

# **B A B Y   B E L I E F   B E F O R E   B A P T I S M**

**BIRTH AFTER REBIRTH: ON THE FAITH OF PRENATAL COVENANTERS  
ALIAS THE SEED OF FAITH IN COVENANT INFANTS BEFORE THEY ARE BAPTIZED**

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by

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Incipiently  
blessed  
before  
baptism

Ingraftingly  
blessed  
during  
baptism

Increasingly  
blessed  
after  
baptism

## **FOREWORD**

On perusing this treatise, one is once again impressed by the humble and unquestioning acceptance of the Word of God by the author. Yet he does not succumb to the fallacy of Biblicism. For he never pretends to have been the first to prove the real sense and significance of biblical truth.

Professor Lee merely seeks to follow in the steps of the Master and of many predecessors who have been instructed by the *Doctor ecclesiae*. Standing on their shoulders and thoroughly conversant with the recognised confessions of faith, he could envisage divine revelation in a meticulous and lucid manner.

According to him -- and rightly so -- the covenant of grace is the mainstay of infant baptism. The flaw that vitiates adult baptism even within the covenant of grace, is the urge of depraved man to contribute meritoriously to the act of grace. This is indeed tantamount to detracting from grace.

A *locus classicus* as regards infant baptism and the validity and cogency of presumed regeneration, is contained in the words of the apostle Paul to the Romans as stated in ch. 4:11 -- which are seldom noted. This did, however, not escape the attention of Calvin and of our author.

Referring to the said text, Calvin terms circumcision "a seal of the righteousness of faith." He then argues "that since God imparted circumcision, the sign of repentance and faith, to infants -- it should not seem absurd that they are now made partakers of baptism, unless men choose to clamour against an institution of God.... Children are baptized for future repentance and faith.... The seed of both lies hid in them, by the secret operation of the Spirit." *Institutes* IV:16:20.

May this study by Rev. Professor Dr. Francis Nigel Lee then enjoy the readership it deserves!

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"You made me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts....  
You are my God, from my mother's womb." Psalm 22

"Before I [the Lord] formed you in the belly, I knew you;  
and before you came forth out of the womb, I sanctified you!" Jeremiah 1

"Sanctify the congregation; those that suck the breasts....  
He will cause the rain to come down for you!" Joel 2

"He [John] shall be filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb....  
"The sixth month, the babe leaped in my womb for joy." Luke 1

"I [Jesus] thank You because You have revealed these things to babies....  
Be converted like these little ones who believe in Me!" Matthew 11 & 18

"They brought to Him [Jesus] infants, so that He could touch them....  
"Whosoever receives not the Kingdom like a child, enters not!" Luke 18

"Jesus said to them [the priests and scribes], Have you never read:  
'Out of the mouth of sucklings, You have perfected praise?'" Matthew 21

"I will pour out of My Spirit.... Repent and be baptized....  
For the promise is to you and to your children." Acts 2

"Rebecca conceived...the unborn children.... It was said...by God:  
'Jacob have I loved.... I will have mercy on whom I want.'" Romans 9

"The unbelieving husband has been set apart by the [believing] wife....  
Else were your children unclean; but now, they are holy." I Corinthians 7

"Faith dwelt first in your grandmother and your mother, and in you....  
From infancy, you have salvation through faith in Christ." II Timothy 1 & 3

"We baptize our children. For it would be unfair to rob those born from us as the people of God, of fellowship.... They are those whom one should presume have been elected by God."

-- *First Swiss Confession* art. 21f (1536).

"We with our children...cannot enter into the Kingdom of God except we be born again.... Although our children have been conceived and born in sin..., they nevertheless have also been sanctified in Christ and therefore ought to be baptized as members of His Church.... You have forgiven us and our children all our sins...and received us through Your Holy Spirit...and so have adopted us to be Your children and sealed and confirmed the same unto us by holy baptism."

-- *Dutch Reformed Baptismal Formula* (1581).

"The children of believers are holy...by virtue of the covenant of grace in which they together with the parents are comprehended. Godly parents have no reason to doubt the election and salvation of their children whom it pleaseth God to call out of this life in their infancy."

-- *Decrees of the International Calvinist Synod of Dordt* I:17 (1618).

"The seed and posterity of the faithful, born within the Church, have by their birth, interest in the covenant and right to the seal of it.... Children by baptism are solemnly received into the bosom of the Visible Church.... They are Christians and federally holy before baptism, and therefore are they baptized."

-- *Westminster Directory for the Publick Worship of God* (1645).

"Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit Who worketh when and where and how He pleaseth."

-- *Westminster Confession of Faith* X:3 (1647).

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## SYNOPSIS

My former friend Rev. Dr. Gary Roper (then of Memphis Baptist Tabernacle) once told me no baby could believe in Jesus. Consequently, concluded Dr. Roper, all early-dying babies -- even those of Christian parentage -- should be regarded as lost.

Another acquaintance, the Baptist David Kingdon, informed me we cannot but be 'agnostic' about such matters. See his well-known book *Children of Abraham*.

Well, can babies believe in Jesus? Until born again, no person at all even sees the Kingdom of God (John 3:3-8). The inspired writer of Christ's Epistle to the Hebrews (11:6) insists "without faith it is impossible to please God."

In chapter I, we look at the teaching of Scripture anent the **baby belief of tiny covenanters**. Do they trust in Jesus even before their birth; because baptized; or only after their infant baptism?

In chapter II, we examine the teaching of **baby belief in the Ante-Nicene Church**. Did the Early Church Fathers teach that covenant infants were to be baptized? Did they assume their prenatal regeneratedness?

In chapter III, we take a look at **baby belief from Nicea to the Reformation**. When did the doctrine of baptismal regenerationism first take root? Was baptism always regarded as essential for salvation -- ere the epoch-making 'Copernican revolution' of Zwingli?

In chapter IV, we examine the views of **Calvin on baby belief before baptism**. What did he say about the presumed regeneratedness of covenant infants prenatally? Did he regard them as needing baptism after their birth? What did he think of baptismal regenerationism?

In chapter V, we note perceptions about **baby belief from Knox till Westminster**. What is the teaching of the Reformed Creeds, from the *Scots Confession* to the *Decrees of Dordt*? What does the *Westminster Confession* (10:3) mean anent "elect infants dying in infancy" being "regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit?" Why does the *Westminster Directory* state "the seed...of the faithful...are Christians...before baptism?"

In chapter VI, we trace the development of the doctrine of **belief within babies from the Westminster Assembly till 1991**. How was this matter viewed by English Puritans like Manton and Owen? How have Calvinists elsewhere (and notably in Scotland and in Holland) seen this matter? What did the Early American Presbyterians believe about this? And what are the opinions hereanent of leading Reformed theologians worldwide, during the last fifty years?

In chapter VII, we draw our **Conclusion -- Christianity's baby belief before baptism!** Even infants need regeneration, in order to be justified. God clearly regenerates all early-dying infants of the godly. Thus the latter babies should all be baptized, by sprinkling, in infancy -- as those themselves presumed to be believers.

## **ORDER OF SOURCES DISCUSSED IN LEE'S "BABY BELIEF BEFORE BAPTISM"**

Holy Scripture (Genesis to Revelation).

The Talmud (Aboth, Baba Kamma, Baba Meezia, Baruch, Chaggim, Cheriroth, Chethboth, Chizzuk Emunah, Erubim, Genesis Rabba, Hullim, Javamoth, Jeramoth, Makshirin, Menahoth, Niddah, Perah, Pesach, Qiddush, Rosh ha-Shanah, Sanhedrin, Shabbath, Tohoroth, Yebamoth, Yoma).

Old Testament Apocrypha (Sirach *etc.*) and Pseudepigrapha (Testament of Levi *etc.*). Tannaim, Hillel & Shammai, Qumran, Essenes. Greeks & Romans (Homer, Euripides, Virgil, Ovid, Plutarch, Apuleius). John the Baptizer. Philo, Josephus, Judaism (according to the Mishna, Aben Ezra, Serira Gaon, Nizzachon, Jehuda Ben-Levi, Meor Enajim, Abraham Ben-David, Rabbi Minchas, R. Solomon, R. Joseph, Abravanel, Maimonides, Selden, Modena, Witsius, Jeremias and Aland).

Clement of Rome. Didache. Epistle of Barnabas. Ignatius. Pliny. Aristides. Epistle to Diognetus. Papias. Shepherd of Hermas. The New Testament Apocrypha (Acts of Paul, Acts of Paul and Thecla, Acts of Peter, Acts of Xanthippe & Polyxena, Words of Baruch, & Gospel of Thomas). Justin Martyr. Polycarp. Hierax. Papyrus. Maximus. Irenaeus of Sirmium. Sabas.

Marcion and the Marcionites. Montanus and the Montanists. Athenagoras. Theodotus. Irenaeus of Lyons. Polycrates. Clement of Alexandria. The Old Egyptian Ordinance. Archeological evidences. Tertullian. Hippolytus. Minucius Felix. Origen. Cyprian. Dionysius of Alexandria. Baptismal inscriptions for infants. The Hieracitae. Eusebius of Caesarea. Lactantius. The 306 A.D. Synod of Elvira. The 316 Synod of Neocaesarea. Asterius.

The 325 Council of Nicea. Alexander of Alexandria. Asterius. Arabic Canons. Athanasius. Zeno of Verona. Optatus of Milevus. Cyril of Jerusalem. Basil the Great. Gregory of Nazianzen. Gregory of Nyssa. The 'Apostolic' Liturgy. The apocryphal Apocalypse of Peter. The apocryphal Vision of Paul. Siricius. Didymus the Blind. Ambrose. Chrysostom. The Donatists. The 397 A.D. Synod of Carthage. The Sixth Synod of Carthage. Jerome.

Epiphanius. Augustine. Pelagius. Caelestius. The Pelagians. The Semi-Pelagians. Innocent. The African Code. The 'Apostolic' Constitutions and other Pseudepigrapha (Pseudo-Dionysius, Pseudo-Clement, Pseudo-Justin, Pseudo-Athanasius, Pseudo-Chrysostom). Philastrius. Theodoret. Isidore of Pelusium. Leo. Deacon Mark. Cyril of Alexandria. Gregory the Great.

The Mediaeval Church. Old Gotho-Gallican Collect. John of Damascus. Liturgy of the Greek Church. Ancient 'Orthodox' Church of Armenia. Ukrainian and Russian Orthodox Churches. Theophylact of Bulgaria. The Paulicians and the Petrobrusians. The Bogomils or Cathari. The Albigensians.

The Waldensians. Alain de Lille. Bernard. Thomas Aquinas. Bonaventura. The 1284 Council of Nemours. The 1304 Synod of Langres. Dante Alighieri. Later Romanism (The Council of Florence, Durand, Gerson, Cassender, Bianchi, Bellarmin, Petavius, Gregory Ariminensis,

Sfondrati, Pope Pius IV, Malebranche, Pope Pius IX, Cardinal Newman, Gousset, J.P. Murphy, B.V. Miller, D.A. Vonier).

Wycliffe. The Lollards. Huss. Calixtines. The Taborites. Bohemian Brethren. Luther. Melancthon. The Augsburg Confession. Gnesianism. Westphal. Heshusius. Chemnitz. The Formula of Concord. Hunnius. The Saxon Visitation Articles. The later Lutherans (Hoffmann, Chemnitz, Gerhard, Delitzsch, Krauth, Pieper). The Anabaptists (Münzer, Storch, Ulimann, Blaurock, Manz, Hübmaier, Simons & Philips). Zwingli. Bucer. Capito. Hedio. The Tetrapolitan Confession. Musculus.

Oecolampadius. The First Basel Confession. Myconius. First Bohemian Confession. Bullinger. Megander. Leo Judae. The Second Basel Confession alias the First Helvetic Confession. Peter Martyr Vermigli. George Wishart. Aretius. Cajetan. The Council of Trent. Laski. Micron. Cranmer. Ridley. Crumwell. The English Confession of Faith alias the Forty-two Edwardine Articles. Hooper. Philpot. Becon. The Church of England's Thirty-nine Articles. R. Hooker. J.H. Blunt. The Hungarian Reformed Confession. The Consensus Tigurinus.

Calvin (vs. Castellio, Servetus & Socinus). Beza. Knox. The First Scots Confession. The First Book of Discipline. The 1565 General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland. Guido de Brés. The Belgic Confession. Ursinus. Olevianus. The Heidelberg Catechism. The Profession of the Tridentine Faith. The Roman Catechism from the Decrees of Trent. The Second Helvetic Confession.

Zanchius. Datheen. Craig. The Scots Catechism. The 1580 Second Scots Confession (alias the National Covenant). Menzo Alting. Friedrich Spanheim Jr. Vander Heyden. The Dutch Reformed Baptismal Formula. The Synopsis of Purer Theology. Taffin. Junius. Keckermann. The Brandenburg Confessions (The Confession of Sigismund the Leipzig Colloquy, and the Declaration of Thorn). Lucas Trelcatius Sr. Lucas Trelcatius Jr. Snecanus. Kimedoncius. Bastingius.

Gomarus. The Arminians (Limborch, Curcellaeus & Episcopius). Acronius. Grevinchoven. Seu. Bontemps. Du Bois. Donselaer. Austro-Sylvius. Moded. Buschius. Tay. Costerus. Nicolai. Lanspergius. Amspringius. Vossenholius. Faukelius. The Short Compendium (of the Heidelberg Catechism).

Cartwright. Whitaker. Preston. Perkins. Ames. Ball. The Synod of South Holland's Formula for Baptizing Adults. Gallus. Donteclock. Bucanus. Puppius. Hommius. Alsted. Henry Alting. The Irish Articles. Lubbertus. Maccovius. The Decrees of Dordt (including its Preamble, its Postscript, and the Addenda of the theologians from Switzerland and Bremen). Walaeus. Rivetus.

Voetius. Cloppenburgh. Udemann. Kuchlin. Geselius. Boerhave. P. De Witte. Burmannus. Polanus. Maresius. Vossius. Wollebius. Nigrinus. Berg. James Alting. Trigland. Smyth. Helwys. Sibbes. Shepard. Cotton. Hooker. Davenport. Williams.

Burgess. Gillespie. Lightfoot. Marshall. Reynolds. Rutherford. Twisse. Ussher. Wallis. The Westminster Directory for the Publick Worship of God. The Westminster Confession of Faith. The Westminster Larger and Shorter Catechism.



Manton. Dickson. Trapp. Baxter. Love. Brooks. Guthrie. Owen. Wigglesworth. Poudrouyen. Cocceius. Wendelin. Lodensteyn. Flavel. Witsius. Watson. John Edwards. Heidegger. Turretine. The Formula Consensus Helvetica. Ridderus. Koelman. Vtringa. Smytegelt. Brakel. William Wall. Matthew Henry. Watts. Steuart. Venema. Maastricht. Marck. Willison. Vander Honert. De Moor. Melchior Leydekker. Jacob Leydekker. Groenewegen. Van Toll. Tuinman. Aemilius.

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# **I. THE BIBLE ON COVENANT BABY BELIEF BEFORE BAPTISM**

How can a baby believe in Jesus? Mustn't a child first profess Christ as his or her Saviour, before being baptized? Aren't all children automatically saved without faith, until they become seven years old? Are infants truly sinners? Do they really need saving, before they reach an age of accountability?

Don't all those dying in infancy go straight to heaven supernaturally, or at least to a painless limbo (possibly full of natural joy) -- but certainly not to hell? Do miscarried or aborted human fetuses really have immortal souls that can never die? Or are such fetuses soulless, and destined simply for the rubbish tip? How can anyone be "born again" -- before they've even been born? "How can these things be?"<sup>1</sup> "What does Scripture say?"<sup>2</sup>

To answer the above and similar questions well, we must distinguish the following three phases.

- A), God's gracious covenant of life with man before the fall.<sup>3</sup>
- B), covenant-breaking man's condition immediately after the fall.<sup>4</sup>
- C), God's subsequent covenant of redemption with His fallen elect.<sup>5</sup>

## **1. God's prefall gracious covenant with all mankind**

The one and only Triune God -- the willing Father, His speaking Son or Word, His inbreathing Spirit -- created mankind good and upright. Having made them as His triune image, He commanded Adam and his wife Eve to reproduce.

Accordingly, all of their descendants would be conceived by the providence of the Triune God. For God had graciously entered into a prefall covenant with Adam as the federal head of all mankind. Genesis 1:1-3,26-31; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Hosea 6:7; Romans 5:12-21; First Corinthians 15:21-22,45-47.

Had the fall not occurred, those descendants would then have been born in a state of rectitude -- would have been good by nature. For Adam and Eve themselves were each the untarnished image of the good God Himself -- knowing and 'reflecting' Him from their very creation onward. They would thus have been fruitful and multiplied -- and all would have remained very good.<sup>6</sup>

In their own unfallen likeness, our first parents would thus have reproduced and brought forth children. The latter would therefore themselves have been untarnished images of God -- knowing and 'reflecting' Him from their very conceptions onward.

They would then have increased in their knowledge of Him. They would have grown up to manhood; have left father and mother; and have cleaved to their spouses nakedly and unashamedly -- knowing and serving the Triune God in all of this, and for ever.

When subsequently conceived and born in holiness, even their sinless babes and sucklings -- the grandchildren of Adam and Eve -- would then have shown forth God's praise. For mankind would then still have been in a state of honour.

In due course, God would then have caused even all the nations of mankind to develop -- from one blood. They would then have dwelt sinlessly all over the surface of the earth -- in order to keep on seeking to serve the Lord.<sup>7</sup>

Had Adam not sinned, there is no way either he or any of his descendants could have been lost.<sup>8</sup> They would then all have been very good, even from their conceptions onward. Yet they would still have progressed in holiness. For they would have advanced from the ability-not-to-sin (*posse non peccare*) toward inability-to-sin (*non posse peccare*) -- until actually arriving there. Thus Augustine.

Meantime: like father; like son; like grandson; and so on till the very end of world history. But for man's fall, the whole human race would have remained holy -- by nature.

## **2. Covenant-breaking man's universal fallen condition**

However, Adam -- the federal head of the entire human race -- soon fell into grievous sin. God had told him to reproduce his own kind. He had also warned him not to eat fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Instead, he was to guard the garden against the serpentine intruder.

He was forewarned that, if he disobeyed, he would die.<sup>9</sup> He did. Then, all his descendants would similarly die (whether prenatally or in old age). Now they do. This proves they too share the penalty of his breaking God's gracious covenant.

It also proves that fallen man and his descendants are no longer able to keep that covenant. Yet they are still required to do so. For they are subject to its obligations -- as well as to the penalty for breaking it. This is true even of God's covenant people -- including their religious leaders. For also "they, like Adam, have transgressed the covenant." Hosea 6:7f.

Declares the *Westminster Confession of Faith*:<sup>10</sup> "The first covenant made with man was a covenant of works, wherein life was promised to Adam, and in him to his posterity, upon condition of perfect and personal obedience.... Our first parents, being seduced by the subtilty and temptation of Satan, sinned in eating the forbidden fruit....

"They, being the root of all mankind, the guilt of this sin was imputed.... The same death in sin and corrupted nature [was] conveyed to all their posterity descending from them by ordinary generation....

"God gave to Adam a Law as a covenant of works, by which He bound him and all his posterity to personal, entire, exact and perpetual obedience.... This Law, after his fall, continued to be a perfect rule of righteousness. Genesis 1:26f; 2:17; Romans 2:14f; 10:5; 5:12,19; Galatians 3:10,12; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Job 28:28."

Thus the **fallen** "Adam lived an hundred and thirty years, and begat a son in his own likeness after his image.... All the days that Adam lived, were nine hundred and thirty years; and he died. Then Seth lived an hundred and five years, and begat Enos.... All the days of Seth were nine hundred and twelve years; and he died"; *etc.*<sup>11</sup> "By one man, sin entered into the world; and death by sin... So death passed upon all men.... Death reigned from Adam [onward]...even over them that had not sinned in the same way of Adam's transgression.... Through the offence of one, many be dead!"<sup>12</sup>

The terrible plight of fallen man, is that he is now a covenant-breaker. So too all his descendants. They are dead in sin and conceived in iniquity. They cannot even see and still less enter into the Kingdom of God -- unless and until they have been born again.<sup>13</sup>

"Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble.... Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one -- seeing his days are [pre-]determined.... What is man, that he should be clean; and he that is born of a woman, that he should be righteous?

"Behold, He [the Lord God] puts no trust in His holy ones [probably meaning the angels which fell].... How much more abominable and filthy is man! ... How then can man be justified with God? Or how can he that is born of a woman, be clean? Look, even the moon and...the stars are not pure in His sight. How much less man, who is a 'worm'!"

### **3. God's postfall covenant of redemption with all elect mankind**

But our gracious God did not leave mankind to wallow in fallen human depravity. Immediately after Adam's sin, God the Father came in His Word and with His Spirit -- to needy mankind. God Himself then promised to crush the serpent and its seed (at Calvary) -- to restore the woman, and to promote "her seed."<sup>15</sup>

Declared the Triune God to Eve: "I will greatly multiply your conception.... [For] You shall bring forth children [or sons]!"<sup>16</sup>

The obligations of God's original covenant with Adam and Eve and all their not-yet-conceived descendants -- "be fruitful and multiply!" (&c.) -- thus still continue, even after the fall. Christ the Second Adam -- "The Seed of the woman" --facilitates this. He does so, in terms of the original covenant's renewal (as the covenant of redemption).

So all of Eve's descendants are covenantally required to live as "seed of the woman." Not one, even after apostasizing from either the prefall covenant of life or the postfall covenant of redemption, should be left unchallenged -- to live and to die like the 'seed of the serpent'!

Thus, God re-asserted His gracious prefall covenant with all mankind. He re-erected His covenant -- as a covenant of redemption. He did and does so with all His elect.<sup>17</sup>

Yet He nevertheless also urges even the unable and unwilling reprobate to comply. Their ongoing disinterest and treasonous refusal to do so, well illustrates the extent of their sinful

dehumanization. Ultimately, however, they will stand manifested -- not as the seed of the woman, but indeed as the seed of the serpent.

In the fullness of time, the God of peace would Himself become the Second Adam Jesus Christ. As man, He Himself would then crush Satan. Thereafter, the God of peace would also soon crush Satan under the feet of the Lord's children themselves.<sup>18</sup>

Adam and Eve seem to have believed these gospel promises. For they apparently repented, and thus again became -- **holy**. For Adam (which means 'man') did not call his wife *Māweth* (meaning 'death' or the 'mother of all dying').

Instead, Adam called her *Chavvāh* -- the Septuagint's *Eua* alias 'Eve.' That name means 'life' -- hence: 'the mother of all **living**.'<sup>19</sup> For also her children were to be required to live in a holy way. Anticipating New Testament baptism<sup>20</sup> -- "unto Adam, also and to his wife, did the Lord God make coats of skins; and He clothed them."<sup>21</sup>

Subsequently, also their children were similarly clothed -- very soon after they had been born. For "Adam knew his wife, and she conceived, and bare Cain (alias 'gotten'). For she said: 'I have gotten a man from the Lord.' And she again bare -- his brother Abel...

"Then Adam knew his wife again. And she bare a son and called his name Seth [alias 'in place of'] . **For God**, she said, 'has appointed me another seed in the place of Abel'.... Then men began to call upon the Name of the Lord."<sup>22</sup>

It is sad indeed that Cain -- but not Abel and Seth --repudiated this covenant of redemption when he grew up. Yet until then, his mother rightly (though rebuttably) presumed him to be regenerate -- even from his conception and birth onward.

Said she at his conception or birth: "I have gotten a man from the Lord!"<sup>22</sup> Or perhaps even: "I have gotten a man -- the Lord!" Adam and Eve, solely by the grace of God, were 'holy roots.' They therefore rightly regarded all their offshoots or offspring as holy too -- until the contrary might later become evident.

"For if the firstfruit be holy, the lump [or remainder] is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches."<sup>23</sup> This is so as regards godly parents, even from their sexual intercourses and the sometimes resulting conceptions onward. Thus, Adam and Eve rebuttably presumed that all their children, solely by the grace of God, were not unclean -- but holy.<sup>24</sup>

They maintained that presumption -- from the very time of the conception of their first child onward -- until the contrary might subsequently become evident. If and when that occurred, their wayward descendant(s) would -- and indeed should -- be rejected by and from the congregation of Christians.

The Dutch Reformed theologian Rev. Dr. George W. Bethune reflects on this. He does so in his book *Early Lost, Early Saved: An Argument for the Salvation of Infants, with Consolations for Bereaved Parents*.

There, Bethune accurately states<sup>25</sup> that "the child, if he lived to grow up, might cut himself off from the covenant by his own sin. Exodus 12:15 & 31:14. The first-born of woman became the murder-cursed Cain. But the babe, as a babe, was from his birth an object of the divine favour or compassion." Or so it then quite rightly seemed to his covenant mother Eve. And correctly so. Genesis 4:1.

But when the apostate Cain, though rightly urged to repent, faithlessly refused to do so -- he was ex-commun-icated. Thus, "some of the branches [of man's family tree] be broken off...because of unbelief" and unfruitfulness. On the other hand, as the other saved branches matured -- they would become fruitful, and "keep on standing by faith."<sup>26</sup>

All branches without exception, however, were first to be presumed holy. Genesis 3:15f & 4:1f; Romans 11:16; First Corinthians 7:14. Only if some of those branches later proved unfruitful, would they then be "broken off."<sup>27</sup> Yet even thereafter, "if they do not keep on abiding in unbelief --they too shall be [re-en]grafted. For God is able to graft them in again."<sup>28</sup>

#### **4. The regeneration of some of the degenerate ever since the fall**

Now Scripture says that since the fall, every child -- whether his or her parents are Christians or pagans -- is morally corrupt from conception onward.<sup>29</sup> Consequently, since Adam's fall, every human being (including even an unborn fetus) is by nature hopelessly lost. So, he or she needs to be regenerated or 'born again' -- before death occurs. Without this happening --absolutely nobody could ever even have seen, and still less entered into -- the kingdom of God.

This 'regeneration' is the very first phase of the Lord's saving work in His children. Yes, **His children!** It enables them to see and also to enter into the Kingdom of God.<sup>30</sup> For regeneration is the work of the sovereign Spirit of God Who wafts His children into His Kingdom -- just like the wind wafts things wherever it wants.<sup>31</sup> Regardless of their infancy or of their senility, all who have been regenerated as God's children really do believe -- however dimly -- in Christ's death and resurrection for their sins.<sup>32</sup>

As the *Westminster Confession of Faith* correctly teaches:<sup>33</sup> "All those whom God hath predestined unto life, and those only, He is pleased, in His appointed and accepted time, effectively to call by His Word and Spirit out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ, enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God.... This effectual call is of God's free and special grace alone, not from anything at all foreseen in man -- who is altogether passive therein until...quickened and renewed by the Holy Spirit....

"Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit.... Baptism is a sacrament, not only for solemn admission of the party baptized into the Visible Church, but also...of regeneration.... Not only those that do actually profess faith in and obedience unto Christ, but also the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized.... [For] it be a great sin to condemn or neglect this ordinance!"

Even the great Baptist Theologian Rev. Professor Dr. Augustus Hopkins Strong rightly admits the following:<sup>34</sup> "Death, the penalty of sin, is visited even upon those who have never exercised a personal and conscious choice. Romans 5:12-14. This text implies that: (a) sin exists in the case of infants prior to moral consciousness, and therefore in the nature [of human beings].... (b) Since infants die, this visitation of the penalty of sin upon them marks the ill-desert of that nature....

"It is therefore certain that a sinful, guilty and condemnable nature belongs to all mankind.... Infants are in a state of sin, need to be regenerated, and can be saved only through Christ.... The work of regeneration may be performed by the Spirit in connection with the infant soul's first view of Christ.... If infants are regenerated, they are regenerated in conjunction with some influence of truth upon the mind, dim as the recognition of it may be."

## **5. The bearing of circumcision and baptism on regeneration**

Now Scripture says that non-bloody baptism replaced the bloodshed of circumcision. That occurred when Christ shed His precious blood on Calvary's cross.

It was the latter -- toward which the bloodshed during circumcision pointed.<sup>35</sup> Before Calvary, circumcision followed faith. Since Calvary, baptism -- in the place of circumcision -- also follows faith. For baptism now seals faith, in all true believers -- just as circumcision did before Calvary.<sup>36</sup>

Before Calvary, circumcision was the sign and seal of the righteousness of the faith already possessed before being circumcised.<sup>37</sup> Even infants were deemed to possess at least 'the seed of faith' -- before being circumcised in Old Testament times. Consequently, they are still to be regarded as faithful -- before being baptized in New Testament times.<sup>38</sup>

Indeed, in Old Testament times a male child left uncircumcised (after the eighth day of his life) -- was "cut off" from his people by that uncircumcision. This clearly shows that he was to be regarded, and had been regarded, as a 'holy child'<sup>39</sup> previously -- until thus "cut off" or amputated in his uncircumcision after attaining the age of eight days.

A child circumcised in infancy (or like Ishmael even as a teenager), might later repudiate that promise.<sup>40</sup> Until he might do so, however -- he was to be regarded as holy.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, even if he later repudiated the promise, he was -- unless and until yet later (re-)converted -- on pain of punishment constantly to be urged to re-appropriate it.<sup>42</sup>

However, if he then refused to (re-)appropriate it, he was thenceforth to be regarded as "uncircumcised in heart" (alias unregenerate).<sup>43</sup> So too, even since Calvary, all baptized persons are repeatedly to be urged to keep on re-appropriating these promises -- also from their baptism onward, and till their deaths.<sup>44</sup>

Even before circumcision was instituted,<sup>45</sup> saving faith in the work of the Christ-to-come was sometimes found both in adults and in their children. For God has always regenerated His elect, whether in infancy or in adulthood -- at some time before they die.<sup>46</sup>

Thus, "elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit Who works when and where and how He pleases. So also are all other elect persons."<sup>47</sup> For "the wind wafts wherever it wants to. And you hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it is coming from and where it is going. So is every one who has been born of the Spirit."<sup>48</sup> "You must be born from above!"<sup>49</sup>

## **6. Regeneration from the fall till the flood**

Ever since the fall, even Adam and Eve and their descendants all needed to be born again (or 'regenerated'). Therewith and thereafter, Adam and Eve believed in the coming Messiah.<sup>50</sup> This their belief, was sealed when they were clothed with lambskins. These were "put on" them by God Himself. So too is baptism -- ever since Him to Whom it points, Christ the Lamb of God, was slain at Calvary.<sup>51</sup>

Clothes were given not only to Adam and Eve, but were also "put on" their covenant children -- even while they were still infants.<sup>52</sup> For Eve clearly (though rebuttably) presupposed that her covenant infants were, from conception onward, of 'the seed of the woman' and not of the wicked 'seed of the serpent.' She continued in that charitable and natural presupposition -- until, in the case of Cain, his impenitence and unbelief later became painfully evident.

For when Cain grew up, he apostasized from the covenant. Abel and Seth, however, remained in that covenantal faith for the whole of their lives.

All of the Old Testament covenant people -- from the first Adam's sons such as Abel and Seth, to God's Son the Second Adam Jesus Christ -- were "clothed" shortly after their births. Similarly, all of the New Testament children of God also "put on" Christ -- when they were baptized, even in infancy.<sup>53</sup>

As Calvin remarks:<sup>54</sup> "God expressly says '[I will put enmity] between you [Satan] and the seed of the woman'; as widely, indeed, as the human race shall be propagated.... The human race, which Satan was endeavouring to oppress, would at length be victorious.... The whole Church of God -- under its Head [Jesus Christ as The Seed of the woman] -- will gloriously exult over him.... 'The Lord shall bruise [or crush] Satan under your feet shortly!'"

Also Seth's immediate descendants remained faithful. "To Seth...there was born a son. And he called his name Enos. Then men began to call upon the Name of the Lord."<sup>55</sup>

This apparently continued, down through the next several generations.<sup>56</sup> It continued at least until the time of the mighty preacher Enoch -- "the seventh [generation] from Adam."<sup>57</sup>

It was "by faith" that the godly Enoch constantly "walked with God" or "kept on walking with God." This he did -- apparently even from his prenatal infancy, when he first began to be catechized.<sup>58</sup> For, very significantly, Enoch's very name apparently means 'catechized' -- from which it appears that his godly father Jared intended to, and indeed did, raise Enoch in the covenant of grace.



So too, it seems, did most if not all of Enoch's named descendants.<sup>59</sup> For this pious practice apparently continued -- right down to the godly Noah.<sup>60</sup>

## **7. The presumed regenerations of Noah's family members before their "baptism"**

The Biblical account of Noah and his family at their "baptism" during the flood<sup>61</sup> richly illustrates this principle of covenantal solidarity between faithful parents and their children. Noah and his entire household were separated from the ungodly. God established His "covenant" with the former, and "baptized" them all as a believing family inside the ark.

This He did, when the rainwaters were sprinkled upon them --down from above.<sup>62</sup> Also Noah's son Ham was at that time treated as a believer, inside the ark of the covenant -- even though subsequently he was cursed.<sup>63</sup>

It is very important to note that Noah was already a godly person -- long before God (re-)established His covenant with him and his descendants, and very long before he and his family were "baptized" during the flood.

Noah's father was the godly Lamech. The latter had declared,<sup>64</sup> even when he begat Noah, that "this one shall comfort us...because of the ground which the Lord has cursed" on account of man's sins.

Godly Lamech without doubt catechized his son Noah, from the latter's conception onward -- just as his own grandfather Enoch and great-grandfather Jared had done before him. Doubtless also his godly son Noah would do the same when he too grew up -- namely when he yet later raised his own children.

So, long before his later "baptism" during the flood -- "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord."<sup>65</sup> For "Noah was a just[ified] man and perfect in his generations, and Noah kept on walking with God."<sup>66</sup> Probably for at least one hundred and twenty years, he also kept on preaching repentance<sup>67</sup> to the wicked flood generation.

It is only thereafter that God [re-]established<sup>68</sup> His covenant with Noah and his entire family. This was still before God yet later "baptized" them, during the flood. "With you I am [re-]affirming My covenant; and you shall come into the ark -- you, and your sons, and your wife, and your sons' wives with you."

This is the first mention of the word 'covenant' in Holy Scripture. The idea is already encountered before the fall. Later, Hosea too very clearly teaches that "Adam transgressed the covenant."<sup>69</sup> Yet the word 'covenant' is not found in the early chapters of Genesis -- until here, right before the flood.

The New Testament mentions these "days of Noah" within "the ark..., in which...eight persons were saved by water." Indeed, it then calls New Testament baptism the somewhat similar antitype.

This comforts God's children who obediently serve the Lord Jesus Christ. For Peter says that "baptism too, the antitype" -- like the water raining onto Noah's ark -- "now saves us." It does so, "not by putting off the filth of the flesh -- but by a good conscience's answer to God, by the resurrection of Christ."<sup>70</sup>

Peter further tells us that this "answer of a good conscience" is given (trinitarianly): to "God the Father; through sanctification of the Spirit; unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ."<sup>71</sup> It is thus given by grace, and not by man's mature 'free will' as an act of man's obedience.

Instead, it is given as a human answer -- on behalf of the entire covenantal family -- to Christ's prevenient special grace. Indeed, it is commanded by authority (or in the Name) of the Triune God of our Christian baptism.<sup>72</sup>

## **8. Circumcision as the seal of Abraham's prevenient faith**

We now come to the institution of circumcision, as the sign and seal of faith in God's covenant promises.<sup>73</sup> These were indeed the promises of Christ. For what God then proclaimed to the Patriarch Abraham and his entire household,<sup>74</sup> was nothing less than the Christian Gospel itself.<sup>75</sup>

Significantly, however, we are told that Abraham trusted the Lord -- and that he was justified by Him -- **before** we are told that the Lord made a covenant with him.<sup>76</sup> It is only subsequently we are further told that God "will make" and "will establish"<sup>77</sup> or [re-]affirm His covenant with Abraham. Indeed, that was still before the circumcising of Abraham and all the males in his entire household.

Thus God said to Abraham:<sup>78</sup> "I will establish [or '(re-)affirm'] My covenant between Me and you, and your seed after you in their generations, as an everlasting covenant -- to be a God to you, and to your seed after you.... This is My covenant which you shall keep, between Me and you and your seed after you. Every male child shall be circumcised.... He who is eight days old, shall be circumcised.... And the uncircumcised male child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised -- that person shall be cut off from his people. He has broken My covenant."

Notice here that the covenant, and circumcision as its sign, are given not only to adults professing the true faith. They are given also to their children -- even from their infancy.<sup>79</sup> Observe further that these children did not first have to grow up, before receiving the sign of the covenant. They received that sign and "seal of the faith" even when they were still tiny infants.<sup>80</sup>

We should note yet further, that God did not make covenants with Isaac and Jacob different from the one He made with Abraham. For the Bible says Abraham dwelt in tents "with Isaac and Jacob --the heirs with him of the same promise."<sup>81</sup>

Most important of all. We need to recognize that the covenant was not first initiated with either Abraham or his household only at the moment they received circumcision. To the contrary.

Abraham's tiny descendants were already in covenant -- even prior to their infant circumcision just eight days after their births.

This is why their later non-circumcision when eight days old -- as indeed required -- did not constitute their non-entry into a covenant not yet existing for them. To the contrary. It rather constituted a breach of the covenant, of which they already partook precircumcisionally.

Hence, "the uncircumcised male child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised -- that soul shall be cut off from his people. He has broken My covenant."<sup>82</sup>

## **9. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob all in covenant before their circumcision**

Now Abraham's son Isaac did not first need to become an adult before he could become a holy person. No! He was already a holy person, even when still a child. In fact, he was prenatally holy already from his mother's womb -- and hence from before the time of his infant circumcision.<sup>83</sup>

Thus, Abraham's seed Isaac was in covenant with God from his very conception onward.<sup>84</sup> His later circumcision when an older infant -- fully eight days after his birth -- could only confirm the covenant already established with him. Indeed, had he not been circumcised eight days after his birth -- the already-existing covenant would thereby have been broken. This shows that the covenant with Isaac was already there for him -- and binding on him -- even before his circumcision.

For Isaac's circumcision in the flesh when eight days old,<sup>85</sup> only confirmed or strengthened the covenant which bound him to God even prior to his being circumcised.<sup>86</sup> Similarly, ongoing uncircumcision either in the flesh or in the spirit only breaks the covenant already established prenatally. Consequently, that covenant therefore already existed for the covenant child -- from long before his infant circumcision.

Happily, there is no evidence that Isaac ever dis-believed God. For he grew up as an obedient covenant child<sup>87</sup> -- even though God certainly increased the imperfect Isaac's faith from time to time thereafter.<sup>88</sup>

## **10. Jacob and Esau -- and the circumcised Shechemites**

The same was later the case with Isaac's own son Jacob. In spite of all Jacob's many subsequent sins and backslidings and rededications, God had loved him justifyingly -- even before he was born.<sup>89</sup>

Though he later sinfully deceived his elder brother Esau into selling him his birthright -- Jacob nevertheless earnestly and faithfully desired that birthright and all of its spiritual blessings, for himself.<sup>90</sup> Though he sinfully deceived his father Isaac, Jacob nevertheless believingly desired his father's blessing.<sup>91</sup> Indeed, God repeatedly renewed His covenant with Jacob: at Bethel;<sup>92</sup> later at the Jabbok;<sup>93</sup> then again at Paddan-aram;<sup>94</sup> and subsequently too.<sup>95</sup>

It is true that God reprobated Isaac's other son Esau even before he was born -- on the grounds of Adam's imputed sin, as well as because of God's foreseeing Esau's own unrepented sinfulness.<sup>96</sup> However, God never disclosed the fact of Esau's reprobation from all eternity past -- either to Esau, or to Esau's parents. God did so neither to Isaac and Rebekah before Esau's birth, nor subsequently to Esau himself.<sup>97</sup>

When Esau grew up, he himself broke the covenant by holding his own birthright therein -- in disrepute.<sup>98</sup> He further lapsed from the covenant -- into fornication and bigamy.<sup>99</sup> Then he hated and sought to murder his brother Jacob.<sup>100</sup> Next, he 'trigamously' married yet another unsuitable wife.<sup>101</sup> Subsequently, he greedily grabbed Jacob's armistice presents.<sup>102</sup> Esau was a covenant-breaker. As the New Testament says, he was a "profane person" or an unholy man.<sup>103</sup>

So too, apparently, was Shechem -- and the ungodly men of his city. Even after they had all nominally submitted to circumcision, they still seemed unregenerate. Comments Calvin:<sup>104</sup> "As if anyone, by laying aside his uncircumcision, might suddenly pass over into the Church of God!" Clearly, Calvin was no friend of circumcisional or baptismal regenerationism.

In this way, even those who circumcised them -- "pollute[d] the spiritual symbol of life by admitting foreigners promiscuously and without discrimination into its society.... So also, at the present time, our baptism separates us from the profane." Thus Calvin.

Faithful covenant-keeping is found in the house of Joseph and even Judah. Though by no means sinless, Joseph was Jacob's most beloved son. Joseph gives constant evidence of trusting, from a very early age, in the merits of Jehovah-Jesus as his only Lord and Saviour.<sup>105</sup>

Even Judah, in spite of many backslidings, seems to have trusted in God from a very early age.<sup>106</sup> Indeed, apparently the same can be said also of Job.<sup>107</sup>

## **11. Moses and the Mosaic covenant of grace**

Also Moses seems to have been a true believer from a very early age. For, in addition to his nine months prenatally inside his pious mother's womb, he was a "goodly child" inside his godly parents' home for the first three months of his postnatal life too.

In his famous book *The Theology of Infant Salvation*, Rev. Professor Dr. R.A. Webb of Southwestern Presbyterian University in Clarksville (Tennessee) observed about Moses that "Stephen described him as 'exceeding fair'.... The margin has it 'exceeding fair to God.' Acts 7:20.

"The argument becomes conclusive as to his childish [or childlike] piety, when we read... 'his parents...saw he was a proper child.' Hebrews 11:23.... It was by faith that his parents saw the properness that was [already] in him.... They saw by the revelation of God in the new-born babe not [merely] physical beauty, but those spiritual qualities which made him 'exceeding faith to God.'"<sup>108</sup>

Subsequently nursed by his own Hebrew mother (probably until at least four or five years of age), Moses early learned the ways of the Lord. For also later, he further "esteemed Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt." Hebrews 11:26. Indeed, as the first Christian martyr Stephen later observed -- it was indeed that promised Messianic "Prophet...Who was in the Church in the wilderness...and with our fathers"<sup>109</sup> such as Moses.

After leading forth his own Hebrew people and their infants from Egypt at the time of the exodus, Moses told them to dedicate their firstborn infants to Jehovah.<sup>110</sup> At Sinai, God through Moses promised His people He would remain faithful to thousands of generations of those who love Him and keep on observing His commandments -- indeed, even month-old babies were given the job of "keeping the charge of the sanctuary."<sup>111</sup> For as covenant children continue obeying their fathers and mothers, the Lord keeps on prolonging their days -- and continues seeing to it that things keep on going well for them.<sup>112</sup>

Just hear Moses addressing his people -- shortly before his death! "If you shall listen diligently to the voice of the Lord your God, to observe to do all His commandments..., these blessings shall come upon you.... Blessed shall be the fruit of your body! ... The Lord shall establish you as a holy people to Himself...and the Lord shall make you plenteous in goods in the fruit of your body."

By the same token, however, the opposite curse will accrue even to the covenant people -- if disobedient.<sup>113</sup> As Joshua told them: "Choose today the gods you wish to serve! ... But as for me and my household -- we will serve the Lord!"<sup>114</sup>

## **12. Infant faith in the days of the judges Samson and Samuel**

Even Samson, in spite of all his many backslidings, was prenatally dedicated "to God -- from the womb, to the day of his death." He regularly served God "through faith" -- whenever the Holy Spirit from time to time revived him.<sup>115</sup>

Samuel too was given to the Lord by his godly mother, for all the days of his life. Indeed, he was so given -- not just before his birth; not just at his conception; but even before his conception.<sup>116</sup>

For Samuel's mother the barren Hannah had earlier vowed that if the Lord would give her a son, she would "give him to the Lord all the days of his life" -- and thus even from his conception onward.<sup>117</sup> Hannah continued praying to the Lord.<sup>118</sup> In time, when her husband Elkanah had sexual intercourse with her, "the Lord remembered her" and caused her to conceive.<sup>119</sup>

About eight months or so "after Hannah had conceived," and "when the time was come about" for her to give birth -- "she bore a son and called his name 'Samuel' [meaning: 'asked for from the Triune God']". She said, 'because I have asked him from the Lord!'"<sup>120</sup>

Elkanah then went up to offer to the Lord the yearly sacrifice. But Hannah said she would not accompany him upon such annual pilgrimages, "until the child has been weaned." In those

times, that generally occurred around four or five years of age. However, Hannah quickly added: "Then I will bring him -- so that he may appear before the Lord, and stay there for ever!"<sup>121</sup>

Hannah finished weaning Samuel when "the child was young." Then she declared she had "lent" (or 'returned') him to the Lord --and would now once again continue to "lend" (or 'keep on returning') him to the Lord, as long as he lived. "So Samuel worshipped the Lord there."<sup>122</sup>

"Then the child [Samuel] ministered to the Lord before Eli the priest."<sup>123</sup> "And the Lord visited Hannah, so that she conceived -- and bore three sons and two daughters" -- even while "the child Samuel grew up before the Lord."<sup>124</sup>

"Then the child Samuel grew on, and was in favour both with the Lord and also with men."<sup>125</sup> "And the child Samuel ministered to the Lord before Eli the priest."<sup>126</sup>

Then "the Lord called Samuel."<sup>127</sup> "Now...the Word of the Lord had not yet been manifested to him."<sup>128</sup> "But the Lord came and stood and called, as at the other [previous] times: 'Samuel, Samuel!' Then Samuel answered, 'Speak, for Your servant is listening!'"<sup>129</sup> The above words "as at the other times" -- clearly indicate that the Lord had repeatedly spoken to the young Samuel on earlier occasions too.

Thereafter, "Samuel grew, and the Lord was with him and did not allow any of His words to fall to the ground."<sup>130</sup> "And all Israel, from Dan even to Beersheba, knew that Samuel had been established to be a prophet of the Lord."<sup>131</sup> "And the Lord appeared again in Shiloh. For the Lord manifested Himself to Samuel in Shiloh, by the Word of the Lord."<sup>132</sup>

Throughout, the above example of Samuel is full of instruction. His mother gave him to the Lord before his conception. She carried him, suckled him, weaned him and instructed him. Repeatedly, he himself heard the voice of the Lord -- and each time hastened to obey Him. What a model covenanter -- for us covenanters also to follow!

### **13. David and the psalms: on infant faith within the covenant**

Also the case of David, in particular, is full of instruction. On the one hand, he was conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity -- long before growing up, backsliding, and then outrageously committing murder and adultery.<sup>133</sup> On the other hand, however, David also confidently trusted in and put his hope upon God -- even when he was still upon his mother's breast, and repeatedly thereafter. For Jehovah was David's God, even from his mother's womb.<sup>134</sup>

According to David himself,<sup>135</sup> the Lord has founded or "ordained strength even out of the mouth of babes and sucklings." Jesus later infallibly rendered this: "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, You have perfected praise."<sup>136</sup> Indeed, the psalmist<sup>137</sup> assures us about his God, that "He gives...His food...even to the young ravens which cry out." How much more does He then keep on giving spiritual food -- to the human young babes and sucklings who cry out their praises to Him!

In spite of his own later sins -- or perhaps in part even because of them -- David could ask and then inspiredly answer the Lord: "How shall a young person keep on cleansing his own way? By taking heed to it, according to Your Word!"

David then adds: "I have sought Your way with my whole heart. O, do not let me wander from Your commandments! I have hidden Your Word in my heart, so that I should not keep on sinning against You.... O, how I love Your Law! ... I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Your teachings are my meditation.... I have not kept on departing from Your judgments."<sup>138</sup>

By His Spirit, God shaped David's fetal body-parts and cared for him even before he was born. David knew this.<sup>139</sup> No wonder, then, that when David's own son by Bathsheba died (uncircumcised) at apparently only seven days of age -- David knew his baby had been regenerated before the latter had died. For David was certain his infant son had gone straight to heaven.<sup>140</sup>

Indeed, God solemnly explained to David His servant: "I have made a covenant with My chosen [one].... Your seed will I establish for ever, and build up your throne to all generations.... He shall cry out to Me, 'You are my Father -- my God, and the Rock of my Salvation.'

"Also, I will make him My firstborn.... My mercy will I keep for him, for evermore, and My covenant shall stand fast with him. His seed also will I make to endure for ever; and his throne as the days of heaven.

"If his children forsake My law and do not keep on walking in My judgments -- if they break My statutes and do not keep My commandments -- then I will visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless, My lovingkindness will I not utterly take away from him, nor allow My faithfulness to fail. I will not break My covenant, nor alter what has gone forth from My lips.

"I have sworn once and for all, by My holiness -- that I will not lie to David. His seed shall endure, for ever."<sup>141</sup> Yes, "a seed shall serve Him. It shall be regarded as the Lord's generation. They shall come, and shall declare His righteousness to a people yet to be born."<sup>142</sup>

#### **14. The covenant theology of David's singer Asaph**

David's singer Asaph also reflects this same solid covenant theology. "Listen, my people! ... I want to utter secret sayings of old which we have heard and known, and which our fathers have told us. We will not hide them from their children. We will shew to the generation to come the praises of the Lord and His strength -- and His wonderful works which He has done.

"For He established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a Law in Israel which He commanded our fathers to make known to their children." God did thus, "so the generation to come might know this -- even the children who should be born, who should arise and declare these things to their children -- so that they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God but keep His commandments.... Marvellous things He did in the sight of their fathers.... He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through. He led them with a cloud."<sup>143</sup>

What is the significance of the above-mentioned cloud? This becomes apparent from the previous psalm -- as well as from a later inspired writing of the apostle Paul

States the previous psalm: "With Your own arm, You have redeemed Your people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. Selah. The waters saw You, O God, the waters saw You. They were afraid. The depths also were troubled. The clouds poured out water."<sup>144</sup>

Compare too Paul's inspired statement about this -- the statement which he subsequently made to the Corinthian Christians. Declared Paul: "Brothers, I do not want you to be ignorant that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea and were all baptized into Moses with the cloud and with the sea.... They drank of that spiritual Rock... That Rock was Christ."<sup>145</sup>

## **15. The views of Solomon the covenant child of David**

The justified David had taught his children the fear of the Lord. That shepherd-king assured them that God does not forsake justified men. Their children too do not need to beg -- but rather share in God's ongoing blessing.<sup>146</sup> So David's son Solomon too grew up in the covenant. "And the Lord loved him."<sup>147</sup>

"Now Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father" -- even when still "but a little child."<sup>148</sup> Later, he composed wise proverbs full of instruction as regards this 'womb-till-tomb theology' -- God's gracious salvation even from the womb, till way beyond the tomb.<sup>149</sup>

For Solomon does not treat his own children like pagans outside the covenant. He does not urge them of their own free will to enter into it. To the contrary. Rather does he remind his children that they have been conceived and born inside the covenant -- and should remain within it.

Writes the inspired Solomon: "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of knowledge.... My son, hear the instruction of your father, and do not forsake the law of your mother!"<sup>150</sup> "My son, do not forget my law, but let your heart keep my commandments!"<sup>151</sup>

"Heed, you children, the instruction of a father; and give attention to learn teaching! For I am giving you good doctrine. Do not forsake my law! For I was my father's son, tender, and the only-beloved in the sight of my mother. He too taught me. And he said to me, 'Let your heart retain my words; keep my commandments, and live!'"<sup>152</sup>

"Listen to me now therefore, children, and do not depart from the words of my mouth!"<sup>153</sup> "My son, observe my words...and keep on living!"<sup>154</sup> "O children, give attention to the words of my mouth; do not let your heart decline!"<sup>155</sup> "Listen to me, children; for blessed are those who keep my ways!"<sup>156</sup> "The just[ified] man keeps on walking in his integrity: his children keep on being blessed after him."<sup>157</sup>



"Keep on catechizing a child in the way he should go; then, when his beard starts growing, he will not depart!"<sup>158</sup> "Keep on listening, my son! ... Keep on heeding your father who begot you! ... My son, keep on giving Me your heart, and let your eyes keep on observing My ways!"<sup>159</sup>

"You do not know what the way of the Spirit is, nor how the bones grow in the womb of a pregnant woman. Nor do you know the works of God Who makes everything..., O young man."<sup>160</sup>

## **16. The pre-exilic prophets on the salvation of covenant children**

The godly governor Obadiah truthfully told the prophet Elijah that he had feared Jehovah from his early youth onward.<sup>161</sup> Yet it should not be assumed that the early-dying babies even of ungodly covenant-breaking parents had themselves not been regenerated -- and were therefore automatically lost.

For consider the case of the early-dying child of ungodly King Jeroboam. He was removed from this life precisely because he had apparently been regenerated and thereby rendered good -- in spite of his wicked father.

Declared the prophet Ahijah: "The child shall die.... All Israel shall mourn for him.... For he only of [the household of] Jeroboam shall come to the grave -- because in him there is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel."<sup>162</sup>

Joel is much more explicit. He insists that God's people to be sanctified, consists not merely of "the elders" and "the bridegroom...and the bride." It consists also of "the children" and even of "those that suck the breasts" -- alias the unweaned babies.<sup>163</sup>

God promises to revive His suffering people. Only after their incipient sanctification, would "He cause the rain to come down for you -- the former rain and the latter rain all at once."<sup>164</sup>

For then, assures the Lord, "I will pour out My Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.... I will pour out My Spirit.... And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the Name of the Lord, shall be delivered." Indeed, inasmuch as praise is a form of prophecy --the prediction includes praise by infant sons and daughters too.<sup>165</sup>

Needless to say, all this was fulfilled in early New Testament times -- soon after Calvary, on Pentecost Sunday. For then, as Jesus too had predicted, He Himself baptized His apostles with the Spirit of God. That was when His wind-like Holy Ghost swept down from heaven -- as Joel's predicted "rain" -- and descended upon each of them.<sup>166</sup>

Then it was that the apostle Peter urged his listeners: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, on the authority of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sin.... You shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is to you -- and to your children."<sup>167</sup>

## **17. Isaiah and Jeremiah on infant faith within covenant children**

God told Isaiah that He had formed Israel from the womb. The Lord even predicted He would also pour water and His Spirit [*cf.* baptism] upon Israel's children and offspring. The latter would then be His named children -- and grow up like grass and young willow trees in moist places.<sup>168</sup>

Through Isaiah, God also says: "Listen to Me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel which are borne by Me from the belly -- which are carried from the womb and even to your old age!"<sup>169</sup> And again: "The Lord has called me from the womb. From the bowels of my mother, He has made mention of my name.... 'You are My servant'...says the Lord Who formed me from the womb."<sup>170</sup>

Isaiah also predicts that the coming Christ, in holy baptism, would "sprinkle many nations" -- expandingly, in the persons of believers and their infant children.<sup>171</sup> For the Lord's Spirit and His words will not ever depart from His people; nor from their children; nor from their children's children -- henceforth, and for ever.<sup>172</sup>

Jeremiah says God knew and formed and sanctified him in his mother's belly -- even then ordaining him as a prophet -- before he came forth from her womb.<sup>173</sup> He also refers to the wicked and Herod-like shedding of "the blood of innocents."<sup>174</sup>

Jeremiah also finds it remarkable and regrettable that many infantly-circumcised Israelites were not then serving the Lord. Accordingly, he urges them: "'Circumcise' yourselves to the Lord so as to take away the foreskins of your heart!" For the people of "the house of Israel are uncircumcised in heart."<sup>175</sup>

Nevertheless, he also expects the arrival of the New Covenant, when God would put His Law in the inward parts of even the very least of His children.<sup>176</sup> For God would give 'one heart' to His people, and to their children after them -- a heart to fear (alias to respect) but not to depart from Him.<sup>177</sup>

## **18. The exilic and post-exilic prophets on covenant children**

Ezekiel gives us even clearer promises. God would gather His children together, and put a new Spirit within them. He would remove the stony heart from their flesh, and cause them to walk in His ways.<sup>178</sup> For God washes and calls the tiny children of the Israelitic people: "My children!"<sup>179</sup>

The prophet Ezekiel insists that even the infant children of viciously ungodly fathers and mothers -- children murdered by ungodly covenant-breaking parents and/or other covenant-breaking apostates -- are nevertheless still God's offspring. For them too He calls: "My children." This indicates God's regenerating of them -- in order to render them "innocent" and to adopt them as His Own even in their infancy.

Anticipating future baptism, Ezekiel also predicts there would be showers of blessing.<sup>180</sup> For God would first sanctify and gather His people, and then sprinkle clean water upon His already-sanctified children. Thus would He give them a new heart and a new Spirit within them,

so that they would walk in His ways.<sup>181</sup>

At that time, the Spirit of God would come into the children of Israel so that they would live -- at the time when He would pour out His Spirit upon them, on Pentecost Sunday.<sup>182</sup> All those still uncircumcised in heart were then to be urged first to repent -- and then to seek membership in the New Testament Church.<sup>183</sup>

After the exile, both Ezra and Nehemiah remonstrate with God's people. They do so -- because of the religious miscegenation at that time.

Ezra complains that "the people of Israel and the priests and the Levites have not separated themselves from the people of the lands.... For they have taken of their daughters for themselves, and for their sons -- so that the holy seed have mingled themselves with the people of those lands."<sup>184</sup>

This was then remedied. For "the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers. And they stood up in their place, and read in the book of the Law of the Lord their God.... They confessed, and worshipped the Lord their God."<sup>185</sup>

Nehemiah too complains. "I saw Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab. And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language.... I contended with them...and made them swear by God, saying: 'You shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons or for yourselves! Didn't Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? ... Outlandish women caused him to sin. Shall we then listen to you, to do all this great evil -- to keep on transgressing against our God in marrying strange wives?' ... Thus I cleansed them from all strangers."<sup>186</sup>

## **19. The covenanters Zechariah and Malachi at the end of the Older Testament**

Zechariah too urges the people: "Ask for rain from the Lord, in the time of the latter rain! Then the Lord shall send thunderclouds, and give them rainshowers and grass in the field"<sup>187</sup>

"Rain" for "everyone," he says. This therefore includes baptismal 'rain' -- even for infants. For the Lord also "forms the spirit of man within him" -- apparently even before birth.<sup>188</sup> Also, God the Father Himself then promises "to pour upon the house[hold] of David...the Spirit of grace and of supplications -- so that they would then look upon Him Whom they had pierced, and mourn."<sup>189</sup>

That would occur at Calvary and also on the subsequent Day of Pentecost soon thereafter. Then, even many of the elect among the people of Israel would first crucify Jesus -- and subsequently with their children "mourn" (alias faithfully repent).<sup>190</sup> For then the true Israel of God (alias the "holy seed") would be separated from apostate "Israel" (alias the unholy seed of the anti-Christian Judaists).<sup>191</sup>

Similarly, Malachi then closes out the Old Testament -- and announces its future renovation at the time when the New would arrive. God's love for Jacob -- even before he was born -- is re-affirmed.<sup>192</sup>

For God's covenant -- the covenant with the fathers -- envisages the production of "a godly seed" by way of "the wife of your covenant."<sup>193</sup> This would be achieved after Jehovah would send John the baptizer, to announce the advent of Jesus.

For, God predicts through Malachi, "I will send My messenger [John] -- and he shall prepare the way before Me [Jehovah-Jesus]. Then the Lord, Whom you are seeking, shall suddenly come to His temple" alias the Christian Church -- as "the Angel of the covenant" Himself.<sup>194</sup> Once Jehovah had thus become Jesus, He would Himself baptize His children -- with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

"But who can stand the day of His coming? And who shall keep on standing -- when He appears? For He is like a refiner's fire.... And He shall purify the sons of Levi."<sup>195</sup> For then the "whole nation" would receive a ritual cleansing and a rainlike relief. That would occur when the Lord would "open for you the windows of heaven and pour you out a blessing" -- on the New Testament's Pentecost Sunday in particular.<sup>196</sup>

First, however, John would come baptizing -- to prepare the way for the advent of Jehovah-Jesus. The prophetic preacher John would be a 'Second Elijah.' For he would turn the heart of the fathers back to the children -- and the heart of the children back to their fathers. Indeed, he would then constitute the Early Christian Church, by baptizing the true nation of Israel -- both penitent fathers and their children -- in a rainlike way.<sup>197</sup> For that is how the word "baptize" was used -- even in the Older Testament times.

## **20. Hebraic baptizings 'between the Testaments'**

Because the Jewish *Talmud* was only written down during the Early Christian centuries, we will not now discuss it. Here, however, we would merely observe that it often reflects Hebrew practices dating even from pre-Christian times.

Also the intertestamentary Jews anciently and widely practised the baptism of both their slaves and their prisoners-of-war. Proselytes to the religion of Israel were baptized, together with their infants. So too were all foundlings and orphaned babies adopted into Hebrew households. See: Genesis 17:12-14,24-27; 34:14-24; 35:2f; Exodus 12:43-49; 14:21-29; 15:1-19; 19:3-10f; 24:4-8; Deuteronomy 20:13-14 & 21:6-12; Isaiah 52:15f; 56:33-7; 60:10; 63:3; Malachi 1:11f; 2:14f; 3:1-2f; 4:4-6.

In the (B.C. 280) Septuagint translation of the Older Testament -- rendered into Greek by Jewish scholars in Egypt's Alexandria -- the simple verb *baptein* is used some twenty times. The intensive or frequentative verb *baptizein* is used some nine times -- and the adjectival past participle *baptos*, once.<sup>198</sup> In at least seven places,<sup>199</sup> *baptein* means either "splash" or "sprinkle" or "pour" -- or alternatively is used in association with other verbs bearing that meaning.

Indeed, any notion of "submersion" is quite excluded in most of the usages of *baptein*.<sup>200</sup> So too in respect of *baptizein* -- in at least one place.<sup>201</sup> All of these meanings are also reflected in the various New Testament references to these Old Testament practices of either *baptein* or *baptizein* (or both).

These very meanings -- baptism also of babies, and indeed by sprinkling -- are found not only among the Pharisees, but also with Jesus.<sup>202</sup> Consequently, the presumption must be that the words *baptein* and *baptizein* would have the same 'non-submersing' meaning of "splashing" or "sprinkling" or "pouring" water upon whole households -- also in Christianity -- as they had in Judaism.

Indeed, they should be expected to have these same meanings -- even when used in respect of the Newer Testament's rite performed as an outpouring first by John the baptizer and then by Christ's apostles themselves.<sup>203</sup> See Matthew 23:15 and John 1:25 *cf.* First Kings 18:30-33.

## **21. The early-life prenatal regeneration of John the baptizer**

Before the advent of Christ and His apostles, however, God would first send the Elijah-like preacher of repentance John the baptizer -- even as Malachi had predicted.<sup>204</sup> The early-life godliness of John is also somewhat reminiscent of that of Samson and Samuel.

John's parents, Zacharias and Elisabeth, were both from priestly families. They were each righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord -- blamelessly.<sup>205</sup>

Being righteous, Elisabeth had been filled with the Spirit before she conceived. She was apparently re-filled thereafter, at least once.<sup>206</sup> So too was her husband Zacharias.<sup>207</sup>

The barren yet godly Elisabeth, like Hannah before her, prayed for a child.<sup>208</sup> God heard Elisabeth's prayer.

For He promised her a son who, like Samson, would "be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb."<sup>209</sup> Consequently her son John, though still conceived in sin, also appears to have been "holy" too -- ever since his conception.<sup>210</sup>

When John as a human fetus was still only a six-month-old unborn baby or *brephos*, he was (again?) filled with the Holy Spirit -- fully three months before his birth.<sup>211</sup> Even then, inside his faithful mother Elisabeth, he joyfully recognized the presence of the just-conceived Jesus inside and at the approach of the Saviour's mother Mary.<sup>212</sup> For John then leaped up for joy, within his mother's womb -- and his mother was herself then (re-)filled with the Holy Spirit too.<sup>213</sup>

Three months later, at his birth as a little child or *paidion*, his father declared that John would later go out before the face of the Lord to prepare His way. That Lord had already been conceived (according to His human nature) and was in that regard now some three months old. Yet that Spirit-overflowing baby Jesus would Himself be born only six months later.<sup>214</sup> Meantime, John had already been born and had started to grow from babyhood and toward childhood.

Later, that child grew up -- and became strong in spirit.<sup>215</sup>

## **22. The adult John seems to have baptized also the babies of his converts**

Now John went out ahead of Jesus in the spirit and power of Elijah -- to turn many of the children of Israel to their God; and to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children.<sup>216</sup> John was happy to do all of this, at great personal sacrifice, in order to "increase" the influence of Jesus among His people.<sup>217</sup>

This 'John the baptizer' preached conversion. John did so -- before administering baptisms not only to penitent fathers but also to their children. For "all the land of Judea" -- and those of Jerusalem and "all the region round about Jordan" --were "all baptized" by John.<sup>218</sup>

Indeed, John preached "the baptism of repentance to all the people of Israel" (including pregnant women and their unborn infants). For John the baptizer of households preached not just to the adults of Israel -- but to whole families.<sup>219</sup>

John also baptized not by submersion, but by rainlike sprinkling.<sup>220</sup> For, as the great Church Father Lactantius later pointed out, Jesus Himself was 'tinctured' or *tinctus* alias "baptized by the prophet John at the river Jordan." This was done, "so that He might save the Gentiles also by [His] baptism -- that is, by the dew of purification."<sup>221</sup>

Elijah, before John, did "pour" water upon the sacrifice atop the altar-stones -- representing all the tribes of Israel (together with their children). So now, apparently, John the baptizer too, as the 'second Elia' as it were -- similarly poured out water, over a later generation of converted Israelites (together with their children). First Kings 18:31-35 *cf.* John 1:25-32.

Yet John did not immediately baptize these fathers and their children. First, he powerfully preached to them all. Only then, after assessing their favourable re-action, did he presuppose their at least incipient faith in the coming Christ -- as a result of his preaching the Gospel to them -- prior to baptizing them.<sup>222</sup>

## **23. Various views that also the babies of believers were baptized by John**

Commenting on the above, the great Ambrose -- mentor of the yet greater Augustine himself -- implies that the Abraham-like and Elijah-like John baptized also infants among God's covenant people. For Abraham had circumcised such, and the Neo-Abrahamic and John-like Elijah had poured water on the altar representing all of Abraham's descendants.

As also the great Westminster Assembly Puritan Rev. Dr. John Lightfoot declares: "The baptizing of infants was a thing as well-known in the Church of the Jews [by way of 'proselyte baptism'], as ever it has been in the Christian Church.... I do not believe the people that flocked to John's baptism were so forgetful of the manner and custom of the [Hebrew] nation, as not to bring their little children along with them to be baptized!"

For "if baptism and baptizing infants had been a new thing and unheard of till John Baptist came, as circumcision was till God appointed it to Abraham, there would have been no doubt an express command for baptizing infants -- as there was for circumcising them [Genesis 17:9-14 *cf.* Colossians 2:11-13]. But when the baptizing of infants was a thing commonly known and used, as appears by incontestable evidence from their [Hebrew] writers -- there need not be express assertions that such and such persons were to be the object of baptism.... It was as well-known before the Gospel began that men, women and children were baptized -- as it is to be known that the sun is up."

Yet further: "The whole nation knew well enough that infants were wont to be baptized. There was no need of a precept for that which was always settled by common use.... Just so the case stood as to baptism.... All should be admitted to the profession of the Gospel -- as they were, formerly, to proselytism in the Jews' religion!"

So the (Ana)Baptists were (and are) wrong in their claim that covenant infants would have been refused baptism by John the baptizer. Wrong too is the claim that baptism was soon thereafter refused to infants by Christ's Own Ministers.

For those claims to have been correct, explains Lightfoot, it would have been necessary "that there should have been an express and plain order that infants and little children should not be baptized -- if our Saviour had meant that they should not. For since it was ordinary in all ages before to have infants baptized [by way of Hebrew 'proselyte baptism'] -- if Christ would have had that usage to be abolished, He would have expressly forbidden it. So that His and the Scriptures' silence in this matter does confirm and establish infant baptism for ever."

Last, we give the comment on John 1:25 of the great Anglican scholar Rev. Dr. William Wall (in his *History of Infant Baptism*). To John the baptizer, explained Wall, "multitudes came in and were baptized, confessing their sins.

"What children they brought with them, need not be mentioned -- especially to the Jewish Christians.... To them, St. Matthew wrote -- who knew the custom of their nation to bring their children with them into covenant." Matthew 3:9 *cf.* Genesis 17:1-10.

"If St. John had been sent to convert and circumcise any uncircumcised nation, so short an account of his success would hardly have had any mention of the children. And yet, no man would have doubted of their being some among them [*cf.* Genesis 17]....

"And so Acts 19:4.... 'John baptized with the baptism of repentance' -- is...no more than what is said of circumcision. Romans 4:11.... It is a 'seal of the righteousness of faith.' Yet every one knows that it [circumcision] does not exclude infants." Colossians 2:11<sup>f.223</sup>

## **24. The need for a Saviour absolutely holy even at His very conception**

The sinless human being and Saviour Jesus Christ, Whom John later baptized, was Himself filled overflowing (or without measure) with the Holy Spirit -- even from His very conception onward. In all this our Lord was -- of course -- quite unique. Yet He was also our human

substitute. As John Calvin once quite rightly said: "Christ was manifested from His earliest infancy so that He might sanctify His elect"<sup>224</sup> -- even from their earliest infancy.

Declared the apostle John about Jesus: "In Him was life, and the life was the light of human beings.... He was the true Light Who keeps on enlightening every human being that comes into the world.... To as many as received Him, He gave the authority to become the children of God -- to those who keep on trusting upon His Name. They have been (re)generated...not by blood nor by the will of the flesh, but by God."<sup>225</sup>

Jesus has been the Son of God from all eternity past. He will ever so remain -- unto all eternity future. However, when He became also the Son of man, He was: first a human zygote;<sup>226</sup> then an embryo;<sup>227</sup> next a fetus;<sup>228</sup> subsequently a new-born baby suckling;<sup>229</sup> then a two-year-old little child;<sup>230</sup> next a twelve-year-old child;<sup>231</sup> then an adolescent;<sup>232</sup> and finally a fully-grown man.<sup>233</sup>

As the great Church Father Irenaeus observed:<sup>234</sup> "He did not despise...any condition of humanity.... But He sanctified every age by that period corresponding to it which belonged to Himself. For He came to save all...who are 'born again' to God -- infants, and children, and boys, and youths.... He therefore passed through every age, becoming an infant for infants, thus sanctifying infants; a child for children, thus sanctifying those who are of this age...for the Lord."

Mary was doubtless filled with the Spirit -- probably before and certainly (again) when she conceived her Saviour. Declares Matthew:<sup>235</sup> "Now the conception<sup>236</sup> of Jesus Christ was thus. His mother Mary...was discovered to be pregnant by the Holy Spirit." For the virgin Mary conceived in her womb, as soon as the Holy Spirit of God then came upon her. In that way, He uniquely overshadowed her so miraculously that the [perfectly] Holy One she thus conceived, could and would be called the Son of God.<sup>237</sup>

## **25. The unique Christ's covenantal holiness from conception to birth**

Immediately after conceiving that Holy One (nine months before later giving birth to Him), Mary hastily went to her cousin Elisabeth who was herself six months pregnant.<sup>238</sup> As soon as Mary greeted her cousin, Elisabeth's own unborn baby leaped up -- and Elisabeth herself was filled with the Spirit.

These latter events occurred, because an already-existing human being -- the Saviour Jesus -- had just been recognized by His half-aunt Elisabeth and His unborn half-cousin John. For Elisabeth said to Mary: "You have been blessed among women, and the Fruit of your womb has also been blessed. Now, the mother of my Lord has come to me."<sup>239</sup>

Doubtless this implies that the just-conceived and sinless and Spirit-overflowing Son of man already existed, there and then, as a most influential tiny human being. It also implies that the Spirit-filled John, three months before his own birth, recognized His just-conceived Saviour.

It further implies that the Spirit-refilled John then communicated that recognition to his Spirit-filled mother. For it specifically states that she in turn was then refilled with the Holy Spirit



-- and communicated much of this to our Saviour's mother. Doubtless that communication from Elisabeth itself refilled the already Spirit-filled Mary with the Holy Ghost --almost nine month's before Mary would give birth to her own Spirit-overflowing Son.

For Mary then exulted: "My soul magnifies the Lord; and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Saviour."<sup>240</sup> Thus, Mary's Saviour the Divine Jesus -- Who had Himself only then just been conceived within her, according to His human nature -- was already her Saviour even at His conception nine months before He was born. Indeed, Mary said Christ had been conceived and would soon be born -- in fulfilment of the promise spoken "to our fathers, to Abraham and to his seed for ever."<sup>241</sup>

Thus, Christ would save His chosen flock of sheep -- and their little lambs.<sup>242</sup> In one word, He would be called 'Jehovah-saves' -- alias 'Jesus.' "For He shall save His people" -- both His taller postnatals and His tiny prenatals -- "from their sins."<sup>243</sup>

Also later, on the very day of Jesus' birth, He was again called 'Saviour' and 'Christ the Lord.'<sup>244</sup> Even then and thereafter, He brought and always will bring "peace on earth toward men of goodwill" (or *eudokia*). This means peace toward those He had chosen -- out of His Own good pleasure or *eudokia* -- before the foundation of the world.<sup>245</sup>

Many of those chosen ones would die in infancy -- as did most of the people who have ever lived and died before the advent of modern medicine and the drastic reduction of the infant mortality rate around 1900 A.D. But not one of Christ's early-dying elect has ever passed away -- without first being regenerated. For unless a person be born again and believes in Jesus -- regardless of age -- he cannot even see and still less enter into the Kingdom of God.<sup>246</sup>

## **26. Christ's ongoing holiness from His birth till His baptism**

Eight days after His birth, Mary's baby was circumcised . This did not make Him righteous. For He was already righteous -- long before His circumcision. At that latter event, however, they named Him 'Jesus.' For this was the Name that had been given for Him by the angel of God -- even before He had been conceived in His mother's womb.<sup>247</sup>

On the thirty-third day after His circumcision, Jesus did not become but was proclaimed to be 'holy to the Lord.' For He was indeed 'The Holy One' -- and also the first-born male Who had 'opened' the womb of His mother Mary.<sup>248</sup>

On that day, the aged and Spirit-anointed Simeon embraced the Spirit-overflowing Jesus as his blessed God. Said Simeon: "Lord, now allow Your servant to depart in peace -- according to Your Word! For my eyes have seen Your Salvation Whom You have prepared before the face of all people as a Light to illuminate the Gentiles, and as the Glory of Your people Israel."<sup>249</sup> Similarly, the aged prophetess Anna then "likewise gave thanks to the Lord -- and spoke about Him to all of those who were looking for redemption."<sup>250</sup>

Again, some time after Jesus had been born, and when He was about two years old -- the wise men from the east came to worship the little child as the promised Christ.<sup>251</sup> After that, "the

little child grew and became strong. He kept on being filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him."<sup>252</sup> "So Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favour, with God and man."<sup>253</sup>

Now in spite of Jesus' unique sinlessness, His prenatal and postnatal human growth still shows many similarities in holiness with that other exemplary (though not sinless) child of the covenant -- Samuel the son of Hannah. Compare Hannah's '*magnificat*' with Mary's.<sup>254</sup> Compare too the 'Jesus texts' in this and the previous paragraphs, with First Samuel chapters one through three.<sup>255</sup>

In his *Commentary on Luke*, Rev. Professor Dr. Alfred Plummer rightly said of Jesus: "His was a perfect humanity, developing perfectly.... For the first time, a human infant was realizing the ideal of humanity" -- namely sinless perfection. Hebrews 5:8 too says of Jesus: 'though He was a Son, He nevertheless learned obedience.'

Likewise, Bishop B.F. Westcott rightly commented on this: "The Lord's manhood was [negatively] sinless and [positively] perfect -- that is, perfect relatively, at every stage.... Therefore He truly advanced by learning, while the powers of His human nature grew step by step -- in a perfect union with the [never-unfolding because from-eternity] divine, in His one Person."

When thirty years old, Hebrew priests were anointed to commence their ministry to God's people. At that age Jesus too, Himself filled to overflowing with the Spirit ever since His very conception, was officially anointed in baptism for ministry to His people. The latter were and are all true believers everywhere -- young and old, regardless of their age.

The Spirit-overflowing Jesus was baptized by John, who had himself been filled with the Holy Spirit even from his own mother's womb.<sup>256</sup> At Christ's baptism, the Holy Spirit yet again further strengthened Him.<sup>257</sup> Thereafter, "full of the Holy Spirit," Jesus returned from the Jordan -- and "was led by the Spirit into the desert."<sup>258</sup>

## **27. The Spirit-overflowing ministry of Jesus to covenant children**

Preaching in the power of the Spirit, Jesus then told the religious leader Nicodemus that only those who had been 'born again' of water and Spirit, can enter into or even see the Kingdom of God. But those thus regenerated, indeed do enter. They do this, by seeing Jesus lifted up for them on the cross --and by trusting Him thus to give them everlasting life.<sup>259</sup>

Jesus then got His apostles to baptize people in His Name, as a sign of their own need for purification.<sup>260</sup> The Spirit-filled John then declared that Jesus always had been, and always would be, filled with the Spirit -- without measure.<sup>261</sup> Indeed, even then, as regards the development of His human nature, Jesus was still on the "increase" -- in the power of the Spirit Whom God the Father still kept supplying to Him immeasurably.<sup>262</sup>

"Then Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee."<sup>263</sup> There, in the synagogue of Nazareth "where He had been brought up," He said: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the Gospel!"

At about this time, Jesus encountered in Cana a certain royal official from Capernaum -- where his son was dying.<sup>264</sup> When the man pleaded with Jesus to come and heal his little boy (or *paidion*), the Lord Christ said: 'Go on your way; your son is alive!' And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken to him.<sup>265</sup>

The next day, even before the man reached his home, his servants met him and told him his son had recovered -- from the very same moment Jesus had encouraged that father the previous day.<sup>266</sup> "So the father knew it.... And he himself believed; and so too did his entire household."<sup>267</sup>

This 'entire household' which believed, obviously included even the 'little child' that had been dying. Hence, it follows that even a 'dying little child' can be expected -- himself to be able to 'believe' in Christ. That trust should commence when his own parent trusts the Word of God, and believes in Jesus as the Lord and Saviour of his or her family.

Leaving Galilee, Jesus now spent some little time in Judea, commissioning His apostles to go forth and baptize those households which would follow Him.<sup>268</sup> Christ had now fully taken over the Kingdom ministry from John. That was the service for which each of them had already been set aside -- previously, even when they had both still been in their mothers' wombs.<sup>269</sup>

## **28. Christ's heavenly Father reveals salvation to speech-less in-fants**

On another occasion, Jesus declared to His Father in heaven:<sup>270</sup> "I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise -- and revealed them to 'speech-less in-fants'<sup>271</sup> alias babies who cannot yet talk. Yes, Father, for thus it was good in Your sight."<sup>272</sup>

In that regard, Jesus then went on to explain to His followers: "All things have been handed over to Me by My Father. And nobody knows the Son, except the Father. Neither does anybody know the Father, except the Son and him to whomsoever the Son wants to reveal it."

Notice here that the verb "reveal" is in the past tense at the beginning, but in the present tense at the end of the second paragraph above in that same passage. Irenaeus (around 185 A.D.) translated the beginning of the above passage in the past but its end in the future tense. Thus, he rendered it: "You have revealed them ['these things'] to speech-less in-fants.... And nobody knows...the Father, except the Son -- and him to whomsoever the Son will reveal it."<sup>273</sup>

Here, the thought seems to be that the Son has revealed the Father to elect speech-less in-fants even before they can talk --and that He wants (or will continue) to reveal the Father to those elect covenant children even after they learn to talk. Indeed, the further thought seems to be that the Son has always been revealing the Father to elect covenant children, both before and after they learn to speak. Yes, always! Not just since Christ's incarnation, but even from that

time onward when Adam and Eve first parented their elect children Abel and Seth.<sup>274</sup>

As Irenaeus further remarks about the above words of Jesus also anent speech-less in-fants:<sup>275</sup> "The knowledge of the Son...has been revealed through the Son. And this was the reason why the Lord declared, 'No man knoweth the Son, but the Father; nor the Father, save the Son – and those to whomsoever the Son shall reveal Him.'<sup>276</sup>

"For [the phrase] 'shall reveal' was said not with reference to the future alone -- as if the Word had begun to manifest the Father only when He was born of Mary. (For remember His revelation of Himself just after He was conceived -- to His mother, to Elisabeth, and also to her six-month-old fetus John.) But it applies indifferently throughout all time. For the Son, being present with His Own handiwork from the beginning, reveals the Father to all -- to whom He wills; and when He wills; and as the Father wills.... To all -- who believe in Him." Thus Irenaeus.<sup>277</sup>

With these 'speech-less in-fants' to whom Christ says the Father reveals 'these things' pertaining to salvation<sup>278</sup> -- and also with Irenaeus's above-mentioned comments thereon -- compare too the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. The latter cites Christ's statement:<sup>279</sup> "The wind keeps on wafting wherever it wants, and you...cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who has been born of the Spirit." Thence the *Westminster Confession* itself concludes:<sup>280</sup> "Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit Who works when and where and how He pleases."

Consequently, also the great conservative modern Lutheran Rev. Professor Dr. Joachim Jeremias believes that the above reading<sup>281</sup> "strikes an original note of Jesus' joy over the revelation granted" -- by Him, to His speech-less in-fants. Jeremias continues: "As only a father knows his son, so only a son knows his father." Consequently, ever since Eden, even speech-less in-fants (among the covenant people of 'Israel' alias the continuing Christian Church) are 'sons' who 'know' their heavenly Father -- albeit only in an 'in-fant-ile' way.

## **29. Jesus tenderly ministers to wrongly snubbed covenant children**

On one occasion -- when His own adult disciples had stood aside helplessly -- a father who believed in Jesus brought His afflicted child to the Saviour for help. So Jesus, noting the faith of the father, drove an unclean spirit out of the child.<sup>282</sup>

On another occasion, when He was travelling though Galilee with His disciples, the latter started disputing with one another. They were arguing about which of them should be the greatest and should rule over the others -- like Gentile or pagan kings rule over their lords.<sup>283</sup> Soon they arrived in Capernaum, where Jesus had previously done many mighty works and preached in synagogues.<sup>284</sup>

Once back in the 'covenantal city' of Capernaum, Jesus asked His disputing disciples what they had been squabbling about while on the way.<sup>285</sup> Then Jesus summarily called a little child, putting him down in their midst. The Saviour then explained they themselves needed to become

like [such] little children -- if they themselves were to keep on entering into the Kingdom of heaven, and to become 'great ones' there.

The Gospel of Matthew records:<sup>286</sup> "The disciples came to Jesus, saying, 'Who is the greatest in [= within!] the Kingdom of heaven?' So Jesus called a little child unto Him and placed it in their midst and said, 'Truly, unless you [disciples] be converted and keep on becoming like the[se] little children -- you [disciples] shall no way enter into the Kingdom of heaven.'"

Jesus then continued: "Therefore, whosoever shall keep on humbling himself like this little child -- the same is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven. And whosoever shall receive one such little child in My Name [see Matthew 28:19], receives Me. But whosoever shall cause one of these tiny ones who keep on believing in Me, to stumble -- it were better for him that a heavy stone were hanged around his neck, and that he were drowned in the deep sea."

Jesus then concluded: "See to it that you do not disdain one of these tiny ones! ... Their angels always continue looking on My Father's face.... The Son of man has come to save -- that which was lost.... It is not the will of your heavenly Father that one of these tiny ones, should perish."

The full Biblical account of the above very important incident, is extremely illuminating. Accordingly, let us first further discuss Matthew's above-mentioned version of its explicit or implicit teachings.

### **30. Matthew on one of Christ's tiny covenant children who believe in Him**

Firstly. The child concerned was a covenant child of Capernaum, and not a pagan child.<sup>287</sup> As John Inchley observes in his book *All About Children*:<sup>288</sup> "Undoubtedly, it was a Jewish child." Here Inchley does not mean that the child was a unitarian and antichristian modern Judaist. He means it was a little child of the Ancient Hebrews -- alias a tiny Israelite who worshipped Jehovah-Jesus as the central Person of the Triune Elohim.

Secondly. The child was a "little child" or *paidion*.<sup>289</sup> Indeed, he was just one of many other similar little children of the covenant. For that child was one of "these tiny ones" (or *mikrōn toutōn*)<sup>290</sup> who believe in Jesus.

