church, is not a new Institution, (as if we should now look for a distinct Institution of *Infant-Baptism*, beside that of *Baptism*;) but as old as *Adam*, for ought I know ; But the solemn Rite of Admission into this Church, (to which the Child hath a Right to be admitted) is a new Institution ; then by Circumcision, appointed to *Abraham* ; and now, by Baptism, upon a new Institution, appointed by Christ.

By

By being Believers Children, they have *Jus ad rem*; and by being Baptized, they have *Jus in re*; whatever be the Priviledge of being within the Pale and Promise of the visible Church. And so long as, by our fault, we debar them from Baptism; we do, so much as in us lyeth, debar them of that Advantage, whatever it be.

Nor is it only a *Priviledge* of the Children (to be thus early admitted into the visible Church, with the Benefits thereto appertaining, and thus dedicated to the Service and Worship of God;) but a *Duty* of Parents, and other Superiors, thus to dedicate them, and (so far as in them lyeth) give them up to God. And we need not doubt, but that the Parent hath a natural Right over the Child of so doing.

And we do not know how soon the Effect of such Dedication (upon God's acceptance) may operate. *Samson*, before he was born, was devoted by *Manoah*, to be a *Nazarite*. And *Samuel* was, by his Mother, *vowed* before he was born, and after *presented* while an Infant, to the special Service of God: *Jeremy* is said to be *sanctified from his mothers womb*; and *Paul* likewise; and *John the Baptist*, while yet unborn; and *Timothy*, from a *Child*.

And we have no reason to doubt, but many Children very early, and even before their Birth, may have the habits of Grace infused into them, by which they are saved, though dying before the Years of Discretion. My meaning is, That God may, by his Grace, so pre-dispose the Soul, to an aptness for Good; as (by our natural Corruption) we are supposed to be Habitually inclined to Evil, though not yet in a Capacity to act either. For

For as the habits of Corruption, which we call Original Sin, by Propagation; so may the habits of Grace, by Infusion, be inherent in the Soul, long before (for want of the use of Reason) we are in Capacity to act either; as is also the rational Faculty, before we are in a Capacity to act Reason.

And we may have Incouragement to expect, or hope for, such Work from God on the Heart of a Child, from our early devoting him to God's Service. And the proper way, by Christ appointed, for thus devoting, or offering up persons to God, is Baptism, into the Name, and to the Service of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost.

I am loth to charge it, as a just Judgment of God, for such neglect; when we see the unbaptized Children, of Faulty Parents, prove lewd and debauch'd Persons; though we have reason to fear, it may be an Effect of not devoting them to God by Baptism, and a neglect of suitable Education. For as we find Corruption doth, so (through God's Blessing) Grace may begin to act very early; And if we *may* do it, certainly we *ought* to do it.

And as Persons, when they be come to Age, ought themselves, to give up themselves, and (as it were) enter into a sacred Covenant with God; (and renew it, from time to time;) so may the Parents (and ought to do it, so far as in them lyeth) give up their Children to God, and ingage them in such a Covenant with him.

We know, amongst our selves, a Child by his Guardians, or his Parents, may be put into the Possession of an Estate, and engaged to the Homage and Fealty thereunto appertaining, before himself do understand what is done. And

And in such a Covenant we find the *Israelites* to enter (*Deut. 29. 10. &c.*) in the Name of themselves, their Wives, and their *little ones*, and even of those then present, and those not present at that Day. And of a like Tenour we suppose to be those mention'd of *Joshua, Asa, Jehojada, Josiah*, That God should be a God to them, and they a People to him. Which is the same, for Substance, which a Person of Age makes for himself, and the Parent for the Child in Baptism.

And if Children be thus capable, or their Parents for them, of entering thus into Covenant with God; why not of receiving the Seal of such Covenant? And why not that of Baptism now, as well as of Circumcision before? For the Child is passive in both.

And, if *Capable*, you admit it to be a *Duty*. For your Exception is, that it is to be understood of *Persons in a capable Condition*. Now, that Infants are *capable* of being admitted Members of God's Visible Church; and *capable* of being dedicated to God's Service, I think is no Question; which are the Business of Baptism.

