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**BELIEVERS' BAPTISM,**

AND

**COMMUNION CONSIDERED :**

*Written in Reply to a Letter from*

**MR. J. BRIDGMAN, M. A.,**

**WALWORTH.**

**BY JOHN FOREMAN,**

**MINISTER AT MOUNT ZION CHAPEL, HILL STREET, DORSET  
SQUARE.**

—  
“——— to fulfil the word of God.”  
—

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**ERRATA.**

Page 66, line 40, for *conscience*, read *conscious*.



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To the Church of Christ meeting for the worship of God  
in Mount Zion Chapel, Hill Street, Dorset Square,  
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DEARLY BELOVED,

IT is well known to most of you, that on the 17th of October, I attended the ordination of our brother Wyherly, at Crosby Row Chapel, King Street, Southwark. And that the part of the service assigned for me to take, was to state the *nature of a gospel church*. I took that part, as many of you were present to witness, and as I have for years considered, and do now consider, that such services are most decidedly sentimental, and demand us to be more than usually explicit and pointed on the principles by which we are distinguished as a denomination, and pretty well as much hated: I was accordingly plain on the exclusive right of believers to baptism, and of baptized believers' exclusive right to communion, according to the only order known or to be found in the New Testament for the church of Christ; and I offered to pay the national debt of England, if scripture could be found to oppose these conclusions.

Our brother, Mr. J. Bridgman, of Walworth, was greatly offended at my remarks, and wrote me a letter, in which, without the divine Judge, or the apostolic jury, he has passed very heavy sentence of condemnation both upon me, and our sentiments, without being able to shew that either are wrong by one fairly quoted text.

I turned the matter about for some time in my mind, until I concluded upon a public reply; and I have written it accordingly, and shall, with mercy's leave, after a time bring it before the public.

Should any one think that I am treating our brother unfairly by giving a public answer to a private letter, I would observe that he charges me with *known falsehood* in my public labours; and that the public ought to know and judge for themselves, and the Lord on their consciences, by his sacred word, be Judge for us all. Not desiring to take any unfair advantage of my brother, I

have set the chief things of his letter down in long quotations, in order that those who read my answer, may as well know what he has really said.

I hope that I have not written so much under the spirit of controversy, but what it will be seen that I have been somewhat moved by the Spirit of truth, and the love of truth, with the word of truth. And that you will not have to say, that it is all lost time to read this, as you have confessed it has not been so with other little productions of my pen.

The Lord abundantly bless and prosper you, as he has done, and pour out of his Spirit in every mercy-way upon you. Do continue to pray for me, my dear brethren, while I have the honour to be

Your very affectionate Pastor,

JOHN FOREMAN.

*27, Samford Street, Lisson Grove.*

*January 17th, 1838*

# BELIEVERS' BAPTISM

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## COMMUNION CONSIDERED, &c.

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DEAR SIR,—Your letter came to hand Oct. 21, or the day following the date thereof. At first sight I thought of giving a short and private answer only, but in looking it over again, I feel convinced that justice to you, to myself, to the truth, and to the denomination to which I have the honour to belong, demands an answer in a very different way.

My labour in the pulpit at *Crosby Row*, on the eighteenth, in stating the nature, constitution, and order of a gospel church, seems greatly to have displeased you, both in manner and in matter too; so that beside speaking very low and contemptuously of me, calling me "*The Preacher*" sixteen times on your single sheet, you have condemned our sentiments as a denomination as false, on *exclusive* believers' baptism and the communion of believers only as so baptized; and then you wish us to *blush*. But at this I am not surprised, and had you stayed here, I should have taken but little notice, because it would have only been to me a marking out the difference that we know exists in sentiment between us. But as I challenged any one to find one text of Scripture in the Word of God for *infant sprinkling*, and for *any other communion* at the table of the Lord than that of believers, who are baptized on a profession of faith in Christ, you have so strangely perverted and misapplied the Word of God for the purpose, and seem, with a look of disdain upon us, to please yourself in the triumph you suppose you have gained over the challenge. And your deadly charge also upon the integrity of my public character in the pulpit that day, you having taxed me with saying *what I knew not to be the truth*, I must consider demands a public trial. Your several reflections, as well as statements, on the senti-

ments in dispute, shall be fairly sectioned out, and set down in your own words for observation. And

FIRST—“*He said, indeed, (else I should not have thought it) that he came after much prayer; but what think you? Could a man under such influence, exhibit flippancy of manners, and use light and low language?*”

I am a plain man, Gen. xxv. 27; using great plainness of speech, 2 Cor. iii. 12; to make the matter plain upon tables, Hab. ii. 2; using similitudes, Hos. xii. 10; but not enticing words, 1 Cor. ii. 4; not preaching to please men, Gal. i. 10; nor handling the Word of God deceitfully, 2 Cor. iv. 2; considering it my duty to contend earnestly for the faith, Jude 3.; to diminish not a word, Jer. xxvi. 2; and to hold in derision all things that are not true by any word from the mouth of the Lord, Ezek. xxiii. 32.

And thus I laboured on the day I offended you, and reflecting thereon in regard to this part of your letter, I do recollect two or three things that I said, to which I suppose you refer, and which I will here set down. And

1. I observed, that profession of religion is now wrought into such a multitude of diversified forms and figures, that to state the fashion of a Church, according to the many gospels of the present day, I should have an endless job, and never come to a conclusion; for that it was like a field of land I knew in the country, which was called *queer field*, because it had so many corners; having just before that also said, that if I had come there that day to work by the day, I should have to take my stand upon similar ground to that of the Jew-invented system which our Lord condemned in Mark vii.; but that as I came to work by the Bible, I should take my stand in the second chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.

2. I observed that what I said against infant sprinkling, in its having no support as an ordinance of God in the plain Scriptures of the New Testament, was not said out of want of love to the persons of my Independent brethren in the faith of God. But that I would say, the case was something similar to a circumstance which occurred in my family; when a little boy of mine, who had one day been out, and that when he came home, he said he had found such a nice pretty thing, and had got it in his bosom, but when it came to be examined what

this nice thing was, it was found with some alarm to be a nasty *Toad*, and that, although the toad was thrown away with great resentment, the child was loved none the less; for that children would pick up any thing.

3. I said that, even some of the Pædo-baptist, or (as infant sprinkling is ~~now baptism~~) Anti-baptist ministers themselves very evidently felt a difficulty in reading over those parts of the Word of God where believers' baptism is too plainly stated to be fairly concealed, and that they would hack, hem, stammer, and skip over them, similar, to a person that I knew who was a poor reader, and that when he came to any place in the chapter where there were any hard words, he would do so and get over them. I did not then state any circumstances, but will now, that will justify such an observation, and—

1. The late beloved Dr. Hawker was one day preaching at Plymouth, and in quoting a passage of Scripture, he left off very abruptly, just at the verge of something plain to the point of believers' baptism, and several of his people observed it, and were struck with it, and who afterward went to the Doctor, and asked him his reasons for so doing. And the Doctor's reply was, "That he had been many years where he was, and that he did not then care to say any thing on that subject." The Doctor came to town a few days after, and those friends reading the Scriptures for themselves, acted by their authority, and were baptized.

2. About eighteen years ago, an Anti-baptist was preaching in *Conway-street Chapel*, in London, and a little forgetting himself, it would seem, he was taken by an evident surprise in making a quotation from the Acts of the Apostles, saying, "Can any man forbid—seeing they have received the Holy Ghost as well as we;" leaping over the words *water*, *that these should not be baptized*. This was done very *dry*, but not very *clean*, from a handling the Word of God deceitfully. But if the whole text had been read, some of the people there who had received the Holy Ghost, might have been inclined to wet both head and foot in obedient honour of their baptized Lord; but that would not have been the thing to the preacher's purpose.

3. About twenty-four years ago, an Independent minister was ordained over a people in the county of

Suffolk, and in his confession of faith, he declared his firm belief in infant baptism, meaning sprinkling; and the only solitary passage from the Word of God, which he quoted in support thereof, was the following one, and that sawn asunder in the following cruel manner, saying, *For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off*; leaving out the words, *Even as many as the Lord our God shall call*, Acts ii. 39. Thus changing the countenance of the text, and reducing the great promise of all spiritual blessings, and of eternal life, to the election of grace of that people, to a mere carnal convenience for the support of what *corruption* only invented and introduced, *pride* and *worldly interest* has fostered into custom, and custom has sanctioned into a law; and which fleshly passions and carnal reason now receive as a most important boon from heaven, although no one is able to shew any right for so doing by any one plain passage in the whole Scriptures, even if you send down to *Moses* and *Aaron* for a plan of New Testament house-keeping.

4. The late beloved *Mr. Hern*, minister in the establishment at *Debenham*, in the county of Suffolk, was one day asked by a friend of mine, who used often to hear him, and on whom he used to make his friendly calls, where infant baptism or sprinkling was to be found written in the Scriptures, and he frankly and unhesitatingly answered, "It is nowhere written in the scriptures, but it is established by law."

5. About two years ago an Independent minister in town was preaching on a subject in Isaiah, and in quoting a passage from the Acts of the Apostles, he very evidently, unawares, read down to the subject of believer's baptism, and being in manifest confusion, he hacked and hemmed as though he wanted to cough, and so he leaped over the place and out of his difficulty. And this he was obliged to do, or he would soon have had to read, *They both went down into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch, and he baptized him*; and we know that this must have been very much against the grain, because this gentleman threatened to write against the Baptists when I first came to settle in London.

6. A minister now in the establishment in the county of Gloucestershire who has several children, has never had any of them sprinkled for the want of anything

like authority for so doing in the Word of God; and he is a learned man, and a nearest relative of one of the highest dignitaries.

Now what can be inferred from these things, but that the Scriptures are too plain on believer's baptism to be read with perfect freedom and good conscience by many, if by any, of its *God-fearing* opponents, and others we think nothing of; but because I told you this in plain figures, anger hath filled your mind, and gall your pen. But my love for you as a man of God is not disturbed thereby brother Bridgman, only I still hate the toad in the bosom, and shall hereby as plainly express the same, as Moses did his dislike of good Aaron's bad calf, although I have no hope of effecting a like destruction.

SECOND. "*I ask was it candid, was it fair, when bills were sent round to Pædobaptist chapels, with requests to ministers and people to attend (not an immersion, but) an ordination, was it fair in the preacher to turn the opportunity into a clap-trap, to draw away the weak and simple among our people into your pools of water?*"

My reasons for saying so much on baptism, on that and on all such occasions are,

1. Because so much is said against it without the least true authority of chapter or verse from the mouth of God.

2. Because so many of its professed friends say so little about it as a part of the revealed will of God and of their ministry, to what the first New Testament preachers evidently did.

3. Because I have determined in the help of the Lord with its comparatively few firm, consistent, and unbiassed advocates, that *that* lamp in the temple of truth shall not be quite extinguished in these compromising, vacillating, passion-pleasing, and respectability-seeking days, while I can lift up my voice in my Great Master's name. I am but a servant, and it is not in me to pick or to choose, or to have any will of my own but as arising out of and again devolving into the will of God. *Preach the preaching that I bid thee*, Jon. iii. 1. *Whatsoever I command thee, that thou shalt speak*, Jer. 1, 7. *Preach the Word*, 2 Tim. iv. 2. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, Mat. xxviii. 20. *Diminish not a word*, Jer. xxvi. 2;

and *Whosoever shall break one of these least commands, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven*, Mat. v. 19; are my solemn orders and instructions from the throne of the Holy. The whole revealed will of God, in doctrine, precept, promise, and ordinance, as exemplified out in the spirit, mind, and order of the New Testament of our Lord Jesus Christ, is my message to deliver, and my premises to defend; and my orders are, to *salute no man by the way*, by way of compromise on any part of truth, but to be faithful unto my Master's death, and my own too, as time, place, and occasion may demand. And where the siege is laid, there to defend; where opposition stands, there earnestly to contend, and where it stands within the household, to withstand even as Paul did Peter to his face, opposing however, not persons but things, with all boldness, but with godly fear; with firmness, but with affection; not in anger, but in love; not for self-mastery, but for the advancement of truth and the Lord's honour; not with imaginations, conjectures, and suppositions of what *may* be the truth, but in the divine authority of what *is* set forth and declared to be so. This is how I understand my appointment to preach the Gospel of the Grace of God, both in his *parental* gift, and operations of the blessings of eternal life, and in his holy kingly rights and honours in the whole elect dominion of his mercy. And if in these things I am mistaken correct me, while my clumsy way of handling must be ascribed to my unskilfulness.

4. Because that occasion, above all others, and particularly that part that I was published to take required it. For it was then to speak out on such a subject or never, for it was a *bible baptist ordination*, and you were to please yourself whether you would come or not, and your friends too, for there was not that I know of, any announcement on the bills of a collection, so as that you and your friends were asked to come and help us. And when I gave out that there would be a collection to meet some little expences, I said, They who liked the service would show it by contributing, and that must be all fair. But

5. You say, "*Not an immersion.*" And we say so too, nor did we immerse, for if we had, we should have acted as untimely, disjointedly, and as incoherently with



the published business of the day, and looked as prettily as our esteemed friend Joseph Irons did, with a baby in his arms at a chapel opening, and again at a common anniversary, sprinkling its *face* in particular, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and calling such a practice an ordinance of the Lord, when God has nowhere set his name to any such practice in any given shape of character whatever, and when also such a practice can in no way whatever, in truth, be made to signify, embrace, or stand good for any thing, consistent with any one *discriminating doctrine of a discriminating covenant of love and favour*, Rom. viii. 29, 30; ix. 5, 6; John i. 13.

6. You ask, "Was it fair for the preacher to turn the opportunity into a clap-trap to draw away the weak and simple of our people into your pools of water." If I had advanced any sentiment, that is not the truth of the Word of God, and then artfully used insinuating and beguiling arguments to ensnare the minds of the simple, then you might fairly ask such a question, but such you know was not the case, for I was stating the Scripture doctrine of believers' baptism, and much as you condemn us, you admit that believers' baptism *may* be a truth, but not so *exclusively*, or that baptism is "for and of believers only." But you seem afraid that your people should be drawn into a close examination of the Scriptures for themselves on this truth, for my appeals were pointedly made to the Scriptures and to them *only*. There is one thing that I will tell you as my decided opinion, and which is, that it is only for you and the antibaptist ministers in general to make a little stir, and keep it up awhile on the subject, and vast numbers of your people would become in baptism one with us. And therefore be quiet, do not make a noise, hush, and be very still, for you will be sure to lose some if you rouse any impartial *scriptural inquiry*! And this latter is what I laboured to effect on the day I offended you, for I again and again recommended that none would take mine or any *man's* opinion, but that they would prayerfully read the Scriptures for themselves; and this you cannot do upon *infant sprinkling* with any safety, because they might search for ever and never find one text for it in the Scriptures, and such labour and disappointment would be likely, in the hand of the Lord, to con-

vince. An antibaptist minister had need be a very clever man, or always be in *sentimental* danger of falling into our river, pond, or pool of *much water*, and of letting the little ones fall out of his arms, of breaking the hand-bason, of spilling the finger water, and of losing many of his adults, if not himself and all, from his present *textless* into our New Testament side of the question, by the force of undeniable truth.

THIRD. "*But as an ordination is a service similar to the first opening or anniversary of a chapel, I for one, nor I alone by many, consider the preacher quite as much breaking the rule of the Apostle, 'Let all things be done decently and in order,' as was Joseph in sprinkling an infant in the presence of John Andrew the dipper.*"

I never did know, and you are the first person who ever said within my knowledge, that an *ordination* is a similar service to that of *opening a chapel*, or to that of an *anniversary*: for,

1. At an ordination the church is required to give an account of the leadings of Providence, relative to their chosen minister, and this is not required, nor even looked for to be done at the opening of a chapel, or at an anniversary.

2. At an ordination, one minister is appointed, and by us is generally published, to state the nature of a gospel church, and which statement is generally supposed to include the constitution and order thereof. And this part of the service, to be any thing at all of what is intended, must be the most decidedly sentimental, and fully descriptive of our real standing as a denomination of any service performed among us, and herein I only fulfilled my appointment. And this is not necessarily expected, though in part frequently performed at the opening of a chapel, but by no means of an anniversary.

3. At an ordination, the chosen minister is requested and expected to give some account of his call by grace, his call to the ministry, and his call to preach in the place then under consideration, and also to state the sentiments he holds, and publicly undertakes in the presence of the then assembled witnesses, by the help of God, to preach and maintain, in doctrines and ordinances, as according to which the church has chosen him to be

their pastor. But there can be no place for such a service at an opening or an anniversary, only at the opening of a chapel, the sentiments are frequently stated that are to be maintained in the worship of God in the place, and this I have heard as much of at the opening of an Independent chapel as I have heard at the opening of one by the Baptists, and that without considering it out of order, time, and place. But I feel persuaded that many of the professing public will laugh at your statement that the services of *opening a chapel*, an *anniversary*, and an *ordination*, are so similar, as that what would be out of place at the one, cannot be in good order at the other; and this I say from much practical acquaintance with such services for several years. We always consider it honourable and orderly, as the occasion may be, for a man to speak openly, plainly and honestly, the sentiments which he holds in his soul to be the truth before God; but we do not consider it to be in good time, place, nor order, to baptize at an ordination, the opening of a chapel, or at an anniversary, unless public notice be given that arrangements are made for such a service at such a time. And therefore our esteemed friend Irons carried his infant sprinkling out in a manner, in which we, without public notice, should consider among ourselves, confusion and untimely disorder, and more like vaunting pride over our surprised neighbours, than a sober act of religious worship.

FOURTH. *“I should say to the preacher concerned in this censure, my brother, let us do to others as we would they in like circumstances should do to us. And as a Baptist (so called) would not have patience to hear a Pædobaptist rant on a general occasion about infant sprinkling; so neither vice versa.”*

What have I done, but honestly spoken out principle at a proper place, occasion, and time? It was a *Baptist* ordination, and I was published to state sentiments according to my well known public profession and personal belief, and I did so, and will leave the public to judge if I should not have departed from the laws of honesty on such an occasion if I had not done so. I spoke pointedly on believers' baptism, because it was a *particular* occasion for such statements to be made; but you call it a *general* occasion. But if an *ordination* be

a general occasion, pray what in all our lives is a public particular one? And if we may not speak out our sentiments at an ordination, when may we speak them? Say, not at all, because while they are opposed they cannot be refuted; nor oppose infant sprinkling, because though so lovely, it cannot by one text in the Scriptures be supported; nor can the unbaptized of God's flock be directed to search them to find it there before they embrace it, without great danger and liability of their being to the very contrary convinced of believers' baptism in doing so. Ah! that is it, and I shall believe that I have now hit the nail on the head, until the contrary be proved.

If we go to an Antibaptist ordination we expect to hear them speak out plainly all their leading sentiments, and especially those which more particularly distinguish them as a denomination, because it is a most particular occasion for doing so, and if they do not so speak out, we conclude they do not act honestly to the occasion. And when you go to a Baptist ordination, do not be offended if they speak out plain, but reckon them not to act honestly, but with some subtile design, if they do not so speak; for truth demands to be frankly told, and fears nothing but silence, secrecy, and cowardice, in its professed advocates. And when a preacher comes forth with *excellency* of speech and *enticing* words of man's wisdom, 1 Cor. ii. 1, 4, and is not plain and open in sentiment, it is to be feared that he is seeking the praise of man more than the praise of God, or that he aims to please the multitude more than to feed the flock of God, or that he suspects the truth of his own sentiments, or that he does not sufficiently understand his own sentiments to make them plain to others, or that the subject in hand is not of that vital importance to himself to induce him to wish other people to understand it as well as himself, or that he has some other motive than that of promoting the knowledge of the truth in that simplicity in which the truth is in Jesus, 2 Cor. i. 12. Eph. iv. 21. The sun is not ashamed to shine, and an honest man is not ashamed to walk in the light thereof, but a thief covets darkness, and a hypocrite a mask.

FIFTH. "The preacher said, indeed, that he respected our feelings, yet at the same time dealt out with all his vehemence, hard blows, not, indeed, of sound argument,

*but which certain sophists know best suit weak minds, merely hard words and positive assertions."*

1. You make a mistake about my saying that I *respected your feelings*, for I neither said, thought, nor meant so; but that I loved my Independent brethren in the faith of Christ, although I condemned infant sprinkling to be sent back to its mother at Rome, and I am still of the same mind. My work, my aim, and my object was to state what I believe in the presence of God, and on the text of the holy Scriptures to be the truth, and to oppose what I believe to be not so; consulting no feelings whatever any further than such sentiments and such statements would go.

2. As to *vehemence*, I know of no such thing about my speaking on that day, more than what is my usual way when speaking to so many hundreds so closely crowded together, and out at the doors, that could not get in, and consequently could not hear, unless the speaker made some exertion. Nor do my friends who were there, that are in the habit of hearing me, know of anything *peculiar* of the kind on that day; but if *sentiment* had suited, *sound* would not have offended; but as the contrary was the fact, the consequent was according.

3. As to *hard blows*, I cannot see how that could be, unless it was in the force of *plain truth*, hitting you were you were *unshielded, uncovered*, and naked of truth's plain chapter and verse; and so being yourself doubtfully tender were pinched; for a *mis* can never *hurt*, and that which will not *apply* cannot *affect*.

4. And as to my being a *sophist*, or acting the part of a sophist, there was no dark and mysterious cunning, nor subtilty of argument with concealed intrigue, in what I said that day on believers' baptism; for I spoke so plain that any one might understand me, and laid myself so nakedly open that any one might see what I was; and it seems that you beheld me a *monster*, or you have strangely over-rated me with sorry epithets. And as for the principle advanced, I referred the people entirely to the Scriptures, and to read them for themselves, without once pointing out *plan* or *place*, except to the New Testament for New Testament ordinances; and if this be sophistry, what is simplicity?—what is honesty?

5. There is no soundness in any argument used to uphold a sentiment in religion that has no Scripture for its support; and that which has Scripture sufficiently plain to be referred to, needs no argument to maintain the *right of its being*, for the sacred text is sufficient authority. Let us look to the Scriptures to make out for us all our religious *principles*, and then carry out their importance, connection, bearing, and advantages, by the best arguments we can use; but let us be careful never to labour by *arguments* to set up principles for which there is no plain authority in the word of God, and then again labour to uphold them in the same way that poor infant sprinkling is obliged to be, viz. by all manner of far-fetched bewildering arguments, and the putting of cunning written books, adapted to work upon the passions, into the hands of inquirers, to becloud the judgment, and silence the mind from inquiry, by Scriptures also as much perverted for the purpose, as ever they were in the Church of Rome to support her corruptions; while it is well known that it will not do, and so it is never recommended, that for a right settlement of mind on the sentiment, the New Testament be closely read through with prayer, and that *that* course be taken that is therein most evidently marked out; but with all my sophistry this is the plan I recommended, and do always recommend, as not knowing a more excellent way.

6. As to my *hard words*, they were plain, and so not hard to be understood: they might be hard to reconcile with infant sprinkling, but not so with the sacred text: Their hardness, therefore, must lie in their difficulty of refutation, and in their likelihood by plain truth to advance the New Testament ordinance of believers' baptism; and also to expose that anomaly, *infant sprinkling*, that can mean nothing in, nor form any part of the system of, personal, vital, regenerate, and new-creatureship religion of the New Testament.

7. My *positive assertions* now stand open for your contradiction with plain chapter and verse. Confidence cannot be wrong in a *good cause*, for in the "fear of the Lord is strong confidence, and the righteous are as bold as a lion," Prov. xiv. 26. xxviii. 1. If I advanced untruth, I am now in your hands to confound; for "the mouth of the just bringeth forth wisdom; but the fro-

ward tongue shall be cut out. The lip of truth shall be established for ever; but a lying tongue is but for a moment." Prov. x. 31. xii. 19. I stood up that day on purpose to make statements of our belief, and not so much to use arguments of defence; and I believed, and therefore have I spoken (Ps. cxvi. 10), and my labour was consistent with place, circumstance, and appointment; and if our sentiment and the statement thereof be so offensive on believers' baptism, arise, my brother, unsheath the sword of the Spirit, and thereby, in the name of the Lord, overcome and vanquish it, and you will do valiantly; we shall profit by losing *dross*, and your infant sprinkling shall then stand as well credentialed as the ministry of the Apostle Paul. Gal. i. 11, 12.

SIXTH. "*The preacher made long and tedious quotations concerning the building of Noah's ark, the tabernacle, and the temple, and to prove what? that which every godly Pedo-baptist acknowledges equally with himself—that God's commands, when plainly given, are to be by his servants implicitly obeyed—no Christian denies this.*"

1. Quotations certainly were made from Gen. vi. Ex. xxv. the xl. and 1 Chron. xxviii. concerning the building of the ark, the tabernacle and the temple, and my design was to shew that the Old Testament saints were not left to contrive nor devise anything in the service and fear of God, either in matter or shape, but that the Lord himself patterned out all *that* whereby he would be feared, and that they were commanded to do what was acceptable, and that they did as they were commanded, and that *less* would have been offensive, and more would not have been acceptable to God. And the conclusion deduced from this was, that so it is now; we are not to cut and contrive anything of ourselves as a standing public ordinance in the worship of God, but that the *word of God* is our entire rule and authority to be immediately regarded, and that all things are to be excluded as not of God but of Satan, that are *void of sacred text*.

2. That it is the duty of every believing child of mercy in the divine family to observe and walk in all the household laws and ordinances of their Father, God, and King; but that this is not done by many who know

and admit what the word of the Lord saith on believers' baptism. And some out of many of my reasons for this remark I will here set down. And, *first*, Mr. H. Fowler, in a sermon which he published, admits that believers' baptism *was an ordinance from heaven*, and that the *first believers were baptized*, but that it is now *optional* with ministers to baptize or not, as they think proper. Where any man can find authority thus to speak in the name and in the solemn presence of God I must leave, but which side of this option is of course taken needs no observation, because there are so many respectable professors that do not like the name of believers' baptism, although they are as ignorant as an ox as to any scriptural reasons why. *Second*. I have met with many in the course of my public life whom I believe to be the subjects of the grace of effectual calling, who have freely said that they saw believers' baptism clearly commanded in the Scriptures; and yet they have not attended to it, saying, "That they could not see it revealed to them for themselves." And when they have been told that, "What is commanded on believers in the Lord in general, and is so practically carried out in the New Testament, devolves as a family duty on every believer, personally as a believer, without anything in the shape of a special revelation on that point any more than particularly so on all and every other point of truth;" their answer has been, "But I do not feel myself worthy to walk in that ordinance," although, at the same time, they could in all these cases see the Lord's Supper for themselves without any particular revelation to them on the subject; and could, also, at the same time go to the table of communion, *worthy* or *unworthy*. So that I have not found, nor can I find, *implicit obedience* to the admitted plain commands of the Lord, quite so fruitfully exemplified as my brother *Bridgman* has undertaken to vindicate.