Thirdly. Though conceived and born in the covenant, the child had still been "lost." That is, lost until Jesus -- yes, Jesus -- had come and "found" him or her.<sup>291</sup>

Fourthly. The covenant child had apparently been brought to Jesus by a believing parent.<sup>292</sup>

Fifthly. The little covenant child had been lost -- ever since being conceived in sin,<sup>293</sup> and until subsequent regeneration. Nevertheless, as one of God's elect, he or she had been a lost yet findable "sheep" and not a lost goat that would never get found.<sup>294</sup>

Sixthly. The child had needed saving -- and Christ had now indeed "come to save" him or her, as a child of His covenant.<sup>295</sup>

Seventhly. The Lord Jesus Christ had now found that child -- and had "called" him or her to Himself.<sup>296</sup>

Eighthly. After calling him or her, Jesus had then picked up that little child -- and apparently conveyed to him or her His personal blessing.<sup>297</sup>

Ninthly. The child concerned had already become a true Christian believer. For he or she had already: been "called" by Jesus;<sup>298</sup> been "converted";<sup>299</sup> and been brought inside the Kingdom of heaven.<sup>300</sup> Indeed, the child had also already been "humbled"<sup>301</sup> -- and had already become a "great one" in God's Kingdom.<sup>302</sup> The child must also previously have been following Jesus and walking on the right road without stumbling. For Jesus warned the adults not to cause that child to "stumble" for the sake of Christ's Gospel.<sup>303</sup> Consequently, that tiny child had already become one of those who "believe" in Jesus.<sup>304</sup>

Tenthly. Christ told His already-converted yet still-squabbling adult disciples themselves -- to keep on being [re-]converted just like that particular little child kept on being [re-]converted. For Christ told them: "Unless you keep on being converted, and keep on becoming like the little children -- you shall not keep on entering into the Kingdom of heaven." Thus, whosoever shall keep on humbling himself like this little child [continues humbling himself or herself] -- is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven."<sup>305</sup>

Eleventhly. Jesus never said all children have been regenerated. Nor did He ever say that children do not need converting. Here, He said that those particular converted adult disciples of His -- needed to keep on being converted to Christ. He said here that His adult disciples needed continuing conversion -- just like that particular converted (and continuously converting) covenant child then in their midst.<sup>306</sup>

Twelfthly. That particular converted covenant child or tiny little one had already become a believer in Jesus -- and was now associated with all those who believe (whether infants or adults). That child was no longer associated with all those who do not believe (whether infants or adults).

Thirteenthly. That believing little child was at that very time not one of a different group of little children and adults who do not believe, and who are therefore still "lost."<sup>307</sup> To the contrary!

Fourteenthly. That particular believing child in 'covenantal' Capernaum -- was one of "these" tiny little covenant children who "keep on believing" in Jesus. Indeed, they do so precisely because He -- first found them; then called them; and next picked them up.<sup>308</sup>

Fifteenthly. All people absolutely (and certainly all Christians) should, in Christ's Name and for His sake, receive "such" a "little child" -- alias such a tiny covenanter who "believes" in Jesus.<sup>309</sup> All of Christ's adult disciples, and His ministers in particular, should "receive" all such covenant children.<sup>310</sup> This, of course, also has definite 'baptismal' implications. Thus, tiny

covenant children should be received "in My Name" -- by "baptizing them into the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit."<sup>311</sup>

Sixteenthly. Whosoever shall not "receive" even "one of these tiny ones who believe" in Jesus, 'scandalizes' or "causes" that tiny believer "to stumble" -- and offends the latter's Saviour Jesus Christ, by himself not "receiving" such children. Indeed, for that offender, it were better...that a heavy stone were hanged around his neck and that he were drowned in the deep sea."<sup>312</sup> This would be a very unpleasant 'total submersion' for those who disdain -- sacramentally or otherwise -- Christ's Own little ones.

Seventeenthly. Christ's adult disciples and especially His ministers are therefore not to disdain even "one of these little ones" who "believe" in Jesus. For their guardian "angels always keep on looking to Christ's heavenly Father" -- on behalf of His tiny believers.<sup>313</sup>

Eighteenthly. It is not the will of the adult disciples' Father in heaven "that one of these tiny ones" who "believe" in Jesus -- and who had therefore already been regenerated -- "should perish."<sup>314</sup>

Nineteenthly. We should note that Christ's command here to "receive" in His "Name" all "such little child[ren]" as "these tiny ones who believe" in Him -- has massive implications for the infant baptism of covenant children (but of not other babies).<sup>315</sup> For Jesus does not here promise His Kingdom to all children -- as if all babies, by definition, were 'innocent.' Nor do they all participate in a 'general atonement' (at least for all children dying in infancy). No!

Twentiethly. Instead, Jesus here promises His Kingdom only to those adults and to those infants who have been "called" by Jesus and who have thus been 'born again.' He promises His Kingdom only to those little ones who have "humbled themselves" and who "believe" in Christ; to who have come to Christ or been "brought" to Him; and to those who are therefore to be "received in His Name."

Twenty-firstly. Such believing adults and such believing babies are consequently no longer the "lost" sheep they once were. Now, they are the "saved" sheep -- or rather the little lambs whom Christ Himself has come and "found."<sup>316</sup> All who would be saved, must receive the Kingdom of God in the way a tiny believer alias a faithful little child receives it.<sup>317</sup> The Holy Spirit Himself, within the hearts of such believing 'little children' -- sometimes even from conception onward -- keeps on crying out: 'Abba, Father!'<sup>318</sup>

Twenty-secondly. We might note 'paedobaptist' anticipations of the above -- in ancient meditations on the 'rainshower passages' in Isaiah. Thus, in the *Talmud*, we read: "Abba, Abba, give us rain!"<sup>319</sup> Yet not all little children know God as their 'Abba' or Father. Only believing little children do.<sup>320</sup> For a farmer does not turn wolves or goats or pigs into sheep -- nor can a 'christening'(!) priest magically transubstantiate piglets into kid-lambs.

Lastly. Tthe true Shep-herd of the sheep-herd similarly again and again goes off after each of His adult sheep and after each of His kid-lambs that have "gone astray" from His flock. Lovingly, He thus 'pursues' them -- until "He finds" that lost sheep or lamb. Then He brings it back to the sheepfold -- before 'baptismally' branding it with His Own Name (if never priorly so

baptized).<sup>321</sup> And thenceforth, in the words of the twenty-third psalm, the thus 'anointed' sheep or lamb is to keep on dwelling in the house of the Shepherd Lord -- for ever.

### **31. Mark's account of that same tiny child who believes in Jesus**

Even more interesting, is Mark's account<sup>322</sup> of the same event regarding the 'believing tiny little child' of Capernaum. There, Jesus had just previously healed the child of a believing father who had brought him to the Saviour.<sup>323</sup>

Right after that, Christ's twelve apostles had started disputing with one another as to which of them was the greatest.<sup>324</sup> So, as soon as Jesus arrived with His apostles in Capernaum, He rebuked the twelve for disputing thus.<sup>325</sup> "He sat down and called the twelve and said to them: 'If anyone desires to be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.'"<sup>326</sup>

Now Christ spoke in Aramaic. In that language, the same word for "child-servant" -- *talya* -- means both 'servant' (or '*diakonos*') and 'little child' (or '*paidion*').<sup>327</sup>

Accordingly, Jesus then "took a little child (*paidion*), and placed him in the midst of them" -- amid Christ's adult disciples.<sup>328</sup> Then, "when He had embraced him in His arms, He said to them: 'Whosoever shall receive one of such little children in My Name, receives Me! And whosoever shall receive Me, receives not [only] Me but [also] Him Who sent Me.... But whosoever shall offend one of the tiny ones who believe in Me -- it is better for him that a heavy stone were hanged around his neck and he were thrown into the sea.'"<sup>329</sup>

The language here, is very precise. It refers not just to one (highly precocious) 'tiny little one' who, as a singular maverick, most unusually 'believes' in Jesus. To the contrary. It refers to a whole class of "these tiny ones [plural] who keep on believing [plural] -- *mikrōn toutōn tōn pisteuontōn*."<sup>330</sup>

Indeed, all of them plurally<sup>331</sup> **'keep on believing'** in Christ -- "in Me," said Jesus. They constitute a whole class -- of which that particular tiny little believer, was merely one.

Here in Mark's account of the above event, we should note a number of important points. Firstly. The child whom Jesus "took" and "embraced" -- was only a "little child" (or a *paidion*). Indeed, he was just a 'tiny little one' (or a *mikros*)!<sup>332</sup>

Secondly. That "tiny little one" or *mikros* -- was just one of the many covenant children in Capernaum (and elsewhere) who continuously trusted in Jesus. For that tiny little believer, Christ assures us, was "one of the little ones who keep on believing in Me" -- *hena tōn mikrōn tōn pisteuontōn eis Eme*.<sup>333</sup> Here, *pisteuontōn* is present continuous: "those who keep on believing."

Thirdly. That believing tiny little child of the covenant, had apparently been brought to Jesus. Indeed, it was probably his or her parents who had brought him or her there -- into that house at Capernaum where Jesus then was.<sup>334</sup>



Fourthly. Jesus received that believing tiny little child -- by picking him or her up, and embracing him or her. He then urged His apostles likewise to receive "such little children."<sup>335</sup> The latter expression -- "such little children" -- can only mean: tiny little believers, conceived and born within the covenant of grace.

Fifthly. Jesus then reminded His apostles to receive tiny little covenant believers "in My Name." Here, compare the baptismal formula's "into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Those who thus receive Christ's little ones, receive Jesus Himself.<sup>336</sup> For they are His children, and represent Him.

Sixthly. Jesus warned His disciples not to "offend" or 'scandalize' or "cause to stumble" even "one of the little ones who believe in Me." If His adult 'disciples' kept on doing that, they themselves would be rejected.<sup>337</sup>

Finally. Jesus then urged that "water" be given "in My Name" to those who "belong to Christ." The indirect bearing of this on the baptism of covenant infants -- alias "the little ones who believe in Me" -- should be obvious.<sup>338</sup>

### **32. Mark's account of this tiny believer (continued)**

Now this little child who believed in Jesus, was indeed a babe-in-arms. It is true that some regard that "little child" as then being an adult servant of the disciples. They say Christ's addressing that person as "a little child" and as "a tiny one"<sup>339</sup> in such 'terms of endearment' -- was merely figurative language.

However, this ignores the fact that Jesus had just recently healed another "little child" or *paidion* of a believing father.<sup>340</sup> It also ignores the fact that Jesus now picked up or "took" this second child in Capernaum -- and "embraced him in His arms."

Indeed, Jesus then put him down --or "set him" in the midst of the disciples.<sup>341</sup> Such is hardly language suggesting His handling of an adult.

Yet others, erroneously argue that Jesus equally blesses all children -- uniformly, without exception. But the inspired Luke states that Jesus here blessed one "little child" specifically.

Indeed, Jesus there tells His disciples that this little child was already one of them -- alias "he that is least among you all."<sup>342</sup> This was then a little child whom Christ tells us (in Mark) was "one of the tiny ones who believe in Me."<sup>343</sup>

Moreover, Jesus does not here tell His disciples to receive all children without exception. Nor does Jesus here command that we should bless or baptize all indiscriminately.

No. Jesus here tells His disciples to receive in His Name "such" little children as that particular tiny little child was. For he was a believing little child; one of "such" little children as "trust" in Jesus; "one of the tiny little ones who believe in Me."<sup>344</sup> As the famous scholar Rev. Professor Dr. Henry Barclay Swete comments, that particular little child was "the representative

of its class -- or rather of the class of disciples it symbolizes."

Significantly, some have suggested that the believing apostle Peter -- there present -- was the father of that particular little child.<sup>345</sup> Others have suggested that the tiny one was the apostle John's trainee Ignatius, the later Bishop of Antioch. For the latter was later nicknamed "*Theophoros* -- alias "the one carried by God" (= Christ).<sup>346</sup>

Yet it really matters very little indeed whether that 'tiny little one' in Capernaum be either Peter's child -- or John's trainee Ignatius. It is certain, however, that "this little child" who "was believing" in Jesus and whom He "picked up" and then "put down" next "to Himself" -- is mentioned<sup>347</sup> right after Christ's healing of a faithful Christian father's "only son" (thus Luke). That "only son" in Luke, Matthew calls a "child" -- and Mark, a "little child."

### **33. "Permit the little [covenant] children to come unto Me!"**

We now consider another different yet similar case, where Jesus blesses still other covenant children. This new event took place not in Capernaum's province of Galilee, but in the territories of the province of Judea.<sup>348</sup>

On this subsequent occasion, the Pharisees had been trying to trick Jesus into making an assailable statement on divorce. However, Jesus instead re-asserted the integrity of marriage. By implication, He also asserted the rightness of (re-)producing faithful covenant children within marriage -- as a creation ordinance of Almighty God Himself.<sup>349</sup>

Many and perhaps even most of God's faithful adult believers do get married. Nearly all of the latter then (re-)produce covenant infants. Such latter are presumed, rightly, to be 'holy from the womb'.<sup>350</sup>

Some of those covenant infants, made godly by Christ at or after their conception -- from the time of their regeneration onward -- will themselves in turn establish godly marriages, if and after they themselves grow up.<sup>351</sup> However, others of those surviving godly infants will never marry when they grow up. Instead, they remain 'godly eunuchs.' Indeed, some have been "so born from their mothers' wombs."<sup>352</sup>

Writes Matthew of Jesus: "Then little children were brought to Him, so that He could put His hands on them and pray. But the disciples rebuked them [who faithfully brought those children]. Yet Jesus said: 'Permit the little children, and do not forbid them to come to Me! For of such is the Kingdom of heaven.' So He laid His hands on them, and went away from there."<sup>353</sup>

Luke's account of this same incident makes it clear that the little children then brought to Jesus, included even "the infants" alias the *brephē* or recently-born sucklings of those who brought them. Luke thus shows that the Kingdom of God consists of sucklings too. Indeed, he records for us the striking words of Jesus that "whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God like [such] a little child -- shall never enter into it."<sup>354</sup>

Jesus does not here say that adults must receive God's Kingdom in the way adults receive children. Indeed, some adults do not receive children. But Jesus here says that whosoever receives God's Kingdom, must receive it in the very way such a little covenant child receives it -- namely, simply by God's grace; and through a God-given faith.<sup>354</sup>

Mark adds that Jesus was "much displeased" when His disciples rebuked those [faithful folk] who brought these little children" to them and to Him. Mark also records that Jesus addressed Himself to those little ones, "took them up in his arms, and...blessed them."<sup>355</sup> Indeed, Mark even states (just a few verses later) that the sons of Zebedee would indeed be 'baptized' with the baptism with which Jesus Himself was baptized.<sup>356</sup>

### **34. Exactly who were these infants then being brought to Jesus?**

Firstly. We should note that those who brought these little children for Jesus to touch them, were covenant people from Judea -- and not Pagans.<sup>357</sup> According to Rev. Professor Dr. William Barclay, it was the custom of mothers in Israel to bring their children on their first birthday anniversary to a distinguished Rabbi, so that he might bless them.<sup>358</sup> This seems to be what was happening here too. They had previously attained the 'age' of a year -- just three months after their birth, and just twelve months since their conception.<sup>359</sup>

Secondly. These little children were apparently already in touch with Jesus -- by virtue of their prior membership of the covenant. We do not mean from their circumcision onward -- from eight days of age after their births. No. We mean that all such covenant infants (including uncircumcisable baby girls) were already deemed holy -- even from their prior conception onward. First Corinthians 7:14. Yet, thereafter, their parents quite rightly still desired to bring them into even closer touch with their Saviour.<sup>360</sup>

Thirdly. These covenant adults brought their little children to Jesus -- even while those little children were yet sucklings (and therefore speech-less in-fants). So too should we.

Fourthly. Pagan parents did not then desire -- nor do they now normally desire -- to bring their own children to Jesus. Unlike the ancient Hebrews who never promoted abortion, the ancient pagan parents (just like their modern counterparts) often deliberately aborted their own fetuses. They also often intentionally killed their own little infants postnatally. Consequently, such pagan parents and their children stayed away from Jesus' closest touch.<sup>361</sup>

Fifthly. The Saviour's closest touch apparently points to His atonement -- even for such little children. Rev. Professor Dr. Joachim Jeremias rightly says that Christ's public blessing of these children<sup>362</sup> "depicts an incident from the time of Jesus' ministry on the eve of the Day of Atonement, when children were brought to the Hebrew Elders" routinely. The purpose of this -- thus the *Talmud* -- was for those Elders to 'bless them, strengthen them, and pray for them.'<sup>363</sup>

Sixthly. Covenant parents had brought their children "from their mother's womb" to Jesus -- for Him to "pray" for them.<sup>364</sup> This shows the parents knew that the covenant blessings for their children were not automatic. They knew they were required to "bring" their children to the

Saviour -- for Him then to "pray" His blessings upon them.<sup>365</sup>

Seventhly. When Christ's overzealous disciples wrongly rebuked the covenant parents for bringing their little covenant children to Jesus, the Saviour was "much displeased." He then told them not to "forbid" those covenant children from being brought to Him.<sup>366</sup> Significantly, this expression "forbid them not" -- *mē kōluete* -- has distinct reference to the household baptism passages in the book of Acts.<sup>367</sup> Thus Rev. Professor Dr. Oscar Cullmann, in his book *Baptism in the New Testament*.<sup>358</sup>

Lastly. Christ's words here<sup>369</sup> -- "Permit the little children to come to Me!" -- already sound familiar. For they remind us of His call<sup>370</sup> to burdened sinners. Among the latter, Christ includes even the "babes" to whom the Father has "revealed" these things!

### **35. "Of such" children, states Jesus, "is the Kingdom of God!"**

Jesus now makes a very crucial remark in respect of these 'little children' of the covenant. Says He: "Permit the little children to come to Me! Do not forbid them! For of such is the Kingdom of God." *Aphete ta paidia erchesthai pros Me! Mee kōluete auta! Tōn gar toioutōn estin hē Basileia tou Theou!*<sup>371</sup>

Now this expression "of such" -- *tōn toioutōn* -- is a correlative demonstrative pronoun of quality. The famous Biblical Greek grammarians Arndt and Gingrich say *toioutos* means "'such a person.'" It signifies this: "either in such a way that a definite individual with his special characteristics is thought of; or that any bearer of certain definite qualities is meant."

Elsewhere, in Holy Scripture, cognates of these same words (*tōn toioutōn*) are used very frequently to indicate that not humanity in general but only a definite individual is (or definite individuals are) in mind.<sup>372</sup> The same applies in our present expression: "Permit the little children and do not forbid them to come to Me, for of such is the Kingdom of heaven!"<sup>373</sup>

For the immediate context of these words "of such" in our present Gospel passage<sup>374</sup> -- namely the phrase "receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, for of such is the Kingdom of heaven"<sup>375</sup> -- clarifies the whole picture. It shows that the Kingdom of God belongs to such adults and children as receive the Kingdom of God -- in the way in which those particular believing children of the covenant were then receiving it. That was by way of being brought to Jesus, probably by their covenant parent(s). That, in turn, then further led to their sovereignly being blessed by Him.<sup>376</sup>

Here the genitive *tōn toioutōn* is not qualitative, but possessive. Thus not "like such" but "of such" is (*estin*) the Kingdom of God. From whatever theological perspective, it is obvious that the word *estin* (generally meaning 'is') must here be understood to mean "belongs." Consequently, the whole of the phrase 'of such is the Kingdom of God' does not mean 'the Kingdom of God is of a childlike nature.' To the contrary, it rather means: 'the Kingdom of God is that of such children as possess it.' It belongs to **them**.

Of course, this does not mean that the Kingdom belong to all children without exception -- nor to all adults without exception. For Jesus does not say the Kingdom belongs to all children. Nor does He say the Kingdom belongs to all such as are childlike. To the contrary, Jesus says the Kingdom belongs to such as receive the Kingdom in the way those particular children then did.

Indeed, Jesus here makes it quite clear<sup>377</sup> that the only people who inherit the Kingdom -- whether as adults or as children -- are those who priorly "receive" it. Here, those who "receive" it means those (and those alone) -- whether adults or children -- who truly "believe" in Jesus.<sup>378</sup>

Christ makes this very plain to the Greek woman from the pagan colony of Syrophenicia. For He tells her that the Israelitic "children" first had to be offered food -- before the leftovers of their bread could be taken and extended toward the unclean pagan "little dogs."<sup>379</sup>

Yet Jesus also makes it clear that the faithless among the covenant 'children of the Kingdom' -- alias the apostate nation of ancient Israel -- would be cast forth into outer darkness. Then, many believing Gentiles would come from the east and the west, like the faithful Roman centurion, and sit down together with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the Kingdom of heaven.<sup>380</sup>

Again, Jesus elsewhere says:<sup>381</sup> "Whosoever shall receive one of such [believing] little children in My Name, receives Me." Also in the parable of the sheep and the goats,<sup>382</sup> it is clear that only the sheep are "brethren" to the great Shepherd-King.<sup>383</sup> Indeed, those who do not help the sheep and the lambs -- are branded as 'goats' and as kindred of the devil.<sup>384</sup>

### **36. Mark on Jesus' famous blessing of the covenant children**

Let us now look at Mark's account<sup>385</sup> of Christ blessing the little children. Here, we again see that even covenant children do need to "receive" the Kingdom of God. For the word "receive"<sup>386</sup> generally refers to the 'acceptance' of a person, or of a message, or of a gift.<sup>387</sup>

However, even where tiny babies are covenant children, they still need to "enter" into the Kingdom. For unless and until a person has been born again, he or she cannot even see and much less "enter" into the Kingdom of God.<sup>388</sup> The Kingdom is to be received by its recipients -- whether adults or children -- in the way or 'just as' a little child who receives it, embraces that Kingdom.

For the Kingdom is to be received in the way a tiny covenanter does -- "as a little child" (*hōs paidion*). In context, this is clearly nominative, not accusative. The immediate context therefore does not mean: 'Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God in the way one receives a child, shall not enter it.'<sup>389</sup>

To the contrary. The immediate context clearly means: 'Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God in the way a little child receives it' (whenever that child indeed does so receive God's Kingdom), 'shall not enter it.'<sup>390</sup> The immediate context,<sup>391</sup> the remoter context<sup>392</sup> and the parallel passages<sup>393</sup> all sustain this meaning.

For in Mark's account,<sup>394</sup> the expression "as a little child" immediately follows and clearly refers to the way believing covenant children -- like the ones Jesus there blessed -- "receive the Kingdom of God." It is precisely the same way in which "whosoever" would "enter" the Kingdom, must himself "receive" it -- namely: through belief, alias by faith in Christ.

Indeed, Mark's account makes it quite clear that "the little children" concerned actually 'came' to Jesus. This does not at all necessarily mean they were old enough to walk. For the unborn Jesus 'came' to the unborn John, when the former's mother thus "brought" Him to John's mother. Indeed, later, these "little children" who "came" to Jesus -- were actually "brought" to Him. For they were conveyed to Him by "those that brought them."<sup>395</sup>

The similar passage in Matthew, previously dealt with, makes this even clearer. For that passage shows that every adult and child and baby -- or "whosoever keeps on humbling himself like this little child" who is right now humbling himself -- is a "great one" in the Kingdom of heaven, alias the Kingdom of God.

It also shows that he who receives in Christ's Name such a little child who believes in Jesus, receives the Lord Himself. Moreover, it further shows that "whosoever keeps on offending one of these tiny ones who keep on believing" in Christ -- is obviously not himself a true believer (as such a believing little child indeed is).

So *hōs paidion* or "as a little child" in Mark's account<sup>396</sup> is just as **nominative** and just as non-accusative -- as *hōs kleptēs* or "as a thief" is, in the expression that the day of the Lord should "not overtake you as a thief."<sup>397</sup> There too, the meaning is not: 'the day shall not overtake you in the way it overtakes a thief.' There, the meaning is obviously: 'the day shall not overtake you in the way a thief overtakes you.'

Here too, in Mark's account of Christ's blessing of the little believing children,<sup>398</sup> the meaning is not: 'Receive the Kingdom of God in the way you receive a little child!' Here, the meaning is: 'receive the Kingdom of God in the way such a little child receives it.'

This implies we are to receive God's Kingdom in the way this particular little believing covenant child was receiving it -- by the grace of God, and through exercising faith in Christ. For only 'such' children inherit God's Kingdom, as really do thus receive it -- namely, by 'believing' and thus 'entering' into His Kingdom.

### **37. Final look at Mark's account of Jesus and the little children**

We now take a last and an even deeper look at Mark's account of this incident.<sup>399</sup> Covenant parents from Judea had come to Jesus. They had "brought young children to Him, so that He should touch them."<sup>400</sup> So now, Jesus "took them up in His arms and put His hands upon them and blessed them."<sup>401</sup>

Firstly. Jesus here "took them up in His arms."<sup>402</sup> These covenant children were Christ's own lambs. For Isaiah had predicted that "He shall gather the lambs in His arm" -- the little lambs, but not the little goats.<sup>403</sup> Indeed, the Hebrew word for 'lambs' (*lā'īm*) is cognate with

the Aramaic for a boy or a girl of the covenant (*talia* and *talitha*). This is seen also in the account of the little girl Talitha. For she was a "little daughter" (*thugatrion*) or a "little child" (*paidion*) or a "tiny little maiden" (*korasion*) -- whom Jesus raised from the dead.<sup>404</sup>

Secondly. Christ's embrace (*enangkalisamenos*) here denotes His warm acceptance of these covenant children. This shows that they belong to Him -- and that His Kingdom belongs to such as them.<sup>405</sup>

Thirdly. Jesus "put His hands upon them."<sup>405</sup> This describes the Hebrew way of "placing" hands upon those who are covenant children, in order to bless them further. Just recall Jacob's former blessing of his tiny grandchildren Ephraim and Manasseh!<sup>406</sup> For, be it noted, they were already his 'children' even before he blessed them thus.

Fourthly. Jesus "blessed them" (*kateulogei...auta*).<sup>407</sup> This means Jesus fervently spoke God's Word -- *kata* plus *logei* -- to these covenant children. Consequently, His Word was the vehicle by which He warmly blessed them.

Lastly. Lest it be objected that babies cannot be spoken to intelligibly -- let Luke's account of this same episode again be remembered. For those whom Mark here calls "little children" (or *paidia*), Luke calls *brephē* alias 'babies' (whether born or not yet born). Such 'babies' -- says Luke -- actively receive the Kingdom.

The connection here between this action of the babies and the 'visible Word' of the sacrament in infant baptism for covenant children, should be obvious. So too should the meaningfulness of even an unborn baby's participation in daily family worship.

### **38. Christ's Great Commission and infant salvation**

We also need to look at Christ's Great Commission. Just before He gave it, covenant children (*paidas*) had been praising Jesus. He Himself had then insisted that God had perfected His praise -- even out of the mouth of speech-less in-fants (*nēpiōn*) and unweaned babies (*thēlazontōn*). Indeed, He soon went on to assure especially the tiny children in Jerusalem that He loved them just as much as a mother hen loves her own little chickens.<sup>408</sup>

Soon after that, Jesus obviously included such speech-less in-fants (and other children too) -- among the God-praisers in "all the nations" to be baptized in terms of His Great Commission.<sup>409</sup>

For, as Isaiah predicted of Him -- "so shall He sprinkle many nations," and "He shall see His seed."<sup>410</sup> Hence, Jesus commanded His Ministers: "Disciple all the nations, baptizing them!"<sup>411</sup>

Also as far as His infant seed is concerned, the implied teaching of Christ's Great Commission is very clearly: first, belief; and only then, baptism. Hence, declared Jesus: "he who believes and is baptized, shall be saved; but he who does not believe, shall be damned!"<sup>412</sup> Of course, this means all believers (the tiny ones too), and all unbelievers (the tiny ones too).

Against the views of all Baptists, we must insist upon executing the full thrust of Christ's Great Commission. For it not only permits but in fact requires that all apparent believers need

to be baptized. This means not just older children and adults who profess belief, but also even all of the many tiny believers.

For the very "nations" (including their babies) are to be baptized. Indeed, just before ordering baptism, Jesus commanded that the Gospel is first to be preached to "every" creature or human being -- including all infants.<sup>413</sup>

The false notion that the (believing but unprofessing) babies of believers should be left unbaptized -- is an Anti-Protestant doctrine which denies the brand-mark of holy baptism to those who seem to be Christ's little lambs. For the risen Christ commanded His servants to feed not just His sheep, but especially His little lambs -- His *arnia* or *probatia*.<sup>413</sup>

Advocates of the opposite and equally atrocious error would baptize unbelieving babies and unbelieving adults. Such erring advocates cast the pearl of Christ's sacrament before those deemed or deemable to be swine (or at least little pigs).

As the great Anglican and Puritan scholar Rev. Dr. William Wall rightly insists in his massive *History of Infant Baptism*:<sup>414</sup> "Suppose our Saviour had bid the apostles, 'Go and disciple all the nations' -- but instead of 'baptize,' had said 'circumcise them!' An Antipaedobaptist will grant that in that case, without any more words, the apostles must have circumcised the infants of the nations as well as the grown men -- though there had been no express mention of infants in the commission."

Very frankly, because baptism has now replaced circumcision,<sup>415</sup> the Great Commission has irrefragable paedobaptist force. Jesus has commanded His Church to subjugate "the nations" as such (including their infants) to the Great Commission. Yet from their antipaedobaptistic viewpoint, Baptists would never wish "the nations" as such to get baptized. Consequently, their hypothesis is not only a sacramentological and an ethical but also an eschatological error.

"He that believeth and is baptized" -- includes babies! In the Great Commission according to Mark 16:16, we read: "He who believes and is baptized, shall be saved; but he who does not believe, shall be condemned."

Here, baptistic Antipaedobaptists and inconsistent Paedobaptists both allege -- that "infants cannot believe." In this, both are wrong.

For, thus Hebrews 11:6, "without faith [or belief] -- it is impossible to please God." This is so, whether one is an infant, or an adult.

Inconsistent Paedobaptists often very wrongly divorce Mark 16:16 from infant baptism. Antipaedobaptists like Wall's opponent Dr. Gale, in his work *Reflections on Mr Wall's 'History of Infant Baptism'* (II:441), rightly declare: "If these words must be extended to all, and applied to every one -- then no person, no not any infant, can be saved without faith." Exactly so!

However, it is only consistent Paedobaptists who can transcend Gale -- and then go on to draw the really right conclusion. It is this. Because nobody can be saved without justification



through faith, infants too must have faith in Christ, so as to be justified. For he who believes and is baptized, shall be saved; but he who does not believe, shall be condemned! Mark 16:16.

That is why Jesus commanded His apostles [and in them also their ministerial successors] "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations." Then, predicting the soon descent of the Holy Spirit into their midst, He further promised them: "I am sending the Promise of My Father upon you. But remain in the city of Jerusalem, until you are endued with power from on high!"<sup>416</sup>

Here, the word 'endued' translates the verb *endusēsthe* in Luke's account of Christ's prediction. The verb also anticipates Paul's later statement that "as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ (*endusasthe*)."<sup>417</sup> It further anticipates Paul's other accompanying statement: "If you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed!"<sup>417</sup>

The above verb "endued" in Luke's Gospel also anticipates his own later verses in the Book of Acts. For, at the beginning of the latter, Luke records Christ's predictive statement that the apostles would "be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days" thereafter.<sup>418</sup> When that occurred -- Luke tells us a little later in his Book of Acts -- it would fulfil Joel's striking prediction that the Lord God would pour out His "rain" even on covenantal "sucklings" or unweaned infants.<sup>419</sup>

Christ's apostle Peter himself also said so. For he rightly understood the full covenantal thrust of his Saviour's prediction. Accordingly, he urged his Pentecost Sunday converts to "be baptized" -- and reminded them that the promise was also for "your children."<sup>420</sup>

Later still, and then looking back, Christ's same apostle Peter would again remind<sup>421</sup> Christian families that they had been "born again" and "sprinkled" even "as new-born babies." Indeed, he would add they had thus been separated unto God. He would then remind them about the 'baptism' of Noah's entire household inside the ark. By the sprinkling of the rainwater, that had also separated them -- from the ungodly households outside the ark of the covenant.

### **39. Christian covenant theology in the Apostolic Church**

Christ gave the apostles His Great Commission, and then told them that He Himself would baptize with the Holy Spirit (on the New Testament's Pentecost Sunday). They rightly understood that this included the infant salvation of God's covenanted people. They therefore also knew that their Saviour further required the subsequent administration of infant baptism -- to signify and to seal that salvation.

Hence Peter knew, even on Pentecost Sunday, that all "from every nation under heaven" who then repented -- were to be baptized, together with their "children"<sup>422</sup> (as part of Chr'st Great Commission to turn all nations into His disciples). Immediately before that, the apostles themselves were first baptized in the Spirit. Yet they were not then taken to a tank and submersed in the Holy Ghost. Instead, all of them were then baptized by the Spirit just "where they were sitting" -- when He "fell" upon them like sprinkling rain, and "sat upon each of them."<sup>423</sup>

So God thus "baptized" His apostles with His Spirit. At the same time, He also "poured" out and "shed forth" the gift of the Holy Ghost even upon the "sons" and "daughters" of Israel permanently residing in the dispersion (but then temporarily lodging in Jerusalem just for that Feast of Pentecost).<sup>424</sup> Indeed, the further baptismal promise to the "children" of those penitent Israelites converted to Christ, includes Joel's promise of the baptismal "rain" even for unweaned covenant babies alias "those that suck the breasts."<sup>425</sup>

This is why Peter himself then told those alerted Israelites: "Repent and be baptized! ... For the promise is to you and your children."<sup>426</sup> Thus, Peter knew that Christ's Great Commission to baptize -- means that the Saviour would thus "sprinkle many nations" (including their "children").<sup>427</sup>

At little later, Philip too knew this. For he did not baptize only male converts to Christ. Instead, after both "small and great...believed Philip's preaching," he baptized both males and females who evidenced faith in Christ.<sup>428</sup>

Indeed, soon thereafter, when a eunuch from the Ethiopian nation learned from Isaiah's writings that Jesus would "sprinkle many nations" -- he asked Philip what then hindered him to be baptized. Philip then gave a clear reply to that man of that Ethiopian nation (as one of the many nations to be sprinkled in respect of both their penitent adults and their children). Philip replied: "If you believe with all your heart, you may!"<sup>429</sup>

For "nations" consist also of "households." According to Luke, the writer of Acts, Jesus Himself had brought salvation to whole households -- such as those of Zaccheus in Jericho (and the nobleman in Capernaum including his *paidion* or "little child").<sup>430</sup> All of this clearly has implications for household baptism.<sup>431</sup>

Throughout the Bible, households would always include all of the babies present.<sup>432</sup> Indeed, we are specifically told that "every" male and "all the men" in Abraham's household were circumcised -- even those only eight days old.<sup>433</sup> Ahimelech's "house" included "both men and women, children and sucklings."<sup>434</sup> Also King Zedekiah's household included all his children.<sup>435</sup>

Even to Joel, the "house of your God" and "His people" included even "the children and those that suck the breasts" -- as well as "your sons and your daughters."<sup>436</sup> Especially Joel anticipated the 'birthday' of the New Testament Church on Pentecost Sunday. That is why the apostle Peter, knowing all this, then insisted that the covenant promises of New Testament baptism for "all the house of Israel" -- were not only for penitent adults, but also for "your children" too.<sup>437</sup>

#### **40. Household baptisms found throughout the Book of Acts**

Further, it is clear that household baptisms are found not just at the start of the Book of Acts,<sup>438</sup> but also throughout its subsequent chapters too. For it is clear that Cornelius and his whole household were already devout and God-fearing, even before they met Peter.

Regarding them all, an angel of God from heaven persuaded Peter: "What God **has cleansed**, you must not keep on calling unclean!" This was before the whole household of Cornelius was baptized with the Spirit and with water. That latter occurred, when God "poured out the gift of the Holy Spirit" upon them all -- so that no man could then "forbid water that they should not be baptized."<sup>439</sup>

The famous Protestant Reformer John Calvin comments on this baptism of the long-standing believer Cornelius and his whole household. In this connection Calvin observes: "We say today that those who are opposing infant baptism are waging war on God, because these men are cruelly rejecting from the Church those whom God honours with the name of sons!"<sup>440</sup>

Similarly, faithful Lydia was baptized, together with her household.<sup>441</sup> Her baptized household would obviously not have excluded any single member.<sup>442</sup> Consequently, any babies in her household, would also have been baptized -- and baptized as those presumed to be fellow-believers.<sup>443</sup>

The same applies in respect of the baptism of the entire household of the converted Philippian jailer.<sup>444</sup> Likewise, the same is also true of the entire believing household of Crispus.<sup>445</sup> And the same applies further to the households of Gaius and Stephanas.<sup>446</sup> We may even suggest with Eusebius and Dr Wall that those baptized in jail probably received the sacrament by way of affusion with a small quantity of water.<sup>447</sup>

Consequently, Paul bore "witness both to small and to great."<sup>448</sup> This probably means: both to the tiny and to the mature -- as well as to the insignificant and to the influential. For Paul knew<sup>449</sup> that the nations of the world need to be brought into subjection to the Great Commission -- by way of baptizing households. In that process, many classes of persons<sup>450</sup> were expected to come to know the Lord -- from their little ones to their adults. Cf. Hebrews. 8:11.

#### **41. Covenantal Infants in Paul's Epistle to the Romans**

Paul's Epistle to the Romans makes it quite clear that the true "Jew" is the born-again Christian with a circumcised heart.<sup>451</sup> Circumcision was of much profit; for the Israelites were God's adopted covenant people from Abraham onward.<sup>452</sup> Abraham's heart was circumcised before his flesh was. For he was circumcised so that he could become the father of all believers -- whether they themselves were circumcised or not.

Now Abraham was also the father of all believing babies -- whether they were circumcised or uncircumcised.<sup>453</sup> This Abrahamic promise involves all those who believe in Christ's 'circumcisional' crucifixion for their sins, and His 'baptismal' resurrection for their justification.<sup>454</sup>

Thus the promise is for all who have been planted into Christ's death. Baptism symbolizes this. Ideally, they should be baptized only after the seed of faith has been planted in their heart. This is the seed which subsequently grows -- and then produces fruit.<sup>455</sup>

Against the submersionist hypothesis misbased on Paul's statement<sup>456</sup> that we "were baptized into Jesus Christ" and "buried with Him by baptism into death," we ourselves concur with the

view of Robert Ayres in his important book *Christian Baptism*. Declared Ayres:<sup>457</sup> "Jesus was not buried in a tank of water...but in a dry chamber excavated in living rock, [after] being laid on a shelf...in the tomb. Such 'burial' cannot be represented by 'burying under baptismal waters.'"

Even Paul as a covenant child seems to have been "alive" -- before he knew "lust" at puberty.<sup>458</sup> Indeed, it was precisely his increasing awareness of his lust which later drove him back to the promised Messiah.<sup>459</sup> For all of Abraham's true seed -- such as Isaac and Jacob, whom God loved savingly even before their birth -- would certainly germinate.<sup>460</sup>

Because Abraham the firstfruit was holy, so too was the rest of the harvest which followed him. Indeed, because Abraham was the holy root -- all of the branches proceeding from his loins were to be deemed holy.

This Word 'holy' means far more than merely sanctifiable. For such branches (or descendants of Abraham) were rebuttably to be regarded as really holy (and actually justified). Yet they still needed to be sanctified more and more.

Like us, they were of course not yet fully sinless. Yet Paul calls still them "holy" branches.<sup>461</sup> Only if those branches subsequently proved to be unfruitful, were they then to be broken off and cut out of the covenant.<sup>462</sup>

#### **42. Children of the covenant free from sexual lust -- before puberty**

Romans seven merits closer attention. Perhaps reflecting on his life before puberty as a child of the covenant, the adult Paul there declares:

"I would not have known lust, unless the Law had said: ['thou shalt not commit adultery!' and] 'thou shalt not covet!' But sin, having conceived its point of departure through the Commandment, thoroughly worked in me every kind of lust. For without the Law, sin is dead. Once indeed I did live, without a Law. However, when the Commandments came, the sin was resurrected -- and I died."<sup>463</sup>

Here, Paul says he would not have known "lust" (*epithumia*) --if the Law had not said: 'Do not lust!' Although including all forms of covetousness, "lust" is often especially of a sexual nature.<sup>464</sup> Indeed, it is difficult to see how a small child could even imagine especially such kinds of lust -- before reaching the age of puberty.

Apparently referring back to his own life before puberty, the adult Paul here seems to be saying: "I was alive...once. But when the Commandment came, sin came to life; while I myself died." Indeed, the Israelitic concept of 'thirteen years and a day' as the age of manhood -- and thus as the age of fuller accountability even for sexual sins -- would seem to corroborate this.<sup>465</sup>

Before teenage, covenant youth are (rebuttably) to be presumed as having been regenerated already -- and often as probably (re)converted too. From about age thirteen onward, however, they now need an even more dramatic turning again toward their Saviour. Once and for all, He

has already washed away all their sins, from the womb to the tomb. Yet at teenage, they also need an ongoing turning away specifically from newly discovered sexual sins *etc.*

So it was apparently about his own pre-puberty life that the mature Paul says: "I was alive once, without the Law." For especially before teenage, he was 'without' the ability meaningfully to understand the laws governing sexual "lust." Origen, Ambrose, Chrysostom and Augustine all apply the words "I was alive once" -- to the general experience of childhood.

Calvin here comments that Paul had "been instructed in the doctrine of the Law from his childhood." Tholuck applies the apostle's words "I was alive" -- to Paul's childhood days. Sanday and Headlam, in their *Commentary*, observe that this refers "to the life of unconscious morality -- happy, but only for [or because of] ignorance and thoughtlessness.... We may well believe that the regretful reminiscence of bright unconscious innocence goes back to the days of [Paul's] own childhood -- before he had begun to feel the conviction of sin."

Meyer says: "Paul means...childlike 'innocence.'" Bruce here says of Paul that "in his earliest days, he lived a carefree life. But 'shades of the prisonhouse begin to close about the growing boy'" -- as he approaches physical maturity.

Ridderbos comments that Paul here "refers to the time in the life of every human being when the claims of the Law had not yet reached him -- namely, in those childhood years when he was not yet conscious of the Law." And N.P. Williams comments that Paul "in three or four vivid words sketches the golden age of earliest childhood during which he was alive 'in the purely physical sense' without the Law..., [and still] swayed solely by instinct."

Naturally, however, Paul was even then already a sinner -- and fully subject to the Law. But he did not yet understand it -- especially insofar as it relates to sexual lust. For then, he "was alive once without the Law" functioning fully -- in his young and relatively ignorant and carefree days before his puberty. Was he then already a regenerated child of God? If so, he still needed to be (re-)converted to Christ -- especially when a teenager.<sup>466</sup>

### **43. Regeneration and (re)conversion among Christians at Corinth**

Paul maintains this same teaching of unrepeatable early regeneration and of ongoing conversion to the Lordship of Christ -- also in his First Epistle to the Corinthians. There, he is writing to those who had already "been sanctified in Christ Jesus" (*hēgiasmenois en Christou Iēsous*) -- and who were already being "called saints or 'sanctified ones' (*klētoi hagiois*)."

Paul had then baptized some and Apollos had next baptized many of the Corinthian Christians -- as those already deemed to be saints. Indeed, Paul reminded them he had baptized the entire [already sanctified] households of Crispus and Gaius and Stephanas -- as the firstfruits of Achaia alias Central Greece.<sup>467</sup>

Also, he reminded the Corinthian Christians they had been fed with milk like babies. That was when Paul had planted and Apollos had watered them -- as Ministers of the Word and

Sacraments. Thus the Corinthian Christians had all been justified and sanctified and washed and baptized -- in the Name of the Lord Jesus.<sup>468</sup>

Paul further stresses that also the infant children of a believing parent are not just sanctifi-able. Truly, such infants have already been sanctifi-ed -- so that they are, in fact, already holy! That is then their status -- "holy" -- and apparently even from conception onward.

Such infants are already holy, Paul further assured the Corinthians, even if only one of the parents is a believer. Indeed, such infants are holy, in spite of the subsequently remaining stains from Adam's original sin -- and also in spite of those infants' own ongoing personal transgressions.<sup>469</sup>

Indeed, Paul reminds the Corinthian Christians that also their "fathers" -- the Israelites of old -- were "all baptized." In their case, they were "baptized into Moses -- in the cloud" at the Red Sea. And that, of course, took place only after their redemption from Egypt.<sup>470</sup>

Paul further reminds the Corinthian Christians that people can know at least some things, even when they are still speech-less in-fants or *nē-epoi* (alias *nē pioi*). They can and do sin, even when they do not yet have any words for 'bad things.' For even then, they can nevertheless already make in-fant-ile sounds -- and can also already understand, in an in-fant-ile way.<sup>471</sup>

Paul further reminds the Corinthian Christians in general that they too -- just like the household of the Corinthian Christian Stephanas -- had all been baptized into the one body of Christ's Visible Church.<sup>472</sup> Indeed, he also reminds them that God had anointed "the church" in Corinth and "all the saints" in Achaia -- and had "sealed" them with the Spirit in their hearts.<sup>473</sup>

#### **44. "Else were your children unclean; but now, they are holy!"**

Some further words are necessary about Paul's key-text to the Corinthians in this regard. For Paul explains: "The unbelieving husband has been set apart in the [believing] wife, and the unbelieving wife has been set apart in the [believing] husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean; but now, they are holy."<sup>474</sup>

The Jewish *Talmud* was written down from perhaps 200 A.D. onward, but it no doubt also reflects much of even the pre-Christian oral tradition of the ancient Hebrews. The Talmud dissociates the 'holiness' of both an unborn child and his pregnant proselyte mother from her own proselyte baptism -- and therefore also from any possible baptismal regenerationism.

For the *Talmud* regards such an unborn infant as being holy already, even without being baptized. It also regards him as being holy together with his mother -- at the very moment she believes, and thus quite before even her own baptism.

Now here in First Corinthians 7:14 Paul is not saying that when "the unbelieving wife is 'set apart' by the husband" who believes, this makes their children holy merely in the sense that they

are then 'legitimate' and thus not bastards. For children born also to unbelieving married spouses, are legitimate too.

Nor is Paul here saying that the unbelieving spouse's having been 'set apart' by the believing spouse, means that the unbeliever has been justified -- simply by having lived together with the believer. For the believer is to continue living with the unbelieving spouse -- precisely so that the believer, through his or her ongoing testimony, "shall save" (*sōzeis*) the unbeliever.<sup>475</sup>

In our text, the phrase 'set apart' (or *hēgiastai*) is past tense -- perfect passive. It refers to something already accomplished in the 'set-apart' unbeliever. The previous sentence<sup>476</sup> makes it clear that it is referring to the 'dwelling together' -- which, of course, has already been accomplished. That 'dwelling together' commenced with that marriage itself -- with its first act of sexual intercourse. For it was there that the unbelieving was 'set apart' for the sexual use of the other spouse -- who either was then, or later became, a believer.<sup>476</sup>

It is sexual intercourse with the believing spouse, within marriage itself, which has thus 'set apart' the unbelieving spouse. Consequently, the resulting children are not unclean (*akatharta estin*) -- but holy (*hagia estin*). On the other hand, the non-covenantal marriage act of two unbelieving spouses -- like everything else in their lives -- is indeed polluted (even if they are married to one another). Therefore their resulting children are unclean and unholy -- and not entitled to receive holy baptism. Compare Exodus 11:5-7 and Ezekiel 22:26 -- for the absolute difference between the holy and the unclean.

The covenantal marriage of a believer, however, is holy. Even if married to an unbeliever, the believer is not polluted by the unbeliever in the marriage act so that their resulting children are thus unclean. No. In the marriage act itself, the believer has 'set apart' the unbeliever. Consequently, their children (both prenatally and postnatally) are not unclean but holy.

#### **45. A believer's faith overshadows an infidel spouse's unbelief**

The faith of the believing spouse is seen to be far more influential than the faithlessness of the unbelieving spouse. That faith of the believer does not justify his or her unbelieving spouse.

Yet the former's faith indeed overshadows the influence of the latter's unbelief, so as to prevent the unbeliever from communicating that unbelief to the joint child of the believer. Consequently, the resulting children are not unclean like the unbelieving spouse --but holy, like the believing spouse.

Of course, a believer should never enter into marriage with one known to be an unbeliever.<sup>477</sup> But if an unbeliever becomes a believer after marriage -- his or her new Christian faith nevertheless also 'sets apart' the unbeliever even in the marriage act (specifically in respect of the children which are usually to be expected to result therefrom).

The status before God of a child of two unbelieving parents, is unclean. The status before God of a child of at least one believing parent, is holy -- from conception onward.

Therefore, children of believers are holy from the womb. Indeed, they are to be recognized as such. This is done by giving them holy baptism soon after they come forth from the holy womb of the believing mother -- or from an unbelieving mother's womb previously 'set apart' by the marriage act with a holy husband. For it is the Holy Spirit working through the marriage act of a believing spouse which produces the conception not of a sinless but indeed of a holy child -- a child lifelong to be separated from sin and dedicated unto righteousness.

There is no suggestion in First Corinthians 7:14 that the infants of at least one believing adult are sanctified only at baptism. Indeed, there is no explicit reference at all to baptism in First Corinthians seven. The statement in First Corinthians 7:14 rather teaches us that the infants of a believer are already deemed holy, even from conception onward -- and therefore long before being baptized.

Nevertheless, precisely First Corinthians 7:14 -- in the broader context -- would still clearly imply that precisely such covenant infants should be baptized as soon as feasible. First Corinthians 1:2; 1:14-16; 3:1-8; 4:1f; 6:11; 7:14; 12:13; 16:15.

Indeed, it is significant that the whole symbolism of declaring persons to be holy, is clearly portrayed precisely by the administration of water-rites. Hebrews 9:10f. See too: Exodus 19:10; Leviticus 6:27f & 15:5-27 & 21:8-15; Second Samuel 11:4. See too Ephesians 1:4-7,13; 4:4-5,30; 5:25-31; 6:1-4; Colossians 1:2; 2:11f; 3:20f.

Consequently, First Corinthians 7:14 not only clearly teaches that covenant children are holy from their conception onward. It also implies they should thereafter be baptized -- soon after their birth.

#### **46. The Anglican Wall and the Baptist Gale on First Corinthians 7:14**

In his *History of Infant Baptism*, also the Anglican Rev. Dr. Wall finally admitted<sup>478</sup> regarding this text: "It has commonly and for the most part been seen that the unbelieving party has been brought over by the believing party, which was a great encouragement for the believing party to stay with the other. As he [Paul] says in verse 16, 'What knowest thou O wife whether thou shalt save thine husband' and *e` contra*....

"Then the sense of the next words ('else were your children unclean but now are they holy') is naturally this: else the children of such matches would be counted unfit to be dedicated to God by baptism. But now you see by the use of the Christian Church they are counted -- as all other Christians are -- *hagioi*, holy, or saints.

"This is the sense in which the ancient Christians understood and expounded this text of Scripture.... The commentaries of Pelagius [and] St. Austin &c....who lived before the rise of Antipaedobaptists...expounded it just so."



For the most part, the above is excellent. However, though the product of mixed marriages, babies of a believing parent are to be baptized in infancy -- even if their other (unbelieving) parent does not priorly come to faith in Christ. For, as Wall himself pointed out, such children [of at least one faithful parent] are not "counted unfit to be dedicated to God by baptism." As children of at least one believing parent -- also those babies are themselves already to be regarded as believers, before being baptized. For, as little Christians, "they are counted as all other Christians are -- *hagioi*, holy, or saints."

Indeed, even Wall's famous adversary the Baptist Rev. Dr. Gale<sup>479</sup> was forced to admit that the Paedobaptists "Dr. Whitby and Bishop Burnet are very accurate in proving that the words 'now are your children holy' do speak...of seminal holiness.... Their argument for infant baptism [is] from seminal holiness."

Thus, in an unguarded moment, even Gale admitted the obvious. For he too conceded that both Whitby and Burnet were "very accurate" in presupposing the existence of "seminal holiness" alias the 'seed of sanctification' in the babies of believers. First Corinthians 7:14; Hebrews 5:12 to 6:2 & 11:6; James 1:18,21,27; First Peter 1:23 to 2:2f; and First John 2:12f & 3:9.

#### **47. God Who has anointed and sealed all His saints, keeps on establishing them**

In his Second Epistle to the Corinthians,<sup>480</sup> Paul apparently strengthens the above teaching. For there he tells us as the saints of the Lord that it is "God Who has anointed us (*chrisas hēmas*)" -- and Who thereafter "keeps on establishing us (*bebaiōn hēmas*)...in Christ." Paul then further states that God "also sealed us (*sphragisamenos hēmas*)" -- and that He has given (*dous*) the earnest [or 'down-payment'] of the Spirit in our hearts."

The sequence here seems to be as follows. Firstly. God unretractably gave the down-payment of His Spirit in our hearts. For He "gave" it, and "has finished giving" it -- *dous* (strong aorist). He did so, when we and our children were regenerated once and for all.

Secondly. God thereafter and unrepeatably "also sealed us (*kai sphragisamenos hēmas*)."

He did this, when He "anointed us (*chrisas hēmas*)" -- at the time He baptized us and our children with water.

Thirdly. God still "keeps on strengthening or establishing us (*bebaiōn hēmas*) together with Christ." This He does, by way of our post-baptismal 'ongoing sanctification.'

#### **48. Covenant children in Paul's Epistle to the Galatians**

In Galatians, Paul insists that God had separated him from his mother's womb and had called him by His grace -- even though it was only when he was an adult that God went on to reveal His Son in him. Thus, the Spirit of God was 'separatingly' and even 'callingly' at work in Paul -- already when he was still very young. Indeed, it even seems God's Son was 'hiddenly' at work

within Paul -- long before God the Father 'uncovered' that Son (not just 'to' Paul but even "in" him).<sup>481</sup>

Rev. Dr. R.A. Webb -- sometime Professor of Systematic Theology at Southwestern Presbyterian University in Tennessee -- at the beginning of the twentieth century authored an important book on *The Theology of Infant Salvation*. There he comments anent Paul:<sup>482</sup>

"Elect as a child and set apart by grace to be a disciple of Christ and a Minister of His Gospel, for the first years of his life his religious zeal was so misdirected.... This is quite common -- for there to be a parenthesis of sin and disobedience between the divine call in infancy, and the conscious and obediential response to that call in mature adulthood." Compare Romans 7:7-17f.

Similarly, God had previously proclaimed the Abrahamic Gospel of Christ to Isaac and to Jacob -- quite before they were born.<sup>483</sup> Subsequently, at least Jacob drifted off into disobedience -- before becoming (re)converted.

Yet those infantly circumcised patriarchs received the same Gospel as did Paul -- and as the New Testament Christians did, before the latter were "baptized into Christ."<sup>484</sup> Indeed, even not-yet-baptized believers -- just like Isaac even before his infant circumcision -- are already children of God.<sup>485</sup>

Paul tells "the saints who are at Ephesus" it was after they believed -- that they were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.<sup>486</sup> They had all been conceived in sin. However, either then or since then they had also been resurrected spiritually -- by grace, and through faith.<sup>487</sup>

Regenerated Gentiles had now become fellow-heirs -- in the same body as had (previously circumcised) faithful Jews.<sup>488</sup> It matters not whether believers were of Jewish or of Gentile extraction. Nor does it matter whether they be infants or adults. In all cases, there is only "one body" -- the people of God.

Indeed, there is also only "one Lord" Jesus Christ -- and only "one faith" and only "one baptism."<sup>489</sup> There is also only "one Spirit" -- the Holy Spirit of God, by Whom believers are sealed as members of that one body.<sup>490</sup>

#### **49. Covenant children in Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians**

For the Lord Christ has but one bride [the Church]. He sanctifies her by His Word -- after having cleansed her -- by the washing of the water.<sup>491</sup> That already-cleansed and Calvary-washed Church contains -- and therefore in part consists of -- also the children of believers.<sup>492</sup> This is why those children, already in infancy, are baptized into membership of that Visible Church.

A Christian parent should therefore not coax his own small children to come "**to** the Lord" -- as if they ever were "away" from or "outside" of Him. Instead, a Christian parent should vigorously bring up his covenant children "in" or inside "the nurture of the Lord" -- while repeatedly urging both them and himself to ensure they really do believe (and thus 'make their election sure').

It was in the covenant family that those children were born -- and even conceived.<sup>493</sup> Consequently, those covenant children or *tekna* are to obey their parents not outside the covenant -- but 'within' it, or "in the Lord."<sup>494</sup>

Looking back from the subsequent chapters in Ephesians, the above is beautifully anticipated even in its very first chapter. There,<sup>495</sup> Paul is rightly adamant that "we have obtained an inheritance (*eklērōthēmen*). So we who have started trusting in Christ previously (*proēlpikotas en tōi Christōi*), should be to the praise of His glory. In Him you too [have started trusting] -- having heard (*akoousantes*) the Word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation. In Him you also, having trusted (*pistēusantes*), [next] were sealed (*esphragisthēte*) by the Holy Spirit of promise. He is the earnest [or down-payment] of our inheritance unto the redemption of the purchased possession -- to the praise of His glory."

This promise was sealed to us especially during our water baptism.<sup>496</sup> As Rev. Professor Dr. Abraham Kuyper Sr. rightly declares:<sup>497</sup> "Ephesians 1:13 is spoken to persons who first stood outside of Christ; who then received knowledge of the truth; and who then got baptized. By virtue of the [post-regenerational] mystical operation of the Holy Spirit at baptism, their own spirit has now become assimilated to that of Christ" -- within His Visible Church.

## **50. By cleaving to their wives godly husbands reproduce covenant children**

The last two chapters of Ephesians are particularly relevant to our subject. Here,<sup>498</sup> we are told that husbands should love their wives just like Christ loves His bride the Church. He loved her; and He handed Himself over for her. He did the latter at Calvary, where He cleansed her by the washing of the water -- so that He might sanctify her by the Word, and so that He might present her to Himself as a glorious Church. No longer would she have a spot or a wrinkle or any such thing. Rather, she would be holy and without blemish.

"This, then, is the way Christ-ian men ought to love their wives -- just like they love their own bodies. He who loves his wife, loves himself. For nobody ever yet hated his own flesh. But he nourishes (*ektrephei*) and cherishes it -- just like the Lord [nourishes and cherishes] the Church. For we are parts of His body -- of His flesh, and of His bones.

This is the reason why 'a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall be joined to his wife: so that they two shall be unto one flesh' (*eis sarka mian*). This is a great mystery; but I am speaking about Christ and the Church. In any case, each one of you in particular must keep on loving his own wife in this way, even as he keeps on loving himself. And the wife must keep on reverencing her husband!"

A Christian husband is thus to keep on becoming 'unto one flesh' with his wife. He must understand that in this way, in due time, children usually result -- from "the wife of your youth." He is further to understand that when those infants are conceived by "the wife of your covenant" -- they are conceived as "a godly seed."<sup>499</sup> Indeed, it is precisely as such that they are then to be raised.

## **51. Bringing up covenant children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord**

Paul further enjoins:<sup>500</sup> "Children, keep on obeying your parents in the Lord! For this is right. 'Honour your father and mother' -- this is the first commandment with promise -- 'so that it may go well with you, and so that you may attain great age upon the earth!' And fathers, do not keep on provoking your children (*tekna*)! But do keep on nourishing them (*ektrephete auta*) in the Lord's child-training and instruction (*en paideia, kai nouthesia, Kuriou*)!"

Here, note firstly. Christ loves His bride the Church. He 'hands Himself over' for her, and to her. He cleanses her, by the washing of the water gushing forth from His riven side on Calvary. So too, Christian husbands are to love their wives and 'hand themselves over' to them and for them. Thus, the husband is to 'be joined' to his wife -- also sexually.<sup>501</sup>

Secondly. Cleansing water came out of Christ's side, when he had 'handed Himself over' for His bride. So too does the believing husband 'sanctify' his wife, in the marriage act itself.<sup>502</sup>

Thirdly. Christ's bride includes even all infants for whom He gave Himself. Them too did He cleanse with the water from His side, when He died on Calvary. So too does the Christian home include all infants conceived and born -- as a result of the marriage act. Consequently, also such children are to be 'cleansed' with water -- symbolically -- at their infant baptism, after their birth from Christian parents.<sup>503</sup>

Fourthly. It was when loving her and giving Himself over for her and to her on Calvary, that Christ cleansed His bride with the washing of the water from His riven side. That cleansing therefore occurs objectively at Calvary. It is accomplished subjectively when God's elect are regenerated. It therefore does not occur when, through His Ministers, Christ subsequently baptizes the members of His Church -- with the baptismal water which only symbolizes this prior cleansing.

Fifthly. Paul does not here say that Christ (in the present continuous tense) still keeps on cleansing His Church -- mechanically and specifically through a baptismal laver itself.<sup>504</sup> To the contrary, Paul here actually writes that Christ (in the completed past tense) finished cleansing His Church -- by the (pre-baptismal) washing of the water<sup>505</sup> (which finished flowing on Calvary). Not *katharizōn* (present participle), but *katharisas* (past participle)!

Sixthly. Here, we do not encounter the Septuagint's "laver" (or *loutē r*).<sup>506</sup> Nor do we here read: 'cleansing in the laver of the water by baptism'<sup>507</sup> etc. Here, we simply read: "having cleansed in the washing [or *loutrō* ] of the water by the Word."<sup>508</sup> Thus, cleansed not through the laver (or *to loutēr*) -- but "cleansed in the washing...by the Word" (or *loutrō...en Rhēmati*).

Seventhly. It is only after Christ's pre-baptismal and Calvary washing of His bride that He, having then started to sanctify her, further keeps on sanctifying her "with the Word."<sup>509</sup> Similarly, it is only after the first marriage act that a Christian husband subsequently keeps on sanctifying his

wife -- even in respect of the possibility of their then-being-conceived but as-yet-unborn child or children.<sup>510</sup>

Eighthly. When those Christian children are born, they need to be baptized in infancy. For they have already been sanctified before their birth, and even from their conception. This is so, in spite of their also being stained -- from conception onward -- with the taint of Adam's original sin.<sup>511</sup>

Ninthly. Such Christian children are 'con-struct-ions' (*tek-na*). They were even prenatally con-struct-ed by God and through their parental con-struct-ors or archi-tec-ts -- within or inside the covenant; "in the Lord." So they were never brought into the covenant, as if they ever had been outside it (like the Pagans).<sup>512</sup>

Tenthly. Such covenant children should therefore **not** postconceptionally or even postnatally be brought into the Lord's nurture of 'child-training.' To the contrary. They should constantly be nourished postconceptionally (and later postnatally), as those who **have** been and still are **inside** or **within** or in<sup>513</sup> the Lord's "child-training" programme -- even from their very conception onward.<sup>514</sup>

Eleventhly. Christian children are to be 'nourished' both physically and spiritually by their 'fathers' -- even from their conception and also from their birth onward. This is to be done in much the same way as husbands 'nourish' their wives both physically and spiritually -- even from the sexual intercourse onward which sometimes results in the production of Christian children.<sup>515</sup> That is to say, together with one's covenant wife, one's covenant children are to be nurtured every day of their life (also by way of daily family worship from the time of their conception onward).

Twelfthly. There must, of course, also be postnatal 'child-training' or *paideia* of the little children or *paidia* within Christ's covenant. This is to include their disciplinary correction, as well as their positive instruction.<sup>516</sup> Chiefly by their parents, but also by the Church.

Thirteenthly. The postnatal "instruction" of the covenant child consists of life-long "admonition." This includes the constant reminding -- or "putting" the child in "mind"<sup>517</sup> -- of his covenantal obligations.

Lastly. The prenatal and natal 'nourishing' and child-training of the covenant infant is to be "in the Lord." This means: "in the Lord" as well as "in the Lord." The same applies to his entire post-natal education too.<sup>518</sup>

## **52. Charles Hodge on infant faith (in these Ephesian passages)**

The great Presbyterian and Reformed theologian Rev. Professor Dr. Charles Hodge expresses all of this very well, in his famous *Commentary on Ephesians*. There,<sup>519</sup> discussing the above passages -- he rightly declares that "infants may be subjects of regeneration.... 'Whosoever believes and is baptized, shall be saved,' Mark 16:16.... Yet children dying before the eighth day, were surely not cut off from heaven [Genesis 17:10-14 cf. Second Samuel 12:18-23].... If an

uncircumcised man [or even a baby] kept the Law, 'his uncircumcision was counted to him for circumcision.' Romans 2:26....

"Faith and repentance are the gifts of the Spirit and fruits of regeneration.... Yet they are required as conditions of baptism. Consequently, the Scriptures contemplate regeneration as preceding baptism.... The sinner, coming to baptism in the exercise of repentance and faith, takes God the Father to be his Father; God the Son, to be his Saviour; and God the Holy Ghost, to be his Sanctifier -- and His Word to be the rule of his faith and practice.... If he is sincere in his part of the service, baptism really applies to him the blessings of which it is the symbol."

As regards the actual administration of infant baptism, continues Hodge, "infants are baptized on the faith of their parents. And their baptism secures to them all the benefits of the covenant of grace -- provided they ratify that covenant by faith.... The doctrine of baptismal regeneration -- that is, the doctrine that inward spiritual renovation always attends baptism rightly administered to the unresisting (and because it is so administered); and that regeneration is never effected without it -- is contrary to Scripture, subversive of evangelical religion, and opposed to universal experience....

"The positive part of parental duty, is expressed in the comprehensive directive: 'Educate them, bring them up --developing all their power by...the instruction and admonition of the Lord!' *Paideia* is a comprehensive word. It means the training or education of a child, including the whole process of instruction and discipline. *Nouthesia*, from *noutheteō* (= *nous* plus *tithēmi*), 'to put in mind,' is included under the more general term, and is correctly rendered 'admonition.' It is the act of reminding one of his faults or duties.

"Children are not to be allowed to grow up without care or control. They are to be instructed, disciplined, and admonished....

"It is 'the nurture and admonition of the Lord' which is the appointed and the only effectual means of attaining the end of education.... Christianity is the only true religion, and God in Christ the only true God. The only possible means of profitable education, is the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

### **53. Covenant children in the Epistle to the Colossians**

Not just in his Epistle to the Ephesians but also in that to the Colossians, Paul addresses "the saints and faithful brethren in Christ."<sup>520</sup> He reminds them that even the still-uncircumcised Gentiles among them had all "been 'circumcised' with the circumcision made without hands." For they had all put off the body of sins -- "by the circumcision of Christ." Indeed, they had all been "buried with Him in baptism."<sup>521</sup>

By here putting baptism on the same level as (infant) circumcision, Paul clearly implies the apostolic and ecclesiastical practice of infant baptism. He calls (baptized) Christians "the elect of God, holy and beloved."<sup>522</sup> And among these "elect" and "holy" Christians, Paul also includes

small "children" who are to "obey" their Christian parents "in all things" and as "unto the Lord." These are small children, whom their fathers are not to "provoke."<sup>523</sup>

Paul here mentions what he calls the "circumcision of Christ." Even according to the antipaedobaptistic F.F. Bruce in his *Commentary on Colossians*, this probably refers to the death of Christ at Calvary. There, He was 'cut off' as the 'foreskin' of His people (both infant and aged) -- so that they could thus be 'circumcised in Him.' Indeed, all this is symbolized by His 'sprinkling many nations' -- in Christian baptism.<sup>524</sup>

Rev. Professor Dr. Oscar Cullmann discusses this in his book *Baptism in the New Testament*. There, he explains<sup>525</sup> that "in Colossians 2:11, the apostle reckons only...against the post-Christian practice of circumcision. After the covenant with Abraham...had found its fulfilment in Christ's redemptive act..., circumcision as an act of reception became pointless.... Reception into the covenant of grace is now the result of baptism....

"Hence, Paul must say [even] to the Jews: 'they ought not [any longer] to circumcise their children' [Acts 21:21].... Christ on the cross procured a general baptism, into which everyone since Pentecost can be baptized.... This continuity according to Romans 4 [verse 11] has to do with faith.... The baptism of adults whose parents at their birth were already believing Christians, is not demonstrable....

"Natural birth within the Church...is to be regarded as the sign of the divine will to salvation, and consequently as [a] claim to reception into the fellowship of Christ" by baptism. And this is why Colossians 3:20 states that it is well-pleasing to the Lord for Christian children to obey their Christian parents **'in the Lord'** or *en Kuriō* ;." Note the parallel, at Ephesians 6:4.

## **54. Paul's Epistles to Timothy on early-age holiness**

Paul's pastoral epistles to Timothy strongly re-inforce this covenant theology. There, in an affectionate yet figurative way, Paul calls Timothy "my own son in the faith."<sup>526</sup>

Paul then enjoins Timothy to teach that married Christian women are to bear and to rear Christian children. Paul does not say that those children were to be brought 'into' (*eis*) the Christian faith -- at some or other time before they reach an imagined 'age of accountability' ere eight years old (or even eight **days** of age). No! Instead, Paul rather says those children are to 'remain in' Christ, and to "continue in faith (*en pistei*) and in love (or *agapē*) and in holiness (or *hagiasmō*)."<sup>527</sup>

Paul says so, precisely because it is (rebuttably) to be presumed that such children have entered into the Christian faith already at their very conception -- at the very moment their Christian fathers and/or mothers had started to "bear" them. Accordingly, Paul tells Timothy to urge especially all leaders in the church to "rule" their Christian children "well." For they are to "bring up" their infants and to "guide" them aright, even after their births (for as long as they are in their homes).<sup>528</sup>

Paul even reminds Timothy that this is the very way Paul himself had been conceived and born and raised. For the apostle declares that he had been, and still was, "serving God from my forefathers with a pure conscience." Indeed, it had pleased God to "separate" him from his mother's womb, and to "call" him through His grace -- even before actually "manifesting" or 'revealing' His Son in him (when an adult).<sup>529</sup>

Similarly, Paul then reminded the faithful Timothy himself that the latter's unfeigned "faith" had first "dwelt in" his grandmother Lois and in his mother Eunice -- and thus "in" Timothy "also" *etc.*<sup>530</sup> Indeed, Timothy had been raised, faithfully, in a godly home -- from his very conception onward.<sup>531</sup> Also when yet a fetus, Timothy had already faithfully "known" the Lord.<sup>532</sup>

Starting from the time he was a baby, Timothy had progressively learned to know even "the Holy Scriptures." These he could well have absorbed through his godly mother's reading of them, while she fed him at her breast. Or she could have done so even previously, when carrying him prenatally within her womb.<sup>533</sup> For, as Calvin here comments, Timothy "was reared in his infancy in such a way that he could suck in godliness along with his mother's milk."<sup>534</sup>

Especially when a godly father practises daily family worship for ninth months before the birth of his conceived covenant child, the Word there and then read out -- passing through the mother's ear or even through her womb to her unborn child -- cannot but have an influence for good on that unborn fetus. Indeed, should the baby die before birth, godly parents should then not doubt his or her salvation. *Decrees of Dordt*, I:17. For elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated by God whenever and wherever He pleases. *Westminster Confession* X:3 (on 'Effectual Calling').

After his birth, Timothy went on learning, and became "assured" of the facts of Christianity and "the Holy Scriptures" -- having "learned" them from his godly mother even long before he was circumcised.<sup>535</sup> Even after he was baptized, Timothy's process of learning things was still to "continue" -- lifelong.<sup>536</sup> Having commenced before his baptism, this "learn"-ing process was surely to "continue" thereafter -- for the rest of his life.<sup>537</sup>

## **55. Titus teaches not baptismal but prebaptismal regeneration**

Similarly, Paul gave Timothy's fellow-evangelist Titus the same theology of early-life faith -- and of infant baptism -- in respect of rearing covenant children. Paul did not ritualistically allege (as do modern baptismal regenerationists) that people 'get justified' (nor that God 'saves' them and keeps on 'saving' them) only when they themselves get baptized. No!

Nor did Paul 'arminianly' allege (as do modern Baptist-type evangelists) that even covenant children 'get saved' only when they personally 'decide for Jesus' after reaching an 'age of discretion.' No!

To the contrary. Paul told Titus that Christians had been or were "saved [past tense] by the washing of regeneration and [by God the Father's] renewing of the Holy Ghost Whom He shed [past tense] on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour."<sup>538</sup> This occurred when Christ



died and rose again -- and when, from the Father, Christ then poured out [past tense] the promise of His Holy Spirit for our salvation on Pentecost Sunday.

This "washing of regeneration" when Jesus died, was effected by the "sprinkling" of the blood of Christ at that same time. The "shedding forth" of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost Sunday shortly thereafter, was again described as a sprinkling by "pouring rain."<sup>539</sup>

Both of these benefits were for believing infants too.<sup>540</sup> Indeed, both benefits are beautifully symbolized by the baptism of sprinkling -- even for covenant babies.<sup>541</sup>

Hence, Paul tells Titus to remember and to preach that Christian families and their "faithful children" had all been "saved" by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost Whom He shed forth."<sup>542</sup> Paul further tells Titus to see to it that especially church leaders should "rule" those "faithful children" or *tekna...pista*. Indeed, he says they should also instruct the aged women to "teach the young women to love their children" -- and to be "keepers at home" or "good" homemakers.<sup>543</sup>

## **56. The Epistle to the Hebrews (on infant faith)**

The Epistle to the Hebrews recognizes that the first principles of Christian teaching, such as "baptisms," are intended even for unweaned babies.<sup>544</sup> For these "baptisms" were the fulfilments of all the various Old Testament "washings" and sprinklings.<sup>545</sup> Indeed, after [first] their hearts had been sprinkled and [next] their bodies had been washed with pure water, [thereafter] even such tiny Christians are to keep on drawing nearer to God.<sup>546</sup>

Hebrews further insists that "without faith, it is impossible to please God. For he who comes to God must believe that God is, and that He is a Rewarder of those who seek Him."<sup>547</sup> Hence: regardless of their age, only those who believe -- can be pleasing to God.

For, "by faith," this is exactly what many of the Old Testament believers did -- from their infancy onward. Thus, Isaac and Jacob and Moses and Samson and Samuel -- in spite of their imperfections and lapses, and also as a result of their many chastenings -- all kept on trusting Jehovah-Jesus. They did so -- from the womb to the tomb.<sup>548</sup>

We too are to "endure chastening." Thereby, God deals with us "as with sons." For "we have had fathers of our flesh, who corrected us." Consequently, "shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits -- and live?"<sup>549</sup>

## **57. 'Infant faith' in the Epistle of James**

The Epistle of James, the "servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ," was written to the dispersed "tribes" of Israel who believed in the Saviour.<sup>550</sup> Those "tribes" obviously included the covenant infants of believing parents -- all of whom James calls: "my brethren."<sup>551</sup>

God's servant James then warns his Christian brethren against falling into all kinds of "temptations" -- especially after their regeneration.<sup>552</sup> He traces all of our own actual sins, back to the original guilt (of Adam's first sin). As fallen beings, we inherited this at our very conception. For James reminds us that -- in our fallen state -- "when lust has conceived, it brings sin forth."<sup>553</sup> "Sin, however, when full-grown, [in turn] conceives death."<sup>554</sup>

So James next urges his regenerated "brethren" not to keep on erring.<sup>555</sup> For he reminds them that every good gift -- such as the free gift even of their prior regeneration itself -- comes from "above" (or *anō then*). For it comes down (or *katabainon*) from the Father of the lights.<sup>556</sup>

Compare in John's Gospel<sup>557</sup> the Lord's statement that "He gave authority to become sons of God...to those who keep on believing in His Name." These are they "who had been born...of God." Also compare the Johannine statements: "generated from above";<sup>558</sup> "generated from water and by Spirit";<sup>559</sup> "you must be generated from above";<sup>560</sup> and "so is everybody who has been generated by the Spirit."<sup>561</sup>

James manifests precisely the same teaching. This one can see, fFrom the analogy of Holy Scripture.<sup>562</sup>

For James now goes on to say, about this heavenly Father Who generates: "Having wanted to, He conceived us by the Word of truth -- so that we should be some variety of firstfruits of His creatures."<sup>563</sup> The believing "tribes" (including their babies) were now deemed to be regenerate.

So James urges them "to keep on laying aside all filthiness -- and meekly to continue receiving the already-implanted Word."<sup>564</sup> This anticipates Calvin's "seed of faith" -- even in tiny covenant children.<sup>565</sup>

It is this "implanted Word" -- James assures his addressees -- which "maintains the ability to keep on preserving their souls."<sup>566</sup> The fruits of their God-conceived regeneration and true Christian faith, were to be exhibited. One such exhibition should be seen in their "oversight" and care of "fatherless" orphans whom God had adopted -- just as He in turn has fathered all other Christians.<sup>567</sup>

## **58. Peter on regenerate and faithful tiny covenant babies**

Also the apostle Peter presupposes faith within tiny covenant children. Previously, he had assured penitent Israelites that the Gospel promises were not only for them -- but also for their "children."<sup>568</sup> Subsequently, he had authorized the baptizing of the entire household of the believing Cornelius.<sup>569</sup> Now, in his Epistles, the aged Peter further re-assures God's sanctified "elect" -- that they had been both "born again" and "sprinkled."<sup>570</sup>

Indeed, he now urges them "as newborn babies" to keep on desiring "the sincere milk of the Word" -- so that they can thus grow stronger.<sup>571</sup> For they had already "tasted" that the Lord truly is gracious.<sup>572</sup> Indeed, newly born-again babies need to keep on growing thereafter.

Peter reminds all those who have obtained a similar precious faith together with us, that also Noah's whole family had likewise received the sprinkling of the rain. That pointed to New Testament baptism.<sup>573</sup> Thus -- by or through that 'type' or preview of baptism -- they all were preserved from total submersion under the floodwaters.

As Robert Ayres remarks in his great book *Christian Baptism*:<sup>574</sup> "The very object of the ark was to save Noah [and his whole family] from the water.... They were already in the ark, before the rain began."

The "just" Noah had first been justi-ified -- outside and before entering the ark. Thereafter, he and his entire family were saved alias preserved from the floodwaters -- saved precisely inside the ark. That too was before the roof above all of them was sprinkled by the rainwater. Christian families too are saved from outside the visible church (yet within Christ as their justifying refuge) -- before thereafter being baptized in(to) the Church by sprinkling.<sup>575</sup>

This is why the apostle Peter himself declared that he and the Christians to whom he wrote were "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." He urged them: "Having been born again..., like newborn babies [you must] keep on desiring the sincere milk of the Word so that you may keep on growing thereby...."

"The patience of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was being prepared in which a few...souls were saved through [and from] water. Baptism, the antitype thereof, now also keeps on preserving us -- not [as] the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but [as] the answer of a good conscience toward God."

As Pridmore maintains in his book *The New Testament Theology of Childhood*:<sup>576</sup> "Walter Grundmann has suggested that these texts are evidence for a primitive Christian *parenēsis* -- which understood the Christian life in terms of a growth from immaturity to mature adulthood.... The newly-baptized, like the proselyte to Judaism..., must avoid the danger of falling back -- and [must] advance in his new life to full manhood."

## **59. The apostle John's "tiny little children" who "know" God**

Finally, also John certainly seems to teach that not just covenant adults but even covenant children were regarded as having been born again -- and therefore to be baptized -- during the apostolic age. For he writes not only to "fathers" and to "young men." He also writes to tiny "little children."<sup>577</sup>

Indeed, he tells all of these various age groups: "You have an unction [or an 'anointing'] from the Holy One." For they had all received a baptismal sprinkling from the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit of the Triune God.<sup>578</sup>

John further adds that "the anointing which you have received from Him, keeps abiding on you." He also states: "You know that every one who keeps on doing righteousness, has been born from Him."

So, whenever certain infants keep on doing righteousness, this proves they have already been born again. For "whosoever has been born of God, does not keep on committing sin. For His seed keep on remaining in him; and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been born of God."<sup>579</sup>

Also John's Revelation seems to reflect the infant baptism of the believing covenant children of God. On the one hand, Jesus says of the Church's false prophetess 'Jezebel': "I will kill her children with death."

On the other hand, His angel declares: "Do not hurt the earth..., till we have sealed the servants of our God on their foreheads." Indeed, Satan gets "angry with the [godly] woman...and with the rest of her seed who keep the Commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

Further, John wrote that Jesus is "clothed with a vesture sprinkled [or baptized] with blood" (*behammenon haimati*) -- and is followed by armies clothed in fine linen white and clean.... I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God.... Whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire." Yet "His servants shall serve Him..., and His Name shall be on their foreheads."<sup>580</sup>

## **60. Summary of baby belief before baptism (in the Bible)**

Rev. Dr. Alexander Carson -- not Th.D., but only LL.D.! -- was an Ex-Presbyterian who later became a famous Baptist. Carson once challenged: "If it can fairly be made out that the circumstance of being born of Christian parents is evidence that infants have faith from the womb, I have no objection to baptize them."<sup>581</sup>

We have accepted this challenge by Carson. For in our above pages, we believe we have indeed "fairly made out" from Scripture alone -- that at least till possible later renunciation, "being born of Christian parents is evidence that infants have faith from the womb."

In our above pages, we have argued from Scripture alone. We have sought to demonstrate that, at least (God forbid!) till a covenant child's possible 'later renunciation' -- his or her being born of at least one Christian parent, determines his or her salvational status. This is adequate evidence rebuttably to presume that covenant infants should be deemed as already possessing at least the seed of faith -- before their birth, and even from their mother's womb.

We have shown this, in the lives or teachings of: Abel, Seth, Enoch, Noah, Shem, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Samson, Samuel, David, Solomon, Obadiah, Joel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Ezra, Nehemiah and Malachi. Also from the New Testament -- we have shown the same thing from the lives of John the baptizer, the unique Jesus, the apostle Paul, and the evangelist Timothy.

For the first woman Eve rebuttably presumed that her children were indeed 'the seed of the woman' -- and not the seed of the serpent. Seth was conceived in the image of his covenant-keeping parents. Indeed, Enoch was 'catechized' (at daily family worship *etc.*) apparently even from his conception onward. Hence, he 'walked with God' continually.

Noah too 'walked with God' -- and likewise his son Shem. Isaac was a child of the promise -- from before his conception onward. Jacob was savingly loved by God -- even before he was born. Moses was a 'proper child' -- even as a newly-born infant. Indeed, Samson and Samuel were separated unto God -- from their very conceptions onward.

David trusted Jehovah -- when still in his mother's belly. Solomon followed his father's statutes -- when still "but a little child." Obadiah feared Jehovah -- from his early youth onward. Indeed, Joel included unweaned covenant babies among the people of God -- and promised that God would later pour out His Spirit even upon the infant sons and daughters of the people of God.

Isaiah said Israel was borne by God from the belly; carried from the womb even to old age; and formed and called by the Lord from the womb. God told Jeremiah He had known and sanctified him --even from his mother's belly. The Lord told Ezekiel the babies even of apostate covenanters were His infants -- "My children." Ezra and Nehemiah called the Israelites "holy seed." Indeed, also Malachi predicted the children would turn even their own fathers -- back to God.

In the New Testament, we are told that John the baptizer was filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb. Indeed, it was within that womb that, three months before his birth, he leaped for joy at the 'fetal' approach of His Saviour. For that unique Jesus Himself possessed the Holy Spirit without measure --even from His very conception onward.

The apostle Paul was separated by God from his mother's womb. Even as a "faith"-ful fetus, Timothy knew the Holy Scriptures. Indeed, right after his birth, he was further enabled to "suck in godliness along with his mother's milk" (Calvin).

Covenant children are therefore to be baptized in their infancy -- as those who themselves certainly seem to be little believers already. Genesis 6:8-18 & 17:7-14 & 21:4; Luke 1:14-17 & 1:41-44 & 3:8-21; Matthew 18:1-6 & 19:13-15 & 28:19; Acts 2:38-39 & 16:31-33; First Corinthians 1:16 & 7:14 & 12:13; and Colossians 1:2 & 2:11-13 & 3:20-21.

Jesus picked up a little child of the covenant and claimed he or she was one of those "who believe in Me." Matthew 18:1-6. He said in respect of such "infants" -- that "of such is the Kingdom of God." Luke 18:15-16. For children of at least one believing parent, are themselves "holy." First Corinthians 7:14. As holy "saints" within the Christian Church, they are therefore not to be brought into, but rather to be raised "within" -- the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Ephesians 1:1 & 6:1-4.

## **61. Baby belief before baptism (in church history)**

We could also show the same from the Jewish proselyte baptism of infants -- and even from the *Targums*, the *Talmud*, the *Old Testament Apocrypha*, the *Pseudepigrapha*, Philo, and Josephus. We could further point to traces and to corruptions hereof in ancient paganism -- possibly borrowed from the true Old Testament religion, from Judaism, or even from Christianity.

Again, we could easily document further confirmation of the above teaching of the Old and New Testaments. In that regard, we could present: the testimony of the Early Church; comments about Christianity in pagan writers like Pliny; and ancient inscriptions in places like the catacombs.

There is also the solid testimony of the many patristic writings extant -- from Clement of Rome to Chrysostom of Constantinople. Indeed, there are also relevant statements especially in the Epistle of Barnabas -- and in writings by Augustine of Hippo-Regius.

Further, we could demonstrate exactly the same from all the Protestant Reformers. From Luther and Zwingli, to Junius and the *Synopsis* -- and especially from the many writings of John Calvin himself -- we could easily show there was always a rebuttable presumption that covenant infants are themselves all deemed to possess saving faith in Christ.

Indeed, also from Post-Reformational Calvinism, we could further point out exactly the same truth in manifold writings. For it is found in the *Decrees of Dordt* and in the *Westminster Standards*. Indeed, it is re-echoed in many Reformed theologians (such as Kuyper and Warfield) -- and right down to the modern historian Rev. Dr. Rousas John Rushdoony in 1990.

## **62. Conclusion: godly parents should have their believing babies baptized**

In the words of yesteryear's famous Baptist Alexander Carson (as noted above), we ourselves now conclude that infants of believers probably indeed do "have faith from the womb." From his present exalted vantage-point in heaven, even Carson now knows this -- beyond doubt.

For today, he is in glory. Carson now knows that the 'Reformed Baptist' Roper was wrong in assuming the damnation of the babies of believers dying in their infancy. Nor is Carson (like the Baptist Kingdon) any longer agnostic about the everlasting destination of the early-dying infants of believers.

Now, the glorified Carson too would "have no objection to baptize" the believing infants of believing adults. Indeed, baptizing the believing babies of believing parents is exactly what Carson too would do today -- were he still here on earth. It is also what his former associates, the Baptists, should also do -- right now.

For Carson, now in glory, is no longer a Baptist. Now, he properly understands the command of his Saviour in Mark 16:15f. Carson now sees that the 'Great Commission' is indeed a **great** commission. For it applies to every human creature -- great, and small.

"Go into all the world, and preach the good news to every creature! He who believes and is baptized, shall be saved; but he who does not believe, shall be damned!"