I know it is objected, that it is said *Matth. 28. 19. Go teach all Nations, Baptizing them &c.* and therefore they are first to be Taught (which Children cannot be) before they are Baptized. And others (who put a greater force upon the word μαθητευσατε) chose rather to render it, *Go make Disciples all Nations, baptizing them &c.* and therefore (say they) they are to be made Disciples (by Faith and Repentance) before they are Baptized.

Now I can well enough admit, that *μαθητεύσατε* may there be rendered by *make Disciples* (and perhaps better than *Teach*;) But their Inference from thence, is a great Mistake.

For, *Go make Disciples by Faith and Repentance*; will not be good Sense. For Faith and Repentance are to be Works of the Persons Baptized, not of the Baptizer.

And 'tis preposterous to think Faith and Repentance intended in the word *Matheteusate*. For Christ is here speaking to his *Apostles*; instructing them, what *They* are to do in Planting a Christian Church. (Not what each respective Christian is to do in a Church thus planted: For that is to come-in after, amongst the things that are to be *taught*.)

And the words lie plainly thus; *Go, Disciple all Nations*, (that is, Gather Disciples of all Nations, or indifferently of any Nation, Jews or Gentiles, all the World over,) *Baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you*.

Or thus, (those who are here called *Disciples*, being after called *Christians*; *The Disciples were called Christians first in Antioch*, Act. 11. 26.) *Make Christians of all Nations, Baptizing them — and Teaching them —*. And, (if we would lay stress upon the order of the Words, *Baptizing* is to go before *Teaching*.)

The word *μαθητεύσατε* (*make Disciples*) is here a Verb Imperative, or Preceptive; and *βαπτίζατε διδασκοντες* (*Baptizing and Teaching*) are Participles, Exegetical or Declarative, how that Precept is to be discharged.

And

And it is in a like Form as this, (if the Founder of a Free-School should thus give Instructions to him that he makes School-Master,) *Make Latinists of any Parish in London, taking them into the School, and there teaching them the Latin Tongue.* Or, in the Language of the University (to the Governours there) *Make Scholars, or Learned Men, of any County in England, admitting them into the University, or a College, and teaching them what is to be there learned.* Or, in the Language of the City (to the Governours, suppose, of the Merchants Company) *Make Merchants of any Country; taking Apprentices; and teaching them the Trade.* (For *μαθητις*, a *Disciple*, signifies the same as a *Scholar*, a *Learner*, an *Apprentice*.)

Would any Man now think, that the Boy must first be a Latinist, before he may be taken into the School? Or, the Academick must be a Philosopher, or Learned Man, before he may be admitted in the University? Or, the Citizen a skilful Merchant, before he may be bound Apprentice? No; but the quite contrary. So here, he is to be entered a Scholar in Christ's School, in order to be farther instructed in the Christian Religion, according to the capacity wherein he is.

But, whether one do put himself an Apprentice (if a Man, and at his own Disposol) or be put an Apprentice by his Parents or Guardians (at whose Disposol he is) if a Child, is all one, as to learning a Trade; And it is all one, whether (before he be thus put an Apprentice) he have some little Skill in the Trade, or none at all. And so here; whether he be of such Years (if not the

Child of a Christian, or have been before neglected) as to have been taught somewhat of Christianity; or yet an Infant, and to know nothing of it. And whether (as in the former case) he offer himself to Baptism; or (as in the latter) he be tender'd to it by his Parents; he is to be Baptized, and to be Instructed, each according to the capacity wherein he is.

But why it should be neglected, when it may be had sooner, I see no reason; at least if it be allowed to be a thing desirable, and advantageous.

Now this, for the most part, was the case of the Apostles, when they converted Jews or Heathens to the Christian Faith. It was not to be expected, that Men at Age, and at their own Disposal, and brought up in another Religion, would be willing to declare themselves Christians, and be Baptized as such, before they knew somewhat of it; (And therefore I would not lay so much stress upon the Order of Words, as if a Person Unbaptized might not be taught, if capable of it)

But when they were so perswaded as to themselves, they did (with themselves) bring in those who were under their Power. As *Lydia*, and all her Household; the *Faylor*, and all his; the Household of *Stephanas*, *Cornelius*, and all his; and the like, I suppose, of others.

And to this purpose I understand that of *Act. 2. Repent, and be Baptized every one of you*, whether Jews or Gentiles, (this being a mixture of many Nations) *for the remission of sins, — For the promise is to you, and to your Children*, (as well as to *Abraham*, and his Children,) *and to as many as our*
Lord

Lordſball call, (and to their Children; for this I ſuppoſe to be underſtood.)