3. *God's commands plainly given*, and a plain obediently observant *sight* of them are two very different things, because circumstances have so greatly to do with the latter; such as who, and who do not see them this way or that, and are they the most respectable that see them so, and have any of the rulers so believed? Fine clothes, money and multitude, has very often great influence over the minds even of many of God's own



called children; and a *golden calf* is of God with many, if an *Aaron* do but make it. This would not be the case if Scripture text was the only sought and regarded rule by which all professors received doctrines and ordinances for belief and action in the things of godliness. And if the Word of God was thus regarded, the point that has *seven* times as much said upon it as another, would not be the least of the two regarded, as is now the case with believers' baptism, in comparison to communion; and that which has not a *word* nor *act* recorded for it in the Scriptures, as is the case with infant sprinkling, would not be received at all, as being any thing of God whatever. I have always found hitherto, when a person could be persuaded impartially, closely, and prayerfully, to read through the New Testament, that they have been disappointed in not being able, as they expected, to find one text for infant sprinkling, instead of many; and that they have found believers' baptism as undeniable as the plain text is to be regarded. And for this cause I do always in public, and in private, when persons come to ask me questions on the subject, recommend a close reading of the New Testament for a just conclusion of mind on the sentiment and of conduct therein. And of the many that I have had the honour to baptize, I have never baptized one who has not been satisfied for themselves on the point by the text of the New Testament, and who has stated the same before many witnesses.

SEVENTH. "*But the preacher more than implied that the command for believers only to be immersed in water is as plainly written in the New Testament, as those particular directions about the Ark, &c. were in the old. I appeal to his common honesty, and he seemed to be an honest man; but to that principle I appeal, and to his face I would say, and in God's presence I would say, You know that is not the truth.*"

1. This is carrying the point of hostility to a high pitch and to a great length. Wrong opinions may through mistake be with great sincerity entertained both of persons and things until the judgment be better informed, but a positively affirmed charge must involve immediate guilt on the one side or the other. I am here charged as in the presence of God, with **WILFUL LYING IN THE PULPIT, AS KNOWING what I said IS NOT**

THE TRUTH. My brother Bridgman says, that *his pen is not dipped in honey*, but unfortunately, on the contrary, he hath so filled it as to *blot his lines with gall*. However, I am not troubled at this, for as the Lord liveth, by whom the heavens and the earth were made, by whom I have *my being and my breath*, before whose solemn judgment-seat I must shortly stand, by whose august will, and by the word of whose mouth the final destiny of my never-dying soul must finally be determined, I KNOW NO SUCH THING AS MR. BRIDGMAN SO SOLEMNLY AFFIRMS THAT I DO.

2. The command, mind, and will of God in the New Testament, on *believers' baptism and immersion*, and that of *believers' only*, is as plain to my view, and to my entire confidence, as the above directions referred to, and as any one truth of God revealed in the whole Scriptures, and has been so for above these twenty years. And all that I have read and heard to the contrary, for between these five and six and twenty years, have not at all shaken my confidence, but on the contrary, have always more confirmed it. And I do most soberly declare, that so plain has the subject appeared to me for the above years, that I have often felt the greatest difficulty in believing those persons sincere who have opposed it. And the books that I have read, which have been written against it, have increasingly plain appeared to me to be entirely without foundation in the Scriptures, forced upon the sacred text, and the Word of God perverted to what was never in the remotest sense intended, in order to mystify and throw into darkness by *art*, that subject, when it could not by plain honesty to the current testimony, and evident sound and sense of the Scriptures, be denied or refuted. And that this was done for no other evident reasons than because, as with some other undeniable points of truth, it is of itself unconvertible into any thing respectably pleasing, and so is despised among men, and therefore to be first criticised into disputation, and then to be rejected with many foul and opprobrious epithets; after the manner in which the enemies of our Lord, first *scourged* him, then heaped *reproach* upon him, and then *crucified* him; and for no other reason than because the *truth* of him was unsavoury to their very different *religious* taste, John xix.

I am a plain man, and I read my plain English

Bible, and according to that I have through the tender mercies of our God received every point which I believe in the name of the Lord to be the truth. And although my friends can give you full proof that I am not wanting in Christian affection and due familiarity, yet, touching *principle*, I care no more about any connection with ministers, any church, congregation, or individual friends, or about any pulpit, or pastorship, than I do about how many fishes there are in the seas, moles in the earth, or gnats flying in the air on a summer's evening, otherwise than as I can therewith plainly, freely, and openly hold my individually espoused sentiments on the sacred text of my plain Bible; considering principles *first*, and then connection; seeking no principle from connection, bending no principle to any connection, always ready to give up any principle that I cannot maintain and defend on the plain and fair reading of my Bible, and holding every man to be flesh and blood inspired, or something worse therein who hold any prominent sentiment, for which not one text in the Scriptures can be found to be fairly conclusive to the point.

I will by and by set before you how and in what way it is, that things appear so plain to me as they do on exclusive believers' baptism; and then if you think me a *poor blind fool*, be it so; but that of being a *lying* rogue in or out of the pulpit, I must deny, claiming sincerity always as my hitherto unforfeited right; and if after this, I be accused, I must then tell our heavenly Father of the injury, and beg him to defend me.

3. That the little figurative things of a figurative dispensation that was to continue but for a while with a few figurative people, and then all to give up into a permanent dispensation extending to a people of all nations, kingdoms, and tongues, in the *simplicity* that is in Christ, should have more determinable plainness of the mind and will of God, as to how he would therein be worshipped, than that permanent dispensation and kingdom of Christ itself has, as to how he will be confessed, worshipped, and adored by the more deeply obligated objects of his peculiar and eternal favour; is to me a subject so strange and unaccountable, that I cannot any way make it out; and yet you say it is so, but which appears to me like saying, That the *picture* of a

man is a great deal more like the man than the man is like himself.

And to consider that the New Testament *word* of God is not plain enough at once to give us the *will* of God as to all standing New Testament ordinances, whereby the heavenly heirs of eternal life and favour, shall rightly acknowledge, fear, and reverence the Lord in spirit and in truth, is an idea that I cannot receive, but must oppose as contrary to truth and big with malignant tendency. To admit that God is not clearly enough revealed by his commauds in the New Testament for his will to be directly known, as to what he would have us to do in the standing institutions of his house, must be a very serious reflection on divine wisdom, and is calculated to more than bring into doubt the divinity and infallibility of the sacred Scriptures, to destroy before men the order, character, and importance of Christian obedience to God, as having no direct law, to give the infidel and every vulture-eyed enemy of godliness the unhallowed advantage they are always seeking to obtain, and to throw confusion into the minds of thousands of God's people, and to wound and weaken the hands of the already feeble before their enemies.

Every prophetic representation of the New Testament kingdom and household of Christ, is that of *more light* than in the Old, as, *Unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings*, Mal. iv. 2. *Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee*, Isa. lx. 1. *The people that walked in darkness, upon them hath the light shined*, Isa. ix. 2; compared with Matt. iv. 16., Luke ii. 32, John i. 9. And John the Baptist, as such, as his whole ministry is characterized by baptism, is in the heavens and hemisphere of the New Testament declared to be, *A burning and a shining light*, John v. 35. But all this your suggestion goes to deny, and to declare, that in some of the standing ordinances of the New Testament, there is so *little light*, and so much *more darkness* than in the old, as for them to be at most but a *doubtful disputation*. That there is much darkness, must be admitted, but not in the Word of God about his commands and ordinances, but in the mind, the will, the taste, and the course of action of professing men, through a flood of early corruptions

and carnal inventions, brought within the profession of the Saviour's name by the subtile workings of the *man* of sin, disguised into the very appearance of the wisdom and power of God, and which, though textless, yet being man-pleasing, have gendered a kind of unperceived darkening bias into the mind even of many a man of God unto this day; and together with the inventions now acting to please and confederate all men, it is *here* and in *these things* the darkness lies, and not in the divine text, nor in the practical pattern apostolically drawn out in the New Testament.

EIGHTH. "*The Baptist minister who will shew me the plain unequivocal command for the immersion in water of a believer, as constituting water baptism, either as commanded by Christ, or his apostles under his authority, I tell him this, that in my own chapel, at my own expence, I will have a pool made, and he shall be my baptizer—will you accept the challenge?*"

In reply to this paragraph, I shall state some things that appear quite plain to me on the subject of believers' baptism, but I shall not pretend to a successful execution of the *challenge*, because that which may be laid down as a *truth* and proved so beyond any fair disputation by one person, may not be at all effective in another's *sight*, and the point in hand is not only to be established on the ground of undeniable truth, but it is to be *shown*, and here lies the difficulty; because I have not only to make my exhibition, but to secure *admitted sight* thereof in the same sense in which the point in hand is exhibited. And when any man can see sufficiently clear for practice under the name of an institution of God, what has not one single text, direct nor indirect, in precept or precedent in the Word of God, it is hardly to be expected that he can by any human effort, be brought to *see* what is *plainly* written and practised out in the Word of God. There is but one cause for a man's *seeing* all the parts of truth's system in their native order, but there are a vast many reasons for his *not* seeing, as there are also for his seeing that to be truly divine that has no relation whatever to divinity.

In my stating how believers' baptism is to me so plain on the text of the New Testament, let it be fully understood that I believe the Scriptures to be the *infal-*

ible word of God, that there is no *deficiency* about them, nor *superfluity* in them; that they contain no *self-contradiction*, and that nothing that is *commanded* is by us to be reckoned *indifferent*; that they are sufficiently pointed and plain to the purpose of every subject intended, and that where one part may seem inexpressive, it is that we should associate some other part therewith, that so by comparing Scripture with Scripture we may come at the mind of the Spirit; that the greater or less acceptation of a word is to be taken from the association in which it stands, and that the current practice of immediately inspired men is infallible comment on, and explanation of, the mind and will of God, for our obedient and practical observance; and that, according to these rules, I shall, by the merciful kindness of our God, now endeavour to proceed. And,

1. Our Lord's commission to his apostles stands in as positive command of *baptism* as it does of preaching the gospel. And the *mode* and *subjects* are as positively determined by command, as the whole commission itself was of God. And the apostles as well knew what was to be required of candidates, and that *that* prerequisite is indispensable, and what *mode* was signified, as they knew from the mouth of the Lord what gospel they were to preach. And they knew that any other subject or mode to what the Lord had commanded, was no more the same institution than *another* gospel was the very same the Lord had commanded. And they solemnly knew that it was no more for them to have two distinct and altogether irrelative ordinances in either subject or mode, or both, for God's own one institution, than it was for them to set up two or more distinct gospels for the one commissioned glorious gospel of the blessed God; the apostles' uniform practice demonstrates this as undeniable fact. They were to preach the gospel wheresoever they went into all the world, and to baptize all them that believed upon such a confession as with which they were satisfied, and not otherwise; saying, *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*. The apostles were to *teach*, and the believing subjects of such teaching in the gospel, were the only subjects for baptism, and them the apostles were to *teach to observe all things whatever the Lord had commanded them*. And if they had not positively and pointedly understood

the Lord's command as plain and unequivocal, they could not have taught others *whatsoever* he commanded them; and had they not have had such a command, they, as apostles, would not have done as they did. All their teaching and doing as standing matters in the church of Christ, were distinctly and positively what they received by command of the Lord, and all other matters of question among the saints for which they had no command, they gave as their circumstantial opinion, and noted them as such. 2 Cor. viii. 8. And as the apostles received the Lord's immediate will in positive command, their apostolical practice is an unequivocal explanation of the Lord's will, and a positive handing down of his commandment to us, with a *Lo, I am with you always to the end of the world*, in the observance thereof.

2. Should it be said, that our Lord's commission to his apostles, does not appear to express an immediate definition of the *only* subjects, and mode of baptism, I would observe, that *these* the apostles *well knew*, and were quite familiar with them *both* from *John's* baptizing. For the distinguishing character of his subjects (Christ himself excepted) was *one only*, and his mode of baptizing most evidently was *one only*; and had our Lord gone into any particular definition of *these* more than his words now contain, when the apostles already knew them so well, and that by their own baptism too, it might then have been supposed that something in them both in future, was to be observed different to what *John* did. *John's* commission to preach and baptize, was as absolutely divine as the commission our Lord gave to the apostles was; for he was the *Man that was sent from God whose name was John*, John i. 6, and he was *sent to baptize with water*, ver. 33, and the *qualification* to be required of the subjects of baptism, together with the *mode*, were as unequivocally defined to *John* by *Him* that sent him to baptize, as the subject matter of his preaching was, or he would have been sent to do, he neither knew *what* nor *how*. The ordinance of baptism therefore, as a standing institution in the gospel and spiritual kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, had from God, its origin, its complete and final framing in the commission and ministry of *John*. And I believe it impossible to prove from the Word of God that the

apostles in any one instance deviated in either *subject* or *mode*, in ministering that ordinance, from the one complete and determinate model which the Lord set up and declared by the ministry of John, and who consequently with design, for as long as the New Testament shall stand upon the earth, is peculiarly styled *John the Baptist*. The only subjects that John received for baptism and baptized, were those who penitently received his ministry, repented toward God, and humbly confessed their sins, or so professed to do, that he received them in that character only; and *all* others were rejected, and none were received from relation by *blood or nation*, Mat. iii. 6, 7, 8, 9. And it is in this way I do most simply and confidently understand the apostles to have acted, as in obedience to the perfect will of the Lord, by positive and unequivocal command delivered unto them, and as plainly understood by them, as the following instances can be made honestly to do no other wise than plainly and fully declare.

1. When Peter and the other apostles were asked by the already *pricked to the heart*, what they should do, the order of the answer was, *Repent and be baptized; and they that gladly received the Word were baptized*; all of them, and no one else that we can hear anything of in the text, Acts ii.

2. *Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them*, Acts viii. 5; this was as the Lord had commanded. *And when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women*, ver. 12. This was according to divine commission, and which shows as plain as any subject needs to be, how they understood the Lord's will in those days; for here were none baptized till they *believed*, or so professed faith that Philip was satisfied with their testimony, and he had no commission to search hearts; and *men and women* are here *particularized* too, and not one word about infants.

3. *Then Philip opened his mouth and began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus*, ver. 35. *And as they went on their way they came to a certain water, and the Eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?* ver. 36. *And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest.* This



is plain enough I think, both in *sound* and *sense*, if all the weight of eternal life hung upon its meaning; and what is its most unquestionable meaning? but that Philip *must not* by any means baptize him, *neither must he be baptized* in the name of the Lord unless he *believed* in the truth of God, which Philip had preached; and we know he could not believe with *all his heart*, without repentance, neither can any sinner repent in heart toward God, without so believing his truth, where one of these is expressed, both are included. And Philip could not baptize any one in the Lord's name, as by any Divine authority whatever, without a satisfactory testimony of these, even to an exact unvarying accordance with *John*, who rejected the *Pharisees* and *Sadducees*, not because they *had* been Pharisees and Sadduces, but because they were *still* so, and could not bring forth the evidence required of repentance toward God. And the Eunuch answered and said, *I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and Philip baptized him*, ver. 37, 38. Now, when you take an infant in your arms for sprinkling, put the like enquiry to it, and wait for the like answer, and never either sprinkle or baptize it until it gives you such an answer to your satisfaction in truth; for if you do, you will be doing what *Philip* dared not to do, and I should think his authority was as large as yours, and that wider or different authority has since been given to no man than was then given. And acting without such evidence you declare by your acts, that your Gentile infants, are now altogether qualified for baptism without repentance, although neither Jew nor Gentile, young or old, were so in the days of *John*, our Lord Jesus Christ, or his apostles and evangelists.

4. When the Lord sent *Ananias* to *Saul* of Tarsus, he went and said unto him, *Brother Saul. arise and be baptized*, Acts xxii. 16; and this was a *direct* command from the Lord, ver. 12; ch. ix. 6; and is a clear case to the point in hand; for *Behold he prayeth*, ver. 11; and therefore he was converted to God, and bore evidence that he was a chosen vessel of God, and that consequently it was his given right, and filial duty, to walk in all the New Testament ordinances of God, and upon such evidence only, the Lord commanded, and *Ananias* acted, and baptized him. And go you and do likewise, and then you will be able to give as good reasons for

your *doing* as for your *hope* in the name of the Lord, and you will have a good conscience, and plain text on your side.

5. *While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the Word. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we. And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, Acts x. 44—48.* In the case of the Eunuch baptism was *demande*d, and here it is *commande*d, but the administration is in both instances alike founded on vital qualification by the grace of God. And both *Philip* and *Peter* were such *water* baptists, that in neither of these very first sermons to those poor strangers, could they forbear preaching and enforcing that ordinance of God; in the *truth* of it, and *administration* of it on the grace formed character of *right* to it. And this is water baptism by apostolical command, and that of all those who had received the Holy Ghost sufficiently to give evidence that they belonged to the chosen household of God, and had obtained repentance unto life, ch. xi. 18; and of no one else young or old. Their baptism did not *precede* such a testimony of their right to it, nor did their receiving of the Holy Ghost *supersede* their baptism, but qualified them for it, and without such evidence of qualification it would have certainly been *forbidden*, if by any means it had once been hinted at in any shape; but such a thing was unknown, and so never named, for the apostle did not ask whether he might minister baptism to *graceless* subjects, but whether the brethren present were not all satisfied that those in the house were the subjects of the grace of God, and so qualified to walk in the distinguishing ordinances of that grace. And if the apostle could not act out the Lord's command in this one instance, but by such a rule, pray tell me in what other instance and place he could and did as the Lord's servant so act. And, if he as the Lord's immediate apostle could not minister baptism but upon the testimony of grace, first imparted to the candidate as the only creation of *right* to it, pray tell me where, and when other men, by no means apostles, obtained divine authority to act contrary to what the apostle could here

dare to act, and to set aside with scorn the only way in which the apostle did here and elsewhere act. For this is not a solitary act of the apostle's, but is in perfect accordance with his own conduct in Acts ii., with that of *Philip* with the Eunuch, and of *John* at Jordan, and with the statement in all places where any description is given of the characters baptized. And this plainly tells us how all the apostles and first ministers of the New Testament understood the command and commission of the Lord, each one for themselves, so as all to act but as one man, and all their several acts to be but as one act for agreement on the point.

6. *And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God heard us; whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us,* Acts xvi. 14, 15. This text, so far as it gives any definite statement of the order of occurrences at all relating to baptism, is to the same purpose as the above quoted, and cannot be made to imply, not even indirectly, anything to render the subject less plain than the above declare it, but as baptism is not a cardinal point of statement or of argument in the text, or at which the text aims, it is merely mentioned in the passing on in order to the statement of other things for which this history is more immediately given. The woman, however, was baptized after her heart was divinely opened in the fear and faith of God; and so upon the very same evidence only that was required in all stated cases of character, as the only one uniform warrant from God, either of admission or of ministration. This household has been much resorted to in support of unconscious infant sprinkling, because there is no particular and detailed account of the persons composing it; but it must be a most miserable shift to fly to the partial silence of one text to support a sentiment that affects the whole public character and order of the Church of Christ, in direct opposition to what is elsewhere so plainly written, and also to other parts of the same text. Attempts to make so much out of silence in one place, shows an awful disregard of what is so plainly written

elsewhere-through the New Testament, in regard to what was so evidently required by all the Lord's servants as a qualification of persons for baptism; and it shews also that if silence in one small part of one text, can by art be converted into but a seeming obscurity over what is elsewhere so plainly written, it is a most *welcome convenience*, and all for the entire want of support by the *voice* of the Lord, even by one text from the mouth of his inspired servants. There is not one word about this household that can be turned into any fair question against the right of *believers only* to baptism on the profession of their faith; for whether it consisted of young or old is of no consequence, since they are all *Christian brethren* at the fortieth verse, and so were all qualified and worthy of baptism at the fifteenth.

7. *And was baptized, he and all his straightway*, Acts xvi. 33. Here is another family baptized, we see; and now, if here can be found any children, or a child baptized in this family without the required profession of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, it shall be admitted that there were as many such as you please in Lydia's household. When the arrows of God reached the poor *jailor's* heart, he did as all must do in like circumstances, said, *What must I do to be saved?* ver. 30. And Paul and Silas said, *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved, and thy house*, ver. 31. *And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house*, ver. 32. *And he rejoiced, believing in God with all his house*, ver 34. Here the jailor and *all his house* had the word of the Lord spoken to them, and *they all* rejoiced, believing in God, and *they all* had the sure declaration of salvation upon such evidence, and the very same all, upon such evidence were baptized, and no one else, that we are any way told of; and why? but because no other were baptized, and that no other by the commandment of God should be.

8. *And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized*, Acts xviii. 8.

Here is another man and all his house baptized, but they are all declared to have first *believed in the Lord*. And *many* of the Corinthians were baptized, but they too are all declared to have first believed. Many indi-

viduals, or a whole family together being baptized, makes no difference, for they were all believers; and the Holy Spirit has not set this down so particularly without a meaning; for here is no baptism of unbelievers, young or old, stated, known, or thought of, as ever intended in the Lord's will, word, and commission to his servants.

9. The household of *Stephanus*, 1 Cor. i. 16, has been referred to in favour of infant sprinkling, with a "perhaps there might be some little children in the family." But this is but a poor lame shift to evade truth for a fleshly purpose, in a manner that every honest man ought to be ashamed of; for so far as the divine text goes, and there is no authority to go any further, it is evident that this *whole* household is included among the *many* Corinthians who believed. For it is particularly written of this house, "Ye know the house of *Stephanus*, that it is the first-fruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints," 1 Cor. xvi. 15. This testimony is divine and can only apply to believers and lovers of Christianity, without affording the least plea for infants, or any one, to be baptized without the faith of Christ; and with all the ado and noise that has been made about whole households being baptized, as a plea for infant sprinkling, it is not a little remarkable that the Holy Spirit has been so particular in stating that they were *all* believers, that the greatest violence must be done to divine testimony to include any one but believers in any one of the households described; for all the statements are in too exact accordance with, *If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest*, Acts viii. 37, to admit of a reasonable supposition to the contrary; but prove that my conclusions on the sacred texts are forced, unfair, and unjust, and I will yield, but until then I feel it my duty to defend.

10. The testimony recorded that John baptized *all* Judea, and *all* the regions round about, has been referred to and taken up as an argument to support infant sprinkling, "because," say they, "if John baptized *all*, then *infants* must be included." But all *individually* are neither stated nor intended, but *all sorts* of characters, high and low, from *all stations* in life, *places*, and *parts* of Jerusalem, Judea, and the regions round about. For the *Pharisees* and *Sadducees* were not included, and

they were a part of the *individual all*; and the *nature* of a Pharisee or of a Sadducee is as fit, without the grace of God, for the ordinances of God's house as the nature of a *child* is without grace; or if not, pray tell me wherein lies the difference. And if a child without the quickening and enlightening grace of God in the heart, be a proper subject for the immediate ordinances of God's spiritual kingdom, what graceless character is there upon the whole earth that is not so? But if the Pharisees and Sadducees could not be admitted by this great and perfect modeller of baptism, immediately sent from God, without the testimony of repentance towards God, how and by what authority is it that infants are now to be admitted without it? unless you mean to say that infants are proper subjects while infants, but that if not baptized then, and they live and grow up, they are not then to be baptized unless they repent. And if this be your meaning, say so; but do be so kind as to bring us your authority from the holy Scriptures. Some people have considered there to be a preferable difference in the infants of believers, and that they, exclusive of other infants, are proper subjects for baptism; but whatever may be the secret will of God concerning them, yet as infants in the flesh they are no more scripture subjects for baptism than the infants of the untamed savages. For the *sanctification* and *holiness* mentioned in 1 Cor. vii. 14, are merely matrimonial and of filial legitimacy in moral regard to society, and not spiritual in regard to the kingdom of God, by the regenerating work and sanctifying power and grace of the Holy Spirit; for that which is born of the flesh is flesh, be it of whose ever flesh it may; and graceless, faithless, and unregenerate flesh and blood, without new-creaturehip in Christ Jesus, *cannot inherit the kingdom of God*, 1 Cor. xv. 50; having no qualification for it, nor consequently for those ordinances which rightfully and alone belong to the heaven-born subjects of that kingdom, whereby for them openly to declare their separation and call by the effectual grace of God unto that kingdom, their hopeful attachment in heart and soul to the King on the throne of that kingdom, and their allegiant submission to his government and laws; and, therefore, that there went out unto John *all* the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were *all* baptized of him, is no argument

for the baptizing of any unbeliever, and so not for infants without the manifest grace of God ; because it is added, *confessing their sins* ; so that the *all* does as much apply to the *confessing*, as to the baptizing, as there were none baptized without it.

And further, if *John* baptized all individually and numerally, pray where did our Lord get his subjects within the space of three years and a half, or in less time, in the very same neighbourhood? because Jesus *made*, and his ministering disciples *baptized more disciples than John*. John iv. 1, 2. On this we may observe two or three things, and 1. Here is nothing intimated of a difference of baptism, but a oneness is fairly implied ; for as full proof of this, Christ and his disciples were preaching and baptizing in *Judea*, at one and the same time that John was baptizing in *Enon*, John iii. 22, 23, and which shews that it was one and the same ordinance, and in the very same way ministered in both cases without a jar. And this is also very evident from the tale that was brought to John, saying, *Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bearest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all come to him* ; for had there been any difference, that would most surely have been observed. Ver. 26. 2. That it was *water baptism*, with our Lord, as well as with John, is most evident ; because Jesus baptized not, but his disciples did all that was done in this baptizing, and they never had the power nor authority to baptize with the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Ghost was not yet in that way given ; because that Jesus was not yet glorified. John vii. 39. 3. However, many were baptized by the disciples in the presence of their Lord, their being *all made disciples*, is very plainly set down as *preceding* their baptism. 4. And, as it is said, *more disciples than John*, and none are here baptized but disciples ; it is another intimation as plain as a declaration to any unprejudiced mind, that they were all disciples, who answered in substance alike to the requirement which *John* first made of those whom he afterward upon satisfaction baptized. And when you find a repenting, truth-believing disciple in the person of an infant, baptize it, my brother, according to the Scriptures, and we will hail the act, and bid you God speed.