Accordingly, we ourselves now call upon all Baptists -- such as Carson once was -- to obey the counsel of God. Let them all bring their babies forward, to receive Christian baptism. Luke 7:29-30 & 18:15-17 *etc.* We call upon all Baptists (whether Arminian or 'Calvinistic') -- and also upon all Ex-Baptists -- to repent of their sins of omission regarding infant baptism.

We call upon them, and upon all other misled Christians everywhere, (rebuttably) to presume that their own tiny babies have been regenerated already -- through the grace of God. We call upon these misguided adult believers to recognize that God has, apparently, therefore already given the 'seed of faith' also to their own babies.

The latter are therefore to be baptized, as those who themselves certainly seem to be little believers. In this regard, knowledgeable Presbyterians are eager to instruct these babies' parents -- and to help the latter rectify their breach of the covenant of grace. Genesis 6:8-18 & 17:7-14 -- and Colossians 2:11-13 & 3:20-21.

For, in the words of Isaiah (59:21): "'This is My covenant with them,' says the Lord. 'My Spirit Who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, nor out of the mouth of your seed, nor out of the mouth of your seed's seed,' says the Lord, 'from henceforth, and for ever!'"

#### ENDNOTES

- 1) Jh. 3:3-9. 2) Rom. 4:3. 3) Gen. 1:26 to 3:4; Hos. 6:7 marg.; Lk. 3:22-38; Acts 17:24-27.
- 4) Gen. 3:5-14. 5) Gen. 3:15 onward.
- 6) Gen. 1:1-3,26-31; 2:7; 5:1-4; 9:1-7; Ps. 49:12 marg. & 139:7,13ff; Eccl. 7:29 & 11:5,9; Zech. 12:1; Mt. 28:19; Lk. 1:15,35ff,41; I Cor. 7:14; Eph. 4:24,30; Col. 3:10ff.
- 7) Gen. 1:26-31; 2:7-9,23-25; 3:15-21; 4:1-4; 5:1-4; 9:1-7; Ps. 8:1-5; 49:12 marg.; Hos. 6:7ff; Mt. 21:16; Acts 17:26; Rom. 5:12ff; Col. 3:10.
- 8) Gen. 2:7; Zech. 12:1; Mal. 2:15; Rom. 5:12f *cf.* I Cor. 7:14; 15:21f,45f. See too *Westminster Confession of Faith* 24:2 & 28:4.
- 9) *Cf.* n. 8 with Gen. 2:9,15,17; 3:1-7f. 10) *Westminster Confession of Faith* 7:1-2 & 6:3 & 19:1-2.
- 11) Gen. 5:3-8f. 12) Rom. 5:12-15. 13) Ps. 51:5; John 3:3-8f; Rom. 1:28; Eph. 2:1-8; Tit. 1:15.
- 14) Job 14:1-4; 15:14f; 25:4f. 15) Gen. 3:8,14. 16) Gen. 3:15. 17) Gen. 2:26f; 3:15f; Gal. 3:15f; 4:4f,24f.
- 18) Rom. 16:20. 19) Gen. 3:20. 20) Gal. 3:27f. 21) Gen. 3:21. 22) Gen. 4:1f,24f.
- 23) Rom. 11:16. 24) I Cor. 7:14.
- 25) Mentz & Rovoudt, Philadelphia, 1846, p. 46. It was also printed by the Board of Publications of the Reformed Church in New York.
- 26) Gen. 4:5-16; Rom. 11:17a,20a & I Jh. 3:12-15. 27) Rom. 11:19a. 28) Rom. 11:23.
- 29) Gen. 2:17; 3:16; 4:1f; 5:3; 6:1-5; 8:21; Job 3:3-10; 10:18-22; 14:1-14; 15:14-16; 25:4-6; Ps. 51:5; 58:3; John 3:6; Rom. 5:12-19; Eph. 2:1-3.
- 30) Jh. 3:3-5. 31) Jh. 3:8. 32) Jh. 3:10-16. 33) *Westminster Confession of Faith* 10:1-3 & 28:1-5.
- 34) A.H. Strong: *Systematic Theology*, Pickering & Inglis, London, 1907, pp. 579, 661-63 & 823.
- 35) Col. 2:11-13. 36) Mk. 16:16 *cf.* Acts 8:36f. 37) Rom. 4:11 *cf.* Gen. 15:6 & 17:7-12.
- 38) Gen. 15:6 & 17:8f *cf.* Acts 16:30-34 and Rom. 4:11 to 6:5f & Col. 2:11f.

39) Gen. 17:12-14 *cf.* Rom. 11:16f. 40) Gen. 17:25 & 16:11f *cf.* Dt. 10:15f & 30:6.  
41) Ezra 9:2 & Neh. 9:2 *cf.* I Cor. 7:14. 42) Lev. 26:40f & Jer. 4:4.  
43) Jer. 9:25f & Ezek. 44:7 *cf.* Rom. 2:28f. 44) Rom. 6:1-4,11 *cf.* Ezek. 11:19 & 36:25f & I Cor. 12:13,26.  
45) Gen. 17. 46) Jh. 3:3-5,9-16.  
47) Thus the *West. Conf.* 10:3, citing Lk. 18:15f & Acts 2:38f & Jh. 3:3f & I Jh. 5:12 & Rom. 8:9 & Acts 4:12.  
48) Jh. 3:8, comp. *West. Conf.* 10:3n. 49) Jh. 3:7, *dei humas gennēthēnai anōthen*.  
50) Gen. 3:15-20 & 4:1 *cf.* Lk. 3:38. 51) Gen. 3:21 *cf.* Jh. 1:29 & Gal. 3:27-29.  
52) Gen. 3:20-21 & 4:1-2f *cf.* 4:26 & 5:3-4.  
53) Gen. 4:4f,26f; 17:12-19; 21:4; Mt. 23:35f; Lk. 2:7-11; Gal. 3:26f; 4:22-28; Heb. 11:4-6; 12:24; & I Jh. 3:6-12.  
54) J. Calvin: *Commentary on Genesis* 3:15, *cf.* Rom. 16:20 & I Jh. 3:9-12. 55) Gen. 4:26.  
56) Gen. 5:7-21. 57) Jude 14. The contents of preacher Enoch's prophesyings is summarized in Jude 15.  
58) Gen. 5:22f; Heb. 11:5f & Jude 11-15. It seems Enoch himself had a godly father (Jered or Jared), who 'catechized' Enoch from infancy. This catechizing probably started from Enoch's conception onward, in the normal course of the daily family worship conducted in the home of his godly father. I Cor. 7:14, compare F.N. Lee's *Daily Family Worship*, D.Min. dissertation, Whitefield Theological Seminary, Lakeland, Fla., 1986, p. 9.  
Indeed, Jared called his son '*Cha:nō k*' or 'Enoch' (which means 'catechized'). Compare the usage of the same Hebrew word *cha:nōk* in the famous verse Prov. 22:6 ('Keep on catechizing a lad in the way he should go; then, when his beard starts to grow, he will not depart from it'). For an exhaustive discussion of this verse, see the 1991 revised edition of F.N. Lee's 1989 D.Ed. dissertation *Catechism Before Communion!*, Whitefield Theological Seminary, Lakeland, Florida. It is also significant that Gen. 5:24 uses the continuous imperfect Hithpael word *wayyith<sup>e</sup>hallēk*, meaning that Enoch "kept on walking" (with God). The whole picture is one of Enoch's constant godliness, from his conception in his mother's womb till his translation to his Father in heaven.  
59) Note that the godly Enoch's grandson the godly Lamech "begat a son and...called his name Noah, saying, "This one shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed." Gen. 5:21-29 *cf.* 4:1.  
60) Note that "Enoch walked with God...and begat sons and daughters" (Gen. 5:22), and that his great-grandson Noah too "walked with God...and begat three sons" (Gen. 6:9).  
61) Heb. 11:7 *cf.* I Pet. 3:15-21 & II Pet. 2:5. 62) Gen. 6:8-10,18 & 7:7,11f.  
63) Gen. 6:10,18 *cf.* 9:22-27. It should however be noticed, even though possible (if not also probable), that the Bible itself never claims Ham was lost.  
64) Gen. 5:29. 65) Gen. 6:8.  
66) Gen. 6:9. In justification of our translation "kept on walking," see n. 58 above (discussing the same word *wayyith<sup>e</sup>halleek* at Gen. 5:24 in respect of Enoch). Similarly, we can probably assume that Noah catechized his children from their conception onward, just as Jared had catechized his son Enoch from infancy onward.  
67) Gen. 6:3-5 *cf.* I Pet. 1:10-12 & 3:15-21 with II Pet. 2:5.  
68) Gen. 6:18. Hebrew, *waha:qimothīy<sup>7</sup> eth-b<sup>e</sup>riythi*; Greek Septuagint, *kai stēsō tēn diathēkē n Mou*. This is not the dispensationalistic introduction of a brand-new covenant, but a re-affirming of the original covenant with Adam (Hos. 6:7 & Gen. 1:28-29 *cf.* 3:15-23 & 9:1-11f) by strengthening Noah as a kind of 'second Adam' in that same covenant (*cf.* Gen. 5:29). Note too how the very word for covenant (*b<sup>e</sup>riyth*) seems to reach back and link up with the time when our covenantal Triune God created (*bārā<sup>7</sup>*) man as his covenanted image (Gen. 1:26-28) as well as even the very universe itself (Gen. 1:1 *cf.* 9:9-16 & Jer. 33:25 & Hos. 2:18) which man was created to subdue (*cf.* Ps. 8). See F.N. Lee's *Creation -- or Cataclysm?*, Jesus Lives, unpub., Brisbane, 1984, nn. 214 & 215.  
69) Hos. 6:7 marg. For a full discussion of our above rendition of this vital verse, see B.B. Warfield's monograph thereon (*Hosea 6:7: Adam or Man?*, in *Selected Shorter Writings*, Presb. & Ref. Pub. Co., Nutley N.J., 1970, pp. 116f). See too A. Kuyper Sr.: *The Doctrine of the Covenants* (Kok, Kampen, 1909, pp. 101f); and G.Ch. Aalders: *God's Covenant* (Kok, Kampen, 1939, pp. 139f & 151f).  
70) II Pet. 3:20f. For a considerable discussion of this passage, especially disproving the Romish claim that it teaches baptismal regeneration, see F.N. Lee's *Baptism Does Not Cleanse*, M.Div. dissertation, Whitefield Theological Seminary, Lakeland Fla., 1991, pp. 81-86.  
71) I Pet. 1:1. 72) Mt. 28:19 *cf.* nn. 61-64 above. 73) Gen. 15:6f & 17:1f *cf.* Rom. 4:11f.  
74) Gen. 17:7f,23f & 18:17-19 *cf.* Rom. 4:12. 75) Jh. 8:56-58 *cf.* Gal. 3:6-8 & 3:16-18 & 3:27-29.  
76) Gen. 5:6,18. 77) Gen. 17:2,7.  
78) Gen. 17:7-14. For the rationale of our rendering *waha:qimothīy* '(re-)affirm' -- see our comments at n. 68 above.  
79) Gen. 17:7-14,23-27. 80) Gen. 21:4 *cf.* Acts 7:8 & Rom. 4:11f. 81) Ps. 105:6-9 *cf.* Heb. 11:9.



82) Gen. 17:14. 83) Gen. 17:12f,19 *cf.* Heb. 11:11. 84) I Cor. 7:14 *cf.* n. 83 above. 85) Gen. 21:4.  
86) Gen. 17:10-14. 87) Gen. 22:1-8 *cf.* 25:21. 88) Gen. 22:8f *cf.* 26:2-6,25 & 27:28f & 35:27f.  
89) Rom. 9:10-13. 90) Gen. 25:31f. 91) Gen. 27:12,20,27f. 92) Gen. 28:13f. 93) Gen. 32:28.  
94) Gen. 28:2 & 31:9f. 95) Heb. 11:21, *etc.* 96) Rom. 9:10-13 & Mal. 1:2f. 97) Gen. 25:24f.  
98) Gen. 25:32f *cf.* Heb. 12:16f. 99) Heb. 12:16f *cf.* Gen. 26:34f & 27:46 & 28:1. 100) Gen. 27:41f.  
101) Gen. 28:9. 102) Gen. 32:5f *cf.* 33:11. 103) Heb. 12:16.  
104) J. Calvin: *Commentary on Genesis* (34:13). 105) Gen. 30:24; 37:3-11; 39:2,9,21; 40:8; *etc.*  
106) *Cf.* Gen. 29:35 & 37:26f & 43:3-8 & 44:16f & 49:8f. 107) Job 1:1f; 3:1-3; 19:25f; 31:1-33f.  
108) Ex. 2:1-11 *cf.* Acts 7:19f; and R.A. Webb's *Theology of Infant Salvation*, Presb. Comm. Pubs., Richmond Va., 1907, pp. 1 & 13f.  
109) Acts 7:37f. 110) Ex. 12:37,48f & 13:1,12f. 111) Ex. 20:5f. 112) Dt. 5:16 *cf.* Eph. 6:1-4.  
113) Dt. 28:1,2,4,9,11,18,40,41,53,62. 114) Josh. 25:15 & 1:5f *cf.* Ex. 24:13 & 32:17f.  
115) Judg. 13:7,24f & 14:6,19 & 15:8,14 & 16:3,17,20,28f *cf.* 11:32-35.  
116) I Sam. 1:11,20,27f & 2:18 & 3:1-20 *etc.* comp. Heb. 11:32f. 117) I Sam. 1:11. 118) I Sam. 1:12,26.  
119) I Sam. 1:19. 120) I Sam. 1:20. 121) I Sam. 1:22. 122) I Sam. 1:24-28. 123) I Sam. 2:11.  
124) I Sam. 2:21. 125) I Sam. 2:26. 126) I Sam. 3:1. 127) I Sam. 3:4. 128) I Sam. 3:7.  
129) I Sam. 3:10. 130) I Sam. 3:19. 131) I Sam. 3:20. 132) I Sam. 3:21.  
133) Ps. 51:1,5 *cf.* II Sam. ch. 11.  
134) Ps. 22:9-10 *cf.* 71:5-6,17. See especially the Lutheran Franz Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Psalms* (22:10-12).  
135) Ps. 8:2. 136) Mt. 21:16. 137) Ps. 147:9. 138) Ps. 119:9f,97f.  
139) Ps. 139:7,13f (*cf.* Eccl. 11:5,9 & Gen. 2:7 & Zech. 12:1 & Mal. 2:15).  
140) II Sam. 12:18-23 & Gen. 17:10-12 comp. W.C.F. 10:3. 141) Ps. 89:3-4,36-46 *cf.* II Tim. 2:13.  
142) Ps. 22:30-31. 143) Ps. 78:1-14. 144) Ps. 77:15-19. 145) I Cor. 10:1-4. 146) Ps. 34:1,11 & 37:25f.  
147) II Sam. 12:24. 148) I Kgs. 3:3,7 *cf.* I Chr. 22:5-13 & 28:6-9 & 29:1. 149) I Kgs. 4:29-31 *etc.*  
150) Prov. 1:7f. 151) Prov. 3:1. 152) Prov. 4:1-4. 153) Prov. 5:7. 154) Prov. 7:1f. 155) Prov. 7:24f.  
156) Prov. 8:32. 157) Prov. 20:7. 158) Prov. 22:6. 159) Prov. 23:19,22,26.  
160) Eccl. 11:5,9 (*cf.* too Ps. 139:7,13f & Gen. 2:7 & Zech. 12:1 & Mal. 2:15). 161) I Kgs. 18:12.  
162) I Kgs. 14:2,12f. 163) Joel 2:16f. 164) Joel 2:23. 165) Joel 2:27-32 *cf.* Mt. 21:15 & I Chr. 25:1-6.  
166) Acts 1:5 *cf.* 2:1-4,16-21,8. 167) Acts 2:38-39. 168) Isa. 44:1-5. 169) Isa. 46:3f. 170) Isa. 49:1-5.  
171) Isa. 52:15 & 53:7f *cf.* Mt. 28:19 & Acts 2:38f & 8:30-38. 172) Isa. 59:21. 173) Jer. 1:5.  
174) Jer. 2:33f *cf.* Mt. 2:17f. 175) Jer. 4:4 & 9:26. 176) Jer. 31:31-34. 177) Jer. 32:38-40.  
178) Ezk. 11:17-21. 179) Ezk. 16:4,8,20f; 20:26f; 23:37. 180) Ezk. 34:26. 181) Ezk. 36:23-27.  
182) Ezk. 37:5-14 *cf.* 39:29. 183) Ezk. 44:7-9. 184) Ezra 9:1-2 (*cf.* too n. 185 below).  
185) Neh. 8:9 & 9:2-3 & 13:23f (*cf.* too Ezra 9:1-2 & Mal. 2:15 & I Cor. 7:14).  
186) Neh. 13:23-30 (*cf.* Mal. 2:15 & I Cor. 7:14). 187) Zech. 10:1.  
188) Zech. 12:1 *cf.* Gen. 2:7 & Ps. 139:7,13f & Eccl. 11:5,9 & I Cor. 7:1-14. 189) Zech. 12:10.  
190) Jh. 19:34f *cf.* Acts 2:23,38f. 191) *Cf.* Ezra 9:1f & Neh. 9:1f with Acts 19:8-10 & Rev. 2:9 & 3:9.  
192) Mal. 1:2 *cf.* Rom. 9:10f. 193) Mal. 2:5,10,14,15 *cf.* Eph. 6:1-4 and compare too *West. Conf.* 24:2c.  
194) Mal. 3:1. 195) Mal. 3:2f *cf.* Mt. 3:10f & Lev. 8:10-12,24,30.  
196) Mal. 3:9f *cf.* Jh. 3:22-25 & Acts 1:5-8 & 2:1-4,14-21,36-39.  
197) Mal. 4:5f *cf.* I Kgs. 18:30-44f & Jh. 1:25f & Jas. 5:17f.  
198) In Ezk. 23:15's 'baptized' alias 'dyed' (in the phrase "dyed attire upon their heads").  
199) Ex. 12:22; Lev. 4:6; 4:17; 14:16; 14:51; Num. 19:18; Dan. [TR] 3:30 [5:21].  
200) Thus at: Ex. 12:22; Lev. 4:6,17; 14:16; Josh. 3:15; Dt. 33:24; Ruth 2:14; I Kgs. [Sam.] 14:27; Ps. 67:23 [68:23]; Dan. [TR] 4:30 & 4:22 [Th.] (= 5:21).  
201) At Jer. 38:22 (45:22) [Aq.]. 202) Mk. 7:4 [TR & D]; Lk. 11:38; Heb. 9:10,19.  
203) See, at length, F.N. Lee's *Sprinkling is Scriptural*, in *The Presbyterian*, Bristol, England, July 1990.  
204) Mal. 3:1f & 4:5f & Lk. 1:15f *cf.* Mt. 17:11f. 205) Lk. 1:5-7. 206) Lk. 1:6f,15,41. 207) Lk. 1:5f,67.  
208) Lk. 1:13. See n. 205 above. 209) Lk. 1:15. 210) Lk. 1:5-6,16 *cf.* I Cor. 7:14.  
211) Lk. 1:15,24f,36,41,44. 212) Lk. 1:44. 213) Lk. 1:41-44. 214) Lk. 1:36f,56,76. 215) Lk. 1:80.  
216) Lk. 1:16f (*cf.* Mal. 4:5f). 217) Jh. 1:25-36 & 3:23-31.  
218) Mal. 4:5f & Lk. 1:16 *cf.* Mt. 3:5f & Mk. 1:4f.  
219) Acts 13:24 *cf.* Mal. 3:2f & Lk. 3:3-8f & Acts 1:5 & 2:14-21,36-39.  
220) Mal. 3:10 & 4:5f & I Kgs. 18:30-33,44f & Jh. 1:25f & 3:22-25 & Acts 1:5-8 & 2:1-4,14-21,33 & Jas. 5:17f.

221) Lactantius: *Divine Institutes* IV:15. 222) Mal. 4:6 *cf.* Mt. 3:2f & Lk. 3:7-14.  
223) See Ambrose's *On Abraham* 11 and II:11:81-84. Also note J. Lightfoot's *Horae Hebraicae et Talmudicae*, I-VI, 1658f (on Mt. 3:16) -- and Lightfoot's *Harmony on John 1:25*. Both cited in W. Wall, *The History of Infant Baptism*, University Press, Oxford, 1862, I pp. 13 & 18ff & 28ff and IV p. 226.  
224) Lk. 1:35 & 2:40,52 & 3:22 & 4:1,14 & Jh. 3:34. Calvin cited in J. Inchley's *All About Children*, London, Coverdale, 1976, p. 20.  
225) *Cf.* Jh. 1:4-13. 226) Lk. 1:35, *gennōmenon*. 227) Lk. 1:42, *karpos*. 228) Lk. 2:5, *engkuos*.  
229) Lk. 2:16, *brephos*. 230) Mt. 2:16-18, *paidion*. 231) Lk. 2:40-42, *pais*. 232) Lk. 2:52, *prosekopten*.  
233) Jh. 1:30, *anēr*. 234) Irenaeus: *Against Heresies* II:22:4. 235) Mt. 1:18. 236) *Ib.* (*gennēsis* or *genesis*).  
237) Lk. 1:31-35. 238) Lk. 1:36-40. 239) Lk. 1:42f. 240) Lk. 1:45. 241) Lk. 1:54f.  
242) Jh. 10:26f & 17:9f. 243) Mt. 1:21. 244) Lk. 2:11. 245) Lk. 2:14 *cf.* Eph. 1:4f. 246) Jh. 3:3-8,16.  
247) Lk. 2:22 *cf.* 1:31. 248) Lk. 1:35 & 2:23 *cf.* Lev. 12:3-8. 249) Lk. 2:25-32. 250) Lk. 2:36-39.  
251) Mt. 2:1, *gennēthentos*; 2:4,8,11, *paidion*; 2:16, two years old. 252) Lk. 2:40, *paidion...plēroumenon*.  
253) Lk. 2:52. 254) I Sam. 2:1-10 *cf.* Lk. 1:46-55. 255) I Sam. 1:11f,19f,22,28; 2:11,21,26; 3:1,4,7,10,19-21.  
256) Lk. 1:15f,36,44,67,76-80. 257) Lk. 3:21-23 *cf.* Num. 4:3f & Ex. 29:20f. 258) Lk. 4:1.  
259) Jh. 3:3-8,14-16. 260) Jh. 3:23f & 4:1f *cf.* 1:25. 261) Mt. 3:11 & Jh. 1:30-33 & 3:22-34.  
262) Jh. 3:30-34. 263) Lk. 4:14. 264) Jh. 4:46f. 265) Jh. 4:47-50. 266) Jh. 4:51f. 267) Jh. 4:53.  
268) Mt. 10:1-13, *cf.* the previous events referred to in Jh. 1:25 & 3:3-16 & 3:22-25 & 4:1f.  
269) Mt. 11:1-24 *cf.* Lk. 1:15-17,76-80 *cf.* Mal. 4:4-6 & 3:1-4. 270) Mt. 11:25-27.  
271) *Ib.*, using the word *nēpios*, from *nē -epos* (meaning: 'no word'). The Latin word *in-fantum* (meaning 'non-speaker') has essentially the same force.  
272) *Ib.*, using the word *eudokia* (meaning 'well-pleasing'). 273) *Op. cit.* IV:6:7. 274) Gen. 4:1f,25f.  
275) See n. 273 above. 276) Mt. 11:25-27 & 10:22. 277) See n. 273 above. 278) See n. 276 above.  
279) John 3:8. 280) *West. Conf.* 10:3. 281) Mt. 11:26f. See our text above at nn. 270-73.  
282) Mt. 17:9-18; Mk. 9:17-26a; Lk. 9:37-48. 283) Mt. 18:1f; Mk. 9:20-36f; 10:38-45; Lk. 9:46f; 22:24-32.  
284) Mt. 4:12-23; 8:5-12; 11:23; 17:24 to 18:1f; Mk. 1:21-28; 2:1f; Lk. 4:16-23,31f; 7:1-5f; Jh. 4:36-53; 6:59.  
285) Mk. 9:33f; Mt. 17:24f; 18:1f. 286) Mt. 18:1-14; Mk. 9:33-37; Lk. 9:46f; 17:2. 287) Mt. 18:11 *cf.* 17:24f.  
288) *Op. cit.* p. 39. 289) Mt. 18:1-5. 290) Mt. 18:6,10. 291) Mt. 18:11,13.  
292) Mt. 18:1 *cf.* 17:15f & Mk. 9:17,36 & Lk. 9:38,48. 293) *Cf.* Ps. 51:5. 294) Mt. 18:12-14.  
295) Mt. 18:11f. 296) Mt. 18:2a. 297) Mt. 18:2b. 298) See nn. 296-97 above. 299) Mt. 18:3a.  
300) Mt. 18:3b. 301) Mt. 18:4a. 302) Mt. 18:4b. 303) Mt. 18:6a. 304) Mt. 18:6b.  
305) Mt. 18:3f *cf.* Lk. 22:26,32. 306) Mt. 18:1-6.  
307) Mt. 18:11 (*TR & D*) may not here be ignored. Those who wrongly regard the verse as but an 'interpolation' from Lk. 19:10, overlook Mt. 9:13 & 10:6 & 15:34 and also thereby advertize their own inadequate hamartiology.  
308) Mt. 18:10,12b. 309) Mt. 18:5. 310) Mt. 18:1,5 *cf.* Mk. 9:35-37 & 10:38-45.  
311) Mt. 18:5 & 28:19 *cf.* Lk. 1:1-3f & 9:46f & 17:1-2 *cf.* Acts 1:1,5 & 2:17f,38f.  
312) Mt. 18:1,5 *cf.* Mk. 9:35-37 & 10:38-45. 313) Mt. 18:6,10 *cf.* Pss. 34:7 & 91:11.  
314) Mt. 18:14 *cf.* Jh. 3:3-8,16! 315) Mt. 18:5f *cf.* Mk. 9:34f & 10:38-45 *cf.* Jh. 3:3-8,16,23f.  
316) Mt. 18:1-6,12-14. 317) Mt. 18:6 *cf.* Mk. 10:15.  
318) Gal. 4:4-6 *cf.* Lk. 1:35 & Rom. 5:5 & 8:14-16 & Eph. 1:5 & Jh. 1:12 & 3:3-16.  
319) *Ta' an* 23b, *cf.* Isa. 32:15f & 44:1-5 & 52:15f (*cf.* too Mt. 5:45 & 28:19 and Gal. 3:27 to 4:6).  
320) Mt. 6:7-9 *cf.* Rom. 9:10-13. 321) Mt. 18:5f,12f *cf.* Mk. 9:34f & 10:38-45. 322) Mk. 9:33-42.  
323) Mk. 9:17-24f. 324) Mk. 9:28-32. 325) Mk. 9:33f. 326) Mk. 9:35.  
327) *Cf.* Mk. 9:35f with 5:51f & II Kgs. 5:2 & Lk. 22:23-27. 328) Mk. 9:35f. 329) Mk. 9:36f,42.  
330) Mk. 9:42, *hena tōn mikrōn* (where *tōn* and *mikrōn* are both plural forms).  
331) Mk. 9:42, *tōn pisteontōn* (where *tōn* and *pisteontōn* are both plural forms). 332) Mk. 9:36-42.  
333) Mk. 9:42. The words *pisteuontōn eis Eme* are here found in the *Codex Vaticanus*, most copies of the *Textus Receptus*, and in Latin & Syriac manuscripts. Other uncials read: *pistin echontōn* ("having faith").  
334) Mk. 9:33-36 *cf.* vv. 17,19,20,24,28f. 335) Mk. 9:36-37a. 336) Mk. 9:37b *cf.* Mt. 28:19. 337) Mk. 9:42.  
338) Mk. 9:41-42; 10:39-45; 16:15f (*cf.* Mt. 10:42 & 28:19). 339) Mk. 9:37,42. 340) Mk. 9:17,24.  
341) Mk. 9:33-36. 342) *Cf.* Lk. 9:48. 343) Mk. 9:36-42. 344) Mk. 9:36,37,42.  
345) *Cf.* Mk. 9:33-36 with 1:28-31. 346) *Cf.* Mk. 9:36.  
347) Mt. 17:18, *pais*; Mk. 9:24, *paidion*; Lk. 9:38, *monogenēs*. 348) Mt. 19:1-15 (*per contra* 17:24 to 18:1f).

349) Mt. 19:4-6 *cf.* Gen. 1:26-28 & 2:24 & 4:1f. 350) Ezra 9:2 *cf.* I Cor. 7:14. 351) Mt. 19:6 *cf.* Gen. 2:24.  
352) Mt. 19:12. 353) Mt. 19:13-15.  
354) Lk. 18:15-17. For proof that this text means we should receive God's kingdom the way such covenant children receive it (and not the way adults receive such children), see our text at nn. 388-99 below.  
355) Mk. 10:13-16. 356) Mk. 10:35-39. 357) Mk. 10:1,13a.  
358) W. Barclay: *Daily Study Bible: The Gospel of Luke*, St Andrews' Press, Scotland, p. 234.  
359) I Cor. 7:14 *cf.* Lk. 1:13f,31f,41f. 360) Lk. 18:15f *cf.* Mt. 11:25f. 361) I Cor. 7:14.  
362) Mt. 19:1-15; Mk. 10:13f; Lk. 18:15f. 363) *Soph.* 18:5. 364) Mt. 19:12f. 365) *Cf.* Heb. 7:25.  
366) Mk. 10:14. 367) See Acts 8:36 & 10:44-47f & 11:14-17 *etc.*  
368) O. Cullmann: *Baptism in the New Testament*, ET, S.C.M., London, 1950, *in loc.* 369) Mk. 10:14.  
370) Mt. 11:25-28. 371) Mk. 10:14. See too n. 367 above.  
372) *Cf.*: Acts 22:23; Rom. 16:18; I Cor. 5:5; 7:28; 16:16; II Cor. 10:11a; Gal. 6:1; Tit. 3:11; *etc.* 373) Mt. 19:14.  
374) Mk. 10:14. 375) Mk. 10:15. 376) Mk. 10:13-16 *cf.* 9:36-42 *etc.* 377) Mk. 10:15.  
378) *Cf.* Mt. 18:6 & Mk. 9:42. 379) Mt. 15:21-28 *cf.* Mk. 7:26f. 380) Mt. 8:8-13 *cf.* Rom. 11:16f.  
381) Mk. 9:37. 382) Mt. 25:31-46. 383) Mt. 25:40. 384) Mt. 25:41. 385) Mk. 10:13-15.  
386) *dechesthai*. 387) Mk. 9:37 & 8:13 *cf.* II Cor. 6:1 & 11:4. 388) Jh. 3:3,5,8,16.  
389) Thus, quite wrongly, Clarke and Schilling. 390) Thus most expositors. 391) Mk. 10:13-16.  
392) Mk. 9:36f,42. 393) Mt. 18:3-6 & 19:12-15 & Lk. 18:15-17. 394) Mk. 10:15.  
395) Mk. 10:13f *cf.* Lk. 1:39-43. 396) Mk. 10:15. 397) I Th. 5:4. 398) Mk. 10:13-16. 399) Mk. 10:16.  
400) Mk. 10:13. 401) Mk. 10:16. 402) Mk. 10:16a. 403) Isa. 40:11. 404) Mk. 5:22f,36,41.  
405) Mk. 10:14-16f. 406) Gen. 48:8-20. 407) Mk. 10:16. 408) Mt. 21:16 (*cf.* Ps. 8:3) & Mt. 23:37.  
409) Mt. 28:19. 410) Isa. 52:15 & 53:10. 411) Mt. 28:19. 412) Mk. 16:16.  
413) Mt. 28:19 & Mk. 16:15f *cf.* Jh. 21:15f. 414) *Op. cit.*, I p. 14. 415) Col. 2:11-13 *cf.* Rom. 4:11f & 6:3f.  
416) Lk. 24:47-49. 417) Gal. 3:27-29. 418) Acts 1:5. 419) Joel 2:16,23,32. 420) Acts 2:1-4,14-21,36-39.  
421) I Pet. 1:2,3,23 & 2:2 & 3:1 & 3:18-21. 422) Acts 1:5 *cf.* 2:5-10,17,36-39.  
423) Acts 2:1-4 & 2:16-18 & 2:33-38 *cf.* 11:15f. 424) Acts 1:5-8 *cf.* 2:1-3,16-18,33,38.  
425) Joel 2:16,23,28f *cf.* Acts 2:1-3,16-17,33-39. 426) Acts 2:36-39. 427) Mt. 28:19; Isa. 52:15f *cf.* Acts 2:39.  
428) Acts 8:5,8,10-12 (*apo mikron heōs megalou...episteusan tōi Philippōi euangelizomenō...ebaptizonto andres te kai gunaikes*).  
429) Acts 8:30-37f *cf.* Isa. 52:15 & 53:7f. 430) Lk. 19:5-10; Jh. 4:46-53; Mt. 18:1-6,10f.  
431) Gen. 6:18f & 7:1f *cf.* Heb. 11:7 & I Pet. 3:20 (and all the 'household baptism' texts dealt with in our subsequent paragraphs).  
432) Gen. 34:30; 36:6; Josh. 2:12f,18; 6:25; 24:15; I Sam. 27:3; I Kgs. 4:7; 5:9; II Kgs. 8:1f; 9:8; *etc.*  
433) Gen. 17:10-12,23-27 *cf.* 46:5-7f & 50:21f & Ex. 1:1-6f. 434) I Sam. 22:15-19. 435) Jer. 38:17,23.  
436) Joel 1:13 *cf.* 2:9,16,18,28. 437) Acts 2:36-39 *cf.* 2:16-21 & 1:5 with Joel 2:16,23,28-32. 438) Acts 2:38f.  
439) Acts 10:1-2,22,35,44-48 & esp. 10:15-35 & 11:9-17 with I Cor. 7:14.  
440) J. Calvin: *The Acts of the Apostles* (11:17), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1965 ed., I p. 325. 441) Acts 16:14f.  
442) *Cf.* Gen. 6:18f & 7:1 & Heb. 11:7 with I Pet. 3:20f. 443) I Tim. 3:4f,12; 5:10,14; Tit. 2:3-5; 3:5-8.  
444) Acts 16:30-34. 445) Acts 18:8 *cf.* I Cor. 1:14f. 446) Rom. 16:23 *cf.* I Cor. 1:14f & 16:15.  
447) Euseb.: *Ch. Hist.* V:5, and Wall's *op. cit.* II p. 390. 448) Acts 26:22. 449) Mt. 28:19.  
450) By "all" we do not, of course, mean the entire human race; but indeed the fullness thereof. See Rom. 11:25-32 & I Cor. 15:22-28.  
451) Rom. 2:28f *cf.* Rev. 2:9 & 3:9f. 452) Rom. 3:1-2 & 9:1-7 & 11:28f.  
453) Rom. 4:11 *cf.* Gen. 17:10-14 & Heb. 11:9. 454) Rom. 4:13, 23-25. 455) Rom. 6:1-5,22.  
456) Rom. 6:3-4 (*cf.* Col. 2:12). 457) R. Ayres: *Christian Baptism*, Kelly London, n.d., p. 197.  
458) Rom. 7:7-9. 459) Rom. 7:11f *cf.* Gal. 1:15f. 460) Rom. 9:7-13.  
461) Rom. 11:16; I Cor. 7:14. 462) Rom. 11:17-20; Gen. 17:10-14. 463) Rom. 7:7-9. 464) Gal. 5:16-24.  
465) See Gen. 17:25; Ex. 12:3,26f,37; Dt. 23:1; Prov. 22:6; Lk. 2:40-46; I Cor. 13:11; 14:20. The *Talmud* is quite specific on this. See: *M.Yom* 8:4; *Yoma* 82a; *Aboth* 5:21; *RN* 16 (5d); *M.Nid.* 5:6 & 6:11; *Rosh ha-Shanah* 3:8; *Baba Kamma* 4:4 & 8:4; *Tohoroth* 3:6; *Makshirin* 3:8 & 6:1; *Menahoth* 9:8; *Perah* 5:4; *Pesach* 99b; *Baba meezia* 96a; *M.Hul.* 1:1; *Erub.* 3:2; *M.Arak.* 1:1 & *Hag.* 1:1.

466) Cf. Gal. 1:15-16; Acts 9:1-20 & 22:3-21 & 26:4-20; Phil. 3:2-16; II Tim. 1:3.  
467) I Cor. 1:2,14-16 & 16:15 cf. Acts 18:8 & Rom. 16:23.  
468) I Cor. 3:2-6 & 4:1-6. See too 6:11, *apelousasthe alla hēgiasthēte alla edikaiōthēte* (in reversed chronological order); cf. too 12:13 (*pantes...ebaptisthēmen*). Also see nn. 469-72 below.  
469) I Cor. 7:3,14 cf. 14:20 & Rom. 11:16 & I Pet. 1:23 & 2:2.  
470) I Cor. 10:1-4 (cf. Ex. 12:37; 13:21; 14:22; Pss. 77:17-20; 78:12-27). 471) I Cor. 14:20 cf. 13:11.  
472) I Cor. 12:13 cf. 16:15f & 1:16. 473) II Cor. 1:1,21f.  
474) I Cor. 7:14 (*hēgiastai gar ho anēr ho apistos en tē gunaiki [tē pistē], kai hēgiastai hē gunē hē apistos en tōi adelphōi epei ara ta tekna humōn akatharta estin, nun de hagia estin*). The words within the sloping square brackets above ([ ]), are found: in the original *Codex Sinaiticus* (*Aleph\**); in the *Codex Bezae* (*D*); in the *Codex Seidelianus* I (*G*); and in all of the Latin and Syrian manuscripts. Instead of *en tōi adelphōi* ("in the brother") as above (and as in all the Pre-Syrian uncials), most copies of the *Textus Receptus* and Stephanus (as well as the Codices *H* & *K* & *L*) have *en tō andri* ("in the husband"). Alternatively, the reading *andri tōi pistōi* ("in the husband who believes") is found in Tertullian, the Syriac *Peshitta*, the *Vulgate*, and the *Ambrosiaster*. Thus Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, Alford & Wordsworth.  
475) I Cor. 7:13-16 cf. I Pet. 3:1f. 476) I Cor. 7:2f cf. I Cor. 7:14 & Rom. 11:16 cf. Lk. 1:35.  
477) I Cor. 7:39 cf. II Cor. 6:14f. 478) *Op. cit.* IV pp. 36ff. 479) *Ib.* IV p. 420. 480) II Cor. 1:21f.  
481) Gal. 1:15f. *Hote de eudokēsen ho Theos ho aphorisas* [aorist participle] *me ek koilias mētros mou kai kalesas* [aorist participle] *dia tēn charitos Autou, apokalupsai to Huion Autou*. Here, *apokalupsai* is aorist infinitive (denoting a decisive but not necessarily a past action, yet indeed one with ongoing consequences in the present and into the future). Cf. too Rom. 7:7f and Gal. 1:16 (*apokalupsai en emoi*; see n. 466).  
482) See too R.A. Webb's *op. cit.* p. 27. 483) Gal. 3:6f,16f (cf. Gen. 17:8-19; 18:13f; 25:21f; Rom. 9:7-13).  
484) Gal. 3:27f cf. 5:2f. 485) Gal. 4:22-31. 486) Eph. 1:1,13 cf. Acts 2:38f. 487) Eph. 2:1-8.  
488) Eph. 2:11-19 cf. 3:6. 489) Gal. 4:4f. 490) Gal. 4:4,30 cf. 4:5 & Rom. 4:11f. 491) Eph. 5:25f.  
492) Eph. 6:1-4. 493) Eph. 6:4. 494) Eph. 6:1. 495) Eph. 1:11-14. 496) Cf. Eph. 4:5 & 5:26.  
497) A. Kuyper Sr.: *On the Sacraments*, in *Dogmatic Dictations*, Kok, Kampen, 1909, V p. 128.  
498) Eph. 5:25 to 6:4. 499) Mal. 2:14f. 500) Eph. 6:1-4. 501) Eph. 5:25-31 cf. I Cor. 7:3-5.  
502) Eph. 5:26-31 cf. Jh. 19:34 & I Cor. 7:3-14a & I Jh. 5:4-8.  
503) Eph. 5:25f & 6:1-4 & I Cor. 7:14 cf. Jh. 19:34 & Mt. 28:19 & Acts 2:38f & 22:16 & Gal. 3:27f.  
504 ) That would have required a phrase something like '*katharizōn loutērōi heautōi*.' Compare thus the *Septuagint* Old Testament's mechanical use of "the laver" (*ho loutēr* = masculine) at Ex. 30:18f *etc.*, rather than the neuter phrase *to loutron* as here in Ephesians. To the contrary, however, Eph. 5:26 simply has: *tōi loutērōi* (= dative of the neuter *to loutron*).  
505) Eph. 5:26, *katharisas tōi loutērōi tou hudatos en Rhēmati*. 506) See n. 504 above for the Greek.  
507) That would have required something like: *katharizōn en tōi loutērōi di' hudatos tou baptismatos* (which is not the phrase which the inspiring Holy Spirit did use).  
508) See n. 505 above for Greek. 509) Eph. 5:26, *hagiasē...en Rhēmati*. 510) Eph. 5:25-37,31; I Cor. 7:3-5,14.  
511) Eph. 5:25f & 5:4 & 4:4,30 cf. Rom. 4:11f.  
512) Eph. 6:1 (*en Kuriōi*) & Eph. 6:4 (*en paideia*) compare Mal. 2:14-15. The Greek preposition *en* ('within') is very important here. It is quite different from the preposition *eis* (meaning 'into' and suggesting motion towards).  
513) Greek: *en* (and NOT *eis*)! See too n. 514 below.  
514) Eph. 6:4 ("*Ektrephete auta en paideia, kai nouthesia, Kuriou*"); NOT *eis paideian*.  
515) Eph. 5:29-31 cf. 6:1-4. 516) Mal. 2:14f & Eph. 6:4 cf. II Tim. 2:25 & 3:14-17 & Heb. 12:5-11.  
517) Eph. 6:4's "admonition," Greek *nou-thesia*. The word is derived from *nous* ('mind') and *thesia* ('a putting'), and hence means: "to put in mind" or "constantly to remind".  
518) Eph. 5:25-29 & 6:4 cf. II Tim. 3:14-17.  
519) C. Hodge: *Commentary on Ephesians* (1856), Banner of Truth, London, 1964 rep., pp. 321f (Eph. 5:26 to 6:4).  
520) Col. 1:2. 521) Col. 2:11-13 cf. Rom. 6:2f. 522) Col. 3:12. 523) Col. 3:20f.  
524) Col. 2:11f & 3:9 cf. Isa. 42:15 & 53:8-10 & Rom. 15:8. 525) Cullmann: *op. cit.*, pp. 68-70.  
526) I Tim. 1:2 cf. II Tim. 1:2 & Acts 16:1-3.

527) I Tim. 2:1,11,15 (*teknogonias*); compare 5:14 (*teknogonein*). I Tim. 2:15 has *dia tēn teknogonias ean meinōsin en pistei kai agapē, kai hagiasmō*. Here, the word *meinōsin* ('remain') and the phrase *en pistei* ('in faith') and the phrase *agapē kai hagiasmō* ('in love and in holiness') are all vitally important.

528) I Tim. 3:4,12 & 5:10,14. 529) II Tim. 1:3 & Gal. 1:15f cf. Acts 22:3-16 & 26:4-16. 530) II Tim. 1:5. 531) Cf. n. 520 above with I Cor. 7:14.

532) Compare: (1), II Tim. 1:5's "faith...which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and...in you also"; (2) II Tim. 3:15's "*apo brephous*" or "from babyhood" or even "from fetushood" (cf. Lk. 1:15-17's Spirit-filled zygote, and especially 1:41-44's "*brephos*" or "the unborn baby" three months before birth who already recognized Jesus as Saviour).

533) II Tim. 2:15 cf. 1:5.

534) J. Calvin: *The First and Second Epistles of Paul the Apostle to Timothy*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1964 rep., p. 292 (on II Tim. 1:5).

535) II Tim. 3:14f cf. Acts 16:1-3. 536) II Tim. 3:14,17. 537) II Tim. 1:5f cf. I Tim. 4:14.

538) Tit. 3:5f cf. Eph. 5:25f. 539) Cf. Isa. 52:15 to 53:10 & Joel 2:23. 540) Isa. 53:10 cf. Joel 2:16f.

541) Isa. 52:15 & 53:10 cf. Joel 2:16,23 & Acts 1:5 & 2:1-4,14-21,36-39. 542) Tit. 1:6 cf. 3:3-5.

543) Tit. 1:6 & 2:4. 544) Heb. 5:12 to 6:2. 545) Heb. 9:10,13,19,24 cf. Ex. 24:4-8. 546) Heb. 10:22-23. 547) Heb. 11:6. 548) Heb. 11:6-21,23-29,32f cf. 12:1f,5f. 549) Heb. 12:7f. 550) Jas. 1:1. 551) Jas. 1:2a. 552) Jas. 1:2b. 553) Jas. 1:15a, *eita hē epithumia sullabousa, tiktei hamartian*.

554) Jas. 1:15b, *hē de hamartia apoteleistha apokuei thanaton*. 555) Jas. 1:16. 556) Jas. 1:17.

557) Jh. 1:12f (*Edōken autois exousian tekna Theou genesthai tois pisteuousin eis to Onoma Autou..., hoi...ek Theou egenēthēsan*).

558) Jh. 3:3's *genēthē, anōthen*. 559) Jh. 3:5's *genēthē, ex hudatos kai Pneumatos*.

560) Jh. 3:7's *genēthē, anōthen*. 561) Jh. 3:8's *houtōs estin pas ho gegenēmenos ek tou Pneumatos*.

562) Ps. 36:7 cf. I Cor. 2:10-13. 563) Jas. 1:18, where *apekuēsen* means "conceived" or "made pregnant."

564) Jas. 1:21, where *emphuton Logon* is to be rendered "the implanted [or engrafted] Word".

565) J. Calvin: *Inst. IV:16:20*. 566) Jas. 1:21, *dunamenon sōsai tas psuchas*.

567) Cf. Jas. 1:27's *episkeptesthai orphanous*, with 1:17f. Compare too Ps. 68:5-6's "God is...a Father to the fatherless; God sets the solitary in families."

568) Acts 2:36-39. 569) Acts chs. 10 & 11. 570) I Pet. 1:3,23. 571) I Pet. 2:2. 572) I Pet. 2:3.

573) I Pet. 3:20f cf. II Pet. 1:1 & 2:5 & 3:6. 574) *Op. cit.*, p. 203.

575) Gen. 6:9f cf. Acts 2:36-39, once more! See too I Pet. 1:2,23; 2:2; 3:20f.

576) A. Pridmore: *The New Testament Theology of Childhood*, Buckland, Hobart, 1977, p. 166.

577) I Jh. 2:12-14. Note the diminutives *teknia* (in v. 12) and *paidia* (in v. 14): not just the non-diminutives *tekna* and/or *paides*.

578) I Jh. 2:20 & Mt. 28:19. 579) I Jh. 2:27-29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1,7,8,18; Jh. 1:11-13 & 3:3-8.

580) Rev. 2:9,23; 7:3f; 12:5f; 12:17; 14:1,12f; 19:13ff; 20:12f; 22:3f. Cf. Rev. 19:13 with Isa. 63:3 & Gal. 3:27f.

581) See Dr. A. Carson's *Baptism: Its Mode and Its Subjects*, Sovereign Grace Publishers, Evansville Ind., n.d., p. 176.

## **II. BABY BELIEF BEFORE BAPTISM IN THE ANTE-NICENE CHURCH**

In our previous chapter, we have examined the teaching anent baby belief before baptism within the covenant of redemption -- according to the inspired and therefore infallible written Word of God. In this present chapter, we shall see that even the fallible and uninspired ancient history of Intertestamental Judaism and of Early Heathenism -- and especially that of the Early Patristic Church -- sustain the above viewpoint.

Before the fall, God graciously brought man into covenant with Him at his very creation (in adulthood). Consequently, man then had the right to commune with Him at the tree of life. Had man not fallen, his children would have grown up aright -- and then communed. Genesis 1:26f & 2:7-9; Ecclesiastes 7:29; Hosea 6:7.

Right after the fall, God cleansed elect mankind. He initiated man and woman into the covenant of redemption. This He did first by cleansing and then by clothing them -- and, when born, also their children. Indeed, God subsequently enabled them to commune with Him -- through a God-given sacrifice. Genesis 3:11-21 & 4:1-4 with Galatians 3:27-29.

Later yet, God cleansed backslidden but penitent covenanters by sprinkling them with rainwater -- during the 'baptism' of the great flood. Thereafter, this was followed by sacrificial communion. Genesis 6:18 & 7:10f with First Peter 3:20f and Genesis 8:20-22.

The above -- cleansing, ingrafting and communion -- is indeed the pattern of all religion. Thus, the sons of Jacob were both cleansed and circumcised -- before communion with God. Also the later intertestamental Judaists observed this same order -- even when proselytizing converts from Paganism. For they first 'baptismally' sprinkled them, and then circumcised them -- before admitting them to their communion.

Greek Pagans stole these rites from the Hebrews, and then perverted them. In their 'mystery religions' those Pagans then themselves -- first cleansed and then initiated candidates, and only thereafter communed with them. Indeed, the cleansing rites of both later Judaism and later Paganism 'magically' devolved --from proto-sprinkling -- toward final submersionism *ex opere operato*.

### **63. The development of proselyte baptism among the ancient Hebrews**

Already in the time of Jacob, there was mention of the circumcising of pagan Proselytes -- and the 'baptismal' cleansing (alias the washing) of Israelites tainted by contact with such Pagans. Thus, the sons of Jacob told the Shechemites: "If you wish to be as we, that every male of you be circumcised -- then we will take your daughters to us and we will dwell with you and we will become one people.... Then Jacob said to his household and to all who were with him, 'Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be cleansed!'" Genesis 34:15f & 35:2f.

At the exodus, only those who had been both cleansed by sprinkling and also circumcised and catechized -- were to partake of the Passover communion. Thus, at the Red Sea, the Israelites and their infants were 'baptized' by sprinkling -- while the 'uncircumcised' Egyptians were drowned (by submersion).

Those Israelites then "washed their clothes" when entering into the Sinai covenant -- soon to be followed by a communion sacrifice.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, there are also later Biblical accounts of (proselyte) 'baptisms' of converted pagans -- like Naaman and Nebuchadnezzar.<sup>2</sup>

Further, 'Intertestamental Judaism' (from perhaps at least B.C. 400 onward) clearly baptized even the infants of Proselytes. This occurred whenever whole families were converted from Paganism to the religion of Ancient Israel.

The great Anglican Scholar Rev. Dr. William Wall has well summarized this,<sup>3</sup> in his famous work *The History of Infant Baptism*, as follows. "1) The Jews baptized all Proselytes of the nations that were converted to their religion. 2) Their proof from Moses' Law that they ought to do so [was: Genesis 35:2; Exodus 19:10; Numbers 15:15]. 3) They baptized also the infant children whom the Proselytes brought along with them to be entered into the covenant of the true God. 4) They baptized all such infant children of the Heathens as they found or took in war *etc.* 5) The great light that this gives for the better understanding [of] the meaning of our Saviour's commission to baptize the nations, [is obvious.] Matthew 28:19. 6) The testimony of St. Ambrose...that John the Baptist baptized infants [is clear].... 7) A parallel [was thus] instituted between the Jewish and Christian baptism."

#### **64. The derivation of the cleansing rites of ancient Paganism**

Now even the ancient heathen religions surrounding Palestine themselves often 'borrowed' from the Old Testament -- and even from early Christianity and yet later Judaism. They generally did so, however, without acknowledgment; and they then always perverted whatever they thus borrowed.

Chronologically, some of the early Pagans did precede the advent of New Testament Christianity. Indeed, their very apostasy from the yet earlier revelation of the one true Triune God -- even helped set the stage for Christianity as their needed correction.

Yet even such Pagans could only survive on the 'borrowed capital' they had stolen from the true religion revealed in the garden of Eden and thereafter. That was later augmented -- in the normative way described especially in the Older and Newer Testaments of Holy Scripture.

Certainly in the Near East, babies were sometimes initiated even into some of the ancient religions of the Pagans.<sup>4</sup> The same was true even of some of the heathen Greek 'mystery religions'.<sup>5</sup>

Oepke and Leipoldt have demonstrated<sup>6</sup> that "both in the Hellenistic environment as well as in Judaism, circumstances were at work which might induce also the Primitive Church to baptize children." Indeed, Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria and Gregory of Nazianzen

(and other Patristic Fathers too) all claimed<sup>7</sup> that Pre-Christian ancient Paganism itself -- had borrowed massively from (and perverted) both Old Testament religion and intertestamental Judaism.

#### **65. Early Judaism: the 'fallen who had been justified' were 'righteous' before circumcision**

Not just the Old Testament Israelites realized that the godly ancient Patriarchs and Proselytes were justified before and irrespective of their being circumcised. So too did even later rabbinical Judaism -- at least in the early phases of the intertestamentary half-millennium (from B.C. 450 till 50 A.D.).

These teachers, following Genesis 6:5 and 8:21 &c --realized<sup>8</sup> that all Adamites and even the 'righteous' Noah and his family had previously been tainted with an evil tendency ever since their birth or even their conception. Yet Early Judaism also realized that at least Noah and probably too his covenant family had been "just[ified]" before their 'baptism' -- during the 'cleansing' of the great flood.<sup>9</sup>

Judaism further realized that even Abraham and his family had been born in sin. They therefore needed to be "justified" before their circumcision -- whether as adult males, or whether as baby boys just eight days old.<sup>10</sup>

In the Old Testament *Greek Apocrypha*, a passage in Jesus Sirach -- certainly written in its present form no later than B.C. 132 -- reads as follows: "To fear the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and it is created with the faithful in the womb. This [wisdom] prepared an everlasting dwelling-place with [godly] men, and will continually remain with their seed. To fear the Lord is fullness of wisdom, and that drenches them with its fruits."

Here,<sup>11</sup> the above phrase "prepared...an everlasting dwelling-place" translates the verb *nosseuō*. Thus the meaning appears to be that wisdom 'nests' in wise and faithful humans -- even from the womb onward. The Lange/Bissell *Commentary on the Apocrypha of the Old Testament* here observes: "Perhaps the early beginning of wisdom is meant here..., in accordance with the Jewish philosophy, as in Psalm 51:7" (cf. 51:5).

#### **66. Proselyte baptism in the pseudepigraphical *Testament of Levi***

There seems to be a reference to the development of the practice of Judaic proselyte baptism also in the *circa* 110 B.C. pseudepigraphical *Testament of Levi*. There, in a semi-Messianic story which Jacob's immediate son Levi is alleged to have told his own immediate children, we read the following.

"I counselled my father and Reuben my brother to bid the sons of Hamor not to be circumcised. For I was zealous because of the abomination which they had wrought on my sister.... My father heard these [latter] things and was wroth, and he was grieved in that they had received the circumcision -- and, after that, had been put to death [Genesis 34:24-31]....



"Then I saw seven men in white raiment saying to me: 'Arise, put on the robe of the priesthood and the crown of righteousness! ... From henceforth, become a priest of the Lord -- you and your seed for ever!'

"Then the first anointed me with holy oil.... The second washed me with pure water [Genesis 35:1-2 *cf.* Exodus 24:6f to 29:4f]....

"Then they said to me....: 'Every desirable thing in Israel shall be for you and for your seed'.... Then Isaac called me...and said to me....: 'While you are young, take therefore to yourself a wife without blemish or pollution but not of the race of strange nations -- and bathe before entering into the holy place!'"

The *Testament of Levi* continues: "Now, my children, I command you! Fear the Lord your God with your whole heart, and walk in simplicity according to all His Law! Thus you must teach also your children -- so that they may have understanding all their life, reading the Law of God incessantly.... Sow good things in your souls, so that you may find them in your life....

"You will take to wife the daughters of the Gentiles, purifying them (*katharizontes autas*).... Then the Lord shall raise up a new Priest..., and His star shall arise in heaven like that of a King [*cf.* Num. 24:17f].... He shall shine forth as the sun on the earth [*cf.* Malachi 3 & 4].... The knowledge of the Lord shall be poured forth upon the earth as the water of the seas.... The **Spirit** of understanding and sanctification shall rest upon Him in the water [compare Luke 3]....

"In His Priesthood, the Gentiles shall be multiplied in knowledge upon the earth and enlightened through the grace of the Lord. In His Priesthood, sin shall come to an end.... The Lord shall rejoice in His children, and be well pleased in His beloved ones for ever.... All the saints shall clothe themselves with joy."<sup>12</sup> Compare Galatians 3:27!

## **67. Proselyte baptism: the *Tannaim* (from B.C. 70 onward)**

Also the Judaistic *Tannaim* Shammai and Hillel discuss the above -- perhaps from 30 B.C. onward.<sup>13</sup> The *Tannaim* were those Israelitic authorities who expounded the Law of God for a period of about two centuries, starting with Hillel and Shammai (who were born around 70 B.C.).

Their comments on Old Testament Scripture are called the *Tanna*.<sup>14</sup> The latter are a very valuable indication of how the Bible was interpreted after the close of the Old Testament (with the prophet Malachi), and before the beginning of the New Testament (from Matthew onward).

From the earliest of these intertestamental *Tanna*, such as those of Hillel and Shammai, the Israelitic understanding of Holy Writ right before the birth of Jesus can be seen quite clearly. In the *Tanna* on Genesis 6:9f, it is clear that these rabbinical commentators regarded Noah's whole family as already just[ified] -- prior to the later inception of circumcision. Indeed, also from the *Tanna* on Genesis 17:12-14, it is clear that those born in Abraham's household were regarded as already "bought" (and thus as already in the covenant) even before they received Circumcision -- some as early as eight days old. Compare too Genesis 12:5; 14:14; 15:2-6; 17:24-27.

It is for this reason that all their males were to be circumcised. Not circumcising those born in the household -- or those bought with money as household servants and thus added to the

homestead -- was indeed a grievous sin. Yet such was not the sin of refusing to enter into covenant. To the contrary, it was the sin of having "broken" the covenant already entered into and therefore thoroughly binding upon that household. Genesis 15:18; 17:10-14; Exodus 4:24-26; Joshua 5:6-11.

Now this obviously presupposes the existence of the covenant with God's people and their even infant children, prior to their circumcising (or their non-circumcising) of their own infant children of the covenant. The latter was to be done through the agency of a Minister of the Word and Sacraments. Genesis 17:23f *cf.* 20:7 & 21:4.

Explaining Genesis 17:12-14, the Pre-Christian Tannaic passages say:<sup>15</sup> "If anyone buys a pregnant Gentile slave[-woman], and she thereafter gives birth to a boy -- then that is a slave-child [that had formerly together with the mother already been] bought with money: to be circumcised on the eighth day [after birth]. But if anyone buys a Gentile slave[-woman] and her [already-born 'separate'] child with her -- that is a slave-child bought with money, to be circumcised at the very first" alias at the same time the mother is baptized.

#### **68. The bearing of these Tanna on First Corinthians 7:14 and on the Essenes**

Similarly, this very important principle of holiness-from-the-womb (rather than holiness-from-circumcision) -- is reflected also in First Corinthians 7:14. For it is from the act of sexual intercourse producing the pregnancy, and not from the much later infant baptism onward, that the covenant child is sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Clearly, all *ex opere operato* voodoo at baptism --is hereby excluded.

The same is clear from the Hebraic practice of the household baptism of proselyte families. The great Anglican baptismal scholar Rev. Dr. William Wall gives a good explanation of this, in his *History of Infant Baptism* ( I:19f): "Though the child...were begotten and conceived in the womb before the parents were baptized, yet if they (and particularly if the mother) were baptized before it were born into the world, the Jews had a saying...recorded by Maimonides [*Isa. Bia* 13] and also in the *Talmud* -- 'A heathen woman, if she is made a proselytess when big with child, that child need not baptism. For the baptism of the mother serves him for baptism.'"

This can only mean that both the parent and the unborn child were regarded as having been cleansed before the baptism of the parent. Consequently, it is not the baptism which cleanses either of them. For they were both already cleansed -- by grace alone and through faith alone -- before that baptism.

The adult proselytes' non-circumcising of their own male children in this way, constituted not just the former's but even the latter's breach of a covenant already there for them (and thus binding also upon them). "In the case of girls," however -- comments the great Lutheran scholar Jeremias<sup>16</sup> -- "baptism was the only act of admission. These [above-mentioned] passages indirectly prove for the Tannaitic period the baptism of Gentile girls at the earliest age....

"If the birth occurred before the baptism of the mother, the infant was baptized along with the mother on her admission.... The oldest rabbinic sources take it completely for granted that

the children, even the smallest children, were admitted with their parents into the Jewish faith.... For the girls, the act of admission was baptism; for the boys, it was preceded by circumcision.... Colossians 2:11 adds confirmation of this point. Paul here names baptism 'the Christian circumcision.'"

About the first-century B.C. Essenes, and also about the similar 'Qumran' sects mentioned in the Dead Sea Scrolls, we can be brief. They were all: syncretistic (Judeo-Gnostic); hemerobaptistic (practising daily religious re-ablutions); autosoteric; and antipaedocovenantal. As such, they represent a paganizing departure from the Old Testament -- with no influence whatsoever upon either John the baptizer or New Testament Christianity.<sup>17</sup> The latter derived straight from Old Testament practices -- before their later devolution into degenerating Judaism.

### **69. John the baptizer on presacramental piety in covenant infants**

Just before and even during Christ's own earthly lifetime, the Scribes and Pharisees crossed land and sea to make proselytes.<sup>18</sup> Whenever they were successful, here is what happened to their converts and the latter's families.

First, the adult male converts were catechized. Then, their confession of sins and profession of faith were heard. Next, they and their males were circumcised. Subsequently, they and their wives were baptized -- in the presence of three human witnesses called *elōhīym*.<sup>19</sup> Then their little children were baptized -- right after the parents.<sup>20</sup>

Indeed, all the members of these converted families were then given new names.<sup>21</sup> For there was a general consensus in rabbinical Judaism that, at death, the people of Israel (but usually not unconverted Gentiles) go forth into a state of bliss at that 'age to come.'<sup>22</sup>

Enter John the baptizer! He urged his addressees to "repent" before he would baptize them. The Bible says he baptized "all the land of Judea" -- hence, not just adults but also their tiny children.<sup>23</sup> Significantly, Acts 22:16 and First Corinthians 6:11 & 7:14 all seem to connect New Testament Christian baptism -- *via* John the baptizer -- with the antecedent Judaic baptism of proselytes and their infant children.

The Early Church Father Tertullian called John "the boundary set between the Old Covenant and the New, at which Judaism ceased and Christianity began."<sup>24</sup> Again, Gregory Nazianzen called John the baptizer "the middle person between the Old and New Testaments."<sup>25</sup>

The famous modern antiquarian Rev. Professor Dr. Joachim Jeremias seems to draw the same conclusion. He does so, when discussing First Corinthians 7:14's famous statement that "your children...are holy" even from the time of their conception onward. Though himself a conservative Lutheran, Jeremias rightly gives the Calvinistic understanding of this passage.

This text, observes Jeremias,<sup>26</sup> is only intelligible when it is remembered that "Judaism distinguishes between children who were [both] begotten and born...[altogether] before conversion to Judaism -- and children who were begotten and born...[altogether] after conversion

to Judaism." Accordingly, concludes Jeremias, in First Corinthians 7:14 "the 'holiness' of the children rests not on baptism but on their descent from a Christian father or a Christian mother."<sup>27</sup>

## **70. Presacramental piety in covenant infants according to Philo**

The famous Alexandrian Judaist Philo, who died around 40 A.D. (and thus about a decade after John the baptizer), discussed<sup>28</sup> how even Eve conceived children. Philo stated that "Adam had sexual intercourse with his wife," so that "she conceived...and said: 'I have received a male baby by the instrumentality of God' [*cf.* Genesis 4:1-2]."

Explained Philo: "A man, in accordance with nature, comes together with a woman...to enter upon those embraces that [sometimes] lead to the generation of children.... Yet they alone will never of themselves bring forth offspring -- without receiving 'seed' from an Other."

More specifically considering 'godly seed' such as Abel and Seth, Philo then asked: "Who then is the One Who sows...the things that are good?" Philo himself then answered: "It is God, then, Who indeed sows the seed.... He bestows His Own offspring whom He has sown.... Moses...introduces Sarah as being 'with child' when God 'visited' her.... And in the case of Leah, Moses teaches that...God indeed opened her womb."

Philo observed<sup>29</sup> that Jewish babies are even "in their swaddling clothes" -- and therefore also before their circumcision -- "trained to recognize God as their Father.... Consequently, they are taught the knowledge [of the Law] from earliest youth [*cf.* Second Timothy 1:3-6 & 3:14-16]. They bear in their souls the image of the Commandments" -- even before their birth. *Cf.* Psalm 139:13-17 & Ecclesiastes 11:5.

Probably referring especially to Judaism's proselytes from the Gentiles, Philo added that "nearly all other persons are sprinkled with water." Yet he assumed that apostate or even backslidden Judaists too need (re-)cleansing. Thus, he specifically said that Moses told the priests -- after "dipping some branches of hyssop in the mixture of ashes and water --to sprinkle it over those who were to be purified."

## **71. The presacramental piety of covenanters according to Josephus**

About half a century after Philo and John the baptizer, the Judaistic Sadducee and famous historian Josephus wrote his various writings -- toward the end of the first century A.D. Interestingly, like Philo<sup>30</sup> and like the New Testament itself<sup>31</sup> -- Josephus<sup>32</sup> too uses the Greek word *panoikei* to refer to whole households.

Josephus further tells us that the Hebrew children "from their earliest consciousness...learned the Laws -- so as to have them...engraved upon the soul." They were "brought up in learning"; they were "exercised in the Laws"; and they were "made acquainted with the acts of their predecessors -- in order to imitate them."<sup>33</sup>

Josephus also tells us that "Aaron himself and his sons were **sprinkled** with water."<sup>34</sup> Indeed, in his own autobiographical *Life* and his *Antiquities of the Jews*, Josephus informs us:<sup>35</sup> "I am not only sprung from a sacerdotal family.... By my mother, I am of the royal blood.... I was born in the first year of the reign of Caius Caesar [37 A.D.].... Jesus, a wise man, was about this time.... He was Christ....

"John that was called the baptizer...was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue both as to righteousness towards one another and piety towards God -- and so to come to baptism.... The washing would be acceptable to him, if they made use of it not in order to the putting away of some sins -- but for the purification of the body: supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness."

Very clearly, all this presupposes "piety" and "righteousness" and "virtue" in candidates -- before their Johannine baptism. For that "washing" by John -- explains Josephus -- was "not in order to the putting away of some sins." In judaical proselyte baptism -- as well as in Johannine baptism, Christic baptism, apostolic baptism and early-patristic baptism -- the baptismal candidate was therefore regarded as having been purified thoroughly beforehand.

## **72. The precircumcisional piety of covenant infants according to the Talmud**

The *Talmud* is a large body of Judaistic teachings first reduced to writing apparently only from the third century A.D. onward. The part known as the *Mishna*, dates from around 150-220 A.D. The lesser or *Jerusalem Talmud* was compiled in 230 A.D.

The *Gemara* (which is far the greatest part of the major or *Babylonian Talmud*) was not completed till about 540 A.D. The roots of the *Talmud* rests, however, upon generations of prior oral traditions -- going back at least to the time of Ezra (*circa* 450 B.C.).<sup>36</sup>

In the *Talmud*,<sup>37</sup> prenatal and thus precircumcisional teachability -- and therefore regeneratedness -- is presupposed. For even prenatal illumination is assumed -- when unborn children were then first "taught" their religious lore. Cf. Psalm 139:15f & Jeremiah 1:5 with Second Timothy 1:3-5 & 3:14-16.

Talmudically, a Hebrew male baby did not become a Hebrew by being circumcised. To the contrary, a Hebrew baby was circumcised as a baby -- precisely because he was already a Hebrew before his infant circumcision. Cf. Philippians 3:5 & Second Timothy 1:3-6. Indeed, uncircumcisable Hebrew female babies were fully Hebrewesses -- and later Israelitesses -- regardless of their lifelong uncircumcision. Genesis 34:1-31 & Num. 27:8f & 36:2f cf. Luke 13:16 & 23:28f.

According to the *Talmud*,<sup>38</sup> the babies of Gentile proselytes themselves became Jews -- before their infant circumcisions. For they became Jews as soon as their parents were adopted by Jewish families, or alternatively themselves professed the Jewish faith. Declares the *Talmud*, "whenever one becomes a proselyte, he is accounted as an infant newly born" --and hence as one not yet circumcised.<sup>39</sup>

Indeed, ancient Israelitic missionaries, continues the *Talmud*,<sup>40</sup> "baptized the little young proselyte" along with his parents. This refers to the practice of the Judaistic baptizings of the babies of proselytes -- both before and during the earthly lifetime of John the baptizer and of Jesus Christ Himself. First Kings 18:30-37 and Malachi 3:1f & 4:4-6 cf. Luke 1:13-17 and John 1:25-34f and Matthew 21:25 & 23:15.

### **73. The Talmud on the circumcision and baptism of proselytes**

The *Babylonian Talmud* declares:<sup>41</sup> "When a proselyte is received, he must be circumcised.... Then, when he is cured [of the wound of circumcision] -- they baptize him in the presence of two wise men."

The *Jerusalem Talmud* adds<sup>42</sup> that when "one finds an infant cast out, and baptizes him in the name of a servant -- do thou also circumcise him!" Also the Babylonian *Gemara*: "The proselytes entered not into covenant but by circumcision, baptism, and sprinkling of blood."

In Judaism's *Talmud*, the above-mentioned pre-circumcisional justification also implies even a prenatal illumination of the baby. For he or she has not only a latent potential, but also an actual prenatal capacity. Even before birth,<sup>43</sup> a child is therefore "taught" religious lore.

This principle clearly extends not only to the infants of slaves, in covenant homes, but also to foundlings -- as well as to an enemy's infants spared in warfare. For Genesis 17:9-27 provides for the circumcision not only of the infants of domestic slaves, but also of all infants adopted into the covenant household. Indeed, Deuteronomy 20:13f and 21:10f seem to imply that at least the nails of women and children captured in war should be circumcised.

Thus, in the Jerusalem *Jevamoth* (8:4), Rabbi Hezekiah comments: "Behold, one finds an infant cast out, and baptizes him in the name of a servant -- do thou also circumcise him in the name of a servant! But if he baptize him in the name of a freeman -- do thou also circumcise him in the name of a freeman!"

Similarly, the Gentile babies of proselytes -- themselves became Jews before their own circumcision. Some of them 'judaized' at the very moment they were adopted into Jewish families. Others became Jews precisely when their own parents themselves accepted Judaistic proselyte baptism -- before the circumcising of those babies themselves soon thereafter.<sup>44</sup>

The Judaistic *Talmud* declares that "whenever one becomes a proselyte, he is accounted an infant newly born."<sup>45</sup> For in Old Testament times, missionaries spreading the Hebrew religion "baptized the little young proselyte" -- along with his ex-heathen 'israeliticized' parents.<sup>46</sup>

### **74. Comments in the Mishna and the Gemara on infant proselyte baptism**

The *Mishna* is a system of ancient oral traditions and customs of the Jews, written down within two centuries of the inauguration of Johannine and Christic baptism. The *Mishnath*

*Chethuboth* both in the Babylonian and in the Jerusalem *Talmud*, mention children becoming proselytes.

Says the Jerusalem *Mishna*: "If a girl born of heathen parents be made a proselyte after she be three years and a day old, then she is not to have such and such privileges there mentioned." And the Babylonian *Mishna* says: "If she be made a proselyte before that age, she shall have the said privileges."

The above reference to a tiny "girl" obviously applies also to an infant boy. However, the latter little proselyte was, in addition to being baptized, also circumcised.

Thus the later *Gemara* adds: "If with a proselyte his sons and daughters be made proselytes, that which is done by their father redounds to their good.... They are wont to baptize such a proselyte in infancy.... This is for his good."<sup>47</sup> For "if any one become a proselyte, he is like a child 'new born.'"<sup>48</sup>

## **75. Patristic comments on pre-Christian 'Judaic' baptism**

According to the 200 A.D. Tertullian, the Pre-Christian Pagans for their own ablutions sometimes stole the rite of baptism from the ancient Israelites. "Here we see," observes Tertullian,<sup>49</sup> "the aim of the devil -- to ape the things of God. Since he [the devil] also sets up a 'baptism' for his disciples."

Fifty years later, Cyprian added:<sup>50</sup> "The Jews had already, and a long time ago, the baptism of the Law of Moses." However, by Christians they "are now to be baptized in the Name of Jesus Christ."

A century later, Basil the Great gave his great *Oration on Baptism*. There he compared the baptisms of Moses, of John, and of Christ.

Finally, Basil's contemporary Gregory Nazianzen declared<sup>51</sup> that "Moses gave a baptism.... They were baptized in the cloud and in the sea.... These were but a type of ours -- as Paul understands it." Exodus chapters 14 to 19; Psalms 77:15-20; 78:12-16; First Corinthians 10:1-2.

## **76. Mediaeval Jewish commentators on Old Testament and Talmudic baptisms**

Also mediaeval Jewish commentators throw similar light onto ancient proselyte baptisms. Thus, Rabbi Solomon explains: "Our rabbis teach that our fathers entered into covenant by circumcision and baptism and sprinkling of blood." And Rabbi Joseph: "Little children are made proselytes together with their fathers."

Moses Maimonides declares:<sup>52</sup> "By three things did Israel enter into covenant -- by circumcision; and baptism; and sacrifice. Circumcision was in Egypt -- as it is written [of the Passover] 'No uncircumcised person shall eat thereof' [Exodus 12:48]. Baptism was in the wilderness, just before the giving of the Law -- as it is written [Exodus 19:10] 'sanctify them...and

let them wash'.... And sacrifice -- as it is said [Exodus 24:5] 'And he sent young men of the children of Israel who offered burnt offerings' *etc.*"

Further: "When an 'ethnic' [alias a Gentile] is willing to enter into the covenant..., he must be circumcised and baptized and bring a sacrifice; or, if it be a woman, be baptized.... A proselyte that is under age, they are wont to baptize....

"As it is written, 'As you are, so shall the stranger be!'" Numbers 15:15 *cf.* Exodus 12:43-49. As 'you are.' And "How are you? By circumcision and baptism!"

Consequently, "a stranger that is circumcised and not baptized, or baptized and not circumcised -- he is not a proselyte till he be both circumcised and baptized.... Even as they circumcise and baptize strangers, so do they circumcise and baptize servants that are received from Heathens into servitude....

"There were many Proselytes that in David's and Solomon's time joined themselves [to Israel].... The judges of the Great Synagogue had a care of them. They drove them not away after they were baptized.... They baptized not a Proselyte on the sabbath.... As soon as he grows whole of the wound of circumcision, they bring him to baptism.... The Gentile that is made a proselyte and the slave that is made free -- behold, he is like a 'new born' child!"

Further, as regards the Hebrew adoption of Gentile children and the latter's proselyte baptism:<sup>53</sup> "An Israelite that takes a little heathen child, or that finds an heathen infant, baptizes him for a proselyte." Compare Genesis 17:13-27 & 14:14 & 18:19.

The apostle Paul had remarked under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit<sup>54</sup> that the Israelites at the exodus were all "baptized into Moses, in the cloud and in the sea." So too were their accompanying proselytes, including those of mixed blood who then left Egypt with them.<sup>55</sup>

## **77. Selden and Modena on Talmudic proselyte baptisms of judaized families**

The great Westminster Assembly Hebraist Dr. John Selden makes an important declaration about a statement of Rabbi Paul. The latter stated in First Corinthians 10:1-2 that 'our fathers were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea.'

This statement, explains Selden,<sup>56</sup> would have been almost unintelligible to Paul's addressees -- had it then not been well-known that the Jews regarded their ancestors as having entered into the Mosaic covenant precisely by baptism. This fact is reinforced further by Moses' own act soon thereafter -- when he "took the blood and sprinkled it on the people." For that act too, the New Testament<sup>57</sup> calls -- a 'baptism.'

Selden elaborates further, concerning the way the Jews proselytized during Talmudic and even Post-Talmudic times. Held the Judaistic *Gemara* of the ancient Hebrews: "They are wont to baptize such a proselyte in infancy, upon the 'profession of the House of Judgment'" alias the Hebrew Court. "For this is for 'his good.'"



Here Selden explains: "A child of never so little age might by their custom be made a proselyte.... A proselyte, if of age, made profession to the Court that he would keep Moses' Law. But in the case of minors, the Court itself did profess in their name the same thing."

Further: "Any male child of such a proselyte that was under the age of thirteen years and a day -- and females that were under twelve years and a day -- they baptized as infants, at the request and by the assent of the father or the authority of the Court.... If they were above that age, they consented for themselves."<sup>58</sup>

In his 1650 *History of the Rites...of the Present Jews*, Leo Modena adds of the proselyte to Judaism: "They take and circumcise him.... As soon as he is well of his sore, he is to wash himself all over in water.... From henceforth, he becomes as a natural Jew."

## **78. Witsius and Wall on Jewish proselyte baptisms**

Toward the end of the seventeenth century, the great Calvinist theologian Rev. Professor Dr. Herman Witsius explains<sup>59</sup> that the Judaists themselves "make the first practice of this baptism to be very ancient. Some ascribe it to the patriarch Jacob -- when he received into his family as a domestic church, the Shechemite young women [and 'little ones'] and other Gentiles who resided with him. Because...Jacob said to his household and to all that were with him, 'Put away the strange gods that are among you --and be clean!'"<sup>60</sup>

As regards the latter-mentioned Biblical passage, continues Witsius,<sup>61</sup> the great Judaistic scholar "Aben Ezra explains the words 'be clean' by the washing of the body..... Others derive the...practice of this baptism from what is said to Moses: 'Go unto the people and sanctify them...and let them wash their clothes!'"<sup>62</sup> -- before the people were given the Ten Commandments."<sup>63</sup>

Thus far, we must therefore agree with the statement of the learned Dr Wall<sup>64</sup> that "this gives great light for the better understanding [of] the meaning of our Saviour, when [in Matthew 28:19] He bids His apostles: 'Go and disciple all the nations, and baptize them!' For when a commission is given in such short words, and there is no express direction what they shall do with the infants of those who become proselytes -- the natural and obvious interpretation is that they must do in that matter as they and the Church in which they lived always used to do.

"As now at this time, if an island or country of heathen be discovered, and a Minister be sent out to them by the Bishops of the Church of England who should say 'Go and convert such a nation and baptize them' -- he would know without asking any question that he must baptize [also] the infants of those who, [after] being converted, offered them to baptism. Because he knows that to be the meaning and the custom of that Church or Bishop by which he is sent."

The famous modern antiquarian Rev. Professor Dr. Joachim Jeremias writes as a confessionalistic and consubstantiationistic Lutheran. Yet (as already noted), he offers the Calvinistic explanation of First Corinthians 7:14. Indeed, he rightly insists regarding prechristian proselyte baptism: "Judaism distinguishes between [baptizable] children who are begotten and born...before conversion to Judaism, and children who were begotten and born...after conversion

to Judaism [without baptism].... We conclude that the 'holiness' of the children [referred to in First Corinthians 7:14] rests not on baptism -- but on their descent from a Christian father or a Christian mother."<sup>65</sup> Compare too Second Timothy 1:6 & 3:14-16.

## **79. Evidence in Paganism of child 'faith' and of 'baptism' by sprinkling**

At this point, we might consider also the evidences for Christian infant baptism by sprinkling -- yielded even by some of the corrupt practices of Pre-Christian heathen religions. They were themselves originally derived from Noah and/or from the Old Testament and/or from Intertestamental Judaism -- before degenerating into perversions thereof.

The Noachic 'baptism' by pouring rain,<sup>66</sup> seems to be dimly echoed both in the later (yet still 'Pre-Exodus') Ancient Egyptian practice of pouring water over bathers. It is also reflected in the yet-later 'baptism' of God's people and their babes-in-arms from rainclouds at the Red Sea, when they all left Egypt -- before later receiving yet other Mosaic 'baptisms' or purificatory sprinklings.<sup>67</sup>

Infant dedication --even to pagan idols -- long continued. It was found especially among the Heathen in the Near East.<sup>68</sup>

Greek Paganism, however, was all Post-Mosaic. Indeed, many of the heathen sprinklings and pseudobaptisms of the Ancient Greeks -- may well have been derived at least in part from post-captivity Jewish synagogues in the various Pre-Christian dispersions or *diasporas*.<sup>69</sup> Such Ancient-Pagan Greek practices included: Homer's sprinklings and pourings; Herodotus's sprinkling-vases; Euripides's spring-water vessels and sprinkling from streams with 'dewy water' and lustral sprinkling-waters and sea-dews; and Plato's lustrations and sprinklings.

Passow's great German *Dictionary of the Greek Language* (from which the first edition of Liddell and Scott's *Greek-English Lexicon* was mainly translated), gives one of the meanings of *baptizō* in Pagan Classical Greek as "'to pour over' (Plato)." Other meanings include: 'pouring' (Aristophon); 'shower upon' (Plato); 'sprinkle' (Menander); 'superfuse' (Athenaeus); 'overload' (Diodorus Siculus); 'inundate' (Heliiodorus); 'overwhelm' (Josephus); 'come upon' (Philo); and 'bestorm' (Plutarch).<sup>70</sup>

Just before the time of Christ, among the Pagan Romans we encounter: Virgil's *hydranos* priest, who "sprinkled them with the light spray for their purification"; Aeneas, who himself "sprinkles his body with fresh water"; and the nymph-goddess Cyrene's triple sprinklings. Indeed, Virgil's *Aeneid*<sup>71</sup> even describes the custom of washing infants -- very soon after their birth.

Virgil's contemporary, Ovid, similarly wrote: "thrice she sprinkled her head"; "bedew yourself with living water"; "I sprinkled myself with the spray of the sea"; and "the bedewing waters." Ovid also wrote: "he himself washed me by sprinkling me with the most pure water"; "sprinkle the village"; "let the water first sprinkle them"; "touch the body with...the sprinkled water"; "sprinkled upon your horns"; and "sprinkled with a stream of wine."<sup>72</sup>

Around 100 A.D., the Pagan Plutarch spoke of affusions of sea-water. Such were thrice sprinkled, by a heathen priest.

Indeed, around 125 -- Apuleius described giving himself "a wash with sea-water for the purpose of purification" under the rites of Isis. Declared Apuleius: "Mithras himself washed me, sprinkling over me the purest water."<sup>73</sup>

## **80. Patristic explanation of Pre- and Post-Christian pagan sprinklings**

The Early Church Fathers give the correct explanation of these Pre-Christian (and sometimes even Post-Christian) pagan 'sprinklings.' The 150 A.D. patristic writer Justin Martyr calls each of these heathen 'mysteries' an "imitation" -- based upon "what was said by Moses."<sup>74</sup>

A little later, there were apostates from Christianity such as various gnostic heretics who stole baptism from the Church and then perverted it. Wrote Irenaeus around A.D. 185: "There are as many schemes of redemption as there are teachers of these 'mystical' opinions.... This class of men has been instigated by Satan to a denial of that baptism which is...the whole faith.... Others again lead them to a place where water is, and 'baptize' them.... Mixing oil and water together, they place this mixture upon the heads of those initiated."<sup>75</sup>

Clearly, then, these rites of apostates (like the Valentinians) evidence the mode of sprinkling as that being practised by the Early Church -- from which the apostates had fallen away. But by admixing oil with water in their own initiation rites, these apostates also anticipated semipelagianizing mediaeval Romanism itself.

The 195 A.D. Clement of Alexandria described a similar teaching. Declared Clement: "Lustrations hold the first place in the 'Mysteries' obtaining among the Greeks -- as also the washings among the Barbarians."<sup>76</sup>

Also the A.D. 200f Tertullian, in his work *On Baptism*, referred<sup>77</sup> to the pagan "washings" of "Isis or Mithras." There devotees to those cults, "by carrying water around and sprinkling it..., expiate...whole cities." Thus, where we find "at the Apollinarian and Eleusinian Games [that] they are 'baptized'" -- explained Tertullian of these pagan washings -- it is actually "the devil imitating the things of God wherever we find him too practising 'baptisms' on his own!"

Indeed, in Tertullian's *Prescriptions Against Heretics*, he again said<sup>78</sup> that "the devil...too 'baptizes' some" -- where "Mithras there sets his mark on the foreheads of his soldiers. Cf. Revelation 7:2-4f; 13:16; 14:1; & 22:4f. "Is it not clear to us," asks Tertullian, "that the devil imitated...the Jewish Law?" The 250 A.D. Cyprian, in turn, even refers to an unbiblical 'Paedocommunion' among the Pagans and/or the Neo-paganizers!<sup>79</sup>

Even as late as A.D. 364, according to the Ancient Church Historian Theodoret,<sup>80</sup> "the insensate emperor" Valentinian approached the pagan temple of 'Fortune.' There "the temple-keepers had taken their stand on each side of the door -- purifying with sprinklers, as they imagined, those who entered."

Indeed, also the 375 A.D. Gregory of Nazianzen insisted<sup>81</sup> that in the pagan 'Mysteries,' the initiatory rites of "sprinklings" had been stolen by demons. They had been filched, he added, from "the legal purifications" of the Ancient Hebrews.

## **81. Jewish and pagan impressions of Early Christian baptisms**

The anonymous author of the Ancient Jewish *Nizzachon* unbiblically denies the transmission to all babies of Adam's original sin. There, he first discusses Judaic proselyte baptism.

That, he suggests, occurred not by submersion. For he insists that in the Old Testament, "it is nowhere commanded to plunge persons or proselytes into the water."

Then, looking at New Testament baptism, he asked Christians:<sup>82</sup> "From what sin or uncleanness does this baptism purify? What sin or uncleanness is there in infant children -- that ye baptize **them**?"