For, though I know that *Children* doth not always ſignify *Infants*; yet, if no more were meant of *their Children*, than of all the World beſide, there was no occaſion of Naming *Children*, but the Senſe had been as full without it.

Now it cannot reaſonably be ſuppoſed, but that there were Children in ſome of thoſe Houſes; (at leaſt it is more likely that there were in ſome, than that there were none in any of them;) and therefore that Children were then Baptized, as well as others; eſpecially when there is no Intimation to the contrary.

And in ſuch Caſes, where there is a ſilence in matter of Fa&ct; it is reaſonable to think, it was ſo, as was moſt likely to be; eſpecially when nothing appears to the contrary, and great Preſumptions of it.

I know there is ſometime mention of Faith, in order to being Baptized; but it is of grown Perſons.

Nor is it always meant of ſaving Faith, and a cordial Conversion; but a *Profefſion* of Faith, or a profefſed willingneſs to be Baptized, and declaring themſelves Chriſtians.

For 'tis ſaid, *Simon himſelf believed alſo, and was baptized*: Which cannot be meant of ſaving Faith, and a real Conversion; for we find him afterward, *in the gall of bitterneſs, and bond of iniquity*.

And when ſo many Thouſands were Baptized in one Day, we cannot think they were all ſingly Examined, ſo as to give (at leaſt a probable) Evidence of ſaving Grace: But, their willingneſs to be

be Baptized, was a sufficient Evidence of their declaring themselves Christians, or professing Christianity.

And when *all Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region about Jordan* (that is, great Multitudes from all those Parts,) *went out to John Baptist, and were baptized of him, confessing their sins*; it cannot be supposed that such Multitudes were all singly Examined, and made particular Confessions of their Sins; But, the Verbal Expressions of many, with the silent Consent of the rest, and the concurrent Actings of all, was an evident Declaration of their common Sentiments.

And it can hardly be thought, that they did not (many of them) bring Children with them; since we know they had then an Opinion, that Children were capable of Benefit from the Benediction of Prophets, and Persons extraordinary; as appears by their bringing of *little Children* to Christ, (such as to be taken up in Arms) for him to *lay his hands on them and bless them*.

Now if each of these Considerations be not, singly, convictive: Yet so many together, of which each is highly probable, and when as nothing (so much as probable) doth appear to the contrary: It seems to me so great an Evidence (in Matter of Fact,) that Children were then Baptized; that I do not at all doubt, but that we are rather to think, that Infants were then Baptized, than that they were not.

To which we may add, the continual concurrence of the Churches Practice, for near Sixteen
Hundred

Hundred Years ; which, in Matter of Fact, is a great Evidence.

For I do not know, that in any Age of the Church, it was ever so much as questioned, or at all doubted, (but that the Children of Christians might be lawfully Baptized,) till that about 100 Years since (in our Grandfathers time) the Anabaptists in *Germany* did (amongst many other extravagant Notions) begin to cavil at it. When as, in all the former Ages of the Church, nearer to the Apostles time, I do not know that any History doth mention, that it was ever questioned.

Whereas a thing of such Daily Practice, if at any time, in any part of the Christian Church, it had received any considerable Opposition ; it could not be, but that some History would have taken notice of it.

And, in such a Case, a constant Silence is, to me, a sufficient Evidence, that it hath been a constant Practice (even from the Apostles time) without any Opposition. And, if so, no doubt, but by them also. And I do not know of any thing alleged, with any shew of Evidence, why we should think the contrary.

If any (who were not the Children of Christians, but converted from Heathenism) have deser'd their Baptism too long ; I think they were faulty in so doing.

But if any will obstinately think, that *Paul* and *Peter* had not, each of them, Two Hands, and on each Hand Five Fingers, because it is no where in Scripture (that I know of) said that they had so : And, that therefore, we are rather to
think

think they had not, than that they had; I cannot help it.

These are my Thoughts, hastily drawn up; and I pray God they may (through his Blessing) be effectual to your Satisfaction.

Yours,

John Wallis.

*For Mr. C.----- to be
left with Mr. ----- at
the ----- in St. Paul's
Church-yard, till it be
called for.*