11. While some have tried to make out a plea for infant sprinkling by the *all* that John baptized, others

have clearly seen that the baptism of believers or penitents only, has so much undeniable countenance in John's baptizing, and that it could by no way or art be turned about as any thing in favour of infant sprinkling, they have declared and tried to prove that John's baptism and Christian baptism are two distinct and very dissimilar things; and then detaching our Lord's commission to his apostles from any thing previous on baptism, they have argued that *that* commission in itself is too inconclusive to exclude the sincerity of different opinions, and that, therefore, infants may justly be included by those who think them proper subjects. But if the account of John's baptizing, was from Heaven, now ordered to be cut out of the Scriptures, and out of our minds, as no longer of any account, even then it would be sufficiently plain to any impartial mind, that the baptism of believers only, as a profession of faith in Christ, their reliance on him, and attachment to him as their only hope and Saviour, and their distinction from what they once were, and from the world that now lieth in wickedness, by the power and constraint of sovereign saving grace on their hearts, is the only baptismal ordinance of God in the New Testament. Believers in Christ only, are really Christians, either for the Church of God or for the kingdom of Heaven, and baptism is theirs only as such, whether in filial duty or in household privilege. And if our Lord have not spoken plain enough in his commission to his apostles for our Antibaptist brethren to understand the very thing commanded, or that any thing definite was at all positively commanded on the point, the apostles' united and uniform practice is plain enough to prove how they understood the Lord. He gave them the *law*, and they so plainly and with one heart practised out its meaning, as to make it an unaccountable difficulty for many of our opposing brethren to find art, cunning, and evasion enough to keep themselves ignorant of it; or to persuade other people that they are so. While we can read the apostles' practice and espouse the good plain sense of what we read, with peace and good comfort, without any such difficulty; and if asked, can give a plain reason, on the authority of divine text, for our belief and our practice.

However, it would be as easy to prove that a thing is not itself, as to prove from the sacred Scriptures that



John's baptism is not God's own immediately instituted ordinance of baptism for the whole of the New Testament dispensation of his Church on earth, without leave or licence to drop it, or alter it, in either *subject* or *mode*. For it is written, *All the prophets prophesied until John*. Mat. xi. 13. And, *The beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God*, Mark i. 1, starts with and fully includes the ministry and baptism ministered by John, as the beginning and as an inseparable part of the gospel dispensation of Christ to his Church. And it is also said in confirmation of this, that John was sent to turn *the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; and to make ready a people prepared for the Lord*, Luke i. 17; and which, as the Lord's servant, in the power of his master, he did, in the calling and baptizing in particular, most of the apostles of our Lord. John i. 35, and downward.

And although more divine light on the deeper subjects and extent of the kingdom of our Lord, was to follow, and did follow, by the peculiar gifts and communications of the Holy Spirit after the ascension of Christ, in the ministry of the apostles, than preceded it in the ministry of John, yet the *matter* was the same in its different *measures*. John was in the *dawn* of day, and they were in the beam, but of the same day. John was the Lord's burning and shining light in the land of Judea and in the regions there round about, and they were the Lord's light and voice to the ends of the earth. Mat. v. 14. Rom. x. 18. The very sort of applicants that John refused, the apostles would not dare to receive; and the very sort of candidates that John would receive, the apostles would readily admit. But if infants be proper subjects for baptism, then there are no improper ones, for one part of fallen, sin-contaminated, faithless, and unregenerated nature, as such without grace, had as much right as another, and the scrupulous discrimination of character for baptism, both by John and the apostles, on such ground, must be pronounced frivolous, unimportant, without divine authority, and worthless of our regard; but we might as well at once declare there to be no king in Israel, nor law for the Church of God, and that every man is right, that is but right in his own eyes, as to lightly esteem what in this matter is recorded on the sacred page. Neither John nor the apostles ever re-

ceived any one that can be found written in the Word of God, but upon their own personal testimony of faith and repentance, and which I have before sufficiently shown, and proved too, unless you shall be able to disprove the evidence with the plain text of God's Word ; and which we shall expect ~~you will do if you can~~, and if you do not do it, we shall conclude it is because you cannot ; and that your pretensions to any scripture authority for *infant sprinkling*, or right to baptism, and of sacred text, against exclusive *believers' baptism*, are all vain, for vain purposes.

12. Some of "the weak-minded," supposing that John's baptism was something different from baptism as ministered by the apostles, have considered that the Apostle Paul baptized at least twelve of John's disciples again, to bring them into *Christian* baptism, in Acts xix. 5, 7. But no such thing is declared or intended in the text ; and if he had done so, it would have merely raised a systematic question ; but the text would say nothing in favour of infant baptism, because they were all believers, ver. 2 ; and Paul asked them whether they had received the Holy Ghost since they believed ; meaning, (there can be no doubt,) the extraordinary gifts and endowments of the Holy Ghost, for the greater dissemination of the name of Jesus, because their *faith* was of the Spirit's ordinary operations.

But they not having received the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, and living afar off at *Ephesus*, they had not heard, and so were not at all informed of what the Lord was doing in that way, or had done ; and they said in regard to this, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost." And Paul asked them, "Unto what then were ye baptized ?" And they said, "Unto John's baptism," v. 3. Then said Paul, "John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. v. 4. When they heard they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus," and had satisfied Paul that they now rightly understood the subject so, according to what the apostles preached of that name, and the power of it by the Holy Spirit, Paul laid his hands upon them in the faith and power of that name, "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on

them ;” and to shew that this was in gifts and endowments, it is added, “ And they spake with tongues and prophesied.” v. 6. So that they were not baptized again, but were instructed on their baptism, and understood it more perfectly in the name of Jesus Christ, by Paul’s explanation, and then they were endowed with gifts. Neither is there any thing in this text to shew that John’s baptism was different in either *mode* or subject from that ministered by the apostles, but direct to the contrary. The pronoun *This* in v. 5, which so much affects the true sense of the reading, belongs to the translator’s additions, and not to the text, and is best thrown out, as it never had any business in. Having now stated how the matter is as plain to me as the fact of my own existence, that *believers* are the only Bible subjects for the ordinance of baptism, I shall now proceed to shew how it appears equally plain to my fullest confidence, that *immersion* is the only *mode*, or really baptism ; and that *sprinkling* a few drops of water on either infant or adult, is no baptism at all, nor any thing else, in the truth of the New Testament religion of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I am satisfied that the New Testament institution of baptism, is to immerse the whole body of the believer in water, and will state my reasons by the Word of God plainly considered for this satisfaction. Many of the most learned men have admitted that we have the best sense of the word used, but as there has been much cavilling on the original word to make it mean any thing, in order that it should properly mean nothing decisively, and as I am a plain man, and believe there is no danger in going by the plain word of God as we have it, that the Lord’s called people are generally a plain people, who need not to be puzzled with critical and endless disputations on a word in a language which it never was the gift of God they should understand, and as I write for the plain New Testament defence of soul sentiments of truth before God, I shall leave such disputations to abler hands, and to those that can make them answer some good purpose, and come to recorded *evidence* on the subject in hand ; and if that evidence, or my conclusions thereon, can with divine text be overturned, I shall be most happy to be corrected ; for the Lord is my witness that I only wish to be *right* ; to *believe* right, to

live right, and to die right, according to the word of God. And,

1st. Observe the *local evidence* ; for the *places* where John baptized are not named by the Holy Spirit of all truth without a meaning, at once adapted to establish the ordinance in the church of God according to divine will, commission, and command ; and as so to stand until revoked by the mouth of the Lord. And it is said of John, that the people were baptized of him *in Jordan confessing their sins*. Mat. iii. 6. And were all baptized of him *in the river of Jordan confessing their sins*, Mark i. 5. Now it is not said, *By*, or *Near* to, nor with water *Out of the river*, but *In the river of Jordan*. I cannot see how it can be possible to get all this into a bason, so as to make a dry footed baptism of it, or a baptism of those who are too young to talk. And John's baptizing in *Enon*, because there was *much* water there, John iii., will not with any fair or sound reason, hold good with the idea that he chose that place for the purpose of sprinkling or pouring, when but a few gallons of water would have been sufficient to sprinkle or pour upon more thousands of people than he ever baptized in all his life. But to evade this evidence for immersion, it has been said that *Enon* was only a place of *small rivulets*, and that John chose that place for the convenience of camels, and other travelling cattle of the comers to his baptism. But such an objection is too futile in itself, and too degrading to the sacred text, to deserve an observation, although for want of better, the opponents of believers' baptism may receive it as forcible reasoning ; for there was no occasion for John to go to such a distance from the people to *preach*, so as for them to want to take out their thirsty cattle in such a manner ; but suppose there was such an occasion from the peoples coming from many miles round to hear him, they could have carried water with them on their camels, as was usual in travelling through those parts where water was scarce. But the objection is too trifling for the dignity of the solemn word of God. And besides, John's *preaching* here is not even named, but his *baptizing*, and *because there was much water there ; and they came and were baptized*.

2d. The *practical evidence*. And Jesus, when he was baptized, *went straightway up out of the water*,

Mat. iii. 16. This shews that our Great Baptist Leader, Head, and Lord, was baptized by his high commissioned servant John, *In*, and not merely *with* water; for his coming straightway up *out of* the water, shews that he first went *down into* the water, and there is no evidence that he was baptized *in a different way* to all the other candidates, so that they all went *down into*, and were baptized *in*, and not merely *with* water. And that they should go down into the water simply for the purpose of having a little sprinkled, or even poured upon them, is too unmeaning and senseless for the dignity of holy inspiration. And although our translators have been careful to give us *with water*, wherever they could, instead of *in water*, yet the subject is practically too plain to admit a reasonable doubt. *And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, &c.*, Acts viii. 38, 39. This is exactly in accordance with our Lord's baptism, and that of all John's candidates, as before shewn; and which is evidence as clear, and unequivocal as evidence need to be, that the will of God on the *mode* of baptism, is immersion, and was clearly understood so by the inspired servants of God, and that they all understood it perfectly alike, and that *that mode* was but *one*, and was that of going down into, and of baptizing *in water*, in a manner most self-consistent with the minister and the candidates, going both down into the water for the only right and proper ministration of it; and which practice must most naturally carry out the sense of the word used, to the fullest acceptation of, to *dip*, or immerse. And I will undertake to say that there is not one opponent to believers' immersion in this whole kingdom, but who would consider that the utmost violence was done to reason, the letter of common law, the spirit of equity, and the clearest analogy of things, if his right to an estate was disputed on no better grounds, than can be found against evidence so good as this is for immersion; and wherever interest, or disinterest, are any guide to a conclusion, *truth* is disregarded; and interest sought at the expence of truth is best never had; for God is true, and truth only will stand in his sight.

3rd. The evidence of *Figurative representation*. And,

1. Our Lord compares his sufferings and death to

baptism, saying, *I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!* Luke xii. 50. He was more than *sprinkled* and *sprayed* with afflictions, misery, and death; for he was enveloped, immersed, overwhelmed, surrounded, and wholly covered with sorrows and woes; to magnify the holy but every way violated law, to honour and satisfy the every way insulted justice of God, and to redeem and purify an every way ruined and sin-contaminated church; that he might bottom the counsels of hell, and all the works and powers of darkness, with complete defeat, overthrow, and destruction; and the counsels, purposes, and promises of heaven, with perfect fulfilment, faithfulness and honour; to the glory of God the Father, the full establishment of the Holy Spirit's inspired witness of him, to his own eternal praise, and to the peace, safety, and final advancement into heaven and endless life, all the chosen in Him. He was baptized in *reproaches*, Luke xxiii. 35, 36, saying, *Because for thy sake I have borne reproach: shame hath covered my face*, Psalm lxix. 7. He was baptized in *sorrow*, saying, "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," Mark, xiv. 34. "Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy water spouts; all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me," Psalm xlii. 7. "I am come into deep waters where the floods overflow me," Psalm lxix. 2. He was baptized in *bloody sweat*, "and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground," Luke xxii. 44. The ground was sprinkled but he was immersed, saying, "I am poured out like water, all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax, it is melted in the midst of my bowels," Psalm xxii. 14. He was baptized in *darkness*, "And there was a darkness over all the earth; and the sun was darkened," Luke xxiii. 44, 45. "And he cried with a loud voice saying, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Mat. xvii. 46. He was baptized in *death*, and in the *tomb*, saying, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption." Psalm. xvi. 10. "And having said this, he gave up the ghost," Luke xxiv. 46, "and he was laid in a sepulchre, wherein never man before was laid;" v. 53; "and he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." 1 Cor. xv. 3.

The above are not so many baptisms, but the vast as-

sociation comprised in our Lord's great baptism, which he endured, to spoil, founder, and for ever to sink the powers of darkness and of death, to establish righteousness in the vindication of the legal and equitable rights of the throne of heaven, and to fit out, and float in full sail, all his beloved church, above wreck and danger, on the broad rivers and streams of salvation, safe for final and endless harbourage in God, life, love, and rest. Isa. xxxiii. 21.

Our Lord called his sufferings and death a baptism, in allusion to his baptism in the river of Jordan, and doubtless, that was because there was that in the mode and process of water-baptism that stood as a fair figure and representation of his overwhelming sufferings and death ; and that these latter answered to the former as the substance to its own true shadow and sign. In Scripture baptism there is a going *down into*, and a coming *up out of* ; and our Lord went down into his great redeeming baptism as one made sin for us, and came up out of it as the Lord our righteousness. He went down into his baptism as a poor subject, paying a small tax, and came up out of it as the King of kings and Lord of lords. He went down into his baptism as one made under the law, and came up out of it as the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. He went down into his baptism as one subject to the covenant of works and ministration of death, and came up out of it as the surety of the better covenant of life and peace, and as the high priest for ever in the ministration of life. He went down into his baptism as a bondsman involved, and came up out of it as one made perfect through suffering, to the honourable cancellation of all hand-writing against us. He went down into his baptism as one laden with the mortality of millions, and came up out of it as a quickening spirit having immortality for millions. He went down into his baptism as a son of Adam, and came up out of it as the Son of God, with power in truth and love. He went down into his baptism as one so weak, so feeble, and so poor, as homeless, weary, and not having where to lay his head, and came up out of it as one having all power and majesty of heaven and earth, in grace and glory, judgment and salvation, whom death could not detain, nor hell withstand, nor heaven deny ; the brightest beam of heaven's beauty,

and the Father's glory; the living fulness of the Holy Spirit's saving testimony; the Bible's soul; the Gospel's life and charm; the strength of Israel's hope; the saint's sweetest way of full delight in a Triune God; the devil's awe; the angel's mysterious, but pleasing, wonder;—the all, and in all—and over all—and far above all—the perfection of heaven's bliss for ever and for ever to his ransomed millions redeemed eternally unto God.

Now, as our Lord did set forth this in his *water* baptism, as by an intended and most properly adapted figure, even so his walking in that ordinance himself, sealed it as a standing institution of religious worship to his believing people, to be observed by them in the same manner as ministered and observed in his baptism; and until there can be some reasonable doubt about what his water baptism, as the pattern, was as to mode, there can be no reasonable doubt as to what Scripture baptism now is as a true copy of that example. And as the apostles had this example so clearly and so largely before them, and ministered it after the same order in the presence of their Master, even to a greater extent than ever John did, it was no more necessary, for the making of the subject of baptism beyond all doubt plain and unequivocal, as to subject and mode, for our Lord to be more explicit in his last commission to them on their baptizings, than it was necessary for him to particularize every doctrine and truth in the gospel, to render unequivocal what the gospel was, when he gave them his last final commission to preach. For it was not a commission for them to do what they had *never* seen nor heard, nor was it a commission for them to do and say *contrary* to what they had seen and heard, nor was it a commission for them to *begin* to baptize any more than it was a commission for them to begin to preach, for they had now been doing both. And therefore it was that they should *continue* in the same preaching and baptizing, and carry their whole ministry in both as to matter, subject, and mode, into all the world; waiting first at Jerusalem, for power from heaven by the Holy Ghost to be able to do so. And if you cannot find plain authority for infant sprinkling from John's baptizing, our Lord's baptism, and the Apostles baptizing in the presence of our Lord, I am sure you will find no divine authority



elsewhere, for the apostles never afterwards practised any thing contrary.

2. Baptism is set forth under the figure of a *death*, *burial*, and *resurrection*. *Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ, were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into his death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection.* Rom. vi. 3—5.

Every unregenerate soul is dead in trespasses and sins, and is as one dead to all vital and true godliness; but when the quickening power of the Holy Spirit, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, is put forth upon the heart, the sinner dies to sin, as to his love of it, the dominion of it over his affections, and the unrelented pleasurable practice of it; so that wherein it was his element, it now becomes his pain; and like one dead to them, he must leave his wicked companions, his wicked and prayerless course, and all his self-righteous, Christless, carnal hopes. And now, while guilt lies heavy on his heart, with the terrors of a righteous God before his eyes, with no peace in his soul, no hope of life, no Christ in view; and, unable to associate one pleasing consideration with his sad secluded heart, he is like a body that is dead and *buried*, having no connection with society on the one or on the other side of the grave; until like the voice that bid Lazarus come forth, some almighty power of saving goodness reaches the heart in the Holy Spirit's testimony of Jesus, and when some light begins to break forth, and some discovery begins to be made of the great mystery of salvation by Christ and him crucified. And now as Christ becomes so apprehended, the heart becomes more dead to sin by the melting charms of his once bleeding but now reigning love, than before by the death portending terrors of the law; and leaving the dark abstraction of guilt and woe, the soul sinks into glad nothingness by faith in the death of Christ for his redemption; and his very soul's affections become entombed within the rent veil of the now-endearing Redeemer's flesh, while he rises into newness of life, and into the hope of eternal life by the power of the Saviour's resurrection and glory, under the sanctifying influence of

the great Comforter of souls and glorifier of Jesus ; to the glory of God the Father, who hath in covenant arrangement thus made the soul meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. Thus the soul is divinely led through a humbling, regenerating, and renewing course, in a greater or less degree of experience, as a member of the mystical body of Christ, in some distinguishing and conforming way of correspondence to the manner and meaning of the death and resurrection of Christ as the mediatorial and living Head of the whole body the Church. And now the whole hope of the soul is in Christ, as his entire destroyer of sin and death, his resurrection to life, his deliverer from all wrath to come, and his happy expectation of heaven and the glory of the heaven expected. Vital godliness is now possessed, Christ is formed in the heart the hope of glory, the love of God is now shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Spirit, the word of life is now gladly received, the gracious will of God is now declared in the soul's forgiveness and salvation, the soul is now created anew in Christ Jesus, and formed for the Lord, to shew forth his praise, to live for ever, to keep his statutes, and to walk obediently in the way of his commands, to confess him scripturally before men, according to the great change wrought in the heart, the matter, manner, and object of faith and hope, and as expressive of the deepest obligation to live to God by the mercy obtained at his hand, in the gift of a new heart, a new life, with faith, hope, comfort, blissful prospect, and all things new, by the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord. For when the soul is quickened into the *life* of faith, it is called unto the *obedience* of faith, made light in the Lord, to walk in the light of the Lord ; and the truth of the Lord is the light of godliness, and his written word only is the divine rule of obedience. God's ordinances in his Church are an external and visible drawing of the hidden, spiritual principles and mystery of godliness ; and do as truly resemble as shadows to their own bodies and as figures to their true substances ; and thus the believer's death to sin and resurrection to the life of righteousness by the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, is set forth in believers' baptism, and as there is no other destruction of death and sure seal of eternal life, either for or in the soul but Christ, dying and rising

as the surety of the covenant of life and peace, this is set forth, and faith in the truth of it is declared by baptism; and as the ordinances of God are institutions of worship, so, in baptism the Lord is externally confessed and worshipped according to the hidden truth of God in Christ Jesus, and in the soul's state by grace. And all this the apostle with sufficient plainness sets forth in our text, saying, *We are buried with him by baptism.*

Now as to the *mode*, sprinkling will in no shape whatever agree with the representations by baptism in this text, while nothing is more happily adapted with ease, and without subtilty or cunning evasion, than immersion, as a figure or sign, to express the plain truth of things signified. And as to the *subjects*, they are addressed as the subjects of *personal godliness*, dead to sin and risen to newness of life; and no infant can be known to answer to this character, nor is it presumed that they do. And thousands of sprinkled babes grow up, live and die in their sins, ignorant of God and haters of all true godliness, and are never known to be the subjects of the quickening, distinguishing and saving grace of God. In Christian baptism the subject is *planted together in the likeness of Christ's death*; but there is nothing in the sprinkling of infants that can justly be made a sign and profession of this. And so by what authority on the face of *this* text they can be sprinkled or baptized any way, I cannot conceive; and what it can mean as to any thing of religion when it is done, I cannot make out by any one text in the whole Word of God; for it cannot on the part of the *subject*, be a confession of sin, or a profession of faith in Christ, or be any act of worship and obedience, or any outward declaration of inward attachment to the name and cause of Christ in the hope of eternal life, by the power and witness of adoption by the Holy Spirit on the heart, as the meaning and intent of scripture baptism is. It makes no change in the child either at the time or ever after; it qualifies for nothing of godliness, it entitles to nothing, it forms no vital union or connection with any thing spiritual, it excludes no evil, it secures no good, it can be no key of after instruction in righteousness, by any one text in the Bible; the child never knows any thing of it unless afterwards told, and when told of it, it commonly cares nothing about it, or if it think any thing of it, then it reckons it a something for

heaven, without faith in the name of Christ, by the renewing and sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit on the heart, and without *that* all forms are nothing. To me sprinkling or the baptism of any one without a confession of sins or profession of faith in Christ and of the life of godliness in the soul, appears to be altogether a perversion of God's institution, and an invention of man, graceless and textless, and without God being without hope. And although we cannot search hearts, yet my confidence from the sacred Scriptures on the point is, that no minister has any Bible authority to baptize any person, young or old, but as he is satisfied for himself from the candidate's personal confession, that the life of godliness is divinely implanted in his heart.

Our brother Joseph Irons several years ago in the pulpit of Shouldham-street chapel, said on our text, "This is not water baptism, but the baptism of the Holy Spirit." He could not in these few words try in this way to destroy the undeniable allusion of the text, without at once confounding his own system, for he denies baptism being a figure of the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and a representation of faith therein; and contends that it refers as a figure to the coming and work of the Holy Spirit, and has laughed at baptismal burial as being most absurd; while to get rid of scripture baptism, he was obliged to have the work of the Holy Spirit compared to a *burial*; and in doing so he at once struck a dart through the liver of his own sprinkling system, because sprinkling is as contrary to any figure of a burial in the Holy Spirit's work, as it is of a burial in regard to Christ. But left to themselves some men will say any thing, or no man would ever dare to say in the name of the Lord, that the ordinance of baptism is not immediately alluded to in the figures of this text.

Nor would our brother Irons have ever dared to say that the *very same text* from the mouth of the Lord, recorded by two different writers, and by them worded a little different, have a direct opposite meaning. But he does say that the sense of Matt. xxviii. 19, is to *make all nations disciples by baptizing them*, (meaning sprinkling them), and then says, "Now I would ask, are infants a part of all nations?" while he says on the very same text from the mouth of the Lord, being the very same

commission to the apostles, Mark xvi. 16. "One would think it impossible for any man in his senses, to imagine it could mean *water baptism*." And he adds, "For here, baptism is as essential to salvation as believing." But this I deny as false and forced, for when our Lord stated the negative of salvation, he said not a word about the *not baptized*. And he gives the following as the meaning in *Mark*, saying, "The true meaning of the text is this; he that believeth, so as to prove that he is baptized of the Holy Ghost, shall be saved." *Jazer Vindicated*, page 18, 19. This is a daring rush through all the fair boundaries of sense, reason, and revelation; and is no more what the text intends to say on baptism, than it is that Lucifer is King of saints. Infidels have often reproached the word of God on the ground of the difference of the statement of the same affair by the different Evangelists; and we have contended that the difference is only in the form of wording, but according to the above, our brother Joseph gives them the very ground they seek to occupy. Because on *Matthew* he makes our Lord's commission to be that of making all nations disciples by baptizing, or rather sprinkling them with *water*, saying, "Who shall dare to limit the extensive command of our Lord?" And on *Mark*, he makes the same commission to be delivered without *one word about water baptism*, or the least meaning of any such a thing, at the peril of a man's *trembling* at saying it has. And in bringing 1 Peter iii. 21, to this place, in order to get over believers' baptism in that text, he reduces the work of the Holy Spirit to a mere *figure*, or figurative salvation, and not the putting away of the filth of the flesh. And what he says in the above place on *Matthew*, that all nations are to be made disciples by water baptism including *all infants*, with a "Who shall dare to limit the extensive command?" is by himself limited to *believers in Jesus and their infant seed* only, in his *True Church*. Page 48. But the above is not more out of the way than his saying, "I must have a thus saith the Lord for all I receive as a matter of faith," and then adds, "I earnestly contend for infant baptism," without one text to support it, although he has found appropriate scriptures generally through his book to other points. When I look at his work on infant sprinkling, and consider his other

wise noble sentiments on the great gospel doctrines of distinguishing and eternal truth, he appears to me in the comparison, to be the worst writer on infant sprinkling I ever met with ; except it be yourself, my brother, so far as you have made any reference to the word of God on the point ; but I would have made no reference to our brother Irons on these papers, if you had not brought him forward in your letter.

3. The apostle further speaks in allusion to baptism as a *burial* and *rising* with Christ, in Col. ii. 12, saying, *Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.* Here the headship, death, and resurrection of Christ for his church, and the believing soul's death to sin, and his rising into spiritual life, by the faith of the operation of God, is set forth by baptism, as by a fit and proper figure ; and for which reason only the word is used in the text. And there is nothing in either sprinkling or pouring that forms the least resemblance, or that can in any way constitute such a figure, or that can be alluded to as illustrative of the matter intended ; for you know that sprinkling a few particles of dust literally is no burial, nor can it with any true meaning be so called ; while immersion is a very plain and well adapted figure of burial and resurrection. And here is also, as in the last text, a personal association with Christ in the matter, but into which it is impossible for you to find an infant brought in its sprinkling, for it is written *Buried with, and risen with him.* And which comes directly to the point that I have before noticed, and shall again and again have to notice, namely, that baptism on the *subject's* part, is a worshipful act of obedience to God, a kind of whole profession of faith and of the religion of Christ altogether ; a public declaration of detachment from the world as it lies in wickedness, and of soul attachment in the humble hope of eternal life, to the revealed system of mercy and salvation through Jesus Christ crucified.

4. Baptism is set forth as a being *baptized for the dead.* For the apostle in contending for the truth of the final resurrection of the body, and the reality of that endless futurity of which the word of God so fully assures us, and which so deeply concerns the whole of our religion, our faith and our hope, but which some of the

Corinthians had denied, 1 Cor. xv. 12, 13, 14, he says, "But now is Christ risen from the dead," v. 20, adding at v. 29, *Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then baptized for the dead?*

Various have been the opinions of different persons on this text, but as a plain man I shall for myself set down my own plain thoughts upon it. And, 1. The ordinance of baptism is here set down as having an immediate reference to the resurrection from the dead, by the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ; and therefore it must be such as to have some resemblance thereof in the mode and process of it. 2. That there is a mental and moral engagement and exercise of the subject's own mind in regard to the resurrection as being really set forth in the ordinance of baptism; for to *that* the apostle makes his appeal. And that there is a profession made, of *faith* in the resurrection by the subject in his baptism; and which is that which gives weight and clearness to the apostle's appeal. And that to deny the resurrection, must be to deny the very mode, figure, and design of baptism, and the personal profession of faith thereof, made in their being baptized. And that no person can be a self-consistent Baptist to deny the resurrection, because in his baptism, that is the very thing that he professes and declares, by such a figure, to believe, and that baptism has no true signification in any thing else without it. And that the Corinthians were baptized on a consistent profession of faith, and were still firm in baptism; and the apostle reasons with them as such, because, while they denied the resurrection, and held baptism, they denied in *substance* on the one hand, what they held fast in *figure* on the other.