Clearly, this Judaistic *Nizzachon* thus recognized that the Early Christians -- just like the Judaists -- baptized babies. It also recognized that the Early Christians, unlike the Judaists, believed infants inherit original sin.

To this must be added the following statement of Rabbi Isaac, directed against Christians. "They have abrogated circumcision, and substituted baptism in its stead.... They have done likewise with the sabbath -- instead of which they observe the first day of the week."<sup>83</sup>

This must mean that the Early Christians whom Rabbi Isaac here criticizes, were themselves baptizing also infants -- just as the Hebrews too had circumcised infants. It must also mean that the Early Christians were then observing Sunday as the Sabbath -- just as the Hebrews had observed their sabbath (but on Saturday).

Certainly the Pagans often dedicated their own infants to idols -- and sometimes as slaughtered sacrifices, by way of infanticide. Probably this is why they themselves sometimes concluded that the Christians' dedication of their own infants to the Triune God by way of baptism -- involved their 'infanticide' too.

Thus, the 130 A.D. Christian *Epistle to Diognetus* is highly significant. For it assured him that Christians "beget children but...do not destroy their offspring" in the way many Pagans then did theirs.<sup>84</sup>

The 145f A.D. Christian apologist Justin added in his *First Apology to [the pagan Roman Emperor] Antoninus Pius*:<sup>85</sup> "As for us, we have been taught that to expose newly-born children is the part of wicked men.... We see that almost all so exposed -- not only the girls, but also the males -- are brought up [by Pagans] to prostitution....

"We see you rear children only for this shameful use.... You receive the hire of these, and duty and taxes -- from them whom you ought to exterminate from your realm.... There are some who prostitute even their own children and wives, and some are openly mutilated for the purpose

of sodomy -- and they 'dedicate' those to the 'mother of the gods' [viz. to the pagan mother-goddess Cybele]."

Yet we **Christians** fear to expose our children, continued Justin, "lest some of them be not picked up but die -- and we become murderers.... We marry...[so] that we may bring up [our children].... Circumcision began with Abraham...in Christ the Son of God.... We who have approached God through Him, have received not carnal but spiritual circumcision.... And we have received it through baptism. Since we were sinners..., and all mankind may equally obtain it" (including also our own infants).

## **82. The difference between the infant initiation rites of Pagans and Christians**

The Christian Apologist Athenagoras implicitly explained the true nature of the sacraments of adult communion and infant baptism. For he stated in his (177 A.D.) *Plea for the Christians*<sup>86</sup> to the pagan Roman Emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Commodus that if Christians were indeed [to be] guilty of the charges of cannibalism and incest, as their pagan opponents falsely alleged them to be, then -- "destroy us root and branch, [together] with our wives and children!"

However, "having the hope of eternal life, we despise...even the 'pleasures' of the soul. Each of us reckons her his own wife, whom he has married according to the laws laid down...for the purpose of having children.... Such is our character."

But "those [Pagans] who have set up a market for fornication and established infamous resorts...for every kind of vile pleasure..., do not abstain even from males. Males with males commit shocking abominations, outraging all the noblest and comeliest bodies in all sorts of ways -- [and] so dishonouring the fair workmanship of God (for beauty on earth is...by the hand and will of God). These men, I say, revile us for the very things which they are conscious of themselves.... Who of them can accuse us of murder?!"

Indeed, "when we say that those women who use drugs to bring on abortion, commit murder -- and will have to give an account to God for the abortion -- on what principles should we commit murder? For it does not belong to the same person to regard the very foetus in the womb as a created being and therefore an object of God's care -- and, when it has passed into life, to kill it. And [we do] not...expose an infant.... Those who expose them, are chargeable with child-murder!"

Then there is also the Christian apologist Minucius Felix. He implied<sup>87</sup> (around 210 A.D.) that Christian initiation within the established Church is by way of infant baptism -- and not, as the Pagans falsely alleged [obtained among Christians], by way of the slaughter of an infant.

Explains Minucius to the 'blind' heathen 'Caecilius': "The story [among the Pagans] about the initiation of young novices [by us], is as much to be detested as it is well-known. An infant...is [allegedly] slain by the young pupil who has been urged on.... No one [even among the Pagans] can believe this --except one who can [himself] dare to do it! And I see that you [Pagans] at one time [really do] expose your begotten children to wild beasts and to birds; at another, that you crush them....

"There are some [pagan] women who, by drinking medical preparations, extinguish the source of the future of man in their very bowels.... These things assuredly come down from the teaching of your gods! For Saturn did not [just] expose his children, but devoured them.

"With 'reason' [*sic*] were infants sacrificed to him by [pagan] parents" -- through infanticide. But Christians devote their babies as living sacrifices to Jehovah -- by infant baptism!

Even the Roman Emperor Julian 'the Apostate' affirmed that the Christians indeed baptized infants. It is true Julian wrongly alleged that Chrysostom alias "John Bishop of Constantinople denies that there is any sin in infants." Yet Julian rightly added that Chrysostom (in his *Homily on Baptized Persons*) indeed said: "We baptize infants also!"<sup>88</sup>

### **83. The transition from the New Testament to the Early Church Fathers**

After Christ's final bloodshedding on Calvary, the bloody sign of Old Testament household circumcision was replaced by the unbloody sign of New Testament household baptism. Genesis 17:10-27; Exodus 4:24-26; Romans 4:11 to 6:3f; Colossians 2:11-13. Only much later, from about 250 A.D. onward, did Christian baptism begin to degenerate -- through contact with devolved Judaistic proselyte baptism on the one hand and pagan mystery rites *ex opere operato* on the other.

With the closing of the New Testament in the first century A.D., God's infallible revelation to man in the Holy Bible was completed. Thereafter, we have only the fallible testimony of Church History. In general, however, the earlier that latter testimony -- the more accurate and valuable the account concerned.

According to Rev. Professor Dr. B.B. Warfield in his 1897 work *The Development of the Doctrine of Infant Salvation*,<sup>89</sup> "the first Christians had no difficulty in understanding and confessing that Christ had come into a world lost in sin to establish a kingdom of righteousness.... That infants were admitted into this citizenship, they did not question."

Let us then now consider the Post-Biblical and Early-Patristic evidence anent the covenantal status of the children of Christians. We start off with two documents from the first century of the Christian era -- the *Epistle of Clement* and the *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*.

### **84. Clement of Rome: 'messengers' unblameable from their youth onward**

First Clement was written (between 68 and 97 A.D.) by the apostle Paul's friend<sup>90</sup> Clement, the later Church Overseer of Rome. It reminded its Corinthian Christian addressees that Noah in his ministry had preached "regeneration." Indeed, "the Lord saved by him" all that "entered into the ark" -- at the time of the great flood.<sup>91</sup>

Later, Clement added that neither the faithful Job and David nor their families were free from pollution -- from their nativity onward. Declared Clement: "Of Job it is written that he was

just and blameless.... Yet he condemns himself, and says: 'There is none free from pollution! No, not though his life be but of the length of one day!'" Thus: "*oude ei mias hēmeras hēzōē autou!*"

Similarly, Clement also referred to David's Psalm 51:5. He then added: "Let us consider...whereof we were made; who and what kind of persons we came into this world.... He Who made and formed us, brought us into His own world -- having **prepared** for us His **\*benefits\* before we were born.**" Thus: *proetoimasas tas euergesias Autou prin hēmas genēthēnai.*"

Indeed, God safely preserved even the converted prostitute Rahab -- "and the household" of her father. For, Clement explained, "redemption should flow through the blood of the Lord -- to all them that believe."<sup>92</sup>

Now this "redemption" of "all" in the "household" apparently commences at the womb. For, explained Clement,<sup>93</sup> "Scripture says in a certain place, 'The Spirit of the Lord is a candle -- searching the secret parts of the belly.'"<sup>94</sup> Consequently, "let us train up the young men in the fear of God" -- not wrongly trying to bring them into it, as if they were ever outside of it.

"Let your children keep on being partakers of true Christian training..., and keep on walking in it"<sup>95</sup> with a pure mind! For He is a Searcher of the thoughts.... His breath [*cf.* the Holy Spirit] is in us" -- namely within Christians both infant and adult.

Challengingly, Clement later asked: "Let us consider, brethren, whereof we were made.... He Who made and formed us, brought us into His Own world -- having prepared for us His **benefits before** we were **born**."

Thus, many of the Roman and of the Corinthian Christians were also in Clement's day apparently acknowledged to have been rendered holy. That was their status from their conceptions and births onward, and thus even before their infant baptisms.<sup>96</sup>

Indeed, those who delivered Clement of Rome's Epistle and handed it over to the Corinthians -- had been Christians almost lifelong. For they were themselves said by Clement<sup>97</sup> to "have walked among us [Roman Christians] from youth [alias from their earliest days] to old age unblameably."

Many years earlier, Christ had baptized His Church with His Holy Ghost on the New Testament Day of Pentecost. It was then that "the Spirit of grace was poured out" upon both adult Christians and their children -- apparently including even visiting "strangers of Rome."<sup>98</sup>

In fact, it was precisely from Rome that Clement, decades later, sent his *First Epistle* to Corinth. He did so, using Christian messengers he declared had walked unblameably even from their childhood onward.

## **85. The *Didachē*: do not abort, but do baptize!**

Around 100 A.D., the *Didachē* -- alias the *Teaching of the Lord through the Twelve Apostles to the Gentiles* -- catechetically discussed the 'two ways.' Those are the way of life, and the way of death -- as reflected by the keeping of breaking of the Ten Commandments.

Positively, as regards the way of life, the Decalogue requires man to be fruitful and multiply.<sup>99</sup> Negatively, as regards the way of death, the *Didachē* insists that man "shall not murder a child by abortion -- nor kill that which had been begotten." For "murderers of children are destroyers of the handiwork of God."<sup>100</sup>

Now the 'way of life' specifically requires baptism too. Continued the *Didachē*:<sup>101</sup> "Having first said all these things -- you must baptize...**unto** the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **with** living water."<sup>102</sup> This means: at a running spring<sup>103</sup> -- and **not** 'under the water.' "But if you do not have 'living water' -- baptize at other water."<sup>104</sup> At all events: Pour out water thrice upon the head<sup>105</sup> -- **unto** the Name<sup>106</sup> of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit!"

Robert Ayres rightly explains all this, in his book *Christian Baptism: A Treatise on the Mode of Administering the Ordinance by the Apostles and Their Successors in the Early Ages of the Church*. There, Ayres notes<sup>107</sup> that the *Didachē* alias "'The Teaching of the Lord through the Twelve Apostles to the Gentiles'...recognizes the sufficiency of baptism by affusion only.... No other mode is mentioned."

Hence the *Didachē* forbids human abortions, and encourages human reproduction. It also prescribes baptism: unto the Name of the Triune God; with living water; and by way of a triple outpouring upon the head.

## **86. The *Epistle of Barnabas*: be fruitful -- and promote baptism!**

The early-patristic *Epistle of Barnabas*, written perhaps around 102 A.D., endorses the above teaching. For God made Adam to be fruitful and to multiply and to subjugate the earth."<sup>108</sup> Indeed, explained Barnabas,<sup>109</sup> the Triune God has "renewed us [Christians] by the remission of our sins...so that we should possess the souls of children." Just as "the infant is kept alive first by honey, and then by milk -- so we also, being quickened and kept alive by the faith of the promise and by the Word, shall live, ruling over the earth."

Now the red heifer, Barnabas has reminded us, was "a type" of "Jesus" -- and of Christian baptism which points to Him. For the Old Testament Ministers were to take the heifer's ashes and to "sprinkle the people, one by one." In this, they were like those who sprinkled "through the cleansing efficiency of hyssop."

In New Testament times, they who still "sprinkle, are those that have proclaimed to us the remission of sins and purification of heart." That they do, when they "preach the Gospel" -- as the representatives of "the twelve tribes of Israel."<sup>110</sup>



Very obviously, representing tribes clearly includes even their infants. Indeed, as the next three chapters (mentioned below) go on to suggest -- this is also intimately connected to circumcision as well as to baptism.

Thus circumcision too had a deeply spiritual meaning. For God, continued Barnabas,<sup>111</sup> declares that "circumcision was not of the flesh but of the heart." For "Abraham, the first who enjoined circumcision, was looking forward in spirit to Jesus."

Moreover, Barnabas went on,<sup>112</sup> the foreshadowing of "the water" in respect of "baptism" had "reference to the Israelites." Here, the latter word means the Christ-repudiating Judaists.

This is seen in "the Living Fountain" (or "the Spring of Life") Whom they forsook. However, Christians who "trust in the cross, have gone down to[ward] the water" -- toward "the vessel of His Spirit." Then, having gone down "to[ward] the water"<sup>113</sup> -- though still "full of sin and defilement" -- Christians again "come up" away from it, "bearing fruit" in their "heart" and thus manifesting "trust in Jesus."

It should be noted here that God's people go "to" or toward the water -- not 'under' it. It should further be noted that they do not have their sins washed off by the water itself -- but by God and from "the vessel of His Spirit." Indeed, it should in addition be noted that they come away from the water "bearing fruit" in their "heart" -- and not upon their 'cleansed' bodies. Consequently, all baptismal regenerationism is quite excluded.

Barnabas concluded that Christians are very much like the blessed Jacob -- after he was conceived, but before he was born.<sup>114</sup> For the Lord gave Christians the Testament which the Jews centuries after Jacob had gone and broken.<sup>115</sup>

Consequently, God now enjoins Christians too: "You shall not slay the child by procuring abortion! Nor, again, shall you destroy it after it has been born!"

"You shall not withdraw your hand from your son or from your daughter! But from their infancy you shall teach them the fear of the Lord!"<sup>116</sup> For the "murderers of children" alias the "destroyers of the workmanship of God" are on "the way of darkness" -- which must be avoided by "the children of love."<sup>117</sup>

## **87. Ignatius and Pliny: also the children of Christians belong to the Church**

We have seen that apostolic baptism was by pouring and sprinkling -- not by dipping or submersion. Thus Clement, the *Didachē* and Barnabas. In the context of the preceding chapters already dealt with above,<sup>118</sup> this further implies the sprinkling of covenant infants too.

Around 107 A.D., we find Ignatius Church Overseer of Antioch declaring that "Christ...was baptized by John -- in order that all righteousness might be fulfilled by Him." According to Ignatius, it was the task of the Minister of the Word and Sacraments to baptize believing households. Thus, he also sent "greetings to the houses of my brothers with their wives and children."<sup>119</sup>

Ignatius further greeted "the widow of Epitropos, with all the members of her [own] and her children's household."<sup>120</sup> These salutations certainly include the children and grandchildren of believers as members of the congregations.<sup>121</sup> Indeed, Ignatius also urged both young and old: "Let your baptism be to you as armour!"<sup>122</sup>

In about 111 A.D., even the pagan Pliny gave valuable information about Early Christianity. That Roman Governor of Bythnia was discussing how Christians might be punished for their beliefs. Indeed, he wrote<sup>123</sup> to Emperor Trajan that he was not "at all sure whether any distinction should be made between them on the grounds of age -- or if young people (*teneri*) and adults (*robustiores*) should be treated alike."

Here it can quite clearly be seen that not just adults but also their very young children (*teneri*) belonged to the Christian Church in Bythnia around 111 A.D. Indeed, even the classical scholars Stander and Louw -- themselves unsympathetic to apostolic Paedobaptism -- concede that the word "*teneri* in Latin generally refers to young children."<sup>124</sup>

#### **88. Aristides: believers thank God for saving their own and their servants' babies**

Perhaps around 120 A.D., the Christian Apologist Aristides wrote to the Pagan Emperor Hadrian. There, Aristides implied that babies born to believers (*cf.* Genesis 17:7-10f) -- as well as the children of Christian masters' converted servants themselves (*cf.* Genesis 17:12) -- were all baptized. Indeed, Aristides clearly indicated that God is to be thanked exceedingly -- upon the infant deaths of covenant children of believing parents themselves, as well as upon the infant deaths of the children of household servants of Christians. For the latter believed their dying babies then went straight to glory.

Thus Aristides observed<sup>125</sup> that Christian masters, "on account of the love which they have for them, instruct the[ir] manservants and maidservants or the children [thereof] when any of them have such -- in order that they may [all] become Christians. And when they [the servants and their children] have become Christians, they [the masters] call them 'brethren' --without distinction."

Thereafter, the status of the converted servants and their children within the household of their masters -- is identical to the status of the Christian masters and mistresses and their own children. Explained Aristides: "When a child has been born to one of them, they thank God. And if he dies in infancy, they thank Him exceedingly -- because he departed this life without sins."

While Pagans, prone to procuring abortions, often cursed their idols when pregnancies occurred -- anti-abortive Christians thanked God for pregnancies. Indeed, even if their own children died in infancy, Christians still thanked God exceedingly. For they knew those children then died only after being cleansed from their sins (whether inherited or personal or both).

Aristides's phrase "departed this life without sins" is probably describing the pre-baptismal condition of those dying infants. For he also used a similar expression to describe the pre-baptismal condition of penitent adults.<sup>126</sup> Yet even if the expression is here describing the

post-baptismal status of early-dying infants of believers, it still clearly evidences that those infants' sins were forgiven -- before they died in their infancy.

Aristides also made another very significant statement about those early Christians. He declared: "If any righteous person of their number passes away from the world, they rejoice and give thanks to God and follow His body (*viz.* Christ's) -- "moving from one place [earth] to another [heaven]."

Taken all together, the above statements of Aristides mean that the infants even of Christians still inherit Adam's sin and therefore need cleansing with the blood of Jesus. Yet the statements also mean that after an early death, the infants of Christians thankfully go straight to heaven itself.

### **89. Diognetus, Papias & the Codex Bezae: Christians bear guileless children**

Around 130 A.D., the anonymous Christian author<sup>127</sup> of the *Epistle to Diognetus* insisted that "the Christians...bear children." Indeed, he even added that they "do not destroy their offspring" nor "cast away their fetuses"<sup>128</sup> -- as the ancient pagans did, and as sophisticated modern Pagans still do.

The extant fragments of the approximately 134 A.D. Papias, are indeed few in number. Yet one of them does record that the early Christians called those who practised a godly guilelessness -- "children."<sup>129</sup>

Indeed, the *Codex Beza* version of Acts 2:38f -- which version the famous antiquary Rev. Prof. Dr. Joachim Jeremias dates at "before 150" A.D.<sup>130</sup> -- clearly applies baptism even to the children of Christians. For it states: "Repent and be baptized.... For the promise is to us and to our children!"

### **90. The Shepherd of Hermas: the justified bride and her children**

Probably also before 150 A.D., the important Christian writing known as the *Shepherd of Hermas* referred<sup>131</sup> not only to "those who have indeed believed...and wish to be baptized in the Name of the Lord." In addition, it refers also to those that "are as unweaned children" (*brephē* or *infantes*) -- and who "remained like children, all the days of their life, in the same mind.... For infants are honourable before the Lord, and are the first persons with Him."<sup>132</sup>

Thus, "*infantes honorati sunt apud Dominum, et primi habentur.*" So too are all who "are as innocent as children" or infants.<sup>133</sup>

Even those adults who are to be "baptized," need to have their riches "circumcised."<sup>134</sup> Indeed, Hermas even enjoined adult converts: "Be simple and guileless, and you will be like speech-less little in-fants (*nēpia*) who do not know that wickedness which ruins the life of men."<sup>135</sup>

Now the "water" of baptism is God's "seal" of repentance. It is specifically to the "apostles and teachers" that "the seal of preaching" was given. Indeed, they were and are to 'preach baptism' -- and then, thereafter, also to give baptism to their converts.

At that time, the latter "descended with them toward the water -- and again ascended"<sup>136</sup> after the baptism. Yet note that the "apostles and teachers" here descended "with" the converts "toward the water" -- so that neither the baptizers nor those baptized were then under the water!

Note further that those thus being baptized, were to be as "innocent as children" -- viz. not impeccable, yet forgiven. Indeed, "infants are honourable before the Lord, and are the first persons with Him."

Hermas further spoke<sup>137</sup> about the righteous, and apparently also of their (justified) offspring, as being fruitful branches and burgeoning offshoots of a large fruit-tree -- the Christian Church. For the beautiful woman whom Hermas in his vision sees being washed in the river, is in fact the bride of Christ.

In one of his visions, she assured<sup>138</sup> Hermas he would experience the healing of his own sins, and those of his whole household. Indeed, that "household" consisted not only of Hermas and his wife, but also of their children.

## **91. The 'New Testament Apocrypha' on baptism as a seal**

Also from before but especially from after this time, baptism -- like the circumcision it replaced -- was clearly regarded as a "seal."<sup>139</sup> Indeed, this is seen even in many of the (sometimes rather fabulous) 'Christian apocryphal writings.'

Important in this regard are the so-called *Acts of Paul and Thecla*. There, Paul is reputed<sup>140</sup> to have regarded Thecla's baptism as "the seal in Christ."

Again, in the so-called *Acts of Paul*,<sup>141</sup> the term "seal" is used as a synonym for water baptism. There, Artemylla is stated to have been "initiated into the Lord of the sea, at the seaside." As to the mode, it significantly alleges that "Paul laid his hand and the water on Artemylla -- in [or with] the Name of Christ Jesus."

Further, in the so-called *Acts of Peter*,<sup>142</sup> a ship's captain is said to have been baptized in [or with] the sea by Peter. Indeed, that baptismal action later on seems to be called a "seal."

Then there are the so-called *Acts of Xanthippe & Polyxena*. There<sup>143</sup> the seal of "the washing of regeneration" is said to be conferred -- in baptism -- as a mark of cognizance; as a protection against evil; and as an assurance of salvation after death.

Moreover, in the so-called *Rest of the Words of Baruch*,<sup>144</sup> the "sign" of water baptism is said to have been imposed on the vanquished Judaists in Palestine -- after the revolt of Bar-Kochba in the first half of the second century A.D. There, baptism is called a "great seal."

Finally, there is -- in Coptic -- the so-called *Gospel of Thomas*.<sup>145</sup> This is, perhaps, a mixture of authentic oral tradition -- and of purely gnostic compositions. There, Jesus is reputed to have spoken about uncircumcised and/or unbaptized children in the eschatological age yet to come.

In this '*Gospel of Thomas*' our Saviour is reputed to have said: "The man old in days will not hesitate to ask a little child of seven days about the place of life. Then he will live."

Again, when "Jesus saw children who were being suckled," He is alleged to have said to His disciples: "These children who are being suckled, are like those who enter the Kingdom."<sup>146</sup> Thus the apocryphal *Gospel of Thomas*.

## **92. Justin Martyr: fetuses are conscious, and covenant infants trust in Christ**

Perhaps just after 150 A.D., the famous Samaritan Christian Apologist Justin Martyr said much of very great significance regarding the conscious ability also of infants to believe. Indeed, he even implied an actual 'seminal faith' in tiny covenant children.

Justin condemned pagan forecasts purportedly made through trying to manipulate the entrails and even the still-conscious souls of aborted human fetuses. Significantly, Justin did not hesitate to call those unbaptized aborted fetuses: "immaculate."

Justin was writing to the Pagan Emperor Antoninus Pius. In regard to the above-mentioned matter, Justin stated:<sup>147</sup> "Let even necromancy and the divinations you practise by immaculate children and the evoking of departed human souls...persuade you -- that even after death, souls are in a state of sensation!"

As Rev. Professor Dr. A. Cleveland Coxe here observes:<sup>148</sup> "Children prematurely taken from the womb were slaughtered and their entrails inspected [by pagan sorcerers], in the belief that the souls of the victim, being still conscious (as Justin is arguing), would reveal things hidden and future. Instances are abundant."

Justin elsewhere condemned also the exposure of newly-born children, rightly labelling it murder. He indicated Christians "have been taught that to expose newly-born children, is the part of wicked men."<sup>149</sup>

Contrary to pagan public opinion at that time, explained Justin, Christians themselves fear to expose children -- "lest some of them be not picked up, but die; and we become murderers.... We marry..., so that we may bring up children."<sup>150</sup>

### **93. Justin on lifelong Christian disciples (for 'seventy years')**

Indeed, while discussing sexual purity, Justin claimed that "many" male and female Christians (*polloi tines kai pollai*) had been "illuminated through the Name of Christ." Such "had been disciples to Christ from childhood" -- or '*ek paidōn emathēteuthēsan*.'<sup>151</sup>

Those persons had obviously been 'sexually pure' when infants -- and also when but little children. Moreover, Justin added that they had remained sexually pure thereafter -- and were continuing to "remain pure" (*aphoroi diamenousi*) even "at the age of sixty or seventy years."

The above-mentioned passive word *emathēteuthēsan* (from the verb *mathēteuein*), here as elsewhere means "to become a disciple" alias a 'taught' follower of Jesus. This passive word was also used by Justin elsewhere -- to refer to baptism.

Thus he also told the Jew Trypho:<sup>152</sup> "Daily some of you [Jews] are becoming disciples (*mathēteuomenoi*) in the Name of Christ..., illuminated through the Name of this Christ." Cf. Matthew 18:6 & 28:19 with Acts 2:38f.

Here, Justin's word "illuminated" -- of course -- was his regular 'persecution-evading' cryptogram for "baptized." As the Paedobaptist Scholar Rev. Prof. Dr. A.C. Barnard here remarks in his book *I Have Been Baptized*: "This refers to the time when they received their status of discipleship -- *i.e.* at [and indeed right before] their baptism. Thus, they [*viz.* those Christian infants] must have been baptized *circa* 80-90 A.D."<sup>153</sup>

So, according to Barnard's understanding of the above (150 A.D.) words of Justin Martyr, those lifelong seventy-year-old disciples had been baptized when they were infants. That, believes Barnard, would have been around A.D. 80f -- hence, still during the apostolic era.

Barnard here assumes a late date for the inscripturation of the New Testament. However, even if those canonical writings had in fact totally been reduced to writing a decade or two earlier (as we ourselves think likely) -- Justin's testimony would still suggest that Paedobaptism was indeed an apostolic practice. For at least some of the apostles were still alive around 80f A.D. Moreover, in the paraphrase of Colossians 2:1-11f attributed to the Christian Justin, we read: "We are circumcised, by baptism."

Also the great Anglican Sacramentologist Rev. Dr. William Wall has pointed out something highly significant here. Declares Wall:<sup>154</sup> "Justin's word *emathēteuthēsan* -- 'were discipled' or 'made disciples' -- is the very same word that had been used by St. Matthew in expressing our Saviour's command *mathēteusate*" in His Great Commission.

That is Christ's injunction to Ministers of the Word and Sacraments to "'disciple' all the nations" -- and to make them into His followers. But what nation is devoid of children?

Continues Wall: "Justin wrote but ninety years after St. Matthew [28:19], who wrote about fifteen years after Christ's ascension.... They that were seventy years old at this time [when Justin wrote], must have been disciples to Christ in their childhood...in the midst of the apostles' times -- and within twenty years after St. Matthew's writing."

So, when Justin was writing around 150 A.D., some of his acquaintances had been Christ's disciples already since their childhood -- and for "sixty or seventy years." This means they had already become Christian disciples or 'taught ones' around 80 A.D., and thus during the apostolic age itself. They must therefore have been 'taught' and baptized -- as those then presumed to be tiny believers even before that time of their infant baptisms.<sup>155</sup>

Those then-tiny believers -- as the covenant children of Christian parents -- therefore seem to have been regarded as themselves trusting in Christ even before their own infant baptisms. Had they died before being baptized in infancy, those tiny believers would still have gone to heaven -- as those already justified before their deaths by grace and through a God-given personal faith in Christ.

For, as Justin rightly asked the Jew Trypho:<sup>156</sup> "Will the mind of man see God at any time -- if it is uninstructed by the Holy Spirit?" No! For compare John 3:3-8 & 3:16 & 3:36. See too Hebrews 11:6 -- "without faith it is impossible to please God."

#### **94. Justin Martyr on baptizing (also infants) by the mode of sprinkling**

Later in that same *Dialogue*, Justin seemed to imply that baptism should occur by way of the mode of sprinkling. The purifying works of "this Man" Jesus Christ the Saviour, explained Justin,<sup>157</sup> "was symbolized...by those events" of sacred history recorded in Old Testament times -- such as when Moses "divided the Sea" for the God-professing Israelites and their tiny babies. Psalm 77:17-20 & 78:13-16 *cf.* First Corinthians 10:1-4.

Moses then, explained Justin, "saw the water gush out of the rock.... And Jacob, having poured oil on a stone..., is testified to -- that he had anointed a pillar to God.... The stone symbolically proclaimed Christ ['the Anointed One'].... 'Therefore God...has appointed You with the oil of gladness above Your fellows' [Psalm 45:7]....

"All kings and anointed persons, obtained from Him their share -- in the names of kings and 'anointed'.... The people found...twelve springs.... Even as our Christ, by being crucified on the tree and by purifying with the water, has redeemed us."

This is also linked to the baptism which Christ received --in our stead. For in terms of the prediction, explained Justin, "the Spirit of God shall rest upon Him [*cf.* Isaiah 11:1].... Jesus had gone to the river Jordan, where John was baptizing.... The Holy Ghost alighted upon Him" -- namely upon Jesus.

"He did not go to the river because **He** stood in need of baptism or of the descent of the Holy Spirit like a dove..., but because of the human race which from Adam had fallen.... This furnished men with a proof that He is the Christ ['the Anointed One'].... John remained by the Jordan, and preached the baptism of repentance.... Then the Holy Ghost and for man's sake...alighted upon Him."

## **95. Justin's comprehensive doctrine of faith and birth and baptism**

It is true that those who grow up outside the Church in Paganism -- as Justin himself had done -- first need to be catechized and to repent and to profess Jesus as their Saviour, before being baptized. This is set out at great length (over four chapters) in Justin's *First Apology*.<sup>158</sup>

A detailed look at this, will prove to be most profitable. For, although principally concerned with adult baptism -- this extended passage by no means precludes but far rather presupposes also infant baptism. Indeed, it further presupposes the baptizee's faith in Christ before his baptism. Thus it assumes the prior existence also of an infant baptizee's faith -- before he too is baptized.

In the passage, baptismal reference is made not only to John 3:3-8 (where Christ was speaking to the adult Nicodemus even about birth and rebirth). There are also implications anent the parallel 'infant blessing' passages. See Isaiah 44:1-5 & 52:15 to 53:10, and Matthew 18:3-6 & Mark 10:15 & Luke 18:17.

For one encounters instruction not just of the parent but (implicitly) also of the infant involved -- before the baptizing of the covenant child. Genesis 17:1-21; 18:18-19; 21:1-4; Psalms 22:4-10; 139:5-16; Luke 1:6,15,31,41,44; Acts 2:38f; Romans 4:11f; First Corinthians 7:14; Colossians 2:11f; Hebrews 5:12 to 6:2-7. Indeed, the influence of Justin can further be seen regarding both adult baptism and infant baptism -- also upon the later (and clearly-paedobaptistic) so-called *Apostolic Constitutions*.<sup>159</sup>

Stated Justin:<sup>160</sup> "As many as are persuaded and believe that what we teach and say is true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly, are instructed.... Then they are brought by us to where there is water.... In the Name of God the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit -- they then receive the washing with water.... Christ also said, 'Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven'.... It is impossible for those who have once been born, to [re-]enter into their mothers' wombs [John 3:3-8]."

Certainly the above seems to presuppose that the baptismal candidates "are persuaded and believe" -- already before their baptisms. For only after they "are persuaded and believe" -- are they then "brought by us to where there is water" *etc.* Those baptisms of theirs, thus presuppose their prior belief. Even babies to be baptized, are presupposed to "believe" already -- albeit, of course, only in a childish way -- before their infant baptism. For, explained Justin, "it is impossible for those who have once been born, to [re-]enter into their mothers' wombs."

## **96. Faith before (infant) baptism in the thought of Justin Martyr**

Justin continued: "How those who have sinned and keep on repenting, shall escape their sins -- is declared by Isaiah the prophet.... He speaks thus: 'Wash you, make you clean...; though your sins be scarlet, I will make them white like wool!'" Isaiah 1:16, compare Leviticus 14:4-7 & Psalm 51:5.



Once again, the candidate is presupposed to "repent" before he or she is baptized (cf. Isaiah's "wash you"). Indeed, also the paedobaptistic implications of that prophet's predictions -- are obvious from Isaiah 32:15f & 44:1-5 and 52:15 to 53:10.

Continued Justin: "At our birth, we were born without our own knowledge or choice -- by our parents coming together.... There is pronounced over him who...has been born again and has repented of his sins, the Name of God the Father and Lord of the universe. They who lead to the laver the person that is to be washed, call him by this Name alone.... This washing is called 'illumination' -- because they who learn these things, have been illuminated in their understandings.... In the Name of Jesus Christ...and in the Name of the Holy Ghost..., he who is illuminated, is washed."

Here we should especially note Justin's reference to "our birth" and "the laver." We should also note that the baptismal 'washing' takes place only after the illumination. This repudiates illumination through baptism -- alias baptismal regenerationism. *Mutatis mutandis*, this further seems to presuppose also an infant's illumination -- before that infant's baptism.

Justin then immediately continued:<sup>161</sup> "Even the demons, having heard this washing published by the prophet [Isaiah], instigated those who enter their [pagan] temples...to sprinkle themselves.... You can understand how the demons, in imitation of what had been said by Moses, asserted that Proserpine was the daughter of Jupiter and instigated the people to set up an image of her...at the spring-heads....

"But we" Christians, concluded Justin,<sup>162</sup> "after we have thus washed him who has been convinced and has assented to our teaching, bring him to the place where those who are called brethren are assembled, in order that we may offer hearty prayers in common -- for ourselves, and for the illuminated person.... so that we may...be found good citizens and keepers of the Commandments."

In two *Fragments* of other works, Justin further stated that "the soul can with difficulty be recalled to those good things from which it has fallen.... If at any time you show a disposition to blame yourself -- then..., through the medicine of repentance, I should cherish good hopes regarding you. But when you altogether despise fear and reject with scorn the very faith of Christ -- it were better for you that you had never been born from the womb!"<sup>163</sup> For "concerning the cleansing of the leper," one should see a setting forth of the "passion of Christ on the tree, in the salvation of those who are sprinkled with the Spirit and the water and the blood."<sup>164</sup>

## **97. Infant circumcision implies infant baptism in Justin's *Dialogue***

Significantly, in referring to cleansing, Justin reminded the Judaist Trypho of his need "to be 'baptized' -- if you touch anything prohibited by Moses."<sup>165</sup> Yet Justin's various references there, to baptism as "the water of life" *etc.*,<sup>166</sup> should not be taken in a mechanical sense.

Justin was not here advocating baptismal regenerationism. For he went on to say:<sup>167</sup> "What need have I of circumcision -- I who have been witnessed to by God? I who have been baptized with the Holy Ghost -- what need have I of that other baptism," namely that with water? "Do not

be offended at or reproach us with the bodily uncircumcision with which God has created us!"

The Samaritan Christian Justin had apparently never received the circumcision of the flesh, but only that of the heart. So he told the Judaist Trypho: "Wash therefore, and now -- be clean! Put away iniquity from your souls -- as God bids you be washed in this laver! Be circumcised with the true circumcision!"

Explained Justin to Trypho: "Even you who are 'the circumcised according to the flesh' have need of our 'circumcision'" -- the circumcision of the heart. And "we, having the latter, do not need the former.... Nor do we receive that useless baptism of cisterns [compare Jeremiah 2:13]. For it has nothing to do with this 'baptism of life.'"<sup>168</sup>

### **98. Justin's *Dialogue* on repentance before baptism**

Significantly, Justin distinguishes baptism from prior repentance -- and also distinguishes the baptism of the soul from the water baptism (predicted by Isaiah in 52:15). Explains Justin:<sup>169</sup> "This laver of repentance...has been ordained on account of the transgression of God's people.... As Isaiah [52:10 to 54:6] exclaims, we have believed and testify that this very baptism which he announced -- is alone able to purify those who repented. And this is 'the water of life' [compare John 4:10-14]....

"The cisterns which you [Jews] have dug for yourselves, are broken and profitless to you. For what is the use of that baptism which cleanses the flesh and body alone? Baptize the soul from wrath and from covetousness," insisted Justin, "then, lo -- the body is pure.... And circumcise the hardness of your hearts!"

Even "when Abraham himself was in uncircumcision, he was justified" already.<sup>170</sup> For "he received circumcision for a sign..., so that it was justly recorded concerning the people that the soul which shall not be circumcised on the eighth day shall be cut off from his family."<sup>171</sup> But since Calvary, "the blood of that circumcision is obsolete....

"[For] Jesus Christ 'circumcises' all who will...with 'knives'...[cf. the sharp two-edged sword of His Written Word] -- so that they may be a righteous nation, a people keeping faith." Compare Joshua 5:2f & Isa. 26:2f with Ephesians 6:17 & Hebrews 4:12. "Come, all nations!" Isaiah 65:1-3 compare Matthew 28:19. "Behold Me..., nations which were not called by My Name!"<sup>172</sup>

Thus, "Christ was proclaimed by the prophets." For even in Joshua five, "the 'knives of stone'...mean His words whereby so many who were in error have been circumcised from uncircumcision." This has occurred through "the circumcision of the heart, with which God by Jesus commanded those from that time to be circumcised." Indeed, Joshua alias the Old Testament's "Jesus would circumcise...those who entered into the holy land."<sup>173</sup>

Justin was emphatic: "I am an uncircumcised man... But though a man be a Scythian or a Persian -- if he has a knowledge of God and of His Christ and keeps the everlasting righteous decrees, he is circumcised with 'the good and useful circumcision; and is a friend of God.'"<sup>174</sup>

Continued Justin: "Circumcision began with Abraham.... Christ the Son of God...was proclaimed as [being] about to come to all the world. We who have approached God through Him, have received not carnal but spiritual circumcision -- which Enoch and those like him observed. And we have received it through baptism.... We were sinners; we received baptism, by God's mercy; and all men may equally obtain it."<sup>175</sup>

Here, "all men" (alias every human being) would include even those who are still tiny. For "Enoch and those like him" --Enoch whose very name seems to mean 'catechized' -- appears to have walked with God even since his infancy onward.<sup>176</sup> Indeed, just like the uncircumcised Enoch -- "Abraham too was declared by God to be righteous...[quite] before he was circumcised."<sup>177</sup>

## **99. Polycarp of Smyrna's womb-to-tomb faithful covenant theology**

Polycarp, Church Overseer of Smyrna -- perhaps the Minister or 'Angel' Messenger mentioned in Revelation 2:8 -- was, like his friend Ignatius, Church Overseer of Antioch, a disciple of the Apostle John.<sup>178</sup> Indeed, Polycarp was probably baptized by John in earliest infancy and probably around 69f A.D. Thus Barnard, Wand, and the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*.<sup>179</sup>

Some time before his death, Polycarp had urged the Philippian Christians "to train up their children in the knowledge and fear of God."<sup>180</sup> Indeed, at his death -- around 155 A.D., according to the scholar Waddington -- the dying Church Overseer of Smyrna said of Jesus: "Eighty and six years do I keep on serving Him!"<sup>181</sup>

Both the Philippians and Polycarp well knew that Paul had been "circumcised the eighth day" -- and that after baptism, all Christians were to be made conformable lifelong to the fellowship of Christ's death and resurrection.<sup>182</sup> There is thus every indication that the Apostle John discipled Polycarp's parents, and baptized also Polycarp as a covenant infant (around 69 A.D.).<sup>183</sup> Polycarp's parents would then have raised the infant Polycarp and their other "children in the knowledge and fear of God."<sup>184</sup>

This would then well explain why Polycarp himself later urged the Philippian Christians to keep on doing exactly the same.<sup>185</sup> Indeed, the dying Polycarp would then have been reflecting back on all of this, when he declared about Christ around 155 A.D.: "Eighty and six years do I keep on serving Him (*douleuō Autō*)"<sup>186</sup> -- that is, from infancy onward.

Rev. Professor Dr. Joachim Jeremias (in his own famous book *The Origins of Infant Baptism*) writes about Polycarp. Explains Jeremias:<sup>187</sup> "His parents were already Christians -- or at least were converted quite soon after his birth.... The words [of Polycarp] 'service of Christ for eighty-six years' support a baptism soon after his birth."

#### **100. Other mid-century martyrs who had constantly believed ever since babyhood**

Not only the adultly-martyred Polycarp had been a believer for practically his entire earthly life. The same applies also to many other Early Christians. Here, we refer particularly to those martyred just a little later -- under the (161 to 180 A.D.) reign of that famous Stoic and Pagan Roman Emperor, Marcus Aurelius.

Such is the evidence present in the *Martyrdom of Justin*, around 165 A.D. When his companions were being put to death together with the adultly-converted Ex-Samaritan and Apologist Justin Martyr -- many of them claimed to have been Christians from childhood onward.

Thus, Hierax said: "I always have been and always will be a Christian!" Paeon said: "I too am a Christian.... From our parents, we received this good confession." Indeed, Euelpistis added: "From my parents, also I learned to be a Christian!"<sup>188</sup>

So too the martyr Papyrus of Thyatira stated during his trial:<sup>189</sup> "I have served God from my youth up." Compare Revelation 2:18,23f & 12:17. "I have never sacrificed to idols. I am a Christian!"

The martyr Maximus added: "I do not offer sacrifice" to idols. The only exception is "the one God, to Whom...I have offered sacrifice from early youth."<sup>190</sup>

With that we may compare too the words of Irenaeus the Church Overseer of Sirmium. He declared: "I have a God Whom I have learnt to serve, starting from my earliest youth."<sup>191</sup>

Finally, consider the case of Sabas. Of him we read in an early writing that "since he was a speech-less in-fant (*nēpiou*), he had never been a follower of anyone else than of the religion [that reveres] our Saviour and Lord -- Jesus Christ."<sup>192</sup>

#### **101. The Proto-Anabapticism of the apostate Marcionites**

Just before 140 A.D., the wealthy shipowner Marcion of Pontus (in Northwest Asia Minor near where the Montanists would soon take root) came into the 'orthodox' Church in Rome. In that city, after coming under the influence of the Jew-hating Syrian Gnostic (and later Docetist) Cerdo, Marcion soon developed a hatred of the Old Testament. He himself then syncretized Cerdo's false teachings with only parts of the New Testament -- to the exclusion of the rest of Holy Scripture.

Consequently, Marcion was excommunicated for heresy by and from the 'orthodox' Christian Church around 144. He then started his own rival religious movement -- in many parts of the Pagan Roman Empire. In many respects, 'Marcionism' foreshadowed not only Montanism and the later Anabaptists -- but even the subsequent Baptists, and modern Dispensationalism.

According to Rev. Professor W. Ward Gasque:<sup>193</sup> "Marcion stressed the radical nature of 'Christianity' *vis-a-vis* 'Judaism' (*sic*). In Marcion's theology, there existed a total discontinuity between the Old Testament and the New; between Israel and the Church; and even between the 'god' of the Old Testament and the Father of Jesus....

"Paul was Marcion's hero, and the one from whom (he thought) he derived his doctrine. His canons of sacred writings consisted of ten Pauline Epistles (minus the Pastorals and Hebrews) and the Third Gospel [alias Luke], both appropriately 'edited' to suit his teaching....

"His theology consisted of a series of *Antitheses* (the title of his major work) -- primarily between 'law' (the principle of the 'demiurge' and of the 'Jews') and 'Gospel' (the principle of the God of 'love' and of redemption in 'Jesus'); and between 'flesh' (that which marks the material order and is evil) and 'spirit' (the characteristic of the eternal realm). The 'law' stresses rewards and punishments, and justification by works; the 'Gospel' features faith, freedom, and grace."

## **102. The Early Church condemned Marcion and his baptismal errors**

Let us now hear the heretic Marcion's orthodox contemporary, the (*circa* 150 A.D.) Justin Martyr of Samaria. Declared Justin:<sup>194</sup> "There is Marcion, a man of Pontus, who is even at this day alive -- and teaching his disciples to believe in some other god greater than the Creator! And he, by the aid of the devils, has caused many of every nation to speak blasphemies and to deny that God is the Maker of this universe....

"Marcion of Pontus...is even now teaching men to deny that God is the Maker of all things in heaven and on earth, and that Christ predicted by the prophets is His Son." For Marcion "preaches another god besides the Creator of all -- and likewise, another son."

Now let us hear Irenaeus, one generation later. Said he:<sup>195</sup> "Simon the Samaritan was that magician of whom Luke...says, 'But there was a certain man, Simon by name, who beforetime used magical arts in that city and led astray the people of Samaria.... He had driven them mad by his sorceries' [*cf.* Acts 8:9-11*f*]. This Simon...feigned faith, supposing that the apostles themselves performed their cures by the art of magic -- and not by the power of God....

"He, then -- not putting faith in God a whit the more -- set himself eagerly to contend against the apostles...and applied himself with still greater zeal to the study of the whole magic art.... This man, then, was glorified by many -- as if he were a god.... He taught that it was himself who appeared among the Jews as the Son, but descended in Samaria as the Father, while he came to other nations in the character of the Holy Spirit....

"Now from this Simon of Samaria all sorts of heresies derive their origin.... Cerdo was one who took his system from the followers of Simon, and came to live at Rome.... He taught that the 'god' proclaimed by the law and the prophets was not the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.... Marcion of Pontus succeeded him, and developed his doctrine. In so doing, he advanced the most daring blasphemy against Him Who is proclaimed as God by the law and the prophets, declaring Him to be the author of evils....

"Vain too is Marcion and his followers, when [he/]they exclude[s] Abraham from the inheritance.... [For] 'he believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness' [Romans 4:3-11f].... 'They shall come from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south, and shall recline with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven' [Matthew 8:11]."

The Marcionites, explained the later Epiphanius in his famous book *Heresies*,<sup>196</sup> taught that "it is lawful to give three baptisms.... So, if anyone fall into sin after his first baptism, he may have a second; and a third, if he fall a second time."

Thus, Marcionitic Proto-Anabaptism! Indeed, the line of the heretical Rebaptists seems to run from Acts 8 and 19 through Marcion to the Montanists and the Donatists to the Petrobusians and the Anabaptists -- and then on to the Baptists, the Campbellites, the 'Latter-day Saints' (alias the Mormons), the Seventh-day Adventists, and the Jehovah witnesses *etc.* However, *per contra*: Romans 6:1-5; First Corinthians 12:13; Ephesians 4:4-6; Colossians 2:11-13; and Hebrews 6:1-6.

No wonder, then, that also Clement of Alexandria<sup>197</sup> condemned the Marcionites as heretics. Indeed, he attributed some of their errors even to the Pagan Plato (and other ancients).

Finally, the great Tertullian utterly rejected their pseudo-baptisms. For he regarded the Marcionites' god as a "kidnapper" of the baptismal water which even they admitted belongs to the matter-creating 'Old Testament God' Whom they hated. Thus, the convert to Marcion, held Tertullian, is "'baptized' to his god -- in water which belong to Another!"<sup>198</sup>

### **103. The Neo-Marcionism but continuing Proto-Anabapticism of the Montanists**

Prior to his own baptism, Montanus had himself been a paganistic priest practising the ecstatic pseudoglossolic rites of the false religion devoted to the earth-goddess Cybele. After his baptism, he syncretized Cybele's religion with Christianity.

The heresy of Montanism then took root especially in the Phrygian area of central northwestern Asia Minor -- from the middle of the second century A.D. onward. It very soon clashed with the Church Universal.

For the Early Montanists were anabapticizing and pseudopentecostalist schismatics. First inwardly and then outwardly, they separated themselves from the Early Church Universal (which they viewed as 'too worldly').

Perhaps initially somewhat influenced by the nearby Anti-Oldtestamentistic and Pseudo-Newtestamentistic apostasy of the 'rebaptistic' Marcionites at Pontus in coastal northwestern Asia Minor, it seems many of these Montanists themselves ceased practising infant baptism. After their secession from the Church Universal, they apparently left their own subsequently-born infants unbaptized -- while themselves purporting to baptize adults only.

In addition, the Montanists 'rebaptized' at least certain adults. Such were they who became Montanists after having already been baptized previously -- whether in infancy or thereafter -- either by the Early Church Universal, or by some other Christian group.

Together with the rise of such Montanistic rebaptizings (*sic*), other arcane practices too [like Proto-Pentecostalistic pseudo-glossolaly] rapidly proliferated among the Montanists -- until many had slidden into non-trinitarian Hypermontanism. Thus, Philaster stated<sup>199</sup> that the Montanists were in the habit of baptizing even the dead themselves -- necrobaptism. This echoed the errors of the semi-pagan heretics mentioned in First Corinthians 15:29 -- and presaged the later submersionistic and polytheistic Mormons.

Increasingly, these Montanistic sectarians seem to have denied the validity of baptisms performed in the mainline Early Church Universal. Accordingly, they more and more 'rebaptized' such 'Ex-Catholics' converted to Montanism.

Finally, many of the latter later devolved into non-trinitarian pseudo-glossolalists -- much akin to their 'Jesus-only Pentecostalist' stepchildren today. For the Hypermontanistic 'Pepuzites' more and more blended the Holy Spirit with the incoherent ecstatic babblings of Montanus and his followers. This raised the serious question, more and more, as to whether their water baptisms could even be considered as valid.

#### **104. Athenagoras on the resurrection of aborted human fetuses**

Athenagoras, the great Christian writer of Athens, in his approximately 175 A.D. *Apology*, refuted the absurdly untrue accusations of murderous Pagans. For many were alleging, *inter alia*, that the early Christians were themselves murderers.

Retorted Athenagoras:<sup>200</sup> "Who of them can accuse us of 'murder' -- or 'cannibalism' [a reference to the 'eating' of Christ's flesh at the Lord's supper]?" However, seeing the Pagans themselves were indeed murdering by way of abortion -- and falsely, accusing also the Christians of murder -- "on what principle should we [Christians then] be committing 'murder'?"

Now "we [Christians] say that those [of their paganistic] women who use drugs to bring on an abortion, commit murder." Indeed, Christians further maintained that those paganistic men and women would have to give an account to God for those murderous abortions.

For those Pagans themselves did "not regard the very foetus in the womb as a created being" and therefore as an object of God's loving care -- which that human fetus indeed is. To the contrary, those aborting Pagans disregard the human fetus -- "and...then kill it!"

A true Christian, however, would neither murderously abort nor "expose an infant." Indeed, "those who expose" infants to the elements and abandon them, "are chargeable with child-murder." Nor would a true Christian, when a child "had been reared," ever "destroy it."

For on judgment day, warned Athenagoras, even aborted "children [will]...rise again"<sup>201</sup> -- and accuse their child-abusing paganistic parents. For "all are to rise again -- those who have died in infancy, as well as others." This shows that the resurrection is "in consequence of the purpose of God in forming man -- and the nature of the beings so formed."

### **105. Theodotus: sentient human fetuses "share a better fate"**

The Church Father Theodotus was an anti-gnostic theologian of the Early Alexandrian School. Around 180 A.D., he wrote<sup>202</sup> that "regeneration is by water and spirit" -- and that "baptism...is the sign of regeneration." However, nowhere did Theodotus suggest that baptism itself effects regeneration.

Indeed, it is clear Theodotus believed that the (intra-uterine?) water and spirit of regeneration operates before baptism. For he apparently assumed the salvation of even unbaptized human fetuses.

Thus Theodotus declared<sup>203</sup> that after their deaths, "aborted infants share a better fate.... An ancient said [quite rightly] that an embryo is alive.... The soul [of the embryo] enters into the womb after the latter has been cleansed and prepared for conception." Indeed, the new soul is "introduced" into the mother's womb "by one of the angels who preside over generation and who, foreknowing the time of conception, moves the woman to [sexual] intercourse....

"On the seed being deposited, the 'spirit' which is in the 'seed' is so to speak 'appropriated' [by the woman's egg-cell], and is thus assumed into conjunction -- in the process of formation [of the embryo].... When the angels give glad tidings to the barren, they introduce souls [right] at conception.... In the Gospel [Luke 1:43], 'the baby leaped up' as a living being" -- when John the Baptist three months before his own birth recognized the Saviour just conceived within His Own mother's womb.

### **106. Irenaeus of Lyons on covenant children from conception onward**

Around 185 A.D., we encounter Polycarp's disciple Irenaeus -- the later Church Overseer of Lyons. Irenaeus was probably born to Christian parents near Smyrna, and thus baptized in infancy. When very young, he had often listened to the preaching of Polycarp the disciple of the apostle John himself. Cf. First John 2:12-14 & 3:7-9 with Revelation 1:1f & 2:8f.

The great Anglican baptismal scholar Rev. Dr. Wall here makes an important observation. "In an age so nigh the apostles, and in a place where one of them had so lately lived -- the Christians could not be ignorant [about] what had been done in their time, in a matter so public and notorious as is the baptizing...of infants."

Now Irenaeus affirmed<sup>204</sup> not the pre-conceptual but certainly the pre-natal existence of the human soul. For our Saviour too had assumed our human nature at His conception. Indeed, He kept it throughout His subsequent human life (and for evermore) -- in order to regenerate His children, regardless of their various different ages.

Jesus, said Irenaeus,<sup>205</sup> was "thirty years old when He came to be baptized, then possessing the full age of a teacher.... Being a teacher, He therefore possessed the age of a teacher. He did not despise or evade any condition of humanity.... But He sanctified every age [of humanity] by that period corresponding to it which belonged to Himself.



"For He came to save all...who are 'born again' to God -- infants and children and boys and youths.... He therefore passed through every age, becoming an infant for infants, thus sanctifying infants; a child for children, thus sanctifying those who are of this age; being at the same time made to them an example of piety, righteousness and submission; a youth for youths, becoming an example to youths, and thus sanctifying them for the Lord."

Irenaeus also stated<sup>206</sup> "that the Spirit of God...descended upon Him [Jesus].... Again, giving to the disciples the power of regeneration unto God, He said to them: 'Go and teach all nations, baptizing them'....

"For God promised that in the last times He would pour Him [the Spirit] upon His servants and handmaids, so that they might prophesy. Therefore He did also descend upon the Son of God made the Son of men -- becoming accustomed, in fellowship with Him, to dwell in the human race."

#### **107. Irenaeus on the baptismal sprinklings of saved infants**

Irenaeus continued: "This Spirit...as Luke says, descended at the Day of Pentecost upon the disciples, after the Lord's ascension -- having power to admit all nations to the entrance of life and to the opening of the New Covenant.... "Dry earth does not bring forth, unless it receives moisture. In like manner we also, being originally a dry tree, could never have brought forth fruit unto life -- without the voluntary rain from above."<sup>207</sup> For our bodies have received unity among themselves, by means of that laver."

"Gideon, that Israelite whom God chose so that he might save the people of Israel from the power of foreigners, foreseeing this gracious gift..., prophesied that there would be dryness upon the fleece of the wool [a type of the people] -- on which alone at first there had been no dew.<sup>208</sup> This indicated that they should no longer have the Holy Spirit from God.

"As Isaiah [5:6] says, 'I will also command the clouds, that they rain no rain upon it; but that the dew, which is the Spirit of God Who descended upon the Lord, would be diffused throughout all the earth [Isaiah 11:2].... This Spirit again He did confer upon the Church.... The Spirit therefore descended under the predestined dispensation. And the Son of God (the Only-begotten Who is also the Word of the Father) coming in the fullness of time -- having become incarnate in man for the sake of man -- fulfilled all the conditions of human nature."<sup>209</sup>

Irenaeus accordingly believed that also infants could be born again. For he believed the Son had revealed -- and still does and shall keep on revealing the Father even to "babes" -- to "whom He wills; and when He wills"; and "to all who believe in Him."<sup>210</sup>

Moreover, Irenaeus apparently also believed<sup>211</sup> that infants deemed to have been regenerated -- should also be baptized, soon after their birth. "The Word of God forms us in the womb. For the Lord said to Jeremiah [1:5], 'before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; and before you went forth from the belly, I sanctified you'" [**past** tense].

Therefore," concluded Irenaeus, "we are by the Word formed in the womb.... Man, with respect to that formation which was after Adam, having fallen into transgression -- needs the laver of regeneration."

Similarly, added Irenaeus,<sup>212</sup> "Naaman of old -- when suffering leprosy -- was purified upon his being baptized." Not that it was this 'baptism' itself which cleansed Naaman. For he had clearly repented even before going to the waters of the Jordan.

Yet Naaman was "an indication to us. For as we are lepers in sin -- we are made clean by means of the sacred water and the invocation of the Lord..., being spiritually regenerated as new-born babes. Even as the Lord has declared: 'Except a man be born again through water and Spirit, he shall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven.'"

### **108. Polycrates the Church Overseer of Ephesus had "always" walked with God**

About 191 A.D., a message<sup>213</sup> was sent to Rome by Polycrates -- Church Overseer of Ephesus. It is practically certain that the Ephesian Polycrates had been a covenant child from his conception onward -- generated from and born of and raised by Christian parents. Ephesians 4:4f; 4:30; 5:25f; 6:1-4. Indeed, he mentioned that also seven of his close relatives became Church Overseers -- just as he himself had done.

Moreover, continued Polycrates<sup>214</sup> "I now, my brethren, have lived in the Lord sixty-five years.... I have not become grey-headed in vain.... I have always[!] walked in Christ Jesus."

Hence it seems practically certain that Polycrates -- and each of his seven episcopal relatives too?! -- was baptized in infancy, as a child of the covenant, around 125 A.D. See too the similar case of Polycarp, Church Overseer of Smyrna,<sup>215</sup> who was born as a believer alias a 'Christ-serving' baby around 69 A.D.

The great antiquary Rev. Professor Dr. Joachim Jeremias makes a very telling remark about Polycrates. The latter himself, observes Jeremias,<sup>216</sup> "refers to his age -- because of his concern for his long and unimpeachable Christian standing. This passage, taking us back into the year 125/6 [A.D.] as the year of Polycrates' birth, also favours the conjecture that [his] baptism took place soon after birth."

### **109. Clement of Alexandria: pagan sprinklings anticipated Christian baptism**

Around 195 A.D., the celebrated Catechist Clement of Alexandria claimed that paganistic washing or "baptism"...was handed down to the [heathen] poets from Moses" -- and from the Mosaic sprinklings. See: Exodus 24:6f; Leviticus 14:4-7; Numbers 19:4f; Hebrews 9:10-21. "The Jews," explained Clement, "wash frequently -- even after being in bed.... So the Pagans copied the Jews.... Telemachus...washed his hand in the hoary sea."<sup>217</sup>

Similarly, the heathen "Branchus, the seer, when purifying the Milesians from plague," by "sprinkling the multitude with branches of laurel, led off the hymn" *etc.*<sup>218</sup> Consequently, Clement

urged the Pagans to turn from their degenerate washings toward Christian baptism -- as the only true continuation of the Old Testament **sprinklings** the heathen had corrupted.

Clement further urged the Pagans:<sup>219</sup> "Behold, like Elijah, the rain of salvation.... Swine, it is said, like mud better than pure water.... Receive, then, the water of the Word; wash, you polluted ones; purify yourselves from [heathen] custom, by sprinkling yourselves with the true drops!"

#### **110. Clement of Alexandria: conscious embryos and infant believers**

Clement also reminded<sup>220</sup> Christians that God Himself had said: "Increase and multiply!" Genesis 1:28. "Let the pagan Greeks then feel ashamed...when they expose the offspring of men!"<sup>211</sup> Yet mercifully "the Romans, in the case of a pregnant woman being condemned to death, do not allow her to undergo punishment -- till she has given birth."

For even the pagan Romans regarded unborn babies as fully human, and their lives as so precious that they were protected by their laws. To Clement himself, aborted human embryos and slain infants are led postmortally into everlasting life -- by caretaker angels.<sup>222</sup> This is apparently so, because they have already been made righteous without baptism.

Indeed, Clement does seem to be referring to baptism where he speaks about [the family of] Noah being justified alias made righteous before the flood -- and where he speaks about "the seal of preaching." For where apparently calling baptism the seal of righteousness, Clement seems to be teaching that one is made righteous before being baptized.<sup>223</sup>

Moreover, Clement's writing *Protrepticus* alludes<sup>224</sup> not only to the "regeneration passage" in John<sup>225</sup> but also to the "infant believers' passages" in the other Gospels<sup>226</sup> -- as well as to the great "baptismal passage"<sup>227</sup> in Justin's *Apology*. This clearly evidences Clement's own commitment even to infant baptism for covenant children. It also seems to imply he believed them to have been justified before receiving that sacrament during their babyhood.

#### **111. Clement's *Paidagogue* presupposes belief within babies**

Important is Clement's work *Paidagōgos* (alias '*The Child-Instructor*'). There, in often allegorical but sometimes literalistic language, Clement declares:<sup>228</sup> "Paedogogy is the training of children (*paidōn agōgē*).... It remains for us to consider the children to whom Scripture points.... Jesus said [Matthew 19:4], 'Permit the children, and forbid them not to come to Me! For of such is the Kingdom of heaven.'

"What the expression means the Lord Himself shall declare, saying, 'Except you be converted and become as little children, you shall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven' [Matthew 18:3] -- in that place not speaking figuratively, but [speaking] about regeneration.... 'Have you never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings You have perfected praise?' [Matthew 21:6 cf. Psalm 8:2]....

"Again, by Moses, He commands 'two young pigeons or a pair of turtle-doves to be offered for sin' -- in respect of 33-day-old infants [Leviticus 15:29 & 12:8 *cf.* Luke 1:24].... We also, in truth, honouring the fairest and most perfect objects in life with an appellation derived from the word 'children' [*paid-es*] -- have named training *paid-eia*, and discipline *paid-agōgia*. Discipline (*paid-agōgia*) we declare to be right guidance -- from childhood [*paid-eia*].... Jesus placed a little child in their midst, saying, 'Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child, the same shall be the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven' [Matthew 18:4]....

"The child (*nēpios*) is...simple, guileless, and destitute of hypocrisy, straightforward and upright in mind.... The band of infants...is delicate as a child.... Horse's colts, and the little calves of cows, and the lion's whelp, and the stag's fawn, and the child of man -- are looked upon with pleasure by their fathers and mothers. Thus also the Father of the universe cherishes affection towards those who have fled to Him.... Who, then, is this infant child?... Scripture calls the infant children: 'lambs.'" John 21:15.

Clement continues in his *Paidagōgos*:<sup>229</sup> "Faith, with baptism, is trained by the Holy Spirit.... For as many as were baptized into Christ, have put on Christ [Galatians 3:26-29 *cf.* Romans 4:11f].... Jesus therefore, rejoicing in the Spirit, said: 'I thank You, O Father, God of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and have revealed them to babes' [Luke 10:21 *cf.* Matthew 11:25]....

"Upon our regeneration, we attained that perfection after which we aspired.... At the moment of the Lord's baptism, there sounded a voice from heaven as a testimony to the Beloved, 'You are My beloved Son! Today have I begotten You'....

"Why was He, the Perfect One, baptized? It was necessary.... He was 'perfected' -- alone -- by the washing of baptism." Further, "He was sanctified by the descent of the Spirit [again before His baptism].... The same also takes place in our case -- [we] whose Example Christ became."

## **112. Clement on Christ's own baptism, unweaned babies, and baptismal 'showers'**

It is important to note that Clement here compares our own baptism with that of the sinless Christ (alias "the Perfect One"). Hence, it is arguable that to Clement our sins are no more washed away during our baptism -- than our sins were washed away from the sinless Christ (our "Example") during His baptism. For it was at Christ's death and not at His baptism that our sins were laid upon Him and then washed away through His blood. Indeed, Christ Himself -- Who had no sin, even from His conception onward -- was totally unregeneratable also during His baptism.

Clement next seeks "to explain what is said by the apostle: 'I have fed you [as children in Christ] with milk, not with meat. For you were not able. Neither yet are you now able' [First Corinthians 3:2].... The expression 'I have given you to drink' (*epotisa*), is the symbol of perfect appropriation. For those who are full-grown, are said to drink; babes, to suck....

"In saying, therefore, 'I have given you milk to drink' -- has He not indicated the knowledge of the truth?.... With milk, then -- the Lord's nutriment -- **we are nursed directly we are born**.... As soon as we are regenerated, we are honoured by receiving the good news of...Jerusalem above, in which...milk and honey fall in showers....

"For children at the breast, milk alone suffices.... The contents of the stomach too, at first, are milky.... But when it is formed into a compact consistency in the womb, by the natural and warm spirit by which the embryo is fashioned it becomes a living creature.

"Further also, the child, after birth -- is nourished.... Such as is the union of the Word with baptism -- is the agreement of milk with water.... He who prophesies the birth of the child, says: 'Butter and honey shall He eat' [Isaiah 7:15].... The Word, then, Who leads the children to salvation -- is appropriately called 'the Instructor' (*Paidagōgos*)."

In all of the above, no matter how figurative the language, several things are clear. Firstly, God's people are like babies. Secondly, God's people also include babies -- and even fetuses and embryos. Thirdly, such persons are born again -- quite before they receive the showers of baptism.

The classicists Stander and Louw are themselves unsympathetic toward Paedobaptism as an apostolic or even as an early-patristic institution. Yet even they concede<sup>230</sup> that Clement, here "countering the attacks of the Gnostics, again uses the figurative expression 'children' and 'little ones' -- when he refers to baptismal practices."

### **113. Baptist concessions anent Clement of Alexandria regarding Christian infants**

Also the Baptist A.W. Argyle, Regent's Park College tutor at Oxford, concedes<sup>231</sup> that "there appears to be one[!] cryptic reference to infant baptism in an allegorical passage of the *Paedagogus*." Argyle is referring to Clement's description of "children who are drawn out of the water" by the fisher of men.

Here Clement, obviously thinking of baptism, wrote:<sup>232</sup> "Let our seals be either a dove, or a fish, or a ship scudding before the wind, or a musical lyre -- which Polycrates used.... If there be one fishing, he will remember the apostle [or *apostolou*] -- and the small children [or *paidiōn*] drawn out of the water."

This clearly proves that "the apostle" applied "the water" even to "small children." It further strongly implies that the baptism also of infants is indeed both a sealing and also an apostolic ordinance.

It will be remembered that also the two classical scholars Stander and Louw -- are unfavourable toward the apostolic and early-patristic practices of Paedobaptism. Very significantly, however, even they here concede: "It is quite possible that the words 'fisherman' and 'children drawn out of the water' function as baptismal terminology."

Yet the Baptist Argyle himself should have conceded there is indeed more than just "one" reference to infant salvation in the relevant book of Clement's *Paidagōgos*. For at the end of its last chapter -- in its closing 'Hymn to Christ the Saviour' [composed by Clement] -- we read:<sup>233</sup>

"Wise Shepherd, tending lambs of the royal flock, bring  
Your simple children in -- so that they may sing...  
their hymns of praise with guileless lips to Christ their King!...  
Fisher of men, You bring to life --  
gathering in pure fishes...from the billowy strife!"

Such "pure fishes" Clement explains further, are "nourished by the milk of heaven given to our tender palate -- and by the milk of wisdom pressed out from the breast of that bride of grace." By "pure fishes" Clement here clearly means regenerated Christians.

Those 'pure fishes' certainly include baptized babies. For Clement has even the latter exclaim: "Filled by the dewy Spirit [the rain-like *Pneuma*]; distilled from the breast of fair Reason [the divine *Logos*] -- let us sucklings join to raise our hymns of praise with pure lips!"

#### **114. Clement on 'the dew of the Spirit' within and upon an infant baptizee**

Also important is Clement's discourse *Who is the Rich Man that shall be Saved?* There, he claimed that (baptized) Christians are "protected" -- not by baptism itself, but "by the power of God the Father; and the blood of God the Son; and the dew of the Holy Spirit....

"Forgiveness of past sins, then, God gives.... This is to repent -- to condemn the past deeds and beg oblivion of them from the Father of all. Only He is able to undo what has been done -- by mercy proceeding from Him -- to blot out former sins by the dew of the Spirit."

The above phrase 'God the Father; and the blood of God the Son; and the dew of the Spirit' -- is obviously a reference to trinitarian baptism. So too is the yet further phrase 'blot out former sins by the dew of the Spirit.'

Clement then goes on to refer to a young man -- who had been adopted by the very presbyter who had previously 'baptized' him. That young person, explains Clement -- after subsequent backsliding -- was later again "'baptized' a second time: with tears."<sup>234</sup>

Here is no sacramental rebaptism. But here is indeed a striking statement which proves that repentance before baptism must continue, increasingly and repeatedly, lifelong also thereafter.

#### **115. Clement on the lifelong disciplining of Christian infants**

In Clement's *Stromata*, there are still more passages bearing on this subject. There, he brought the Johannine phrase "born not of blood nor of the will of the flesh" -- into connection with regeneration.<sup>235</sup>

He also quoted Genesis 1:28, and urged marriage -- "for our country's sake; for the succession of children; and [for]...the perfection of the world."<sup>236</sup> Indeed, he even enjoined all children: "Honour your father and your mother, so that it may go well with you!"<sup>237</sup>

Clement further insisted that God's "elect shall not labour in vain, nor procreate children to be cursed. For they are seed -- blessed by the Lord."<sup>238</sup> Clement then added that "he who procreates children according to the Word, and who educates and teaches them in the Lord, bears a good catechism...to the elect seed."

Moreover, continued Clement, "even a 'bishop' [or 'church overseer'] is to rule well -- at home -- over his 'faithful children.'"<sup>239</sup> No celibacy of clergy here! Also the old women are to "counsel the young women to be...lovers of their husbands and lovers of their children [Titus 2:3f]." For "marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled [Hebrews 13:4]."<sup>240</sup>

Clement went on to point out that "those who fall into sin after baptism, are those who are subjected to discipline.... Therefore, this is what the Lord says: 'Every alien son is uncircumcised in heart.... There shall not enter one of the strangers into the midst of the house of Israel!'" Ezekiel 44:9f.

However, concluded Clement, "the righteous Job says: 'Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there' [Job 1:21].... It is as a just man that he departs." Christ's phrase "'unless you be converted and become as children' [Matthew 18:3]...., shows that He would have us to be such as He also generates us from our mother." Hence, this is symbolized by "the water."

#### **116. The Pre-Tertullianic Church never denied inherited sin in covenant babies**

Rev. Professor Dr. Kurt Aland of the University of Münster (where the revolutionary Anabaptists formerly built their 'New Jerusalem'), concedes that the practice of infant baptism in the Church today is both needful and legitimate. Yet he also considers that infant baptism is **certainly provable** -- **only** from the third century onward.

Aland argues:<sup>241</sup> "In the Acts of the Apostles...we must conclude that infant baptism was not practised at that time -- since these [covenantal] infants were [then] regarded as *hagia* [before baptism]. The Ancient Church perpetuated this tradition -- and only at the end of the second century departed from it, and that, on theological grounds.

"So long as the Church assumed that children born of Christian parents were sinless, it abstained from infant baptism. So soon as it recognized the falsity of this presupposition, it began to ask for and introduce infant baptism.... The sinful corruption of children from their birth is admitted.... The necessity of infant baptism follows on it."

The serious flaw in the above reasoning, is the statement that the Church before A.D. 200 assumed that "children born of Christian parents were sinless" from their conception until at least their birth. However, the Church never so assumed. *Per contra*: Genesis 6:5 & 8:21; Job 14:1-4 & 15:14f & 25:4f; Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12-18; Ephesians 2:1-3; *etc.*

Aland's further error, somewhat related to the last-mentioned, is his misperception: "In the Acts of the Apostles...infant baptism was not practised" *etc.* Hopefully, we showed the opposite.

Aland is apparently attempting to reconstruct early church history -- from a 'Carlstadian perspective' (which syncretizes Lutheranism and Anabapticism). For Aland wrongly assumes that, before Tertullian, the Early Church (heretically) upheld the sinlessness of the babies of believers -- and that, not till just before Tertullian, infant baptism was unknown to the Church.

From these misassumptions, Aland wrongly concludes that the Patristic Church and even the Apostolic Church never baptized covenant infants at all -- until it rightly perceived also them to be the sinful human beings which Aland rightly believes there indeed are. **This** perception is indeed correct. But Aland incorrectly alleges it began -- only at the beginning of the **third** century.

Yet the real facts are quite different. Because the Apostolic Church itself regarded even unbaptized covenant children as saved sinners -- it therefore went right ahead and baptized them, also in apostolic times.

Some 150 years later, by the end of the second century, however -- the Church was beginning to get influenced by incipient Manichaeism. This seems to be the reason why it then, for the first time, fabulously began to invest sin-cleansing power into baptism. Until then, baptism had been administered in great simplicity. Yet it had previously been given only to those adults and infants who were regarded as prebaptismally regenerated -- in spite of their inherited original sin.

For the Apostolic Church knew of the inherent prenatal sinfulness even of covenant children. Yet it also knew of their postnatal infant baptism. So too did the Apostolic Fathers, the Apologists, and the various Patristic Fathers even before Tertullian. Indeed, this evidence is further strengthened by that of archaeological findings.

### **117. Archaeological evidence anent infant faith within covenant children**

Round about 200 A.D., we encounter some striking evidence from Egypt favouring the infant baptism of covenant children. The *Old Egyptian Ordinance* alias the *Egyptian Church Order*, dating from no later than the last part of the second century A.D., declared that (the day before the baptism of the candidates) the church overseer was to "seal their foreheads....

"The water shall flow through the baptismal pool, or pour into it from above," stated the ancient *Egyptian Church Order* -- "except when there is scarcity of water.... Then, use whatever water you can find....

"**First baptize the little ones.** Those who can speak for themselves, shall do so. If not, their parents or some other relative shall speak for them. Then baptize the men, and last of all the women."<sup>242</sup>



Now the British Museum in London displays a mummy of an Egyptian child. It dates from about 200 A.D., and is only 74 centimeters long. Its coffin depicts a little girl with crossed hands, holding a cross. She is estimated to have died when only four years old.

It is clear that the buriers believed the four-year-old had died trusting in the work of Christ on the cross. It is therefore probable that she had been baptized at some time prior to her early death.<sup>243</sup> Indeed, the contemporaneous Egyptian evidence of Clement<sup>244</sup> and Origen,<sup>245</sup> would fully justify this probability.

### **118. The catacombs corroborate infant faith an infant baptism**

Looking next at the Roman catacombs, from about the same time or perhaps even earlier onward,<sup>246</sup> it is seen that some epitaphs -- such as 'my sweetest child' and 'innocent little lamb' *etc.*<sup>247</sup> -- suggest that the one so commemorated, died at a very early age. Other wordings often give the specific age at death -- together with an indication of the godly faith even of very young Christians.

One of the most famous inscriptions, is that for Julia Florentina. She lived eighteen months and twenty-two days, and was seen to be a believer before she drew her last breath.

See Stander and Louw's *Baptism in the Early Church*.<sup>248</sup> Also see Diehl's book *Ancient Christian Latin Inscriptions*; Didier's work *Infant Baptism in the Tradition of the Church*; and Ferguson's essay *Inscriptions and the Origin of Infant Baptism*.<sup>249</sup>

Here are two more samples: "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour! To Pastor -- a good and innocent son, who lived 4 years, 5 months and 26 days. Vitalis and Marcellina, his parents." Once more: "To Leopardus, a neophyte, who lives 3 years, 11 months. Buried on the 24th of March. In peace."<sup>250</sup>

Here are another couple of inscriptions regarding Christian babies who, apparently as little believers, each died when less than fourteen months old. "Matronata Matrona, who lived a year and 52 days . Pray for thy parents!" Again: "We, Crescentius and Micina, commend...our daughter Crescen[tina], who lived 10 months and . . . days."

All of the above probably, though not provably so, died baptized. In such cases, the sacrament would regularly have been administered not by submersion but by way of sprinkling. Too, it would have been administered precisely to such tiny ones deemed to believe in Jesus.

For, as the great church historian Rev. Professor Dr. Philip Schaff observes, "pouring or affusion is...found on pictures in the Roman catacombs -- one of which De Rossi [the greatest authority thereon] assigns to the second century (in the cemetery of Calixtus). 'It is remarkable that in almost all the earliest representations of baptism that have been preserved to us, this [the pouring of water from vessels over the body] is the special act represented.'"

Also the great systematic theologian and dogmatics historian, Rev. Professor Dr. Benjamin B. Warfield, has drawn a similar conclusion. "Affusion on the head of a recipient," he explains, "is the ordinary mode of baptism depicted in the early decorations of the Roman catacombs."<sup>251</sup>

### **119. Ward and Schaff on the archaeology of Paedobaptism**

So too Australia's greatest authority on Presbyterian church history, Rev. Dr. Rowland Ward. In his 1991 *Baptism in Scripture and History*, he points out:<sup>252</sup> "It shows the desire to retain what would have been, in my judgement, the common mode during the open air ministry of the Baptist and the Apostles -- namely pouring or sprinkling the head of the candidate.... C.F. Rogers<sup>253</sup> suggested this interpretation in 1903, in his *Baptism and Christian Archaeology*....

"The archaeological evidence unearthed during the past 100 years, has confirmed this thesis. Nearly 400 examples of ecclesiastical fonts belonging to the period 230 - 680 A.D. have been located. The archaeological data is discussed in such works<sup>254</sup> as *The Architectural Setting of Baptism*....

"The fonts discovered, show that the general practice was for the candidate to enter.... His head was then dipped in a basin arrangement called the laver; or else the water was simply poured. Drawings on the walls of the catacombs and elsewhere back into the second century, show a similar mode."

However, whether the Christian died baptized or not, as Schaff himself rightly observes,<sup>255</sup> a "prominent feature of the catacombs is their hopeful and joyful eschatology. They proclaim in symbols and words a certain conviction of the immortality of the soul and the resurrection of the body, rooted and grounded in a living union with Christ in this world."

The above evidence would strongly indicate that not just Christian parents but also their early-dying children -- thus "sleep in Jesus." First Thessalonians 4:14. The matter of their having been baptized or not, appears to be quite irrelevant to the factuality of the confidence with which their heavenly destiny is assumed.

### **120. Tertullian's sad shift toward Montanistic Antipaedobaptism**

From approximately 200 A.D. onward, Tertullian of Carthage provides us with much information about infant faith -- and also about the doctrine of infant baptism. Born a non-covenantal Pagan, and converted only as an adult, Tertullian himself was admitted into the Universal Church and baptized as an adult only after he professed his faith.

This was, of course, merely a profession but not necessarily a possession of faith. Yet it seems to have been genuine, even though Tertullian later started drifting off toward the semimontanizing heresy of pseudoglossolalic Montanism.

The latter championed ongoing revelation, deemed to occur in 'miraculous' tongues-speakings. It had also introduced the sacramentalistic innovation of the [re-]baptism of

adults only -- and apparently only by 'magical' submersionism alone. These, it seems, were practices Montanism had adopted from the paganistic 'mystery' religions -- such as the *taurobolium* of Cybele worship<sup>256</sup>

Notwithstanding Tertullian's semimontanizing drift toward anti-paedobaptistic Montanism, his often varying views on a whole range of subjects -- usually orthodox, but at other times occasionally heterodox -- are still extremely valuable.<sup>257</sup> It should also be noted that according to Augustine, Tertullian finally abandoned his Semi-Montanistic views and connections. Thereafter he is reputed to have returned to the mainline Universal Church -- with its doctrine of baptizing also children of the covenant in their infancy, by the Scriptural sign of sprinkling.

Sometimes Tertullian was rather heterodox. Yet, even where counselling that infant baptism be delayed, he was very aware that the latter was indeed a long-established ecclesiastical practice -- which also he probably realized had been inaugurated by Christ Himself.

"The delay of baptism is preferable," Tertullian alleged. That is so -- "principally, however, in the case of little children." It is true, conceded Tertullian, that "the Lord does indeed say, 'Forbid them not to come unto Me!'" But, asked Tertullian, "why does the innocent period of life hasten to the 'remission of sins?'"<sup>258</sup> This certainly seems to suggest that the Church Universal was then baptizing infants, allegedly since apostolic times, to which infant baptisms Tertullian was here objecting.

Argyle the Baptist<sup>259</sup> succinctly shows us just how much of a sacramentalist the adult immersionist Tertullian became. Says Argyle: "From Tertullian's writings, we can piece together the form that was used in baptism.... The candidate solemnly renounced the devil and his pomp and his angels."<sup>260</sup> Then he was thrice immersed [thus not Tertullian but only Argyle]<sup>261</sup> in the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit -- in water previously consecrated."<sup>262</sup>

Further, continues Argyle, "milk and honey"<sup>262</sup> were administered to the newly-baptized.... Tertullian is the first writer<sup>263</sup> who clearly mentions...the post-baptismal administering of unction, the anointing with olive-oil, followed by the laying-on of hands -- together with the making of the sign of the cross on the forehead of the baptized.... "The spirit is bodily washed in the waters, and the flesh is spiritually cleansed in the same."<sup>264</sup>

### **121. Tertullian's orthodox view of prenatal infants as sentient**

At other times and as regards other matters, however, Tertullian was very orthodox. For he was particularly helpful in the realm of prenatal anthropology. Opposing paganistic abortion, he enjoined Christians: "In our case, murder being once and for all forbidden, we may not destroy even the fetus in the womb.... To hinder a birth, is merely a speedier man-killing. There is no difference -- whether you take away a life that has been born, or destroy one that is coming to the birth. That is a [hu]man, which is going to be [an adult] one. You already have the fruit in its seed."<sup>265</sup>

Elsewhere, Tertullian even added the following:<sup>266</sup> "The Law of Moses [Exodus 21:22-25] indeed punishes with due penalties the man who shall cause abortion -- inasmuch as there exists

already the rudiment of a human being." Moses clearly implies that the woman's unborn 'fruit' is indeed a child. And David implies that his own 'ego' began (and got stained with sin) right at conception -- even before he was subsequently "formed" in his mother's womb, when he "hoped upon" or "trusted in" God.<sup>267</sup>

What then is the position as to the infant's soul before his or her birth? Held Tertullian: "The soul possessed this uniform and simple nature from the beginning.... Those who profess the truth, care nothing about their opponents -- especially such of them as begin by maintaining that the soul is not conceived in the womb...but is im-pressed from without upon the infant [only] before his complete vitality but after the process of parturition [or birth].

"The Stoics," Tertullian explained further,<sup>268</sup> quite wrongly "begin by maintaining that the soul is not conceived in the womb -- nor is produced at the time that the flesh is moulded." Indeed, even "Plato himself...tells us that the soul..., originating elsewhere and externally to the womb, is inhaled when the new-born infant first draws breath [at his or her birth nine months after conception].... This view of his, is merely fictitious.... These gentlemen were too modest to come to terms with women on the mysteries of childbirth....

"Give us then your testimony, you mothers -- whether yet pregnant, or after delivery!" Give us your testimony "whether you feel, in the embryo within you, any vital force [or vivacity] other than your own!... Inasmuch as sustenance by food and the want thereof, growth, decay, fear, and motion are conditions of the soul or life -- he who experiences them, must be alive!"

Now and then, babies are sometimes born dead. Tertullian explains that such "infants are still-born. But how so -- unless they had had life" previously? For "where does it come from that, from similarity of soul, we resemble our parents in disposition..., if we are not produced from this 'seed of the soul?'.... A [hu]man's nativity" or 'generatedness' exists "from his earliest conception."

Accordingly, "his soul also draws...its origin from that moment. To this ['nativity'], likewise belongs the 'inbreathing' of the soul" -- the imparting of the human soul by God Himself. Genesis 2:7 compare Zechariah 12:1.

## **122. Physical life and spiritual recognition both start at conception**

Tertullian also declared: "Consider the wombs of the most sainted women, maternally implanted with the life within them." For "their babes...were not only alive within, but were even endowed with prophetic intuition. See how the inward parts of Rebecca are disquieted [Genesis 25:22-25] -- though her giving birth is as yet remote.... A twin offspring chafes within the mother's womb....

"Consider again these extraordinary conceptions...of the barren woman [Elisabeth] and the virgin [Mary].... One of them [Elisabeth] was too old to bear seed, and the other [Mary] was pure from the contact of man.... However, even these [offspring of Elisabeth and Mary] have life -- each of them in his mother's womb....

"Mary magnifies the Lord, [for] Christ had stirred her up within [Luke 1:46].... Elisabeth exults with joy, [for] John had leaped [up] in[side] her womb [Luke 1:41f]. The mothers each recognize their own offspring, being moreover each **recognized by their [unborn] infants**. These were, therefore, of course, alive -- and were not merely [living] souls but [immortal] spirits also."

Indeed, it seems **the unborn John** six months after his own conception and three months before his own birth **recognized** not just Mary walking toward his own mother Elisabeth. The unborn John then recognized Jesus too -- Who had at that time only just been conceived within Mary. Could John then not also at the same time much rather have acknowledged his own God?!

Tertullian continued: "Accordingly, you read the Word of God which was spoken to Jeremiah, 'Before I formed you in the belly I knew you!' Since God forms us in the womb, He also breathes upon us [when starting to form us].

"So did He also do at the first creation [Genesis 2:7], when 'the Lord God formed man and breathed into him the breath of life.' Nor could God have known man in the womb -- except in his entire nature.... 'Before you came forth out of the womb -- I sanctified you.'" Jeremiah 1:5. Can one be sanctified, without first being regenerated?

"How then," Tertullian goes on, "is a living being conceived? Is the substance of both body and soul formed together, at one and the same time? Or does one of them precede the other in natural formation?... Both are conceived and formed, and absolutely simultaneously....

"Not a moment's interval occurs, even at their conception. A prior place can be assigned to neither. Consider what occurs at man's earliest existence -- in the light of what occurs to him at the very end [of his existence]. As death is defined to be nothing else than the separation of body and soul -- life, which is the opposite of death, is susceptible of no other definition than the conjunction of body and soul. If the severance happens at one and the same time to both substances by means of death -- then the law of their [initial] combination ought to assure that it [too] occurs simultaneously....