If their baptism had been only infant sprinkling, and not a figure of the resurrection, nor any profession of faith in the resurrection, the apostle never could have appealed to it to raise an argument from it; in defence of the resurrection upon their own profession. And had they been sprinkled only when they were infants, the apostle could never have swept them off their legs by their baptism, making it so self-contradictory to be Baptists, and at the same time deny the resurrection; because they might have pleaded an excuse, and said, that it was never done by their *consent*, nor even by

their *knowledge*; but that it was imposed upon them by other people; and that as it was not done as an act of their own profession, so they were under no obligation thereby; and that as it is without *benefit* in either sign or substance, and without godly fear by any command, so it is a mockery to meaning, and consequently can never be any scripture plea or argument for any thing in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

3. Relative to the seeming difficulty in the reading of this text, I am satisfied for myself to believe that the apostle here expressed himself in no other way, nor with any other allusion, than according to the analogy of faith, and uniform sense of the holy Word of God, both on the doctrine of the resurrection, and on baptism, by which it is signified, represented in figure, and professed. And that his saying, "*they*," when he meant the very people he was speaking to, was but a kind of *side-reflection*, more keenly censuring their error, and chastising them for their folly, than a more direct form of address, after the manner in which our Lord often treated the proud and foolish scribes and pharisees in his parables. And wherein they are said to *be baptized for the dead*, it is not *instead* of the dead, but *first*, for Christ, as for his sake who died and rose again, to whom they professed to give and surrender themselves in their baptism as his property, and not their own; his purchase, his right, and his care unto their everlasting life by the *merit* of his death and the *power* of his resurrection; and unto whom, as such, they professed in their baptism to bow in obedient hope, for the honour of his name, his praise, and his glory in the earth, and for the declaration of their faith in his name, as their once *dead*, but now *risen*, Lord and Saviour. But in all which they must be acting the part of very fools, if there were not, as they denied, any truth in the doctrine of the resurrection; and that they could do nothing with their profession in general, and more particularly so with their baptism, if the doctrine of the resurrection were not a truth. And, *secondly*, they were baptized for the dead in regard to *themselves*; that as baptism figures out a death and burial, prior to, but in immediate prospect of, and respect unto a resurrection from the dead, so they therein professed for Christ's sake to be *dead* to the wicked, vain, foolish, and perishing elements of *this* world, in



hope of resurrection to a more holy, happy, and better world to come, according to the gospel promises of God. And as they had signified this by their baptism as a figure, they must again contradict it all, and declare their baptism to be but in false profession, and themselves to be still in their sins, if, as they had said, there be no truth in the resurrection. Therefore, whatever may be said upon this text, it appears impossible to deny that baptism herein stands as a pointed figure of and profession of faith in the *resurrection*; and that for *that* reason only the apostle uses it as he does, upon their profession, as an argument in defence of that doctrine.

5. Baptism is compared to a *washing*, as it is written, "*Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins; calling on the name of the Lord.*" Acts, xxiii. 16. Natural water of itself, much or little, can never take away sin, nor do any thing towards it; but it is that element that is most simply adapted to set forth that which can and does. Sin has spread its uncleanness all over the soul, and to be saved from wrath to come, the soul must be all over washed from sin. And for this purpose, in the abundant mercy of our God, a *fountain* is opened for sin and uncleanness to the house of David, and to the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Zec. xiii. 1. Triune love agreed on the plan, and the fountain was opened with a sword, (ver. 7,) and in the sin-atonement person, sufferings, agonies, and death of our redeeming Christ, is where this wide, deep, perpetual, and, for us, happy opening of the perfectly cleansing fountain was made, and *the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.* 1 John i. 7. Now, this is more than a basin, out of which *partially* to wash, or to sprinkle either the face, the hands, or the feet,—washing no part at all; for it is a fountain in which to wash all over, and be savingly clean, every whit. John xiii. 10. For as far as sin has extended over the soul, sufferings for the *rights* of justice must be endured, and the fountain must, for the *faith* of the promise, the *honour* of Christ, and the *life* of his church, extend, cover, wash, cleanse, and make all clean for ever, or be of no avail at all for the kingdom of heaven, as no unclean thing or uncleanness can enter there; so that the Poet rightly sung—"Wash me, *Saviour*, or I die!" And as sin has spread its dire contagion all over the soul, every way, the flaming sword turns every way

in the claims of justice against it ; so that for the wicked devices of our heads the Redeemer's head was crowned with tormenting thorns ; for the lusts of our eyes he was blindfolded with contempt ; for the sinful words of our mouths he was smitten on the mouth ; for the pride of our countenance he was smitten on the cheekbone ; for the presumption of our lives he was dressed in a purple robe of derision and scorn ; for our far and wild wanderings, his feet were fastened with nails to the tree of death ; for our unclean doings his hands were pierced through ; for our nature's uncleanness he was thrust to the heart ;—he gave himself up to all this for his church, his sheep,—the people whom he loveth ; he poured out his soul unto death, and was more marred than any man :—

“ Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,—  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown.”

The curse for sin was borne, atonement was made, death was destroyed, the legal rights of inflexible holiness were vindicated, and thus the fountain for sin and uncleanness to the whole house of David, the mercy vessels of the whole election of grace, was righteously and mercifully opened in the blood-sweat and death of death sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And next follows the turning of the almighty hand of faithfulness, love, and life *upon the little ones* ; Zec. xiii. 7 ; that Jesus may see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied, Isa. liii. 11, and that the redeemed of all nations and tongues may come and see the glory of the Lord in their salvation. Chap. lxvi. 18. And when the Holy Spirit of all truth enters the heart, he convinceth of sin, the proud soul is rebuked, and his beauty fadeth as a leaf ; the voice of the Lord in his majesty is heard, and rottenness enters the sinner's bones ; Hab. iii. 16 ; weakness before the Almighty is felt to be in every part ; all human righteousness is discovered to be rags and filthiness only, and sin to be exceeding all human thought sinful ; and that to escape from the hands of the law is now found to be impossible ; the heart is now broken ; the righteousness of God's judgment is now admitted ; the sinner's mouth is stopped with guilt ; the soul is hedged in and undone ; and *now* is the day of salvation,—free grace is now to be magnified ; peace and good-will to man on the earth, and glory to God in the highest, is now to be attested, and the Lord alone to

be exalted. "Woe is me, for I am undone," says the soul: "Look unto me and be ye saved," saith the Lord. "Whither shall I flee," says the soul. "Come unto me," saith the Lord. "What shall I do," saith the soul. "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world," saith the Lord. "Mine iniquity is great," saith the soul. "Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool," saith the Lord. And at length, weeping for the mercy and favour proclaimed, discovered, and in a measure obtained, "Lord, unite my heart to fear thy name; Lord, teach me thy way; Lord, what wilt thou have me to do," cries the soul. "Arise, and be baptized," saith the Lord.

No power of grace, nor virtue of atoning blood depend upon ordinances, but it hath pleased the God of all grace to institute ordinances to represent the methods and matters of his grace, and thereby also to be confessed and worshipped. And thus *baptism* is God's institution to represent the opened fountain of soul-washing from all uncleanness; and for that reason and with such meaning, baptism is called a washing in that text. And in the act done in truth, there is, 1. A confession of the entire overspread of sin, that requires a fountain that will all over wash it away. 2. A public acknowledgment of that fountain which God hath opened, and an embracing it too. 3. A declaration of *faith* in this fountain, as the only one that hath virtue to wash away sins, and that it so stands as the only appointed way to cleanness, to life eternal, and to God. 4. A public declaration of soul *hope* of eternal life, by the abundant all-sufficiency of this fountain alone to cleanse and purify. 5. A grateful and obedient submission to the divine will, declared in instituted ordinances, to be observed by the children of his grace, to the declarative honour of his name, as the king and lawgiver of his Church, and as the God of salvation.

To take this text at all according to its plain and most legitimate sense, *believers* only can be the proper subjects, and *immersion* only can be the proper *mode* of representation. For you know that you cannot intelligently and with sound reason, say to an infant, *Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the*

*Lord* ; and yet there is not one text that I have treated on in these lines, that carries less in it on the subject than this ; and where you will find others in God's Word, which at all belong to the point that do, we cannot see, and therefore it will be your duty to shew us. And you know that *sprinkling* is not *washing*, and can neither stand for it, nor represent it. For if your *laundress* were but once, only to sprinkle your *linen*, instead of washing it, and bring it home so, you would not pay her for washing it, or if she obtained your money before you saw it, you would consider, that in her calling that washing, she had spoken a plain falsehood, that she had insulted your reason, and deceived, cheated, and robbed you ; for that in *that case*, sprinkling and washing would be so very dissimilar, as by no means to be one and the same thing, nor possibly capable of *standing* for each other, or of *expressing* or *representing* the same thing. And why should we force a meaning upon God's most holy word, that we should take as a *burlesque* upon our reason, to be put upon ours ? Let us herein act towards God by the most plain sense of his word, as we at least expect others to act towards us, by the common and uncontradicted sense of our words. Our baptism came from heaven in the ministry of John by direct commission, with its evident order of *subject*, *mode*, and *sense*, plainly enough practised out, as I have observed ; and why should we dance about all over the Old Testament, and twist the Scriptures into all manner of artful shapes, to get rid of that sense ? as has been done even to the triumph of infidels, who have said, " These theologians can turn their Bible about all ways, and make it speak any thing to carry a favourite opinion, and therefore, they cannot surely themselves believe the book to be divine." Our Lord has beautifully shewn the difference between the use of the *bason*, in the exercise of brotherly love, tenderness, forgiveness, and humility, as he commands among his saints, for their peace and good comfort one with another, and that of the *fountain* of himself, his blood, and his death, in which they are all over vitally washed and made clean every whit for the kingdom of God. For beside commanding them *to wash one another's feet*, he says, *If I wash thee not thou hast no part with me*. John xiii. So that water without grace in the heart is nothing to any one ; no, the Word

of God authorizes no other order than, first grace possessed, and then the water of representation observed; first grace, by blood and righteousness for *life*, and then the ordinance of water by and with the Word of God, for the obedience of faith in Christ, as the only true fountain of all washing for salvation represented.

We do not receive for truth all we hear, and sometimes the greater the words, the more proud flesh there is in them; for it has been said that, "It is grossly absurd to suppose that baptism represents the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, for then we should have two ordinances to represent one leading feature of the scheme of redemption." Jazer, page 95. But let it be kept in mind that our text does by baptism pointedly represent the washing away of sin, and as all fulness dwells in Christ, so the fulness of washing and purifying is in him; he is the only covenant and mercy fountain revealed, and his blood only cleanseth from sin, and he says, "If I wash thee not thou hast no part with me," and as the Spirit speaketh *not of himself*, but testifies of Christ, John xv. 26, xvi. 13, we consider it opposing a great truth of God, to deny our Lord Jesus Christ the headship honour of representation in the baptism of his believing members. The same *Christ*, but not the *same thing of Christ*, is represented by the two standing ordinances of representation. For a *fountain* will not make a *feast*, nor is it at all a proper figure for the staff and whole stay of life; nor will *bread* and *wine* make or represent a fountain, nor are they proper figures for *washing* and cleansing. And, therefore, observe *first*, all that appertains to washing, cleansing, and sanctifying by the blood, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, together with the soul's having passed from death unto life, from darkness to light, from *self* to *Christ*, from the *law*, as a ministration of death, to the *gospel* as the ministration of life, from legal *works* to *free grace*, from the *world* to the *church*, and from the dominion of sin and Satan into the kingdom of Christ, with newness of creatureship, life, and hope in him, to the glory of God the Father, by the regenerating, enlightening, and leading power, love, and unction of the Eternal Spirit, are set forth, declared, and professed in the believer's baptism; as an act of grateful worship, in faith and godly fear; and as a worshipful sign of the

belief and apprehension of such realities by the candidate ; and not as a prefiguration set up on a faithless, thoughtless, unconscious subject, of what we have no pledge will ever take place, and of what in thousands of instances, we never do see take place. And, therefore, to sprinkle a few drops of water on an infant as a sign of the Spirit's work, when we have no promise that *that* work will ever be performed on *that* child, is worse than childish ; it is sure to please carnal nature, because it is her own invention, but as it is without scripture *text*, so it is without scripture *meaning*. And *secondly*, all which appertains to the fulness of stay, staff, support, and comfort of spiritual life in Christ Jesus our Lord, without fail to the dependent believing soul, as the bread of life, the true bread, the bread from heaven, the living bread, the bread of God, the meat indeed, and the drink indeed, and the only soul eating and drinking by faith, the Bible knows, or that God has given for the believer's present and eternal salvation ; life is represented, figured out, and set forth to the believer, and professed by the believer, in the ordinance of *bread and wine*. And both these are the Lord's own ordinances of worship, and neither of them are less, and neither of them are more, having both alike the same authority, and both alike to be observed by persons within the pale of a profession of faith and godliness therein only. And *according to the Scriptures*, those persons who are worthy by the qualifications of grace for the one, are qualified for the other ; and those who are not qualified for both, are qualified for neither. For if an *unbeliever* be unworthy to eat at the Lord's table, he *not discerning the Lord's body*, as the bread of life, nor worshipping him as such therein ; even so also any unbeliever is unworthy of baptism, he *not discerning the Lord crucified* as the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, nor worshipping him therein, by any newness of life through the power of the Holy Spirit, he being still a child in old nature's lap only.

6. The ordinance of baptism is called, *The baptism of repentance*, Mark i. 4, and *Baptism unto repentance*, Matt. iii. 11. This shews very plainly, together with the characters that *John* refused, that the only proper candidates, were the subjects of *repentance for their sins*. And as this is a whole and overwhelming work of God's hand on the heart, as forgiving love also is when made

known to the soul, so it is most properly and consistently expressed, signified, and confessed, by going down into, being overwhelmed in, and coming up quite out of the water in baptism, as God's own appointed ordinance of representation. And *unto repentance*; that is, unto that course of newness of life, that is a continual evidence of the soul having repented for and out of sin and impenitence, and which, to be declared and represented by the ordinance of baptism, it must be most consistent for that to be in that way that is properly adapted, solemnly to set forth and profess with godly fear, so great, so important, and so whole life affecting a change. And for this, a few drops of water sprinkled on the face, can form no representation, while *immersion* though despised is a just figure.

7. Baptism is called a putting on of Christ, *For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ*, Col. iii. 27. Here the ordinance of baptism is evidently alluded to and spoken of as the external, professional, god-fearing, and declarative garment of internal godliness. There souls were baptized into the saving love, grace, blood, and righteousness of our Lord Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, in the hope of eternal life; and by the ordinance of water baptism, as the Lord's own appointed institution of distinction and discrimination for his believing people, their persons were visibly baptized into his gospel name, truth, cause, and system, in devoted obedience, and public profession of belonging to him; according to the true intent of that ordinance. So that to be what they professed to be in their baptism, *they were the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus*. And they were so baptized into him, as that their interest in him, their belonging to him, and their obedient obligation and devotedness to him, were professed and signified by their baptism, which properly so signifying, must be by the immersion of their whole persons, in his name. And indeed the whole mystery of their *becoming* christians and the reality of their *being* so, is set forth in this ordinance, while the supper represents Christ as the whole sustenance of the life of faith. It may be objected that *water baptism* is not intended in this text at all, but it is not to be excluded because so much more than that is intended; for wherever the *word* is used through the

whole of the New Testament, it is in immediate allusion to that ordinance, as a proper figure and representation of the mystery, the matter and grace intended; and the word is never used but in allusion to that ordinance as its representation, and but for that ordinance, the word *baptism* would want some visible representation to give it intelligibility in spiritual things; and the greater the matter signified in the text under that figure, the more needful it is that baptism as a figure, and discriminating ordinance be what we contend it is, namely, *the immersion of the whole person*; for *less* could be no just representation of the great matters expressed by that figure.

But there are two or three things more that claim our notice in this text, and 1. As they are said to have *put on Christ* in their baptism, it shows that in scripture baptism, there is the consent, approbation, and profession of the *candidate's own mind* with understanding, because it is stated to be his own act of so putting on Christ; but an infant cannot be known to answer to this character, and therefore the sprinkling it cannot have any relation to the baptism alluded to in this text. 2. Christ is said to be *put on*, but an infant cannot be said, as to any gospel repentance, faith, hope, love, or profession, to put on Christ in any external figure of internal grace; and yet such is the baptism alluded to in this text. And the figure of putting on, is that of *a dress*, as an enlisted soldier putting on the king's livery, and wearing it in sign that he belongs to his majesty, and may be said to have *put on the king*, by having put on the king's *appointed figure*. And the figure may be seen in the inmates of a charitable institution, where the founder has willed a certain figure and make of dress to be worn; the inmates may be said to have *put on the founder*, by putting on his appointments, and wearing his will in their garment. But infant sprinkling is more like shaking a few unconnected shreds and clippings on the head, than the putting on a complete covering as a garment, as the figure is in scripture baptism. 3. As such dress is to signify that such persons belong to such king or such institution, so scripture baptism is to signify that the baptized belong to *Him*, and to his interest and establishment in whose *Name* they are baptized; and there is no given right of ministration to be found in the



scriptures, but upon this principle. For the unvaried rule of scripture is, *If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest, and he that believeth shall be saved, being of the Lord's household of faith.* We cannot account for hypocrites, deceivers, and false professors, nor are we accountable, but it is only on the principle of this interest satisfactorily **professed**, that the right of ministering baptism stands in the scriptures as an ordinance of God. If I am herein wrong, according to sacred text, scourge me with a whip of small cords; and if not, submit.

8. Scripture baptism is the answer of a good conscience. *The like figure whereunto, baptism, doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.* 1 Pet. iii. 21. The apostle in the preceding verse speaks of the ark, wherein eight souls were saved by water. And this he represents as a *figure*, and a similar one to baptism, or that baptism is a *like figure*; for their going into the ark and being shut in there, was to the world, and to the order of things in which they had lived therein, as though they were *dead and buried*; and their coming out of it, into the *new* state of things, no more to unite with the old world, in the old order of things, was as a resurrection from the dead in a figure; as the apostle Paul also treats on baptism, Rom. vi. 3, 4, 5. No infant sprinkling, nor unregenerate baptism, can possibly in any way compare with this figure. And stated as baptism is in this text, any man must be as wilfully hard as *iron*, to say that, "It is grossly absurd to suppose that baptism represents the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ," and that "The only design of water baptism is, to represent and prefigure the baptism of the Holy Ghost." For the apostle Peter says, *The like figure whereunto, baptism, doth also now save us, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ*; as all the rest of the verse is a parenthesis of explanation, of how and in what sense salvation is by baptism; shewing that baptism here meant, is *not enough* for the work of the Holy Spirit on the heart, because it is *but a figure*, and that it is *too much* for infants, because it is the answer of a good conscience. But observe, 1. *A good conscience*, for this describes the proper subjects for baptism. A good con-

science before God, is the fruit of saving grace in the soul, and is the peculiar property of the heaven-born blest man of God. It is an enlightened, humbled, tender, cleansed, sober, honest, hopeful, peaceful, obedient conscience; by a heart-felt sense of the power, goodness, promise, and blessing of the grace of God; in the person, righteousness, death, resurrection, and glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. And the preceptive will of God as the God of all grace, declared by his revealed institutions, is an *appeal* to such good conscience; and as baptism is one of the Lord's preceptively enjoined institutions, a practical observance thereof is the obedient answer of a good conscience towards God thereby. 2. We are said to be *saved by baptism*, but this is only in a figure of and in regard to, the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. For water, *not taking away the filth of the flesh*, represents it done by the *death* of Christ, and points out also our hopeful way of resurrection to life eternal, by his resurrection, as the gloriously risen and living Head of Zion; and in which sense only salvation is here attributed to baptism. But, 3. The utmost violence must be done to the common sense of words to affirm that the apostle doth not here set down baptism as representing, pointing to, and having immediate regard to the resurrection of Christ, and as standing so as a figure to the believer; and that so, *less than immersion* cannot be a *like figure* to the ark, nor a proper representation of the things signified. 4. That the ordinance of *water baptism* is here intended, is evident, because it is said to be a *figure*, that *doth not* put away the filth of the flesh, and the work and influence of the Holy Spirit is *more* than a figure, in every point of operation on the heart, and takes away the filth of the flesh too, by an application of the precious blood of Christ to the conscience. 5. *This Baptism* is with the candidate's *own* good conscience, and therefore it is too much for *infants* to express, or ministers to require of them, or of any but a believer. 6. Nor is this a baptism of the *minister's speculation*, to prefigure what possibly *may be*, and equally what possibly *may never be*, and for which there is no personal evidence that it *ever will be*, namely, the work of the Holy Spirit on the heart, and that the subject may have a good conscience; for this is the *answer* of a good conscience; and therefore a good conscience *precedes*

baptism, as a qualification for it, whereby to give such an answer in it. 7. The apostle here speaks of baptism in round and impartial terms, without the least sign of any note of restriction to signify that merely in some instances, baptism is the answer of a good conscience, while in other instances, it is allowable, and is equally a scriptural and right observance of this institution of the Lord, and that the designed ends thereof are equally answered, when it is any thing but the answer of a good conscience towards God; there being on the part of the subject, no conscience whatever concerned in the matter; nor even a possibility of it that we know of. *Here is no applying water to the infant seed for baptism; no, here is no place in this text for that popery, and universal contradiction to the distinguishing character of the New Testament, new birth, new creatureship, and personal religion of our Lord Jesus Christ, alone by the quickening power of the Holy Spirit on the heart of the chosen and sanctified in Him. Infant sprinkling has no relation, connection, or acquaintance here at all; but is altogether a stranger and unknown; and must remain so till the unconscious can act out the answer of a good conscience towards God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

9. The truth of the first believers in the New Testament dispensation being *immersed* in water, and that nothing less than that was their baptism, has been too plain and evident to be denied by some, who have nevertheless followed the practice of infant sprinkling; and to reconcile this contradiction, they have considered that immersion was then necessary, and very evidently most proper, and that for *two* reasons. *First*, because it was *the introduction of the new dispensation*. But baptism is not the mere sign of a new dispensation, but of personal newness of heart towards God by the quickening power of the Holy Spirit into newness of life by faith in Christ Jesus. Baptism is a New Testament ordinance to the end of time, and there is no authority from the Lord to make less of it at any time, than was made of it at the first, any more than there was of the Old Testament ordinances of God, until the death of Christ. And so much was made of baptism at the first as an ordinance of public and distinguishing profession of godliness, that the whole of personal religion and reception of the truth

of God was characterized by it, in distinction from those who were despisers of the truth, and so were not baptized. And all the people that heard, and the publicans justified God, being baptized with the baptism of John. But the pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized of him. Luke vii. 29, 30. Water baptism will never make an infidel a believer, nor an enemy a lover of divine truth; but this text shews that those who are the proper subjects for baptism, are such only, as grace in the heart has prepared to receive and love the truth of God after their baptism, and to justify God, as wisdom's children do. A baptized stranger to vital godliness in the heart, is a hypocrisy and cheat among men; there being no such warrant or design in that institution of God. That which is a standing ordinance to one part of the New Testament Church of God, must be so, both in mode and matter, to the whole; for there is no partial line drawn, and the Church is one. For there is *one body*, and *one spirit*, by which that one body is animated into spiritual life; *one calling*, by which that one body is called unto the fellowship of the gospel; *one hope* of eternal life, which God hath promised; *one Lord*, as head, husband, and lawgiver, in whom the whole body is united, and to whom the whole body is subject; *one faith*, in which, and by which the one whole body stands; and *one baptism*, by which that *one union*, that *one life* in calling, that *one hope* of the promise, that *one faith*, in the *one Lord*, are all publicly declared and professed, to the glory and honour of the *one God and Father*, by the *one Spirit* of life, truth, love, and power. And our Lord's own baptism as *Head*, is example of this to his whole quickened and living body the Church to the end of time. Eph. i. 22, 23. ch. iv. 4, 5, 6.

And the *second* reason assigned is, because *many of the first Christians were converted from Heathenism*. But there can be no soundness in this idea, because natural circumstances can make no difference to the personal state of a sinner dead in sin before God, be of what nation or name he may, civil or savage. A *Pharisee* is as far off from God as a *Heathen man* is; a *Jew* is as much without God and without hope as an *Egyptian*; and an educated *Englishman*, although sprinkled when an infant, is as far off from God as a wild *African*, without the regenerating work and sanctifying power of

the Holy Spirit. *For I saw the wicked buried, who had come and gone to the place of the holy.* Ecc. viii. 10. *And though hand join in hand, the wicked shall not be unpunished.* Pro. xi. 21; ch. xvi. 5. Forms of religion put upon either infant or adult, without the love and power of godliness within, is but a mockery of that vital personal godliness that is only of God, entirely begins with new creatureship in Christ Jesus, and which only is for the kingdom of Heaven.

I have now written how it is that exclusive believers' baptism, by immersion only, is as plain to my mind as any one truth in the whole revealed gospel of God my Saviour; and that no other *subject* and *mode* is known in the New Testament, as the baptismal ordinance of God, and that baptism is an ordinance of confession, profession, obedience, and conscientious worship, on the part of the subject; and that none have any right to walk in it but such persons as are by grace qualified to attend to it in such a way; and that none but penitent persons were ever *intentionally* baptized by either *John* or the apostles of our Lord. And I do most solemnly declare that the commission, the command, the word, and the will of God, on exclusive believers' baptism, by immersion only, is as plain to my mind, as those directions are for the building of the Ark, the Tabernacle, and the Temple; and the living God be Judge between thy soul and mine, on your deadly accusation that I said in the pulpit, **WHAT I KNEW TO BE NOT THE TRUTH.** Having a few things more to say unto you, I shall now proceed to other sections of your letter.

NINTH. "*The preacher offered to pay the national debt, if we from the holy scripture produced baptized infants. He offered a real impossibility, for a supposed impossibility, and in that he was not wisenor honest neither; for no honest man will, at least ought, to put his hand to a bill he cannot pay when due. The 1 Cor. x. 2. tells me that many infants were baptized in, or rather by the sprinkling of the cloud and by the spray of the sea; you will be so kind as to forward the national debt by return of post.*"

1. I said I would pay the national debt of England in four instalments within twelve months, if infant sprinkling, as a New Testament ordinance, could be proved and supported by one single text in the word of

God ; and so I now say, to you and all infant sprinklers. And why do you not immediately arise and stop my mouth, if such a text can be found ?

2. You say, "*He offered an impossibility for a supposed impossibility, and in that he was not wise.*" This I did to expose infant sprinkling to public ridicule, by the Prophet's rule on another textless subject, (1 Kings xviii. 27.) until it shall be supported and approved as an ordinance of God, at least by the fair reading of one plain text in the sacred word directly to the point. And I did it also to rouse the souls of its admirers, either to find precept or precedent for it in the text of divine authority, or to give it up as a textless intrusion into the place of God's ordinance, and a perversion of his truth. And for this plan of speaking I have Bible example in Job xl. 6 to 14. And therefore it must be a vast deal more *unwise* for you to practise what you cannot support by any part of the Lord's revealed will, than it was for me to speak of the unmeaning thing which stands where it ought not, in the place of the Lord's enjoined ordinance.

3. "*Nor honest neither, for no honest man will, at least ought, to put his hand to a bill he cannot pay when due.*" It seems that you can much easier say all manner of bad things of me than you can refute what I have said, or find Scripture to support your more fleshly pleasing and fancied better way. I have done nothing in this affair whereby you should accuse me of dishonesty, for I only spoke out too plain and honest on the truth for error to live by. For my hand has been set to no such *bill*, as you have not delivered the required goods, my brother ; and you know that such bills say, *value received*. You have sent me something for a text ; but the sending that instead of what I ordered, looks as though you could degrade yourself to trifle with the word of God, insult his wisdom, the penmanship of the inspired, and what little sense I have, to keep your little Dagon on its legs. Let me receive the value above required, and then if I cannot maintain my credit, I will publicly confess myself a confounded Baptist, an imprudent and worthless insolvent, and a dishonest bankrupt, uncertificated to speak any more in the name of the Lord for ever.

4. Now, let every honest-hearted Bible believer hearken to and judge, of what my brother Bridgman

has adduced from the sacred book of God, to prove that infant sprinkling is a New Testament ordinance, to prove me dishonest, and to demand my above pledge, as having met my challenge. "The 1 Cor. x. 2, tells me that many infants were baptized in, or rather by the sprinkling of the cloud, and by the spray of the sea!" This is the only text brought to meet my challenge, and doubtless it is the nearest to the point—the best, and the most appropriate that my friend could find in support of infant sprinkling as a New Testament ordinance; and it has just as much to do with the point, as it has to do with how many particles of sand, strung as beads, it would take to reach from here to the moon, or with how many drops of water it took to make the flood in the days of Noah. For what the text does say of baptism, is for the distinguished people of God only, and that by immersion also; for they were baptized *in* the sea, and *in* the cloud, and not *by* either. But my friend says, "*Rather sprinkled,*" although the text never said, thought, or meant any such a thing; for it is taken, with other things, from the Old Testament, to warn and reprove the Corinthians, as a baptized church. But it would *rather* suit his taste best, it seems, could it be made to say that; and it now seems *rather* more palatable to pervert it into that meaning, against the common sense of its reading, than to take the good sense and mind of the Spirit, as it evidently stands; and that he would *rather* have people weak enough to take it for granted to mean *sprinkling*, than read the plain text for themselves, and follow the evident mind of the Spirit therein expressed: and this *rather* looks like a want of art enough to twist scripture about with that cunning, so as not to be found out in supporting infant sprinkling without one fairly quoted text. And my friend says, the text "tells him that *there were many infants baptized:*" but it must tell him what it never told any one else, and he cannot point out to me wherein it tells him so, either in sound or sense; for I am sure it tells me quite as much and as plainly, that there were many herds and flocks of cattle, and many kneading troughs baptized. Ex. xii. 32, 33. But the subject of the text is altogether an allegory, and the eternal Spirit of truth and wisdom has taken only the *fathers*, as the characters of the figure, carrying out the representation also in a

way, that I am sure must at once destroy all conclusions for infant sprinkling on these premises; saying, *And did all eat of that spiritual meat; and did all drink of that spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.* ver. 3, 4. But in order to consider this matter more closely, let us observe the following particulars:

1. The Israelites were as a body, a *figurative* people, and as such, were of God chosen apart and distinguished from all other nations and people on the earth; with the oracles and institutions of God peculiarly given to and set up among them. They were a figure and representation of the true church of Christ, of New Testament days, consisting of the chosen, redeemed, and personally quickened and called out of all nations, kingdoms, kindreds, and tongues. They in figure, represented no other, and these only, young or old, are the true and vital antitype. And in that figure it is said of them, "All our fathers were *under* the cloud, and all passed *through* the sea." And this the apostle treats as alike figure of the baptism of the true and quickened saints of the New Testament. And the *man-na* which they after this received, and the *water* which they drank out of the *smitten Rock*, the apostle sets forth as a like figure of the communion of baptized saints at the Lord's table; calling the Rock in figure, *Christ*, and the Manna, *spiritual meat*, and the water, *spiritual drink*. And this the apostle wrote to the Corinthians, as a church of baptized believers, who were at that time not very regular and consistent among themselves, but much to the contrary; to warn them of the chastising rod of God, which they might expect, if they laid not aside their follies, and more consistently observed the revealed will of God, in the privileges and obligations of their *antitypical* situation; as it befell their type, for their sins in the wilderness. ver 5. But this has nothing to do with *nature's* children, as such only, of any nation, or at any age, for they are not the antitype of the Israelites; but it has alone to do with the quickened and heaven-born *children of grace*; and this I think you must yourself admit, if you only consider how the Corinthians were reprovably situated at this time, and what was consequently the apostle's evident design in thus writing.



2. They were baptised *in the cloud and in the sea*. This baptism was a figurative burial and resurrection, for they were *under* the cloud, and all passed *through* the sea (ver. 1), and which was as a *covering* (Ps. cv. 39), and it was a perfect separation between them and the Egyptians (Ex. xiv. 20); and the waters stood as an heap (Ps. lxxviii. 13), and were as a wall unto them on the right hand and on the left (Ex. xiv. 22). And thus they were shut in as in a grave, and were to Egypt as those that were dead and buried; while their passing up out of the sea towards the *land of promise*, was as a resurrection to newness of life, with old things passed away, and all things become new. And they are said to be *baptized unto Moses*; that is, unto him as their acknowledged leader and conducting head; and into the doctrines he taught, the institutions he established, and the whole system he exhibited of distinction from all the nations of the earth—in the fear of the one God of heaven and earth, and in the hope of his promise; and which was in likeness of figure to the baptismal burial of a believer in the faith of Christ, and in allusion to which figure, baptised believers are said to be *buried with Christ by baptism*, and to be *baptized into Christ*.

3. The *all* that the eternal Spirit, by Paul, makes any mention of, as the only characters exhibited for our observation in this allegory, and which ought to govern our ideas as to the mind of the Spirit therein, relating to the baptism and the baptized in the text, are equally said to *all eat*, and to *all drink*, of the same spiritual meat and spiritual drink. Now it does not appear any way possible to find the antitype of this figure in sprinkled infants, for we can form no idea of their capability of eating and drinking of the spiritual things of the gospel of Christ. But as the Holy Spirit has stated the subject in our text, it comes exactly into our sentiment, that they who are qualified for baptism, are the qualified to apprehend, handle, and taste the things signified, and that they properly attend to the former, as a profession of faith and interest in the latter. And this also shews that all who are worthy of the ordinance of baptism, are equally worthy and proper subjects for the *table* of the Lord. And unless you can prove that the table of the Lord is for the faithless world at large, and not exclusively for the church of personally regenerated

believers, you cannot apply any thing in the figure of this text to nature's infants; as I have all along observed, that it is only where both ordinances are spiritually applicable, that either are to be administered, according to the plain sense of scripture.

4. Although the Holy Spirit says nothing about infants as forming any part of character in the intended allegory of our text, yet as they were with their parents by natural consequent of their literally leaving Egypt, I would say, for argument sake, let them have some figurative place in our ideas. And then they must be considered as a part of the distinguished congregation of God's Israel, and as such to have come out of Egypt; and this you cannot say of, nor apply to the mere infants of fallen nature, no, not even to the infants in a good man's house, for they are the babes of his nature and of his flesh, and not of his faith and spirituality. And therefore, the congregation of Israel, from the aged to the infant, could only represent the grace distinguished people and spiritual church of God; consisting of believers only, in the several degrees of little children, young men, and fathers. 1 John ii. 13. As this can say nothing for the sprinkling of Gentile infants, and no other text can be found in the word of God to say more, it is a gross perversion of the word of God, to apply what our Lord said of *believing little ones*, to the babes of nature, for the purpose of dragging in infant sprinkling in some way, as though both warrantable and beneficial, and to set all down as *worse than sea monsters* (Jazer Vindicated, page 25), who reject it for want of divine text to give it either *authority, sense, or benefit*; but who will all embrace it as soon as you, and our brother Joseph Irons, shall, with all your art, and his bluster, find one single text in the word of God, which the Holy Spirit ever intended for infant sprinkling—evidenced by any New Testament practice, recorded on the sacred page.

5. Not one, either young or old, of the whole congregation of Israel were ever once sprinkled or sprayed by either the cloud or by the sea, any more than they were all drowned and destroyed therein. And this I say, for the following several reasons—*first*, Because the waters were a wall on the right hand and on the left (Ex. xiv. 22, 29), and so were settled and quiet, as

a complete miracle of divine power and peace, and not in a state of disorder and convulsive agitation, so as to throw a spray over the thousands of Israel. And to say *sprinkled by the spray of the wall*, would sound so odd, that it would not be considered common sense, but for the purpose of expunging believers' baptism. *Second*—Because the waters were gathered together; the flood stood upright as a heap, and *the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea*. Ex. xv. 8. And there can be no spray from *congealed waters*, when they are bound together like ice, in solid mass, as though petrified. So that while there was perfect safety, there was no appearance of danger, nor any thing to marr the divinely-created beauty, majesty, and charm of their miraculous journey through the sea; of which they accordingly sung. *Third*—Because while the waters of the Red Sea were turned into rocky walls of salvation to the Israelites, they were waters of divine judgment and wrathful indignation to the Egyptians. And as the Lord had put a perfect difference between Israel and the Egyptians (Ex. xi. 7), not one single drop, any more than a destructive wave, of those waters of wrath to Egypt could ever fall on the head of the Israel of God; for that would have confounded the difference he had put between them. There is not, nor can there be, the least particle of God's condemnation on the wicked, that can overtake or fall on the head of them that are in Christ Jesus; and *without spray*, the finger of God distinctly pictured out this at the Red Sea, when a single spray would have spoiled the figure. *Fourth*—Because the *cloud* was not a common cloud of nature, and consequently not a *water* cloud at all (Ex. xiii. 21, 22); for it was a pillow of *fire* by night, and so it must very soon change to be a water cloud for the convenience of my sprinkling brother by day. But it was a cloud of *darkness* to the Egyptians, and of *light* to Israel; and it was God's ordinance of *separation* of his Israel church, from the Egyptian world. Ex. xiv. 19, 20. It was the abode of the angel of God's presence with his people, and was a perpetual pillow and cloud to them all their journey through the wilderness. Neh. ix. 19. And it was therefore a miraculous cloud, and full of spiritual figure, being a military hostile cloud to the hosts of the Egyptians (Ex. xiv. 24, 25), and a cloud

of sanctuary favour to Israel (Chap. xxxiii. 9, 10); herein representing our incarnate and all-glorious Lord and Saviour, who is to the world who lieth in darkness, as a root out of dry ground, without form or comeliness, a stumbling block and rock of offence, and the preaching of him, foolishness; while to his chosen, redeemed, and called church, he is altogether lovely, the true light, the wisdom and power of God, and consequently *precious*. *Fifth*—Because the Lord's promise was, that the children of Israel should go on DRY through the midst of the sea. Ex. xiv. 16. And this promise was strictly fulfilled, for the Lord *made the sea DRY!* ver. 21. *He turned the sea into DRY!* Ps. lxvi. 6. And the children of Israel walked upon DRY *in the midst of the sea*. Ex. xiv. 29. Yea, the children of Israel went on DRY *in the midst of the sea*. Chap. xv. 19. Now, from these considerations, and the plain reading of the sacred text, it appears that the Israelites were just as much sprinkled with frogs, lice, locusts, and all the other plagues and judgments that fell on Egypt, as ever they were sprinkled by the spray of either the cloud or the sea. But we live and learn, and learn something of one another, for unless I had been told, it would have never entered into my mind, that the *baptism of fathers* is the *sprinkling of infants*, or any authority for it.

6. All the congregation of Israel passed the baptismal ordinance of discrimination and separation from Egypt, before they came to the associate ordinance of communion among themselves, by the *manna* and the *water*, which the apostle keeps up so strictly in the order of the figure. Not one Israelite came any other way than *through* the sea, and *under* the cloud; and which in the figure, as the apostle has drawn it, contains all we contend for, as the only order known or to be found in the New Testament, of first repentance and leaving off the old things and works of darkness: then follows baptism, and then communion at the Lord's table.

TENTH. "*However, to be serious, the preacher was conscience that what he required of others he could not give himself, and that if we cannot (as we think we can) produce instances from the New Testament of infant baptism, neither can you produce one plain command, or one evident instance, for and of believers only to be im-*

*mersed; you are well aware it is not a matter of certainty, but of doubtful disputation; were it a matter of certainty, and a thing so plain that he who runs may read, it would be as evident to one man of common understanding as another."*

1. You say, *To be serious.* If you have not been serious, you ought to have been, my brother, and not to have trifled with the breathings of the Holy Spirit by Paul, as you have in the foregoing paragraph of your letter. If you have not been serious, you ought to have been, to charge me as you have in your letter with *sophistry, wilful lying, foolishness and dishonesty, &c.*, in my pulpit labours. If you have not been serious, I have, and whatever may be my natural mode of opposing what in my soul I believe to be of Satan, and not of God, or of commending what I believe to be eternal truth, the Lord is my witness, that I am no trifler with the scriptures, nor have I been since the quickening power of grace reached my heart in the year of my Lord and my God, 1812.

2. "*The preacher was conscious that what he required of others, he could not give himself.*"

I was conscious of no such thing, nor am I now; and the public shall be judge, whether I have not produced from the current testimony of the New Testament for exclusive believers' baptism, all that I ever required of you, for plainness only in one text for infant sprinkling. I was and am conscious that *believers* were baptized, and that *that* confession was required of them *previous* to their baptism, which gave God's ministers satisfaction that they were believers; and that upon such confession only they baptized them; and this fact you have first to deny in as plain texts of the word of God's truth, as I have stated it for a fact, and so remove it out of your way, before you can find any scripture place, name, meaning, breast, or bread, for infant sprinkling, admitting it was then allowable in the shape of an ordinance of God, with some benefit connected with it. And I was and am conscious that there is no spiritual relation between a believer's *faith*, and an infant's *flesh*; and that so there can be no relation between the believer's baptism, as an act of obedience and profession of faith, and the sprinkling of an unconscious babe; and that so they cannot be one and the same

ordinance ; and that as there is but *one* baptism, one of these must be wrong, and let that be expelled for ever that is without one either preceptive or practical text. And I was and am conscious, that as a confession of a vital change of heart to God was required in some instances, it is dispensable in no instance by any scripture example, to be the same ordinance. And I was and am conscious, that to make use of water for baptism on a subject known to be unconscious of what is done, or on any subject known to be without the grace of repentance, attaching some benefit and importance to the act, is putting water in a place that belongs only to the life, power, and interest of the saving grace of God in the heart ; and it is placing an importance to water *without the Spirit*, that the word of God has never done, and which is the great delusion of millions in what is called *Christendom*, and is a practical denial of the great leading and vital sentiment of the word of God, that no spiritual benefit from Christ can accrue to any soul by any act of man done upon him *without the Spirit of Christ be in that soul*, and that *except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God, or enter, to receive any spiritual benefit whatever therein*. And it is making that of a *little water*, which we, who believe in the baptism of believers only, have never once dared to think of making of *much water*.

The necessity of repentance and faith on the part of the candidate as accompaniments to baptism, is what most, if not all, national churches have always been obliged by the plain word of God to admit, ever since they have had a being, and as they could not well be national churches without taking in infants, and it appeared too much to presume that infants had repentance and faith in themselves, or that they could make the necessary confession according to scripture, while these were nevertheless seen to be indispensable—they have got persons in the name of *sureties* and *sponsors*, or *god-fathers* and *god-mothers*, to be foolish and wicked enough, in their blindness, to stand and falsely vow and promise, as solemnly as on oath before God, that the child shall be a penitent and godly believer when it grows old enough and big enough. This is admitting that repentance and faith are indispensable in baptism, but as here are *subjects* brought in that the scriptures

know nothing about, so, to look any thing like self-consistent, here is obliged to be a providing for *repentance and faith*, in a way that the scriptures know nothing about. And supposing to meet the objections to this key-stone in the arch of popish mockery of all vital and true godliness, this spiritual wickedness in high places, Mr. A. Bedford makes the following blind and untrue defence, saying, "Little children are believers by the faith, which either of their parents possess, imputed to them." *Scrip. Cron.* page 322. Now, if you will find but one text of scripture, as plain and as pointedly expressive of infant sprinkling, as the many are, that are set down on these papers, for believers' baptism only, as a New Testament ordinance, consistent with the spirituality of the gospel kingdom of God, you will do all that I required of you, and shall then receive my concession.

3. "*And if we cannot (as we think we can) produce instances from the New Testament of infant baptism.*"

If you think you can produce instances from the New Testament for infant sprinkling, why has not the thing been honestly, and as a matter of duty, done long ago, and the question settled? Mere human *thinking* as a point of conclusion, without better evidence, is but a traitor, and is as partial, treacherous, and delusive, as Satan himself is, and it breeds its thousands of ills in its thousands of ways; but as a labourer in search of evidence, and as a handmaid to acknowledge on fair and reasonable evidence acquired, and subject to that evidence, *thought* is good, and such a thinking man is wise and useful too. But *Saul* of Tarsus thought he ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus, and so he persecuted the saints. And *Abraham* thought the fear of God was not in the land, and so he denied what God had joined together. Gen. xx. 2, 9, 10. But *David* said, *I thought on my ways, and turned my feet to thy testimonies.* Ps. cxix. 59. While people can be kept thinking as you think, without requiring evidence for decision of conduct, they can hold infant sprinkling just as quietly as ignorantly; but it is all vanity, unless it can be found in God's revealed thoughts; and therefore it is no wonder that you should be so concerned about the weak minded of your people when I spoke out so plain.

4. "*Neither can you produce one plain command, or one evident instance for and of believers only to be immersed.*"

In reply to this requirement of plain command with evidence, I would say, *John's* being sent of God to baptize, and his baptizing consequently, is plain command, and his rejecting all who could not produce the satisfactory evidence of repentance, is plain evidence for believers only; and *John's* baptizing them in the river of Jordan, is plain evidence for immersion, and the total silence about infants on baptism, and on all others but believers, is plain evidence that infants never had in scripture days any thing to do with baptism any way, and never would have been brought into the professing church, if but *one tenth* of the evidence had been waited for from the word of God, that we have therein for the baptism of believers only. *Annanias* had a plain command to go and command *Saul*, as a praying man and chosen vessel, to be baptized, *calling on the name of Lord*. Acts ix. *Peter* had a plain command from the Lord to go to the house of *Cornelius*, to tell him what he ought to do, and *Peter's* command of them who were in the house, to be baptised, was as plainly of *believers only*, on whom the Holy Ghost had descended; and his question as evidently excluded all else. Acts x. *Philip* had a plain command to go and minister to the eunuch, and he has plainly declared to him, that he had no authority to dare to baptize him but as a believer: and it is equally plain that he took the eunuch down into the water to baptize him, and this is plain enough that he was immersed; unless in the light of all fair reasoning and conclusion on other subjects, we argue and quibble ourselves on this, into a figure far below childishness. And it is equally plain that no evidence whatever can be adduced from the word of God, that there was more than *one* mode of baptizing, any more than there is of more than one qualification of subject, or of that being less than the grace of God vitally in the heart.

5. "*You are aware it is not a matter of certainty, but of doubtful disputation.*"

I am aware that believers' baptism is a matter of *disputation*; but I am not aware that it is a *doubtful matter*, if the sacred text and self-consistency in spiritual



things be to decide. I know it is not so with my soul before God, nor has it been for all the years that I have read the scriptures for myself with no man's eyes but my own, and have been induced by the great and tender mercies of our God, to take my great *Master's* rule of *thus it is written, and thus it behoveth me*. But you seem fond of anticipating my mind, by the true state of your own, for it is evident that the subject is doubtful with yourself. But if you omit believers' baptism, because it is doubtful, with so much evidence as it has in sacred text, how is it that you can practice infant sprinkling, when by the same rule it cannot be better than doubtful, having no account upon the sacred page? This looks like inclining to *side* instead of *centre*. You fully acknowledge the poor plight that your own soul is in as a *minister of the New Testament*, by confessing that the revealed will of God, touching the way of obedience in one of his most public ordinances of the gospel dispensation, is with you but a matter of *doubtful disputation*. You, as a public minister, are a professed *guide*, and a *pilot*; but with yourself it seems the way and the seas are but doubtful. A doubtful guide in soul matters of godliness, is rather a queer thing my brother; but your confession shews, however, that your infant sprinkling is but like a poor culprit at the bar, whose miserable existence hangs only on the slender thread of a disputed doubt. But there is something which strikes me very solemnly from your remark, because it goes to say, that while the God of all grace hath revealed his gracious *will* clear enough for the forgiveness, the peace, the hope, and salvation of poor, lost, and miserable sinners, that they should shew forth his praise; his *will* as to how he will be feared and worshipped as the King of kings, and God of so great a salvation, is not revealed more connectedly and uniformly clear and decisive than a *doubtful disputation*. But although it may appear so to you, it evidently is not so in reality; because there was a time when they that believed were of one heart and of one soul, (Acts iv. 32) according to the Lord's own promises, saying, *I will give them one heart, and one way, that they may fear me for ever*. Jer. xxxii. 39. And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new heart within you, and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and

will give them an heart of flesh, that they may walk in my statutes, and keep mine ordinances, and do them. Ex. xi. 19, 20. And the apostle commends the Corinthians because, notwithstanding their contentions, they had kept the ordinances as they were delivered unto them. 1 Cor. xi. 2. And so there must have been a sufficiently clear and evident a standard of divine will originally in the ordinances, for all them that believed to be of one heart and of one soul therein. And although seas of corruption have rolled in their floods of hostile and crafty disputation, to so great a perversion of this ordinance, yet the sacred text on the subject is not in the least doubtful now more than then. For if there be any partiality in the translation on this subject, it is turned all on your side of the question, because the translators were not baptists themselves, and it was the side also on which the court that employed them wished them to bend all they could, by leaving some words not translated, because that would have otherwise spoke too plain for the times on our side. But the will of God is plain enough on the subject, for us to know and to be satisfied, that believers' baptism only, and that by immersion only, may be disputed till time ends, but cannot be denied by one fairly read passage in the sacred word; it is like its great *Master, it cannot be hid*; nor its opposite supported by any one fairly read text on the subject of baptism. The baptism of believers by immersion only, cannot be twisted into a commendation to the *passions* of man, nor to the *fine feelings of human nature*; and therefore every method of art devisable has been had recourse to, to get rid of it; so that if you wade through the thousands of streams of human argument and far-fetched subtleties, instead of coming impartially to the scriptures, in their self-interpreting order, you may well be *doubtful*, while the subject is in itself *doubtless*. Put not confidence in a guide. Mic. vii, 5. Cease from man, whose breath is in his nostrils; for wherein is he to be accounted of? Isa. ii. 22. Our Lord's whole life was, *As it is written*, and *That the scriptures might be fulfilled*. And the apostles' preaching was, *As they had received of the Lord*, and *According to the scriptures*. And our orders are to search the scriptures, to study, and to preach the word. And when we have the written word in its most

uniform and agreed sense for what we believe, preach, and do, we have then some good reason for our sentiments, and meaning for our acts.

6. "*Were it a matter of certainty, and a thing so plain that he who runs may read, it would be as evident to one man of common understanding as another.*"

How is it, my brother, that believers' baptism by immersion, must, to be received, be so plainly written that you may read it as you run—while infant sprinkling can be so readily received without any thing written in sacred page, to read at all on the subject? How many points of the revealed will of God are there, when all the readings and circumstances of the New Testament connected therewith, are considered, that are more full and plainly written, than the exclusive baptism of believers, and the evidence of its being immersion only? Is it not plain that a confession of godliness was required personally of some candidates? And will you point me out the place where it is written, that any others were ever baptized without it? Is it not plain that some candidates did go down into the water to be baptized? And will you point out the place where it is recorded in the holy word, that others were baptized without going into the water at all? And, as you dispute the *immersion* of believers, upon the word being used for *washing*, and may be applied to the *washing of the hands or the face*—did all Jerusalem, Judea, and all the regions round about, go down into the river of Jordan, to wash their hands' and their faces, and that too before the days of *John*? And if not, then why did the candidates from all those parts go there to be baptized therein, or *John* go there to minister baptism therein, if the use of a little water in a basin, as in the washing of the face and the hands, would have been one and the same thing, as the appointed ordinance of God? As the scriptures must have self-consistent and sound reason for their statements, no fair and conclusive answer to these questions can be found, on the principle of unconscious infant sprinkling.

And as to the subject of believers' immersion being as evident to one man of understanding, as another, if it were plainly written, is altogether a false conclusion, as to a *practical* admission and reception of it; unless you can prove that there is not one plainly written scripture

truth under the whole heavens. For there is not a divine truth, even to the being of God, but what has been disputed and denied; and that not by idiots, but by men of the greatest natural or common understanding! The greatest errors on some of the plainest points of truth, have been brought in and defended by some of the greatest of men, to the astonishment of others, who have lamented that such should be the case. Aaron was not void of common understanding, when he practically denied the living God, made a golden idol calf, and ascribed a kind of omnipotent self-existency to it, saying, *I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf.* Ex. xxxii. 24. The professing world was not void of common understanding, through the several ages in which the plainest truths were perverted and denied, until Antichrist, with all its corruptions, arrived at its full stature. There is no dependance whatever to be placed on common understanding, for many of those who have, with all their powers of mind, opposed believers' immersion at one time, have at another, been, with all their hearts for conscience's sake, obliged to embrace and defend it: and that has not been because the sacred text has been altered into plainer record, nor yet that they have become idiots. Common understanding constitutes no authority or rule in this case; but what saith the scriptures is the test, and not what they do not say, nor what any man may say without their authority.

Having now made my observations on the principal things in your letter on baptism, and that so plainly, that you may see that no subject is more simple and doubtless to my mind than that in all the scriptures—I shall, before proceeding to the other part of your letter, namely, on *Communion*, subjoin a few remarks on *circumcision*.