"Life begins at conception.... The soul also begins from conception. For life takes its commencement at the same moment and in the same place as the soul does.... Adam's flesh was formed of clay.... The clay and the breath combined at the first creation, in forming the individual man [Genesis 2:7].... We still declare that they are...contemporaneous and simultaneous in origin.... Even now, the two substances [body and soul], although diverse from each other, flow forth simultaneously."

It should be remembered that Tertullian elsewhere declared:<sup>269</sup> "I shall begin with baptism.... We are taken up as new-born children." Indeed, he also insisted<sup>270</sup> that "young novices...are only just beginning to bedew their ears with divine discourses...as whelps in yet early infancy and with...one single sprinkling." Deuteronomy 29:29 & 31:11-13 & 32:2-7. See later below!

### **123. Tertullian: sprinkling the preferred mode of postnatal baptism**

We now need to move on from prenatal human life and consciousness and even prophethood -- to postnatal baptism. We have already seen that Tertullian at one point of his life backed away from the Historic-Christian doctrine of infant sprinklings -- namely, while he was moving toward the [re-]baptisms of antipaedobaptistic Semi-Montanism. Even then, however, it should not be thought that Tertullian totally abandoned infant baptism -- nor the truth of 'faith before baptism' (regardless of age). Still less should it be thought that Tertullian then repudiated sprinkling as the proper mode of baptism.<sup>271</sup>

Indeed, even during his schismatic days as a heterodox Semi-Montanist, Tertullian still grudgingly continued to regard infant baptism as valid -- and indeed as the established practice of the Universal Church from which he had temporarily seceded. Moreover, Tertullian himself even continued to advocate the questionable practice of emergency baptism even for infants -- and also for others -- if any such seemed to be dying.<sup>272</sup>

In his great work *Christian Baptism*, also Robert Ayres points out<sup>273</sup> that Tertullian's novel form of baptism by 'triple tinction' probably does not mean 'submersion.' It need not necessarily mean even 'immersion' -- and could well include sprinkling. Indeed, it could even consist exclusively of sprinkling. For in his *On Repentance*, Tertullian mentioned<sup>274</sup> "one single sprinkling of any water whatever" -- precisely when discussing baptism.

We ourselves think it probable that Tertullian did come to prefer innovated submersionism to Scriptural sprinkling -- especially after moving toward the heterodoxy of the antipaedobaptist and submersionizing Semi-Montanists (with their partly paganistic practices), and before later again moving back to the practice of the Church Universal. This would be so, particularly because during his middle phase Tertullian then mechanically -- if not magically -- maintained that the more water used in baptism, the more thoroughly it washed away sins. Of course, at the very end of his life (thus Augustine),<sup>275</sup> Tertullian did re-embrace the ancient views of the Universal Church -- apparently also those regarding the Biblical mode and subjects of baptism: *viz.* sprinkling and infants.

### **124. Tertullian on the proper subjects of baptism**

Let us now take a more detailed look at Tertullian's views on the proper subjects of baptism. In his early-date work called *Repentance*, composed perhaps in 192 A.D., the then-still-orthodox Tertullian was apparently thinking of Deuteronomy 32:2's words to the 'men and women and children' of Israel. There, God said through Moses: 'My doctrine shall drop as the rain. My speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass.' Compare too Deuteronomy 29:29 & 31:12.

Tertullian commented<sup>276</sup> on this, that it "is chiefly urgent<sup>277</sup> in the case of those young novices who are only just beginning -- to 'be-dew' their ears with divine discourses...as whelps in yet early infancy and with...one single sprinkling." Nevertheless: "That baptismal washing is a sealing of faith -- which **faith** has begun.... We are **not** washed in order that we may escape

from sinning, but because we have ceased -- since in heart we have been bathed already.... So it is becoming [or it behooves] that **learners** desire baptism -- but do not hastily receive it."

In the last sentence, Tertullian seems to have advocated not so much the 'post-poning' of baptism -- but rather the 'pre-poning' of **faith** and repentance to a point preceding baptism. For here he was arguing that "we have been washed" -- since in heart, we have been bathed already."<sup>278</sup>

Even after making full allowances for the colourfulness of this language, it is still very difficult indeed to exclude covenant babies from Tertullian's baptismal doctrine. For he is here talking about Christian "**whelps** in yet **early infancy**." Indeed, it is even more difficult to extract the notion of submersionism here. For Tertullian here says those infants were "be-dew"-ed alias baptized with "one single sprinkling."

### **125. Tertullian's classic treatise 'On Baptism'**

We now come to Tertullian's classic (though perhaps already somewhat semimontanizing) writing on this subject -- his *On Baptism*. He wrote that discourse against an antichristian pseudo-prophetess. She was "a viper of the Cainite heresy" -- who was "making it her first aim to destroy baptism."

That 'viper' was probably even opposed to baptism as such -- and certainly opposed to the baptizing of tiny babies alias the '**little fishes**' of Christians. However, precisely such "little fishes" -- explained Tertullian -- "after the example of our 'I-CH-TH-U-S' [or 'Big F-I-S-H'] Jesus Christ, are born in water.... The 'viper' (*sic*) "knew full well how to kill the 'little fishes' -- by taking them out of [or away from] the water."<sup>279</sup>

Tertullian next grounded the sacrament, historically, "in the Spirit of God Who hovered over [the waters] from the beginning." Indeed, He "would continue to linger over the waters 'of the baptized'" (or *intinctorum* alias the 'in-tinct-ed ones').<sup>280</sup>

This is evident -- even from the perverted paganistic practices which were, remotely, derived from this. For even the Pagans, "by carrying water around and sprinkling it, expiate...whole cities...and are 'baptized'" (*sic*) in that way.<sup>281</sup>

Continued Tertullian:<sup>282</sup> "After the waters of the deluge by which the old iniquity was purged -- after the 'baptism' so to say of the world -- a dove was the herald" which brought peace to the world of Noah's family baptized in the ark. Later, "the entire people [of Israel], as unconditionally free, escaped the violence of the Egyptian king -- by crossing over through water" at the Red Sea. There they were 'baptized' into Moses, and with the cloud."<sup>283</sup>

Even today, Tertullian rightly insisted, believers 'baptized' with the blood of Christ are saved -- even when not able to have received water baptism. For this 'baptism of blood' indeed "stands in lieu of the fontal bathing, when that has not been received."<sup>284</sup>

## **126. The crucial eighteenth chapter in Tertullian's treatise 'On Baptism'**

Especially the eighteenth chapter of Tertullian's work *On Baptism* warrants detailed attention. His main and proper thrust there, was "that **baptism is not rashly to be administered**.... 'Give not the holy thing to the dogs, nor cast your pearls before swine!'<sup>285</sup> [Matthew 7:6]." Significantly, this very verse is footnoted in the sacramentology also of the Calvinistic Puritans' *Westminster Confession of Faith* (29:8<sup>9</sup>).

However, in what then immediately followed, Tertullian also showed his increasing opposition to the apostolic practice of the Universal Church. Indeed, he now clearly discloses his increasing shift away from Historic Christian Paedobaptism -- and toward semi-paganizing Semimontanist and its antipaedobaptistic submersionism, and indeed even toward its incipient baptismal regenerationism.

Said Tertullian: "According to the...disposition and even age of each individual, the delay of baptism is preferable; principally, however, in the case of little children. For why is it necessary -- if [baptism itself] is not so necessary -- that the sponsors likewise should be thrust into danger, who both themselves, by reason of mortality, may fail to fulfil their promises, and may be disappointed by the development of an evil disposition in those for whom they stood?"

"The Lord does indeed say, 'Do not forbid them to come to Me!' [Matthew 19:14 & Mark 10:14 & Luke 18:16]. Let them 'come' while they are 'learning' -- while they are learning where to come! Let them become 'Christ-ians' [alias 'baptismally-anointed ones'] when they have become able to know Christ! Why does 'the innocent period of life' hasten to the 'remission of sins?' More caution will be exercised....

"For no less cause, must the unwedded also be deferred.... If any understand the weighty import of baptism -- they will fear its reception, more than its delay. Sound faith is secure in salvation. The Passover affords a more than usually solemn day for baptism.... However, every day is the Lord's; every hour, every time, is apt for baptism."

## **127. Doctrinal errors in chapter eighteen of Tertullian's 'On Baptism'**

Here, Tertullian esteemed these 'delayed baptisms' to be "preferable" to hasty baptisms -- even as regards adult baptisms, but especially in respect of infant baptisms. Why especially the latter? Because they involved 'sponsors' -- and Tertullian reprehended that "the sponsors likewise should be thrust into danger."

Observe that Tertullian did not here attribute "danger" to infant Christians, nor to older Christians, for themselves remaining unbaptized. Rather did he attribute danger to adults getting themselves baptized too hastily -- and also to "sponsors" in getting infants baptized too hastily.

For Tertullian rightly believed that unbaptized infant Christians and unbaptized adult Christians were relatively safe already. He had just said, two chapters earlier, that the so-called



'baptism of blood' in respect of unbaptized believers -- "stands in lieu of the fontal bathing [alias water baptism] when that has not been received."

Tertullian now consistently and rightly went on to say: "baptism is not rashly to be administered" -- and: "Give not the holy things to the dogs!" Cf. Matthew 7:6. Significantly, this is a text which also the *Westminster Confession of Faith* (29:8<sup>g</sup>) applies against lax admission to the Sacrament.

Accordingly, "the delay of baptism is preferable -- principally...in the case of little children.... [For baptism itself] is not so necessary.... Why is it necessary...that the sponsors...should be thrust into danger?" Indeed it is not, said Tertullian -- and say we too.

Continued Tertullian: "Why does the innocent period of life hasten to the 'remission of sins?'" Such haste is unnecessary -- for the 'innocent' infant is already safe before baptism, and baptism itself is never that essential.

"If any understand the weighty import of baptism, they will fear its reception more than its delay." For the real danger of hasty baptism -- of either infants or adults -- is much greater than the alleged 'danger' of delaying such baptisms. Meantime, if through the 'delay' a faithful infant or a faithful adult should die without ever being baptized -- no harm has been done. For "sound faith is secure in salvation."

### **128. Tertullian's error of delaying infant baptism till later**

We still need to add that there is nevertheless at least one glaring error in this eighteenth chapter. For there, Tertullian also said that "the delay of baptism is preferable principally...in the case of little children" -- even though Tertullian himself also admits that "the Lord does indeed say in respect of infants too: 'Forbid them not to come unto Me!'" Matthew 18:2-14.

Here, Tertullian rightly connected the latter injunction to infant baptism. He also rightly insisted that infant baptisms should be delayed -- whenever the sponsors were in danger of wanting that baptism administered overhastily. In such cases, Tertullian soon went on to say -- rather recatechize those sponsors, and postpone the infant baptism till the "solemn day" of the next annual Passover-time!

However, Tertullian did seem to plead that this delay should be extended 'overlongly' -- even until the infants "are growing up." Tertullian here rightly admitted the infallible Christ Himself had said 'forbid them not to come unto Me' -- even while they were yet infants. Yet the fallible Tertullian then went on to say -- against Christ? -- that it is better such infants not so come to their Saviour, until that "are growing up."

Moreover, the fallible Tertullian's false statement here about covenant infants needing later to 'become Christians when they have become able to know Christ' -- is quite irreconcilable with the words of the infallible Christ Himself. For that matter, they are also quite irreconcilable with the correct statements Tertullian himself made elsewhere -- about covenant infants being 'holy' at conception, and being sentient even before birth. As the *Westminster Assembly's Directory for*

*the Publick Worship of God* insists, the "seed" also the infant children of "believers" are themselves "**Christians** and federally holy before baptism and therefore are to be baptized" *etc.*

Also the famous Anglican baptismal scholar Rev. Dr. Wall here rightly comments anent Tertullian: "It is a heedless answer that he makes to those words of our Saviour, 'Suffer little children to come to Me' &c -- when he says, 'Let them come when they are grown up when they understand' &c. For that seems to be the very thing that the disciples said, when they rebuked those that brought them -- for which rebuke our [Paedobaptist] Saviour blamed the [then antipaedobaptizing] disciples....

"Our Saviour would indeed have infants brought to Him in their infancy.... He declared the love of God to them, by His blessing and embracing them -- and saying 'Of such is the kingdom of God.' Which shews them to be capable of the covenant of mercy, and that infants are expressly admitted.... Deuteronomy 29:10 --'you, your little ones, &c -- and in the Old Testament had the [circumcisional] seal of the covenant."

### **129. Summary of Tertullian's baptismal treatise**

The following further points should carefully be noted. When they are, Tertullian is found to have been a lot more favourable toward infant baptism in general and the pre-baptismal faith of covenant infants in particular – than he is often perceived to have been.

First, the eighteenth chapter of Tertullian's work *On Baptism* is found in a treatise where he has been referring to baptisms by sprinkling. And, indeed, also to household baptism.

Second, the nineteen chapter's reference to Passover baptisms is significant. For it seems to indicate that the eighteenth chapter had been concerned chiefly not with the infant baptisms of the children of established Christian parents, but rather with the annual addition of adult Ex-Pagans to the Church each Easter.<sup>286</sup>

Third, Tertullian's recommendation that "the delay of baptism is preferable principally...in the case of little children" -- is merely his own personal preference against the undenied Universal Church's preference and practice of baptizing the infants even of converts from Paganism. However, Tertullian's caution would obtain even against the speedy baptism of the infants of long-time Christian adults or other ecclesiastically-recognized 'sponsors.' The latter would include: the Christian grandparents of their own orphaned grandchildren; Christian couples adopting children; or the Christian owners of penitent slaves and their slave-children.

Fourth, Tertullian's personal "preference" here indicated his mild discouraging of the already-established practice of infant baptism. That shows the latter was already paramount.

Fifth, Tertullian correctly assessed baptism was "not so necessary." This clearly indicates he was then not advocating 'baptismal regenerationism' as such.

Sixth, Tertullian's reference to the practice of using adult sponsors, wherever "baptism itself is not so necessary," indicated his own approval of 'emergency baptisms' deemed "necessary."

To him, the latter might well have included situations wherever adults or even infants were dying unbaptized -- and wherever 'sponsors' could not be obtained in time to be present at the 'necessary' baptism of dying infants. All of which again stresses infant baptism.

Seventh, Tertullian mentions of adult "sponsors" at infant baptisms. This indicates both infant baptism and sponsors at infant baptisms were already securely established. Tertullian's discouraging of both -- indicated that both were then being practised in the Church at large.

Eighth, even Tertullian applied the 'forbid them not' texts (of Matthew 19:14 & Mark 10:14 & Luke 18:16) to baptisms. Unintentionally, he thus linked the texts to infant baptism.

Ninthly, Tertullian rebuked those who at "the innocent period of life" fairly 'hasten' to receive baptism as the sign of the 'remission of sins.' This is obviously a reference to infants being hastened into the Church, to receive the very 'infant baptism' the Semi-Montanizing Tertullian was then opposing.

Tenth and last, Tertullian ascetically opposed the baptism even of unwedded adults. Possibly if not probably, this opposition too derived from Semi-Montanism. At any rate, it is just as unbiblical -- as is his wanting to delay the baptism of covenantal infants until "they are growing up."

### **130. Tertullian on the holiness of unborn covenant children**

In his later work *On the Soul*, Tertullian again dealt with our subject. We have already seen<sup>287</sup> that Tertullian in that treatise<sup>288</sup> made some truly excellent observations about the soul's consciousness and ability to believe even before birth.

In that same treatise, however, Tertullian also recognized the cogency for infant salvation of Paul's inspired statement in First Corinthians 7:14. We mean Paul's statement that the believing spouse sanctifies the unbelieving spouse in sexual intercourse within marriage, so that their resulting children are not 'unclean' but 'holy.'

Tertullian rightly recognized that all children are conceived in sin. Thus, they cannot be saved at all -- unless subsequently born again before they die (either during fetushood or thereafter).

For all the divine "endowments of the soul which are bestowed on it at generation, are still obscured and depraved by the malignant being [Satan]...ready to entrap their souls from the very portal of their birth -- at which he is invited to be present in all those superstitious processes which accompany childbearing" among the Pagans. "In no case -- I mean of the Heathen, of course -- is there any nativity which is pure from [or devoid of] idolatrous superstition."<sup>289</sup>

However, added Tertullian, "the apostle said that when either of the parents were sanctified, the children were holy [First Corinthians 7:14]; and this as much by the prerogative of the seed

(*ex seminis praerogativa*), as by the discipline of the institution (by baptism and Christian education). 'Else,' said he [Paul], 'were the children unclean'....

"He meant us to understand that the children of believers were designed for holiness, and thereby for salvation.... Besides, he had certainly not forgotten what the Lord had so definitively stated: 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God' [John 3:5] -- in other words, he cannot be holy.

"Every soul, then, by reason of its birth [or even conception], has its origin in Adam -- until it is born again in Christ. Moreover, it is unclean all the while that it remains without this regeneration." For "there is besides the evil which supervenes on the soul [of the paganistic child] from the intervention of the evil spirit, an antecedent...natural evil which arises from its corrupt origin" -- namely, 'original sin.'"

Indeed, as Dr. Wall points out in his great work on *The History of Infant Baptism*, Tertullian here "expounds the holiness that such children have by the prerogative of their birth -- by these words: *sanctitati designati* ('designated for holiness')." <sup>290</sup>

### **131. Tertullian believed that infants could have faith**

In his *On the Soul*, Tertullian said <sup>291</sup> that infants could believe in Christ. "The infancy...of a human being...may be compared with the nascent sprout of a tree [*cf.* Romans 11:16].... His infant cries...testify to his actual possession of the faculties of sensation and intellect.... The babe **knows** his mother; discerns the nurse; and even recognizes the waiting-maid.... It would be very strange indeed that infancy were naturally so lively -- if it had not mental power."

Indeed, if "the baby knows his **mother**" -- how much easier for the baby to **know** his or her **heavenly Father** and His Son through the Holy Spirit! For there is indeed, even prenatally, a Saviour Friend Who "keeps on sticking closer than a brother." Proverbs 17:17 & 18:24 *cf.* Psalm 139:13f. Maintained Tertullian somewhat unbelievably: "In the district of Colythus, children [even] speak -- such is the precocity of their tongue -- before they are a month old." <sup>292</sup>

Here, the following can nevertheless clearly be seen. Each one of these points should clearly be noted.

First. Tertullian regarded all infants since the fall as being conceived in sin and not 'pure' -- unless and until 'born again.'

Second. Paganistic children are regarded as conceived and born in 'idolatrous' uncleanness.

Third. Covenant children born of at least one believing parent are 'holy' -- and therefore themselves to be regarded as Christians even at their birth.

Fourth. Such covenant children are holy 'by the prerogative of Christian seed' or 'because of their descent from a Christian parent.'

Fifth. Because those covenant children are 'holy' by descent from a Christian parent -- they are not incipiently made holy by their subsequent baptism.

Sixth. Such 'holy' children are intended for infant baptism (as the seal of their presumably already-present incipient faith). They are also intended for a post-baptismal Christian education or 'the discipline of the institution' -- alias the development of the child's faith already seminally present before his or her infant baptism.

Seventh. Were it not for their descent from a Christian parent, such children would be 'unclean' (whether baptized or not).

Eighth. As the babies of believers, they are covenant children -- and therefore 'designed for holiness and thereby for salvation.'

Ninth. Already before their baptisms such covenant children are deemed to have been 'born again' -- without which latter they could not be Christians and 'cannot be holy.'

Tenth. As those deemed to have been 'born again' already -- such covenant children are clearly baptizable, after and because of and in addition to their prebaptismal and even prenatal 'holiness.' First Corinthians 7:14 *cf.* Mark 16:16. Because they had been 'designed for holiness' at conception, they were so sealed at their baptism -- and were so to be promoted subsequently.

Eleventh. All at conception inherit the guilt of Adam's sin "until...born again in Christ" -- or until "entered onto Christ's list."<sup>293</sup>

And twelfth. Every such (unregenerate) child remains "unclean all the while he or she remains without this regeneration." That is so, because of the prenatal 'antecedent' and 'evil which arises from its corrupt origin' (namely at conception, *cf.* Psalm 51:5).

Last, in this regard the remarks of the famous Anglican Rev. Dr. Wall in his celebrated volumes on *The History of Infant Baptism* are highly significant. Erroneously, Wall himself believed covenant babies are cleansed precisely during their infant baptism. Yet anent First Corinthians 7:14, even he was forced to admit<sup>294</sup> "that Tertullian...expounds the holiness that such children have by the prerogative of their birth" -- rather than by their subsequent baptisms.

### **132. Aland-Jeremias-Argyle: Tertullian on Early-Patristic baptismal practice**

As even the maverick Lutheran Aland rightly points out,<sup>295</sup> according to Tertullian: "When born a Pagan, this sin clings to a man..., and in particular pagan[istic] superstition.... Where a man has Christian parents, or even only one, this danger does not exist. For he is born -- a *sanctus* [alias as one who has finished being made holy].... Christian children...are to be regarded as *sancti* 'when either of the parents was sanctified'; and, in truth, they are actually born as such." Coming from even an offbeat Lutheran like Aland, this is an amazing admission.<sup>296</sup>

Aland further states,<sup>297</sup> though somewhat erroneously: "The New Testament undoubtedly makes statements about the character and significance of baptism for the Christian. But it makes

these statements without providing any binding prescription as to the manner in which it is to be carried out, and in particular without any clearly-binding directions concerning the time of its administration.

"In the Acts of the Apostles, and occasionally elsewhere, we are able to glimpse a few aspects of early Christian usage. From them, we must conclude that infant baptism was not practised at that time, since these infants were regarded as *hagia*" alias 'holy ones' -- even while yet unbaptized. "The early Church perpetuates this tradition, and only at the end of the second century departed from it."

"As shown in one of our previous paragraphs, Aland here erred grievously. Yet he also adds elsewhere<sup>298</sup> (and this time rightly so): "We know that *circa* A.D. 200, there were circles in Carthage desiring infant baptism. About 220, the *Church Order* of Hippolytus in Rome included little children in the baptismal order....

"About 230, Origen -- in Palestine -- characterized it as the 'custom of the Church'.... And about 250, it was the rule demanded by the bishops in North Africa.... There is no doubting that infant baptism took place between 230 and 250 in Palestine...'according to the custom of the Church.' It need not be doubted that the usage in that place is older."<sup>299</sup>

The orthodox Lutheran Rev. Prof. Dr. Joachim Jeremias demonstrates conclusively<sup>300</sup> that "neither Tertullian nor Origen nor Cyprian give us the slightest support for the hypothesis that infant baptism was an innovation in their time." Indeed, even the Baptist Argyle had made similar concessions.

The **Baptist Argyle** explains<sup>301</sup> that Origen describes "the practice of infant baptism not only as a custom of the church, but as an apostolic custom." Indeed, "Cyprian Bishop of Carthage, a contemporary of Origen, directs that infants should be baptized."

These Lutheran and Baptist opponents of the Calvinistic concept (of the holiness of covenant children from conception onward), all concede that the extant Post-Tertullianic evidence overwhelmingly shows that the Early Church indeed upheld the federal holiness of covenant children -- and accordingly baptized them in infancy. So, we can now proceed more rapidly -- while next presenting the Post-Tertullianic evidence supporting our viewpoint.

### **133. Schaff's summary of paedobaptistic practice before 200 A.D.**

Before we do so, however, we first wish to endorse Rev. Professor Dr. Philip Schaff's summary of the views of the Early Church Fathers on this subject. Declares Schaff:<sup>302</sup> "Pious parents would naturally feel a desire to consecrate their offspring from the very beginning to the service of the Redeemer, and find a precedent in the ordinance of circumcision....

"Justin Martyr expressly teaches the capacity of all men for spiritual circumcision by baptism; and his 'all' can with the less propriety be limited -- since he is here speaking to a Jew [*Dialogue with Trypho* ch. 43]. He also says that many old men and women of sixty and seventy years of age have been from childhood disciples of Christ [*First Apology* ch. 15].

"Polycarp was eighty-six years a Christian, and must have been baptized in early youth. According to Irenaeus, his pupil and a faithful bearer of Johannean tradition, Christ passed through all the stages of life to sanctify them all, and came to redeem through Himself 'all who through Him are **born again** unto God -- sucklings, children, boys, youths, and adults' [*Against Heresies* II:22:4]....

"Among the fathers, Tertullian himself not excepted -- for he combats only its expediency -- there is not a single voice against the lawfulness and the apostolic origin of infant baptism. No time can be fixed at which it was first introduced. Tertullian suggests that it was usually based on the invitation of Christ: 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not'.... Heretics also practised it -- and were not censured for it" by the Church Universal.

### **134. Hippolytus: the little ones in Christian families are to be baptized**

Hippolytus of Rome, the Church Overseer of Portus, was a disciple of Irenaeus.<sup>303</sup> Around 215 A.D., he compiled his *Apostolic Traditions*. This seems to have drawn from the older *Egyptian Church Order*.<sup>304</sup> Hippolytus himself may well have authored the latter. Even if not, he at any rate certainly incorporated it into the second part of his book: *Concerning the Apostolic Tradition of Gifts of Grace*.<sup>305</sup>

Hippolytus clearly linked Christian baptism to Judaic proselyte baptism. He directed:<sup>306</sup> "First you should baptize the little ones. All who can speak for themselves, should speak. But for those who cannot speak, their parents should speak -- or another who belongs to their family."

Thus, Hippolytus accepted household baptism -- including that of covenant infants -- as an unquestioned rule. This had probably been transmitted to Hippolytus by his teacher Irenaeus -- who had received it from his mentor Polycarp, who had himself in turn absorbed it from his teacher the apostle John. Certainly Hippolytus's statement on household baptism was transmitted from the Coptic into the Latin, and also into the most diverse oriental languages. It thenceforth served as a foundation for numerous subsequent Church Ordinances normative for the administration of baptism in the Church Universal.

The skeptical Aland has attempted to argue<sup>307</sup> that the previously-mentioned passage<sup>308</sup> in the *Apostolic Traditions* represents a Post-Hippolytan interpolation. However, the remarkable agreement shown by the Ethiopic, Arabic and Syriac translations of this passage -- certainly favours its Hippolytan if not even its Pre-Hippolytan antiquity. In fact, the first word in the title *Apostolic Tradition* -- rather evidences even an apostolic practice long before Hippolytus.

Very much more significant yet is the fact that it became the principal source, and often part, of many subsequent books on Common law throughout the Christian world -- in Latin, Greek, Syriac, Sahidic *etc.* All of these, without exception, reflect the unbroken custom of baptizing infants.<sup>309</sup>

### **135. Origen: infant baptism is an apostolic tradition**

Origen, the highly allegorical student of Clement of Alexandria, succeeded his mentor as head of the Catechetical School there -- round about 225 A.D. Eusebius tells us<sup>310</sup> Origen's ancestors had been Christian "from his forefathers" for several generations (*ek progenōn*). Indeed, Rufinus remarks<sup>311</sup> that Origen inherited his Christianity "from his grandparents and forefathers (*ab avis atque atavis*)."

Observes Dr. Wall: "Origen was born *anno* 185. That is, 'the year after the apostles 85' [John having passed away around A.D. 100]." Origen, continued Wall, "was seventeen years old when his father suffered." Consequently, "his grandfather, or at least his great-grandfather, must have lived in the apostles' time...."

"He could not have been ignorant [of] whether he was himself baptized in infancy.... He had no further than his own family to go, for inquiry of how it [infant baptism] was practised in the time of the apostles...."

"He was...a very learned man, and could not be ignorant of the use of the churches in most of which he had also travelled.... He was born and bred at Alexandria.... He had lived in Greece and at Rome and in Cappadocia and Arabia -- and spent the main part of his life in Syria and Palestine." See Eusebius's *Church History* VI.

It is clear that Origen himself was baptized -- apparently in infancy -- and probably in Egypt around 185 A.D. When an adult, he still clung to infant baptism -- being largely orthodox in his doctrine of the universal imputation of Adam's original sin.

Thus, in his *Eighth Homily on Leviticus* chapter four, and referring further to Psalm 51:5f, Origen argued that "every soul that is born in the flesh is polluted with the filth of sin and iniquity.... None is clean from pollution, though his life be but of the length of one day.... The baptism of the church is given for forgiveness of sins. Infants also are, by the usage of the church, baptized."

Similarly, in his *Homily on Luke* chapter fourteen, Origen remarked: "Infants are baptized.... None is free from pollution, though his life be but of the length of one day upon the earth.... Infants are baptized!"

Rev. Professor Dr. Schaff declares:<sup>312</sup> "In the churches of Egypt, infant baptism must have been practised from the first.... Origen distinctly derives it from the tradition of the apostles.... Through his journeys in the East and West, he was well acquainted with the practice of the Church in his time...."

"Origen himself was baptized in childhood (185 or soon after)...in connection with the Egyptian custom.... It would certainly be more difficult to prove that he was not baptized in infancy.... Compare his *Commentary on Matthew*..., where he seems to infer this custom from the example of Christ blessing little children."<sup>313</sup>



### **136. Origen on infant faith and infant baptism: continued**

On Matthew 18:2-14, Origen commented that Jesus is here referring also to those who are infants in age. Origen then asked three questions. **When** is it that the angels here spoken of, are set over those little ones shewed by our Saviour? **Whether** they [those little ones] take the care and management of them [the angels] from the time when they by the washing of regeneration...as newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the Word and are no longer subject to any evil power? **Or** from their **birth**, according to the foreknowledge of God and His predestinating of them?"

Such a little child as our Saviour then set before the apostles, had his 'guardian angel' given to him by God before his infant baptism -- viz. from the time of his birth, and even from his prenatal conception onward. Origen says that the guardian angel is given to every one from his birth. Jeremiah (1:5) says God sanctified him before he came forth out of the womb. Matthew (18:6) says of Jesus that there are "little ones that believe in Him" -- even before their baptism.

Most of Origen's vast writings were lost, but some have been preserved especially in those of Jerome and Rufinus. Thus we still have Origen's comment on Matthew 19:28, where Jesus speaks of those who have followed Him in the regeneration.

Commented Origen: "That is a regeneration...when a new heaven and a new earth are made.... But the way to that regeneration, is that which by Paul is called the laver of regeneration.... There is perhaps in our generation none clean from pollution, though his life be but of one day.... All that are born, may say that which was said by David in the...[fifth-first] psalm. That was this -- 'I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.' But in the regeneration..., everyone that is born again of water and Spirit is clean from pollution."

Not less than forty times did Origen, in the remnants of his Greek works, cite the Septuagint's Job 14:5 -- that 'none is free from pollution, though his life be but of one day.' Indeed, this statement is also cited both there and elsewhere -- in the translations of Jerome and Rufinus from Origen.

It is said in those translations: "This natural pollution of sin must be done away by water and the Spirit." Consequently, also infants one day old need the regeneration (of which infant baptism is the sign and seal). For Origen knew that about half of those then being born into the world, must get regenerated during infancy -- if ever at all. For he knew that half the human race then alive, was never reaching adulthood.

Indeed, Origen himself maintained<sup>314</sup> that Elijah had 'baptized' the twelve stones of the altar, representing the twelve tribes of Israel and their infant children, when he had proceeded thrice to "pour" water over those stones. Similarly, so too John the baptizer as a 'Second Elijah' had sprinkled the penitent Israelites and their infants. See: First Kings 18:33f; Malachi 3:1-4; 4:5-6; John 1:25; Matthew 17:3-13.

### **137. Origen on infant faith and infant baptism: concluded**

Origen held<sup>315</sup> (anent Romans 6:5f) that "the Church received from the apostles the tradition of baptizing infants too." Elsewhere he stated<sup>316</sup> (on Luke 2:22a) that "children also are baptized for the remission of sins.... That is the reason why infants too are baptized." Indeed, yet elsewhere he maintained<sup>317</sup> (on Leviticus 12:2) that baptism is given "according to the custom of the Church to infants also."

In these three last-mentioned places (Romans and Luke and Leviticus), Origen cites<sup>318</sup> the Septuagint's version of Job 14:4f as a prooftext: "No one is pure from stain, yea, though he be but one day old." In all three of these passages, either the Greek *paidia* ('little children') or the Latin *parvuli* ('small children') occurs.

For "a child who has only just been born..., has sin..., as...Psalm 51:5-7 shows.... The Church received from the apostles the tradition to administer baptism to the children also.... Infants are baptized for the remission of sins.... That is...why infants too are baptized."<sup>319</sup>

Significantly, Origen called baptism: "regeneration to God."<sup>320</sup> Yet he repudiated any notion that this might have occurred *ex opere operato* -- where he said the insincere are baptized unto condemnation.<sup>321</sup> Some believers, said Origen, "are called from childhood and the earliest age of life." Indeed, these are they who are "faithful from childhood."<sup>322</sup>

In his *Homilies on Joshua*, Origen implied that even the infants of Israel were 'baptized' at the Jordan -- and without submersion. For "at the Jordan, the ark of the Testament was the leader of the people of God.... The *waters* curbed their stream, and piled up...and gave a safe passage.... These things...refer to...you, Christian, who has crossed the Jordan stream -- through the sacrament of baptism."

Still commenting on Joshua 3:8-17 and 4:1-22, where the children of Israel were all 'baptized' at the Jordan on dry land, Origen in that very connection next referred to Matthew 18:10. Maintained Origen: "According to that saying of our Lord concerning infants -- and you were an infant when you were baptized -- 'their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven.' So then, Jesus wrote His Law in your heart in the presence of those children of Israel beholding God's face, at the time when the sacrament of faith was given to you!"<sup>323</sup>

Origen himself thus certainly claimed that, since the time of the apostles, baptism had always been given to infants. Also the knowledgeable Jerome claimed this about Origen.

He unfortunately also went far beyond infant baptism. Syncrretizing the Bible (probably unconsciously) with Hellenistic and perhaps also Egyptian Paganism, Origen developed an incipient theory of baptismal regenerationism. Indeed, he also used it to help construct his own neopaganizing hypothesis anent the pre-existence of the soul even before conception.

Nevertheless, Origen's words do at least clearly evidence the widespread practice of Paedobaptism in his own day. His words do lend credibility to his claim that infant baptism was certainly an apostolic practice. Indeed, there is even evidence that Origen's student Basilides

received "the seal" of baptism not at all by way of submersion -- but by way of pouring or sprinkling from a "small jar of water."<sup>324</sup>

### **138. Cyprian of Carthage: newborn infants of believers should be baptized**

Cyprian, a rather ritualistic student of Tertullian, was born of respectable yet heathen parents around 200 A.D. He seems to have lived a rather worldly life -- until converted and baptized [as an adult] in 246.

In 248, Cyprian became a Church Overseer -- which Tertullian had never become. Cyprian was certainly influenced by his fellow Carthaginian Tertullian in many ways -- and even baptismally. Yet it seems very significant that also Cyprian nevertheless argued strongly in favour of both the existing practice as well as the normative rightness of household and infant baptism.

It was, of course, on the eighth day after birth that covenant infants had been circumcised -- prior to Christ's resurrection on the 'eighth day of the week' to fulfil and to replace circumcision. Genesis 17:8-16; John 20:1,19,26; Colossians 2:11-13. Thus, Cyprian stated that the earlier (251 or 253 A.D.) Synod of Carthage had unanimously and rightly recognized the validity of such infant baptisms as were administered even before the eighth day after birth.

Explained Cyprian<sup>325</sup> as to "the case of infants..., 'the Son of man has not come to destroy...but to save them.' As far as we can, we must strive that -- if possible -- no soul be lost. For what is lacking to him who has once been formed in the womb by the hands of God?"

Cyprian continued: "Among all, whether infants or those who are older, there is the same equality of the divine gift.... That very grace also which is given to the baptized, is given either less or more -- according to the age of the receivers.... God, as He does not accept the person, so does not accept the age -- since He shows Himself a Father to all, with well-weighed equality for the attainment of heavenly grace....

"Although the infant is still fresh from its birth, yet it is not such that any one should shudder.... For in respect of the observance of the eighth day in the Jewish circumcision of the flesh, a sacrament was given beforehand in shadow and in usage. But when Christ came, it was fulfilled in truth.... Because the eighth day (the first day after the Sabbath) was to be that on which the Lord should rise again -- and should quicken us and give us circumcision of the Spirit.

"The eighth day and the Lord's day -- that is, the first day after the Sabbath -- went before in the figure. That figure ceased -- when by and by, the truth came and spiritual circumcision was given to us.... Peter also, in the Acts of the Apostles [10:28], speaks and says 'The Lord has said to me that I should call no man common or unclean'.... Nobody is hindered...from baptism and from grace.

"How much rather ought we to shrink from hindering an infant who, being lately born, has not sinned -- except in that being born after the flesh according to Adam, he has contracted the

contagion of the ancient death at its earliest birth.... To him are remitted not his own sins, but the sins of another....

"This was our opinion in the Council... By us no one ought to be hindered from baptism...which (since it is to be observed and maintained in respect of all) -- we think is to be even more observed in respect of infants and newly-born persons."

Significantly, in his own writings *Against Two Letters of the Pelagians* (IV:8), Augustine of Hippo later cites this Cyprianic passage. He then adds "about the baptizing of infants" that "there is no doubt but that it is to be had at Carthage." So too in his *Epistle to Boniface* (98:3f). And so too Jerome (in Book III of his own *Dialogue Against the Pelagians*).

### **139. Cyprian: baptism should be administered by way of sprinkling**

Cyprian's commitment to infant and household baptism and indeed to the mode of sprinkling, can also be seen elsewhere. Thus, there is his further statement<sup>326</sup> that "the Jews under the apostles...had already gained the most ancient baptism of the Law and Moses." Numbers 8:5-7 & 19:8-13 *cf.* Hebrews 9:10-21.

Even more strikingly, Cyprian wrote to Demetrianus about Ezekiel 9:4-6. There the executioners of God's wrath were commanded to "slay all -- old and young, maids and little children -- that had not the mark upon their foreheads."

Cyprian then applied this to *Christians*, saying it signifies that none can now escape but those only who are "regenerated -- and signed with Christ's mark." See too Matthew 28:19 *cf.* Revelation 7:2-4 & 9:4 & 14:1 & 22:2-4.

There was also the important controversy surrounding the re-admission or non-readmission (and thus the re-baptism or non-rebaptism) of former members who had 'lapsed' from the Universal Christian Church during the time of the Decian persecutions. All of the various parties involved in that controversy, unanimously insisted on the rightness of baptism by the method of sprinkling. This was true: of the compromised Lapsists; of the unreadmitting Novatianists; of the anti-rebaptist Stephenites; and also of the Cyprianists (who demanded rebaptism for all those even trinitarianly baptized by either the Montanists or the Novatianists).

It was the Antirebaptists who finally emerged victorious in this controversy. They rightly insisted on the rightness of baptism by the method of sprinkling -- seeing the 'baptized' disciples were not submersed but "effused"<sup>327</sup> on the day of Pentecost.

Also the stern and overstrict Novatianists knew of no other method of baptism than by sprinkling. Indeed, the gravely-ill Novatian himself had previously received a 'Tertullianistic emergency baptism' by "being perfused in the bed where he lay."<sup>328</sup>

With this, one should compare Walafrid Strabo's later baptismal statement about Cyprian's contemporary Laurence.<sup>329</sup> We mean his statement that "one of the soldiers..., being converted,

brought a pitcher of water for Laurence to baptize him with" -- just before Laurence himself was martyred about the same time as Cyprian, in 258 A.D.

#### **140. Other evidence in Cyprian for baptismal sprinkling**

Cyprian himself remarked that those who had been sprinkled baptismally, at least in the Universal Church, should not be rebaptized wheresoever -- by any mode whatsoever.<sup>330</sup> There, Cyprian discussed those previously baptized by being "sprinkled."

If they had been "sprinkled" in the Universal Church, continued Cyprian, their own "diffidence and modesty prejudices none.... Holy Scripture speaks by the mouth of the prophet Ezekiel [36:25-26] and says, 'Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean'....

"Also in Numbers [19:8-13], ' And the man that shall be unclean...shall be cut off from Israel' because the water of sprinkling has not been sprinkled upon him.' And again [Numbers 8:5-7]..., 'You shall sprinkle them with the water of purification.' And again [Numbers 19:9], 'The water of sprinkling is a purification.' Thence -- it appears that the sprinkling [alias *adspersionem*] of water prevails....

"If any think that those have gained nothing by having only been sprinkled with the saving water, but that they are still empty and void -- let them not be deceived!... Nay, verily, the Holy Spirit is not given by measure, but is poured out [alias *infunditur*] altogether upon [alias *super*] the believer." Cf. Acts 1:5f & 2:1-4,14-21.

According to Cyprian, it wrongly "seems just to some -- that those who outside the Church...are polluted with profane water [in 'heretical baptisms'], should be judged to be baptized." Consequently, "they who come [into the Universal Church] from heresy -- shall not be asked whether they were washed [alias *loti*] or sprinkled [alias *perfusi*]."

Yet, when describing baptisms performed by the Universal Church herself -- Cyprian never used the word *mergo* and much less the words *immergo* and *submergo*. Instead, he used only words like *baptizo* (usually) -- and occasionally *adspersi* [alias 'sprinkled'], *infunditur* [alias 'poured out'], and *perfusi* [alias 'poured'] *etc.* Indeed, Cyprian's contemporary -- Dionysius the Church Overseer of Alexandria -- speaks of baptism specifically as a threefold sprinkling.<sup>331</sup>

#### **141. Syncretistic Cyprian: the father of baptismal regenerationism**

Already from the above, a syncretism can be observed between non-regenerating infant baptism by Scriptural sprinkling on the one hand -- and 'magical' paganistic washings *ex opere operato* on the other. Indeed, it was especially the 250 A.D. Catabaptist Cyprian who introduced the swiftly-spreading and paganistic pollution called 'baptismal regenerationism' -- into the Early Church Universal. Yet even subsequently, resistance against it still continued -- for more than a century thereafter.

We hardly ever agree with Dr. Samuel Angus, sometime Professor of New Testament and Historical Theology at St. Andrew's College, University of Sydney. He was greatly in error -- also when he attributed New Testament Christianity to Pagan Greek roots.

Yet what Angus claimed about the Late-Patristic Church, is true. For it is undeniable that the form-ed Church at length became increasingly de-formed. This occurred especially from the (250 A.D.) time of Cyprian onward. It continued until the Church re-formed -- in the days of the 1517<sup>f</sup> Protestant Re-form-ation.

Wrote Angus:<sup>332</sup> "It was inevitable that [heathen] Hellenic religion should leave a deep impression upon...later Christianity..., mainly because Hellenic converts became the pillars of the Church.... In considering the history of Christian sacramentarianism..., the organization of the Catholic Church was largely the creation of the genius of Cyprian, who was a firm believer in magic....

"In several of the [Pagan] Mystery-Religions, 'baptism' was the means to the remission of the penalties of sin and of regeneration.... The 'baptism' of the *taurobolium* [alias being showered with bull's blood], was valid for twenty years."

Unintended corroboration of the above, comes also from the camp of Traditionalistic Romanism. Thus Dr. B.V. Miller, Oscott Professor of Dogmatic Theology at St. Mary's College.

According to Miller:<sup>333</sup> "All competent scholars are agreed that from the end of the third century, the Catholic theology of the Mass was fixed.... It is maintained by many that this is a perversion of the primitive doctrine.... The principal author of the innovation and of the change in the current of theological tradition, is said to be St. Cyprian."

Let it never be forgotten that Cyprian, though an Early-Catholic Christian, was also a heterodox Catabaptist! For Cyprian deviated from mainline Christianity [and even from Early-Catholicism] at that time -- with his insistence upon rebaptizing all those catholicized even from trinitarian sects. This rebaptistic viewpoint was essentially magical and ritualistic.

Fortunately, it was then successfully opposed -- in the middle of the third century -- by Stephen of Rome and by Dionysius of Rome. Yet it did introduce a permanent element of superstition -- which soon spread throughout the Early-Catholic Church. It poisoned her for many centuries, and indeed right down till the Protestant Reformation.

#### **142. Baptismal inscriptions for infants (dating from 200 to 300 A.D.)**

In looking at some ancient inscriptions from Italy and France (alias Gaul) -- dating from A.D. 200 to 300 -- it can be seen that they too favour infant and household baptism, and indeed specifically by sprinkling. (Perhaps because of overly-strict understandings of the First and Second Commandments of the Decalogue especially among the earlier Christians, there are no extant Christian drawings or even inscriptions -- on any subject whatsoever -- before 200 A.D.)

A tombstone inscription of approximately 200 A.D., however, reads:<sup>334</sup> "Zosimus, a believer [descended] from believers (*pistos ek pistōn*), lies here; having lived 2 years, 1 month, 25 days." Another such tombstone states of the "innocent infant" Dionysius, that "he lies here with the holy ones." Yet another gravestone suggests that the covenant child Eutychianus had been baptized, **before** dying when only one year old.

Similarly, the "holy infant" Kyriakos is styled a "slave of Christ" -- on his tombstone. Further, another tombstone mentions the "baptism" of a tiny child addressed as "the sweetest one born." Again, the grave of the two-year-old Pomponia Fortunata is marked with the Christian symbol of the fish -- and claims that she "died in peace." And another tombstone inscription states that "by the Holy Spirit, Innocent lived about three years."

Yet other third-century tombstones suggest: that Sabus had been baptized, before dying when not yet one; that Theodora died, baptized, when 11 months old; that Alexandria also did so, when two; and that the "worthy...believer" Apronius was baptized at the request of his godly grandmother -- before he died after living one year and nine months and five days.

Further, there is the case of Tyche, who was baptized before he died when only one year ten months and fifteen days old. Irene was baptized one week before she died, after living with her parents for eleven months. And three different Greek Christian boys, who all died when twelve years old, are stated to have been "born believers" (or *pistoi genetēi*) -- as faithful covenant children of three different pairs of Christian parents.

From Africa, there are third-century inscriptions indicating that two children were baptized before they died when respectively nine hours and six days old. And the adult martyr Crispina said when dying, that God Who commanded her to be born -- had also given her **salvation** and baptism at the time of her birth.<sup>335</sup>

### **143. The baptismal errors of second- and third-century Sub-Christians**

We have already seen that the dispensationalistic Marcionites wrongly taught the repeatability of baptism. Possibly Simon the magician and probably the heretic Menander 'baptized' not in the Name of God Triune nor even Jesus but in their own name. The Carpocratians quite literally put their own 'ear-mark' on their converts. And the Valentinians poured a mixture of oil and water over the heads of their proselytes (thus anticipating the practice of mediaeval Romanists).

The Cerinthians (like the modern Mormons) 'baptized' for the dead. So too did the Montanists -- who also first rebaptized their converts, and then abandoned infant baptism. Several sects would not baptize married people, and insisted on divorce first. Even within the Church Universal, for a short time, the Firmilianists and the Cyprianists wrongly rebaptized converted sectarians who had been baptized previously elsewhere in the Name of God Triune.

Of all these groups, none are known to have denied infant salvation. Not until the Hieracitae in 285f A.D., do we encounter that heresy.

According to Rev. Professor Dr. Philip Schaff,<sup>336</sup> the heretic "Hieracas or Hierax of Leontopolis in Egypt...lived during the Diocletian persecution." That occurred on and off from 284 to 303 A.D. Schaff further claims that Hieracas "declared virginity a condition of salvation." Later, Epiphanius [*circa* 315-403 A.D.] described him as a man...who...denied the...salvation of children."

It is not known whether or not this Hieracas and his followers ever abandoned infant baptism. In his own work *The Development of the Doctrine of Infant Salvation*,<sup>337</sup> Rev. Professor Dr. B.B. Warfield describes especially the followers of Hieracas. Warfield explains that "a heretical sect arose called the *Hieracitae*..., consigning apparently all children dying before the use of reason -- to annihilation. See Epiphanius's *Heresies* 67 and Augustine's *Heresies* 47."

As 'Neo-Hieracianism' -- this heresy of Hieracas later re-emerged among the mediaeval Petrobusians (A.D. 1105f). They denied both infant salvation and infant baptism. Thus even the Baptist A.H. Newman, in his *History of Antipaedobaptism*.<sup>338</sup>

For the rest, the evidence of Early Church History is quite clear. The Church Universal always presupposed the salvation of early-dying covenant children, and accordingly baptized during their infancy such covenant babies as looked likely to continue to live here on Earth. There is no evidence at all that any early Sub-Christian sect rebaptized infants if and after they became adults. Such is not found until the second-generation Montanists, at the beginning of the third century.

Even the Semimontanist Tertullian II, while indeed favouring the postponement of baptism till adulthood, did not deny the Christic and apostolic antiquity of infant baptism. Nor did he ever advocate the rebaptism in adulthood of those previously baptized when infants.

Not till the Hieracitae at the end of the third and the beginning of the fourth century -- do we encounter the viewpoint that infants as such cannot be saved. Indeed, it is not till the twelfth century heretical Petrobusians that we find a wholesale abandonment of infant baptism -- coupled with their apostate Neo-Hieracianistic denial of infant salvation.

#### **144. Baptisms of young believers in early-fourth-century writings**

Around 300 A.D., Eusebius the Church Overseer of Caesarea informs us that even Novatian received baptism by effusion. He also records that God in Old Testament times provided "fountains facing the temple...for those who required the purification and the sprinklings of water and the Holy Spirit." Indeed, he also tells us Basilides was baptized in prison -- thus suggesting sprinkling.<sup>339</sup>

Similarly, Lactantius wrote<sup>340</sup> that "Jesus was baptized by John at the river Jordan." This was done, "so that He might wash away by the spiritual laver the sins not of Himself...but of the...Pagans also -- by baptism, that is, by the sprinkling of the dew of purification."

The Synod of Elvira (in 306 A.D.) referred<sup>341</sup> to infants as Church Members by baptism. Alexander, the Church Overseer of Alexandria, baptized by sprinkling or pouring; and his



successor, the great Athanasius, regarded baptism by affusion as the true Christian mode. Indeed, Athanasius cited Genesis 7:11f and Leviticus 24:4-9 and First Corinthians 10:1f -- and reflected on the relationship between **baptism**, rain, clouds, the sprinkled waters of purification, and tears.<sup>342</sup>

The 316 Synod of Neocaesarea seemed to imply that the prenatal tiny boy of a pregnant woman herself baptized during pregnancy -- should himself be baptized postnatally, during his infancy. Thus: Rivetus,<sup>343</sup> Wall,<sup>344</sup> Balsamon,<sup>345</sup> Zonarus,<sup>346</sup> and Augustine<sup>347</sup> -- *versus* the antipaedobaptizing Arminian Hugo Grotius.<sup>348</sup>

Also the (320 A.D.) Asterius presupposed the customariness of infant baptism and the duty of covenant parents to have their children baptized.<sup>349</sup> In fact, even most of the fourth-century heretics -- the Arians, the Donatists, the Symmachians, and the Pelagians -- all 'baptized' their own children.<sup>350</sup> This then was the situation right after the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325 -- and indeed also right down till that time, even from the Apostolic Age onward.

#### **145. Summary of baby belief before baptism in the Ante-Nicene Church**

We have seen that the infallible teaching of the Old Testament anent the infant faith of covenant children -- Psalm 22:9f & Jeremiah 1:5 *etc.* -- is the basis of the similar pure teachings of the New Testament. It is also the source of whatever is truthful in the perverted teaching of Judaism and Paganism, both of which were partly derived therefrom.

Thus, Early Judaism (between Old and New Testament times) taught that the godly were 'righteous' -- even before their circumcision. The infants of proselytes were similarly regarded, as soon as their parents had been judaized. Indeed, not just John the baptizer but also Philo the hellenized Judaist and the historian Josephus the Sadducee -- presupposed presacramental piety in covenant infants. So too did the Jewish *Talmud* -- and also the Hebraists Selden and Witsius thereanent.

Many forms of Paganism, in the Near East and in Ancient Greece, credit infants with faith. Such religions practised water-rites, also by way of sprinkling. It was, however, especially the Early Church Fathers who meaningfully transmitted -- and for quite a while preserved -- the true teachings of the Old and New Testaments about these matters.

Thus, Clement of Rome mentions Christian messengers -- who had been unblameable from their youth onward. The *Didachē* prohibits abortion -- and urges baptism. The *Epistle of Barnabas* encourages Christians to be fruitful -- and to baptize by sprinkling. Ignatius, Pliny and Papias all evidence that Christians had their households baptized. Indeed, the *Shepherd of Hermas* describes Christ's justified bride -- and her children.

The '*New Testament Apocrypha*' regards the baptism of babies as a seal of an even earlier infant faith. Justin Martyr insists fetuses are conscious, and that covenant infants trust in Christ. He had a comprehensive doctrine of faith before baptism -- which is especially prominent in his

*Dialogue with the Jew Trypho*. Indeed, Polycarp -- who at the end of his life claimed to have served Christ for eighty-six years -- must have had faith even when an infant.

Other martyrs in the middle of the second century who had believed ever since their babyhood -- include Hierax, Paeon, Papyrus, Maximus, Irenaeus of Sirmium, and Sabas. Athenagoras and Theodotus insist that human fetuses are sentient. Irenaeus of Lyons believed in the salvation of covenant children from conception onward. Indeed, Polycrates claimed he had "always" walked with God.

Clement of Alexandria stated: that pagan sprinklings anticipated Christian baptism; that embryos are conscious; and that covenant infants are believers. He strongly stressed Christ's care of unweaned babies, even before they received infant baptism by way of 'dew' or 'showers.' Indeed, he also emphasized the need of their lifelong disciplining thereafter.

Archeological evidence corroborates both the doctrine of original sin as well as that of the covenant also with the infants of believers. So too does the ancient *Egyptian Church Order*, where it insists: "First baptize the little ones!"

Although Tertullian sadly shifted toward Semimontanism, he did not deny but clearly admitted the Paedobaptism of the Early Church -- even tracing it back to the words of Christ in Luke 18:15f. Tertullian himself regarded even prenatal infants as thoroughly sentient -- and sprinkling as the preferred mode of postnatal baptism. Very significantly, on the basis of First Corinthians 7:14, he viewed the infants of believers as themselves 'holy' -- even before their birth.

Hippolytus, in his *Apostolic Traditions*, taught that the little ones in Christian families are to be baptized. Origen too called infant baptism an apostolic tradition, and reflected this in all of his Bible Commentaries. Cyprian said newborn babies of believers could and should be baptized even before a week old -- and indeed by way of sprinkling. Significantly it is not till then -- in the middle of the third century (A.D.) -- that we encounter the incipient doctrine of baptismal regenerationism outside of Paganism in Christian circles.

All extant inscriptions from A.D. 200 to 300, support infant faith within, and the early baptism of, the children of believing adults. According to Eusebius and Lactantius -- compare too the Synod of Elvira and Athanasius -- this occurred by way of sprinkling. Asterius taught the practice of infant baptism as a duty of believing parents. And even most of the fourth-century heretics -- such as the Donatists, the Arians, the Symmachians and the Pelagians -- all had their own children baptized.

So then -- the Old Testament teaches infant faith and infant circumcision, and the New Testament teaches infant faith and infant baptism. Yet also Paganism and Judaism presuppose the privileged position of a religionist's own infants. Further, certainly infant faith -- and it would seem also infant baptism -- was clearly taught by the Early Church Fathers. That was long before Christianity ceased to be persecuted by a hostile state -- at the advent of the first Christian Emperor in 321 A.D.

The above, then, is the testimony especially of: Clement of Rome; the *Didachē*; Barnabas; Justin Martyr; Irenaeus; Clement of Alexandria; Tertullian; Hippolytus; Origen; and Cyprian. It

is the conclusion yielded also by: the archaeological evidence; the inscriptions; the extant ordinances; and the canons of the Early Church Councils themselves.

## ENDNOTES

- 1) Genesis 34:15f; 35:2f; Ex. 4:24-26; 12:22,43-49; 14:19 to 15:12; 18:12f; 18:12f; 24:6-11; Num. 15:15; I Cor. 10:1-2; Heb. 11:28f & 13:10-16. See too Wall's *op. cit.* I pp. 10f.
- 2) II Kgs. 5:1-18, esp. vv. 10 (LXX); Dan. 4:33 & 5:21 (LXX).
- 3) Wall's *op. cit.*, ed. 1836, I p. xli. See Cullmann's *op. cit.* pp. 25f & 60-65; and Lee's *Sprinkling is Scriptural* pp. 22f.
- 4) Ps. 106:32-40; I Kgs. 16:31-34 & 21:25-29 *cf.* Rev. 2:20-23; Jer. 7:17-21,31 & 44:17-25; Ezk. 8:6 to 9:6 ("little children"); 16:3-6,20f,36; 20:26,31f; 23:37.
- 5) Dr. Rose of St. Andrews, the eminent Scottish authority on classic pagan mystery religions, declares that an "old and popular rite...had the carrying of...a kind of small maypole. The bearers of it were children.... The Athenian children sang: 'Eiresione brings figs and fat loaves...and oil to scrape her off!'" J.H. Rose: *Religion in Greece and Rome* (Harper, New York, 1959, p. 75). Too, "the *Ephebi* marched out to Eleusis.... The legally qualified were all Hellenes, and subsequently all Romans, above a certain very youthful limit of age." Thus Rose & Farnell: *Mystery [Religions]*, in 1929 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, XVI:47.
- 6) Cited in J. Jeremias: *The Origins of Infant Baptism*, Napierville Ill., 1963, p. 11.
- 7) See our main text at nn. 66-72 below. 8) *Aboth* RN 16 (6a); *San.* 91b; *Gen. R.* 34 (21a); *etc.*
- 9) Gen. 6:9-18f & 7:4-7f *cf.* I Pet. 3:20f. 10) Gen. 15:6 & 17:1,10-14 *cf.* Rom. 4:9-12.
- 11) Ecclus. 1:14-16. See J.P. Lange's *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures*, ET, Clark, Edinburgh, 1880. Vol. XV of the Old Testament, containing the Apocrypha = E.C. Bissell's *The Apocrypha of the Old Testament*, Clark, Edinburgh, 1880, pp. 280,288,290.
- 12) *Testament of Levi* 3:2 to 5:15. In editor R.H. Platt Jr.'s *Forgotten Books of Eden* pp. 220 & 228-33, in the 1976 Collins-Fontana edition of the *The Lost Books of the Bible and the Forgotten Books of Eden*. See too J. Jeremias's *Infant Baptism in the First Four Centuries*, S.C.M., London, 1960, pp. 24-28. *Cf.* too the latter's original German version, Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, Göttingen, 1958, pp. 30-37: "In the second century B.C., at the conversion of a Gentile to Judaism, circumcision sufficed and nothing is said of a baptismal washing (*Testament of Judah* 14,10; *Achior*). It is only toward the end of the first century B.C. that the transition was made to attribute personal uncleanness to the Gentile. It is obvious that one in this way wished to prevent mismarriages between Jews and Gentile women. Compare *Test. Levi* 14,6." Also see J. Jeremias's *Proselyte Baptism and New Testament*, in *Theological Journal* V, 1949, pp. 418-28.
- 13) *Test. Levi* 14,6 (thus Jeremias) = *Test. Levi* 4:17 in Platt's *op. cit.* II p. 231. (Jeremias's *Inf. Bapt.*, ET pp. 24-28; *cf.* too the 1958 original German version pp. 30-37).
- 14) See the arts. *Hillel* and *Tannaim* in A.M. Hyamson & A.M. Silbermann's *Jewish Encyclopaedia*, Shapiro & Vallentine, London, 1939, pp. 286 & 633.
- 15) *b. Shab.* 135b *Bar.* Compare: *Ger.* 2:1; *Keth.* 1:2-4; 3:1-2; *Qid.* 78a *Bar. par. b. Yeb.* 60b; *j. Qid.* 4:66a.10; *j. Bik.* 1:64a.31f; *j. Yeb.* 8.9b.62f; *Pes.* 8:8.
- 16) *Op. cit.* pp. 37f.
- 17) See Tertullian's *On Baptism* 15; A. Dupont-Sommer's *The Jewish Sect of Qumran and the Essenes*, Vallentine & Mitchell, London, 1955, pp. 150f; F.N. Lee's *Catechism Before Communion!*, Ed. D. dissertation, Dominion School of Education, Fla., 1989, pp. 69f (paras. 262-66); and F.N. Lee's *Sprinkling Is Scriptural!*, in *The Presbyterian*, Bristol, July 1990, pp. 24f. U.C. Ewing's work *The Prophet of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Philosophical Library, New York, 1963) is both cavalier and superficial.
- 18) Mt. 23:15. 19) Mt. 28:19 & I Jh. 5:6-8. 20) H. Witsius: *On the Covenants*, Tegg, London, ed. 1837, II p. 421.
- 21) Jeremias: *op. cit.* pp. 35f *cf.* Gen. 17:5-10f & Lk. 1:59f. 22) Pridmore: *op. cit.* p. 113.
- 23) Mt. 3:2f & Mk. 1:5f. 24) Tert.: *Against Marcion* 4:33. 25) Greg. Naz.: *Oration* 39. 26) *Op. cit.* p. 46.
- 27) *Ib.* p. 75. An amazing statement, coming from a (somewhat sacramentalistic) Lutheran scholar!
- 28) Philo: *On the Cherubs* 12-15. Comp. too: Lk. 2:7 & 2:21.

- 29) Philo: *To Gaius* 16:31; and as cited in Ayres: *op. cit.* pp. 102f.
- 30) Cf. Philo's *On Joseph* 251 & his *On the Life of Moses* I:5. 31) Acts 16:14-16; 16:30-34; 18:8; *etc.*
- 32) Josephus's *Ant.* 4:70,300; 5:11. 33) Josephus: *Against Apion*, I:8,12; 2:19,26,27.
- 34) Cited in Ayres: *op. cit.* pp. 102f. 35) *Antiq.* 18:3:3 & 18:5:2 compare *Life* 1 & 23.
- 36) See the arts. *Ezra the scribe* and *Mishnah and Talmud*, in A.M. Hyamson & A.M. Silbermann's *op. cit.*, pp. 219 & 433 & 630f. Also note the remarks by the famous Baptist Rev. Dr. John Gale, in his *Reflections on Mr. Wall's 'History of Infant baptism'* (in the latter's III pp. 344f): "Several of the greatest rabbins, as Serira Gaon, Jehuda Ben-Levi, the author of Meor Enajim, Abraham Ben-David, Rab. Minchas, Isaac Abravanel &c -- and, from these, the most learned Christian writers -- say the ancientest part of the *Talmud* (namely that which is called the *Mischna*) was not compiled till about one hundred and fifty years after the destruction of Jerusalem. Buxtorf says, 'the *Jerusalem Talmud* was compiled by Jochanan, two hundred and thirty years after Christ.' But the *Gemara*, which is the far greatest part of the *Babylonian Talmud*, was not made till five hundred years after Christ, nor till three hundred and eleven after the *Mishna*, according to Abraham Ben-David and Ganz" (*Tzemach David* ad an. 978 millen. 4 & ad an. 260 millen. 5).
- 37) *Niddah* 30b. 38) *Keth.* 11a. 39) *Yeb.* 48b; *Bar. par. Ger.* 2:6f; *Yeb.* 22a,62a,97b; and *b. Bek.* 47a.
- 40) *Erub.* 11:1 & *Test. Levi* 14:6. See too *b. Shab.* 135<sup>b</sup> *Ber.*; *Ger.* 2:1; *Keth.* 1:2-4; 3:1-2; *Qid.* 78a; *Ber. par. b. Yeb.* 60b; *Qid.* 4:66a.10; *j. Bik.* 1:64a.31f; *j. Yeb.* 8.9b.62f; and *Pes.* 8:8.
- 41) *Mass. Jeramoth* f. 47 and *Gemara Babylon* at *Cheriroth* 2 and at *Chethuboth* I:11. Cited in Wall's *op. cit.* I pp. 4, 8 & 15.
- 42) *Hierosol. Jeramoth* f. 8.4. Cited in Wall's *op. cit.* I p. 13. 43) *Niddah* 30b. 44) *Keth.* 11a.
- 45) *Yeb.* 48b *Bar. par. Ger.* 2:6f; *Yeb.* 22a,62a,97b; *b. Bak.* 47a. 46) *Erub.* 11:1. 47) *Chethuboth* I:11.
- 48) *Jevamoth* 4:62:1. 49) *On Baptism* 5:5. 50) *Epistle* 73. 51) *39th Oration*.
- 52) Rabbi's Solomon and Joseph, in Wall's *op. cit.* I pp. 12 & 17. Also the Talmudic tract *Repud.* & ad tit. *Cheriroth* 2. See too M. Maimonides: *Issuri Bia*, chs. 12-14. Cited in Wall's *op. cit.* I pp. 3f, 11f, 17 & 30f.
- 53) M. Maimonides: *Halach. Hibdim.*, ch. 8. Cited in Wall's *op. cit.* I p. 13, and in J.H.A. Bomberger's *Infant Salvation* (Lindsay & Blakiston, Philadelphia, 1859, p. 173).
- 54) I Cor. 10:1f. 55) Ex. 12:28,48f. 56) J. Selden's *On the Sanhedrin* I:3, cited in Wall's *op. cit.* I pp. 13f.
- 57) Ex. 24:8 *cf.* Heb. 9:10,13,19f & 10:22f.
- 58) J. Selden: *Miscellaneous Discourses* I ch. 8; *De Nat. et Gen. juxt. Heb.* II ch. 2; and *De Synedr.* I:3. All cited in Wall's *op. cit.* I p. 10. See too L. Modeno's *The History of the Rites, Customs and Manner of Life of the Present Jews throughout the World*, translation E. Chilmead, London 1650 (as cited in Wall's *op. cit.* I p. 7).
- 59) H. Witsius: *Economy of the Covenants* (Tegg, London, ed. 1837, II, pp. 421f).
- 60) Cf. e.g. Aben Ezra on Gen. 35:2 *cf.* 34:14,26,29. 61) *Op. cit.* II p. 422.
- 62) Ex. 19:10 *cf.* v. 14 (and *Mekilta* & Nachmanid. & Bechai & Mik. *etc.* thereon). See too the Talmudic *Tract. Repud. ad Tit. Cherithoth* ch. 2. All in Wall's *op. cit.* I p. 6.
- 63) See: the *Gemara Bab. Jit. Tabinoth* c. IV fol. 47; M. Maimonides's *More Neboch.* III c. 33; J. Selden's *De Synedr.* I c. 3 on Lev. 11:25,28,40 & 14:8,47 & Num. 19:10,21 & 31:24; Hammond's *Six Queries on Infant Baptism* sect. 78 (in *Works* I).
- 64) *Op. cit.* I p. 21. 65) *Origins*, pp. 46 & 75. 66) Gen. 7:11f *cf.* I Pet. 3:20f.
- 67) Gen. 10:1-6,13; Ex. 12:37; 13:12f; 14:21f; 24:8; 29:21; Lev. 214:7f; Num. 19:2f; Pss. 77:15-20; 78:12-14; I Cor. 10:1-2; Heb. 6:2; 9:14-21; 11:24-29. See too Ayres: *op. cit.* p. 464.
- 68) Lev. 18:21; II Kgs. 16:3; 21:2-6; 23:10; II Chr. 28:3; 33:6; Ps. 106:38; Jer. 7:17,30f; 32:35; Ezk. 16:3f,20f,36; 20:26f; 23:37; Hos. 3:2-5 & 9:9-16; Acts 7:42f.
- 69) Cf. Acts 15:19-21. 70) Thus Ayres: *op. cit.* pp. 17-44. 71) Virgil: *Aeneid* Bk. IX.
- 72) Ovid: *Fasti* [Poetical Calendars] I:669-74 & IV:313f,651f,727f,735-42,776,789 & VI. Cf. Ayres: *op. cit.* ch. IX & pp. 422f & 431f and ch. XI & p. 543.
- 73) Cf. Ayres: *op. cit.* ch. XI & p. 543.
- 74) Justin Martyr: *First Apology* chs. 62 & 64. See too our main text at nn. 158f below.
- 75) Iren.: *Against Heresies* I:21:1-4. 76) Clem. Alex.: *Strom.* V:11. See too our text at nn. 217f.
- 77) Tert.: *On Baptism*, ch. V & esp. para. 5. 78) Tert.: *Prescriptions Against Heretics*, ch. 40.
- 79) Cyprian: *On the Lapsed* III:9,25. 80) Theodoret: *Ecclesiastical History* III ch. 12.
- 81) Greg. Naz.: *Orat.* 39:3. See too Ayres: *op. cit.* chs. VI, VII & IX.
- 82) *Nizzachon* pp. 53 & 192, as cited by the Baptist Rev. Dr. J. Gale (in Wall's *op. cit.* III p. 349).
- 83) *Chizzuk Emunah*, p. 401, as cited in Gale. See Wall's *op. cit.* III p. 351. 84) *Epistle to Diognetus* ch. 5.
- 85) Chs. 27-29 & 43. 86) Chs. 3 & 33f. 87) Minucius Felix: *Octavius* chs. 9 & 30.

88) Augustine: *Against Julian* II:9 (in Wall's *op. cit.* I pp. 230-32). 89) In his *Two Stud.*, p. 144.  
90) Phil. 4:3. 91) Clem. Rom.: *1st Ep. to Cor.* 9:4 *cf.* I Pet. 3:20f.  
92) Clem. Rom.: *1st Ep. to Cor.* 12:5f & 17:1 & 18:1f (*cf.* Josh. 2:13-18; Heb. 11:31; Job 14:4; Ps. 51:5).  
93) *Op. cit.* ch. 21; *cf.* I Cor. 1:16 & 2:10-12 & 7:14 & 12:13. 94) Prov. 20:27 *cf.* Ps. 139:7-16.  
95) I Cor. 7:14 *cf.* Eph. 6:1-4. 96) *1st Ep. to Cor.* 38 *cf.* Rom. 4:11f & 16:5f & I Cor. 7:14.  
97) *1st Ep. to Cor.* 63:3 *cf.* 65:1.  
98) *Ib.* 46:5 *cf.* Acts 1:5 & 2:1-4, 14-21, 36-39. Note too the phrase "strangers of Rome" in Acts 2:10.  
99) Gen. 1:26-28 & 2:16-25 and Ex. 20 *cf.* Hos. 6:7f. 100) *Ep. Barn.* 1:1-2; 2:1-2; 5:2.  
101) *Did.* 7:1-3 (*cf.* I Cor. 7:14 & 10:1-2 & 12:13). *Did.* 7:4 goes on to say: "Before baptism, let the baptizer fast...one or two days before." Antipaedobaptists sometimes claim this proves babies could not have met that requirement, and therefore could not then have been baptized. See H.F. Stander & J.P. Louw: *Baptism in the Early Church*, Didaskalia Pubs., Garsfontein RSA, 1988, p. 7. However, not only is that 'requirement' extra-biblical and therefore to be ignored. But as P.W. Marais, citing Jonah 3:5-8 and Joel 2:15-16, rightly points out in his *Infant Baptism and Sprinkling -- Yes or No?* (W & M Pubs., Pretoria, 1974, p. 143): "I find nothing in this passage which teaches that the baptismal candidate should be an adult, since an infant too can fast." Stander and Louw (*op. cit.* p. 8) themselves indeed admit this, where they concede: "Common sense allows for babies to be able to fast."  
102) *en hudati zōnti.* 103) *Cf.* Jh. 3:23. 104) *eis allo hudōr.* *Cf.* Acts 10:47f & 11:13-17 & 16:31-33.  
105) *eis tēn kephalēn.* 106) *eis Onoma.* 107) *Op. cit.* p. 289. 108) Gen. 1:26f. 109) *Ep. Barn.* ch. 6.  
110) *Ib.* ch. 8. *Cf.* Gen. 1:26 & Num. 19:4f & Dt. 29:29 & 31:11f.  
111) *Ep. Barn.* ch. 9. Comp.: Jer. 4:3f; 9:25f; Dt. 10:16.  
112) *Ep. Barn.* ch. 11. See too Jer. 2:12f & Jh. 3:23 *cf.* Josh. 3:11.15 & 4:1.17.22. 113) *eis to hudōr.*  
114) *Ep. Barn.* ch. 13, *cf.* Gen. 25:23. 115) *Ep. Barn.* ch. 14, *cf.* Isa. 47:6f & 61:1f. 116) *Ep. Barn.* ch. 19.  
117) *Ib.* chs. 20 & 21. 118) See our text at nn. 91-117.  
119) Ign.: *Epistle to Smyrna* 1:1 (compare Mt. 3:15); 8:2 (compare I Cor. 4:1f & Heb 5:4f); 13:1.  
120) *Epistle to Polycarp* 8:2. 121) Isa. 59:21.  
122) *Epistle to Polycarp* 6:2 (comp.: Eph 6:11f & I Th. 5:8 with Gal. 3:26-29 & 4:28).  
123) Pliny: *Epistle to Trajan* X:96:2. 124) *Op. cit.*, p. 11. 125) Aristides: *Apology* 15:6 & 15:11.  
126) It seems to be referring to the pre-baptismal condition of those infants -- *cf.* the pre-baptismal condition of adult pagans who repent. For Aristides soon goes on (*op. cit.* 17:4) to describe the similar regeneration of adult pagan converts *before* their baptism: "When it happens that one of them is converted, he is ashamed before the Christians anent the works which he has done. He thanks God, saying, 'In ignorance have I done them!' So he purifies his heart -- and his sins are forgiven him." See too Warfield's *Two Stud.* p. 144 and H.B. Harris's *The Newly Discovered Apology of Aristides* (London, 1891, p. 108).  
127) Generally called *Mathētēs* (= 'Disciple'). 128) *Epistle to Diognetus* ch. 5 (Greek).  
129) Papias: *Fragment II.* In *Ante-Nicene Fathers (ANF)*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1969, I, p. 153.  
130) J. Jeremias: *Inf. Bap. First Four Cent.*, pp. 11 & 72. 131) *Shepherd of Hermas* I:3:7. 132) *Ib.* III:9:29.  
133) *Ib.* III:31:3 (compare Mt. 18:3-6 & 19:14).  
134) *Herm.* I:3:6f, Latin; & III:9:29f, Latin. Compare Lev. 19:23 & Lk 11:41, Greek *kathara*.  
135) *Herm.* II:2:1. 136) *Ib.* II:4:3 & III:9:16f. Compare Rom. 4:11; Eph. 4:30; 5:25f; 6:1-4; Rev. 7:2f; 22:4.  
137) *Herm.* III:8:3f compare Rom. 11:16 & I Cor. 7:14.  
138) *Herm.* I:1:9 (*cf.* I:3:1 & II:2:7 & III:5:3 & III:7:5f) and II:2:3 & II:3:1 & II:12:3 (compare Ign. *Ep. Smyrn.* 13:1 at our n. 119 above).  
139) *Herm.* II:4:3 & III:9:16f. Compare: Rom. 4:11; II Cor. 1:21f; Gal. 3:27; Col. 2:11f; Eph. 4:30; 5:25f 6:1-4; Rev. 27:2f; 9:4f; 14:1; 22:4.  
140) *Acts of Paul and Thecla* 32,34,40. 141) *Acts of Paul* 3,24,31. 142) *Acts of Peter* 5.  
143) *Acts of Xanthippe & Polyxena* 2,13,28.  
144) *Rest of the Words of Baruch* 6,23. Compare Rom. 4:11 & Rev. 7:2-4f.  
145) *Gospel of Thomas*, Logion 4 (*cf.* Gen. 17:10-14 & Col. 2:11f).  
146) *Ib.* Logion 22 *cf.* Gen. 17:12f & II Sam. 12:18-23. 147) *1st Ap.* 18.  
148) A.C. Cox: *Notes on Justin Martyr.* In *ANF* I pp. i & 169 n. 2. 149) *1st Ap.* ch. 27.  
150) *Ib.* ch. 29. Compare Eph. 6:1-4 with 4:4f,30 & 5:25f.  
151) *Ib.* 15:6 (*hoi ek paidōn emathēteuthēsan tō Christō*). 152) *Dialogue with the Jew Trypho* 39:2.  
153) *Cf.* Justin's *1st Ap.* chs. 15:6 and 61 & 65 with A.C. Barnard's *I Have Been Baptized*, DRC Bookroom, Pretoria, 1984, p. 78.

- 154) Wall's *op. cit.* I pp. 66-171.
- 155) *Cf.* the writings of the apostle in Jh. 3:3-8 & I Jh. 2:12-14 & Rev. 7:2-4 & 22:4.
- 156) *Dial.* 4:1 (compare too *West. Conf.* 10:3).
- 157) *Dial.* chs. 86-88. Compare Lev. 14:7f & Num. 19:4f *etc.* with Heb. 9:10-21. 158) *Ist Ap.* chs. 61-65.
- 159) *Apost. Const.* VI:1:3 & VI:2:5 & VI:3:14f. See our text at pp. 246 & 311 and at ch. IV's n. 47 below.
- 160) *Ist Ap.* ch. 61: "*Hosoi an peisthōsi kai pisteuōsin..., kainopoiēthentes dia tou Christou exēgēsometha.... Hoi hamertēsantes kai metanountes. Touton lousomenon agontes epi to loutron.... Ho phōtizomenos louetai.*" Significantly, even a modern Romish translation likewise seems to presuppose illumination before baptism: "Those who are convinced and believe..., are taught.... We lead them to a place where there is water.... Those who have sinned and then repented, shall be freed of their sins.... At our first birth..., [we] were born...through the mutual union of our parents.... He who leads the person to be baptized to the laver..., calls him by this Name [of God the Father] only the illuminated one, is also baptized." Thus the rendition of the Catholic University of America Press, Washington D.C., 1965 rep., *in loco*. The last two underlined words above are rendered in Latin at Migne's *Patrologia Graeca* respectively as "*lavacrum*" and "*qui illuminatur abluitur.*" Almost the entirety of the full Greek text of ch. 61 is given in Wall's *op. cit.* I p. 67.
- 161) *Ib.* chs. 62 & 64. See too our text at n. 74 above.
- 162) *Ib.* ch. 65: "*Meta to houtōs lousai ton pepeismenon kai sugkatatetheimenon....kai tou phōtisthentos.*" Even the modern Catholic University of America Press translation renders this: "After thus baptizing the one who has believed and given his assent, we...offer up sincere prayers...for the baptized person." The underlined words above are rendered in Latin at Migne's *Patrologia Graeca* as "*pro eo qui illuminatus est.*"
- 163) Just. Mart.: *From the Lost Writings* Fragment 9, in ANF I pp. 300f. 164) *Ib.* Fragment 10.
- 165) *Dial.* ch. 6 *cf.* ch. 12. 166) *Ib.* ch. 14:1 (compare *Ist Ap.* chs. 61 & 65). 167) *Dial.* ch. 29.
- 168) *Dial.* chs. 18 & 19. 169) *Ib.* chs. 14 & 16. 170) *Ib.* ch. 23 (compare Gen. 15:6).
- 171) *Dial.* ch. 23 (compare Gen. 17:10-14 & Rom. 4:11). 172) *Dial.* ch. 24. 173) *Ib.* ch. 113. 174) *Ib.* ch. 28.
- 175) *Ib.* ch. 43.
- 176) Gen. 5:18-24 *cf.* Heb. 11:5-6 & Prov. 22:6. 177) *Dial.* ch. 92 (compare Gen. 15:6 & 17:1-26 with Rom. 4:11).
- 178) *Cf.* Rev. 1:1ff & 2:8ff with Iren.: *Her.* 3:3 (& Wall's *op. cit.* I p. 81).
- 179) Polyc.: *Martyrdom of Polycarp* 21, Waddington. See the main text at our n. 181 below. Barnard *op. cit.* p. 78 seems to suggest an infant baptism date of 70 A.D. for Polycarp. For he "died 22nd February 156," just after saying of Christ: "For eighty-six years I have been His servant." Polycarp's *Martyrdom* 9:3. Similarly, see too J.W.C. Wand's *A History of the Early Church to A.D. 500* (Methuen, London, ed. 1949, p.96); and ed. F.L. Cross's *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford Univ. Press, ed. 1978, p. 701). Also *cf.* Stander and Louw's *op. cit.* p. 9: "Barnard maintains that the age of Polycarp proves that he was probably born in the year 70 A.D., and that he was baptized as an infant. His opinion concerning this quotation is shared by the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (1978:701) and Wand (1949:96)."
- 180) Polyc.: *Epistle to the Philippians* ch. 4 (compare Eph. 4:4f,30 & 5:25f & 6:1-4). 181) *Mart. Polyc.* 9:3.
- 182) *Cf.* perhaps Rev. 2:8f. 183) Phil. 3:5,10,11,14,21. 184) *Ep. to Phil.* 4:2. 185) *Id.*
- 186) See n. 181 above. 187) *In loc.* 188) Anon: *The Martyrdom of Justin* ch. 3.
- 189) Cited in J. Jeremias's *Inf. Bapt.*, p. 64.
- 190) Cited in K. Aland: *Did the Early Church Baptize Infants?*, S.C.M., London, 1961 p. 72.
- 191) Irenaeus of Sirmium: *Martyrdom of Irenaeus* 4:3. Cited in R. Knopf & G. Krüger: *Selected Acts of the Martyrs*, Tübingen, 1929, 104.1. Thus Jeremias's *Inf. Bapt.*, p. 61 n. 3.
- 192) Anon: *Martyrdom of Sabas*. Cited in Knopf-Krüger's *op. cit.* 119.16f. See Jeremias's *Inf. Bapt.*, p. 61 & n. 3.
- 193) W.W. Gasque: *Marcion (second century)*, in ed. Douglas's *op. cit.* pp. 629ff.
- 194) Justin Martyr: *Ist Ap.* chs. 26 & 58. 195) Iren. *Her.* I:23:1 to I 27:1f & IV:8:1.
- 196) Epiph.: *Heresies* 42 (*Marcionistae*). 197) Clem. Alex.: *Strom.* III:3. 198) Tert.: *Bap.* 15.
- 199) Philaster: *Heresies* 49. 200) Athenagoras: *Apology* ch. 35.
- 201) Athenagoras: *On the Resurrection* 14:65:12f. 202) Theodotus: *Excerpts* 7 & 5 (in ANF VIII pp. 44 & 43).
- 203) *Excerpts* 48 & 50. See too *Ante-Nic. Fath.*, VIII pp. 43-48.
- 204) Iren.: *Her.* II:33f & IV:20 & V:6 (in Wall's *op. cit.* I p. 81). *Cf.* Iren.: *Epistle to Florinus* (in Eusebius's *Ch. Hist.* V:20:1).
- 205) *Ib.* II:22:4 (*cf.* Lk. 3:21-23 & Ex. 29:21 & Num. 4:3f).

206) *Her.* III:17:1-3 *cf.* I:21:1-3 & *Fragment XXXIII* Harvey II 497f. 207) *Isa.* 52:15; 56:3-7; *Joel* 2:16,23,28f.  
 208) *Judges* 6:37 *etc.* 209) *Cf.* again our text at n. 205 above.  
 210) *Ib.* IV:6:7 (*cf.* *Mt.* 11:25-27). See too our ch. I at our nn. 160f & 191f above. See too J. Inchley's *op. cit.* pp. 20f, and Lee's *Revealed to Babies* pp. 1 & 6f.  
 211) *Against Heresies* V:15:3. Compare too *ib.* I:21:1 ("baptism...is regeneration to God").  
 212) *Iren.*: *Frag.* XXXIV, in *ANF* I p. 574. 213) Eusebius: *Church History* V:24:6-8.  
 214) *Id.*: "*Hexēkonta pente etē echōn en Kuriō...* *En Christō, Iēsou pantote pepoliteumai.* On this *pepoliteumai*, see too *Eph.* 2:12-19! Also comp. Barnard's *op. cit.* p. 78; and Stander & Louw's *op. cit.* pp. 9f.  
 215) See n. 178f above. 216) *Inf. Bap.* p. 59. 217) *Clem. Alex.*: *Strom.* IV:22. See too our text at n. 76 above.  
 218) Cited in Ayres: *op. cit.*, p. 317. 219) *Clem. Alex.*: *Exhortation to the Heathen*, X:12-13. 220) *Strom.* III:4.  
 221) *Ib.* II:18. 222) *Clem. Alex.*: *Eclogia* 41 & 48 (*cf.* the apocryphal *Rev. Pet.* 25).  
 223) *Strom.* II:9 (*cf.* *I Pet.* 3:20f & 4:6). 224) *Clem. Alex.*: *Protrepticus* 9:82. 225) *Jh.* 3:3f.  
 226) Such as: *Mt.* 18:3-6; *Mk.* 10:15; *Lk.* 19:17. 227) *Just. Mart.*: *1st Ap.* 61:4).  
 228) *Clem. Alex.*: *Paidagogue* I:5.  
 229) *Paedag.* I:6-7. Perhaps (but not necessarily) betraying just the beginnings of the false theory of baptismal regeneration, Clement unfortunately then adds: "Being baptized, we are illuminated; being illuminated, we become sons; being sons, we become perfected; being perfected, we become immortalized." Here the original Greek has: "*baptizomena phōtizometha, phōtizomena huiopoioumetha, huiopoioumenoi teleiouvometha, teleiouvomenoi apathanatizometha.*" This is a series of passive present participles. The series not necessarily suggests baptismal regeneration, any more than our "being sons" in this present life now (both before and after baptism) could possibly suggest the completion of our being perfected before the next life yet to come. Nevertheless, the ambiguity in these words is unfortunate. Later advocates of baptismal regeneration have appealed to this phrase in Clement as if it were indeed teaching that later doctrine.  
 230) *op. cit.* p. 44.  
 231) A.W. Argyle: *Baptism in the Early Christian Centuries*, in ed. A. Gilmore's *Christian Baptism* (Lutterworth, London, 1959, p. 202 & n. 8). Argyle here employs the latinization (*Paedagogus*) of the Greek *Paidagōgos*.  
 232) *Paidag.* III:11. See too Stander and Louw's *op. cit.* pp. 42f, and Wall's *op. cit.* I pp. 84f.  
 233) *Paidag.* III:12. A more flowery version reads as follows: "Heavenly Wing of the all-holy flock, Fisher of men who are saved, catching the chaste fishes with sweet life from the hateful wave of a sea of vices!... Babies nourished with tender mouths, filled with the dewy Spirit of the rational pap -- let us sing together simple praises, true hymns to Christ our King, holy fee for the teaching of life!"  
 234) *Clem. Alex.*: *Who is the Rich Man that shall be Saved?*, chs. 34,40,42. 235) *Strom.* II:13 (*cf.* *Jh.* 1:13).  
 236) *Strom.* II:23. 237) *Strom.* III:15 (*cf.* *Ex.* 20:12). 238) *Strom.* III:15 (*cf.* *Isa.* 65:22f).  
 239) *I Tim.* 3:2-4 & *Tit.* 1:6. 240) *Strom.* IV:15-35, esp. IV:15:20 (*cf.* *Tit.* 2:3-5 & *Heb.* 13:4).  
 241) *Op. cit.* pp. 10 & 113.  
 242) Cited in Stander & Louw's *op. cit.* pp. 59-63, from Hippolytus's *Apostolic Tradition* 20-22. *Cf.* too J. Jansen: *The Right of Infant Baptism*, Kok, Kampen, n.d., *in loco*.  
 243) J. Jeremias: *Inf. Bap.* pp. 66-68, and the photograph facing p. 64. 244) See our text at nn. 217-41 above.  
 245) See our text at nn. 310-324 below. 246) P. Schaff: *Ch. Hist.*, II p. 301 n. 1 & p. 307.  
 247) *Ib.* II p. 302. 248) *Op. cit.* p. 78.  
 249) E. Diehl's *Ancient Christian Latin Inscriptions* (Berlin, 1961); J.C. Didier's *Infant Baptism in the Tradition of the Church* (in *Selected Christian Monuments* VII, Tournai, 1959); and E. Ferguson's *Inscriptions and the Origin of Infant Baptism* (in *The Journal of Theological Studies*, 1979, XXX, pp. 37-46).  
 250) Schaff's *Church History* II p. 303 item 2; p. 304 item 20; p. 304, items 5 & 4; p. 249 n. 3, where Schaff is citing De Rossi.  
 251) B.B. Warfield: *How Shall We Baptize?*, in *Selected Shorter Writings of Benjamin B. Warfield*, ed. Meeter, Presb. & Ref. Pub. Co., Nutley N.J., 1973, p. 337.  
 252) R. Ward: *Baptism in Scripture and History*, Melbourne, 1990, pp. 42f.  
 253) C.F. Rogers: *Baptism and Christian Archaeology*, Oxford, 1903, p. 322.  
 254) J.G. Davies: *The Architectural Setting of Baptism*, London, 1962, pp. 23-26. See too Ayres: *op. cit.* pp. 376A & 389-419.  
 255) *Ib.* p. 309.