The circumcision of the male children of the seed of Abraham, affords no true argument in favour of infant sprinkling, although it has often been referred to for that purpose. For

1. The Lord by a covenant commanded circumcision to Abraham, and his house only, and not to the whole world at large. Gen. xvii. And Abraham and his house were not a figure of the whole *natural* world, but of Christ, and his chosen, redeemed, and called church. And in this figure, Abraham is called the *father* of all

*them that believe.* Rom. iv. 11, 16. And they that are of the *faith* only, are blessed with faithful Abraham. Gal. iii. 9. And are called *Abraham's seed* according to the promise. ver. 29. And this has nothing to do with natural babes, as such only, of any nation or circumstances; but with the *believing*, of whatever age or nation they may be. And therefore, circumcision can be no authority for infant sprinkling, until it can be proved that all infants stand in the same relation to Christ in his spiritual church, and equally interested in the everlasting covenant of his blood and redemption, as infants in the house of Abraham did to him in the figure, and were interested in the covenant of circumcision.

2. Circumcision was a *sign* of the covenant of circumcision, and of *interest* therein to the circumcised; and they carried that sign in their flesh through life, and by it could refer to that covenant as the children of its interests. Rom. iv. 11. Phil. iii. 4. But infant sprinkling is no *sign*, given of and from God, of the sprinkled infant's interest in the everlasting gospel covenant of life and peace. And while it bears no such sign to the sprinkled at any after period, either in flesh or Spirit—so neither is there any covenant to which *by it as a sign*, the sprinkled can with any divine authority be referred as a covenantee. For there is no gospel interest in God's everlasting covenant of salvation, but *in Christ*, and there is no scripture sign to any soul of personal interest in Christ, but by the circumcision of the heart by the renewing and consecrating power of the Holy Spirit. 1 Cor. v. 17. And as sprinkling has been spoken of as of so much importance, as though it put the child into a covenant relation to God, that it did not stand in until sprinkled—that the child is to be brought to Christ by means of sprinkling—that it is not our heavenly Father's will that any of those little ones *that are sprinkled*, should perish—and that it is the procurement and insurance of *bread*, they would be denied if not sprinkled [*Jazer Vind.*, p. 25]—my enquiry is, wherein lieth all this virtue, without any thing of the Spirit of grace in the candidate? Is it in the *water* sprinkled—or in the *act* of sprinkling—or in the *man* that sprinkles? And on what ground does all this benefit of infant sprinkling rest—the covenant of works, or the covenant of

grace, as there is not one word about it either way in the word of God? And if all this benefit belongs to sprinkling, and which cannot be by any qualification in one infant candidate, more than in another, where is the evidence of it in the thousands, and tens of thousands, of drunken, swearing, lying, thieving, and debauched ones, who were sprinkled when infants, dying as they lived, some in exile, some in the prison cell, and some hanged for crimes against the laws of both God and man? And what is any *child*, sprinkled or not sprinkled, without the Spirit of Christ in him, any more than any *man*, without the Spirit of Christ in *him*? 2 Cor. xiii. 5. There is no such virtues ascribed to believer's baptism; but which is on the believing candidate's part, a profession of repentance, of faith in Christ—an act of obedience, and of the worship of God, according to the New Testament word of God—creating no rights of covenant interest, nor securing any, but is a profession of the hope of them, as all secured in Christ.

3. Circumcision was a *seal* of the righteousness of the faith to Abraham as the *head*, in a figure of Christ; and to his seed and house as the *body*, in the figure of the church. And Christ, whom God the Father hath sealed, is the *head* of the true household of faith, and of whom the whole saved family of God is named—as the circumcised family and house of Abraham, and not the whole world of the heathen, as such, were named of and after Abraham in the figure. And the *true* circumcision is *that of the heart*, by the power and grace of the Holy Spirit (Phil. iii. 3. Rom. ii. 29); whereby the redeemed are circumcised unto Christ, as his true and living household—as the house of Abraham was with and unto him in the figure. And circumcision was a seal of *confirmation*, and an earnest given of interest in the promises, privileges, laws, and ordinances of that covenant to the family and household of Abraham, for their *father's* sake in the figure (Deut. vii. 12), and the Holy Spirit's work and witness in the heart of believers for Christ's sake, is the antitypical seal of confirmation to their interest in Christ, and is the earnest of the inheritance of eternal life. Eph. i. 13, 14. And this is rightly and obediently professed and declared in believer's baptism, but can in no way apply to infant sprinkling,

nor to sprinkled infants. For an infant can profess nothing of faith and obedience therein, and it can be no *seal* of interest in Christ, nor earnest of eternal life to the child from God, as the Lord's sealings and earnest are in the hearts of believers. It is the believer's *duty* as well as privilege, by the saving mercy he hath obtained, to observe and keep the Lord's commands, devolving on him as a believer; but Christ is vitally all, and he may be entirely all of hope of eternal life, in thousands of instances where the water in the ordinance is never observed at all; but water can never mean any thing in the gospel, without Christ in the power of endless life in the heart. Therefore we say, Christ formed in the heart the hope of glory first, and then profess him as such by baptism; for any thing short of this to be called baptism, has no meaning with the subject, nor any authority of ministration by the written word of God.

4. All the household of Abraham had a hereditary and *common right* to all the immunities of the Lord's typical economy with him; and *circumcision* was the distinguishing *initiation* of them into those rights and immunities. But we are no where authorized to conclude any thing of the interest of infants in the gospel rights of the election of grace by faith in Christ. And therefore infant sprinkling cannot in any way be a similar rite of initiation into the New Testament economy of salvation; nor have any such appointment as circumcision had in its own economy; while according to the New Testament, the circumcision of the heart by the power of the Holy Spirit, is the true initiation of the chosen into the hidden blessings of their covenant interest; and baptism, on a profession of faith and repentance, is rightly so, into the visible fellowship of the gospel. But it may be said of infants, "They may have an interest, and we cannot tell who of them have not." That is all very true, but if any man be in Christ he is a new creature, and Paul *knew no man after the flesh*, and *how shall we know children*, by any right of interest after the flesh? Neither can we know any one after the flesh by any right to baptism. 2 Cor. v. 16. The true church of God is not national, nor hereditary by blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of such as are personally born of God. John

i. 13. For the Abraham-days of natural family figure being now past, and the true light shining, no claims can be justly made to any of the eternal blessings of the spiritual kingdom of God, nor to those particular ordinances which are intended to represent an interest in them, by any ~~relationship or parentage~~ whatever; but there must be personal repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Acts xx. 21. All void of repentance will perish. (Luke xiii. 3): and faith being the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen (Heb. xi. 1), without faith it is impossible to please God (ver. 6), and therefore he that believeth not shall be damned, sprinkled or not sprinkled (Mark xvi. 16): and *begin not to say, We have Abraham to our father*, for the axe is laid at the *root* of the tree; and every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire. Luke iii. 8, 9. Now, as the blessings of God's salvation are in no way hereditary by family, blood, or nation, but individually *as the Lord our God shall call*, there is not the least authority to treat and minister the ordinances that are intended to represent them, in that way, as though they really were hereditary. And whatever may be said for infant sprinkling, it is impossible to give it any other countenance, than that of something hereditary after the flesh, without the Spirit, and contradictory to the personality and sovereignty of election, the particularity of redemption, and the undeniable truth from the lips of Christ, that the personal new-birth work of the eternal Spirit in the soul, is the perfect and entire original of all vital godliness, and that without that, all signs put upon either man, woman, or child, are but worse than nothing, being a mockery, and if to any thing, they lead to hypocrisy and false hope. Consequently, regeneration by the power and grace of the Holy Spirit, is the only true and real initiation into the spiritual kingdom of God, with the blessings thereof; and of which believers' baptism, according to the word of God, is a true representation, and a just and consistent profession, with faith and obedience.

5. Circumcision being altogether another thing, it neither recommended nor hindered baptism: for it continued in authority with all other figures of that



economy, until the death of Christ ; so that while *John* and the *apostles* of our Lord were baptizing *Jewish believers*, the Jews were circumcising their infants and proselytes, John vii. 23. And the circumcised Jews were rejected from baptism, although they were circumcised, and were the natural seed of believing *Sarah* and *faithful Abraham*, the friend of God, because they could not give evidence of *repentance* towards God ; and *Paul* was baptized when he *believed*, although he was circumcised at eight days old. And although our Lord was circumcised on the eighth day to keep the *Law*, he was at about thirty years of age baptized unto his work and into his *public declaration of character*, as the Christ of God, and the Saviour of the chosen of all nations to the ends of the earth. And he declared baptizing in the river to be *becoming*, but sinful worms have since that, in their pride called it *indecent*, and by many other foul epithets, although the great Lord of their being, and Saviour of the lost, so walked in it. There appears in these considerations not the least divine countenance for infant sprinkling from the circumcision of Jewish infants. For the *proper* subjects for circumcision were rejected as *improper* for baptism, until they were the subjects of faith and repentance ; and they who had been circumcised, were nevertheless baptized when they believed. And as it was no recommendation to baptism that the Jews were the seed of *faithful Abraham*, for they were desired *not to name that* as any argument in favour ; where is the authority for the *infant seed* of believer's now to be sprinkled or baptized any way ? And as our Lord was baptized into a public declaration of his character, so baptism is for the believers' profession and declaration of character, as the subject of repentance towards God, and a believer in the Saviour's name.

6. Circumcision had much profit attached to it in the keeping of the Law, Rom. xi. 25. And chiefly because unto them were committed the oracles of God. Cha. iii. 2. The economy of circumcision had divine authority, and it had the law of divine will in ordinances to be observed, and with the observance thereof, they had the ensured privileges of that economy, by the promissory oracles of God. And the covenant and law of the spirit in Christ Jesus touching baptism, is *repent, and be baptized* in the name of Jesus Christ,

for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. Acts ii. 38. Now where there is no law there is no right or interest, and where there is no promise there is no privilege; but here is divine law and divine promise; and when by the grace of God, this order of things meets in any soul, as it does in all the *lawful* subjects for baptism, there is much profit with it every way, because of the oracles of God that are given therewith. But there is no such *parallel* for infant sprinkling, as there is no such law for it, nor promises to it, and so no such profit attached to it; and it is therefore by the conferment of the *name* and the forming a *plea* for christians without *truth in the inward parts* by the Holy Spirit, Psalm li. 6. John viii. 37. and without Christ by faith, Eph. ii. 12. unprofitable many ways, because it is not given in one single oracle of God. For if we take it to the scriptures for a *character*, the only one it can have from them is, *a sought out invention contrary to uprightness*, Eccles. vii. 29. If we consider it a *representation*, there is no *truth* in it, nor authority for it, for it cannot represent any spirituality about the unconscious infant; nor is there any given authority to conclude that it represents any vital godliness that it ever will have, for such is an untold secret with God only; and the Lord has no where authorized his New Testament ordinances to be personally ministered upon one person or order of persons, to represent the true and spiritual New Testament religion of another person, or persons. *Natural birth* gave the Jewish infants right to *circumcision*, and circumcision to all the promised immunities of that economy. But nothing of this can in truth be said of the natural birth, or of the sprinkling of infants, relative to the eternal blessings of the everlasting gospel and covenant of salvation. For the regeneration birth of the soul, of God, and to God, by the power of the Holy Spirit only, gives right to baptism, and all the promised blessings of the gospel, as the true antitype of the Jewish figure. If we call infant sprinkling a *profession of Christ* in distinction from, and as an elevation of them above the *heathen and heathenism*, then it is all false and without any foundation in truth, for infants can profess nothing, nor is there one promise of *interest* in Christ that can be claimed for them therein, whereby for them justly to wear such a pre-

tention, for that is all governed alone by the evidence of, *as many as the Lord our God shall call*; and the word of God reckons no one in distinction from a *heathen man, without the faith and truth of Christ*, Mat. xviii. 17. If we call it a *dedication*, then it may be justly asked, who hath required it? for there is not a word for it in all the word of God as an ordinance. Nor is it *harmless*, and therefore to be allowed as a matter of indifference, claiming liberty; because it is a carnal, antichrist substitute in the place of God's own New Testament ordinance. It is a piece of *false piety* like that of the Jews, *who would not go into the judgment hall lest they should be defiled*; while they chose the release of a common thief rather than not have Christ crucified out of their way. For it is in the gratification and pious figure of religious flesh without the Spirit, an open hostility against *that* scripture order as altogether hateful, which says *when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized both men and women*, Acts viii. 12, there not being an infant named or thought of in the baptism; and its chief aim is that *that* more lovely order to carnal flesh hypocrisy and pride, may in the course of time be established altogether that *without believing all infants may be sprinkled, scripture baptism be crucified by the very pious hands which dedicate by sprinkling, and there be no believing men and women baptized at all*. If the word of sacred writ be our only authority, standard, and rule, *this must be wrong*, and will have no place in the church of Christ, when he shall drive all *pious deism* out. If we call infant sprinkling a *mode of instruction*, then the question is, who have ever been instructed to profit in godliness by it, and in what way? while thousands have been instructed by means thereof, to determine themselves christians while dead in sin and buried in the lusts of the flesh and of the world. If we call it a *means to bring children to Christ*, what children are there who are really brought to Christ by it? And what difference for the better is there now or for eternity between a sprinkled infant and one that is not sprinkled? No man loves his children more than I do mine, or feel more prayerful concern for their welfare, but the heavens forbid that

I should so much mock God as to impose such a cheat upon them in the name of a godly ordinance.

7. In the economy of circumcision, *the man child that was not circumcised, was to be cut off from the people of that economy.* Gen. xvii. 14. And how will this apply to infant sprinkling? Does sprinkling unite the infant to, and interest it with, the saints of God in the covenant blessings of eternal life? And does the omission of sprinkling *bar* the infant at any time, in whole or in part, or in any way, from all or any of those blessings? Ignorant and blind superstition, and perhaps something in man worse than both, have said, and do now say as much. And our brother Irons, flatly contradicting the great doctrines he preaches, must mean something of this—or what does he mean, when he reckons those who do not sprinkle infants to be *worse than sea monsters*? If it be not in *this*, then wherein lieth our worse than monstrous? Our streets are flooded with the wickedness of those who were sprinkled when infants, while many are mercifully called savingly to know the Lord, who were never sprinkled. This shews that infant sprinkling cannot stand in the New Testament, as in the place of circumcision in the Old. And as we have plenty of woeful proof that it does not regenerate the infant, to say nothing of the sacred word, nor ensure the regeneration of it, nor make it in part a bible christian, nor help it in one bible step towards it; and as the omission of it does not hinder the outstretching of the saving arm of the Lord upon the *not sprinkled*, and as the sprinkled do not, by any virtue thereof, worship and fear the Lord any more than those do by nature who are not sprinkled—what, on the fair reading of any one passage in the whole scriptures, does sprinkling infants do? What godly end has it to answer? And what place does it fill for spiritual good? And how can it be reconciled with, or be made to mean anything consistent with the doctrines of a settled covenant, a determined and particular mediation—ship, a completed, particular, and eternal redemption—the all-divine, unconditional, and personal regeneration of the chosen, by the eternal Spirit—and the salvation of all the foreknown church of God, by distinguishing, free, omnipotent, determined, and eternal favour—while the whole world of infants are born into the world alike,

without any mark of difference for human discrimination? For infant sprinkling to be consistent with itself, it must be *universal*, because there is no difference to distinguish subjects; and then it must be contrary to the bible statements, and the operative displays of the salvation favour of God; and so to be consistent, we must drop infant sprinkling altogether, as irreconcilable with any one truth in the vital and Spirit-wrought religion of the New Testament.

We have been charged with making too much of water, and too little of the Spirit's work, in believers' baptism; but we do not baptize in much water, to make people christians, or anything else in the renewing of the heart for the kingdom of God; but, as in the Lord's commanded way, publicly, gratefully, and obediently, on their own profession, to declare them so, to the honour and praise of the God of all grace, who in his love, wisdom, and power, hath made them so. We ask, who makes *most* of the water, and *less* of the Spirit's work in that ordinance—we, who require a testimony of the Spirit's regeneration of the soul as a qualification for baptism, holding baptism as a declarative ordinance of obedience to God, by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, in hope of eternal life by the Spirit's witness of adoption—or those who sprinkle infants, and attach great importance to it, without such work of the Spirit being even considered to be done at all, and without any one known personal promise to such infants in the flesh, that such divine work will ever be wrought in them at all; while without that all is death, though sprinkled as many times as there are stars in the heavens, or drops of water in the great seas? And we would again ask, who makes most of the water, and least of the Spirit's work—we who reckon no man a *monster* because he does not baptize, nor because he is not baptized in much water—or he who reckons us *worse than sea monsters* because we cannot sprinkle a little water on the face of unintelligent infants, in the name of God, until we have his word to do so?

8. Having observed in seven particulars that circumcision is no authority and can afford no sort of fair argument for the sprinkling of infants—I would just in a word or two observe, that in *one* point, infant sprinkling and circumcision do agree: and that is, *in the making a fair shew in the flesh, and the avoiding of*

*suffering persecution for the cross of Christ.* Gal. vi. 12. When circumcision, with all other types of that economy, had by the death of Christ no longer any divine authority, many people liked it because they could, apart from its own economy, make something of a fair show out of it for the flesh; and those who, contrary to the mind of the Spirit, still observed it, moved very respectably thereby: much the same as is now the case with infant sprinkling, which has not one text in God's word to support it, and never had. For it is corruption's own offspring, is pleasing to the flesh, is of the world, and the world loves its own accordingly; because that is their own way of being christians without Christ; that standing for every thing without any thing of the Spirit. And it throws a kind of cloak over many other things, which without it, would be so seen as to be much more offensive. And so the sprinkling minister is all that the more respectable, and less subject to persecution for the cross of Christ, because the Pope, and church of Rome, the kings, queens, and the nobility of nations, together with the rulers of national synagogues, all hold infant sprinkling with a high hand, and have established it by law. And therefore it is accordingly a shocking thing not to sprinkle infants; and we may well be reckoned *worse than sea monsters*, because for the want of one word for it from the mouth of God, together with the impossibility of reconciling it with the Spirit of truth in general, and the spiritual origin, nature, and character of all true godliness for the kingdom of God on earth, or in heaven, we cannot do it; even as those who could not circumcise without divine authority, and who did according to the mind of the Spirit in sacred text, discard it as a thing of nought; but who had to suffer persecution for the cross of Christ thereby; as we are by many reckoned the worst of all people, for no other cause than because mercy hath made us *bible baptists*, and would not let us be *popish sprinklers!*

But to conclude on this subject—I am no enemy to infants, nor to the salvation of infants dying in their infancy, as I have stated in my "*Thoughts on Heaven;*" for my belief is, that they are taken away as the chosen of God, from the evil to come. But my opposition is to the putting an unmeaning ceremony upon them,

falsely in the name of something of the religion of Christ. Many blessed men of God have, and many do now practise infant sprinkling, but the word of God is our standard—shew me authority from that, and I will then do it too. I contend for *mastery* with no man, but the promotion of truth is my sole desire and only aim. I hope in the fear of God, that I am no man's enemy, but opposed to what the greatest of good men may hold without sacred text; and my contention is not against *persons*, but *things*. I shall now proceed to the second part of your letter, namely, on *Communion*.

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## COMMUNION CONSIDERED, &c.

ON this subject I shall say but little in reply to your letter, compared to what I have said on baptism; because the very same authority required of you for *infant sprinkling*, is now required of you for *any other communion* whatever at the Lord's table, than that of persons previously baptized, on their own personal profession of repentance towards God, and of faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; namely, the New Testament word of God, in either precept or precedent, and ONE single text in the evident mind of the Spirit direct to the point, or from which it may be justly and honestly concluded, shall determine the point in your favour.

In the name of the Lord, I will agree with and hold any thing in the world for baptism, and will receive, hold, and agree with any and every sort of communion, that has the support of the *New Testament word of God my Saviour*. But *short* of that, *beyond* that, or *contrary* to that, God forbid my soul ever to take its stand; although I may have to stand alone, and be exposed to all the malignant arrows expected to be furiously shot at a reputed *schismatic*; and although I have lived long enough to see and to know, that both infant sprinkling and mixed communion, are truly *parsonic* flesh hook considerations, that copiously bring up that to hand, which it would be folly in the extreme otherwise to expect to obtain. Jude 12. 1 Sam. ii. 13, 14.

Job xxxii. 21, 22. But a close adherence to the sacred text is better than fat feeding; and a good conscience on the written word of truth, is better than all perishable gain; for a plain possession of the divine word is the fairest answer to every question, the best argument in every dispute, and a sure defence against every accusation.

You may hold the worst opinion of us, call us by the worst of names, and dip your pen in the gall of angry contempt; but all that says nothing to the points in hand—that proves nothing—that clears no truth—that can do no good: it is a ministry that has no promise, *for the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.* James i. 20. To the word of God then, my brother, for that is our appeal—and we ask no more than to stand by that, or by that to be convicted. If there be any other church of Christ in the New Testament than that of persons baptized on their own personal profession of faith in the truth and Christ of God, do be so kind as to tell us where to find it, for we can find nothing of the sort. And if there be any such a thing in the word of God, as any one individual ever being taken into communion with such a baptized church, without being first baptized on a personal profession of faith—do be so kind as to tell us where it is recorded; because that also is a thing that we cannot find from the Dan to the Beersheba of the whole word of God, travelled all over with close observation. And if you can find these things for us, and do not, you will be very *cruel*, so to leave us still in the dark. And you will not be as the apostles advise, *Of a ready mind—Apt to teach*—in meekness instructing those who oppose themselves. 1 Peter v. 2. 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. Nor will you be so kind and considerate as the poor *lepers* were, when they knew what no one but themselves knew in all Israel, and said one to another, “We do not do well: this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace: now therefore come, that we may go and tell the king’s household.” 2 Kings vii. 9. And if you cannot produce these things from the word of God, and they are nowhere therein to be found, then you have done very *naughtily* in reproaching, accusing, and bearing false witness against your neighbours. But doubtless this was done in *haste* (Ps. cxvi. 11), or *ignorantly* (1 Tim.



i. 13) understanding neither what you said, nor whereof you affirmed (ver. 7); for we have all our passions (James v. 17), and are none of us as yet perfect (Phil. iii. 12). But in regard to your letter on the subject of *communion*, I will, with the help of mercy, briefly notice the following things. [www.libtool.com.cn](http://www.libtool.com.cn)

FIRST. "I mean what he termed *strict*, but I call *schismatic communion*."

1. Communion at the Lord's table, has been called by many names, because to suit their own convenience, men have thrown it into so many shapes and forms, as they have severally thought proper to "adopt." But the word of God knows but one way, and if this one way *only* had been righteously observed, no particular terms of definement would have been required to distinguish bible communion; nor would any minister of the gospel ever have called that *schismatical*. We reckon the word of God to be plain enough for our guide, if we are disposed to be guided by it; and we profess to take that alone for our guide, and we challenge you to prove the mind of the Spirit in any one text against our order of communion; and yet if you cannot do that, you stand guilty of denouncing the sacred word of God itself *schismatical*. And if to stand without contradiction from the mouth of God by his sacred word, *be schismatical*, we are content to bear the name, the blame, and the shame thereof, from you and all others who have taken *lovely expediency*, and not *divine authority* for your order. If you are *right*, we are *wrong* of course, and it is for you to prove that we are wrong, not by human *multitude*, but by *sacred truth*; and we shall expect that you will try, and then let us see your production for an experiment. You have made your *charge*, and you have thereby either done great justice to truth, or equally great injustice to us and the truth too. On communion, as on baptism, we take the written New Testament word of God, to be his revealed will to his New Testament church for a rule, in every age to time's end; and that every change or deviation from that standard in the professing church, is of the world, the flesh, and the devil—is the corrupt offspring of the *man of sin*—and is not to be cherished, but opposed by the written word of God, as the only true model and unbending law of all true religion before God. But I

know that to contend for this, is to expose ourselves to persecution, and raise again the old popish hue and cry of *schism, schismatic, schismatical*—with our esteemed brother Bridgman too as a chief mate in the phalanx. We claim the sacred text by its own authority; and it is for you, or any one else, to disprove that claim simply by the same authority; and until then, we are in waiting position; and when that is done, teach us and warn us, and if we repent not, then let us be unto you as heathen men; but do not accuse us with what you cannot prove by divine law, because that act is capable of so many not very honourable interpretations.

By the terms *strict* and *close* communion, we mean strictly all of a piece, all of one heart and one soul, in *faith* and *baptismal* principles, according to the reading and meaning of the sacred text; and a keeping close as such to that, as our one only rule and authority; for two cannot well walk together, with becoming and true honesty, *except they be agreed*. Amos iii. 3. A man might just as well pretend honestly to serve two directly opposite masters, as for that to be. Matt. vi. 24. And as the disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord, no man is to be saluted in regard either to his *principles* or his *feelings*, at the expense of, or contrary to, the great Master's holy word. John xvii. 17. We live in a day in which such salutations are the very spirit of the times; and *faithfulness* earnestly to contend for, and to give place to, nothing short of nor less discriminating than the plain but solemn text of eternal truth, is counted schismatical, monstrous bigotry, is smote on the mouth, and is led out to be crucified—as the religious Jews did its Lord and Lawgiver.

2. "*But what I call schismatical communion.*"

They that gladly received the word, were baptized, and then, and not until then, they were added to the church; and they continued *stedfastly* in the apostle's *doctrine* and *fellowship*, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. Acts ii. 41, 42. And it is for this order that we contend; and here we take our stand, because there is no other order that we can find in sacred text, to be admitted in the New Testament church of Christ: but as this does not answer your purpose, you call it *schismatical*; although, even with evident wresting of the

scriptures, you have not been able to shew the least seeming divine authority for any other. Your calling it so, does not prove it is so; and such accusations without proof of guilt, only shew your own weakness, strengthen our hands, and make us more bold to travel on without the camp, joyfully bearing such reproach for the sacred text. No one was ever worse named than the *Holy One of God*, and by none more so than by *professors of the religion of God*, and that because he could not go with the popular multitude, and approve of their self-bred, pleasing traditions, before or even with the sacred text. And *truth*, even from like quarters, must expect the same fate with its Lord, having but one uncompromising countenance; while error has as many beguiling charms, as Diana of Ephesus is reputed to have had breasts, kindly giving suck to all nature. Words, being cheap, it is much easier to *accuse*, than to *convict*. Our divine law condemns no man, until it hears him, and finds him guilty; try us by that law, for we have no fear of consequences. But until we are proved wrong by the sacred text, which of you convinceth us of sin? John viii. 46. Are we not hated without a cause? chap. xv. 25. Is not our brother moved with envy only? Acts vii. 9. Do you not judge after the flesh? John viii. 15. With us it is a very small thing that we should be judged of you, or of man's judgment; he that judgeth us is the Lord. 1 Cor. iv. 3, 4. To the word of God then, my brother, and if you can find and prove to us any other communion at the Lord's table, known and approved in the New Testament, than that of persons baptized on a profession of faith, you shall find it among us in less than six months after such proof; for the word of God is our only rule, whatever may be yours.

SECOND. "*In this matter I have always been of opinion that your sect goes too far, much too far, or else to be thoroughly consistent with a bad principle, not far enough.*"

1. You are not the first person that has had a bad *opinion* of our *sect*; for a great long while ago, it was *hated of all men, even of brothers too, for Christ's sake*; Mat x. 22; it was every where *spoken against*, Acts xxviii. 22. and made as the filth of the earth, and the offscouring of all things unto this day. 1 Cor. iv. 13. And it has been the *opinion* of many religious

folk, that service has been done to God when we have been cast out of the synagogues; not reckoning killing too bad for us, John xvi. 2; while the *proud* have sometimes been reckoned a *happy* people, Mal. iii. 15. But we are told by good authority, *not to think it strange*, 1 Peter iv. 12, but to count it all *joy* when such *temptations* are our lot, James i. 2, and that although it may be a *fiery trial*, 1 Peter iv. 12, to be counted *aliens to our mother's children*, Psalm lix. 8, yet it is but the trial of our faith, to prove to ourselves and to those about us, whether we can stand the test of opposing *opinions* for the truth's sake; and that it shall be precious in the end, for that herein the disciple is but as his master.

2. Your opinion having been *always*, is greatly to be suspected of being too old to be good; and of having sprang up in early ignorance, prejudice, chimera, and of the *flesh* and not of the *spirit*. For when Paul became a man in Christ, he put away his childish *opinions* in the flesh, to make room for new and better ones; 1 Cor. xiii. 11; and he had not had an opinion worth a penny above fifteen years, when he wrote his second epistle to the Corinthians, chap. xii. 2. Besides *opinions* are so innumerable and diversified as to form no true ground of reliance nor point of decision. And of those opinions that have *not* been *always*, above nine hundred out of the thousand have been taken up by one man from another, and a vast number of them out of old corrupt human systems, and by the rule only of *what is most generally received*, without acting impartially by the best of rules, namely, the searching of the scriptures daily to see if things be so; Acts xxviii. 11; and like Abraham, if needs be, come out alone to serve God; Heb. xi. 8; and like Paul, who conferred not with flesh and blood; Gal. i. 16; counting all opinions that were contrary to the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, and contrary to the obedience of faith revealed, loss, dross, and dung, Rom. xvi. 26. Phil. iii. 7. 8. The divine *will*, declaratively and practically drawn out on the sacred page, is the only rightful law of decision, rule of judgment, and authority by which to accuse, to condemn, to approve, or to justify; and to that court we appeal, and demand judgment there. To the law and to the testimony,

our cause is with God, and *truth*, thereby supported is our meaning; while we esteem mere human opinion, affecting the public order of the church, without sacred text, from the otherwise greatest of good men, but as the wild and unimportant spectre of an imperfect brain of frail liabilities. Every godly sentiment inspired in the soul by the eternal Spirit of truth, hath its correspondent on the sacred page; and that which is not a recorded principle of truth in the scriptures, is not an eternal truth of divine influence in the heart. And therefore our Lord said to men of *opinion*, "search the scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me." John v. 39.

THIRD. "*That your sect goes too far, much too far, or to be thoroughly consistent with a bad principle, not far enough.*"

1. We go too far for you and for your opinion it seems, and too far for the confederating, accommodating, faithless, fleshly spirit of the age; and consequently too far for our own carnal interest, but not far enough to establish a *bad principle*, and so not too far for the word of God, and not far enough for you to condemn us, except by your own *opinion*. This is just were we wish to be, out-running all supineness in regard to the sacred text as our only standard and our rule, without going into extravagance by any unhallowed constructions upon the holy word of God.

2. By our going too far and not far enough, I suppose you mean, that for us to be so particular on *communion* we ought to be equally particular about some other things that are recorded in the New Testament that we do not literally practice. I know there are such things, but you must prove to us that they are standing perpetual ordinances by the command of the Lord to the end of time, as evidently as the ordinances of baptism and the communion at the table are; and as evidently exemplified out to us for the same purpose. The selling of all their possessions by the first converts, and the having all things common among them who then believed, were from circumstances which rendered that order of their affairs necessary for their support. Acts iv. 34. 35. And *that* also in the wisdom of all foreseeing providence, brought the value of their estates into happy use for themselves and for the Lord's

young church, before they should be scattered abroad by the hand of persecution and so lose the whole for ever, and their enemies enrich themselves thereby. Benevolence among the saints, and to each other as such, by his love and for his name sake who hath sanctified them, is a lovely principle and action of vital godliness; but their selling of their whole possessions and casting all the value into God's cause, was the result of divine *influence* peculiar to the time and circumstances of the church, and may be reckoned among the divine miracles of wisdom, power, and love; and not of *perpetual* command. The exercise of that family principle was enjoined by command, and encouraged by divine promise and example, but to that *extent*, and in that *way*, was purely optional; as the apostle *Peter* very evidently shews. Acts v. 4. And the after accounts of the collecting for the poor saints, shews that it was done by voluntary contributions, as we do now; but that the possessions of them that had them were not then sold and given up; so that as that practice did not continue, even through the days of apostles, it never was commanded in the shape and obligation of an appointed standing institution of God. And there are several other things to which perhaps you may refer, but they are so much of a similar nature and so unlike the two great standing distinguishing and perpetual ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper, that I deem it unnecessary to notice them till further called upon; except that of *laying on of hands*, which I would just name. It appears that the laying on of hands, and that which is so called in the scriptures, was for the purpose of conferring extraordinary gifts, as that of tongues &c; and there is no evidence that they were laid on for any other purpose—healing being a different thing. And this was done by the *apostles only*, by the power of the Holy Spirit that was so with and upon them, and by no one else; for *Philip*, that great graced evangelist of God, did not so lay his hands on any one at *Samaria*, but the apostles only did it when they came there. Acts viii. 17. 18; and therefore it was never an appointed perpetual ordinance, or authorized beyond the apostles. However we are none of us perfect, and how much soever we may be ignorantly deficient in all

things, we challenge you before God, the elect angels, and all good men, to prove your charge, and that we are not fully authorized by the sacred text to go as far as we do as a "sect," practically on the subject of communion.

*Third, "I would ask that minister in all seriousness, Have you and your denomination exclusively the keys of the Church of Christ."*

In reply to this we say *no*; nor do we ever pretend to any such thing, We are but *servants*, and our great Master's *word* and the example of his first servants on his New Testament establishment, is our law, rule, and only authority of order and of action. We lock nothing up that the scriptures have not locked up, and we have got no keys to unlock what the word of God does not unlock, if you have. If that word be no law to you it is to us; and you have, for all what you have written to me on the point, got the whole of the proof entirely to make out, that you pay any regard to the authority of that word in your order of communion, and that we have not got both the *letter* and *Spirit* of that word for what you call our "schismatical communion." If you can move upon a more convenient plan in the name of the Lord, than his word knows any thing of, that is no reason why we should, or that such a practice should be silently justified. I have many times said from the pulpit before hundreds of people on the most public occasions, bring the authority of scripture for any order of communion and for any thing in the name and place of believer's baptism, and we will instantly agree therewith, and be of those sentiments in all good conscience before God and with all men. And I have told individuals the same in private, who have bitterly complained of our order; while they have not brought one single text to prove that it is wrong, or that any other is right. And why after all this, have not scriptures been brought to open our doors for us, in a way that in all good conscience on the Almighty's word, we have no divine key, and are entirely ignorant of where to find one to open them ourselves? We conclude it is because no such thing can be found in the word of God, and that people find fault with us, because they love their own lovely wide-way better than they do the Lord's unaccommodating

narrow one ; and then they cry us down as monstrous ugly, that they may pass for fair without authority. But after the above propositions having been made so repeatedly, surely no one ought to speak against us, until they have brought forward scriptures that will, in their sound meaning, stand against us. But, passing over what Antichrist has in various ways done, it is greatly to be lamented that now, with many whom we have reason to believe know better, the word of God is daily becoming the *last* and the *least* reference for authority, and rule of principles and order in the church of Christ. And which shews the importance of sacred advice saying—*Abide in me.* John xv. 4. Little children, *abide in him.* 1 John ii. 28. *Keep yourselves from idols.* Chap. v. 21.

You have written a long letter to me, but you have treated me as coolly as *Simon* the Pharisee did our Lord, for you have brought me neither water for my feet, nor ointment for my head, in one single text that is at all to the point in hand. Luke vii. But we shall expect you will find up something to your point, in the true meaning of the word of God if it be possible ; or we shall conclude that you are on our side, just in the same way as *Balaam* was on *Israel's*, when he said of the Lord, "He hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it." Num. xxiii. 20. And as *Satan* was on *Job's* side, when he said to the Lord, "Hast not thou made a hedge about him?" Job i. 10. At present it does not appear by any shewing from your pen, that your attack on us is at all for how far we differ from the scriptures, but for how far we differ from *you*, and your multilateral plan ; while you are unable to prove yourself right by the word of God, or us wrong on the point in hand.

FOURTH. "*Are the elect, redeemed, and regenerated of the Lord, to be kept from, or thrust back if they approach the Lord's table, because they have not been immersed in cold water—although, as the elect, their names are in the Lamb's book above.*"

1. The Lamb's book above is no rule for our conduct in the church below, but the revealed and written will of God, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, *given under heaven.*

2. Neither election, redemption, nor regeneration, constitute any preceptive law of institutions, or of order



in the church; but the word of the God of all such grace. We are to be neither law-makers for the wicked, nor breakers of divine law for the saints. Divine favour does not exempt from scripture obligations, but qualifies for them, and brings the soul within the household commands and precedents given in the word of God for his believing church and people obediently to observe. Our Lord was as much the beloved of heaven, and in that character, had as great a claim to be excused from the commands and orders of the written word of God, as any regenerated soul can have, but he never pleaded an exemption *because he was the Son of God*; but on the contrary, said, "Honour to whom honour is due. Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer; that the scriptures might be fulfilled." And he did that at Jordan which his professed followers can now speak of in the most reproachful manner. And in those days, when any point of argument came in the way, the enquiry used to be, "What saith the scriptures?" but now your argument goes to say, "What would you like best? What plan do you *'adopt'*? Come which way you please; the child is not to be denied a folly, because it is a child, and it is to have all its own way, disregarding the Father's word, according to its own self-willed convenience, although the Father's honours be trampled in the dust." The unregenerate are no where in God's word required to walk in those ordinances of God, which are peculiarly given to his called and believing people, because they are dead in sins, and their hearts are not gospel-wise right before God: but according to your idea, the regenerated are to be excused, because they are blessed with regeneration grace unto eternal life. This will just suit carnal and presuming professors, because it is an argument only to get rid of the Bible-obligations of practical obedience to the written word, which are enjoined on all that are called to be saints, and who name the name of Jesus. What the Lord did for his Old Testament people was, *that they might observe his statutes and keep his laws*. Ps. cv. 45. But your argument is, that New Testament saints, since the New Testament pattern of the will of God has been practically drawn out, and plainly written down by inspired authority, are to be excused by what the Lord in his goodness

hath done for them; so that instead of leading to, divine favour is to exempt from gospel obedience by the written word; while on the contrary, it is such favour only that qualifies for and obligates to such obedience. This is recommending a liberty to neglect the written word of God, as of little importance, compared to the studied convenience of believers, because grace abounds. This may sound very sweet, and many there are who are fond of such sweet things; but to eat much of such honey is not good (Pro. xxv. 27), because it is contrary to the very Spirit of God's word, which saith, "A son honoureth his father, and a servant, his master; if I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of Hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name." Mal. i. 6. "If ye love me, keep my commandments." John xiv. 15. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." Chap. xv. 14. "This is the love of God, that ye keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous." 1 John v. 3. They are a *yoke*, but to the obedient spirit they are *easy*. Matt. xi. 29, 30. When constrained by the love of Christ, we can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. 2 Cor. xiii. 8. And we contend that the New Testament truth of God to us is, what is written, in the plain sense in which command and example are practised out. And we consider it a daring imposition, although from the greatest of men, for any one now to put a meaning upon our Lord's commission and example to his apostles, which they themselves never named, hinted at, or practised out, in whole or in part, in any shape whatever recorded.

If you will bring the authority of scripture with you, for communion at the Lord's table without baptism, on a personal profession of faith in Christ, I do hereby solemnly engage, that with timely notice from you, I will call our friends together, and hold a communion, and you shall freely commune with us, and all that you like to bring with you of your sentiment. Therefore do not *accuse* us, but *convict* us, and come, as hereby invited, and confound us with the truth of God's holy word; and if you do not do *this*, we shall, from the time these papers come under your notice, hold *your* opposition and your charge on us of being *schismatical*, and of our

*thruting* the Lord's redeemed, in that public contempt their own textless futility will justly deserve. And if you can bring scripture to prove even that the thing was ever apostolically thought of and contemplated as allowable at any time, although not then decided; but so as that if the apostles now lived upon the earth they would practise it, even with such proof, we will allow any communion you please for twelve months, taking the whole length of that time prayerfully to consider how, with all good conscience, in the truth towards God we are then in future to act. And be assured of this, that we would then have mixed, open, or antibaptismal communion, if it could possibly be had with truth; and that especially, because of the respectability it would gather into our connexion—the reproach it would save us from which we now have to bear for the truth's sake—and also for the drag it would bring into our net (Hab. i. 16); for many parsons have now found out that *that* certainly is the right patrition side of the ship, and take that side accordingly, whatever be truth's side.

3. "*Because they have not been immersed in cold water.*"

Ah, that is the difficult point! Believers' baptism exclusively is right enough, and is clear enough written, but the *water is cold*; it is despised—it is no way respectable and accomodating to proud flesh and blood; and although the scripture letters of it are weighty and powerful, its bodily presence is weak, and its speech is contemptible, as God's servant Paul was. 1 Cor. x. 10. And this is enough to make the *water cold*, and to keep it so. But who warmed the waters of Jordan—the much water of Enon—and the waters in the wilderness for the Eunuch? The waters were as cold to the natives of that climate literally, as they are in any other climate to the natives; but carnal invention in religious profession, religious pride, and indifference to the pure word of God as the only rule of right, are since that grown so warm, that baptismal waters with religious professors, are now become so much more cold in the proportion than then! If believers' baptism was merely for persons to *gracefully lounge* on any *easy couch*, and be sprinkled with something that they like best of *sweet odour*; and *communion* was for persons to stand up to the waist in *cold water*, and so take the elements, we

should very soon have as many more *baptists* than communicants, as we now have of *communicants* more than baptists: if even there were then *seven* times as much written in the holy word of God on communion as there now is, and but *one-seventh* written on baptism that there now is. I would not speak in this way, if undeniable evidence did not bear me out, in the face of the very *contrary proportion* written in the sacred word for the *two ordinances*. And your speaking so reproachfully of believers' baptism, is not speaking against me, but against the only recorded order of the word of God on that subject. For we have frequent accounts therein of *believers* being baptized, when communion at the table is not even hinted at; and no account is given us of any other persons but *believers* being *intentionally* baptized, or of any coming to the table who were not first so baptized.

These things I tell you openly before the public, and it is for you to contradict them, if you can, with the word of truth, or go on reproaching the word of God, the Lord himself who was baptized in the river of Jordan, and us for adhering to the fair reading and only recorded order of the scriptures—just as long as you can find pleasure in so doing, my brother. If there were an instance or two recorded, where any person or people did come to the table of communion, without being first baptized, on their own personal profession of faith in Christ, it would suit your taste much better no doubt; but we ought not to be blamed because it is not so, nor because we cannot make it so for you, nor because we cannot allow that it is so for your convenience, when it is not so, nor because we are content with the matter as it is written, and to act exclusively by that rule, and the evident common sense that is uniformly conveyed by what is written—nor because we contend that what is contrary to what is written, is *wrong*—nor for our considering that to be altogether of the flesh, and without authority from God, that is without sacred text, until by the word of God we are proved wrong in so doing. While we act in the name of the Lord, in belief of the scriptures as we closely read them, and until it be proved that we have mistaken them, and are condemned by them, we shall laugh at reproach, and believe (2 Tim. iii. 16), adhere to (Phil. iv. 9), and take the encourage-

ment of (1 Peter iii. 13) — not fearing that we shall thereby *feel, see, speak, or do any harm*, in our own souls, to any one on earth, or before the God of the whole earth. Acts xxviii. 5, 6, 21. Phil. ii. 15.

FIFTH. “ *You call it strict, I call it schismatical communion, because you, not we, keep away the children from their Elder Brother’s table, unless they conform to your rules, I say your rules ; for since the national debt is to be paid by one of us, I will pay it twice, if you will find me scripture text which saith, or seem to say, Let men and women first be dipped, and so let them eat of the bread, and drink of the cup.*”

1. Your calling us *schismatical* is an old *popish* opprobrium, now and then raked out from among the bats and cobwebs of college cloisters, by the true sons of secular churches, for difference of sentiment only, without once proving, or being able to prove it to be for a difference from the *truth*. We are so accustomed with our dear Master, and his apostles, to be called by bad names, that we are quite indifferent to it; as they are only terms that are found in the vocabulary of human prejudice, and not in the book of God against us. But this does shew us, that whatever friendship you may express towards us, you inwardly esteem us as *schismatics !*

2. We keep no brother from the Lord’s table, but we invite them to come according to the word of God, as I have invited you to come, in whatever way the text of God’s word authorizes. And if it be now counted a sin to stand fast by that, and to walk by that rule, in its recorded doctrines and ordinances, we must still be reckoned vile, moving on as the not many mighty, not many noble, not many wise men after the flesh; and as the hated of all men for the truth’s sake, in its own order. For we must consider, that all our contest lies in *this*—whether divine text, and the only known and recorded order thereof, are absolute law, to be steadfastly regarded always; or whether human caprice and studied convenience, are to give laws, and constitute rules of obedience in the church of God? We oppose the latter, and are blamed; but prove the former to be wrong, or that we have not the former with us, and we will submit, and resign in both ordinances. Something no doubt you will do in reply to this, and we shall

expect you will cut a considerable figure on the plain text, for the instruction of the humble in this life and the poor in spirit; and for the stopping of the mouth of gain sayers, and for the reclamation of them that are out of your way.

3. "*Unless they conform to your rules, I say your rules.*" [www.libtool.com.cn](http://www.libtool.com.cn)

Well, call them our rules, we have no objection to that, for we are in too good company to object. For they *believed*, and were *baptized*, and were then *added to the church*; and *these* our rules. And they continued in such *doctrine* and *fellowship*, and *these* are our rules. There is not a word of their being *baptized* until they *believed*, nor a word of their being *added* to the church until they were so baptized, nor a word of their breaking the bread of *fellowship* at the Lord's table, until they were so added to the church, Acts ii, and *these* are our rules, but not yours; although we will challenge you before heaven and earth to find any other rule of communion in the church of Christ in the New Testament, or to prove that the apostles, in any one instance, ever deviated from these rules, or *knew*, or even *thought* of yours but as they apprehended the workings of the man of sin.

4. "*For since the national debt is to be paid by one of us, I will pay it twice, if you will find one scripture text which saith, or seem to say, let men and women first be dipped and so let them eat of the bread and drink of the cup.*"

We know there is no such a saying in any one scripture text, for the scriptures are too much the penmanship of the Holy Spirit to have any such a needless and weak composition inserted in their sacred pages. For baptism, as the believer's putting on of a public profession of Christ, so entirely and distinctly preceeded all connection with the church in communion, and the well known truth of this fact, was so settled among them that believed, as the only known order by the revelation of God, as altogether to preclude all consistent ground, occasion, or opportunity for any thing of such a form of words. The baptism of believer's was in full ministration by direct commission from God, before any New Testament church was orderly united, or the communion at the table was at all instituted;

both by *John*, and the apostles of our Lord too in the presence of their great Master. And in our Lord's final and standing commission to the end of the world, baptism was as much commanded on all believer's, as the preaching of the gospel to all nations was; and the apostle fully and clearly demonstrates the same in their acts, and that so they understood their Master both in his presence and absence; and yet not one word is there to be found in that commission about the communion at the table. Many were baptized who had no opportunity at or near the time to commune at the table, as those who were baptized before the table was instituted, and others situated as the Eunuch was; although none were baptized but such as were considered regenerated children of the chosen family of God; but you will never find that there was ever one believer who came to the table unbaptized, because he had not an *opportunity* to be baptized, although a believer. Our Lord entered upon his public character as the Christ of God, by *baptism*; and he did not institute the table of communion until just before he left the world. Philip baptized the Eunuch on his profession of faith, but not one word is said in the case about communion at the table. Ananias was sent of God to converted Saul of Tarsus, and he went and commanded him to arise and be baptized, and he baptized him; but not one word is said in the affair about the table. Paul in giving an account of his conversion, distinctly states his baptism, but says not a word about the table at the time .Acts xxii. Baptism is mentioned in *Epistles* where not one word is said about the table, as in the first of *Peter*; and baptism is mentioned later too than any thing is to be found said of the table: as in the *Epistles* to the *Galatians* and the *Ephesians* Baptism as evidently appointed of God, was publicly and uniformly practiced as an *individually* putting on of a profession of Christ, and of faith in his name; and a person was not fully and openly a professor without being baptized. And therefore baptism is called a *putting on of Christ*; and which also clearly shews what the ordinance of baptism must be, as to the subject, the mode, and the personal profession made therein. While the ordinance of the table was, and properly is the communion of the *body*, who are thus baptized into a profession of Christ; and

no other communion at the table is to be found in the word of God. No one can say that *Nicodemus* was not a vessel of mercy, but as we hear nothing of his ever being baptized, so we hear nothing of his ever coming to the table of communion. And *Joseph* of Arithmathea was a good man, Luke xxiii. 50. 51, and secretly a disciple of Jesus, John xix. 38. 39; but as we hear nothing of his ever being baptized, so we hear nothing of his ever being in the communion of the church. There were many of the chief rulers that believed on Jesus, but they did not confess him (I presume to say) by the distinguishing and openly declarative ordinance of baptism; and as they did not confess him by baptism, so we hear nothing of their ever coming to the table of communion. And the two reasons assigned why they did not so confess Christ, are first, "lest they should be put out of the synagogue;" and the next is, because, "they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God;" and herein they are not alone. John xii. 42. 43. So that if your proposed saying were any where to be found in the holy word, together with the present current testimony, and all that can now be gathered from the New Testament, it would only go to say, that your corruption was then creeping about the church, and was in those early days cautioned against, withstood, and condemned. And the text that you refer to in, 1 Cor. xi. 26, has just as much to do with persons not baptized on a profession of faith coming to the Lord's table of communion as it has to do with how many colours there were in Joseph's coat, and no more. For the Corinthian church was a baptized one, as all the churches of Christ then were, on their own personal confession of faith; Acts xxviii. 8. 1 Cor. xii. 13; and I will defy you in the name of the Lord, to prove that *that* order was ever subverted or confounded by apostolical authority. 1 Cor. xi. 1. 2. The apostle was writing to the church, and of those only who then belonged to the church; and whoever will impartially read the *tenth* and *eleventh* chapters, will see that the apostle's design was to correct certain abuses and irregularities which had obtained and were practiced among them; without the remotest thought or idea of receiving persons to the table without their first being baptized



on their own personal profession of faith in Christ; for he says, "the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? and the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" Chap. x. 18. "Wherefore my dearly beloved, flee from idolatry" ver. 14. "And I would not that ye should have fellowship with devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of Devils. Do not provoke the Lord to jealousy." ver. 20, 21, 22. "Now in this that I declare unto you, I praise you not." Chap. xi. 17, 18, 19, 20 21. "What! have ye not houses to eat and drink in? or, despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not?" ver. 22. "Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together to condemnation. And the rest will I set in order when I come." ver. 33, 34. It hereby appears to me as clear as the sun in the heavens in a cloudless day, that the apostle was not speaking nor even thinking of receiving communicants at all in any shape; but that he was contending for a proper and becoming deportment on the part of those who were already in church fellowship, in their coming together to the table of the Lord, so that they did not commit guiltiness and provoke the Lord in carnally *abusing*, instead of obediently and worshipfully *using* that institution of the Lord. And therefore, a greater perversion of the mind, meaning, and entire intention of the word of God, and of an inspired writer, was never practised in the high days of *Rome*, than your reference to 1 Cor. xi. 26, as a standing criterion and divine authority, for receiving of unbaptized persons to the communion of the Lord's table; and for the proving us wrong in not doing so; infant sprinkling being not baptism at all and altogether unknown in the scriptures. And why my brother, do you thus catch at the mere sound of a word, and so strangely rest its evident meaning? is it not because you must do *this* or nothing on your point? as the scriptures do not contain one single text minded to your purpose.

And why and on what ground is the ordinance of the table made so *much* of, as though it was almost a sure passport for heaven, when so *little* is said on it in the

scriptures; and believer's baptism is made so *little* of, and even rejected and spoken most contemptuously of, when so *much* is said of it in the scriptures? Surely an enemy must have brought this about; for the table is *but* an ordinance of the Lord, and believers' baptism is *no less*; having its direct commission from heaven, and honoured by our Lord, himself being baptized and commencing his public character thereby. That which has least said upon it in the sacred word, is in many respects carried to a pitch of superstition, and that which has so much the most said upon it is *despised* and *rejected of men*. This would not be the case if baptism was to be in *rose water*, instead of being as it is in common, "cold water;" but more especially so, if the New Testament scriptures of God were purely regarded as the sole and exclusive law of religious conclusions on the New Testament ordinances of God. For though you so pathetically call the table, "the table of our elder brother," the scriptures are much more full of record to declare the baptism of believers to be a distinguishing ordinance of the eternal God of salvation, than of the table, and also to precede it; and was obediently observed so through the New Testament by the believing before they came to the table. But religions corruptions have since that runned to seed in the hearts of professing men, and that is what makes all the difference between now and then; and between you and me.

SIXTH. "*St. Paul's criterion would not be cold water, little or much, but the living water of the Spirit, such as Christ spoke of to Nicodemus, and at the last day of the feast.*" John iii. 5. vii. 37.

1. If your spirit never be admitted into heaven till you can prove that Paul the apostle as the Lord's servant ever admitted, or that the sentiment as the truth of God ever entered his heart to admit, persons to the table of the Lord without their being first baptized on a personal profession of their faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, you will never, no never, see the face of Jesus, my brother.

2. The work of divine grace in the heart, to the production of repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, is the criterion whereby that the soul is interested in the everlasting covenant of God's

favour, and all the fulness of our Lord Jesus Christ unto everlasting life, may be safely concluded ; and that is also a scripture criterion for baptism, and baptismal profession of faith in Christ, is the scripture order of coming to the Lord's table of communion, without one text to the contrary, or one fairly doubtful. Now you hear all this, and if it be not true, contradict it at once with the truth of God's word ; or we shall wax bold by your silence through impotency.