256) F.N. Lee: *Pentecostalism: New Outpouring or Ancient Heresy?*, Commonwealth Pub., Rowlett Tx., 1986, paras. 4 & 15 & 24 to 27. See too Ayres: *op. cit.* pp. 527 to 624 & 594-96 (citing the A.D. 381 Council of Chalcedon's condemnation of Montanistic immersionism or *katadusis*).

257) Compare, e.g., his perception that pagan sprinklings were themselves perversions of the "Jewish Law." See our main text at our nn. 77 & 78 above. Cf. Heb. 9:10-21.

258) Tert.: *On Baptism* ch. 18. Cited in Jansen's *op. cit.* (*in loc.*). 259) In Gilmore: *op. cit.* pp. 199f.

260) Tert.: *The Chaplet* 3; *On Idolatry* 24; *The Shows* 3; *The Apparel of Women* I:2.

261) This word "immersed" is that of the Baptist Argyle, not that of Tertullian. For some of Tertullian's views on the mode of baptism, see our text at nn. 291f below.

262) Tert.: *Against Praxeas* 26, and *On Baptism* 6. 263) *Chap.* 3, and *Against Marcion* 1:14.

264) *On Baptism* 7; *Chap.* 3; *Shows* 24; *Idol.* 19. 242) *On Bapt.* 4-5. 265) Tert.: *Apology* ch. 9.

266) Tert.: *On the Soul* ch. 37. 267) Ex. 21:22; Ps. 22:9f; 51:5; 139:13-16. 268) *Soul* chs. 25f.

269) *Chaplet* ch. 3. 270) *Repentance* 6.

271) See Tertullian's *On Baptism* ch. 2: "a man is baptized (*tinctus*)"; and ch. 12: "baptized (*tinctus*)" & "sprinkled (*aspersi*)" & "sprinkled over (*perfundi*)." See too Tertullian's *Prescription Against Heretics* ch. 40: "The devil...too baptizes (*tingit*).... Mithras there sets his mark on the foreheads of his soldiers.... The devil imitates the Jewish Law." See too Tertullian's *On Repentance* 6 (cited at our n. 276 below). Also compare our text at nn. 260 & 269 above.

272) See our main text at nn. 276f & 290f below. 273) *Op. cit.* pp. 324-38.

274) Tert.: *On Repentance* 6:4f (*asperginem unam cuiuslibet*).

275) See Schaff: *Ch. Hist.* II pp. 421 & 822; ANF III p. 4 & 240 (citing Augustine's *On Heresies* 6); cf. Hefele in *Nicene & Post-Nicene Fathers (NPNF)*, 2nd Ser., XIV pp. 128.

276) *Repent.* ch. 6. 277) On emergency baptisms, see n. 271 above. 278) See K. Aland: *op. cit.*, p. 67.

279) Tert.: *On Baptism* ch. 1. [*Ichthus*' means 'fish' in Greek. It was also an ancient Christian cryptogram, meaning: *Iēsoūs Christos Theou Huiou Sōtēr* -- alias 'Jesus Christ; God's Son; Saviour.']

280) *Ib.* ch. 4. Compare: Gen. 1:2 & Mt. 3:11-16. 281) *Ib.* ch. 5.

282) *Ib.* ch. 8, cf. Gen. 8:2-12 & I Pet. 3:20-21 & Lk. 3:21-22. 283) *Ib.* ch. 9, cf. Jh. 3:5.

284) *Ib.* ch. 16, cf. Jh. 19:34.

285) Mt. 7:6. Significantly, not just Tertullian as above but even the *Westminster Confession* (29:8<sup>a</sup>) applies this text to the need of withholding the sacrament from the unworthy. See too Wall's *op. cit.* I p. 100.

286) See chs. 18-19. 287) See our main text at nn. 264-76 above. 288) *Soul* chs. 19f & 26f.

289) *Soul* 39:1 to 40:1 & 41:1. 290) *Op. cit.* I p. 101. 291) *Soul* ch. 19f. 292) *Ib.* ch. 20.

293) As to what Tertullian here might mean, with probably reference to baptism, see our main text at n. 271 above.

294) *Op. cit.*, 1836 ed., I p. 183.

295) *Op. cit.* pp. 66 & 65. We say Aland is a maverick. For he seems to reject infant baptism as having been an apostolic or even an early-patristic ordinance. See our text at n. 297 below. Aland's rationale, however, may well be because he seems to sense (correctly) that covenant infants are not made holy during baptism, but are already holy before baptism!

296) Amazing, in that holiness at birth clearly undermines the Lutheran view that regeneration normally takes place only during (yet not because of) postnatal baptism. See, however, our remarks at n. 294 above.

297) *Op. cit.* p. 113. 298) *Ib.* pp. 100 & 48. 299) See too our main text at n. 245 above.

300) *The Origins of Infant Baptism*, p. 75. 301) *Op. cit.* pp. 202f. 302) *Ch. Hist.* II pp. 258f.

303) Thus ANF V p. 3. 304) See our main text above at n. 253f.

305) See too Jeremias: *Inf. Bap.* pp. 13, 31 and 73 nn. 5 & 6.

306) Hippolytus: *Concerning the Apostolic Tradition of Gifts of Grace* 21:3. 307) *Op. cit.* pp. 49f.

308) 21:3, see our main text at n 306 above. 309) Jeremias: *Inf. Bap.* p. 92.

310) Eusebius: *Ch. Hist.* VI:19:10. See too Wall's *op. cit.* pp. 73f.

311) *Ib.*, compare Jeremias's *Origins* p. 75. See too Wall's *op. cit.* I pp. 78, 103f & 125.

312) Schaff: *Ch. Hist.* II p. 260 & n. 2.

313) Orig.: *Commentary on Matthew* XV (III:1268 sqq.), and *Comm. on Mt. 18:10* (XIII:331) cited in Wall's *op. cit.* I pp. 115f & 120f.

314) Orig.: *Commentary on John* 6:13.

315) Orig.: *Commentary on Romans* V:9 ("*pro hoc et Ecclesia ab apostolis traditionem suscepit, etiam parvulis baptismum dare*)."



316) In his *Homilies on Luke* XIV. 317) In his *Homilies on Leviticus* VIII:3 (*secundum Ecclesiae observantium*).

318) Orig.: *Homilies on Luke* XXVIII, and *Commentaries on Fragments from John* 121. See too Stander & Louw's *op. cit.* pp. 68f.

319) J. Bajis: *Infant Baptism?*, Conciliar Press, Mt Hermon Ca., n.d., at nn. 18f. 320) See n. 318 above.

321) *Homilies on Ezekiel* 6:5. 322) *Comm.* XV:36 on 20:1-16.

323) Orig.: *Homilies on Joshua* 4:1 and IX:4. Cited respectively in Stander & Louw's *op. cit.* pp. 74f and in Wall's *op. cit.* I pp. 73f & 117f.

324) See Euseb.: *Ch. Hist.* VI:5. See too our own n. 329 below. 325) Cyp.: *Epistle* 58(64).

326) Cyp.: *Epistle* 72(73):17. 327) Anon: *Treatise on Rebaptism* 6. Ca. 253 A.D. See ANF V pp. 665f.

328) Euseb.: *Ch. Hist.* VI:43. Here, 'being perfused' translates "*perichuseis*" alias 'poured around.' Compare Wall's *op. cit.* I p. 142 (1844 Oxford ed.), where he quotes Petavius thus: "At present...we content ourselves with pouring a little water on the head, which in Greek is called *perichusis*." Dionysius Petavius was a French Jesuit (1583-1652), author of the most learned *Opus de Theologicis Dogmatibus*. Thus Ayres: *op. cit.* p. 351 & n. 1.

329) Cited in Wall's *op. cit.* (ed. 1844) I p. 160 & II p. 386: "I gave here the instance of St. Laurence out of Walafrid Strabo, baptizing with a pitcher of water, in a case of necessity; and of Basilides out of Eusebius." Ayres (*op. cit.* p. 352) explains: "Laurence suffered martyrdom about the same time as Cyprian, *i.e.*, A.D. 258. Wall gives the case [II pp. 389f]: 'One of the soldiers that were to be his executioners, being converted, brought a pitcher of water for Laurence to baptize him with'.... This passage seems to be genuine, because cited by Walafridus Strabo, who died about the year 849; *cf.* p. 13 of the same volume." On Basilides, see our main text at nn. 324 above.

330) Cyp.: *Ep.* 74(75):12-16 [Oxford ed. = 69].

331) See John Moschus's *Pratum Spirituale* ch. 176: "A certain Jew was travelling in company with some Christians through a dry and desert country.... He was seized with grievous illness, and...begged his companions to baptize him. They replied that there was neither priest nor water at hand.... But being earnestly adjured not to refuse him, they...sprinkled him three times, with sand instead of water, saying that they 'baptized' him in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.... On their return, Dionysius the Church Overseer of Alexandria, being consulted on the subject, decided...that the Jew was baptized if only he were sprinkled...with water (*baptizatum esse Judaeum si modo aqua denuo perfunderetur*)."

332) S. Angus: *The Religious Quests of the Graeco-Roman World*, Murray, London, 1929, pp. 166f & nn. 1. Angus also refers to Tertullian's *Baptism* 5, and to his [*Prescriptions*] *Against Heresies* 40.

333) B.V. Miller: *The Eucharistic Sacrifice*, Burnes Oates & Washbourne, London, 1930, p. 17.

334) See Jeremias's *Inf. Bap.* pp. 41,56,75-79, 85-86, & 90-94. See too Jeremias's *Origins* pp. 59-53 & n. Ayres too (*op. cit.* pp. 377 & 396f) gives copious evidences about sprinkling: from inscriptions in the catacombs; on fonts; and in ancient baptisteries; *etc.*

335) *Acts of Crispina* 2:1 *cf.* 3:3. 336) *Ch. Hist.* II p. 401. 337) Pg. 145. 338) Pg. 31.

339) Euseb.: *Ch. Hist.* VI:5,43 & X:4:44f. 340) Lact.: *Divine Institutes* IV:15.

341) Synod of Elvira, canons 1 & 22.

342) Rufinus's *History of the Church* I:14; Sozomen's *Ecclesiastical History* I:17; and Athanasius's *Questions on Paul's Epistles* and *On Holy Baptism*.

343) *Ib.* pp. 155f: "Rivet, Marshall &c do accuse Grotius of partiality and foul dealing in general in his pleading the cause of the Antipaedobaptists, and particularly in this place.... See Rivet's *Hugonis Grotii Annotata in Consulationem G. Cassandri, cum animadversionibus Andae Riveti*, in his *Opera Theologica*, Rotterdam, 1651-60, III pp. 925-76 esp. at p. 941.

344) Wall then rightly comments (*ib.* p. 153): "The woman in this case does not desire or demand the baptism at that time for her child, but for herself only.... If the bishops had thought baptizing of infants unlawful, they would have determined this.... It is no kind of proof that they did think so.... They meant only to take away the perplexity about baptizing the child when born.... There is something in the propriety of phrase in the last clause that does incline it to this latter sense.... That is the notation of the word *idios*, which properly signifies any thing 'peculiar to one's self'; and the repetition of the article *tēn* before the words *epi tēi homologia*.  
"If the bishops *had* meant to determine that the child could not be supposed to be baptized with its mother for this reason, because in baptismal profession every one must declare his own choice; and so an infant could not be baptized -- they would have expressed that latter clause thus, *dia to heauton dein heautou teen proairesin en tēi homologia, deiknunai*, 'because every one must make his own choice at the profession.' But when they say *dia to heautou idian tēn proairesin tēn en tēi homologia, deikusthai* [as in fact they did], they do (as any critic will

observe} express this sense -- 'because the choice which is made at the [baptismal] profession, is declared by every one peculiar to himself'... It is only a reason of what they had said last: 'that the mother communicates nothing to the child' -- and not any reason against the baptizing of an infant...."

345) *Ib.* pp. 156f: "Balsamon's comment on that canon is this: 'Some had said, "that women which come over from the heathens to the church great with child ought not to be baptized but to stay till they were delivered -- lest, when the mother is baptized, the child in her womb do seem to be baptized too, as being altogether united to her.... So when it is born it will either be left unbaptized, or if it be baptized it may be accounted to be twice-baptized."

Continued Balsamon: "The Fathers therefore, not allowing this contradiction, appointed that such women may be baptized without any scruple -- when[ever] they please. For that the woman has nothing common with the child in her womb in the concern of baptism -- especially, say they, when as to every one in baptism his own promising is necessary. But the embryo (*esterēmenon diatheseōs*), having not the qualification (or disposition or affection), cannot make the profession at [the mother's] baptism. And that clause 'when they please' was added to the canon.... The Fathers therefore said that it is at the woman's pleasure to be baptized when she will.... But [postnatal] infants do promise by their sponsors, and being actually baptized have the heavenly illumination granted to them."

346) *Ib.* pp. 157f: "Zonarus's words are these in his comment on the said canon: 'It determines that women with child may be baptized when they please.... Some affirmed "that the foetus is baptized together with the mother, and that therefore the infant when born must not be baptized lest it should have a double baptism." Therefore were those words added "for the mother in this matter communicated nothing to the child" -- *i.e.* for the mother only and not the child is made partaker of holy baptism.... In the foetus that is enclosed in the mother's womb there is no choice. It is not to be accounted to have received baptism. And therefore it has need of baptism...when it shall be able to choose."

347) *Ib.* pp. 158f: "We are now come so low as within sixty years of the time of St. Austin [alias Augustine]....

St. Austin sometimes speaks of this case of a woman baptized while great with child, and he does not only determine it as these bishops do but he speaks of it as a clear case.... He takes occasion to mention it, lib. vi *Contra Julianum* c. 5, where he is shewing the weakness of that argument of the Pelagians who said that if original sin be the cause why infants are baptized, then the child that was born of Christian and baptized parents would not need to be baptized -- as being born of those that were cleansed of that sin and of a mother whose body was the temple of the Holy Spirit.... Now, when such an infant is baptized, he will not be accounted twice-baptized."

348) Wall (*op. cit.* I pp. 150f), discusses an important quotation out of the Council of Neocaesarea [*anno* 314]. Therein the Arminian "Grotius (*Annot. in Mat. xix.14*) seems to himself to have found a proof out of it that many in that age judged that they are not to be baptized....

"Some about that time and place had put this question -- whether a 'woman with child' that had a mind to become a Christian and be baptized, might conveniently receive baptism during her 'going with child' -- or must stay [unbaptized] till she was delivered.... The words of the council...are these...: 'A woman with child may be baptized when she pleases. For the mother in this matter communicates nothing to the child, because in the profession every one's own [or peculiar] resolution (*idian proairesin*) is declared."

349) See too Asterius: *Homilies* 12:3f & 21:10 & 27:2f. 350) J. Jeremias: *Inf. Bap.* pp. 93f.

### **III. BABY BELIEF FROM NICEA TO THE REFORMATION**

In this chapter, we shall endeavour to trace the gradual demise of the Ante-Nicene Church's presumption of baby belief before baptism in covenant children. We shall trace it from the 325 A.D. Council of Nicea onward. A description will be given of this deterioration, right down to the time of the Lutheran and Zwinglian Protestant Re-Formation of the Christian Church -- just prior to the time of John Calvin himself.

#### **146. Faith and baptism in the canons of the *Council of Nicea***

Already the *Council of Nicea* correctly complained<sup>1</sup> (in 325 A.D.) that "many things have been done contrary to the ecclesiastical canon.... Men just converted from heathenism to the faith, and who had been instructed but a little while, are straightway being brought to the spiritual laver -- and as soon as they have been baptized, are advanced to the episcopate. ... For the time to come, no such thing shall be done.... To the catechumen himself, there is need of time -- and of a longer trial after baptism."

Nicea also discouraged the ordination of ministerial candidates without prior examination.<sup>2</sup> On this, the later commentator Balsamon observed: "Some say that as baptism makes the baptized person a new man, so ordination takes away the sins committed before ordination. This opinion does not seem to agree with the canons."<sup>3</sup>

Finally, in the *Arabic Canons* attributed to the Council of Nicea, there was mention "of sponsors in baptism." This preceded the soon-following canon anent "giving names of Christians in baptism -- and of heretics who retain the faith in the Trinity and the perfect form of baptism."<sup>4</sup>

#### **147. The baptism of infants in the Donatist Controversy**

It is true that the Donatists rejected the validity of baptisms performed in the Catholic Church, and rebaptized all donatized converts therefrom (and also from all other groups of Christians). But it is not true -- as sometimes alleged by Antipaedobaptists -- that the Donatists rejected infant baptism. Nor did they question the presence of faith in infants before administering baptism to them.

Around 367, the Catholic Bishop Optatus of Milevus wrote an important book *Against Parmenian the Donatist*. That book also incorporated an appendix compiled a little earlier (between A.D. 330 and 347). As Dr. Wall explains of Optatus:<sup>5</sup> "This Bishop living in Africa had occasion to write several books against the schism of the Donatists. Some part of the controversy between them and the Catholics was about baptism -- but not about infant baptism....

"This appears plainly, by what this author says in way of persuading them to break off their schism: 'The ecclesiastical management is one and the same with us and you. Though men's minds are at variance, the sacraments are at none [so that Paedobaptism and the prebaptismal faith

of covenant children was not a matter of variance between Catholics and Donatists]. And we may say -- we believe alike; and are sealed with one and the same seal (not otherwise baptized than you); nor otherwise ordained than you are'....

"The apostle says, 'As many of you as have been baptized in the Name of Christ, have put on Christ' [Galatians 3:27]. Oh what a garment is this that is always one, and never renewed; that decently fits all ages and all shapes! It is neither too big for infants; nor too little for men; and, without any alteration, fits women."

Significantly, the Donatists too agreed -- in their controversy against the Church Universal. Wrote Cresconius the Donatist against the Catholics: "There is, between us and you, one religion -- the same sacraments. Nothing in the Christian ceremonies different. It is a schism that is between us -- not a heresy."

All this foreshadows the later *African Code* against Donatism (and also against Pelagianism). There, it was held that "when those baptized in infancy by Donatists are converted -- this [prior baptism by Donatists] shall be no impediment to them." Indeed, "let there be no rebaptisms!"<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, added the *African Code*, "whosoever denies that infants newly from their mother's wombs should be baptized -- or says that baptism is for remission of sins but that they derive from Adam no original sin which needs to be removed by...regeneration" *etc.* -- "let him be *anathema*!" Indeed, "whoso affirms that those newly born and baptized contract nothing from Adam's transgression..., is to be execrated. For through one [*viz.* Adam] -- both death and sin invaded the whole world."<sup>7</sup>

#### **148. The covenant child Basil the Great was sanctified prenatally**

Basil the Great, A.D. 329-79, was truly a child of the covenant. Therefore, fifty years after his birth, in the words of his famous contemporary Gregory of Nazianze during the latter's *Oration at Basil's Funeral* -- Basil had, prenatally, been 'formed day by day' half a century earlier. Compare Psalm 139:16 (Septuagint): 'Your eyes saw my unshapeness[es]; they had all been written in Your book; they shall keep on being formed, day by day.'

In that funeral oration, Gregory had just finished speaking about Basil's martyred progenitors -- and of his immediate parents. The latter were his godly father (Rev. Basil Sr.) and his gracious mother Emmelia. Gregory next went on to say of Basil the Great himself:<sup>8</sup> "Then, in the beginning of his age [namely *prōta tēs hēlikias*], he was by his excellent father...'swaddled' (*sparganoutai*) and 'formed' (*diaplattetai*) -- with that best and most pure formation (*katharōtatēn*) which the godly David [in Psalm 139:16 Septuagint] speaks of as proceeding 'day by day' *etc.*"

Gregory continued: "There have been many men of olden days, illustrious for piety.... Enos first ventured to call upon the Lord [Genesis 4:26]. Basil both called upon Him himself -- and, what is far more excellent -- preached Him to others. Enoch was 'translated' [Genesis 5:21].... Basil's whole life was a 'translation'.... Abraham was a great man; a patriarch; the offerer of the

new sacrifice [Genesis 22:1f].... Basil's offering was no slight one, when he offered himself to God.... Isaac was promised even before his birth [Genesis 18:10]. Basil promised himself....

"Among those that call upon His Name, there is Samuel -- who was given to God before his birth; and sanctified immediately after his birth; and the anointer with his horn of kings and priests [First Samuel 1:20 & 16:13]. But was not Basil as an infant [or rather 'fetus'] consecrated to God from the **womb** (*ek brephous Theō kathierōmenos apo mētras*), and offered with a coat at the altar (*bē mati*)?" Compare First Samuel 2:19 with Galatians 3:27. "And was he not a seer of heavenly things; and anointed by the Lord; and the anointer of those who are being perfected by the Spirit (*teleioudenōn ek Pneumatos*)?"

Gregory concluded: "I now turn to the New Testament.... Who was the forerunner of Jesus? John -- the voice of the Word, the lamp of the Light before Whom he even leaped in the womb [Luke 2:41].... Is it not indeed manifest that Basil was a copy of John.... When, after he had finished his course and kept the faith [from the womb to the tomb!], he longed to depart.... The time for his crown was approaching.... This is my offering to you, Basil!"

#### **149. Dr. Wall on Basil's prenatal and postnatal formation before his baptism**

Dr. Wall's remarks about the above, are extremely important. Says he:<sup>9</sup> "This 'formation' [or *katharōtatēn* of the prenatal Basil] appears to have been given in infancy -- both by the words *ta prōta tēn hēlikias* ('in the beginning of his age') and also by the emphasis of the word *sparganoutai* which signifies the binding or first fashioning of the body of an infant in swaddling clothes.... The foregoing paragraph must have referred to his [Basil's] infancy....

"He [Gregory] is comparing Basil to each of the patriarchs and holy men of the Old Testament -- Abraham, Moses, &c..... Among the rest, he compares him to Samuel.... Samuel among them that call upon His Name, was both given [or promised] before he was born -- and presently, after his birth, was consecrated.... Was not this man [Basil] consecrated to God in his infancy, from the womb, and carried to the steps [*bēma* alias 'font'] in a coat? Did he not become...an anointer of such as were [being] initiated by the Spirit?

"The word '*bēma*' properly signifies steps. It is ordinarily taken for a pulpit, to which one goes up by steps.... It may signify a font or baptistry.... But the 'coat' in which he [Gregory] says Basil was offered to God....cannot well be supposed to have been anything but...baptism [*cf.* Galatians 3:27]. And this, he says, was in his infancy.

"The instance of Samuel dedicated in infancy, is one which this father [Gregory] does, at other places, make use of for a comparison or example of a Christian's child baptized in infancy.... Where speaking to some tender mothers that were afraid...of putting their infants into...baptism, he [Gregory in his *Oration* 40:17] says: 'You are afraid, as a faint-hearted mother.... But Hannah, before Samuel was born, devoted him to God; and, when he was born, presently consecrated him and brought him up in a priestly coat.' The very things that he says here of St. Basil's parents!"

## **150. The fourth-century Church's transition toward baptismal regenerationism**

Asterius 'the Sophist' (who died about A.D. 340) held<sup>10</sup> -- on the strength of *Sheminith* (the Hebrew superscription to the sixth psalm) that the eighth day after birth was the best time for baptism -- "as a sign of the seal of the faith of Abraham [Genesis 17:12].... Also circumcision was given to the descending generations -- so that even the Christians afterwards may learn to seal their infants."

They do this, "through baptism by 'the circumcision of Christ.' Concerning this, Paul says: 'In Whom you were also circumcised by a circumcision not made by hand, having been buried with Him through baptism by the circumcision of Christ' [Colossians 2:11].... The circumcision of the Jews was given to an infant early.... How much more should the 'circumcision of Christ' -- through baptism -- be given even more speedily to the infant..., so that if the infant dies he may not depart unsealed" from this life.

In A.D. 329, because of the ever-rising heresy of baptismal regenerationism, we have the first known case in the Church Universal of the baptism of an infant of two Christian parents being postponed to adulthood. In this way, all of the sins ever committed during one's life, were deemed to have been washed away by baptism at the end of one's old age.

Such was done in the case of the infant Gregory of Nazianzen. Similarly, also Emperor Constantine -- the son of one believing parent -- was baptized only on his deathbed in 337. However, as we shall soon see -- when Gregory himself grew up -- he discouraged these 'delayed baptisms' and warmly encouraged the revival and utilization of the apostolic and early-patristic infant baptisms of covenant children.

Meantime, as the modern Greek Orthodox scholar Bajis remarks:<sup>11</sup> "Some may ask why Sts. John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nazianzus...and Jerome were all baptized as adults -- even though they had at least one Christian parent. The earliest evidence that Christian parents refrained from having their child baptized immediately [or at the very most within a couple of years] after birth -- is in the middle of the fourth century. Gregory was the first example of this.

"None of these men postponed their baptism because of faith, however. Surely Gregory and John Chrysostom at thirty [and] Jerome at twenty...(at which ages they were baptized) -- had reached the 'age of reason' and individual faith long before then! They [and especially their parents] postponed their baptisms on the false premise that they could better assure themselves a place in heaven -- if they minimized the times they sinned after baptism."

The postponement of the baptisms of covenant children from infancy till later life should not be taken to imply that such infants were devoid of faith when still unbaptized babies. To the contrary, as we have just seen above -- in the words of Bajis: "John Chrysostom, Gregory of Nazianzus...and Jerome" -- and, he could well have added, even Augustine of Hippo-Regius -- "were all baptized as adults." Nevertheless, "none of these men postponed their baptism because of faith" (or their lack of it) when still infants. For quite apart from all being covenant children, it is further to be presumed that all of them also had at least the seed of faith -- while they were yet babies.

### **151. The faiths of the infants of Gregory Nazianzen's mother the godly Nonna**

We have already seen that, in his *Oration at Basil's Funeral*, Gregory of Nazianze certainly presupposed the covenanter Basil's prenatal sanctification -- being the child of godly parents. Gregory also seems to have suggested that Basil was baptized in infancy -- even though Gregory himself was not.

The reason why the infant Gregory had been kept unbaptized, may well be because his father (Gregory Sr.) had been an advocate of Hyspistarianism -- an idolatrous unitarian syncretism of Judaism and Christianity and Paganism. However, Gregory Jr.'s mother Nonna was a lifelong godly covenanter. She herself had been conceived and born of Christian parents. So later, she likewise consecrated her own three children to the Lord -- long before they were born.

It seems Gregory Jr. himself could never remember not believing that Christ was his Lord and personal Saviour. Certainly this was indeed the case in respect of his brother Caesarius and his sister Gorgonia.

Just hear part of Gregory Nazianzen's sermon at the funeral of his own younger brother! Said Gregory Jr. of Caesarius:<sup>12</sup> "His father [Gregory Sr.] was well-grafted -- out of the wild olive tree [of Hyspistarianism] into the good one [of his wife's 'catholic' Christianity]....

"His mother [Nonna] was consecrated to God by virtue of her descent from a saintly family. She was possessed of piety as a necessary inheritance not only for herself but also for her children -- being indeed a holy lump from a holy firstfruits [Romans 11:16 *cf.* First Corinthians 7:14]. And this she so far increased and amplified -- that some...have both believed and said that even her husband's perfection has been the work of none other than herself....

"Lovers of their children and of Christ as they both were..., they were far greater lovers of Christ than of their children.... I have entered into these details not from a desire to eulogize them..., but to set forth the excellence inherited from his parents [Gregory Sr. and Nonna] by Caesarius....

"His earthly life was such as becomes [or behooves] those really well-born.... Bred and reared under such influences, we [children] were fully trained in the education afforded here [in Nazianze].... Our mother, in her motherly love for her children, had offered up a prayer.... And God...hears a righteous prayer, and honours the love of parents for well-disposed children."

### **152. Gregory Nazianzen on the lifelong faiths of his sister and their mother**

Hear too parts of Gregory Nazianzen's sermon at the funeral of his older sister Gorgonia, daughter of the Ex-Hyspistarian Gregory Sr. and his from-conception-onward faithful 'catholic' Christian wife Nonna. Exclaimed Gregory Jr.:<sup>13</sup> "Who is there who knows not the Abraham and Sarah of these our latter days -- Gregory (Sr.) and Nonna his wife?

"He [the 'Abrahamic' Gregory Sr.] has been justified by faith.... He, beyond all hope, has become

'the father of many nations'; she, has spiritually travailed in their birth.... He escaped from the bondage of his father's gods; she is the daughter, as well as the mother, of the free.... This good shepherd [Gregory Sr.] was the result of his wife's prayers....

"From them, Gorgonia derived both her existence and her reputation. They sowed in her the seeds of piety.... Gorgonia's native land was 'Jerusalem above' [Hebrews 12:22f].... She consecrated herself entirely to God.... She also won over her husband to her side, and made of him a good fellow-servant [of God].... She further made the fruit of her body, her children and her children's children, to be the fruit of her spirit -- dedicating to God not [just only] her single soul, but the whole family and household [Isaiah 59:21 cf. First Corinthians 7:10-14]."

Hear too Gregory Nazianzen's description of his godly mother, in parts of his sermon at the funeral of his father. Declared Gregory Jr.:<sup>14</sup> "She applied herself to God and divine things as closely as if absolutely released from household cares.... What time or place for prayer ever escaped her? To this she was drawn before all other things in the day.... Who paid such reverence...or stood like a pillar at the...daily psalmody? ... It was on her part a great undertaking to promise me to God, before my birth....

"Through God's goodness has it been that she has not utterly failed in her prayer.... She fell before God night and day -- entreating for the salvation of her 'head' with many fastings and tears, and assiduously devoting herself to her husband.... For the salvation of my father, there was a concurrence of the gradual conviction of his reason.... His wife was frequent in her supplications and prayers.... So my father yielded himself to God."

### **153. Infant faith and infant baptism in the writings of Gregory Nazianzen**

We have already seen that Gregory Nazianzen was the covenant child of an ex-Hypisistarian father and a from-conception-onward 'catholic' Christian mother. Cf. Romans 11:16 & First Corinthians 7:14. Through the misunderstanding of his father Gregory Sr., Gregory Jr. himself -- just like the infants of misguided Baptist parents today -- was not baptized while a baby. Indeed, though sanctified from his conception onward, he was not baptized at all -- until fully thirty years of age.

In rectifying this former error of his own father, Gregory Jr. later wrote to those who were still in the situation in which he had been. He declared:<sup>15</sup> "Let us then be baptized, so that we may win the victory! Let us partake of the cleansing water..., more sacred than the ashes of the heifer sprinkling the unclean!"

For Gregory himself had now become a convinced and vigorous advocate of infant baptism. Hear him challenge some antipaedobaptizing wayward mothers: "Have you a speech-less in-fant (*nē pion*)? Do not let sin get any opportunity, but let him be sanctified from infancy (*ek brephous*)! From his very tenderest age, let him be consecrated by the Spirit! Do you fear the seal (*sphragida*) on account of the weakness of nature? O, what a small-souled mother [you are] -- and of how little faith!"



Gregory went on: "Hannah, even before Samuel was born, promised him to God; and after his birth, consecrated him at once.... You have no need of amulets or incantations.... Give your child the Trinity (*dos autōi tēn Triada*) -- that great and noble Guard!" That is -- give you infant trinitarian baptism!

Continued Gregory:<sup>16</sup> "Some will say, in the case of those who can desire baptism [*epizētoun tō n to baptisma*] -- what have you to say about those who are still infants [*nēpiōn*]? ... Are we to baptize them too?"

To this question, Gregory himself then replied: "Certainly!... A proof of this is found in the circumcision on the eighth day, which was a sort of typical seal, and was conferred on children.... But in respect of others (*allōn*)" -- namely the post-infantile children of Pagans -- "I give my advice to wait till the end of the third year, or a little more or less. Then they may be able to listen and to answer something about the sacrament."

So here, Gregory implies that also covenant babies themselves can desire (though of course not request) the seal of infant baptism. On the other hand, the children of "others first need to wait till the end of the third year." Those three years constituted the traditional period of continuous catechism -- for converts from Paganism before their baptism and consequent admission to the Lord's supper. It was also the traditional period (between ten and thirteen years of age) during which infantly-baptized covenant children were catechetically to 'improve their baptism' before their admission to the Saviour's Table.

Gregory Nazianzen also tells<sup>17</sup> us that the demons stole the [Biblical] rite of sprinkling -- for paganistic initiations -- from the Old Testament purifications which foreshadowed Christian baptism. Indeed, Gregory also tells us<sup>18</sup> that rebaptisms are wrong.

Gregory had been born in 330, and -- through the misunderstanding of his Ex-Hypsistarian father when Gregory Jr. himself was still an infant -- baptized only in 360. Yet even by 360, the unbiblical trend toward postponing baptism till one's deathbed -- was still only a trickle.

#### **154. Other fourth-century evidences of infant faith and infant baptism**

In his *Catechetical Lectures* (around 330 A.D.), Cyril of Jerusalem<sup>19</sup> connected sprinkling and baptism in respect of covenant children being prepared for their first communion service. Indeed, between A.D. 360 and 430, the baptism of newborn covenant infants is frequently cited as a well-established custom still being practised at that time. Thus: Zeno of Verona, Optatus of Milevus, Gregory of Nazianzen, Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, the *Apostolic Constitutions*, Pseudo-Clementine, Didymus the Blind, Siricius, Ambrose, Augustine, Chrysostom, the Sixth Synod of Carthage (canon 7), the Synod of Rome (canon 5), Jerome, Theodoret, Innocent, Mark the Deacon, and Cyril of Alexandria.<sup>20</sup>

Thus the 362 A.D. Zeno of Verona<sup>21</sup> called baptism a "second circumcision from the cradle." Also the 370 Basil the Great exhorted not just believing adults but also their covenant children to be baptized. For Basil regarded such covenant infants as -- believing babies.

As a maturing 'child of the covenant' the adult Basil specifically seems to have presupposed prebaptismal faith not just in adults but also in covenant infants -- even prior to their infant baptisms. For he wrote:<sup>22</sup> "One must **believe first**; and then be sealed with baptism." *'Pisteusai gar dei proteron eita tō; baptismati episphragisasthai!'*

Believe first! Only thereafter: be baptized! Compare Mark 16:16 -- even in respect of the infant baptism of infant believers like the covenant child Basil!

### **155. The adult Basil the Great insisted on infant baptism**

Basil the Great, we have already seen, was raised in the Christian faith from infancy. Indeed, his father was Rev. Basil Sr -- and his mother the godly Emmelia.

When an adult, Basil the Great himself explained:<sup>23</sup> "A Jew does not delay circumcision. Because of the threatening that 'every soul that is not circumcised the eighth day, shall be cut off from his people' [Genesis 17:14]."

Basil therefore then commanded: "Put off 'the circumcision made without hands in the putting off of the flesh' which is performed in baptism!" Colossians 2:11f. "Our Lord Himself says: 'Verily verily I say to you -- except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.'" John 3:3f.

According to the 450 A.D. church history writer Theodoret of Cyrrhus,<sup>24</sup> Basil told Emperor Valens that the latter needed to have his little child (or *paidion*) baptized. Gregory of Nazianze (in his *Oration on Basil*) claimed he himself was an eye-witness of that event -- and he himself compared Valens's "little child" to David's dying infant (in Second Samuel 12:14-23). The fifth-century church historian Socrates called that child of the Emperor "the speech-less infant son of Valens (*nēpion huiou tou Oualentos*)."<sup>25</sup>

Contemporaneously, Gregory of Nyssa rightly taught that covenant babies receive blessing -- not wrath.<sup>26</sup> Yet he also taught that Elijah's pouring of the water on the twelve-stone altar, representing all the tribes of Israel -- was a figure of Christian baptism.<sup>27</sup>

### **156. Ambrose on infant circumcision/baptism and on John's baptizing of babies**

The 380 A.D. Ambrose, Church Overseer of Milan rightly supported<sup>28</sup> the infant baptism of covenant children -- by appealing to the Old Testament ordinance of circumcision. Yet wrongly, he held that if an infant dies without having been baptized -- such a person will have no share in the Kingdom of God. He arrived at this horrendous conclusion by ignoring the un-circumcisedness of Israelitesses, and by wrongly equating baptism<sup>29</sup> with John 3:5. But in the latter text God merely says that all persons must be regenerated -- to enter into His Kingdom.

Ambrose wrongly took regeneration to mean baptism. He also confused the Kingdom of God alias the Visible Church with salvation. Indeed, he further misunderstood John 3:5 to mean that all must be baptized in order to enter into glory.

However, Ambrose rightly rebuked<sup>30</sup> all unbaptized adults who continued to postpone their baptism. He spoke of "that returning of the riverwaters backward, toward the springhead, which was caused by 'Elijah' [= John the Baptist] when the river was divided." Ambrose attributed this to "those infants that are baptized [who] are reformed back again -- from wickedness, to their original nature."

Ambrose not only implied that John/Elijah baptized also infants, by turning the whole nation of Israel as such back to her original estate. By equating baptism with spiritual circumcision, and thus infant baptism with infant circumcision -- and by insisting on baptism for salvation even as regards infants -- it seems certain Ambrose believed that John baptized not just penitent adults, but their infants too.<sup>31</sup>

Indeed, his pupil Augustine commented<sup>32</sup> on this: "Ambrose does here say, in effect, that John...did baptize infants.... He does plainly speak of the baptism of infants [being] used in the apostles' time."

Moreover, even Ambrose himself presupposed that John the baptizer prenatally -- and therefore while still both uncircumcised and unbaptized -- indeed experienced the grace of God, and was right then filled with the Holy Spirit. For, in his *Exposition of the Gospel According to Luke* (II:22f), he gave the following comment (on Luke 1:29-45):

"The arrival of Mary and the blessings of the Lord's presence, are also speedily declared.... Elizabeth was the first to hear the voice; but John was the first to experience grace.... The women speak of grace; the babies make it effective from within, to the advantage of their mothers....

"The infant leaped [up]; the mother was filled with the Spirit. The mother was not filled before the son. But after the son was filled with the Holy Spirit, he filled his mother too." Cf. also Malachi 4:5-6 and Luke 1:11-17.

### **157. John Chrysostom on infant faith and infant circumcision**

The (385 A.D.) Chrysostom of Constantinople stated<sup>33</sup> that "our circumcision" alias "the grace of baptism" is received by the Christian "in the very beginning of his age (*aōros hēlikia*). Because "circumcision was to be given on the eighth day," so too with the similar "baptism.... It is lawful that one receives it...in infancy." Because a Jew was obliged to circumcise his child in infancy, so too a Christian parent needs to have his child baptized -- as an infant. Genesis 17:8-14 & Colossians 2:11f.

Chrysostom also enjoined<sup>34</sup> Christian parents to "imitate them of old. You women especially -- emulate those admirable women! Has a child been born to any one? Imitate Hannah's example [First Samuel 1:24]! Look at what she did [with her young baby Samuel]! She put him into the hands of God.... It was the faith of the mother and her earnest zeal, that wrought the whole.... Yet she did not say: 'I will wait till the child is grown up -- so that he may [only then] have a taste of the things of this life.'" No!

"She was absorbed in one object: how from the very beginning she might dedicate [her son Samuel] -- as the spiritual image [of God] -- to God.... Therefore was her married state more glorious...in that she dedicated the firstfruits to God. Therefore was her womb fruitful -- and she obtained other children besides." First Samuel 2:21.

Chrysostom also called baptism painless circumcision.<sup>35</sup> Cf. Colossians 2:11. He said it may be received by covenant infants who have the **inward** seal of the **Spirit**. Consequently, "we baptize little children also." Indeed, "some of those baptized...were children when they received it."<sup>36</sup>

In this, Chrysostom was followed by his students. Thus Theodoret of Cyrrhus declared<sup>37</sup> that "we baptize infants." Similarly, Isidore of Pelusium explained<sup>38</sup> that "sucklings are baptized" -- *'ta brephē...baptizetai.'*

### **158. Chrysostom on infant faith and infant salvation**

"In the loss of children" -- Chrysostom explained<sup>39</sup> to Christian parents -- "while you see [that child of] yours die, you shall thank the God of love.... The deceased has removed into a better country, and bounded away to a happier inheritance....

"That is not your child which is lying there" -- but merely his discarded tabernacle or tent-like corpse [Second Corinthians 5:1f]. Your child himself "has flown away, and sprung aloft into boundless height.... He has gone on a journey, and will return with the King.... If then you seek your son -- seek him where the King [is, and] where the army of the angels is -- not in the grave; not in the earth. He is so highly exalted. Do not yourself remain grovelling on the ground!"

Here is no limbo or purgatory for dead covenant children. Here the infantly-dying believer goes straight to heaven -- whence he or she will return with the King to earth at the very end of history.

Chrysostom also gave a very interesting comment on First Corinthians 7:14 -- with implications for the baptism of certain infants. He referred to the text concerning the unbelieving spouse being sanctified by the believer -- precisely in order that their children be not unclean but holy.

Explained Chrysostom:<sup>40</sup> "So that the [married] woman need not fear being made 'unclean' by copulation," the apostle does not tell her that the believing wife is made unholy by the unbelieving husband. To the contrary, "the apostle tells her that 'the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife'....

"For on supposition that you, being unclean, brought forth a child; and that child not being from you alone -- the child would [otherwise] be 'unclean' or but 'half-clean'.... Therefore, he adds: 'otherwise your children would be unclean; but now, there are holy!'"

### **159. Infant faith and infant baptism even among the Donatists and the Pelagians**

The 397 Third Synod of Carthage informs<sup>41</sup> us that even the Donatists baptized their children -- after breaking away from the Universal Church in 312. And the 401 Sixth Synod of Carthage re-emphasizes<sup>42</sup> the customariness of infant baptism in the Universal Church -- even while the later Christian Emperor Theodosius II was that very same year being baptized in Byzantium, not long after his birth.

Now the Pelagians denied original sin and the imputation of its stain to all infants from their conception onward.<sup>43</sup> Yet the famous Irish Pelagian Caelestius nevertheless defended the practice of infant baptism -- at the Council of Carthage in A.D. 411-12.

The A.D. 418 Sixteenth Synod of Carthage anathematized<sup>44</sup> everyone who "says that newly-born infants should not be baptized when they come forth fresh from their mother's womb." Augustine too remarked<sup>45</sup> in A.D. 422 that "the infant must be baptized while he is alive.... Women would throw their sandals at the heads of Pelagians, if they should dare to say of infants: 'Let them not be baptized!'"<sup>46</sup>

In point of fact, however, the Pelagians never questioned infant baptism. Thus Caelestius the Pelagian told the deacon Paulinus: "As for infants, I always said that they stand in need of baptism -- and that they ought to be baptized."

Indeed, even after the Synod of Carthage condemned the Pelagians in 418 -- one of them sent a letter to Rome saying: "We do acknowledge that the grace of Christ is necessary for all, both grown persons and infants.... We renounce all that should say that one that is born of parents both baptized, ought not to be baptized.... We own baptism to be necessary for all ages."<sup>47</sup>

Thereafter, it seems Semipelagianism was promoted from 425 onward by Bishop Theodore of Mopsuestia. Yet, in his lost book on *Sin* (fragments of which have been preserved elsewhere), he apparently did insist that "the holy mysteries [or baptismal signs] are given to infants.... They are accounted worthy of baptism...because they are full of sin."

As Wall concludes:<sup>48</sup> "Semipelagians...expressly renounced Pelagius as a heretic.... They called their [orthodox] adversaries, Praedestinarrians. But as to the matter we are treating of, they all agreed that there is original sin in infants [and] that all baptized infants dying in infancy are saved."

### **160. Jerome's covenant theology anent Laeta's Christian mother and her family**

When the transmission of Adam's sin to unborn infants was, quite rightly, still unquestioned in church circles (even by the Pelagians) -- the great Jerome of Bethlehem also asserted the prenatal holiness of covenant children. It was chiefly the later controversy against the Pelagians, who denied the sinfulness of babies, which propelled both Jerome and Augustine toward the opposite error of baptismal regenerationism.

Earlier, however, Jerome wrote:<sup>49</sup> "In days gone by, men rejoiced to hear it said of them, 'Your children shall be like olive-plants round about your table!'" They also rejoiced to hear it said: 'You shall see your children's children!' Psalm 128:3-6.

Now, "also in the Gospel...the Lord discusses that Commandment of the Law which says 'Honour your father and your mother!'" Matthew 19:19 & Ephesians 6:1-4. Consequently, Jerome referred to Cornelius -- that "devout man" of New Testament times who "feared God with all his house...and prayed to God always.... Truly did he 'fear God with all his house.'" Acts 10:1-4f.

Nowhere do we see Jerome's early 'covenant theology' more clearly -- than in his statements about the well-known family of Laeta. Her mother was a Christian. So too was -- Laeta herself; her husband Toxotius; their daughter Paula; and Paula's children too.

As Jerome wrote after Paula's death, and to her Christian daughter Eustochium:<sup>50</sup> "If all the members of my body were to be converted into tongues..., I could still do no justice to the virtues of the holy and venerable Paula. Noble in family, she was nobler still in holiness.... Other may go back...to Paula's cradle and...to her swaddling clothes."

Many years earlier, long before Paula's death and when she was still very young, Jerome had reminded<sup>51</sup> her mother the Christian Laeta how she had reared her daughter Paula. To that Christian mother Laeta, Jerome had then written: "You yourself are the offspring of a mixed marriage [between the Pagan Albinus and his Christian wife]. But the parents of Paula -- you and my friend Toxotius -- are both Christians. Who could have believed that to [Laeta's father] the heathen pontiff Albinus -- should be born, in answer to a mother's vows, a Christian granddaughter [Paula]!" First Corinthians 7:14.

Who could have believed "that a delighted grandfather should hear from the little one's faltering lips -- Christ's Alleluia?!... The one unbeliever [Albinus] is sanctified by his holy and believing family [cf. First Corinthians 7:14]. For, when a man is surrounded by a believing crowd of children and grandchildren -- he is as good as as candidate for the faith" in Christ.

### **161. Jerome's covenant theology for Laeta rooted in Holy Scripture**

"I speak thus to you, Laeta.... The same faith which has gained you your daughter [Paula], may win your father [Albinus] too. And that -- so you may be able to rejoice over blessings bestowed upon your entire family.

"In answer to your prayers...I [as a spiritual father] wish to address you as a mother -- and to instruct you how to bring up our dear Paula who has been consecrated to Christ **before** her birth and vowed to His service **before** her conception. Thus, in our day, we have seen repeated the story told us in the prophets about Hannah who -- though at first barren -- afterward became fruitful.... Samuel and Samson are both instances of this -- as is also John the Baptist who, when Mary came in, leaped for joy [Luke 1:41].... As then Paula has been born in answer to a promise -- her parents should give her a training suitable to her birth....

"It is written of the woman [in First Timothy 2:15], that 'she shall be saved by rearing children -- if they remain in faith'.... Parents are responsible for their children when these are of ripe[r] age.... How much more must they be responsible for them when...they cannot...'discern between their right hand and their left' [Jonah 4:11] -- when, that is to say, they cannot yet distinguished good from evil....

"While the son is a child and thinks as a child [First Corinthians 13:11], his parents are responsible for his actions.... Perhaps you imagine that, if they are not baptized, the children of Christians are liable for their own sins, and that no guilt attached to parents who withhold from baptism those who by reason of their tender age can offer no objection to it? The truth is, that...baptism...of the child...brings advantage to the parents.... In your case, [Christian Laeta,] you have no discretion -- having offered your child even before her conception.... When Hannah had offered in the tabernacle the son whom she had vowed to God -- she never took him back."

## **162. Jerome's covenant theology in the family of Paula's daughter Blaesilla**

When Paula herself had grown up -- we read in Jerome<sup>52</sup> that "Paula married Toxotius.... Thus, nobly born, Paula through her fruitfulness and her chastity won approval from all -- from her husband first, then from her relatives, then from the whole city. She bore five children" -- Blaesilla, Paulina, Eustochium, Rufina and Toxotius Jr. Here writing to the godly Eustochium on the death of her saintly mother Paula, Jerome reminded her: "Your mother has now -- after a long martyrdom -- won her crown!"

Of Paula's children, we know that Blaesilla was widowed as a teenager -- and died in Christ when herself but twenty, even predeceasing her mother Paula. For Jerome had then written<sup>53</sup> to Paula anent that bereavement: "Who can recall with dry eyes, the glowing faith which induced a girl of twenty to raise the standard of the cross?... Who can recall without a sigh, the earnestness of her prayers...and singing the psalms?"

Doubtless rhetorically, in his letter to Paula Jerome then 'assured' even the deceased: "Be at peace, dear Blaesilla, in full assurance that your garments are always white!" Ecclesiastes 9:8 *cf.* Galatians 3:27 . "The words to the dying robber are a pledge of this: 'Truly, I say to you -- today you shall be with Me in paradise.'" Luke 23:43.

Directly, Jerome then assured her grieving mother Paula: "After her long pilgrimage, she [too]...ascended up into her ancient heritage.... Therefore we should congratulate our dear Blaesilla that she has passed from darkness to light [Ephesians 5:8], and has in the first flush of her dawning faith received the crown of her completed work.... By the mercy of Christ she, four months ago, renewed her baptism in her vow of widowhood....

"David..., after interceding in vain for the life of his infant child, refused to weep for it -- knowing that it had not sinned [Second Samuel 12: 14-23].... Spare yourself, [Paula,] I beseech you! Spare Blaesilla -- who now reigns with Christ!... At this moment, she cries out to you..., 'Mother! If I was nourished at your breast; if I was taught by your precepts -- do not grudge me my exaltation! Do not so act that we shall be separated forever!'....

"Blaesilla's name shall be forever on my tongue.... Living as she does with Christ in heaven, she will live also on the lips of men."

### **163. Jerome's covenant theology in the family of Paula's daughter Paulina**

Paula's second daughter, Paulina, married the Christian Roman senator Pammachius. When Paulina died, Jerome wrote to comfort the grieving widower. He did this by reminding<sup>54</sup> Pammachius of the godliness of four Christians -- of his mother-in-law Paula and her three living Christian daughters: "three women closely united in blood and moral excellence."

Explained Jerome: "A mother with such daughters, wins for herself on earth all that Christ promised to give in heaven." Thus, including the still-living mother herself: "Four saints turned out by a single family."

Jerome then discussed the dead wife of the widower Pammachius. "Paulina," Jerome nostalgically reminded him, "kept the bed of marriage undefiled.... Reading the words of the apostle, 'marriage is honourable and the bed undefiled' [Hebrews 13:4]..., her one thought day and night was that...her union should be blessed with offspring.... She only desired children, [so] that she might bring forth virgins to Christ."

Finally, the godly Paula's other daughter Eustochium too seems to have served the Lord -- even from her infancy. So Jerome wrote<sup>55</sup> also to her: "Be not fearful, Eustochium! You are endowed with a splendid heritage. The Lord is your portion."

### **164. Other statements of Jerome suggesting prenatal sanctification**

Before the Pelagian controversy (which doubtless caused the Church to overreact into baptismal regenerationism), Jerome thus apparently presupposed prebaptismal infant faith within covenant children. By implication, he therefore indirectly presupposed also their **prebaptismal regeneratedness**.

For, then commenting on Matthew 28:19, Jerome further declared:<sup>56</sup> "First disciple all the nations! Then, when they are discipled..., baptize them with water! For it cannot be that the body should receive the sacrament of baptism -- until the soul has beforehand received the true faith."

Yet Jerome also said<sup>57</sup> -- and rightly so -- that it is a grievous sin in Christian parents not to bring their babies to receive infant baptism. Also as to the mode thereof, he defended<sup>58</sup> specifically the sprinkling of covenant babies -- with appeals to Psalm 51:2-7 and Ezekiel 16:4 & 36:21-25 and Zechariah 12:1.

Jerome elsewhere added:<sup>59</sup> "Marriage is a gift of God.... The apostle Peter says: 'as heirs together of the manifold grace of God.'" First Peter 3:7, joined with 4:10. Noah was preserved at the deluge...together with his wife and sons.... The ark, according to the apostle Peter, was a type of the Church -- [the ark] in which eight souls were saved" (namely Noah and his entire



family). Indeed, household baptism -- including infant baptism -- is the sign and seal of that family salvation. First Peter 3:20f.

### **165. Jerome on the glory of Christian child-bearing and child-rearing**

"The Jews," concluded Jerome, "gloried in children and child-bearing.... Blessed was he whose seed was in Zion, and his family in Jerusalem! And part of the highest blessing was: 'your wife shall be as a fruitful vine, in the innermost parts of your home; your children like olive-plants, round about your table.'" Psalm 128:3.

Finally, when the baptismal regenerationist Bishop Paulinus of Nola asked a question of Jerome, the latter's answer still manifests his earlier theology -- namely a covenantal one. With obvious reference to First Corinthians 7:14, Paulinus had asked Jerome 'how those children that are born of...baptized parents, are holy?'

Even the Anglican Rev. Dr. Wall here rightly understood his meaning. Observes Wall of Paulinus:<sup>60</sup> "He seems at this place to have taken the obvious sense of St. Paul's words to be that the infants of Christian parents are holy from birth -- and desires to know what holiness this is that St. Paul ascribes to them from their birth, since...the parents be baptized Christians."

To the above question of Paulinus of Nola anent First Corinthians 7:14, Jerome replied:<sup>61</sup> "Tertullian has discoursed in his books on *Monogamy*" [II:2]. Tertullian further addressed the matter of the prenatal holiness of covenant children, also in his book *On the Soul* [chapter 39]. There, added Jerome, Tertullian "declares that the children of believers are called 'holy'.... There can be nothing 'holy' -- **except creatures** which know of and worship God."

### **166. The early Augustine's doctrine of infant faith within covenant children**

Ambrose of Milan's pupil was the greatest theologian of the Early Church, and possibly of all time -- the Carthaginian St. Augustine of Hippo-Regius in North Africa. First, however, the famous Augustine backslid into terrible wickedness before his dramatic reconversion when an adult. Yet it should not be forgotten that, though unbaptized in infancy, he was still a child of the covenant. His godly mother Monica had prayed for him before his birth -- and for the rest of her life, faithfully, thereafter. Indeed, it seems Augustine himself already knew the Lord when just a tiny boy -- before later drifting off for many years into the paths of sin.

For, after his above-mentioned adult reconversion, that greatest of all patristic theologians wrote<sup>62</sup> the following about himself: "O Lord my God..., when [at birth] I came hither into this...dying life..., I heard from my parents from whose substance You did form me...[that] Your merciful comforts sustained me.... For neither my mother nor my nurses filled their own breasts. But You, by them, did give me the nourishment of infancy -- according to Your ordinance....

"As a boy, I began to pray to You -- my 'Help' and my 'Refuge'.... My elders -- yes, and my own parents too who wished me no ill, laughed.... And yet I [later] erred, O Lord God.... In doing contrary to the wishes of my parents..., I disobeyed them."

Though Augustine had himself been an unconfirmed catechumen ever since his late boyhood, he had thereafter: fallen away into immorality; contracted an unofficial union (in A.D. 372); and produced a godly son Adeodatus, who died in 390. Augustine himself was reclaimed for Christ in 386, and baptized together with his son in 387.

Rightly so! See Genesis 17:10-27. For Adeodatus was still the son of a formerly backslidden and now (re)converted covenanter -- and the grandson of the godly Monica. Isaiah 59:21.

In his *Confessions*,<sup>63</sup> Augustine wrote to God: "Being now clothed with the humility appropriate to Thy sacraments..., we took into our company the boy Adeodatus -- born of me carnally, of my sin. Well hadst Thou made him! He was barely fifteen years, yet in wisdom excelled many grave and learned men. I confess unto Thee Thy gifts, O Lord my God, Creator of all, and of [Thy] exceeding power to reform our deformities.... That boy...we fostered...in Thy discipline....

"There is a book of ours, which is entitled *The Master*. It is a dialogue between him and me.... Thou knowest...his thoughts in his sixteenth year.... That talent was a source of awe to me. And Who but Thou couldst be the Worker of such marvels?... I fear nothing for his childhood.... We took him coeval to us in Thy grace, to be educated in Thy discipline."

#### **167. The young Augustine on covenant infants' faith in Christ before their baptism**

Augustine also realized<sup>64</sup> that covenant children seem to have faith in Christ even before they are baptized in infancy. Thus, he wrote to Bonifacius: "The regenerating Spirit is possessed in common both by the parents who present the child [for baptism] -- and by the infant that is presented and is born again." Indeed, once a child receives Christ's saving grace, he cannot lose it -- neither by his own nor by his parents' later sins.

The doctrinaire Anglican Dr. Wall has given an accurate comment on the above statement of Augustine. "The guilt of original sin," explains Wall,<sup>65</sup> "descends from the parent to the [prenatal infant] child -- because the child is not yet a separate living person." However, "the faith and godly will of the parent bringing his [postnatal infant] child to baptism, is available -- because the same Spirit that sanctifies and regenerates the child, moves the parent to offer him to baptism."

Remarkable too is Augustine's following statement:<sup>66</sup> "Some Christian child[which died] has been lost. You have 'lost' a Christian child. Not that you have indeed 'lost' him, but have sent him before you. For he has not gone quite away -- but gone ahead. Ask your own faith: surely you too will presently go there -- where he hath gone ahead [*cf.* Second Samuel 12:18-23].

"I am unwilling to speak of the loss of a child.... Let us speak in some more happy and auspicious tone! I do not say, then, you will have one less. Reckon rather, that you have One more! Give Christ a place with your children! Let your Lord be added to your family!

"Let your Creator be added to your offspring! Let your Brother [Christ] be added to the number of your children! For, though there is so great a distance -- yet He has condescended to

be a Brother.... You have two children. Reckon Him [to be] a third...; keep the place of one child, for your Lord! For what you shall give to your Lord -- will profit both you and your children."

### **168. The intermediate Augustine on infant faith before infant baptism**

As Augustine remarked, the Holy Spirit is bestowed even upon infants.<sup>67</sup> Baptism corresponds to the Israelitic circumcision administered on the eighth day.<sup>68</sup> And circumcision in Old Testament times stood for baptism.<sup>69</sup>

Indeed, infant baptism is of apostolic antiquity, and not of subsequent ecclesiastical manufacture. Declared Augustine:<sup>70</sup> "The custom...of infant baptism...is a tradition from the apostles. The age of infancy...bears a witness of great weight. For it was the first to have merited to shed its blood for Christ." Matthew 2:16.

In Leviticus 21:8-15, God says to the priests: 'I, the Lord Who sanctifies you, am holy.... He who is the high priest among his brethren, upon whose head the anointing oil was poured, and who has been consecrated to put on the garments..., shall not profane his descendants among his people. For I, the Lord, do sanctify him.'

Augustine commented on this passage:<sup>71</sup> "Hence Cornelius and they who were with him appeared to be already sanctified invisibly by the Holy Ghost.... For all were baptized" -- but only thereafter. Acts 10:1-2,44-48.

One should also note the bearing on baptism of the high priest's consecration to put on the garments" in the above passage Leviticus 21:8-15. Compare too the statement in Galatians 3:27 that "as many of you as have been baptized into Christ -- have put on Christ." Thus Augustine called<sup>72</sup> baptism a "wet tinge in water." He then added: "O, what a garment this is...that decently fits all ages and all phases! It is neither too big for infants, nor too little for men."

Remarkable too in Augustine, is both his initial and his mature understanding of First Corinthians 7:14. In 393 A.D., he rightly employed that text against divorce. At that time, commenting against adultery, he pointed out<sup>73</sup> that "an unbelieving husband has been sanctified in his believing wife, and an unbelieving wife in her believing husband.... Else were your children unclean; but now, they are holy." For: *'sanctificatus est...vir infidelis in uxore, et sanctificata est mulier infidelis in fratre.... Alioquin filii vestri immundi essent; nunc autem sancti sunt.'*

Even the great Anglican baptismal scholar Rev. Dr. Wall concedes<sup>74</sup> that Augustine here means: "Were it not so that the faith of the one did generally prevail against the infidelity of the other [parent] -- the children of such would generally be left in their unclean state and be brought up in heathenism.... We see now, on the contrary, that those of you that live in a state of marriage with unbelievers do generally so far prevail by God's grace that your children are...holy or sanctified."

Augustine then further elaborated: "There were, then, Christian infants that had been sanctified -- some by the authority of one of their parents; some by the consent of both." For it

is the Holy Spirit Who, before the event, works both in those who bring the infant -- and in the infant thus brought unto baptism.

### **169. Augustine on the prebaptismal divine illumination of the covenant infant**

Here are Augustine's own words:<sup>75</sup> "Infants ought to be baptized.... Mere infants...are rightly called 'believers' -- because they in a certain sense profess faith by the words of their parents....

"If, however, the infant departs from the present life...., the guilt in which he was involved by original sin having been done away -- he shall be made perfect in that Light of truth Which, remaining unchangeable for evermore, illumines those justified.... Even for the life of infants was His flesh given -- which He gave for the life of the world.... 'He who believes on the Son, has everlasting life; while he that does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him' [John 3:35f].

Now in which of these classes must we place infants -- amongst those who believe on the Son -- or amongst those who believe not the Son? In neither, some say.. . This, however, the [Biblical canon or] rule of the Church does not indicate. For it joins baptized infants to the number of the faithful....

"Others again, as Jeremiah [1:5], are sanctified even in their mother's womb. Whereas all men, if there is original sin, are equally guilty.... We therefore ought not to doubt that even for infants yet to be baptized, was that precious blood shed....

"Some, however, understand that as soon as children are born [or 'born again' alias regenerated], they are enlightened.... They derive this opinion from the passage: 'That was the true Light Who enlightens everyone that comes into the world' [John 1:9].... If they are...already illuminated..., they at all events ought gladly to receive baptism....

"No man is illuminated, except with that Light of the truth Who is God.... 'He that plants is nothing, nor is he that waters. But God Who gives the increase'" -- is everything. First Corinthians 3:7.

"Man indeed hears the speaker, be he man or angel. But in order that he may perceive and know that what is said is true -- his mind is **internally sprinkled** with that Light Who remains for ever and Who shines even in darkness."

Augustine then concluded: "We affirm therefore that the Holy Spirit dwells in baptized infants...like a spark raked up, which will kindle as they grow in years." Thus Augustine's *Epistle to Dardanus*<sup>76</sup> -- anticipating Calvin's *Institutes*.<sup>77</sup>

### **170. Augustine: covenant infants of baptized parents themselves need baptizing**

Augustine rightly regarded infant baptism as an apostolic institution. But, after the start of the Pelagian controversy -- partly in overreaction against the Pelagians, he then wrongly claimed an equal apostolicity for the paganistic (and neopaganizing) theory of baptismal regenerationism. Thus Augustine falsely claimed,<sup>78</sup> in "the universal Church from the earliest times, that believing infants have obtained through the baptism of Christ the remission of original sin."

Yet Augustine also intimated that covenant children were fit for infant baptism prior thereto -- and that original sin remains even thereafter. For he further explained: "It is not without reason that the blessed [250f A.D.] Cyprian carefully shows [in his *64th Epistle*] how from the very first the Church has held this as a well-understood article of faith.... He was asserting the fitness of infants only just born -- to receive Christ's baptism....

"It was on the eighth day that infants were previously circumcised.... However, after bestowing upon them the full support of his argument -- he still confessed that they were not free from original sin."

Of course, both the 250f A.D. Cyprian and the 400f A.D. Augustine should at this point have concluded -- as did the pre-Cyprianic Church -- that infant baptism (which at Calvary replaced infant circumcision) could no more wash away original sin than circumcision did. For even Cyprian and Augustine both admitted that circumcision did not render covenanters "free from original sin." Indeed, before Calvary, all faithful female covenanters had their sins washed away -- without ever being circumcised.

Largely following Cyprian, Augustine's subsequent remarks clearly and properly endorsed the Biblical doctrine of transmitted original sin -- as well as the Biblical doctrines of infant faith followed by infant baptism. However, they do so improperly. For they make the forgiveness of sin dependent upon infant baptism -- instead of (with the Bible) making infant baptism dependent upon God's gracious forgiveness of infant sin, by His grace and through infant's faith.

Explained Cyprian and Augustine: "To no one born of men ought God's mercy and grace to be denied. For since the Lord in His Gospel says, 'The Son of man has not come to destroy men's lives but to save them' [Luke 9:56] -- so far as in us lies, not a soul ought, if possible, to be lost."

From this, Augustine then drew quite the correct conclusion: "Remission of sins is given even to the greatest sinners after they have believed.... How much more ought an infant not to be forbidden who, newborn, has done no sin except that -- from having been born carnally after Adam -- he has contracted from his very birth [and indeed even from his very conception] the contagion of the primeval death....

"I do not recollect ever having heard of any other doctrine on this point from Christians who accept the two Testaments." That is the case, added Augustine, "whether [such doctrine was] established in the Catholic Church or in any heretical or schismatic body whatever."

### **171. The Paedobaptist Augustine refutes the paedobaptistic Pelagians on original sin**

"But surely," said some of the Pelagians, infant baptism cannot cleanse covenant babies who have not sin! So it cannot be that "baptism cleanses the primeval sin." For "they who are born of two baptized parents, ought to be free from this sin. For these could not [then] have transmitted to their children -- that thing which they did not themselves possess."

In answer to this objection, Augustine now rightly demonstrated that covenant infants of baptized parents themselves are still sinners; need the Saviour; and therefore need baptizing. "I should in my turn ask them some questions," said Augustine of the Pelagians. "How is it that the foreskin, after being removed by circumcision, should still remain in the sons of the circumcised? Or again, how does it happen that the chaff which is winnowed off so carefully by human labour -- still keeps its place in the grain which springs from the winnowed wheat?"

Augustine continued:<sup>79</sup> "We are contending with those who allow that the children of the baptized ought to be baptized [themselves].... It is quite possible for one who is not cleansed, to be born of parents who are cleansed.... Not generation, but regeneration makes Christians.... Thus, any child who is born of parents who are cleansed (because born again) -- -- must himself be born again, in order that he too may be cleansed."

The abovementioned paragraphs of Augustine, are great. The only trouble with them is that -- in combatting the rising and new heresy of Pelagianism -- he now more and more identified regeneration with baptism.

### **172. Pelagius on infant faith and salvation**

We must now say a few words about both the orthodoxy and the heterodoxy of two great northern theologians at that time. We mean the Briton or 'Welshman' Morgan (alias Pelagius), and the 'Scottish' Irishman Caelestius.

The British Pelagian Morgan was a man of vast learning and piety. He had -- before falling into heresy -- been beloved and respected even by Augustine himself. Indeed, especially Augustine mentions Morgan's works -- most of which have now been lost. His writings included: his *Three Books of the Trinity*; his work on *The Hardening of Pharaoh's Heart*; his book on *The Law*; his famous *Confession of Faith* (often wrongly attributed either to Jerome or to Augustine); his anti-Manichaean work *On Virginity*; and his well-known writings opposing Jerome's denigration of marriage.

In his *Exposition on St Paul's Epistles*, apparently composed before 410 A.D., the great British theologian Pelagius rightly said<sup>80</sup> against the Romanists: "If Adam's sin hurts those that did not sin themselves, then Christ's righteousness may profit those who did not believe. For they are as much, nay more, saved by One -- than they were, before, dead by one.... If baptism does cleanse [as the Romanists allege], then they that are born of parents both baptized, must [themselves] be without this sin. For parents could not transmit that which they did not have."

Indeed, the Pelagians rightly argued<sup>81</sup> as follows concerning the words of Jesus in John 3:3-5. "He does not say 'Except a man be born again of water and the Spirit he shall not have salvation or eternal life'.... He merely said 'he shall not enter into the kingdom of God' [perhaps meaning only the visible Church, as distinct from having everlasting life]. Therefore infants are to be baptized, in order that they may be with Christ 'in the kingdom of God' -- where they will not be, unless they are baptized. Should infants die, however -- even without baptism they will have salvation and eternal life."

The Pelagians further rightly held:<sup>82</sup> "The Apostle indeed says 'Else were your children unclean but now they are holy' [First Corinthians 7:14].... There was no necessity for the children of believers to be baptized" -- even though they should be. Thus the Pelagians, according to Augustine's *Forgiveness* II:41:25.

### **173. Pelagius fell into error after rightly refuting Romanism**

The Romanists -- syncretizing Scripture with neo-paganistic 'magic' -- had been alleging that baptism (and baptism alone) indeed washes away original sin. Pelagius rightly withstood that heresy. For, just like Augustine (till then), Pelagius clearly and correctly saw that First Corinthians 7:14 teaches that the infants of at least one [either baptized or unbaptized] believing parent, were 'holy' prenatally (and therefore prior to their own baptism).

Indeed, Augustine concluded in his own (412 A.D.) work *On Forgiveness* that the exposition of First Corinthians 7:14 which Pelagius gave -- was correct. For also Augustine himself had presented that same exposition -- in his own earlier [393 A.D.] work *On the Lord's Sermon on the Mount*.<sup>83</sup>

In that writing, Augustine himself had argued Paul's statement that "your children...now are...'holy'" means: "now the children were Christians, who were sanctified at the instance of one of the parents." At that time, on this matter, Augustine and Pelagius were still in agreement with one another.

Indeed, even in his (412 A.D.) work *On Forgiveness*,<sup>84</sup> Augustine was yet arguing that the verse First Corinthians 7:14 "must be understood both as we ourselves [= Augustine] elsewhere *and as Pelagius* (in his notes on this same Epistle to the Corinthians) has expounded it.... The Apostle's words seem...to indicate...some particular sanctification is here to be understood..., by which the children of the believing parents were sanctified.... A **sprinkling** of holiness [**internally**] -- arising out of the closeness of married life and children."

Even as late as 418, in his own work *On the Grace of Christ and Original Sin*,<sup>85</sup> Augustine still spoke highly of the accomplishments of Pelagius. Admitted the African of the Briton: "He has discoursed a good deal on points about which no question was raised as to his views.... Having then terminated a discussion which he had conducted to his heart's content -- from the Unity of the Trinity to the resurrection of the flesh, on which nobody was questioning him -- he goes on to say, 'We hold likewise one baptism which we aver ought to be administered to infants in the same sacramental formula as it is to adults [Matthew 28:19 cf. Ephesians 4:4-6 & 6:1-4]'.... The sacrament is administered to children."

Good too was Pelagius's suggestion that "infants have redemption by the baptism of Christ" -- alias by virtue of Christ's work during and as depicted by His Own baptism. However, in subsequent years and partially in overreaction against Romanism -- Pelagius drew further (and quite incorrect) conclusions from First Corinthians 7:14 (and especially from Romans 5:12f).

For Pelagius then misconcluded that the infants of a believer were devoid of the guilt and stain of Adam's transmitted sin. Indeed, he even suggested that those infants could therefore themselves earn salvation -- through their own good works.<sup>86</sup>

#### **174. Augustine rightly refuted the final deception of the Pelagians**

In 417 A.D., Pelagius sent an *Epistle to Innocent*, Bishop of Rome. There, he alleged "that men slander him [Pelagius] -- as if he denied the sacrament of baptism to infants." Indeed, Pelagius then added that "he had never heard even an impious heretic say this...about infants."

Pelagius next asked:<sup>87</sup> "Who indeed is so unacquainted with Gospel lessons, as...to attempt to make such an affirmation?... Who is so impious, as to wish to exclude infants from the 'kingdom of heaven' [perhaps meaning the visible Church] -- by forbidding them to be baptized?"

Indeed, according to Augustine,<sup>88</sup> the Pelagians were so surrounded or "beset both with the authority of God's Word and with the usage of the Church that was of old delivered to it, and has been since kept by it, in the baptizing of children -- that they dare not deny that infants are [to be] baptized." For they say that 'infants do indeed answer truly, by the mouths of those that bring them, that they believe in the forgiveness of sins.'

The Ultrapelagian Caelestius -- author of the books *Definitions of Sinlessness*; and *Monastic Life*; and *Original Sin*; and *Statement of Faith*; and *Syllogisms* -- was a tenacious and successful propagandist. In his own *Prologue* to his own *Commentary on Jeremiah*, Jerome called Caelestius "by origin of the Scotch [*viz.* the Irish] nation" -- one "having his belly filled...with Scotch porridge."

Augustine regarded Caelestius as bolder than the more subtle Pelagius. In his *Confession*, published at Rome, Caelestius stated: "I have always maintained that infants require baptism and ought to be baptized."

Indeed, as Augustine pointed out:<sup>89</sup> "Caelestius here conceded baptism for infants.... This, accordingly, is the language which Caelestius used in the ecclesiastical process at Carthage: 'As touching the transmission of sin...many persons of acknowledged position in the Catholic Church deny it.... I have always maintained that infants require baptism, and ought to be baptized.'"

#### **175. Overreaction to Pelagianism pushes Augustine into baptismal regenerationism**

However, four decades later -- Augustine changed the views on baptism he had so orthodoxly set out in his earlier work *On the Sermon on the Mount*. We shall let the great Anglican baptismal scholar Rev. Dr. Wall relate the saddening story.



Explains Wall:<sup>90</sup> "About forty years after the writing of this book, when Pelagianism had in the mean time arisen and sunk again, some Semipelagians in France who held...that infants dying unbaptized shall (though they miss...the kingdom of heaven) yet live eternally without punishment -- made use of these words of St. Au[gu]stin[e] to uphold their tenet."

In responding to this new sect, the Semipelagians, Augustine now taught the certainty of salvation for all baptized infants dying thus -- and the damnation of all the unbaptized so dying. Wrote he: "God forbid that I should leave the matter of infants, so as to say it is uncertain whether those that are regenerated in Christ -- if they die in infancy -- do come to eternal salvation.... Those who are not regenerated, do fall into the second death."<sup>91</sup>

This could be interpreted as meaning that Augustine did not categorically state that unregenerated babies actually die in infancy -- but only that dying regenerates definitely go straight to heaven. Unfortunately, however, Augustine here meant that only baptized babies were thereby regenerate -- and that all unbaptized infants were therefore *ipso facto* unregenerate.

Misinterpreting (and misappealing to) First Corinthians 7:14, the Pelagians and the Semipelagians had falsely assumed that merely the strong desire of a believing wife to win her unbelieving husband -- might well be sufficient to save him. Indeed, they had further concluded that the desire of just one parent that his or her infants be saved -- was quite sufficient to make them Christians (with or without infant baptism).<sup>92</sup> The truth, however, is that without a **personal faith** in Christ -- both the unbelieving spouse and the infant of a believer are **still damned** (whether they are baptized or not).

But Augustine now overreacted. In his great (412 A.D.) Anti-Pelagian work *On Forgiveness*,<sup>93</sup> he declared: "The Apostle indeed says 'Else were your children unclean, but now are they holy' [First Corinthians 7:14].... This certainly does not contravene our assertion.... The faithful 'holy' children..., unless they are baptized..., go into damnation.... The holy children of believers and the unclean children of unbelievers are -- notwithstanding their different circumstances -- equally prohibited from entering the kingdom of God [meaning heaven], if they have not been baptized."

#### **176. Analysis of Augustine's Anti-Pelagian baptismal error**

Here, Augustine still upheld the same correct interpretation of First Corinthians 7:14 he formerly gave in his work *On the Lord's Sermon on the Mount*. But Augustine had since then now also incorrectly added that it "is to be held without any doubt that whatever be the sanctification [or 'holiness'] meant, this must be held steadily -- that there is no other valid means of making Christians and remitting sins, except by men becoming believers through the sacrament.... Nor are the children who are born of parents howsoever just and holy, absolved from the guilt of original sin -- unless they have been baptized in Christ."<sup>94</sup>

Lastly, in his 418 A.D. work *On Original Sin*,<sup>95</sup> Augustine declared that "Pelagius endeavoured by deception to overreach even the judgment of the [Roman] Bishop of the Apostolic See.... He [Pelagius] sent a letter to Rome to...[the ailing Bishop] Innocent of blessed memory.... When it found him not in the flesh, it was handed to...[Innocent's successor] Zosimus, and by him

directed to us.

"In this letter, he [Pelagius] complains of being 'defamed by certain persons for refusing the sacrament of baptism to infants'.... The objections, however, are not urged against them in the manner he has stated. For they [the Pelagians] neither deny the sacrament of baptism to infants, nor do they promise the kingdom of heaven to any irrespective of the redemption of Christ.... The real objection against them, is that they refuse to confess that unbaptized infants are liable to the condemnation of the first man....

"The Apostle Paul says most plainly, that before they [infants] were born, they did neither good nor evil [Romans 9:11]. On what account, therefore, is an infant rightly punished with such ruin -- if it be not because he belongs to the mass of perdition and is properly regarded as born of Adam, condemned under the bond of the ancient debt unless he has been released from the bond not according to debt but according to grace.... Thus there is a whole and perfect cleansing in the self-same baptismal laver...of all the sins remitted now in our baptism."

Thus the false doctrine of baptismal regenerationism finally took root even in Augustine. Unfortunately, his semi-mechanical doctrine of the sacraments at **this point** overshadowed his glorious perspective of God's sovereign election. Nevertheless, Augustine rightly still admitted it is only in the elect that the sacraments accomplish what they represent.<sup>96</sup> Indeed, he also stated: "Though the sacraments were common to all, the grace was not common."<sup>97</sup>

Calvin says "by the mouth of Augustine...there is a sanctification without a visible sacrament -- and a visible sacrament without internal sanctification."<sup>98</sup> Yet for the rest, Augustine now promoted the false theory of baptismal regenerationism -- though rebuttably so.<sup>99</sup>

### **177. Augustine's baptismal errors versus Vincentius's Proto-Protestantism**

Immediately after the Universal Church's condemnation of Pelagianism in 418, a brilliant convert to [Universal and therefore Non-Roman] Catholicism from the Rogatian faction of Donatism -- a man called Vincentius Victor of Mauretania -- rebuked Augustine of Hippo. Vincentius did so, because Augustine had previously hesitated to reject the traducian theory anent the origin of the human soul (in favour of historic and traditional creationism).

Remarked Vincentius: "Who deserves without committing any sin, so immense a punishment as to be conceived in the sin of another before leaving his mother's womb and then to be no longer free from sin? But from this punishment, the free grace of God delivers the souls of such infants as are regenerated in Christ with no previous merits of their own. 'Otherwise grace is no grace.'" Romans 11:6.

Augustine replied in his 419 treatise *On the Soul and its Origin*. There, he first dealt with early-dying infants who had timeously received baptism. Said Augustine:<sup>100</sup> "In the case of those infants too in [respect of] whose baptism...he found something to say," Vincentius had argued that their "being involved in the sin of another could not possibly have been detrimental to them -- predestinated as they were to eternal life in the foreknowledge of God."

Next, Augustine presented Vincentius's view anent early-dying unbaptized infants. "When he wished to answer with respect...to those infants who are prevented by death from being first baptized in Christ, he was so bold as to promise them not only paradise but also the kingdom of heaven..., implying that without any grace of Christ the souls of infants are redeemed to everlasting life and the kingdom of heaven.... In their case, [Vincentius held that] original sin may be cancelled without Christ's baptism" -- alias without their own reception of the baptism offered by the Christ-ian religion.<sup>101</sup>

Although disagreeing with the above, even Augustine then slightly relented. Said the great Carthaginian:<sup>102</sup> "The thief...confessed the crucified Lord." Luke 23:42f. "His faith on the cross flourished.... There was discovered in him the full measure of a martyr [alias a witness to Christ's Lordship].... All this indeed was manifest to the eyes of the Lord Who at once bestowed so great felicity on one who, though not baptized, was yet washed clean in the blood.... This man [Vincentius]...acknowledges that infants are involved in original sin. He yet boldly promises them even without baptism the kingdom of heaven."

However, Augustine soon wrongly warned<sup>103</sup> his own followers against Vincentius and his associates: "Do not let them affirm that souls become sinful by another's original sin! Do not let them affirm that infants who die unbaptized, can possibly reach eternal life and the kingdom of heaven -- by the remission of original sin in any other way [than baptism] whatever!"

Vincentius and his followers were certainly not Pelagians. Yet Augustine nevertheless rightly warned: "Let them restrain their imagination, lest they should be driven in their difficulty to enunciate the now damnable and very recently condemned heresy of Pelagius -- to the effect that the souls of infants have not original sin!"

#### **178. Augustine's critique could not refute Vincentius's prebaptismal salvationism**

Victorius's Proto-Protestant baptismal strengths and Augustine's Proto-Romanistic baptismal weaknesses subsequently become even more apparent. For Augustine observed<sup>104</sup> that Vincentius had come "to speak of those who...expire before they are baptized. He says in this place...: 'Infants who, being predestinated for baptism -- are yet, by the failing of this life, hurried away.... It is written of such, "Speedily was he taken away lest...wickedness should alter his understanding or deceit beguile his soul. Therefore He hastened to take him away from among the wicked. For his soul pleased the Lord.'"" Wisdom 4:11,14,13.

Vincentius had then continued: "I would be bold to say...that they [unbaptized early-dying predestinated infants] can attain to the forgiveness of their original sins.... Just as in the case of the thief on the cross who confessed but was not baptized, the Lord...gave him paradise.... The Lord acknowledges that in His Father's house are many mansions [John 14:2].... In these abodes, the unbaptized is brought.... And the baptized!"

""Responded Augustine:<sup>105</sup> "The new-fangled Pelagian heretics have been most justly condemned..., having dared to give to unbaptized infants a place of rest and salvation.... This they would not have dared to do, if they did not deny their having original sin.... This man [Vincentius], however, professes the catholic belief on this point -- admitting that infants are tied

in the bonds of original sin. And yet he releases them from these bonds without the laver...and says..., 'Infants do not pass into condemnation -- though no laver of Christian faith absolves them from the chain of original sin.'"

### **179. Augustine's predestinarianism should have saved him from baptismal error**

So Augustine finally fell into baptismal regenerationism. However, if he had lived a little longer -- he may well have overcome that overreaction to Pelagianism. Instead, he may well have developed his predestinarianism much more strongly than he did his sacramentology. Indeed, already in his (426 or 427 A.D.) *Treatise on Rebuke and Grace*<sup>106</sup> -- he almost reached that position.

There, he argues no longer as a Proto-Romanist but as a Proto-Calvinist. Insisted Augustine: "They are children of God whom as yet we have not, and God has already.... The Evangelist John [11:51f] says 'that Jesus should die for that nation [of Israel] -- and not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad'.... This certainly they were to become, by believing.... Yet, before this had happened, they had already been enrolled as sons of God....

"Those whom we call His enemies, or the infant children of His enemies -- whomever of them He will so regenerate that they may end this life in that faith which worketh by love -- are already and before this is done, in that predestination, His children; and have [already] been given to Christ His Son, [so] that they may not perish but have everlasting life.... Whosoever therefore in God's most providential ordering are foreknown, predestinated, called, justified, glorified -- I say...although not yet born again and even although not yet born at all -- are already children of God and absolutely cannot perish."

According to Rev. Professor Dr. B.B. Warfield in his 1897 *Two Studies in the History of Doctrine*, the great African here "speaks of men not yet born -- as [being] among those who are called according to God's purpose and [who are] therefore of the saved who constitute the Church." Augustine further "asserts that those who are so called..., are 'already children of God enrolled in the memorial of their Father with unchangeable surety'.... Those who are of the 'called according to the purpose [of God]' are predestinated...to salvation."

In later years, it was the Romish Church that increasingly followed Pelagius and especially the Semipelagians -- and the Calvinists who followed the gist of Augustine. Concludes Warfield:<sup>107</sup> "Both Pelagius and the Church of Rome consign infants dying unbaptized -- [not to heaven but] to a natural paradise....