3. We contend as much and as earnestly for the oil, wine, and water of divine unction, influence, and life, and all the pure blessings of free grace, by the power and ministry of the Holy Spirit, as the entire spring and sole maintenance of all vital and true godliness in the heart, for and unto the kingdom of God, as you do, or ever did, my brother, and that always so ; although it is no uncommon insinuation, and as glaringly false as common, that we deny the vital work of the Spirit in contending for the ordinance of believers' baptism. But if believers' baptism, although an undeniable scripture ordinance, is to be set aside and rejected, because it is but an ordinance, and is no vital part of the matter of salvation, and can answer no purpose more than an instituted means and ordinance of representation of vital things—what instituted ordinance of God for our practical observation is there that might not be equally set aside by the same rule ? The *power* productive of any spiritual good, is not in any means, but in *Him* that appoints them ; and he works by them as he pleases. He hath appointed *ram's horn* and *earthen vessel* instruments and means, whereby he will do his pleasure, and commands to be worshipped, that the excellency of the power may be of him, and that all creature pride and supposed excellency may be laid deep buried beneath the feet of his greatness and goodness. Scripture ordinances therefore are none of them to be set aside because they are no more than what they are, any more than any of them are to be set in the place of God, because they are what they are : every thing is good in its appointed place, order, season, and design. Eccles. iii. 11.

SEVENTH. "*Yours is a baptist rule, not an apostolical—not christian—not Christ's rule. It is the rule of a*

*party, and therefore schismatical, because it rends the beautiful garment of christian love."*

1. "*Yours is a baptist rule.*"

This we are quite ready to admit, and are by no means ashamed of it, nor disposed to conceal it, or deny it; for we have a *good conscience* in it as such, on the authority of the word of God, as we can find no authority therein for any gospel rule to the contrary. For our *great Christ* was a baptist, being baptized in the *cold water* of the river of Jordan; and he was a *baptist minister*, for he made, and by his authority in his presence, his disciples baptized *more disciples* than John, in the same mode that John baptized him; and he is a *baptist Saviour*, as he was baptized in sorrow, woes, and death, for all that he saves from wrath to come: and he is a *baptist King*, as he connected the institution of believers' baptism with the great laws of life—saying, "Go ye into all the world, and *preach the gospel*; he that *believeth*, and is *baptized*, shall be saved—teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." And our's is a *baptist salvation*, as we are saved by Christ's *baptism*, and the ordinance of baptism is a figure of it, and *hope in it* was in scripture times, publicly professed by baptism. And the very first institution of the table communion was in the strict order of a "party" of baptists *only*, as the disciples were of one *heart* in hope, faith, and sentiments; and of one *mind* on the way of God in his church; and this *order* at the institution of the table, is divine law to the church in all ages, as the institution itself is: hypocrites, like Judas, being lawless in the case. And the apostles being baptized (Acts i. 22) were all *baptist ministers*, who baptized no person but on their personal profession of faith, and *after* that only received them into the church, as of the Lord's adding. Acts ii. And all the churches of Christ in the New Testament are *baptized churches*, who never knew any communion but of persons baptized on their own personal profession of faith, and no account can be found in the book of God of any one soul *otherwise* in communion. And as a baptizer is a baptist, and the all overflowing, all heart and life affecting work of the Holy Spirit is compared to baptism, so He is the *divine Baptist* thereby, as also by his holy approbation of presence at Jordan, and by many undenia-

ble evidences of power exercised, and of saving favour imparted, by quickening and other operations mercifully wrought on baptizing occasions, on *many* persons, and even through my unworthy-to-be-named instrumentality too, as well as others, whom I could bring before you if required, who must bless and give thanks to the gracious name of God, for his blessing of life, love, and mercy, on their souls, through the means of that ordinance, of which you and others can speak so reproachfully. And the New Testament scriptures are *baptist scriptures*, as they speak so largely of and for the baptism of believers, as *that* which gave distinct character to the professed penitents, believers, and followers of Christ; and they cannot be forced to say one word against it, or for any thing contrary, although in violence for their silence, they be *scourged at Waltham*, and *crucified at Camberwell*. And as they are the scriptures of the *eternal Triune God* of our salvation, as the divine Lawgiver, and object to be confessed, adored and revered in the institution, He is divine Baptist Author of "baptist rule."

You may say what you will, but you must come over to our denomination to be saved by the *great Baptist One*, who was baptized in the "cold water" of the river of Jordan; although it may *hurt your feelings* as much as it did *Naaman's*, that his own rivers could not cleanse him, as well as the Israel waters of God's appointment. It is no use whatever of your jostling, shuffling, and shrivelling about so awkwardly, poor creature, for there is no way whatever by which you can possibly get to heaven, but in the arms, the bosom, the grace, mercy, and peace—and by the life, love, and baptismal blood and death of the triumphantly risen, and all-glorious Prophet, Priest, Advocate, and KING BAPTIST—who sits upon his throne, and looks like one that has been slain, with his vesture dipped (baptized) in blood.

And you have got all this to contradict and overturn with the sacred text in your hand, and by that authority only, before your intended reproach will to any effect fasten upon us; and also to give the heavy taxation of your next words any shadow whatever of bible truth.

2. "*Not apostolical—not christian—not Christ's rule.*"

All this throws light upon nothing, but the prejudice of your own mind; for otherwise it is a darkening of

counsel by words without knowledge. Is any thing truly *apostolical* rule, that is not *christian* rule? and is any thing *christian* rule, in communion, or in any thing else in religion, that is not *Christ's* rule? Can the apostles of Christ differ from Christ, and therein be acting apostolical? and can the christian deviate from Christ, and be therein acting the christian? If not, then nothing is either christian or apostolical rule, that is not Christ's rule.

These questions sometimes arise in my mind, when I hear people talk so winningly, so lovely, and so unitingly of a course of things in the professing church, for which there is not the authority of one word from the mouth of Christ, I do hereby ask you, in the name of the Judge of all the earth, and before angels and men, and more especially before the generally assembly and church of the first-born—and shall expect you to give me a plain, unequivocal, and decisive answer, on the clear authority and plain testimony of the sacred text—**WHAT IS CHRIST'S RULE OF COMMUNION IN HIS CHURCH ON EARTH?** You may point out some way that is best pleasing to most men, but my request to you is, what is the revealed and declared mind and will of God recorded in the New Testament text?—to be gathered from the *mouth of Christ*, or from the *mouth of the apostles*, or from the *acts of Christ*, or from the *acts of the apostles*, or from the *conduct of the churches of Christ*? You have roundly and pointly said that communion, *exclusively* on the principles of believers' baptismal profession of faith in Christ, is neither *apostolical*, *christian*, nor *Christ's rule*. And we shall now demand of you to find up the *truth* of that saying in the *word of God*, as an honest man of God, who would say nothing but the truth; and as a man of honour, who would not suffer himself to lie under the suspicion of saying what he is not at once prepared to support by the unequivocal laws of truth, ought to do.

Our Lord Jesus Christ as the object of faith, and the example and commanding Head of baptism, and of communion, was himself baptized in the river, before he instituted the table communion; and therefore he did not even himself set down to the table of communion but as a *much water baptist* with his apostles. Though Lord of all right to do as he pleased, he did not set

down as an unbaptized person, nor as one unconsciously sprinkled, or done any thing else to when an infant, so as that any one else could take license to do so from his personal act. And as his personal acts were his rule, so his was personally *baptist rule*; or it must be proved from the mouth of God, that his order of action in these things was no part of heaven's will, declared as any rule at all for us; and that cannot be, until it can be proved that in these things he acted several very different ways; and that would be to prove that our great Lawgiver gave us no rule at all in these things: but the contrary is the fact, for as *Leader* and *Lawgiver*, he hath left us an example how to follow him. John xxi. 22. The apostles, in communion with him, were all *baptists*, and as there were none else there, it was properly communion by *baptist rule*. If it be said that the individual baptizing of all the apostles cannot be traced out, even that is no consequence to the point against us, for they were all baptizers of *made disciples*, in the presence and by order of Christ, and they were all of *one accord* after his ascension. Acts ii. 1. Nor did they differ in any religious sentiment of salvation, or of order in the Lord's household, after the Spirit's holy descent upon them; and so they were all baptists, and all within *baptist rule*: or why was *Ananias* so directly sent to baptize believing *Paul*, who was chosen and called of God to be an apostle? There is no account of the baptizing of *Philip*, nor of *Ananias*, but they were evidently baptists enough to preach and administer believers' baptism, and that was carrying out a *baptist rule*. And all the churches of Christ, that were planted and watered by the apostles, were what we call *baptist churches only*; for if there be some of them whose baptizing is not particularized, yet as all God's foreknown, elect, and redeemed, strangers, begotten again to a lively hope, who were scattered abroad throughout *Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia*, were all baptized, as the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Peter i. 1, 2, 3. iii. 21.)—all those churches are at once included. And that they were so baptized is sufficiently clear and evident by the apostle's so pointedly writing to them all as such. And this makes the fact plain enough to any impartial mind, that the *baptist rule* was every where observed by believers,

as the only christian apostolical rule of Christ, then known or ever heard of among them. And that no other rule of communion is Christ's, even by one solitary text ; and so neither *christian* nor *apostolical* by any one act recorded, or by any authority so to act. If this evidence is not plain enough for you, I will tell you what it is plain enough for, and that is, that by it I will hereby solemnly pledge myself, that when you shall find such good evidence in the sacred text for any *other rule*, I will from that hour be of your sentiments both on *sprinkling* and *communion* too ; and will give up our *baptist rule*, and publish the same in at least half-a-dozen periodicals.

3. "*It is the rule of a party, and therefore schismatical.*"

We suppose that by the charge of *party*, you mean to say that we are a mere seditious pestilential faction. But all this will only make us laugh at your weakness, unless you can and do support your charge by the New Testament law of God. However, the idea of a *party*, may be taken in a *good* sense, as well as in a *bad* one, and we have no objection, but earnestly desire to be a plain *scripture party* in the fear of God. We have no objection for conscience' sake to be that party who are *condemned* without and against divine law (Isa. lix. 15), in distinction from those who *justify* themselves without and against divine law. Gal. vi. 12. Rom. xvi. 18. We do not want men to call us *good*, so long as by the word of God they cannot prove us *bad*, and we have a good conscience in all things pertaining to godliness. You have made your deadly charge upon us, and it is now for you to sustain it by the evidence and power of the sacred text, and by the same law to overturn all the evidence in our favour on these papers ; or retract what you have said, as one that has spoken unadvisedly.

4. "*Because it rends the beautiful garment of christian love.*"

We are not at all accountable, nor are we careful, for whatever may be rent by a conscientious adherence to the word of God, in the evident sense of that word. We consider that there may be a great deal of fleshly religious finery, highly presuming to christian love, which the sooner rent the better. Rev. xvii. We glory in rending *that* garment, though it be off a *christian's*



back, and we get never so bitterly maligned for so doing, that is hostile to and unknown in the truth and order of God's word. There is no real and important beauty in any religious garment, any further than it is inspiration-seamless, and bible truth-woven from the top throughout. John xix. 23. And that love that cannot live in the element of plain bible truth and order enforced, let it die; for it is not a fruit of the Spirit, for he is the Spirit of *truth* as well as love; and it is not of Christ, for he is the Son of God in *truth* and *love*. And all *true* godliness, whether in sentiment, disposition, or act, is the seed and offspring of Christ in *truth* and *love*, or in love founded upon truth. 2 John i. 1.

EIGHTH. "*St. Paul's rule of admission to christian communion is this, As many as Christ has received, let us receive. Rom. xv. 7. The whole of Chap. xiv. is applicable, and especially the xv. 5, 6, 7. I wish you could be made to blush for your inconsistency—I mean not your's alone, but of your party.*"

1. Wherein have we differed from Paul's rule in the admission to communion? for that is all still to be discovered and to be proved. You must prove that any one was ever admitted to communion, without being first added to the church, and that there ever was one added to the church without being first baptized on a personal profession of faith in Christ, or that such a thing was ever asked for, or thought of, by either candidate, minister, or the church; before you can prove that we differ from Paul's rule of receiving all whom Christ hath received.

2, You have to prove that Rom. xiv., and chap. xv. 5, 6, 7, has any thing to do with our subject at all, any more that it has to do with the plagues of Egypt. I will positively affirm and challenge contradiction before men of any degree, that no such thing is the mind and intent of the Spirit; and that no such thing was in Paul's mind, argument, aim, or intention in these two chapters, as that the church at Rome was to receive into their communion at the Lord's table, persons who were not baptized on their own personal profession of faith in Christ; or that *baptism*, for or against, was any way concerned as a question, in the business of Paul's writing the xiv. and xv. chapters, to the Romans. To me it appears truly awful, that you, as a man of God,

a minister of the gospel, and a man of letters, should so wring, wrest, and twist, the sacred word of God, into a meaning which, is as evident as the sun is clearly in the heavens in a cloudless summer's noon day, was never the mind, meaning, or intention of the Holy Spirit on the inspired apostle's soul in what is written; and that you should do *this*, to support what cannot be upheld in the name of the Lord by a more true, fair, and honest reading of his sacred word. So to snatch up and drag in, as by the hair of ones head, merely adapted sounds, irrespective of the particular meaning or the evident general drift of argument and design of what is written, as the best and only support you can obtain from the holy word, is but the more fully to prove that your particular subject in hand is altogether unscriptural; and also worse than that, to betray truth in general into the hands of its communion vultur-eyed foes. Psalm xxii. 7.

From the use that is made of the Old Testament scriptures by references in the New, we see that great liberty is allowed in the using of the sacred word for the elucidation of revealed subjects; but to lay down any portion of the sacred word, as the positive ground upon which to found those conclusions on doctrines or ordinances, that shall affect the public order and character of the church of God, we must adhere immediately, and be particular to the primary and infallible meaning and intent of the Holy Spirit by the pen of the inspired writer. It is miserably bad to hear what is generally the truth, advanced upon a false construction on a text of scripture, but it is many times more awfully worse to falsely construe a portion of the sacred word for the purpose of supporting what the true reading and meaning of no part of the word of God will support for a truth. That which is most pleasing to a man, is to him generally the least like an *error*, although it may at the same time be most erroneous; and therefore we ought always, and particularly on controverted points, to take that cautionary question with us, "How readest thou?" Luke x. 26. And also that we always keep in mind the sacred injunctions, "take heed how ye hear." Luke xviii. 18. "Believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they be of God." 1 John iv. 1. The business of the

saints of God is not to *receive* all things, but to *prove* all things, by comparing spiritual things with spiritual, 1 Cor. xi. 13; *holding fast that which is good*. 1 Thes. v. 21. For it is the *simple* only who believeth every word, while the *prudent* looketh well to his goings; Prov. xiv. 15; *finding no holy path* of safety to walk in, where there is *no light* of the *divine word*; Psalm cxix. 104, 105; nor warrant to conclude in favour of that which hath no sacred text; 1 Cor. xi. 16; but praying in all things, "O let me not wander from thy commandments." Psalm cxix. 10.

3. The Roman Church was a *Baptist Church* and there were no cavils, hesitations, or questions in it, or about it, to settle on that subject. But as a people settled of one heart and of one mind therein, the apostle did enforce their godly and Christian-like observance of what they professed *to be*, and to *believe* in their baptism: that they might do credit to that profession, and honor God as the truly risen to newness of life according to it. chap. vi. 3, 4. This church appears evidently to have consisted of *Jews* and of *Gentiles*; and although these were alike the subjects of the free grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ, yet from the great difference there was in their former character, situation, circumstances, habits of life, relations by blood, and deep laid prejudices, and the unhallowed handle that the ill tempered nature of flesh and blood might make of these things; together with some things, which from the second, third, and fourth chapters, we may fairly and safely judge the apostle had already heard of them; there appeared so great a danger, as to render it needful closely and solemnly, to caution them against being *jealous* one of another, and to admonish them to exercise due affection toward one another, that the peace and harmony of the church as a body, might not be incautiously disturbed with such things, as ought for ever to be forgotten, in their equal debtorship to the free grace of our Lord Jesus Christ for salvation. And to cure this evil, or to prevent this *likely* one, was the apostle's design; as also that the different degrees of knowledge, strength of hope, and boldness in the faith of Christ, that there was among them, should create no misunderstanding, but that the *strong* should bear with and help the *weak*, and

love and receive them, as the Lord had received them all both weak and strong, and alike made them all what they were for the kingdom of heaven; the *strong* having nothing to *boast*, and the *weak* having nothing to *fear*. And that if the Jews still had a regard for certain days on certain accounts which the Gentiles knew nothing about, that *that* should be of no consideration of disturbance, so long as the Lord's own given order of divine ordinances for his New Testament church was not disturbed thereby. And that if the *Gentiles* could with good conscience eat certain meats which the *Jews* could not, that they should not be considered *unclean*, nor *unbelievers*, nor be *despised* for so doing, so long as the divine model laid down for the New Testament church was duly regarded and honourably maintained by them. And that the weak and much *bound* should not be treated with *indifference* but with *tenderness*, because they could not see far and clear enough to enter more into *liberty*. And that those who were most favoured with the glorious liberty of the sons of God, should not be considered *presumptuous* because of that liberty; but that all should use what measure of grace they had, to the glory of God, in a studious regard with all needful self-denial for each others welfare in the Lord; for that *which* should be profitable for them all, and well pleasing to God, as in 1 Cor. viii. These are evidently the ends and designs the inspired man of God had on his mind, when moved to write the xiv. and xv. chapters to the Romans, and particularly so in the 5, 6, 7, verses of Chap. xv; without the least or remotest thought of disturbing God's own given order of believer's baptismal communion, or of receiving unbaptized persons into the communion of the church. Nor can I see that the design of the argument regards the receiving of fresh communicants to the table, but the receiving of those into each others affections, prayerful concern, and care, who were already members in communion. And I am confident that no such thing is either said, meant, or thought of, as that of their receiving new communicants in any way contrary, to the one way of divine will, in which they were at the first united as a baptized people on their own personal profession of faith. But contrary to all that you can prove to be either

said, meant, or thought of, by the inspired writer, you falsely apply the things said in these chapters to the setting aside of baptism, and to the establishment of communion without it; and that not because you really have *one text to disprove baptism*, but because you *do not like it*.

4. "I wish I could make you blush for your inconsistency, I mean not yours alone, but your party."

I dare say you do wish so; and fools enough should we be to blush without cause: and a considerate man you must be to wish us to do so without *shewing* us cause. If we had to wring the nose of scripture, until we bring forth the blood of violence done to its evident and only true sense and meaning (Prov. xxx. 33), to make it look our way, and could no how get it to do so after all, as you have done with just such want of success, to make it look in your favour on the points in hand, we would instantly blush, and you should then have your wish without any further trouble. But what is our "inconsistency?"

1. It is because we cannot sprinkle infants, and call the act an ordinance of God, when neither you, nor any one of its advocates, can find one passage in the whole scriptures of God intended for its existence or support, nor one text to give it any signification whatever when it is done, except it be that of turning God's own ordinance out doors, to be laid in a manger, that the inn may be differently occupied by the more agreeable.

2. It is because neither we, you, nor any one else, can find any churches of Christ in the New Testament but of persons baptized on their own personal profession of faith in Christ? and because it is equally impossible to find the least mark or trace of any other communion at the Lord's table, than that of persons so baptized.

3. It is because we cannot consent to be more self-inconsistent and self-contradictory than the Popish church of Rome herself is, or than any of the national churches are, or than any class and denomination of people at all professing the religion of Christ on the face of the whole earth are. By which we mean, that as *baptists*, to believe that *water baptism* is an ordinance commanded of God in his holy word, and that the baptism of *believers only*, on their own personal profession of faith, to be that ordinance of God according to the scriptures, and

so only to administer it; and to hold accordingly, that infant sprinkling, or sprinkling at any time, is no baptism at all, and so is not God's commanded ordinance observed at all; and then to take persons into our communion whom we so consider to be not baptized at all—is to act ~~more self-inconsistent~~ and self-contradictory, than any other denomination will so degrade themselves to consent to. Because of all those denominations who hold infant sprinkling to be baptism, or pouring, or the baptizing of believers to be so, if persons think proper, while either way is considered among them to do as well, none of them will admit into their communion those persons who have not been (as they reckon it) baptized in some way, and at some time. The *mixed* communion *baptists* therefore, in receiving persons to the table of communion, whom they do consider, on their own professed belief of baptism, to be not baptized at all, do on the one hand hold baptism to be a commanded ordinance of God according to the scriptures, and on the other hand they practically deny it altogether; and according to their own professed sentiments thereof, they do it in the worst way of any people. My decided belief of such conduct is, that it is not done to lose one penny by it, nor to meet nor please the shoeless beggar, nor to fulfil any known part of God's revealed will commanded in the scriptures; and that flesh and blood only hath revealed this course unto them, and not our Father which is in heaven. What is called *mixed* communion is the practising of a flat contradiction, and when I can see a right for that in the word of God, I shall then be able to see that baptism may be dispensed with altogether in *every* way, as well as to be denied in *such* a way. To ask us to admit of mixed communion, is to request of us according to our sentiments, to give up baptism altogether in the case of every such candidate; and that is more than our friends on the opposition bench would, according to their sentiments, give up to any request of ours. Were I an *Independent*, I should despise the crouching, cringing, curling, fleshly accomodating, and flattering conduct of a *mixed* communion baptist minister (Prov. xxviii. 20, 21), *although a man of God* (1 Kings xiii, 9, 21, 22), because I should consider it done to catch the *monied* and *respectable*, who otherwise might go and

help to support some place of their own denomination. And when a baptist might come to the table to commune with me, I should laugh to see how easy, how towardsly, and how senseless the poor thing could practically deny its own sentiments on baptism, and justify the very opposite. And I should suppose the independent ministers do so now sometimes, if the truth of it could be known; but if the baptists will be weak enough so to betray their own sentiments, let them be secretly laughed at.

4. Or does our "inconsistency," lie in our *not considering* baptism the *demarkation* of all vital godliness for the kingdom of God? and that because we *do not consider* all who are not baptized to be dead in sin, and in the way to perdition? and because we cannot violate the only to be found order in the word of God on communion, that we *do not* conclude to have nothing to do with unbaptized persons? Or is it because, that while we consider many unbaptized persons to be the called heirs of glory, we do not set one of God's commanded ordinances aside altogether to accommodate to them some carnal corruption that has intruded into the professing church, while the Lord himself by the mercy they have obtained of him, commands them to keep his commandments, and not us to set them aside and so justify others in the neglect of them. We wish to go and act together in christian love, with all the children of mercy and subjects of the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, so far as we can in all good conscience toward God on the truth and order of his holy word; but to go no further with any person or people than we can do it on *principle* by the word of God, as we read it and understand it; holding *that*, we honestly consider to be *unscriptural*, to be as *really* so in the hand of a *good* man, as the same would be in the hand of an *infidel*; giving it no more quarters in the one case than in the other, but esteeming the *brother* as a brother still, as the apostle *Paul* did *Peter*. Gal. ii. 11.

5. Our Lord preached in the Jews temple and in their synagogues, but he did not invite the priests, levites, nor congregations to the table of communion, and we cannot say that there were not many whom Jesus secretly knew

to be the heirs of life, quite as well as we can judge of persons when they are openly called by grace; but he regarded the *revealed* order of truth. *Nicodemus* and *Joseph* of Arimathea, acted a godly christian part toward the body and cause of our great Redeemer, and the service so done was acceptable and lovely in the esteem of the disciples, and the Holy Spirit has recorded those deeds as such; but as they were never baptized, that we know of, so the disciples never invited them to the table, although they received their christian *acts*, and doubtless esteemed their persons. And is it our "inconsistency" to act in like manner by the revealed order of truth? Be it reckoned so, we are quite content to bear such reproach, while we are commanded to *stand fast* in the *faith* (1 Cor. xvi. 13), in the *liberty* (Gal. v. 1), and in the *one spirit* of the gospel (Phil. ii. 27), and in the Lord, as his word declares his will. Chap. iv. 1, 2. And likewise to *strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die*. Rev. iii. 2. And I do feel it my duty before God, to contend as earnestly for *believers'* baptism as the *only* baptismal ordinance revealed in the scriptures, and for the communion of saints here below on such principles only, as I do for any one of the doctrines of grace; and that for no other reason than because they are the scripture matters of the preceptive will of God to me, without controversy on the sacred page. And as to their importance or non-importance, touching the salvation of souls, that is a matter which I feel to be no business of mine to stop to enquire about; the revealed *word* of the Lord is the imperial law to my soul, and it rests exclusively with HIM, what he will do with that word. And as to who may *see* things so, or who do not—who may *receive* them so, or who may not—how many, and what *great men* have rejected such an order of things—and who will, or who will not, go to heaven, of those who here reject or receive such an order of things—are matters that belong entirely to my great, wise, and gracious Master, and by no means to me. *My orders* are to *Let my eyes look right on, and to let mine eyelids look straight before me* (Prov. iv. 25); and I suppose this to be toward my great Master, and the whole of his revealed will in its recorded truth and order. And it is required of *stewards*, that a man be found *faithful*. 1 Cor. iv. 2. And this is as much required in a steward in the midst and in regard to the *family*, as it is among and in



regard to *strangers* and *enemies*; and so with all *faithfulness* unto death, to *occupy* until the Master comes, and then to receive the crown of life. Luke xix. 13. Rev. ii. 10.

5. "*But your party.*"

What a mercy for us it is that *charge* and *conviction*, *accusation* and *condemnation*, *attack* and *conquest*, differ so widely as they do. Who are the *party*, and which is the *principal*—who are the *faction*, and who are the *original state*, between you and us, waits to be decided. You brand us for the *party*, we deny the charge, and it is for you to prove the charge against us. If we can maintain our ground by the word of God, and you cannot make that word out in its original design to oppose us, then you are the party. And if you can maintain your claims, and the word of God will bear you out by the sound reading of its sacred text, then we will admit we are the party, and are accordingly guilty of schism; but you have got all that to prove, and we shall condemn every thing that does not come with the authority of the sacred text. I have so put myself into your hands, *that you may now grind me to powder, if truth be on your side*; and if you do not do something of the kind, your cause will look all the worse. Arise, and put on the armour of God, take the sword of the Spirit, and quit yourself like a man; and do not spare, hit in earnest, for I am not afraid, only take care you do not hit yourself. *Truth* is what I want, and not *mastery*; let me have truth, whatever be my cost. I shall expect to hear from you, and shall be most happy to pay all the attention in my power to whatever you may say on the points in hand. My brother, God bless thy soul, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit, in all wherein thou fearest God, thinkest right, and holdest fast, that which is holy, that which is true; and may all else go to the moles and to the bats. Farewell.

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