"This natural paradise is formally assigned by Roman theologians to that portion of the other world designated 'hell' [or rather *limbus infantum* alias 'limbo'] .... It is precisely what the Pelagians taught should be the state of unbaptized infants after death!" So, by over-reacting against this particular error of Pelagius, Augustine and the Romanists ended up embracing it themselves in another way and under another term.

## **180. Fourth- and fifth century pseudepigraphical support for Paedobaptism**

During the fourth and fifth centuries, many pseudepigraphical documents were fabricated in the names of previous Church Fathers. Yet even those constructions attest the strength of Paedobaptism at that time.

Thus, around 375 A.D., we encounter the final form of a document now known as the *Apostolic Constitutions*. Its shorter form probably dates from at least 325 A.D., if not earlier. Though it might so imply, it could hardly have been written by the Apostles themselves. Yet it might well accurately reflect their teaching. Indeed, it certainly reflects the teaching of the Christian Church in the fourth century -- if not earlier, and possibly right from the very beginning.

These so-called *Apostolic Constitutions* declared<sup>108</sup> of the children of Israel that God "divided the Red Sea and...separated the waters...and had led the people through them -- as through a dry wilderness." Subsequently, however, He took the "prophetic rain" away from "the wicked synagogue" and commanded "the clouds that they rain **no** rain upon it."

Instead, He "poured" out "His Spirit" upon "the sons...and...daughters" of "the converted of the Gentiles." Psalm 77:15-20; Isaiah 5:6; Joel 2:28; Acts 2:1-18. Consequently, God now forbids circumcision, and urges Christians to be "contented with one baptism alone" (cf. Ephesians 4:4f). For "they that attempt to [re-]baptize those already initiated, crucify the Lord afresh [cf. Hebrews 6:1-6]....

"The Lord says, 'except a man be baptized of water and of the Spirit -- he shall by no means enter into the Kingdom of heaven.' And again, 'he that believes and is baptized -- shall be saved' [John 3:3f & Mark 16:16].... You must also baptize your infants -- and 'bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord [Ephesians 4:4f & 6:1-4]!' For He says: 'Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and do not forbid them [Mark 10:14f *etc.*]!'"

We next look at a work allegedly authored by Dionysius the Areopagite (cf. Acts 17:34 *sic*). There, Pseudo-Dionysius states "that also children who cannot yet understand the divine mysteries should be made partakers...of the most sacred signs of society with God.... Our divine instructors, considering this, have thought fit that children should be admitted."<sup>109</sup>

Even the (*circa* 375 A.D.) *Pseudo-Clementine documents* applied John 3:3f to baptism.<sup>110</sup> Thus, in their *Homilies*,<sup>111</sup> the apostle Peter is said to have explained to the mother of the Apostle Paul's associate Clement of Rome that no Christian should sit at the same table with an unbaptized person -- albeit even an unbaptized child. For no 'unbaptized' person can enter into the Kingdom of God."

Also important are Pseudo-Justin's *Questions to the Orthodox*. That work, in its 56th Question, discusses such "children that die in infancy...as have been baptized by the means of others." It then declares "that the baptized will be made partakers of the blessings granted by baptism."

Then there are the *Questions to Antioch* of Pseudo-Athanasius. That document, in its 115th Question, asks: "Whither do [faithful] infants go when they die -- into punishment, or into the kingdom? And particularly -- whither go the children of heathen? And where are placed the children of the faithful that die **unbaptized**? Are they placed with the believers, or with the unbelievers?"

The answer runs: "Our Lord says, 'Suffer little children to come to Me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven!' And again the Apostle says, 'Now are your children holy.' It is plain that the children of believers do...go as spotless and faithful into the **Kingdom**."

Finally, there are the *Homilies on Adam and Eve* of Pseudo-Chrysostom. On Psalm 14 Chrysostom himself had said: "One brings an infant to be baptized." Pseudo-Chrysostom now adds: "Let us consider the meaning of what the Church all over the world practises, in the baptizing of infants or adult persons."<sup>112</sup>

### **181. Baptismal regenerationism and the Post-Augustinian Church Fathers**

Especially after Augustine, there was an almost universal slide into full-blown baptismal regenerationism. Yet the Biblical doctrine of infantly baptizing covenant children -- still remained firmly entrenched. Thus, the 420 A.D. Mark the Deacon described how his superior (Rev. Porphyrius) baptized a couple together with their infant whom he himself had just delivered.<sup>113</sup>

In 430, Cyril Bishop of Alexandria not only did the same in respect of Leviticus 14:1f and Numbers 19:2f and Isaiah 4:4.<sup>114</sup> He also applied John 11:26's "Do you believe this?" -- to the confession a believer makes soon after becoming a father. This occurs "when a newborn child is brought forward to receive the anointing of initiation -- or rather of consummation -- through holy baptism."<sup>115</sup>

Around 440 A.D., Leo the Great strongly condemned all rebaptisms (which were even then still being practised by Neo-Marcionites, Neo-Montanists and Neo-Donatists). Wrote Leo:<sup>116</sup> "I know indeed that it is an inexcusable fault when, according to the fashion of the heretics which is condemned by the holy fathers, anyone is compelled to reiterate his baptism which has been given once for all.... The apostolic doctrine is directed against such a practice -- teaching us there is but one Godhead in the Trinity; one confession of faith; and one sacrament of baptism!"

Theodoret Bishop of Cyrrhus applied Psalm 52:2f and Ezekiel 36:25f and Zechariah 13:1 and Hebrews 9:10 -- to infant baptism by sprinkling. Indeed, with the false doctrine of baptismal regenerationism now fast asphyxiating the Early-Mediaeval Church, he gave perhaps the last correct exposition of First Corinthians 7:14 -- until the time of the later Pre-Reformers.

Explained Theodoret: "The unbelieving party [in the marriage] is 'sanctified.' That is, there is hope of salvation. But suppose either the [unbelieving] man or the woman do persist in unbelief?" Then, the unbelieving spouse will be lost. "Yet the seed shall be saved!" Indeed, these last words Theodoret "explains as Calvin has since done." Thus concedes the leading Anglican baptismal scholar Rev. Dr. Wall in his *History of Infant Baptism*.<sup>117</sup>

## **182. Almost universal occurrence of Paedobaptism among all early Christians**

That same great Anglican, Rev. Dr. William Wall, also well summarizes the baptismal significance of this particular period of church history. He explains:<sup>118</sup> "Irenaeus, [Tertullian,] Epiphanius, Philastrius, St. Austin [alias Augustine] and Theodoret -- who wrote each of them catalogues of all the sects of Christians that they had heard of -- do none of them mention any that denied infants' baptism."

We have already seen Augustine pleading that he had never heard of any sect of Christian heretics denying infant baptism. The learned Pelagius did the same. The above seven ancient writers indeed do mention a few sects that used no baptism at all. But they do not mention any practising water-baptism who ever denied it to infants while giving it to adults.

Thus Irenaeus mentioned many sects, especially the Valentinians -- whom he traced back to the baptized apostate Simon the magician [Acts 8:13-23]. "Some of them," wrote Irenaeus<sup>119</sup> anent the way they initiated one of their converts, go "mixing oil and water together [and] then pour it on his head."

In the days of Cyprian, even the Novatianists practised infant baptism.<sup>120</sup> Later, also as regards the Donatists, Augustine often make use of the instance of infant baptism granted by them -- to overthrow some other errors they had about baptism.<sup>121</sup>

The (approximately 300 A.D.) heretical Hieracites taught that none dying in infancy could come to the kingdom of heaven -- whether they were baptized or not. But the Donatists, Arians, Pelagians and all other sects that Augustine or Pelagius had ever heard or read of, if they used any baptism at all, indeed gave it to infants.

Epiphanius said<sup>122</sup> that the Church "accounts it [baptism] to be to the Christians in the place of the old circumcision.... The law had the circumcision in the flesh...till the 'great circumcision' came -- that is, baptism...which circumcises us...and seals us unto the Name of God."<sup>123</sup>

No sect is said to have had any difference with the Church about the baptizing of infants in the first four centuries. Augustine noted Pelagians agreed with the Church that infants are to be baptized. Theodoret in his *True and Orthodox Doctrines and Usages of the Church* mentioned infant baptism as something undisputed and undenied by any sect.

A little later, both Prosper of Aquitaine and John Cassian opposed Pelagianism and Semipelagianism precisely by appealing to the universal practice of infant baptism among all kinds of Christians. Indeed, according to Wall,<sup>124</sup> "there is no passage in any author from this time to the year of Christ 1150 or thereabouts -- that speaks against it."

## **183. Increasing baptismal regenerationism only from third century onward**

Only around 210f A.D., the semimontanizing anti-paedobaptistic and immersionizing ritualist Tertullian had promoted the first seeds of the awful heresy of baptismal regenerationism. His student Cyprian then brought them further toward fruition. Together with this error that the water of baptism itself washes away sin, came the similar error that the more water used, the more sins were deemed to get washed away -- and/or the better those sins are expunged. From 350 (and especially from 450 A.D.) onward, the Biblical doctrine of infant baptism became grossly deformed.

Wall explains further that the Early-Mediaeval "Christians, when they were baptized by immersion, were all baptized naked -- whether they were men, women or children. Vossius has collected several proofs of this." In the ritualistic and superstitious Early Middle Ages, "they thought it better represented the putting off [of] the old man, and also the nakedness of Christ on the cross. Moreover, as baptism is a washing, they judged it should be the washing of the body, not of the clothes."

Particularly from 350 onward, the growing heresy of baptismal regenerationism had produced an increasing tendency for Christian parents to delay the baptism of their own children to adulthood, and even to their deathbeds. The superstition was, that the later in life the baptism was received, the greater the number of prior sins would thereby be washed away -- and the less the amount of time there would then be left to sin afresh before one died.

The Lutheran Jeremias has accurately assessed the situation. Thus, he observes:<sup>125</sup> "Certainly the large number of Christian parents in the fourth century who postponed the baptism of their children...were not moved by theological considerations, but were influenced by a magical misunderstanding of baptism."

However, especially from 450 onward, this pernicious doctrine led to full-fledged ritualism (as in both Western Romanism and Eastern 'Orthodoxy'). Thus, in 450, the Syrian Church decreed: "Let not the seal [of baptism] suck the milk of a mother that has been baptized!"<sup>126</sup>

Indeed, "it is not to Augustine [who died in 430 A.D.] but to Fulgentius (died 533)...or to Gregory the Great (died 604) to whom we must go for the strongest expression of the woe of unbaptized infants." Thus Warfield,<sup>127</sup> in his *Development of the Doctrine of Infant Salvation*. It was therefore only in the two centuries following the death of Augustine, that absolute baptismal regenerationism reached its peak.

Thus Fulgentius declared:<sup>128</sup> "Not only men...but also children...in their mother's womb and [who] there die, or pass from this world after being born from their mothers without the sacrament of baptism -- are to be punished with the everlasting penalty of eternal fire. Because...they nevertheless incurred by their carnal conception and nativity -- the damnation of original sin." What a truly damnable doctrine!

Within less than fifty years after that, just before 600 A.D., Bishop Gregory the Great of Rome was declared the first sole and universal pope. On Job 1:16, Gregory wrote:<sup>129</sup> "Those who have done nothing here [on earth] of themselves, but have not been freed by the sacraments of salvation -- enter there [in the hereafter] into torments." Moreover, he added elsewhere:<sup>130</sup> "It is



perpetual torment which those receive who have not sinned of their own proper will at all."

Warfield concludes:<sup>131</sup> "The pelagianizing process [was] begun in the Middle Ages by ascribing to infants guilty only of original sin" -- inability to *poena damni* alone. This then "culminates in our day, in their assignment by the most representative theologians of modern Rome -- to a natural paradise which has not been purchased for them by Christ but is their natural right. This is the very essence of Pelagianism, and logically implies the whole Pelagian system."

#### **184. The mediaeval 'magic' of baptismal regenerationism**

To the Early-Mediaeval Church, one could almost apply the words of Isaiah 24:5 that "the earth is polluted" -- largely "because they have transgressed the laws; changed the ordinance; broken the everlasting covenant." It is true that the Deformed Church now abandoned the fourth century's tendency unnecessarily to delay baptism. Instead, it now began to administer baptism too hastily -- especially to dying infants. Yet this was done, chiefly because of the very same false fear -- of unbaptized persons going to hell.

In addition to parents, other baptismal sponsors and 'godfathers' now tended to become a *sine qua non* -- ultimately sometimes even *in lieu* of parents. Emperor Justinian (527-65 A.D.) made infant baptism compulsory -- by edict. Exorcism began to accompany baptisms. The latter were now accomplished by the laying on of hands, exsufflations, veiling of the face, opening of the ears, putting clay upon the eyes, adding fragrant oil and other substances to the baptismal water, wearing special baptismal gowns, tasting milk and honey, giving a kiss of peace, illuminating 'holy lamps' -- and using all kinds of other superstitious devices, such as secret passwords.

Mediaeval baptism thus became practically a 'carnal ordinance'; it led to an unspiritual 'materializing' of the element of water; and it became laden with neo-heathen encrustations. Such included even experimentations with 'nude' baptisms -- and especially with infant communion immediately after infant baptism in the East, and the blasphemous Mass for but seven-year-old children in the West.

Baptismal 'documents' (such as the *Pseudo-Clementina*) were falsely attributed to earlier authors -- such as the Clement of Philippians 4:3. Many of them were infiltrated by and/or synthesized with earlier heathen rites, like those of Apuleius. Ritualistic opposition to 'heretical baptism' predictably increased. In one word, the doctrine of magical baptismal regenerationism became fully unfolded.

Finally, the action of the baptismal water became regarded as in itself effective (*ex opere operato*). The Mediaeval Church had become the 'Deformed' Church of the 'Dark Ages.' Islamic imperialism against the Christian world from the outside, and corrupt ritualism from within -- would now hold sway for the next few centuries.

#### **185. Paedobaptist sprinkling continued even during the Dark Ages**

Yet even in the *Apostolic Liturgy* at the end of the fourth century, the baptismal prayer had continued to urge God to "wash him [the baptizee] with Thy holy hyssop [compare Psalm 51:2-7]. Also the *Old Roman Liturgy* (at the end of the fifth century), and even Pope Gregory's later version thereof (at the end of the sixth), prays for the heathen: "Let him come to the fountain of the washing" (cf. John 3:3-8 & 3:23-25). So, syncretistic submersionism had still not yet supplanted Scriptural sprinkling.

Indeed, the *Old Gotho-Gallican Collect* still prayed that the candidate be "bedewed...from above" -- by "the on-pouring of the Holy Spirit." Even in the *Liturgy of the Greek Church*, eight-day-old babies were anointed, immersed, and then sprinkled with pure water eight days later -- while adult converts received only triune affusion.

Thus, with all its immersionizing irregularities, Mediaeval Christianity still retained at least some vestiges of the true Church of Scripture. This was seen especially in Armenia.

In the 'Orthodox' Church of Armenia -- one of the first countries in the world to adopt Christianity -- the priest pronounced the child baptized, after pouring water on his head three times and before the child's parents themselves sometimes subsequently submersed him once. The latter was apparently a relic of an old Arian custom which had thus -- but unsuccessfully so -- attempted to de-trinitarianize the Church.

In 'Little Russia' (alias the Ukraine), baptism was by pouring.<sup>132</sup> In the more barbaric 'Great Russia' -- the child was thrice submersed. Compare J.D.C. Fisher's *Christian Initiation: Baptism in the Mediaeval West. A Study in the Disintegration of the Primitive Rite of Initiation*.<sup>133</sup> Yet John of Damascus in the eighth century still declared<sup>134</sup> that baptism into Christ signifies the baptism of those who believe in Him. And Theophylact Archbishop of Bulgaria wrote in 1070 A.D.: "It is impossible for one who has not **believed**, to be **baptized**."<sup>135</sup>

The great Calvinist theologian Rev. Professor Dr. Herman Witsius, writing around 1670, well describes the baptismal practices of those Middle Ages. There was not, he remarked, "especially in northernly climates, the necessity of being stripped naked and plunged all over.... In ancient [post-patristic] times...the persons to be baptized were...stripped naked. Yet afterwards, as the lewdness of others...increased, experience clearly testified it to the whole world [that] this could no longer be done with decency.....

"Therefore, for five centuries back, that custom has been gradually discontinued almost all over the West.... Gisbert Voetius, a [Calvinist] divine of immortal memory, [has been] proving...that the baptism of persons half-naked did not obtain in the [Apostolic and Patristic] Ancient Church.... The rite of affusion or aspersion seems safer, for which no such naked exposure of the body is requisite."<sup>136</sup>

## **186. The baptismal views of the Paulicians and the Bogomils**

Yet the wildcat sect of the adoptionistic Paulicians now arose in Armenia at the end of the seventh, and increased especially in the ninth century. Combining Marcionism and Manichaeism, most of the Paulicians rejected the Christian sacraments altogether. These were followed by the Athingians. They were strongly judaistic, observing all the Old Testament rituals excepting circumcision (for which they substituted baptism).<sup>137</sup>

As Professor Dr. Edwin Yamauchi has pointed out<sup>138</sup> in his article *Manichaeans*: "The Paulician movement, which spread in Armenia from the seventh to the twelfth century, though it repudiated Manichaeism, resembled it in its dualistic views. The Paulicians came to Bulgaria in the tenth century and helped to develop the Bogomils, who flourished in the Balkans in the eleventh and twelfth centuries. The latter in turn stimulated the important Manichaean-like heresy of the Cathars or Albigensians in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries."

In 1012, Neo-Manichaeans appeared even in Germany. A group in Treves rejected infant baptism. These were the so-called *Cathari* -- called 'Bogomils' in the East, and 'Albigensians' in the West. Instead of Biblical baptism, they substituted their own rite called the *consolamentum* -- which also women were allowed to administer. Thereby, they laid on hands -- and imposed John's Gospel onto the candidate's breast.<sup>139</sup>

As Professor Dr. Paul D. Steeves indicates<sup>140</sup> in his article *The Paulicians and the Bogomils*, "the Paulicians...held that only the Gospel and letters of Paul were divinely inspired. An evil deity...had inspired the rest of the New Testament, and the Old Testament. The Paulicians claimed that this evil deity was the creator and god of this world. The true God of heaven, they said, was opposed to all material things.... Physical and material...sacraments...must have come from the same evil spirit....

"Some of the Bulgars adopted Paulician ideas into a new religious system that acquired the name 'Bogomilism'.... Around the middle of the tenth century, Bogomil began to teach that the first-born son of God was Satanael.... This deity was expelled from heaven. He made a new heaven and earth, in which he placed Adam and Eve. Satanael and Eve became the parents of Cain.... Moses and John the Baptist, according to Bogomil teaching, were both servants of Satanael.... The Bogomils...despised marriage.... They rejected baptism and communion as Satanic rites."

### **187. The Petrobrusian denial of infant salvation and thus of infant baptism**

In Western Europe and especially in France, a group of Neo-Marcionistic Anti-Paedobaptists arose at the beginning the twelfth century. Around 1105 Peter de Bruys and his 'Petrobrusians' and Henry of Lausanne and his 'Henricians' denied infant salvation, rejected infant baptism, and practised rebaptism.

In 1147 Bernard of Clairvaux tried to stem the spread of that heresy. Bernard accused Henry the Petrobrusian of gross sexual immorality. He also wrote that "the sacraments are esteemed unholy [by the Henricians].... The infants of Christians are hindered from the life of Christ -- the grace of baptism being denied to them."<sup>141</sup>

Shortly after the commencement of the activities of Petrobrusians like Henry of Lausanne, their views also influenced a different group -- some marriage-denying Neo-Manichaeans. Bernard then wrote<sup>142</sup> of the latter: "They laugh at us for baptizing infants." Indeed, in 1192 Alanus said that some of the Cathari reject infant baptism -- and others of them reject all baptisms whatsoever.

According to the sixteenth-century scholar Cassender in his important book *On the Baptism of Infants*, the Petrobrusians were the first ever to deny infant baptism and infant salvation. Cassender stated<sup>143</sup> they believed "all the world had been blind hitherto -- and by baptizing infants for above a thousand years [from about A.D. 25 to 1105f], had given but a mock-baptism."

Those twelfth-century Petrobrusians held that precisely because infants are unsavable, it is useless to baptize them. Modern Baptists, however, generally hold that all dying in infancy -- whether baptized or not, and regardless of their parentage -- are saved.

Thus the Petrobrusians held that infants are incapable of being saved. They also revived the Donatistic view that piety is essential for the valid administration of a sacrament. Indeed -- even according to the British Baptist Erroll Hulse -- just like the later Anabaptists, "Peter de Bruys...rejected large parts of Scripture and embraced the false doctrine of 'soul-sleep.'"<sup>144</sup>

According to the great Anglican baptismal scholar Rev. Dr. Wall,<sup>145</sup> "the Petrobrusians -- otherwise called the 'Henricians' -- did own water-baptism, and yet deny infant-baptism.... Peter Bruis and Henry [were] the two first antipaedobaptist preachers in the world.... I take this Peter Bruis...and Henry [of Lausanne] to be the first antipaedobaptist preachers that ever set up a church or society of men holding that opinion against infant baptism, and rebaptizing such as had been baptized in infancy."

However, denying infant baptism, they "quickly dwindled away -- or came over to those that owned it." Indeed, concludes Wall,<sup>146</sup> with the exception of these non-ecclesiastical and disorganized infant-damning twelfth-century Petrobrusians, "there is no certain evidence of any church or society of men that opposed infant-baptism" -- till the sixteenth-century antireformational German Anabaptists from about 1522 onward.

### **188. The Waldensians maintained the infant baptism of tiny Christians**

Ritualistic Rome, with her rigid heresy of baptismal regenerationism, increasingly practised baptism specifically by submersion. For then, the theory became -- the more water used, the more sins erased and the more effectively they were deemed to be washed away. Yet from about 1180 onward, we also encounter the protests of the Proto-Protestant Waldensians.

While rejecting the various ritualistic additions to baptism, these disciples of Peter Waldo did not repudiate the validity of infant baptisms as such -- not even when performed in the Church of Rome. Indeed, when unable to avail themselves of the rather scarce services of their own very-itinerant pastors, some of them permitted their own children -- rather than remain unbaptized -- to be baptized even by Romish priests. Still others, with reluctance, even delayed those baptisms (because not necessary for salvation) -- until their own Waldensian pastors were later available and

able to officiate.

Thus, among the Waldensians -- observes Wall -- "there is no certain evidence of any church or society of men that opposed infant baptism.... For the main body of the Waldenses, there is no probability at all.... The present Waldensians or Vaudois in Piedmont, who are the posterity of those old, do practise infant baptism....

"They were also found in the practice of it, when the Protestants of Luther's Reformation sent to know their state and doctrine.... They themselves do say that their fathers never practised otherwise.... They give proof of it from an old book of theirs called the *Spiritual Almanack*, where infant baptism is owned.... There is a *Catechism* of theirs...composed out of this old book that does expressly mention and own infant baptism....

None of those whom we now denote by the name 'Waldenses' that owned water baptism, held any thing against infant baptism.... Pilchdorf writes against them...*anno* 1395.... He says the Waldenses 'do dislike and even loath the Runcarians, Beghards and Luciferians' [alias Neo-Manichaeans].... He also supposes that from their beginning, they had been free from any false doctrine about the sacraments.... They betook themselves to preaching privately, and...they...reject all those means by which the [Romish] clergy...do gather their children -- except the sacraments only."

Martin Luther rightly wrote<sup>147</sup> that "the Waldensians baptize little ones.... They proceed, then, to baptize little children."

Indeed, as Rev. Dr. Wall explains,<sup>148</sup> apart from the Petrobrusians, "there is no certain evidence of any church or society of men that opposed infant-baptism -- till those in Germany, [the Anabaptists,] A.D. 1522.... For the main body of the Waldenses, there is no probability at all."

So too the Baptist A.H. Newman, in his *History of Antipedobaptism*. He too rightly insists:<sup>149</sup> "The early Waldensian pastors...had scarcely anything in common with Baptists."

For "the *Waldenses*," as Rev. Professor Dr. Samuel Miller rightly points out,<sup>150</sup> "in their Confessions of Faith and other writings drawn up between the twelfth and sixteenth centuries...for several hundred years before the Reformation...speak on the subject." The evidence leads to only one conclusion: "The great body of the Waldenses, were Paedobaptists."

Miller then cites from Waldensian historians themselves: "Baptism, say they, 'is administered in a full congregation of the faithful, to the end that he who is received into the church may be reputed and held by all as a Christian brother.... We present our children in baptism.... The things which are not necessary in baptism are the exorcisms; the breathings; the sign of the cross upon the head or forehead of the infant.'"

Note: "the head or forehead of the infant." Note again: "the head or forehead of the infant." Emphases ours -- F.N. Lee.

Later, under the influence of Calvinism, the Waldensians linked up with the Reformed Faith. The Waldensians' own historic adherence to infant baptism is seen very clearly in their 1655 *Waldensian Confession*. For there, they state<sup>151</sup> "that we do agree in sound doctrine with all the Reformed Churches of France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland...and others as it is set forth by them in their confessions -- as also in the *Confession of Augsburg*."

Indeed, that *Augsburg Confession* -- endorsed also by Calvin and the early Calvinists -- specifically states<sup>152</sup> "that children are to be baptized." It then goes on to "condemn the Anabaptists, who allow not the baptism of children."

### **189. The impact on baptism of Thomistic Roman Catholicism**

However, it was the magical view of baptism which predominated in the Late Middle Ages. For around 1250, Thomas Aquinas programmed 'baptismal regeneration' as the only view which would soon be standardized officially -- in the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>153</sup>

Sometimes, Thomas upheld the right view -- for the wrong reason. Thus:<sup>154</sup> "A sacrament is a sign of a sacred thing -- inasmuch as it sanctifies a man." By the latter he meant, wrongly, that baptism itself regenerates. Again wrongly, he also held that it was originally administered by submersion.<sup>155</sup>

Indeed, centuries of baptismal regenerationism had by this time made submersionism very popular. Yet even Thomas conceded that "pouring and sprinkling are also allowable."<sup>156</sup> Baptism, he opined, is itself an "instrumental cause" -- initiating saving grace and bringing it to man.<sup>157</sup> Baptism is given this ability -- so that anybody is regenerated through it itself":<sup>158</sup> *ex opere operato*.

Baptism, believed Thomas, is therefore the door to the kingdom of heaven.<sup>159</sup> It is essential to salvation -- except for those desiring to be baptized yet who die before this can be accomplished. Baptism, he insisted, is regeneration.<sup>160</sup> Lay-baptism was and still is permitted -- chiefly because all unbaptized children were and are regarded as being excluded from heaven.<sup>161</sup>

Baptismal regenerationism was by now practically universal. Superstitious submersion (whether triple or single) was then thought to be a "safer" mode of baptism than sprinkling. No doubt "safer" -- because the more water used, the more effectively and the greater the number of sins were deemed to be washed away thereby.

Indeed, this superstition of submersionism can also be seen especially throughout ritualistic Eastern 'Orthodoxy' -- as well as in the entire Eastern Rite of Romanism. However, in the times of the Romanistic Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventura -- immersion was the most common baptismal mode even in apostate Italy. "It is the safer way to baptize by immersion" (Thomas).<sup>162</sup> "Dipping into the water is the more common...and the safer" (Bonaventura).<sup>163</sup>

Yet the water still needed to be applied to the head -- as the most important part of the human body.<sup>164</sup> Nevertheless, the 1284 Council of Nemours limited head-sprinkling alone -- solely to cases of necessity.<sup>165</sup>

However, with the first beginnings of the Pre-Reformation at the end of the 1290 day-years of Daniel 12:11 (*cf.* Revelation 14:6-9) -- the 1304 Synod of Langres went back to the Bible. For it proclaimed: "Let the presbyter make three pourings or sprinklings of water on the infant's head!" Note well: "on the infant's head" -- and: "on the infant's head!" Emphases ours -- F.N. Lee.

Over the next decades, the Pre-Reformers and especially the Protestant Reformation, would erelong restore that Biblical mode -- head-sprinkling -- to its rightful place. Indeed, under pressure from the Pre-Reformation and the Reformation, by 1551 even the Church of Rome had by and large returned to the Biblical mode of sprinkling of infants.

Meantime, the Deformed Church had long abandoned the fourth century's tendency unnecessarily to delay baptism. It had instead, now for many centuries, administered it all too hastily. Yet it now did this -- chiefly because it was superstitiously terrified that unbaptized persons, dying such, would go to hell.

### **190. Wycliffe and his followers on infant baptism**

Fortunately, however, the Christian Gospel was still preserved -- especially in Northern Europe. In 1377, the English Pre-Reformer John Wycliffe (1324-84) assailed the Romish mass.<sup>166</sup> In 1402, the Wycliffite Huss did the same in Bohemia.<sup>167</sup>

Neither ever questioned the suitability of sprinkling -- nor the practice of infant baptism. Wrote Wycliffe in his *Trialogue* and in his *On Baptism*: "Nor is it material whether they [the baptizees] be dipped once or thrice, or water be poured on their heads."<sup>168</sup>

He continued: "On account of the words in the last chapter of Matthew [28:19], our church introduces believers who answer for the infant.... The child of a believer is carried into the church to be baptized, according to the rule of Christ."

Yet "it seems hard...to assert" like the Romanists "that this infant will be lost" if dying unbaptized -- "the people's pious intention continuing.... Where then is the merciful liberality of Christ?"

Consequently, even an unbaptized covenant "infant shall be saved -- as is pious to believe." Nevertheless, "without a doubt, infants are duly baptized with water."<sup>169</sup>

### **191. The faithful Paedobaptism of Wycliffe's Lollards**

Wycliffe and his English followers, the Lollards, rejected baptismal regenerationism. Hear Wycliffe's student Walter Brute before the Bishop of Hereford in 1393: "I greatly marvel at that saying in the decrees ascribed to Augustine -- that little children who have not been baptized, shall be tormented with eternal fire although they were born of faithful parents.... How shall the infant be damned that is born of faithful parents who do not despise but rather desire to have their children baptized?"

Very interestingly, the great Anglican baptismal scholar Rev. Dr. Wall has pointed out<sup>170</sup> that in the time of Henry IV (who reigned from 1399 to 1413), "one of the [baptismal] articles usually enjoined [by their enemies] for the Lollards...to recant" -- was itself anti-regenerationistic. Amazingly, as the famous martyrologist John Foxe<sup>171</sup> recites it, it was this: 'that an infant, though he die unbaptized, shall be saved.'

Indeed, the Norfolk and Suffolk followers of the 1424 Wycliffite William White were constantly "speaking against women baptizing new-born infants in private houses. They also expressed themselves against the opinion of such as regard as damned those children who depart before they come to their baptism.

"Wycliffe had said that the water itself, without the baptism of the Spirit, is of little efficacy.... He and his followers had said that if the parents be good Christians and pray for their child, there is hope that it may be saved -- though it do by some sudden chance die before it can be baptized."

Moreover, there is the evidence of the Anti-Wycliffite Roger Dimmock. Around 1390, he wrote to King Richard II of England. There, Dimmock alleged<sup>172</sup> Wycliffe's Lollards condemned the papal doctrine of celibacy -- claiming it led to sins worse than heterosexual fornication. For, claimed the Lollards, though 'slaying of children ere they be christened be full[y] sinful -- yet sodomy was worse.

England's great 'Pre-Reformer' John Wycliffe was thus not only a convinced Paedobaptist, but apparently also an Antirebaptist. King Richard II's Queen Anne of England was herself a Wycliffite -- and the sister of Wenceslaus King of Bohemia (in the modern Czechoslovakia). It was probably chiefly through her agency that Wycliffe's views were taken over almost without amendment by the Bohemian 'Pre-Reformer' John Huss -- and also by his friend Jerome of Prague, who had become a Wycliffite while at Oxford University before returning to his native Bohemia.<sup>173</sup>

The followers of Huss were called the Hussites. "The Hussites of Bohemia," according to the great Anglican baptismal scholar Rev. Dr. Wall,<sup>174</sup> were of the "opinion...that infants dying unbaptized, may be saved by the mercy of God.... Indeed, they were disciples of our Wycliffe."

## **192. The influence of Wycliffe through Huss upon Luther**

In due course, the Wycliffite Huss would influence Martin Luther himself -- and thus launch the Protestant Reformation. Rome's 'Holy Council' itself pronounced "John Huss to have been and to be...the disciple...of John Wycliffe."

Thus the Romish controversialist Eck, Luther later exclaimed, "vilifies me as a 'heretic' and a Bohemian" -- even "publicly accusing me of the heresy of and support for the Bohemian 'heretics.'" For Eck was indeed accusing Luther: "Many of the things which you adduce, are heresies of...Wycliffe and Huss."

Luther himself, however, insisted that "John Huss and Jerome of Prague were good Christians." Luther also insisted that "Paul and Augustine are in reality Hussites." And again:



"All this is not Luther's work. The credit belongs to John Huss." Thus, "it is high time that we seriously and honestly consider the case of the Bohemians, and come into union with them.... I have no desire to pass judgment...upon John Huss's articles.... I have not yet found any errors in his writings."

Luther even went back behind the Wycliffite Huss -- to the Englishman Wycliffe himself. Declared Luther: "As far as the [papal] 'decretals' are concerned..., they are...things it is not necessary to believe -- as John Wycliffe said." Indeed, in 1520 Luther boldly admitted: "I shall be called a Wycliffite!"

Where is the proof of all these above claims? See the documentation given in Francis Nigel Lee's 1989 monograph *Luther and Calvinism on Antichrist in the Bible*.<sup>175</sup>

### **193. The rebaptismal error of the Bohemian 'Minor United Brethren'**

Now after the Romanists' murder of Huss, his numerous followers unfortunately soon split up three different ways. Thus arose the Partially-Reformed Calixtines, the militant Proto-Protestant Taborites, and finally the separatistic 'Bohemian Brethren' (alias the later 'Moravians').

These latter "Bohemian Brethren" -- as the great church historian Philip Schaff has explained<sup>176</sup> -- rightly "denounced the Pope of Rome as Antichrist." Yet they also wisely recognized that something of the historic Christian Church, though grossly deformed, was still to be found even within Romanism -- in spite of its numerous papal perversions.

So: "At first, they received the sacraments from Calixtine and Romish priests who joined them." Yet "in 1467 they effected an independent organization...under the lead of Michael, formerly a Catholic priest." This was the 'Minor United Brethren' -- a minority party within the antirebaptist Bohemian Brethren as a whole.

Then, however, the minority party over-reacted. They forgot that in Biblical times Josiah and Paul had not recircumcisingly or rebaptizingly repudiated -- but rather reformed -- the deformed Church of God. For ex-priest Michael and his Minor United Brethren now went and "elected by lot...three priests out of their number -- and laid hands on them. Then they were all solemnly rebaptized."

This latter act, of course, was a Neo-Donatist and catabaptistic error -- itself not devoid of sacramentalism. Never, however, did these Bohemian Brethren either abandon infant baptism as such -- nor rebaptize as adults those they deemed to have been baptized in infancy. Thus, these Bohemians were not antipaedobaptistic Anabaptists. Still less were they adult-submersing Baptists.

As even the Pro-Mennonite Leonard Verduin has admitted:<sup>177</sup> "The Brethren did practice infant baptism in the case of children born to 'believing parents'.... Here the point was not anti-pedobaptism, but anti-Constantinianism."

#### **194. The rebaptismal recantation of these United Bohemian Brethren**

Fortunately, some of the later and better theologians of the 'minor party' Bohemian Brethren soon rethought their catabaptistic position. They then abandoned that 'rebaptismal' radicalism -- perhaps still during the fifteenth century. Indeed, already by the time of their 1504 *Bohemian Confession* (subsequently published in 1535) -- they had also abandoned a 'purely symbolical' sacramentology.

Perhaps under Luther's influence from 1520 onward, they opted for consubstantiation. Later yet, they also gradually abandoned even that -- for the purer truth of Calvinism. See their letter sent to Beza in December 1575 -- and, further, their *Bohemian Confession* of that same year.

Now it seems this 1467f Bohemian Brethren 'minor party' had already abandoned its catabaptistic doctrines -- by 1504. No doubt its leaders informed the antirebaptistic Luther about this, before he supported them in 1520. At any rate, in their 1504 *Bohemian Confession* -- as well as in its later (1535) *Prologue* -- they courageously distanced themselves from the previous rebaptistic lapse of their own ancestors.

Thus, in the 1535 *Prologue*, the Ministers of the Church of the Bohemian Brethren assured the King of Bohemia and Hungary (Ferdinand I) that they were certainly not Anabaptists. This disclaimer was necessary. For their Romish opponents were then falsely alleging that very thing.

Explained these 'Bohemian Brethren':<sup>178</sup> "It is not unknown to anybody that we do not belong to the party of the Anabaptists. For we take our origin from the Church of the Bohemians.... We had already existed many years before them [the Anabaptists], and we do not defend their error-filled teachings.

"We have nothing in common with the Anabaptists...and have taken over nothing from them.... Our association has been in existence for much longer -- from before anyone ever first heard anything about the Anabaptists....

"However, although our ancestors were wont to rebaptize those who had been baptized by Romish priests in former years -- they [our ancestors] still had an altogether different viewpoint and another purpose and an entirely other reason than the Anabaptists. Now, however, even this rebaptism has been abolished completely among us. Pre-eminently hereanent, a short account will be given in this writing -- by the most excellent men of our Church....

"Further. Whenever we are, because of this rebaptism, regarded as Anabaptists -- by the very 'sophisticated' [Romish] priests of Bohemia -- even this weapon is necessarily turned against them. For their ancestors too 're-re-baptized' those who had been baptized by papal priests, but who had thereafter been dedicated in [re]baptism" by the Bohemian Brethren.

For the Romish priests then, "by way of reprisal, once again repeated the baptism [already given] by the Bohemian Brethren --to those [re-]renewed as Papists." The Romish priests in Bohemia thus "rebaptized those baptized by both us and by our ancestors -- and they forced

people, even with violence, to receive their baptism....

"Yet the priests maintain they had not faltered nor erred when they rebaptized those baptized by us. For they regarded us as heretics, sectarians and ecclesiastical excommunicatees. Thus it also seemed very right to them -- that our baptism was of no significance, effect and power. This is why they rebaptized....

"We answer that we..., just like they, give nothing to baptism...among ourselves.... We used to regard the baptism administered by them as invalid and void.... It is therefore clear that they have just as much guilt toward us, as we have toward them -- in rebaptizing the baptized."

### **195. The Bohemian Confession(s) from 1504 onward**

Thus the 1535 *Prologue* to King Ferdinand. However, even earlier -- also before Luther's conversion to Protestantism -- we already encounter a 1504 *Bohemian Confession* to King Vladislav (which was thereafter constantly updated). We now cite from the 1535 version.

Article 12 declares "that children are baptized...and dedicated to Christ...according to His words: 'Permit the children to come to Me, and do not hinder them; for of such is the Kingdom of heaven' [Matthew 19:14]. Therefore, we baptize ours."

For we all "rest upon the words of the Lord for children, in the Name of the Holy Trinity. Indeed, this statement [Matthew 28:19] is general: 'Teach all nations, inasmuch as you baptize them in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit!' We do not baptize them again thereafter; and we no longer rebaptize....

"They [a former generation of 'Bohemian Brethren'] previously rebaptized those who wished to be taken up into our churches from others.... When the Romanists violently fought against the 'Bohemians' in matters of faith and religion, the leaders of both Churches clashed with Scripture....

"In several localities the one repeated the baptism of the other, for as long as they persevered in the greatest hatred. For the ancestors of our faith, who then completely separated themselves from them [and indeed from all others], had their own particular association, and administered the sacraments -- and rebaptized all who wished to join their churches....

"This kind of rebaptism existed in our churches -- until we acquired a better insight about this. However, in the course of time -- after through the goodness of God the light of truth illuminated our men more brightly, and after they had investigated the Scriptures more carefully, and after they had at the same time been supported by the help of several learned men -- they realized that rebaptism is not necessary for the Church. And they then immediately discontinued and abolished it, with the approval of all.

"Hence, with the general agreement of our men, every repetition of baptism was abolished.... Nowhere is baptism any longer repeated among us. Yet some priests of the so-called Bohemian-Romish party -- just as in former times, even now still rebaptize our people -- although for the most part against their wishes, and in opposition to the parents."<sup>179</sup>

## **196. God maintained His baptism -- in spite of mediaeval meanderings**

To a much lesser extent than in Britain under the Wycliffites and in Bohemia under the Hussites, Christianity had continued -- even in Southern Europe. It had continued not only in the stagnant southeast, but also in the southwest -- in spite of the papal tyranny there. In 1520, Germany's Luther called this *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*.<sup>180</sup> Also the French-Swiss Reformer Calvin described the oppressive papal antichrist with great precision.

For, as the Genevan genius explained,<sup>181</sup> even as regards "the Papists" -- there were and are "vestiges of a Church which the Lord has allowed to remain among them.... The Lord...deposited His covenant in Gaul, Italy, Germany, Spain and England.

"When these countries were oppressed by the tyranny of antichrist -- He [the Lord], in order that His covenant might remain inviolable, first preserved baptism there -- as an evidence of the covenant. Baptism..., consecrated by His lips, retains its power in spite of human depravity."

## **197. Luther on the faith of covenant children before their infant baptism**

According to Scripture, it is the Word which regenerates. James 1:18. According to the Anabaptists, the Spirit alone regenerates -- unmonitored by the Word. Rome, however, said that regeneration was effected by baptism -- and that baptism then produced faith.

Rome thus held that infants could not believe savingly until after and because they had been baptized. The Anabaptists held that infants as such cannot believe (nor even profess belief), so that infants should not be baptized -- but that adults could receive baptism (yet only after professing their faith). The Protestant Reformation objected first to Rome and then to the Anabaptists. Instead, it pointed both of them back to the **Bible**.

Probably even before his formal break with Rome, Luther had realized -- through studying Holy Scripture -- that baptism presupposes faith within the baptizee himself. From the Bible alone, Luther was led to deny the Romish error (and the later Anabaptist heresy) that unbaptized infants cannot believe -- and to demonstrate the contrary. On this, see Francis Nigel Lee: *Revealed to Babies*, Confederate Series, Commonwealth Publishing, Rowlett, Texas (1987).

To Luther, Genesis 17:7 teaches that God is the Lord not only of adult believers but also of their seed. For John the baptizer believed while yet in his mother's womb. Luke 1:41. Matthew 18:6f refers to a whole class of little ones who believe in Jesus. Indeed, in Matthew 19:14 -- Jesus even declares that only those adults are fit for the kingdom of heaven who believe like such infants.<sup>182</sup>

Thus Luther rightly realized that John the baptizer -- as a baby born to believing parents -- was himself already a believer in Christ, even before John's own birth. Luke 1:36-44. That was prior to any possible circumcision and/or baptism John may have received -- either in infancy, or thereafter.

Referring to Christ's blessing of the children in Mark 10:14f, Luther insisted<sup>183</sup> that infant faith is present "before or certainly in the baptism.... If any baptism is certain of success, the baptism of children is most certain.... In adults there may be deception, because of their mature reason [and such 'reason is a whore']. But in children, there can be no such deception -- because of their slumbering reason."

What is this 'slumbering' reason? Luther explained: "Tell me, is the Christian deprived of his reason when he is asleep? Certainly -- then -- his faith and God's grace do not leave him. If faith remains with the sleeping Christian while his reason is not conscious of the faith -- why should there not be faith [with]in children, before reason is aware of it? A similar situation obtains, when a Christian is engaged in strenuous labour and is not conscious of his faith and reason. Will you say that, on account of this, his faith has come to an end?" Of course not!

Luther later told the Anabaptists that Mark (16:16) does **not** say 'he who confesses he has faith and is baptized, shall be saved.' For Mark says instead -- that 'he who believes and is baptized, shall be saved.'

Explained Luther:<sup>184</sup> "It is true that a person should believe, for baptism.... But his faith, you do not know.... Because all men are liars, and only God knows the heart.... I do not get baptized because I am sure of faith, but because God has commanded it.... Who then can exclude the little children? We have a command to offer every one the universal gospel and the universal baptism. The children must also be included. We plant and water; and leave [it to] God to give the increase."

In First John 2:13, we read that "little children...have known the Father." Here, *paidia* means 'little children' -- and to 'know the Father' means to believe in Him. Explained Luther:<sup>185</sup> "It is certain that those are meant here, who are younger than the 'young men' -- that group which is under fifteen or eighteen years of age, down to the first year" [alias from their very birth].

Luther also quoted Augustine with approval.<sup>186</sup> For both Luther and Augustine held that "it is not the sacrament, but the faith of the sacrament which justifies."

### **198. Was Dr. Martin Luther a Baptismal Regenerationist?**

Whatever Luther believed about consubstantiation and the necessity of baptism, he apparently did not believe that uncircumcised dying infants in Old Testament times and unbaptized dying infants in New Testament times, were lost for that reason. Indeed, he even seems to have believed that all uncircumcised or unbaptized dying infants would be saved by grace and through their own personal faith in the Saviour Jesus Christ (little though that infant's faith may be).

This seems obvious from Rev. Professor Dr. Martin Luther's comment on Genesis 17:14 -- in the 1961 Concordia or St. Louis edition of his *Works* (III:143f). Luther there discusses Moses' words: 'Any uncircumcised male who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, shall be cut off from his people'.... He then comments: "The words must be understood of a cutting-off from the church. This, however, does not pertain to the Gentiles at all.... For even though the Gentiles are excluded from circumcision, they are nevertheless not excluded from the blessing -- if they

**believe** with faithful Abraham....

"The Jews...if they [through **dis-belief** went and] **slighted** circumcision...ceased to be the people of God..., and [then] their reward was hell and its fire.... This statement [however], as we have also pointed out above, **does not involve infants who died before the eighth day.** Even though they have original sin, a merciful God will nevertheless find a way to deliver them....

"One must have the same opinion about the little boys who were not circumcised either because of the carelessness or the wickedness of their parents, just as today there are some who are not baptized.... Such little children should be committed to the dispensation of the goodness of God.

"For what guilt against this law have the little children who either die or are neglected by ungodly parents? Therefore they should be left to the goodness of God, and should not be condemned as the Scholastics have condemned them."

### **199. Luther on infant faith even before infant baptism**

Well-known is Luther's (quasi-Calvinistic!) emphasis on 'infant faith' at, and even before, infant baptism. For, he insists, "**children must themselves believe** -- lest the majesty of the Word and sacrament be obscured."<sup>187</sup> So "we are of the opinion and the expectation -- that the **child should believe**, and **we pray that God give it faith.** Yet we do not baptize it for that reason, but because God has so commanded."<sup>188</sup>

Already in 1521, Luther clearly stated<sup>189</sup> that "**without faith no sacrament is of any use....** The sacrament of baptism is a divine sign or seal given by virtue of the promise and Word of Christ in the last chapter of Mark [16:16]. **He that believes** and is baptized, **shall be saved.**"

Again, Luther insisted<sup>190</sup> that the Church should pray to God to pour out His blessing upon the one to be baptized -- "so that **he may become worthy** to come to grace at his baptism.... The **children themselves believe**...and have their own faith which God works within them -- through the faithful intercession of their parents who faithfully bring them to the Christian Church.... Through their [parental] intercession and assistances, **the children receive their own faith** from God."

Luther appealed to infant circumcision (Genesis 17:10f), and asserted against the Anabaptists that children actually believe. Matthew 18:6 & 19:14 . "**Baptism** helps no one. It **is also to be given to no one** -- **except he believes for himself.** **Without personal faith, no one is to be baptized!**"

In his *Large Catechism*, Luther added: "Baptism without faith, remains a mere ineffectual sign. Those who receive baptism without full faith, receive not the Spirit but only water.... **Children also believe, and can rightly be baptized....** We bring the child [to baptism], with the belief and hope that **it believes.**"

In his contemporaneous *Swabach Articles*, Luther said: "Who is the person who receives what baptism gives, and profits? This is at once most beautifully and clearly expressed in the word: 'he who **believes** and is baptized, shall be saved!' Mark 16:16."

## **200. The roots and the rise of the Anabaptist heretics**

Only around 1522, did the Anabaptists emerge. They were subdivided into many different varieties, with some similarities yet also with great differences among each another.

The great German church historian Rev. Professor Dr. Albrecht Ritschl, in his famous three-volume *History of Pietism*, attributed their origin to the mediaeval 'spiritual Franciscans.' Drs. G. Kramer, the noted Dutch historian of doctrine, considered<sup>191</sup> the Anabaptists to have agreed with Romanism in many weighty matters of faith.

Even modern Baptist(ic) church historians have agreed with this assessment. Thus, in his book *The Anabaptist Story*, Rev. Professor Dr. W.R. Estep rightly insists<sup>192</sup> that "not one of the Swiss Anabaptist leaders came from a Waldensian background.... All of the early Anabaptist leaders came originally from the Roman Church...or directly out of Catholicism into Anabaptist life."

Even more interesting is the admission of history professor Dr. K.R. Davis in his book *Anabaptism and Asceticism*, published by the modern Mennonite Anabaptists themselves. "The Marburg Anabaptists," explains Davis<sup>193</sup> of their clearly communistic leanings, "question[ed] prospective members and those requesting the sign of baptism thus: 'If need should require it, are you prepared to devote all your possessions to the service of the brotherhood?'"

Based on his Hutterite studies, Friedmann -- the author of the informative Mennonite book *The Theology of Anabaptism* -- has observed "that Anabaptist baptism might perhaps be compared to a monastic vow.... Anabaptism represents a laicization of the Catholic monastic spirituality."

Many were the errors of the Anabaptists. Quite apart from their unanimous antipaedobaptism, most of them were riddled with other heresies too. Such included denials of: the Trinity; the incarnation; the oath; private property; the calling of the civil magistrate; postmortal consciousness; and everlasting punishment. Such also included assertions favouring: antinomianism; pseudo-glossolalia; revolutionism; communism; polygamy; community of wives; dispensationalistic hyperpremillennialism; and soul-sleep.

## **201. Points of agreement and disagreement among the Anabaptists**

Some of Anabaptism's views seemed to derive -- also *via* Francke and Paracelsus -- even from the paganizing Pre-Renaissance. This is unquestionably so in the cases of Campanus, Denck, Münzer and Servetus. See Francis Nigel Lee: *A Christian Introduction to the History of*

*Philosophy*.<sup>194</sup> With semi-pagan monastic communism as its root -- Anabaptism was later to yield Neo-Paganistic Marxian Communism as its fruit.

Most Anabaptists departed much further from Scripture than Romanism had ever done. Admits the foremost sympathetic authority on Anabaptism, Harvard's Professor Dr. G.H. Williams:<sup>195</sup> "The ancient heretical Christology (originally developed by Valentinus and assimilated by Apollinarius)...was variously communicated to the sixteenth-century Radicals...in part indirectly by the perpetration of the 'celestial flesh heresy' in Bogomile and Cathar circles."

Williams has also rightly pointed out that Anabaptism "broke on principle with the Catholic-Protestant *corpus christianum*" -- alias the idea that the lands of Europe then constituted a Christian body. Indeed, Anabaptism "induced currents in history and the interpretation thereof which pulsate today...through democratic progressivism to Marxism."<sup>196</sup>

It is, of course, quite true that many of the simpler Anabaptists -- such as the widow Idelette Stordeur, even before she presbyterianized and married the great Protestant Reformer John Calvin -- were indeed sincere Christians. Yet as to their distinctives -- the Anabaptist leaders themselves can, at best, only be described as Sub-Christian. What was good in the Anabaptists, did not originate with them. What did originate with them, was not good.

The Anabaptists were divided into many varieties. Yet they were nevertheless all apparently influenced by the dualistic, Neo-Manichaeic, Anti-Oldtestamentistic and Antipaedobaptistic Oriental sect of the ninth-century Paulicians.<sup>197</sup>

Indeed, most of the Anabaptists were also tinged by the infant-damning and antipaedobaptist Petrobrusian and Neomarcionistic soul-sleepers of the twelfth century. Thus even modern Baptist church historians like Rev. Professor Drs. H.C. Vedder and W.M.S. West.<sup>198</sup>

West divides those "Anabaptists" *inter alia* into 'Spiritualists' and 'Anti-Trinitarians.' He holds that the 'Spiritualists' include "Thomas Münzer...and...eventually Andreas Carlstadt.... The most famous names among the 'Anti-Trinitarians' are Miguel Servetus...and Faustus Socinus."

Some Anabaptists believed babies were 'safe.' But others believed infants were lost -- because those infants were (rightly) deemed incapable of professing and (wrongly) deemed incapable of believing in Christ. Again, some Anabaptists believed baptism was merely a sign of faith; others believed it made prior faith secure. Yet others believed faith was vain without baptism. But all Anabaptists believed it was sinful to baptize babies.

## **202. The attacks of the Anabaptist Thomas Münzer against Luther**

The Protestant Reformation had already commenced -- when the Paedobaptist Martin Luther of Wittenberg issued his *Ninety-Five Theses* against the Romish deformation of Christ's Church. That occurred on Reformation Day, 31st October, 1517. However, five years later, by 1522 not just reactionary Romish priests (from the ultra-right wing) but also revolutionary Anabaptist



weavers (from the lunatic left) were all viciously attacking the great Reformer.

As Professor Dr. Robert D. Linder has pointed out,<sup>199</sup> the weavers "Nicholas Storch, Thomas Drechsel and Marcus Stübner...preached a radical biblicism -- which included rejection of infant baptism; denial of the need for a professional ministry and organized religion (because all 'godly' men were [said to be] under the direct influence of the Spirit); special revelation through visions and dreams; the imminent return of Christ; and perhaps psychopannych[ian]ism.

"Driven from the Saxon town of Zwickau where they originated and where they had influenced Thomas Münzer, they visited Wittenberg in December 1521 during Luther's absence.... Their millennial 'enthusiasm'...led to their expulsion in 1522."

Significantly, also the modern British Baptist historian Erroll Hulse has rightly called<sup>200</sup> these first German Anabaptists "radical prophets." Explains Hulse: "The leaders of this group were Storch, Stübner and Münzer -- the latter of ill-fame, because of his...claim of prophecy: the ability of inspired speech similar to the claims of Neo-Pentecostals today.... Carlstadt, a well-known personality in town, was much influenced by the visitors. Eventually he came to the position where he refused to administer infant baptism."

In his important article on Thomas Münzer, the historian Prof. Dr. Robert G. Clouse has rightly indicated<sup>201</sup> that "he preached in a violent way.... He also organized his followers into bands, ready to take up arms.... At Muhlhausen...he preached to the townsmen and helped to involve them in the Peasant Revolt....

"His teaching against infant baptism and his emphasis on the [alleged new] inspiration of the Holy Spirit, influenced other Anabaptists.... Marxist historians emphasize Münzer, because he anticipated later social revolutionaries."

Sympathetically, Harvard's Professor Dr. G.H. Williams has stated<sup>202</sup> "that Thomas Münzer was a fierce fanatic, possessed of a demoniac spirit." When previously a Romanist, "he became father confessor" -- yet was plagued with "radical doubt as to the existence of God." However, after "he entered the circle of the three so-called Zwickau prophets," Münzer went "preaching... direct revelation in visions and dreams..., the abandonment of infant baptism, [and] belief in the millennium.... He appears to have encouraged the postponement of baptism until children should be of sufficient age to understand the action."

In his communistic 1524 *Sermon Before the Princes*, Münzer called apparently Luther "Brother Fattened Swine" and "Brother Soft Life" and even "Mr. Liar" -- and the Lutheran theologians "vicious reprobates."<sup>203</sup> Preaching revolution, he called upon the common people to crush the 'godless.'<sup>204</sup>

As Williams has explained:<sup>205</sup> "Münzer warned that if the princes should fail to identify themselves with the 'covenantal people' -- the sword would pass from them to the people.... "Sovereignty resided in the godly people" -- meaning Münzer's people!

"He took the outpouring of the Spirit in himself and others as confirmation of the prophecy of Joel (chs. 2:27-32 & 3:1-4)." This, Münzer combined "with the equalization of the saints in the

common possession both of the gifts of the Spirit and the goods of life." Compare George Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four* -- and Ron Sider's 1984 *Rich Christians in an Age of Hunger*!

### **203. Hübmaier the Anabaptist and the road to revolution**

Münzer was apparently much encouraged by his fellow South German, Balthasar Hübmaier of Wausthut (or Waldshut). He had been a Roman Catholic priest who had studied under Luther's implacable opponent, Dr. John Eck. Hübmaier himself had persecuted Jews -- and helped promote the burning down of their synagogue in Regensburg.<sup>206</sup>

According to the Baptists Vedder and Estep,<sup>207</sup> "foot washing was practised by Hübmaier even before believer's baptism was introduced." Yet by Easter 1525, after not baptizing but merely 'dedicating' most infants (yet still baptizing them when parents demanded it), Hübmaier introduced rebaptism in Waldshut. He himself rebaptized some three hundred Christians. This he did by sprinkling or pouring, but not by submersion.<sup>208</sup>

Those who practise infant baptism, Hübmaier now averred, "rob us of the true baptism.... One must not baptize infants.... If so, I may baptize my dog or my donkey; or I may circumcise girls.... I may make idols out of St. Paul and St. Peter -- I may bring infants to the Lord's Supper."<sup>209</sup>

To Hübmaier,<sup>210</sup> "infant baptism is a deception invented and introduced by men.... The sprinkling of infants...is no baptism, nor is it worthy of such a name."

1527 saw the publication of Hübmaier's work *The Reason and Cause Why Every Man Who Was Christened in Infancy Is Under Obligation to be Baptized According to the Ordinances of Christ Even Though He Be One Hundred Years Old*.<sup>211</sup> Indeed, in his last polemic writing, *On Infant Baptism*,<sup>212</sup> Hübmaier not only condemned infant baptism but even declared that it actually harms the infant.

Hübmaier was an *anti-pacifistic* Anabaptist. See his work *On the Sword* (translated by the Baptist Vedder).<sup>213</sup> Indeed, Hübmaier made common cause even with the revolutionistic Anabaptist Thomas Münzer.

Bullinger charged Hübmaier with a restless spirit of innovation. The latter was certainly very brazen. Boldly, Hübmaier had claimed even Luther in support of his views.

So Luther retorted<sup>214</sup> that "Balthasar Hübmoer [Hübmaier] quotes me, among others, by name -- in his blasphemous book on rebaptism -- as if I were of his foolish mind. But I take comfort in the fact that neither friend nor foe will believe such a lie -- since I have sufficiently in my sermons shown my faith in infant baptism." In addition, Luther classed the Anabaptists with the Jewish fanatics at the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D. He also compared them to the Donatistic Circumcellions who had ravaged the African Church from the beginning of the fourth century onward.

## **204. The Anabaptists and the 1525 Peasant War in Germany**

Matters exploded early in 1525, upon the publication of the *Twelve Articles of all the Peasants* (allegedly and indeed apparently authored by Hübmaier). As the Lutheran theologian Charles M. Jacobs has pointed out:<sup>215</sup> "The social ferment out of which the Peasants' War arose, had its beginning far back of the Reformation. It had been in progress for a full century before the Reformation began.... Heretical ideas of many kinds had combined.... The hope of the coming millennium glowed most brightly in the hearts of those who had the least to hope for this side of it....

"This view of it was zealously spread by radical...preachers of religious revolution. The best know of these men, were Thomas Münzer and Balthasar Hübmaier.... Münzer, Hübmaier and others were preaching religious revolution.... The *Twelve Articles*...were adopted originally by the peasants...from January or February 1525....

"On the basis of extensive research, Wilhelm Stölze [*Peasant War and Reformation* (1926)] has suggested that they were written by Hübmaier.... A valuable edition of the most important sources, is that of Böhmer: *Documents for the History of the Peasant War and the Anabaptists*, Bonn (1910)."

Also the Dutch *Christian Encyclopaedia* has linked Hübmaier to the Peasant War.<sup>216</sup> Indeed, the Schaff-Herzog *Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge*<sup>217</sup> even mentions his acquaintance with Thomas Münzer -- the monster of Mühlhausen.

Now of the 1525 *Twelve Articles of all the Peasants*, the Fourth condemned the 'custom hitherto that no poor man has had the power to be allowed to catch game, wild fowls, or fish in running water.... This seems to us altogether improper.' Further, the Tenth Article communistically demanded what it called "the common fields" -- which, it alleged, "once belonged to a community. We would take these back again into the hands of our communities."<sup>218</sup>

Revolutionary insurrection spread rapidly across the whole of Southwestern and Central Germany. Soon, all was in uproar. Palaces, castles, convents and libraries were all put to the torch by Münzer's Anabaptists. Ten years later, they even ruled -- from the City of Münster.

## **205. The Atheist Friedrich Engels on the Anabaptist Thomas Münzer**

As Karl Marx's colleague the famous communist Friedrich Engels remarked,<sup>219</sup> "the peasants and plebeians...united in a revolutionary party whose demands and doctrines were most clearly expressed by Münzer.... The millennium and the day of judgment over the degenerated church

and corrupted world proposed and described by the mystic, seemed to Münzer imminently close....

"Under the cloak of Christian forms, he preached a kind of pantheism...and at times even approached atheism.... There is no heaven in the beyond.... There is no devil but man's evil lusts....

"His political program approached communism.... Even on the eve of the [1848] February Revolution, there was more than one modern communist sect that had not such a well-stocked theoretical arsenal as was Münzer's in the sixteenth century....

"By 'the kingdom of God' Münzer understood a society in which there would be no class differences or private property and...authority independent of or foreign to the members of the society.... A union[!] was established to implement all this.

"Münzer set to work at once to organize the union. His sermons became still more militant and revolutionary.... He depicted the previous oppression in fiery colours, and countered it with his dream vision of the millennium of social[istic] republican equality. He published one revolutionary pamphlet after another and sent emissaries in all directions. 'All the world must suffer a big jolt' [proclaimed Münzer]. 'There will be such a game that the ungodly will be thrown off their seats, and the downtrodden will rise.'" Thus the modern communist Engels.

Proclaimed Münzer:<sup>220</sup> "All things shall be common, and occasionally they shall be distributed according to each one's necessity.... Whatever prince, count or lord will not submit to this, and being forewarned -- his head shall be stricken off or he shall be hung."

Münzer then collected together eight thousand peasants, and ransacked the cloisters and the houses of the rich throughout Thuringia. However, he was solidly defeated at the Battle of Frankhausen in 1525, and beheaded shortly thereafter.

## **206. Münzerite Anabaptists still continued spreading the sedition**

The death of the Anabaptist Münzer was by no means the end of the bloodshed. From Thuringia, the revolt now spread to Swabia. There, the preaching of Hofmann (later the leading Anabaptist) inspired the peasants to make their demands laid down in the *Twelve Articles*.

Without waiting for the nobility to reply, the peasants revolted. In eight days, 179 castles and twenty-eight cloisters were burnt down. Many of the nobility were butchered. But the princes finally arose against the fanatics, and the revolt ended in the bloody death of nearly one hundred thousand peasants.

Friedrich Engels was by no means the only leading communist to praise these Anabaptists (in his 1850 book *The Peasant War in Germany*). Marx's other associate, Karl Kautsky, did the same -- in his 1894 book *Communism in the Middle Ages and in the Time of the Reformation*, and also in his 1897 book *Communism in Central Europe in the Time of the Reformation*. Ever since, communist text-books world-wide have been doing exactly the same.

In the same year of the Peasant War, Luther published his 1525 essay *Against the Robbing and Murdering Hordes of Peasants*. Clearly referring to the Anabaptist Thomas Münzer and his supporters, Luther insisted<sup>221</sup> that the Peasant War was "the devil's work...and in particular...the work of the archdevil who rules at Muhlhausen...."

"The peasants are not content to be themselves the devil's own, but they force and compel many good people against their wills to join their devilish league and so make them partakers of all of their own wickedness and damnation.... How many martyrs could now be made -- by the bloodthirsty peasants and the murdering 'prophets'!"

## **207. Luther on the antinomian antipaedobaptistic Münzerites**

Luther later asked:<sup>222</sup> "What was Münzer seeking, except to become a new Turkish emperor? He was possessed of the spirit of lies, and therefore there was no holding him back. He had to go at the other work of the devil, take the sword and murder and rob, as the spirit of murder drove him -- and he created such a rebellion, and such misery."

Then Luther again warned<sup>223</sup> against "poisonous and dangerous' preachers' who take the side of one party alone and call the lords names -- in order to tickle the people and court the peasants like Münzer, Carlstadt and other fanatics.... If Münzer and Carlstadt and their comrades[!] had not been allowed to sneak and creep into other men's houses and parishes whither they had neither call nor command to go -- that whole great calamity [of the Peasant War] would not have happened."

Luther further contrasted the Biblical basis of the Lutherans with the pseudo-spiritualistic fanaticism of Thomas Münzer's Anabaptists. "They devised the slogan: 'Spirit! Spirit! The Spirit must do it! The letter kills!'" -- exclaimed Luther. "Thus Münzer [derisively] called us Wittenberg theologians, 'men learned in the Scriptures' -- and [deludedly called] himself, 'the man taught of the Spirit'.... There you see how the devil had armed himself -- and built up his barricades!"<sup>224</sup>

Indeed, Luther soon regarded<sup>225</sup> Revelation 8:8 as a picture of those "who boast their spirits above all the Scripture and move -- like this 'burning mountain' -- between heaven and earth." Such, he insisted, "in our day, do Münzer and the fanatics."

Now the average German Anabaptist, wrote Luther, wished to have "nothing to do with baptism" -- meaning infant baptism. Yet that was just one of the many errors of these Anabaptists. For -- added Luther -- "another rejects the sacrament; still another teaches that there will be another world between this one and the last judgment; and some assert that Christ is not divine."<sup>226</sup>

All the Anabaptists rejected infant baptism. Indeed, many of them further rejected even adult baptism -- whenever administered by the Romanists, or even by the Protestants. Clearly, the Anabaptists were not interested in the Reformation of Christ's Church.

But with their new and sectarian "gathered church" concept, the Anabaptists were indeed interested in revolution -- against what they regarded as a Christless social order. Consequently, in 1525 Luther now rightly called them "the new false-prophets"<sup>227</sup> of Germany.

## **208. Luther's antirebaptistic work *Concerning Rebaptism***

In his own work *Concerning Rebaptism* (1528), Luther thrashed the Anabaptists. They had over-emphasized the subjective and downgraded the objective side of the rite. Yet, Luther retorted, important as faith is -- the **Word**, and not faith, is the basis of baptism. Any would-be baptizer who regards faith on the part of the baptizee as essential for the validity of the baptism -- can never consistently administer baptism. For he can never be certain that faith really is present.

It is possible, conceded Luther, that some might conceivably doubt the validity of their own infant baptisms. For they might well have no irrefutable evidence that they even then already truly believed. They might then conceivably wish to request (re-)baptism -- when adults.

That request, however, should not be granted. Instead, insisted Luther, the one making this request should be told that even if he were thus to be 'baptized' a second time -- Satan might well soon trouble him again, as to whether he then too really had faith. Then he would have to be 'baptized' yet again -- a third time -- and so on, *ad infinitum*, for just as long as any such doubts kept recurring.

"For it often happens that one who thinks that he has faith," explained Luther, "has none whatever -- and that one who thinks that he has no faith but only doubts, actually believes. We are not told 'he who knows that he believes'...but 'he that believes [and is baptized] shall be saved!' [Mark 16:16]....

"The man who bases his baptism on his faith -- is not only uncertain.... He is...godless and hypocritical.... For he puts his trust in what is not his own, *viz.*, a gift which God has given him -- and not in the Word of God alone." Consequently, even though at the time of baptism there be no faith -- the baptism, nevertheless, is still valid.<sup>228</sup>

## **209. The condemnation of Anabaptism in the Lutheran Symbols**

The Lutheran 1530 *Augsburg Confession* (later endorsed also by John Calvin), declares<sup>229</sup> that the Lutheran churches "condemn the Anabaptists...who imagine that the Holy Spirit is given to men without the outward Word, through their own preparation and works.... They condemn the Anabaptists who allow not the baptism of children....

"They condemn the Anabaptists...who teach that those who have once been holy, cannot fall again.... They condemn the Anabaptists who...contend that some men may attain to such a perfection in this life, that they cannot sin.... They condemn the Anabaptists who forbid Christians...civil offices.... They condemn the Anabaptists who think that to condemned men and the devils shall be an end of torments."

Augsburg's 1530 above statement on baptism was later explained by Luther's close colleague, Rev. Professor Dr. Philipp Schwartzerd (alias Melanchthon). For Melanchthon's own 1531 *Lutheran Apology* adds:<sup>230</sup> "Faith alone makes the person worthy to receive the beneficial divine water.... Nothing else can be received, than that we so believe from the heart." Indeed, the sacrament of baptism is nothing other than a "picture of the Word" -- or a "visible Word" which expresses to the eye what the Word causes the ear to know.

From 1530 till 1540, Melanchthon (and apparently with the full approval of Luther himself) constantly improved the 1530 '*Unvaried*' *Augsburg Confession* alias the *Confessio Augustana Invariata* -- until it had become the 1540 '*Varied*' *Augsburg Confession* alias the *Confessio Augustana Variata*. The latter added a few words to the article on baptism -- thus moving further away from the absolute necessity of baptizing infants. This enabled also Calvin to endorse the *Augustana* some five times between 1540 and 1557.

Only after the death of Melanchthon in 1560, did these slight additions begin to attract the attention of the more doctrinaire Gnesio-Lutherans. They then accused Melanchthon of crypto-calvinism. Indeed, especially after the adoption of the *Formula of Concord* (1576 & 1584), the Gnesio-Lutherans became increasingly more hostile to Calvinism -- and increasingly insistent on the necessity of baptism.<sup>231</sup>

In that *Formula of Concord*, the later Lutherans declared<sup>232</sup> that "the Anabaptists are divided into many sects, of which some maintain more, some fewer errors. Nevertheless, in a general way, they all profess such a doctrine as can be tolerated neither in the Church, nor by the police and in the commonwealth, nor in daily [domestic and social] life."

The *Formula* then mentions "Anabaptist Articles which cannot be endured in the Church." It claims that "this 'righteousness' of the Anabaptists consists in great part in a certain arbitrary and humanly devised sanctimony, and in truth is nothing else than some new sort of monkery."

These intolerable Anabaptist Articles include those "that infants not baptized are not sinners before God but just and innocent." Of "baptism..., in the opinion of the Anabaptists, they [infants] have no need.... Infants ought not to be baptized until they attain the use of reason, and are able themselves to profess their faith....

"They [the Anabaptists] neither make much account of the baptism of children, nor take care to have their children baptized, which conflicts with the express words of the divine promise (Genesis 17:7 sqq.). For this only holds good to those who observe the covenant of God and do not condemn it."

Further, the *Formula* also condemns the "Errors of the [Anabaptist] Schwenkfeldians." Among these, it mentions the error "that the water of baptism is not a means whereby the Lord seals adoption in the children of God."

## **210. The degeneration of the baptismal views of the later Lutherans**

Even after his protestantization, Luther's own baptismal views had still remained somewhat encrusted with remnantal post-biblical and mediaeval sacramentalistic accretions. See his 1523 *Little Baptism Book Germanized*, and his 1525 *The 'Order of Baptism' Newly Revised*.

Indeed, especially Luther's 1525 to 1529 controversy with Zwingli on the other sacrament of the Lord's Supper, propelled Luther more and more in the direction of an inadequate view of both sacraments. Thus, even Luther himself -- and especially the later Gnesio-Lutherans -- asserted that the Holy Spirit regenerates not before but usually only during baptism (yet still not because of baptism). This marks a shift somewhat away from Luther's earlier and more Biblical position outlined in our sections 197 to 199 above.

Yet according to Warfield,<sup>233</sup> the 1485-1558 German Reformer John Bugenhagen -- under Luther's direction -- taught "that Christians' children intended for baptism are not left to the hidden judgment of God if they fail of baptism." Instead, they "have the promise of being received by Christ into His kingdom."<sup>234</sup> This is underscored "also [by] Gerhard."<sup>235</sup>

Warfield discussed the baptismal difficulties of Lutheranism. He rightly maintained:<sup>236</sup> "The distinctive principle of the Lutheran system, is doubtless the cause of the great embarrassment exhibited by Lutheran writers in dealing with this problem..."

"Thus for example Kliefoth knows nothing better than to suggest that unbaptized children dying in their infancy, whether children of Christian parents or of infidels, stand in the same category with adult heathen -- and are to have an opportunity to exercise saving faith when the Lord calls them before Him for judgement on His second coming. And the genial Norse missionary bishop Dahle...says...'we may entertain a hope of salvation and bliss for our unbaptized children immediately after death -- yet no more than a hope!'"<sup>237</sup>

## **211. The re-romanizing tendency of Gnesianism after Luther's death**

'Gnesianism' became the official view of the Lutheran State Church denominations after the death of Luther in 1546 and especially after the death of Melanchthon in 1560. Even though Luther himself had apparently approved it, the Gnesio-Lutheran Flaccius Illyricus attacked and condemned Melanchthon's 1540 'crypto-calvinistic' *Confessio Augustana Variata*. That Flaccius did at the 1660 Colloquy of Weimar. In this he was followed by Chytraeus, Heshusius and others.

This Gnesio-Lutheran interpretation of baptism was confessionally 'frozen' into the *Formula of Concord* from 1576-80 onward. Among many other (generally excellent) provisions, the *Formula* unfortunately also regards<sup>238</sup> "the view that infants...may without baptism...attain unto salvation" -- as one of the "Anabaptistic Articles which cannot be endured in the Church."

Fanatical Gnesio-Lutherans would later employ these words also against Calvinism. Thus, Gnesio-Lutheranism's anti-Calvinistic *Saxon Visitation Articles* reject what they wrongly term "the false and erroneous doctrine of the Calvinists on Holy Baptism."

There, those 1592 *Articles* rightly allege, Calvinism teaches firstly "that baptism does not work nor confer regeneration, faith, the grace of God, and salvation -- but only signifies and seals



them." Calvinism teaches secondly, "that salvation does not depend on baptism." Calvinism teaches thirdly, that "when the ordinary Minister of the Church is wanting, the infant should be permitted to die without baptism." Calvinism teaches fourthly, that "the infants of Christians are already holy before baptism in the womb of the mother." Fifthly, Calvinism teaches that such covenant infants "even in the womb of the mother are received into the covenant of eternal life."

Most unfortunately, the Gnesio-Lutheranistic 1592 *Saxon Articles* -- though excepting what it calls "cases of necessity" -- reject<sup>239</sup> the above Proto-Lutheran (and Calvinian) views. Yet nevertheless, even some of the Classic-Lutheran divines, such as Chemnitz,<sup>240</sup> maintained that infants indeed have faith -- and do believe in a certain manner. Indeed, Gerhard even conceded that while "baptism is indeed the ordinary sacrament of initiation...., in the event of privation or impossibility -- the children of Christians are saved by an extraordinary and peculiar private dispensation.... God does not so bind His grace and saving efficacy to baptism as that, in the event of privation, He may not both wish and be able to act extraordinarily."

So too the eighteenth-century Lutheran Rev. Professor Dr. J.F. Buddaeus regarded the condition even of the unbaptized heathen infants as 'to some extent tolerable.'<sup>241</sup> Likewise the great nineteenth-century American Lutheran, Rev. Professor Dr. Charles Krauth.<sup>242</sup>

Indeed, also some of the more modern of the famous Lutheran theologians -- such as the conservatives Cremer and Althaus -- fortunately follow Luther's original view of "infant faith." In so doing, however, they technically put themselves at variance with the official semi-sacramentalistic views of the Gnesio-Lutheran State Churches.

## **212. Luther and the Lutheran Dorner on infant faith before and at baptism**

Luther himself, in his *Commentary on Genesis* (chapter 17) -- from the fact that Hebrew children dying before circumcision were not lost -- argues that neither are Christian children dying before baptism. Thus too the great Lutheran theologian Rev. Professor Dr. I.A. Dorner.

For Dorner has rightly shown<sup>243</sup> that the De-Romanized "Luther, in order to leave no place for the *opus operatum*, **assumed...the personal faith of the child in order to baptize**" him or her. See the "*Catechismus Major*.... Luther assumed that God gives the child faith for baptism....

**"Faith and regeneration are already brought to baptism,"** explains Dorner of Luther. "The only meaning left to the latter, is that of sealing what has been done.... In the *Large Catechism*, he says [anent] whether children have faith -- let the learned decide.... On the occasion of the *Wittenberg Concord*, 1536, he conceded that...**children have...an analogon of faith**: namely a natural bias of the soul to God -- just as Calvin also spoke of *fides seminalis* in children."

Indeed, Dorner concludes<sup>244</sup> of Luther that "in reference to the children of Christians who have died unbaptized, he says: 'The holy and merciful God will think kindly of them.... What He will do with them, He has revealed to no one, [so] that baptism may not be despised -- but has reserved [them] to His own mercy. God does wrong to no man'" -- and hence still less to a little man, alias a tiny human being.

### **213. The Lutheran Pieper on infant faith and infant baptism**

The renowned modern conservative theologian Rev. Professor Dr. Francis Pieper explains his own contemporary Lutheran understanding of the character of the renunciation of Satan and the profession of Christ at baptism. Pieper writes<sup>245</sup> that "by baptism the child is transferred from the kingdom of Satan to the Kingdom of Christ...through the child's own faith.... The child is asked whether he believes; the sponsors answering in the stead of the child.... The child has a faith of his own [both before and] in baptism -- and is not being baptized on the faith of the sponsors; or of the Christian Church; or even on his own future faith.

"The personal faith of the child, must by all means be upheld. Any doctrine that would put the child in possession of the blessing of baptism without faith (*opus operatum*) as the receiving hand on the part of the child [himself or herself] -- is anti-Christian.... We are in fact more certain of [a presupposed infant] faith in the baptism of a child, than [of adult faith] in the baptism of adults.

"In the baptism of adults, we [can only, and] must, accept their word. If they deceive us or themselves, that is their own lookout." Such deceit, however, is never perpetrated by the child at infant baptisms.

"The question as to faith," continues Pieper, "is no less appropriate in pedobaptism than in the baptism of adults.... We know of children -- and that, more certainly than of adults -- that in or at their baptism they do believe....

"Adults will have to become like the children, if they would participate in the kingdom of heaven.... We shall have to desist from our own calculations and learn how to think correctly, by faith in the words of Christ, about the faith and salvation of children."

As Pieper rightly insists:<sup>246</sup> "True faith, and works of faith, are found in infants. Psalm 8:2 -- 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings hast Thou ordained strength'.... Scripture predicates saving faith of children and infants directly. **Matthew 18:6** -- 'Whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me.' There is...no reason to take the *paidion* of verse 5 in a sense different from the *paidion* of verse 4: 'Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child'.... Even de Wette adheres to the literal interpretation."

Pieper continues: "First John 2:13[-14] -- 'I write unto you, little children [*paidia*], because ye have known the Father.' To 'know the Father' means, of course, to believe in Him. *Paidia* means children...'down to the first year' [Luther]." Indeed, Holy Scripture is constantly "ascribing to children the fruit and effect of faith, namely, eternal life. Mark 10:14 -- 'Of such is the Kingdom of God.' Matthew 19:14; Luke 18:16.

"The denial of infant faith, springs from rationalistic considerations.... John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Ghost while yet in his mother's womb. Luke 1:15.... It proves beyond doubt that it is not above the power of the Holy Ghost to create faith in infants" -- even before infant baptism (thus F.N. Lee).

Pieper concludes: "Scripture states explicitly that little children 'believe in Me.' Matthew 18:6. The Lutheran teachers follow this statement of [Christ in] Scripture, by describing the **faith of children as *fides actualis*** [alias an 'actual faith'] -- and never as a *habitus otiosus* (idle habit), or a *mera potentia*: a mere ability to produce faith at some future time.... The faith of infants is indeed...***fides directa*** -- that is, faith which [directly] lays hold of its object, Christ, the Savior of sinners."

#### **214. Switzerland disturbed by the Anabaptist heresies**

In the years culminating in 1525, the Anabaptists had torn Germany apart. Ominously, a similar situation was now threatening to develop in Switzerland too. For the rumblings of the Peasant War in Germany soon reached Switzerland.

Zwingli was rightly alarmed. The Anabaptists were radical revolutionists. Their baptismal views were relatively unimportant. But their social views -- as reflected in their demand that Christians get themselves rebaptized -- made Luther's previous controversy even against Rome now seem peripheral.

Schaff has rightly suggested<sup>247</sup> that "radicalism was identical with the Anabaptist movement, but the baptismal question was secondary. It involved an entire reconstruction of the Church and of the social order. It meant revolution.... Nothing is more characteristic of radicalism and sectarianism, than an utter want of historical sense and respect for the past.... It rejects even the Bible as an external authority, and relies on inward inspiration....

"The radical opinion...rejected Luther's theory of forensic, solifidian justification." The radical Anabaptists replaced *sola fide* (by faith alone) with *sola revolutione* (by revolution alone). "They hoped at first to carry Zwingli with them, but in vain....

"They then charged him with treason to the truth, and hated him worse than the pope.... The demand for rebaptism virtually unbaptized and unchristianized the entire Christian world, and completed the rupture with the historic Church." Thereby, they existentialistically and indeed also revolutionistically cut the continuous cord connecting the present to the past generations -- and to the future.

Unlike the Communists, modern Antipaedobaptists are understandably embarrassed by the German Thomas Münzer. Instead, they hasten to claim their descent rather from the 'milder' Anabaptists -- such as Conrad Grebel and his Swiss circle. Thus the British Baptist Hulse has claimed<sup>248</sup> it was "the first baptism -- when Grebel baptised Blaurock in the home of Manz on January 21 1525." However, Hulse is silent about an adulatory letter from Grebel to Münzer some four months earlier, written on September 5th 1524.

#### **215. The Swiss Anabaptist Grebel's admiration of Thomas Münzer**

That letter Grebel addressed<sup>349</sup> "to the sincere and true proclaimer of the Gospel, Thomas Münzer at Allstedt in the Hartz, our faithful and beloved brother with us in Christ." It started off: "Dear **Brother** Thomas."

Soon thereafter, it further stated: "Thy book against false faith and baptism was brought to us, and we were more fully informed and confirmed.... It rejoiced us wonderfully that we found one who was of the same Christian mind with us....

"On the matter of baptism, thy book pleases us well, and we desire to be further instructed by thee. We understand that even an adult is not to be baptized without Christ's rule of binding and loosing.... All children who have not yet come to the discernment of the knowledge of good and evil and have not yet eaten of the tree of knowledge...are surely saved by the suffering of Christ the new Adam....

"As to the [Protestant] objection that faith is demanded of all who are to be saved, we exclude **children** from this and hold that they are saved **without** faith[!].... We do not believe that children must be baptized.... Infant baptism is a senseless, blasphemous abomination[!] -- contrary...even to the papacy....

"Thou knowest this ten times better, and hast published thy protests against infant baptism.... I have already begun to reply to all (excepting thyself) who have hitherto misleadingly and knowingly written on baptism and have deceived concerning the senseless blasphemous form of baptism -- as, for instance, Luther.... I, C[onrad]. Grebel, meant to write to Luther in the name of all of us, and to exhort him to cease from his caution."

Then, in a "Postscript or Second letter," Conrad Grebel continued: "Dearly beloved Brother Thomas!" Condemning again "the idolatrous caution of Luther," Grebel then stated that especially the Zwinglians "rail at us as knaves from the pulpit in public, and call us 'Satan changed into angels of light.'" Cf. Second Corinthians 11:14.

Grebel concluded by urging Münzer to "establish and teach only...unadulterated baptism.... Thou art better informed than a hundred of us.... Ye are far purer than our men here, and those at Wittenberg.... [Signed:] Conrad Grebel..., Felix Mantz...and seven new young Münzers against Luther."

## **216. Zwingli's first condemnation of the Anabaptists' views on baptism**

When first contacted by Anabaptists in Zurich, even as early as 1524 the Protestant Reformer Zwingli never countenanced the rebaptism of those already baptized in infancy. To the contrary, even then he was already declaring:<sup>250</sup> "I leave baptism untouched.... We must practice infant baptism, so as not to offend our fellow men."

Zwingli first enjoyed some little friendship with the incipient Anabaptists in Switzerland. They seemed allies against Romanism, and initially supported his reforms. But when he clung to Paedobaptism, they opposed him.

For the Swiss Anabaptists at length began not only to get themselves 'rebaptized' -- but also steadfastly to refuse baptism to their own covenant infants. So Zwingli later condemned their views in his 1525 *Christian Introduction of the Zurich Council to the Pastors and Preachers* (in the section *Concerning the Abrogation of the Law*).

Now Zwingli had invited the Anabaptists to have private discussions with him. In vain. So a public disputation followed -- by order of the magistrate -- on January 17th 1525.

In his accompanying letter to Vadian, Zwingli wrote: "The issue is not baptism, but revolt!" Yet, as regards baptism, Zwingli rightly believed that John the baptizer had baptized not just God-professing adults but also their babies.<sup>251</sup> He further believed that First Corinthians 7:14 implies those babies' eligibility also for visible church membership.<sup>252</sup> So he rightly launched a vigorous verbal attack against the Anabaptists.

Exclaimed Zwingli: "Their rebaptism is a clear sign that they intend to create a new and different church. Biblical baptism, however -- just like circumcision -- can be performed once only. Once in the covenant, a man remains there. The New Testament knows only one baptism. Neither Christ nor the holy apostles ever repeated it -- or taught that it needed to be repeated."<sup>253</sup>

Zwingli further pointed out that "the soul is cleansed by the grace of God, and not by any external thing whatever." Consequently, "baptism cannot wash away sin."

Furthermore, Zwingli rightly saw that "the children of Christians are not less the children of God than their parents are -- or than the children in Old Testament times were." So, seeing they "belong to God -- who will refuse them baptism?"<sup>254</sup>

The antitrinitarian Anabaptist leaders Jan Denck (a pantheistic universalist) and Ludwig Hätzer (an adulterer and accused bigamist)<sup>255</sup> then denounced Zwingli. He was, they said<sup>256</sup> -- worse than the pope! The Anabaptists had stubbornly rejected the baptism of covenant infants. So Zwingli now finally -- and publically -- condemned their views.<sup>257</sup>

The Reformer Bullinger was an eye-witness at that great debate. It took place in the Zurich Council Hall on January 17th 1525. The Anabaptists argued that infants cannot believe. But Zwingli showed that infant baptism had replaced infant circumcision (Genesis 17 *cf.* Colossians 2:11-13), and that the infants of Christians are themselves 'holy' (First Corinthians 7:14). He published his arguments (five months later) in a book: *On Baptism, Rebaptism, and Infant Baptism*.

Zwingli won that the debate, hands down. Another disputation was held in March, and a third in November -- with the same result. As Bullinger later declared, the Anabaptists just could not answer Zwingli.<sup>258</sup>

## **217. The formal birth and coming forth of Switzerland's Anabaptists**

Within four days of being trounced by Zwingli in the great debate of 17th January 1525, at one of their sectarian meetings the ex-priest Blaurock defiantly asked his colleague Grebel to

rebaptize him in the home of Manz. Blaurock then in turn rebaptized all the others present. Thus was Swiss Anabaptism formally launched.

The Baptist Hulse has well described<sup>259</sup> this situation. "This idea crystallised in the first baptism, when Grebel baptised Blaurock in the home of Mantz on January 21 1525.... Evening gatherings in the homes of the dissenters continued, and represented the first informal beginnings of gathered Baptist churches in the area. In the course of the week following the first baptism, thirty-five were baptised by affusion (pouring) at Zollikon."

What a concession from the Baptist Hulse! The members of "the first...Baptist churches" -- Hulse has assured us -- were "baptised by affusion" alias pouring, and not by submersion. Subsequently too, Blaurock baptized by sprinkling; and Mantz by pouring.<sup>260</sup> As Richard Nitsche has shown, in his *History of the Anabaptists in Switzerland at the Time of the Reformation*: "We hardly encounter a single formal submersion, such as indeed occurred later."<sup>261</sup>

Blaurock himself then lashed out. According to the 1525 Anabaptist *Hutterite Chronicle*,<sup>262</sup> Blaurock insisted that both Luther and Zwingli had "let go of the true baptism of Christ" -- and had "followed instead the pope with infant baptism...into a false Christianity.... Luther and Zwingli defended...this false teaching [Pedobaptism] -- which they really learned from the father and head of Antichrist."

It will be recalled that Grebel had rebaptized Blaurock in the home of Mantz. Fortunately, Mantz had rightly told his Swiss Anabaptist colleagues that John the baptizer had sprinkled [and not submersed]. Consequently, the three of them now did the same. Unfortunately, however, they did not follow John's sprinkling of also the babies of believers. Nor did they follow John (who baptized once and for all) -- in their frequent 're-baptisms' of those already baptized.

Mantz himself later recounted these dramatic events among the Swiss Grebelites. He then wrote:<sup>263</sup> "Just as John baptized..., so they -- were poured over with water."

However, having thus upheld the right mode of (re)baptism -- albeit, wrongly, for those already previously baptized -- Mantz then wrongly prescribed the wrong age for that ordinance. It should, he insisted, be received not merely in adulthood -- but also specifically at age thirty. For he bizarrely decreed that "infant baptism...is also against the example of Christ Who...was baptized at thirty years.... Christ has given us an example, that as He has done -- so also ought we to do."

Yet, according to the Baptist Hulse,<sup>264</sup> after "Grebel baptised Blaurock in the home of Mantz" -- the latter Anabaptist himself was subsequently killed when only twenty-nine. Consequently, in getting himself (re-)baptized before his early death, Mantz rejected his own inane injunction that baptism "ought" to be received precisely when thirty. One must indeed also wonder just how many Anabaptists -- and Baptists like the Mantz-admiring Hulse -- were themselves precisely thirty when also they were baptized according to Mantz's prescription (to which even Mantz did not submit himself).

## **218. Hätzer the heretical hymnwriter and anabaptistic adulterer**

We have already referred<sup>265</sup> to the anabaptistic hymnwriter Hätzer and his colleague the pantheistic universalist Denck. Both of them hated Zwingli even more than they did the pope. However, Denck himself has been described by the famous church historian Rev. Professor Dr. J.H. Kurtz as 'the pope of the Baptists,'<sup>266</sup> And Hätzer was not only antitrinitarian, but also a repeated adulterer -- and indeed also a bigamist.

According to the *New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*,<sup>267</sup> in 1523 Denck became involved in the trial of the three impious painters of Nuremberg. There, "the ideas of Thomas Münzer and Andreas Karlstadt influenced him greatly.... About October 1525, he was forced to leave Nuremberg, and he became a wanderer....

"He was rebaptized by Hübmaier...[and became] a leader of the Anabaptists.... He opposed the doctrines of predestination, the bound will, justification by faith, the sufficiency of Christ's atonement, the authority of the Scriptures...and the ministry."

Also in the *New International Dictionary*, the Scottish Baptist J.G.G. Norman has stated<sup>268</sup> that Hätzer "came to Zurich, and wrote advocating an iconoclasm like that of Carlstadt.... Tending to antitrinitarian spiritualism, he was accused of adultery.... He composed hymns which were highly prized." Indeed, to this the English Baptist Hulse has added: "Hätzer, Hübmaier and Blaurock -- all ex-priests" raised in Romanism -- "were other influential characters involved in the Anabaptist movement."<sup>269</sup>

Harvard's noted scholar G.H. Williams is clearly sympathetic to the Anabaptists. Yet even he has frankly admitted the truth about Hätzer. Williams explains<sup>270</sup> how "Hätzer in Worms in 1527...was engaged with Denck in translating.... He attacked the Magisterial Reformation for disparaging the apocryphal books.... The clearest evidence of Hätzer's final antitrinitarian spiritualism, is a stanza from one of the many hymns that he composed and which were cherished....

"There survives the following explicitly antitrinitarian utterance placed in the mouth of God: 'I am He who created all things.... I am not three persons, but I am one. And I cannot be three persons, for I am one.'"

Williams continued: "Hätzer was exposed in the house of Georg Regel to his besetting temptation, for which he earlier had been asked to leave Basel. This time, however, it was adultery with the mistress herself of the little Anabaptist maid he had earlier taken to wife.... He was clearly guilty."

## **219. The Anabaptists, rebaptizing defiantly, expelled from Switzerland**

From the above, it is very clear that both Zwingli and Zurich would be well rid of the likes of Hätzer and his Anabaptists. The latter had been trounced in three successive public debates against Zwingli -- respectively in January, March and November 1525. After the first debate, they had: defiantly started rebaptizing Christians in and around Zurich; created public disturbances; and

threatened even the very maintenance of law and order.

So the City Council of Zurich then decided against them. Yet it still followed Zwingli's clement advice. Anabaptist parents with unbaptized children, should be given eight days to get them baptized -- or face banishment from the city and canton (yet with full benefit of their goods) as obvious seditionists.

The great church historian Schaff has rightly described<sup>271</sup> what then ensued. "The Anabaptists refused to obey, and ventured on bold demonstrations. They arranged processions and passed as preachers of repentance, in sackcloth and girdles, through the streets of Zurich" -- all the time "abusing 'the old dragon' (Zwingli) and his horns [Revelation 12:9 & 13:11 & 20:2]; and exclaiming: 'Woe, woe unto Zurich!'"

Schaff continued: "The leaders were arrested.... A commission of Ministers and Magistrates were sent to them, to convert them. Twenty-four professed conversion, and were set free.... Fourteen men and seven women were retained...but made their escape April 5 [1526]. Grebel, Mantz and Blaurock were rearrested -- and charged with communistic and revolutionary teaching.

"After some other excesses, the magistracy proceeded to threaten those who stubbornly persisted in their error.... Six executions in all took place in Zurich [not for rebaptism but indeed for revolutionism], between 1527 and 1532....

"The foreigners were punished by exile, and met death in Roman Catholic countries.... [The German Anabaptist] Hübmaier, who had fled from Waldshut [or Wausthut in Germany] to Zurich [in nearby Switzerland], was tried before the magistracy...and was sent out of the country."

## **220. Zwingli's various writings against the errors of the Anabaptists**

According to Zwingli, "the Anabaptists have their wives in common and meet at night...for lewd practices." He accused them openly: "As often as you [Anabaptists] confess Christ, you make a confession which is worse than that of the demons. For they had experienced His power in such a measure that they sincerely confessed Him to be the Son of God. But you, when you confess Him, do so hypocritically!"<sup>272</sup>

Again, insisted Zwingli: "Give up the oath in any state, and at once -- and in keeping with the Anabaptists' desire -- the magistracy is removed.... [Then,] all things follow as they would have them -- what confusion and up-turning of everything!"

In 1527, Zwingli wrote his refutation of the Anabaptist Balthazar Hübmaier's little book *Concerning the Christian Baptism of Believers*.<sup>273</sup> In that same year, Zwingli also published his own *Polemic against the Catabaptistic Catastrophe*. There, he showed that rebaptism amounts to recrucifying Christ [Hebrews 6:1-6].

In that latter work, he rightly remarked that "the Hebrews' children, because they with their parents were under the covenant, merited the sign of the covenant [circumcision]. So also



Christians' infants -- because they are counted within Christ's Church and people -- ought in no way to be deprived of baptism, the sign of the covenant."<sup>274</sup>

Zwingli thus saw that the Church "distributes the sacrament [of baptism] -- to those who according to human judgment are to be regarded as elect."<sup>275</sup> He therefore insisted that Christ-professing people (and their infants) are to be regarded as saved -- before their baptisms. For "by the time the sacrament is administered, [even] the Anabaptist does not need it." This is so, because baptism certifies "something already given and accomplished in the heart" of a person "who knows that God has forgiven his sins long ago."

According to Zwingli<sup>276</sup> "we are certain of the election of nobody more -- than of infants who are taken away in youth.... There cannot be any stain (*labes*) -- in infants who spring from believers. For original sin is expiated by Christ.... No stain of [personal] misdeeds (*labes facinorum*) can contaminate them."

Of course, by this Zwingli did not mean that covenant children cannot sin. He meant that they were to be deemed to have been regenerated and therefore forgiven the guilt of Adam's sin -- even before their own infant baptism.

While conceding that some Anabaptists were indeed Christians, Zwingli did not accept that all of them were. For Zwingli also insisted that many Anabaptists were more immoral than even the weakest Paedobaptists. Indeed, precisely their revolutionary rebaptisms tended toward the revolutionary communism of the Anabaptists (both as to goods and as to wives). Proto-Pentecostally, it also promoted their revolutionary and epilepsy-like "babbling under the claim of inspiration."<sup>277</sup>

## **221. Zwingli's antirebaptistic Questions Concerning Rebaptism**

Zwingli also published a work about *Questions Concerning the Sacrament of Baptism*. Indeed, in his *Confession of Faith*, he declared<sup>278</sup> that "specifically the children of Christians belong without exception to the Church of God's people -- and are Members of His Church.... However, the children [of Israel] just as much as the [adult] Jews themselves belonged to that Church. No less do our children belong to the Church of Christ, than was formerly the case with the children of the Jews....

"All who descend from them according to the flesh, were reckoned to the Church. Yet if ours were not counted together with the parents, Christ would appear to be mean and stingy toward us -- if He had denied us what He gave to the [Hebrew] Ancients.... Hence, in my opinion, those who damn the children of Christians -- are acting godlessly and arrogantly. So many open testimonies of Scripture speak against them that the Gentile Church would become not merely just as large but larger than that of the Jews." Behold Zwingli's optimism -- *versus* the pessimism of the Anabaptists!

Continued Zwingli: "Were John and Paul not chosen -- even when they were still children -- and indeed, from the foundation of the world? However, the word 'Church' is taken quite generally -- namely for all who pass as Christians; that is, for those who relate themselves to

Christ.... [In Old Testament times,] Isaac, Jacob, Judah and all descendants of Abraham were members of this Church -- even in their childhood; yes, even those children whose parents turned to Christ through the preaching of the apostles at the start of the [New Testament] Church....

"That was also the case of the young children of the first Church. For this reason, I believe and acknowledge that they were marked with the sacrament of baptism.... For the promise is not given to our children more narrowly but rather more extensively and more richly than it was to the children of the Hebrews in olden times.

"These are the foundations according to which the children are baptized and the Church is to be commanded. The attacks of the Anabaptists have no power against this....

"Isaac was circumcised as a child, even though he did not [then] make a profession of faith.... We are prepared -- without the sacrament -- so that we may receive the sacrament.

"The Spirit works with His grace, **before** the sacrament. The sacraments serve as general testimonies of that grace which already previously inhabits each one in particular. Thus, baptism is conferred in front of the congregation -- to him who **already** has the promise **before** he receives baptism."

"From this, it is acknowledged that he is a member of the Church... . Our children are no less regarded as belonging to the Church, than were those of the Hebrews. When members of the Church bring their child, it is baptized. For as a child of Christian parents it is regarded as belonging among the members, according to the promise. By baptism the Church thus openly takes in him who was previously already accepted by grace.

"Consequently, baptism does not bring grace; but the Church testifies that he who has baptism imputed to him, has **already** received grace.... The sacrament is the sign of something holy, namely of the grace already **received**.... The Anabaptists err thoroughly, inasmuch as they refuse baptism to the children of believers -- and err in many other ways too.... But now, by God's grace, this pest in our midst has much abated."

## **222. Zwingli's antirebaptistic Declaration of Christian Faith**

Finally, in Zwingli's *Declaration of Christian Faith*, he declared<sup>279</sup> that "the sacraments...are for us signs and symbols of holy things, not the things themselves which they imply. For who could be so simple as to regard the sign as the thing signified?

"The sacraments are to be honoured.... For they signify the holiest things -- both those things which have happened, as well as those things we should do.... Thus, baptism indicates that Christ has cleansed us with His blood; and that, as Paul teaches, we 'put Him on' or are to live according to His example. Romans 13:14 & Galatians 3:27....

"Would the sacraments then have no power?" -- just because they are given only to those deemed to be believers already? "No, they have a big power!"

Firstly, they are holy and honourable. For they were constituted and received by Christ the High Priest. For He not only instituted but also Himself received baptism....

"Secondly, they testify about an event.... Because baptism now indicatively proclaims the death and the resurrection of Christ, these must have been actual events....

"Thirdly, they represent the state of things which they indicated. This is why they also receive their names.... Fourthly, they signify high things....

"Fifthly, the signs are similar to the things signified. For in each sacrament, one can measure two things. The one is the external sign, like the water in baptism.... The other and the more important, is the essential in the sacrament.... In baptism, through the water of grace, the really essential matter is that we are inwardly cleansed and washed from sins by the blood of Christ; that we are a congregation of Christ; that we are incorporated into Christ; that we are buried with Him in His death; and that we are raised with Him to a new life, *etc.*....

"Sixthly, the sacraments offer support and help to faith.... The sacraments thus support faith.... The hearing and the feeling are all attracted to the operation of faith.... For the faith of the Church or of those baptized, acknowledges that Christ died and rose and triumphed for His Church. One hears and sees and feels that -- during baptism....

"Seventhly, it represents the condition of an oath.... The Anabaptists...hold all things in common.... [They say that] a man could have...more than one wife, in spirit.... They have distanced themselves from us, and they never belonged to us.... That anabaptistic pest crawls particularly into places where the pure doctrine of Christ begins to emerge.... From this...it can clearly be seen that it is sent by Satan, in order to strangle healthy seed while the latter is germinating!"

### **223. Vicious Antipaedobaptism of the Anabaptist Melchior Hofmann**

We first hear of the colourful Swabian Melchior Hofmann in the time of the Anabaptist Thomas Münzer. Already in 1525, while Hofmann was in Dorpat, there was uproar and iconoclasm.<sup>280</sup> The same year he clashed with the Lutheran Ministers there; began to show deviant views about political government; and rejected the oath. After he falsely predicted that Christ's second coming would occur in 1533, the King of Sweden forbade him to preach there. Lutheran Ministers then attacked him, and Luther himself opposed him. Next succumbing to the influence of Schwenckfeld, Hofmann slid even more deeply into the various heresies of Anabaptism.

Hofmann denied Christ's humanity,<sup>281</sup> alleging that Jesus merely travelling through Mary 'like water through a pipe.' To Hofmann, the Saviour 'has not two but only one nature' and was solidified as heavenly dew in the womb of Mary -- like a spiritual pearl in a carnal oyster.

In April 1530, Hofmann was 'rebaptized'<sup>282</sup> (*sic*). Understandably, his fanaticism then increased. For now he wrote<sup>283</sup> that baptism "is the sign of the covenant God instituted solely for the old...[but] not for...immature children.... There is absolutely no order enacted by the apostles or Jesus Christ...about it.... It has not been discovered that they ever baptized any [infant] child,

nor will any such instance be found in all eternity....

"Paedobaptism is absolutely not from God, but rather is practised out of wilfulness by Anti-Christians [alias Antichrist-ians] and the satanic crowd in opposition to God and all His Commandments.... Verily, it is an eternal abomination to Him. Woe, woe to all such blind leaders who wilfully publish lies for the truth -- and ascribe to God that which He has not commanded and will never in eternity command! How serious a thing it is to fall into the hands of God!... Their inheritance and portion, is rather eternal damnation!"

Hofmann next claimed that baptism was bridal: "The bride of the Lord Jesus Christ has given herself over to the Bridegroom in baptism...and has betrothed herself and yielded herself to Him of her own free will and has thus in very truth accepted Him and taken Him unto herself." This language is not only clearly antipaedobaptistic, but also almost erotic. It doubtless played a major role in promoting the emergence of polygamy and even community of wives among many of the Hofmannites.

While preaching in the border region of Germany and Holland, Hofmann made many converts. They themselves later 'converted' the Dutch lechers Matthys and Beukels, and two of Matthys's own 'apostles' then rebaptized and ordained the Dutchman Obbe Philips as well as the German city Münster's Rothmann. Hofmann himself was then imprisoned in Strassburg, where he died in captivity.

Hofmann was a false prophet. His prediction that one hundred and forty-four thousand would soon go forth from Strassburg and convert the world<sup>284</sup> -- never came to pass. Nor did his prediction that Christ's second coming would occur in 1533!

#### **224. The Dutch Anabaptist Leaders Obbe and Dirck Philips**

After the imprisonment of Hofmann in 1533, the Hofmannite baker Jan Matthys alias 'Elijah' emerged as the new leader. His 'commissioned apostles' Boekbinder and Cuyper then rebaptized the famous Dutch Anabaptist Obbe Philips in the same year -- before they then went forth to Münster, and rebaptized its cathedral's ex-priest Rothmann.

Obbe himself then ordained his own brother Dirck Philips -- and then rebaptized and ordained the famous Anabaptists David Joris in 1534 and Menno Simons around 1536. So renowned did Obbe become, that the Dutch Anabaptists were then often called Obbenites.<sup>285</sup>

Obbe's brother Dirck alias Dierick or Dietrich later became the leading Mennonite theologian. As History Professor Dr. K.R. Davis has pointed out:<sup>286</sup> "Son of a Dutch priest[!], he...left the Franciscans and converted to Anabaptism in 1533.... His elder brother[!], Obbe, ordained him...in 1534.... He wrote extensively and systematically, and was probably the leading theologian of the early Dutch and North German Mennonites. But largely because of his greater severity and rigidity, he was...responsible for schism within the Mennonite brotherhood."

Dirck Philips spurned the Old Testament. He also rejected the incarnation -- and denied infant baptism.

As the Pro-Mennonite Leonard Verduin has rightly maintained:<sup>287</sup> "In the words of Dirck Philips, one of the most influential thinkers in the camp of the Anabaptists: 'The false prophets cover and disguise their deceptive doctrines by appealing to the letter of the Old Testament.... It is from this fountain that the sacrilegious ceremonies and pomp of the Church of Antichrist [alias Rome] and the deplorable errors of the seditious sects [alias the Lutherans and the Calvinists] have come.'"

The Hofmannite Dirck Philips also derived both his christology and his sacramentology from the 'bridal baptisms' of Hofmann himself. To Philips, there was no link between the infant circumcision of the 'carnal' Old Covenant and the adult baptism of the 'spiritual' New Testament.<sup>288</sup>

The ones regenerated, as a reward for their obedience in following Christ's command, receive the forgiveness of sin -- so that "in baptism the regenerated children of God are washed through the blood and the Spirit of Christ."<sup>289</sup> Synergism and crypto-sacramentalism are both present in this statement of Dirck Philips.

## **225. The awful actions of Anabaptism in its 'millennium' at Münster**

News reached the Hofmannite Anabaptist Beukels in Holland that the cathedral priest Bernard Rothmann of Münster in Germany had defended Antipaedobaptism (but not yet adult rebaptism). So Beukels concluded that Hofmann's eschatological predictions were then being fulfilled in Münster.

Matthys, the henchman of Beukels, therefore promptly resumed the rebaptisms previously suspended by Hoffmann. After two of his 'apostles' (Boekbinder and Cuyper) had rebaptized and ordained Obbe Philips to lead the 'Obbenite' Anabaptists in Holland, the Dutch Anabaptist Matthys then sent them to Münster -- where they promptly rebaptized the ex-priest Rothmann.<sup>290</sup>

After Matthys was killed in one of the predictable skirmishes, Beukels immediately took over and proclaimed a yet stricter form of communism. He enforced the death penalty even for merely complaining -- and then established polygamy.<sup>291</sup> On this, we shall now let Harvard's Professor Dr. G.H. Williams tell the story.

Matthys and Beukels and other Dutch Anabaptists themselves sped to Münster, and supported Rothmann and his stooge Mayor Knipperdolling. Matthys proclaimed himself King of Münster, and announced his intention of killing all his enemies. Catholics and Lutherans both fled the city. Matthys then and there introduced communism and confiscated all money, food and real estate.<sup>292</sup>

Rothmann taught this radical sharing of property and its public ownership -- in his 1533 *Confession of Both Sacraments*. He based it on spurious rewritings (allegedly by Isidore) of the pseudepigraphical *Fourth and Fifth Epistles of [Pseudo-]Clement*. Rothmann's programme led to a community where the sharing of goods and wives was compulsory.<sup>293</sup>

While Rothmann had a mere nine wives, Beukels took fifteen -- and Knipperdolling seventeen.<sup>294</sup> "Koning Jan" alias 'King John' Beukels had deserted a wife in Leyden; had next married the beautiful young widow of Matthys; and then soon had a whole harem.

A 'law' was passed, forcing all women under a certain age to marry -- under pain of capital punishment. Quarrels among plural wives were also capitally punished. Finally, divorce had to be permitted -- which 'transubstantiated' polygamy into gross licentiousness.<sup>295</sup>

Just like Melchior Hofmann before them, the Melchiorite Rothmannites in Münster held both baptism and marriage to be an image of the relation of Christ to His bride (alias the community of the faithful). However, explains G.H. Williams,<sup>296</sup> these "Rothmannites...could think of Christ with many individual brides -- and hence each husband with a plurality of wives. But since plural marriage was also bound up with faith, the marriage of believers with unbelievers was not true marriage but the equivalent of adultery -- and therefore to be annulled by a rigid communal discipline....

"After a fearful battle, the city was taken on 25 June.... [The Anabaptist leaders] Knipperdolling and Krechting remained loyal to their Anabaptist faith, but John Beukels made a partial recantation before his death and even offered, if his life were spared, to persuade the remaining Anabaptists to give up all thoughts of violence."<sup>297</sup>

History had repeated itself. Centuries earlier, the Circumcellion circuit-riders had rebaptized Donatistically -- and then gone plundering and burning, murdering traditional Christians in many areas of North Africa. Now, revolutionary rebaptists rode again!

A then-contemporary writer described it all perfectly. See U. Rhegius's *Refutation of the Neo-Valentinians and Neo-Donatists of Münster* (Wittenberg 1535). See too the classic statement by the modern liberal Roman Catholic scholar C.A. Cornelius -- in his *History of the Münster Revolution*.<sup>298</sup>

Interestingly, in his essay *The Anabaptists and the Rise of the Baptist Movement*, the modern Baptist scholar Rev. Dr. West of Oxford has rightly described Münster's Jan Beukels as "scarcely sane." Nevertheless, in all candour, West has then also honestly added: "It is certainly not right to divorce Münster entirely from Anabaptism."<sup>299</sup>

## **226. Obbe Philips's Recantation in his *Recollections of the years 1533-1536***

Long after the fall of Münster in 1536, and indeed even until 1540, the famous Obbe Philips continued to lead the Dutch Anabaptists: his Obbenists. Then, however, he became convinced that Anabaptism was fraudulent. Withdrawing from it at that time, around 1560 he published his *Confession* -- alias his *Recollections of the years 1533-1536*. That is an account of what had helped to open his eyes to all of those deceptions.

Obbe's frank and honest *Confession* is of very great importance in exposing neo-Anabaptism (such as Pseudo-Pentecostalism and other heresies) today. Consequently, we now present important excerpts therefrom.

Wrote Obbe:<sup>300</sup> "The first church of Christ and the Apostles, was destroyed and ruined in early times by Antichrist.... All who with us are called 'Evangelical' know that the whole of the papacy is a Sodom, a Babylon and Egypt, and an abomination of desolation -- the work or service of Antichrist.... Its ordinances...and teachings are false....

"Fieriness became apparent in some [Anabaptists] who could no longer contain themselves.... They presented themselves as teachers and envoys of God, professing to have been compelled in their hearts by God to baptize, preach and teach.... Among these were Doctor Balthasar Hübmaier..., John Hut, John Denck, Louis Hätzer, and Thomas Münzer....

"Among these, Melchior Hofmann stood out.... This Melchior was a very fiery and zealous man, a very smooth-tongued speaker who...wrote heatedly against Luther and Zwingli concerning baptism and other articles.... I know of no one who has so much calumniated and damned in his writings, as this Melchior -- whereby also we all taught many blasphemies.... All who did not say yes and amen -- were 'devilish and satanic spirits'; 'godless heretics'; and people 'damned to eternity'....

"Great dissension and insurrection daily broke out among the burghers.... Baptism [of adults only] came rapidly into vogue -- among many plain and simple souls. At the same time, Melchior had written from prison that baptism should be suspended for two years....

"There arose a baker of Haarlem named John Matthys, who had an elderly wife whom he deserted.... He took with him a brewer's daughter, who was a very pretty young slip of a girl.... He enticed her away from her parents with sacred and beautiful words -- and told how God had shown great things to him, and that she would be his wife.... He professed to have been greatly driven by the Spirit; and how God had revealed great things to him...; and that he was the other witness 'Enoch'....

"When the friends or brethren heard of this, they...attached themselves to John Matthys and became obedient. John Matthys as 'Enoch'...sent out 'true apostles' in pairs.... Some, such as Gerard Boekbinder and John [Beukels] of Leyden, departed for Münster.... They also comforted us and said...no Christian blood would be shed on earth, but in a short time God would rid the earth of all shedders of blood.... Thus did we on that day almost all permit ourselves to be [re]baptized.

"The following day...they summoned us...and, with the laying on of hands, laid upon us the office of preaching.... We could feel the laying on of hands and...many loose words which had neither strength nor lasting effect -- as afterward we amply discovered....

"After this, some others arose who were made teachers by the previous ones mentioned.... Such strange instruction was heard among them! One corrupted marriage. The second taught nothing but parables. The third would pardon no one nor recognize him as brother who fell into

apostasy after baptism.... Others stood firmly by visions, dreams and prophecies....

"I am still miserable of heart today, that I...was so shamefully and miserably deceived that I did not stop forthwith but permitted myself to bring poor souls to this -- that I through the importuning of the brethren, commissioned to the office: Dietrich Philips in Amsterdam, David Joris in Delft, and Menno Simons in Groningen.... It is this which is utter grief to my heart, and which I will lament before my God as long as I live....

"I shall be silent about all the false commissions, prophecies, visions, dreams, revelations and unspeakable spiritual pride which immediately from the first hour stole in among the brethren.... As soon as anyone was 'baptized' he was at once a 'pious Christian' -- and slandered all people and admitted no one on earth to be good but himself and his fellow brethren.

"Was that not a great and terrible pride? And who can express the great wrangling and dissension among the congregation -- of debating and arguing about...the thousand-year Kingdom of Christ on earth; about the incarnation, baptism, belief, Supper, the promised David, second marriage, free will....

"A reasonable, impartial Christian may truly say that it is no Christian congregation but a desolate abomination -- that it can be no temple of God but a cave of murderers full of hate, envy, jealousy, spiritual pride, pseudo-piety, hypocrisy, contempt, defamation. They could suffer neither the love nor benefit of another who was not of their belief."

## **227. The not-so-peaceful Anabaptist Menno Simons**

About 1534, the priest Menno Simons had renounced Romanism. Around 1536, he was 'rebaptized' and '(re-)ordained' by the above-mentioned Obbe Philips (then himself still an Anabaptist).<sup>301</sup>

After Obbe withdrew from his own Obbenites around 1540, his brother Dirck and the Unitarian Anabaptist Adam Pastor and Menno Simons reorganized the Dutch Obbenites under the new name of Mennonites.<sup>302</sup> Indeed, Menno promptly branded<sup>303</sup> Obbe as "a Demas" (Second Timothy 4:10) -- but never denied that Obbe was the one who had ordained Menno!

Menno wrote three important books. The first bore the title *Christian Baptism*. The second was called *Foundation of Christian Doctrine*. The third purported to describe *True Christian Faith*. Together with Dirck Philips, Menno ordained Adam Pastor in 1542. Pastor taught that Christ did not exist before the incarnation. However, only after 1547 did the Mennonites excommunicate and 'shun' him.

As the Baptist Estep has admitted: "Menno was never quite able to shake off the memory of that unpleasant experience. Like himself, Pastor had been a priest.... In other respects, he was apparently a true Anabaptist.... Rationality led him to doubt the deity of Christ....

"Menno felt that the threat to the faith was so grave that he wrote a small book to counteract Pastor's influence, *Confession of the Triune God* [1547].... Menno's own view of the incarnation,



however, became a source of controversy.... Menno's position differed from the historic view, in denying that Christ received His human body from Mary."<sup>304</sup>

Simons not only forbade oaths, but also lacked love. Not only did he perfect the practice of 'shunning' and often wield the ban. He also untruthfully denounced Paedobaptism as: "nothing other than a ceremony of the Antichrist; a public blasphemy; a sin of sorcery; a graven image; yes, an abominable idolatry!"<sup>305</sup>

To Menno, infant baptism was "a human invention of which not one jot or tittle is found in God's Word." He condemned it as "a sin of sorcery; a graven image; a falsification of the ordinance of Christ; a work of superstition and idolatry; a public abomination; and a sacrament of the churches of the antichrist -- just as absurd as the baptism of church bells in the Papacy."<sup>306</sup>

Thus spake not the Lord God, but thus spake Menno Simons. Let it not be forgotten that this Menno is the very man British Baptist Erroll Hulse has recently called<sup>307</sup> "probably the most successful of the early Baptists."

To Menno, Christians should regard the paedobaptistic sacrament as "the baptism of the antichrist." Therefore "we must resist infant baptism not only with our mouth, but also unto blood and death." For "we must be baptized on our own faith." Infants cannot believe or share in regeneration, "because reason[!] teaches they do not have ears to hear God's Word."

Thus Menno<sup>308</sup> -- the 'apostle of reason.' However, as Luther rightly pointed out, in our fallen world -- 'reason' is a whore.

As a false-prophet, in 1536 Menno also -- just like many dispensationalists today -- mispredicted the second coming of Christ as then being "imminent." So too did the other Anabaptists.<sup>309</sup>

Today, more than four-and-a-half centuries later, the second coming of Christ has still not yet occurred. Thus, even the uneminent Menno of the Mennonites stands 'imminently' exposed as a false-prophet indeed. Deuteronomy 13:1-11 & 18:10-22.

## **228. The Antitrinitarian Anabaptist Servetus (or Miguel Serveto)**

Miguel Serveto (alias Michael Servetus) was probably quite the most dangerous of all the Anabaptists. Harvard's Professor Williams, very sympathetic to the Anabaptists, has described himself<sup>310</sup> as having "spiritual connections with Calvin's principal foe Michael Servetus.... Servetus [w]as a Spaniard brought up in contact with Moriscos and Marranos."

The Moriscos were Ex-Moors or converts to Romanism from Mohammedanism, and the Marranos [alias 'Pigs'] were Ex-Jews or rather Sephardic Judaists who had submitted to Christian

baptism with reluctance and resistance. However, such Islamic Moors and Spanish Jews then surreptitiously continued practising their cordial Unitarianism -- even after their own purely nominal baptism by the Church in Spain.

Indeed, often before and sometimes even after their baptism -- many of them usually swore a secret oath to try to destroy the Church's Trinitarianism from within. And it was with such Moriscos and Marranos that Servetus the Spaniard had been raised.

Understandably, after Servetus published his books *On the Errors of the Trinity* (1531) and *Concerning the Trinity* (1532) -- the whole of Christian Europe was deeply shocked. Then, in his 1553 *Restitution of Christianity*, Servetus also vilified infant baptism in the Name of the Triune God. No wonder that Calvin in 1556 denounced him as "that vilest of men" -- and "an Anabaptist and the worst of heretics."<sup>311</sup>

"Servetus," explains the sympathetic Williams,<sup>312</sup> "repudiated as a philosophical sophistication -- the claim of the 'Trinitarians' that the mundane [or 'economic'] generation of the Logos-Son had been preceded by an eternal [or 'ontological'] generation of the Logos-Son.... For Servetus, the Holy Spirit was a power -- and not a Person -- of the Godhead....

"The Prologue of John was seen to be a parallel to the Prologue of Genesis, and the identification of the Word with Light had now made it possible for Servetus to think of the Word itself (*cf.* Dietrich Philips)...before the mundane incarnation as also a kind of 'celestial flesh'.... For Servetus, as of 1553, Christ was also the eternal idea of man in the mind of God....

"His basic proposition was...that there were not three intradeical Persons.... As for the continuous but invisible outpouring of the Spirit of God, Servetus was aware of it everywhere as the mundification of the divine *substantia* in all creatures which could therefore be considered full of divinity. Hence, all things, from the heavenly bodies to the smallest flowers, could be looked upon as gods....

"According to Servetus, God's Spirit is present in a special way at baptismal regeneration or deification -- to clarify the mind of the convert." Thus Servetus coupled his repudiation of the Ontological Trinity and his confession of a purely economic 'trinity' -- to his repudiation of infant baptism and his advocacy of a baptismally-regenerationistic or rather a baptismally-deificationistic adult Anabaptism.

More importantly, Servetus failed to see that the denial of personality to the ruling Spirit and the spoken Word within <sup>̂</sup>*Elōh̄ym* at Genesis 1:2-3, implies an equally impersonal <sup>̂</sup>*Elōh̄ym* at Genesis 1:1. Yet such a denial is untenable in terms of Genesis 1:26. For the latter text proves the personality of God *vis-a-vis* mankind -- just as much as it proves the individual personalities of God's "We" (the ruling Spirit and the spoken Word of Genesis 1:2-3) *vis-a-vis* One Another also within <sup>̂</sup>*Elōh̄ym* Himself. Hence, an unexegetical view of Genesis 1:1-26 -- is the very root of Servetus's unitarian heresy (as it is of also every other possible heresy).

As the great church historian Rev. Professor Dr. J.H. Kurtz has indicated<sup>313</sup> regarding the viewpoint of Servetus, to that heretic "Son and Spirit are only different *dispositiones Dei* [or dispositions of God]. The Father alone is *tota substantia et unus Deus* [the whole substance and

one God]. And as the 'trinity' makes its appearance in connection with the redemption of the world, it will disappear again when that redemption has been completed.

Yet the polemic of Servetus extended beyond the doctrine of the Trinity to an attack upon the church doctrine of original sin and the repudiation of infant baptism.... He denounced views opposed to his own as 'doctrines of devils' -- among other reproachful terms applying to the church doctrine of the Trinity the name of *triceps Cerberus*, the three-headed dog of hell."

## **229. The influence of Servetus among Anabaptists internationally**

The influence of the rabid Antitrinitarian Servetus soon spread to Italy -- and then, also with that of the Unitarian Socinus, to Hungary and Poland. Soon Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, was a centre of Anabaptism.<sup>314</sup> There, the Calvinist Georg Weigel stated that the Antitrinitarian Anabaptists "tell their dreams and visions...[and] introduce plurality of wives, community of goods, contempt of the magistrate, of the courts, and of every rank."

As the Calvinist Rev. Professor Dr. H. Bouwman has shown: "In Bohemia, Italy and Poland -- many still remained Anabaptists." There, "they intermixed especially with the Antitrinitarians..., absorbing themselves into the Socinians."<sup>315</sup> Interestingly, even the American Baptist Rev. Professor Dr. H.C. Vedder has admitted<sup>316</sup> that "we find definite proofs of immersion only among the Anabaptists...in Poland" -- namely, among the Antitrinitarians.<sup>317</sup>

These serious heresies were then indeed general among Anabaptists. As the eminent church historian Rev. Professor Dr. Kurtz has explained:<sup>318</sup> "It was agreed...to summon an Anabaptist Council to meet at Vienna in September 1550.... About sixty deputies...laid down the following doctrinal propositions as binding upon all their congregations: 'Christ is not God but man...; there are neither angels nor devil...; there is no other hell than the grave in which the elect sleep...till they shall be awaked at the last day...; the souls of the ungodly as well as their bodies, like those of the beasts, perish in death.'"

The Anabaptist Servetus spread his Antitrinitarianism to Italy, and his fellow heretic Faustus Socinus then exported Unitarianism from Italy to Poland and thence to Holland and even to England. Walter Klaassen's *Anabaptism: Neither Catholic nor Protestant* and I.B. Horst's *The Radical Brethren: Anabaptism and the English Reformation to 1558*, substantiate these facts.<sup>319</sup>

"The Anabaptists," claims the Baptist Estep, "made the New Testament alone normative for the Christian life." Even the 'moderate' Anabaptist Pilgram Marbeck (alias Marpeck) held to "an absolute distinction between the Old Testament and the New."<sup>320</sup>

Too, the Neo-Anabaptist Harold Bender states<sup>321</sup> the case quite rightly in the *Mennonite Quarterly Review*. "Anabaptism was not fully conformant to Reformation Protestantism.... It refused to place the Old Testament on a parity with the New Testament..., relegating therefore the Old Testament to the position of a preparatory instrument.... Baptism is not the counterpart of circumcision therefore."

However, the Bible teaches the very opposite. Romans 4:10f & 6:1f; Galatians 3:6-29; Colossians 2:11-13.

### **230. Candid assessment of the Anabaptists' faith and practice**

The famous Swiss-American German Reformed church historian Rev. Professor Dr. Philip Schaff has explained<sup>322</sup> that "the early history of the Anabaptists exhibits...violent revolutions, separatism, mysticism, millenarianism, spiritualism, contempt of history, ascetic rigour, fanaticism, communism, and some novel speculations concerning the body of Christ as being directly created by God and different from the flesh and blood of other men....

"They rebaptized those baptized in infancy.... They themselves denied the validity of infant baptism...and regarded voluntary baptism in 'years of discretion' as the only true baptism."

To Schaff, the Anabaptist Thomas Münzer was the "evangelist of the social revolution." He anticipated the later Marxists and Leninists (who praised him). Thus, as a 'revolutionary communist' he signed his pamphlets: "Münzer with the hammer" [and the sickle] -- and "Let not the saint's sword grow cold from blood!"

Sympathetic even to the Antitrinitarian Servetus,<sup>323</sup> Harvard's Professor Dr. G.H. Williams has admitted<sup>324</sup> that among the Anabaptists in general "the imminent advent...was discussed and calculated with enthusiasm. Group confession led to disclosures that alarmed spouses.... Glossolalia broke out. There was lewdness and unchastity, and the extraordinary declaration of a deranged woman that she was predestined to give birth to the Antichrist."

According to the American Baptist Rev. Professor Dr. McGlothlin,<sup>325</sup> it was not till 1527 that the first Anabaptist 'Articles of Confession' were drawn up -- inculcating, however, the teachings of communism. This was done by the ex-priest Michael Sattler -- at Schleithem, on the border of Germany and Switzerland. The full title of that document is *The Brotherly Union of a Number of Children of God Concerning Seven Articles*.

Those *Seven Articles* of Schleithem were the ecumenical 'basis of agreement' defining the Brotherly Union of German and Swiss Anabaptists. They consisted of: (1) the total rejection of infant baptism; (2) the rigid affirmation of the mandatory ban; (3) a heretical view of the Lord's supper; (4) an unbiblical doctrine of ministry; (5) a statement on the need to separate from political 'abominations'; (6) rejection of the state's sword; and (7) repudiation of the oath.<sup>326</sup>

The great church historian Philip Schaff has noted<sup>327</sup> that "the earliest Anabaptist articles" in these "Swiss statements of 1527...bear solely on practical questions. Two of the teaching inculcate communism, and that the Lord's supper be celebrated as often as the brethren come together."

For a refutation of this communism of the Anabaptists, see Francis Nigel Lee's *Biblical Private Property Versus Socialistic Common Property*<sup>328</sup> and also his recent monograph *The Anabaptists and their Stepchildren*.<sup>329</sup> For a refutation of their overly-frequentative use of the Lord's supper, see Francis Nigel Lee's *Quarterly Communion at Biblical Seasons Annually*.<sup>330</sup>

### **231. Further assessment of Anabaptism (by its admirers)**

The *Articles of Association* of the Moravian Anabaptists forbade the Lord's supper to persons holding private property.<sup>331</sup> Also those of the Dutch Mennonites upheld many heterodox beliefs. Thus the various editions of the 1580 *Confession of Waterland*<sup>332</sup> still deny the guilt of hereditary sin (art. 4); teach that God predestinated all men for salvation (art. 7); reject war, secular office-holding, and oaths (arts. 18 & 37 & 38); and repudiate infant baptism as 'unscriptural' (art. 31).

Significantly, the Mennonites in the Netherlands later called themselves *Doopsgezinden* alias Baptist-minded. This occurred even before the yet later establishment of the Dutch Baptist congregations.

Now while all of the Anabaptists attacked infant baptism, most of them 'rebaptized' adults only by pouring. The first clear case of submersion among the Anabaptists -- thus the Baptist M'Glothlin<sup>333</sup> -- occurred when the altogether naked Ulimann got himself submersed in the Rhine. Only in the seventeenth century did the first English-speaking (Re-)Baptists baptize and/or rebaptize by submersion alone. Fortunately, they then did so only by way of non-naked submersions.

As even Wheaton College's Rev. Professor Dr. Donald M. Lake has honestly insisted<sup>334</sup> in his article on *Baptism*: "Only with the English Baptists about 1633 did the issue of immersion arise among the Particular Baptists. Prior to this, even the Baptists practiced affusion or sprinkling."

Most of the Anabaptists were intolerant and violent, although some of the later ones were pacifistic. Some Anabaptists killed all who refused rebaptism. Most affirmed soul-sleep and denied the existence of hell and of the devil. Many were communists, polygamists and/or advocates of 'group marriage' alias 'free love' (*sic*). The majority seem to have been a miscellaneous assortment of Antitrinitarians -- namely Binitarians, Pantheists, Tritheists and/or Unitarians *etc.* The Anabaptist Servetus denounced the Holy Trinity as a 'dog with three heads' -- and already by 1534 Anabaptism had been exported even to England.<sup>335</sup>

All of the Anabaptists, to a man, rejected infant baptism. Practising community of property and community of wives, the violent Anabaptists were the forerunners of the Red Revolutions of 1848 and 1917 and thereafter -- even till today. Communists of the world -- unworking men of all nations -- ignite!

### **232. Character of the baptistic views of the Anabaptists**

Appreciating that most Anabaptists did not immerse under water, we need not dwell on the maverick plunging of the Anabaptist Ulimann in the Rhine -- nor on the single submersionisms of the Unitarian Anabaptists in Poland. Accordingly, we here confine our attention only to the widespread Anabaptist denial of sealing during baptism -- and especially their individualistic denial of household baptism (and thus that of covenantal infants).

The Anabaptists did not heed the Biblical statements about the sealing (or confirmatory) effect of baptism -- especially in respect of covenant children (Romans 4:11 *cf.* Colossians 2:11f). Nor did they understand that believers' children, even before their birth, are already to be regarded as being among the faithful.<sup>336</sup>

Thus the Anabaptists denied the possibility of regeneration and faith within unborn babies, and also in newly-born children.<sup>337</sup> Consequently, they also denied that any newly-born children should receive baptism as the sign of regeneration and faith.

Holy Scripture, however, teaches that only those sinners who have been regenerated can enter into the Kingdom of God. See John 3:3-8. This clearly means that all unregenerates, even if still very tiny, are lost. Yet the Anabaptists held that babies are: neither lost; nor sinners; nor regeneratable. Denying the covenant of election, they maintained that all babies are 'innocent' (just as were Adam and Eve before the fall).<sup>338</sup>

The Anabaptists correctly saw -- that faith is not acquired by baptism. Neither is faith obtained for the very first time only at that sacrament's administration.<sup>339</sup>

However, that believers' babies should be seen as obviously residing already among the faithful even before their birth -- never dawned upon the Anabaptists. These heretics accordingly denied the possibility of regeneration and faith inside believers' unborn infants themselves -- and also inside just-born babies and other very young children.<sup>340</sup>

Indeed, following Pelagius, the Anabaptists quite wrongly held that all children -- even those of pagan parents -- were devoid of guilt.<sup>341</sup> Sinless infants (said the Anabaptists) need neither repentance; nor faith in Christ; nor baptism. Indeed, they concluded that even the infants of believers can have no faith at all -- at least while still infants. Scripture, however, teaches quite the opposite -- Psalm 22:9f; Matthew 18:6; Luke 1:44 & 18:15f; Second Timothy 1:5 & 3:15f.

### **233. Bucer, Oecolampadius and the 1532 First Basle Confession**

In 1530, the Reformed *Tetrapolitan Confession* appeared. This was drawn up by Calvin's mentor Martin Bucer, and others. It rightly states<sup>342</sup> -- even in respect of infants -- that without faith it is impossible to please God [Hebrews 11:6].

Declares the *Tetrapolitana*: "Baptism is a sacrament of the covenant which God makes with those who belong to Him. There, He promises to protect them and their descendants and to regard them as His people.... It should be imparted even to the children.... Every promise applies just as much to us, as to those of old; 'I will be the God of you, and of your seed!'" Genesis 17:7-14.

Bucer also wrote to the Anabaptist Margaret Blaures in 1531 about the well-known Anabaptist Pilgram Marbeck. Asked Bucer:<sup>343</sup> "What is the view of your Anabaptist of whom you write to me -- but that of the ancient Cyprian, who wanted to rebaptize all those who had been baptized by heretics?"

Also Rev. Professor Dr. Johann Heuszgen or Hausschein (alias Oecolampadius) -- Zwingli's friend in Basle -- firmly believed that regeneration often precedes infant baptism. In his *Instruction Against Rebaptism*, he urged Christians not to trust in baptism itself. For not the earthly water but only the Spirit of Christ washes away sins and brings about regeneration. Yet baptism is necessary, so that people can regard us as belonging to the number of the Christians. Infants too need forgiveness of sin, and regeneration. For they follow the sinful Adam.<sup>344</sup>

"If that were not so," explained Oecolampadius, "it would be incorrect to baptize them. For then, it would be a lying sign."

For baptism indicates the forgiveness precisely of sin, through faith in the cleansing blood of Jesus. The fact is, however, that God "provides" the "Holy Spirit" to at least such of His elect who die in their infancy before receiving baptism. At the same time, He also provides that those who do not die before their baptism in infancy, but who live till early childhood and beyond, then have "**further grace poured over**" them. See Oecolampadius's 1527 *Answer to Balthazar Hubmaier's "Little Book Against...Infant Baptism."*<sup>345</sup>

Above, it should be noted that Oecolampadius advised "to baptize" even the babies of believers in their infancy -- and then to expect them to have further grace "poured over" them. Very clearly, these words indicate his conviction that also the babies of believers should be baptized -- and indeed not by submersion, but precisely by having the water "poured over" them (alias by way of sprinkling).

It was probably Oecolampadius who wrote the 1532 *First Basle Confession*.<sup>346</sup> That was subsequently revised in 1534 by his Zurich successor, Rev. Professor Dr. Oswald Myconius. Significantly, it ends with a final section under the heading: *Against the Errors of the Anabaptists*.

There, the *First Basle Confession* proclaims: "We openly declare that we not only do not accept but that we reject those strange erroneous teachings as abominable and as blasphemous. For these weird swarms (*Rottengeister*) also say -- among other damned and evil opinions -- that one should not baptize children. We, however, do get them baptized -- according to the custom of the Apostles and of the Primitive Church, and also because baptism has come in the place of circumcision."

### **234. The "unashamed" wickedness" of the Anabaptist Pfistenmeyer**

With this, one should compare the 1531 work *Unashamed Wickedness* (about Pfistermeyer and his followers) -- written by Zwingli's successor. Wrote Henry Bullinger of these Swiss Anabaptists:

"They be wholly given over to such foul and detestable sensuality.... They do interpret it to be the commandment of the Heavenly Father, persuading women and honest matrons that it is impossible for them to be partakers of the Kingdom of Heaven -- unless they do abominably

prostitute and make common their own bodies to all men."

According to Bullinger, these Anabaptists further taught that "we ought to suffer all kinds of infamy or reproach for Christ's sake. Besides that, the publicans and harlots [held the Anabaptists] shall be preferred to the 'righteous' in the Kingdom of heaven.... [Furthermore, they also taught that] Christ was but a prophet -- saying that ungodly persons...and the devils also should enjoy the heavenly bliss."<sup>347</sup>

The *Second Basle Confession* alias the *First Helvetic [or Swiss] Confession* of 1536, was drawn up by the same Bullinger --in association with Myconius, Megander, Leo Judae, Bucer and Capito. Martin Bullinger was Zwingli's successor in Zurich. There, Myconius succeeded Oecolampadius as Professor of Theology. Megander was recommended by Zwingli for a Zurich Professorship. Leo Judae was Zwingli's co-worker in Zurich. And Bucer and Capito were Reformed theologians from Strassburg.<sup>348</sup>

### **235. The 1536 Second Basle or First Helvetic Confession on baptism**

Now this *First Helvetic Confession* is directed largely against the Anabaptists. It insists<sup>349</sup> that Christ "has two different unmixed natures in one individual person.... He took our flesh upon Himself (yet without sin)...from the virgin Mary."

It further declares<sup>350</sup> that the "sacraments...are not merely empty signs -- but consist of signs and the things signified. For in baptism, the water is the sign. The signified thing itself, however, is regeneration and adoption in the family of God."

The *First Helvetica* continues: "We baptize our children with this holy washing" -- literally, 'we tinge our infants' (in the original Latin). "It would be unfair if we were to rob those born from us [who are God's people] -- of the fellowship of God's people" [namely the fellowship of the parents of such infants]. For "our children are predestined through the divine Word -- and they are those whose pious election is to be presumed."

In the last sentence, the official Latin text reads: *infantos nostros...tingimus...de eorum electione pie est praesumendum*." The official German translation here runs: *taufen wir unsre Kinder...von denen man vermuthen soll, sie seien von Gott erwählt*." To prove this 'presumed election' of the infant children of believers -- the *Confession* itself then immediately goes on to cite: "Titus 3; Acts 10; Genesis 17; First Corinthians 7; and Luke 18."

Note here that the word 'presume' is used. The *First Helvetica* thus teaches not the false and hypercalvinistic heresy of irrebuttable and asserted regeneration, but the glorious 'Calvinistic' (and indeed also Pre-Calvinistic) doctrine of the rebuttable but nevertheless (pre-)supposed regeneration of covenant infants.

Later apostasy after infant baptism (and also after adult baptism) could certainly rebut this prebaptismal presumption. Where such apostasy then occurs and remains, it proves the previous presumption to have been incorrect. Yet, until such post-baptismal apostasy might occur --



prebaptismal regeneration is indeed to be presumed -- as a necessary prerequisite for the right administration of baptism.

The *Helvetica* then concludes with a warning against "all those who hamper the holy congregation and fellowship of the Church, and who introduce ungodly doctrines.... These are signs which in our time are displayed mostly by the Anabaptists....

"They should be suppressed, so that they do not poison nor harm nor pollute the flock of God with their false doctrines.... The Magistrate should punish and eradicate all blasphemy."<sup>351</sup>

### **236. Peter Martyr on the 'presumed regeneration' of holy babies before baptism**

Perhaps as early as 1540, the Italian ex-monk and ex-prior Pietro Martire Vermigli alias Peter Martyr (1500-62) was soundly converted. He then became a leading Reformer. Indeed, he also became a Protestant Professor of Theology -- first, with Bucer, in Strassburg; then, through Cranmer, at Oxford; and finally, through Bucer, in Zurich. Thus, the Italian Protestant Peter Martyr laboured in England -- as too did the Scottish Reformer John Knox -- even in the days of the Anglican Archbishop Thomas Cranmer.<sup>352</sup>

From Oxford, Peter Martyr wrote in a letter to Henry Bullinger in 1552 that infants of believers are regenerated before baptism (*regeneratus ante baptismum*).<sup>353</sup> Indeed, in his *Common Places* (or *Loci Communi*), Martyr stated:<sup>354</sup>

"Those are truly saved, to whom the divine election extends -- [even if or] although baptism does not intervene. Just so, I hope well concerning infants of this kind.... I see nothing to the contrary.... It is right to hope well, concerning the salvation of such infants."

Further:<sup>355</sup> "It cannot be denied but that they which be of full age if they believe, are justified even before they be baptized.... Neither would we baptize infants, but that we suppose that they already pertain unto the Church and unto Christ....

"The 'holiness' (First Corinthians 7:14) is that they belong unto the Church of God.... The young children of the faithful may have the Spirit and grace of Christ. For this cause, the Apostle seemeth to call them 'holy.' Wherefore, unto the Romans it is said: 'But, and if so be the root be holy, the branches also are holy: and if the first fruits be holy, the lump also shall be holy [Romans 11:16]....

"If you demand how the children of Christians belong unto the Church or unto Christ, we will answer: no other wise, than the children of the Hebrews, being of the posterity of Abraham, were said to be contained in the covenant of God.... Our little ones enjoy the benefit of them which were sprung forth from [out] of the stock of that patriarch [Abraham]. So verily, the salvation of our children is altogether of the mere election and mercy of God, which oftentimes goeth together with natural propagation. Weigh with thyself, that even they be elected by God which be also born of the saints."

Martyr went on: "We judge the **children** of the saints, to be **saints**.... We exclude them not from the Church, but embrace them as Members thereof.... We hope well of the children of the faithful.... And **for this cause, we baptize them**.... They therefore which be so born of Christians, are called holy -- because they are judged to belong unto **grace** and election, seeing nothing persuadeth otherwise.

"Now, then, the Church doth seal these things unto them in baptism.... The children of the Hebrews which died **before** the eighth day, might be saved [Genesis 17:10f cf. Second Samuel 12:18f].... They belonged unto Christ.... It is sufficient for the salvation of infants, if they be endued with the Holy Ghost."

### **237. Peter Martyr on the prebaptismal regeneration of covenant children (continued)**

Peter Martyr continued:<sup>356</sup> "By election and predestination, they belong unto the treasure of God; are endued with the Spirit of God which is the root of faith, hope, charity and of all virtues which He afterward sheweth and declareth in the children of God.... Such young children may be called 'faithful'.... And that that age may be adorned with the Holy Ghost, John [Luke 1:15] and Jeremy[ah 1:5] may witness, who were inspired with the Spirit of God even from their mother's womb.... Everyone is saved by his **own** faith, **not** by that of others." Thus, every justified infant is saved by his or her own faith in Christ --not by that of his or her parent(s).

So God has im-pressed faith into covenant infants. "Touching them which be of ripe age, we require a faith ex-pressed --and in act. But in the young children of Christians which are offered to be baptized, we saw that the same is begun.... I mean in their beginning and root, because they have the Holy Ghost -- from Whom both faith as well as all other virtues flow.... Therefore, **young children** who truly belong to the **election** of God -- **before** they can be **baptized**, are **instructed** by the Spirit of the Lord [if not also by holy people]. **Otherwise**, as we alleged before, they could not be saved -- if they died before circumcision or baptism."

Martyr even stated:<sup>357</sup> "The holiness of children consists of their belonging to the Church of Christ and their possessing the Holy Spirit and the grace of Christ.... Election often coincides with natural reproduction, so that those born from saints are at the same time the elect of God.... These little children, because they belong to God's inheritance by election and predestination, for their preservation, have poured over them the Holy Spirit -- Who is the Root of faith and hope and charity.... They can thus be called '**believers**'....

"Everyone, says the prophet, is saved through his own faith [in Christ]. Consequently, the **little children** too have their **own faith** -- not a faith which is actively expressed, but an 'embryonic faith' as regards its beginning and its root.... Indeed in the little children of Christians which are brought to be **baptized**, we say faith **has** begun -- from the root, I say, in its principle."

Covenant children, continued Peter Martyr, possess faith even before their infant baptism. "For they have the Holy Spirit -- from Whom faith proceeds, just like all other virtues.... Thus, children belong to the Church not just after but even **before** baptism. Yet they could not be Members of the Church, unless they had **already** been filled by the Spirit of Christ [cf. Romans

8:9,15f]. For this reason, those children who truly belong to the Church, have been furnished with the Spirit of the Lord **before baptism.**"

Indeed, "those belonging already to the Church -- are visibly implanted into it" by infant baptism. For "outward signs do not join us to Christ, but are given when we are already joined to Him.... We judge the children of saints to be saints -- so long as by reason of age they do not declare themselves to be strangers from Christ.... For this reason, we baptize them."<sup>358</sup>

### **238. The baptismal views of George Wishart and Benedict Aretius**

The famous Scot George Wishart, the forerunner of the greater Scottish Reformer and erstwhile Romish priest John Knox, lived for some time in Europe. There, Wishart became deeply impressed by the *First Helvetic Confession*. Returning to Britain in 1542, he taught at Cambridge. In 1544, he went back to his native Scotland, introducing there the standards and faith of the Swiss Reformation.<sup>359</sup>

Wishart had a profound influence on John Knox, especially through the former's translation of the *Confession of Faith of the Churches of Switzerland*.<sup>360</sup> Once again, this document broadcast its doctrine anent the "presumed election"<sup>361</sup> of covenant children -- and, this time, also into Scotland.

Rev. Dr. Benedict Aretius, the 1542f well-known Calvinistic botanist, was first Professor of Philosophy at Marburg in Germany and later Professor of Theology at Berne in Switzerland. Referring to First Peter 3:18-21 and First Corinthians 10:1-4, Aretius stated:<sup>362</sup> "The great flood is a figure of baptism, inasmuch as **Noah and his family were saved**" there. Aretius also stated that "according to the Apostle, the Israelites were baptized in the cloud and in the sea. For the cloud overshadowed and the sea **sprinkled all of them** equally."

Those **infants** who "have faithful parents, **have the Holy Spirit**.... We ought to cherish the good expectation that God's election is hidden" there. For such children "are holy; belong to the Church; and **have the Holy Spirit**" -- Who is the Administrator of the true baptism."<sup>263</sup>

### **239. The road to Trent and Rome's classic doctrine of baptismal regenerationism**

So God, in His blessed providence, had sent the Protestant Reformation. Now, all enlightened Christians could rejoice in the famous Lutheran Schwarzerd's later defence of the 1530 *Augsburg Confession*. Schwarzerd alias 'Melanchthon' --meaning 'Black Earth' -- was Professor of Greek and New Testament at the University of Wittenberg. He was also Martin Luther's "right-hand man."

Wrote this Rev. Professor Dr. Melanchthon:<sup>364</sup> "Here we condemn the whole rabble of Scholastic doctors, who teach that the sacraments confer grace upon him who interposes no obstacle, *ex opere operato*, without any good motion on the part of the recipient.... This impious and superstitious opinion is taught with great authority in the whole kingdom of the Pope."

The Vatican then replied to this at her historic Romish *Council of Trent*, in 1545*f*. For Trent firmly repudiated both Lutheran and Calvinistic Protestantism. Indeed, it implicitly further rebuffed some of the counter-reformational claims even of Cardinal Cajetan himself.

Writes the modern Romanist theologian Professor Dr. Murphy:<sup>365</sup> "The theologian Cajetan...expressed the opinion that in the case of infants dying in their mother's womb, the prayers of the parents could secure the justification and salvation of the children. He thought that a blessing of the child in the womb -- given in the Name of the Blessed Trinity -- would secure this.

"This opinion was regarded with great disapproval by the theologians of the Council of Trent [Session V, Decree 1].... Though it was not actually condemned, Pope Pius V ordered that it should be expunged from the works of Cajetan.... Even St. Bonaventure seems to have nodded. For he says<sup>280</sup> that an infant would be deprived of grace if unbaptized -- unless God made it the object of some special privilege."

Thus did Rome reply to the Reformation (and to reformist Romanists like Cajetan) at the Council of Trent in 1545*f*. There, she re-iterated that the sacrament of baptism comes not to the justified but to "the damned" -- and "totally expunges" the guilt of all pre-baptismal sin. She declared that baptism itself translates "a man from the state of death into spiritual life -- "by its own working" (or *ex opere operato*). Indeed, she insisted that baptism itself impresses a certain "spiritual and indelible" character into the soul.<sup>366</sup>

#### **240. The baptismal tyranny of Trent**

The implications of this for baptism now unfolded -- especially among Protestants in general and Calvinists in particular. Rome had just reacted against the Reformation -- and with renewed rigour. Down through the previous centuries, the Mediaeval Church had entrenched baptismal regenerationism. That of scholastics like Thomas Aquinas, had been especially influential. All of this was now frozen into an inflexible dogmatism -- at the tyrannical Council of Trent from 1545 onward.

At its famous *Fifth Session*, on June 17th 1646 Rome decided on some important decrees at Trent. She said:<sup>367</sup> "Whosoever affirms that new-born infants are not to be baptized even though they are the children of baptized parents, or says that they are indeed baptized for the remission of sins but derive no original sin (from Adam) which required to be expiated by the laver of regeneration in order to obtain eternal life, whence it follows that in them the form of baptism for the remission of sins is not true but false -- let him be *anathema*!"

Further: "Infants who of themselves could not have committed sin, are truly baptized for the remission of sins -- in order that what they have contracted by generation, may be cleansed by regeneration.... Whosoever denies that the guilt of original sin by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ which is conferred in baptism, or even asserts that that which has the true and proper nature of sin is not wholly taken away, but is only rased or not imputed -- let him be *anathema*!"

At Trent's *Sixth Session*, on her 'Decrees as to Justification,' she decreed<sup>368</sup> that "the instrumental cause [thereof] is the sacrament of **baptism**, which is the sacrament of faith without

which justification is never obtained.... This faith, before the sacrament of baptism, catechumens...seek from the Church....

"They immediately hear the words of Christ, 'If ye would enter into life -- keep the commandments!' Therefore, [in baptism they are] receiving true and Christian righteousness as a first robe (instead of that one which Adam by his disobedience lost both for himself and for us) -- a fair and immaculate robe presented to them by Jesus Christ which, on being born again, they are enjoined to preserve [so] that they may produce it before the tribunal of our Lord Jesus Christ and have eternal life."

In Trent's most important *Seventh Session*, Rome decreed:<sup>369</sup> "Whosoever shall say that the Sacraments of the New Law were not all instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, and are either more or fewer than seven -- viz. Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, [Holy] Orders, and Matrimony (or even that any one of these seven is not truly and properly a Sacrament) -- let him be *anathema*!"

"Whosoever shall say that these seven Sacraments are so equal among themselves, that no one is in any respect of greater dignity than another -- let him be *anathema*! Whosoever shall say that the Sacraments of the New Law are not necessary to salvation...and that without them or a wish for them men by faith alone obtain the grace of justification, though all are not necessary for each -- let him be *anathema*!"

"Whosoever shall say that these Sacraments were instituted for the sake of nourishing faith alone -- let him be *anathema*!"<sup>370</sup> "Whosoever shall say that by these Sacraments of the New Law grace is not conferred *ex opere operato* (from the work performed), but that faith alone in the Divine promise suffices to obtain grace -- let him be *anathema*!"<sup>371</sup>

"Whosoever shall say that in the Roman Church (which is the mother and mistress of all Churches) there is not the true doctrine of the Sacrament of Baptism -- let him be *anathema*!"<sup>372</sup> "Whosoever shall say that baptism is free, *i.e.*, not necessary to salvation -- let him be *anathema*!"<sup>373</sup> "Whosoever shall say that infants, in respect they have no act (capacity) of believing, are not to be counted among believers after they have received baptism..., let him be *anathema*!"<sup>374</sup>

The only other really significant baptismal statement in the *Decrees of Trent* themselves, is that made at its November 25th 1551 *Fourteenth Session* 'On the Most Holy Sacraments of Penance and Extreme Unction.' There, the following cryptic but very telling statement is made:<sup>375</sup> "Penance is, for those who have fallen after baptism, necessary unto salvation; as baptism itself is, for those who have not as yet been regenerated."

Trent was a reaction against Protestantism (both Lutheran and Calvinist). Thereafter, Lutheranism and Calvinism were both quick to react to Trent. Later, when we deal with Calvin himself, we will present especially his reaction to Trent (as published from 1547 onward).

## **241. John Laski on the presumed regeneration of covenantal infants**

Meantime, the 1499-1560 Polish nobleman and great Reformed theologian Jan Laski (alias John á Lasco) had been a Romish priest and even the Dean of Gniezno. However -- after his conversion to Protestantism in 1538, almost fifteen years after meeting Zwingli -- he went to Germany. There, he had a massive influence on the Palatine theologians (and hence on the germination of their later *Heidelberg Catechism*).

Laski also established the Presbyterian Church in Friesland (south of Denmark near the Dutch/German border).<sup>376</sup> Then, through Cranmer's influence, he migrated to England -- from 1550 onward.

There, he pastored an exiled congregation. While in Britain, he -- together with Martin Micron of Flanders -- worked out a famous liturgy with very important baptismal implications and with widespread influence (also in Holland from 1580 onward).

Perhaps already from 1542 onward, Laski began to write especially on the subjects of infant faith and infant baptism. In his work *Concerning the Sacraments of Christ's Church*, he wrote<sup>377</sup> that "we are **not first** sanctified to God and incorporated into Christ only when baptized; but we were already sanctified from the foundation of the world, in the sacrifice of the promised Seed [Genesis 3:15 cf. Revelation 13:8]. Already in Adam's loins, we were...incorporated into Christ, according to the determinate will and gracious mercy of God." Indeed, "in baptism, this is what is sealed: being born again, or to **have** put on Christ (*renasci seu Christum induisse*)!"<sup>378</sup>

## **242. Laski on the 'unconvertedness' of regenerated covenant infants**

Laski is probably the first Reformed theologian who clearly distinguished between regeneration and conversion -- especially with reference to children.<sup>379</sup> "Conversion or the renewal of our [conscious] mind is the...fruit of our regeneration.

"For, after growing up, we come to know of this renewal -- and that we have been born again.... We are not reconciled with God through baptism -- but by the power of God's mercy in Christ, through the promise by which even original sin was forgiven before we were baptized."<sup>380</sup>

Laski continued:<sup>381</sup> "We are incorporated through baptism into the Church of God, but not because we did not belong to her before baptism.... Baptism is the visible testimony of our incorporation.... We have already, from the origin of the world, long **belonged** to the Church in an invisible manner."

Laski did not hesitate to include their children among the believers.<sup>382</sup> This is clear from his *London Baptismal Formula*. Therein he asked the parents of the tiny baptizees whether the former believe that "these children brought here by you, **are** also the seed of our Church?"<sup>383</sup>

Laski also asked the parents:<sup>384</sup> "Do you also acknowledge...that our children...are now included with us in the divine covenant [for Christ's sake], and at His command certainly ought to be sealed with the seal [baptism] of accepting Christ's righteousness?"

After the parents would assent, their children would be baptized. Then Laski would pray:<sup>385</sup> "Almighty and merciful God and Father! We thank and praise You that You have forgiven us and our children all our sins through the blood of Your dear Son; and that through Your Holy Spirit You have received us as members of Your only-begotten Son and thus as Your children; and that You seal and ratify this for us by holy baptism."

Similarly, in Laski's *London Catechism*, we read that "everything children lack in themselves -- they possess in Christ our Lord Who has loaded their weakness upon Himself...and Whose faith and obedience are imputed to them by grace, and through Whose Spirit they are also sanctified as a temple of God.... Should we then, with clear consciences, permit our children to be baptized as believers?"

"Without doubt! For inasmuch as they are in God's judgment regarded as believers by Christ Who has fulfilled all things for them..., one should also baptize them as believers. Thus it is testified to them, by the ministry of the churches, that they are members of the Lord Christ."<sup>386</sup>

Laski's formative influence not only on the English in and around London but also on Martin Micron of Flanders as well as on Peter Datheen -- and thus on the latter's *Dutch Reformed Baptismal Formula* -- was tremendous.<sup>387</sup> So too, in a subsequent century, Laski's writings were highly instrumental in helping to bring about the conversion of that great but then-as-yet-still-unconverted modernist, Rev. [later Professor Dr.] Abraham Kuyper.<sup>388</sup>

### **243. The Hungarian Reformed Confession on the baptism of covenantal infants**

In 1557, Hungarian Reformed theologians drew up their *Czenger Confession of Faith* alias the *Hungarian Reformed Confession*. It was published in 1570, in the Hungarian city of Debrecin. The latter is the site of the oldest Reformed University in the world, often nicknamed 'the Calvinist Vatican.'

This magnificent confession commenced with a heavy emphasis on the Triune God -- and, by implication, also upon the importance of trinitarian baptism. It was directed against the many Unitarians then troubling Eastern Europe. Here it cites, *inter alia*: Exodus 3; Isaiah 6 & 63; Ezekiel 2; First Corinthians 2 & 10 & 12; Colossians 1 & 2; Hebrews 3; First John 5; *etc.*

Later, it launched a section headed 'On Child Baptism' especially against the Anabaptists. There, it taught that except the offspring of those who are 'dogs' and 'pigs' -- all "children brought to the Church are to be baptized in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Giving a good reason, it then declared: "For the sacrament of circumcision was instituted also for children. Romans 5:6; First Corinthians 15; Colossians 2." Indeed, a powerful rhetorical

question (obviously expecting a negative answer) was asked in "Acts 10. 'May anyone refuse the water -- so that those who have received the Spirit should not be baptized?'" No!

The *Hungarian Confession* then drew the obvious conclusion. "So Peter commanded that they [*viz.* Cornelius and his entire household] be baptized in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ."<sup>389</sup> Acts 10:2,22,24,27,47-48.

This (rebuttably) presupposed the existence already, of saving faith -- even in tiny baptizees. For the sacrament of baptism is a real "seal of the covenant." Thus, "we also reject the error of those who teach...it is only a mere sign."

#### **244. Bullinger on the presumed regeneration of covenantal infants before baptism**

Henry Bullinger was Zwingli's successor in Zurich. Bullinger held that covenant infants possess imputed faith, and also the renewal of regeneration. For he deemed that they too had received the impartation of the Holy Spirit.<sup>390</sup>

In 1536, together with others, Bullinger drew up the *First Helvetic Confession*. As previously seen,<sup>391</sup> this "presumed" that covenant children are elect before their baptism.

In 1545-51, together with Calvin, Bullinger drew up the *Consensus Tigurinus*. This states believers partake of Christ before baptism. "**Faith is required of them before they come to the sacrament....** Those who are baptized in earliest infancy, are regenerated by God" *etc.*<sup>392</sup>

In Bullinger's 1560 book *Against the Anabaptists*<sup>393</sup> --compare too his 1561 work *The Origin, Developments, Sects, Increase, Aims and Common Doctrines of the Anabaptists*<sup>394</sup> -- he appealed to Matthew 18:10's statement that "these 'little ones' believe in Me." Indeed, Bullinger himself added that such "children are rightly called 'believers' in the Gospels." He also applied Acts 10:47 to such children, saying: "Can anybody refuse the water and not baptize them, seeing they **have** received the Holy Spirit just as much as we have?"

Indeed, in his 1566 *Second Helvetic Confession*,<sup>395</sup> Bullinger states that baptism is a sign of the "adoption" of covenant children -- prior to their own infant baptism. By "adoption," Bullinger meant legal inclusion in the very family of God's own children.

#### **245. Infant faith and baptism in Bullinger's Homebook and his Decades**

In Bullinger's 1568 *Homebook*, he declares<sup>396</sup> that "God's elect saints do not first receive the grace and gift of God only when they receive the sign. For they **partake** of the thing signified **before** they partake of the sign." Thus, speaking of covenant children, he asked: "Do we not baptize them when immature...., because we believe that God **has** cleansed them with the blood of Jesus Christ -- and received them by pure grace and mercy, and made them heirs of His everlasting Kingdom?"



Bullinger then concludes: "Because we baptize children for these reasons, we sufficiently advertise that they do not first receive that grace through baptism. Instead, children thus receive the seal of that which they possessed even previously. They therefore already belonged to Christ's fellowship [before baptism]; but by baptism, they are visibly incorporated, just like adults."

In his famous *Decades*, Bullinger affirmed<sup>397</sup> that "the young babes and infants of the faithful are in the number or reckoning of God's people -- and partakers of the promise touching the purification through Christ. It followeth of necessity that they too are to be baptized....

"Whosoever He receiveth and acknowledgeth for His -- these, no man without an horrible offence may exclude from the number of the faithful. And God promiseth that He will not only be the God of them that confess Him, but of [their] infants also. He promiseth to them His grace and remission of sins. Who, therefore -- gainsaying the Lord of all things -- will yet deny that [such] infants belong to God, [and] are His?"

Further, Bullinger also commented on Jesus' statement in Matthew 18:1-6. There, Jesus said: "It is not the will of My Father Who is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish!" Bullinger insisted that Jesus was here speaking of early-dying covenant infants. They would not perish, explained Bullinger --because they are "**holy branches of a holy root**." Romans 11:16.

"We baptize immature children...because God...promised us and our seed, to be our God.... From pure grace and mercy, God has purified them through the blood of Jesus Christ.... They are not first given grace through baptism. But thereby they have sealed to them -- that which they already previously possess."<sup>398</sup> Indeed, the saints are justified and sanctified before they are sealed and confirmed by the sacraments.<sup>399</sup>

Further, in his *Summa of the Christian Religion*, Bullinger added<sup>400</sup> that although the infants of believers had previously been received in the covenant as children of God, in baptism they actually receive His "Name." Consequently, they are thereafter not only the children of God which they were even before their infant baptism. But subsequently, they are even 'name-d' children of God (the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit) -- just like believing adults.

#### **246. Martin Micron presumed prebaptismal regeneration in covenant infants**

It was Bullinger's student Martin Micron,<sup>401</sup> the 1523-59 Flemish Reformer, who most contributed toward the later Dutch Reformed *Formula for the Administration of Baptism to Children*. Micron did so together with the Reformer Laski -- and *via* the 1562 Peter Datheen.

Micron went to London in 1549, where he ministered in Austin Friars to Flemish Reformed Christians then exiled in Britain. There, he wrote his *Christian Order of the Flemish Congregations of Christians*, and his *Short Catechism*. Indeed, he also edited a shortened version of his associate Laski's own *Church Order*.<sup>402</sup>

Micron's own *Baptismal Formula* first sets out the meaning of the ordinance, and then gives a moving *Prayer Before the Baptism*. This latter was a 'calvinization' derived from Luther's

*Noah's Ark Prayer* -- which that German Reformer had previously protestantized from an earlier mediaeval version in a traditional baptismal rite.<sup>403</sup>

Micron's own *Baptismal Formula* was used in the German Reformed Palatine, from the late 1550's onward.<sup>404</sup> In that *Formula*, Micron asked the baptizees' parents if they believe their babies had **already** been sanctified. For Micron rightly regarded covenant children themselves as already justified and purified possessors of faith in Christ, even before their own infant baptisms.<sup>405</sup>

At the beginning of the baptismal ceremony,<sup>406</sup> Micron the baptizer would say to the infant baptizees' parents: "Baptism was instituted by the Lord Christ as a seal of God's covenant with us. Our children may not be kept from it. For they participate in that same covenant.... The promises of God in Christ Jesus are given to us and our children [Acts 2:28f].... Declare to me whether you acknowledge that these children you are presenting to me [to be baptized], **are** the seed of this Church of ours, by the power of God's covenant!"<sup>407</sup>

Micron's *Short Catechism*, published in London in 1561 (with a *Foreword* by Laski himself),<sup>408</sup> was even more specific. There, Micron stated<sup>409</sup> that "nobody should withhold from baptism those who **possess** the Holy Ghost (Acts 10:2,24,47f)." For such "little children are the most special members of Christ's Church. They **belong to Him**, and therefore are not required to profess their faith before being baptized -- as adults are."

The reason for this, maintained Micron, is "because the Church has much more certain testimony of their salvation from the Word of God, than one may get from the profession of adults.... For Christ's sake, they are blessed -- that is, regarded as holy, justified, pure and faithful -- no less than adult believers are."<sup>410</sup>

Indeed, on Mark 16:16 -- 'he who believes and is baptized, shall be saved' -- Micron further remarked<sup>411</sup> that it is "by Christ's imputation that immature children of the Church are regenerated as believers. For the righteousness of faith is in them (Romans 4:11)."

So then, with both Laski and Bullinger's student Micron resident in England, the Reformed Faith began to be propagated there too. Indeed, this was even before Bullinger's associate John Calvin had won the hearts of Regent Somerset and his ward (young King Edward VI).

## **247. The Early British Anabaptists from 1534 onward**

The Protestant Reformation represents a gigantic step forward in the Church's understanding of the Biblical doctrine of baby belief before baptism. Maintained Warfield:<sup>412</sup>

"That all children of believers, dying in infancy, are included in the covenant of God and enter at once into glory -- was the characteristic feature of the Reformed doctrine.... With this great advance, the minds and hearts of most men were satisfied..., happy in teaching from positive Scripture the certain salvation of all the children of Christian parents departing from their arms -- to the arms of Jesus."

There is no trace of Antipaedobaptism in Britain before the year 1534. Indeed, in 1533 Henry Frith -- who was martyred for his Protestantism later that same year -- wrote in his *Declaration of Baptism* about German and Dutch Anabaptists that "there is an opinion risen among certain which affirm that children may not be baptized until they come unto a perfect age; and that, because they have no faith. But verily, methinketh that they [the Anabaptists] are far from the meekness of Christ and His Spirit -- Which, when children were brought unto Him, received them lovingly.... I trust the English (unto whom I write this) have no such opinions."<sup>413</sup>

Indeed, in 1538 Henry VIII and his Parliament declared:<sup>414</sup> "1. That the sacrament of baptism was instituted and ordained in the New Testament by our Saviour.... 2. That it is offered unto all men, as well infants.... 3. That the promise of grace and everlasting life...adjoined to the sacrament of baptism, pertaineth...also to infants.... 4. Infants must needs be christened.... They be born in original sin.... 6. That they [Englishmen] ought to refute and take all the Anabaptists' and Pelagians' opinion in this behalf, for detestable heresies and utterly to be condemned."

However, the Anabaptists did infect even Britain at an early date -- between the reigns of Henry VIII and Elizabeth I. According to the Baptist Estep,<sup>415</sup> "it seems...to be fully substantiated that continental Anabaptists were numerous and not without influence in England from about 1534.... In 1538 the English authorities learned that the Anabaptists had published and distributed a book on the incarnation [denying it]. For this effrontery, they were asked to leave the country."

#### **248. Laski and Bullinger combat the first English Anabaptists**

Even the Unitarian Anabaptists in Poland soon spread their influence among their brethren in Holland, and thence also into England. There, as G.H. Williams has stated, they were vigorously opposed by the Polish Calvinists in London's Stranger's Church at Austin Friars, "where Laski served as the first superintendent. The king recorded in his journal that the Stranger's Church was organized 'for the avoyding of al sectes of Anabaptistes and such like.'"<sup>416</sup>

Also the Swiss Calvinist Bullinger had massive influence in England against the Anabaptists. See his *Wholesome Antidote* (London 1548), his *Most Sure and Strong Defence of the Baptism of Children* (Worcester 1551), and his *Most Necessary and Fruitful Dialogue Between the Seditious Libertine or Rebel Anabaptist and the True Obedient Christian* (1551).

The followers of "Henry Hart, a leader of a congregation of dissenters in Kent..., were referred to as Anabaptists. They were also accused of Pelagian heresy and libertinism. From Hart's own tract, printed in 1548 and reprinted in 1549, it is clear that...his teachings regarding free will, the new birth and discipleship were true to Anabaptist insights." Thus the American Baptist, Professor Estep.<sup>417</sup>

On English soil in the middle of the sixteenth century, we also find the evangelical Anglican Rt. Rev. Dr. Bishop John Hooper. Before he died in 1555, he maintained:<sup>418</sup> "It is ill done to condemn the infants of the Christians that die without baptism, of whose salvation by the Scripture we be assured. *Ero Deus tuus, et seminis tuis post te*" -- 'I shall be a God to you, and to your seed after you!' Genesis 17:7.

"Anabaptists," Hooper complained to Bullinger in 1549, "give me much trouble with their opinions respecting the incarnation of the Lord." For Kent and Sussex were then hotbeds of Anabaptism. Indeed, between 1549 and 1550 there were no less than three editions of Hooper's *Lesson of the Incarnation of Christ*, against the Anabaptist heresy of the 'celestial flesh' of Jesus even from before His earthly conception onward.<sup>419</sup>

In 1553, Thomas Cole published his *Godly and Fruitful Sermon Against the Anabaptists*. Soon thereafter, also Bishop John Jewel rightly called them "a large and inauspicious crop of Ariens, Anabaptists and other pests."<sup>420</sup> No wonder, then, that the most important creedal formulation of the Church of England -- the *Forty-two Articles* of 1553 -- included no less than seventeen articles against the Anabaptists.<sup>421</sup>

#### **249. The anti-Anabaptist Edwardine Articles of 1553**

Indeed, the above-mentioned (1553) 'Edwardine Articles' of the Church of England were drawn up largely against the Anabaptists. The Presbyterian Rev. Professor Dr. W.A. Curtis of the University of Aberdeen states in his book *History of Creeds and Confessions of Faith* that<sup>422</sup> "the framers of the *Forty-Two Articles* had not only the earlier English attempts in mind, but also...the medley of eccentric or heretical opinions roughly classed as Anabaptist.... Artt. I-IV, VI-VIII, XIV, XV, XVIII, XIX, XXVII, XXVIII, XXIX, XXXII, XXXIII, XXXVI-XLII explicitly or implicitly condemn the varied opinions classed as Anabaptist."

Those opinions "impugned the Creeds, Catholic Christology, faith in the Trinity, rights of individual property, the need of Scriptures, infant baptism, avoidance of excommunicated persons, reverence for traditions and ceremonies, obedience to magistrates, military service, [and the] taking of oaths." Positively, those Anabaptist opinions also "affirmed Christian perfection[ism], inefficacy of services and sacraments conducted by unworthy Ministers, [and] ultimate universal salvation."

This opinion of Rev. Professor Curtis is quite in agreement with the well-known Anglican scholar Rev. Professor Dr. E.J. Bicknell. He declared<sup>423</sup> "that the *Forty-two Articles*...are a double-edged weapon, designed to smite two opposite enemies. On the one hand they attack mediaeval teaching and abuses.... They oppose even more keenly the teaching of the Anabaptists.... The name Anabaptists was given to them from their denial of infant baptism and their custom of re-baptizing converts. There is hardly any error of doctrine or morality that was not proclaimed by some of them. They were a very real danger to all order in Church and State alike....

"The Anabaptists are only mentioned by name twice, but...they had revived all the ancient heresies about the Holy Trinity and the Person of Christ.... Many of them were Pelagians.... Others claimed that, being regenerate, they were unable to commit sin.... Some depreciated all Scripture and placed themselves above even the Moral Law.... Some denied any need of ordination for Ministers, and claimed that the efficacy of all ministrations depended on the personal holiness of the Minister.... Infant baptism was denied.... All church discipline was repudiated.... Many held strange views about the descent into hell, the nature of the resurrection -- and the

future life, the ultimate salvation of all men, and millenarianism..... The authority of the State was impugned, and communism demanded."

## **250. Philpot the paedobaptistic Protestant martyr's Anticatabaptism**

The Catholic Sir P. Philpot of Hampshire had become a father. His son John was baptized in the Church of Rome in 1516. She burned John at the stake in 1555.

Rev. Dr. John Philpot (Bart.) was a great Protestant. Educated at Oxford and qualifying in the Law, he then went to the Continent of Europe. There, he was almost arrested by the Inquisition -- for expounding 'heretical' (*viz.* 'Pro-testant') ideas in a controversy with a Franciscan.

Philpot greatly admired Calvin, and translated some of his homilies. On his return to England, he became Archdeacon of Winchester under the Calvinistic King Edward VI. However, when Philpot later attacked transubstantiation, Edward's successor the Romish Queen 'Bloody Mary' had him arrested and imprisoned. Ultimately, and very appropriately, he was kept in the Lollard's Tower.

Eleven "Examinations" followed. His Fifth Examination was before the Romish Bishops of London and Coventry and others. There, Bishop Bonner asked Philpot:<sup>424</sup> "Pray tell me into what Faith were you baptised?" Philpot replied: "I acknowledge one holy Catholic and Apostolic Church, whereof I am a member. I praise God, and am of that Catholic Faith of Christ whereinto I was baptised."

The Bishop of Coventry then soon asked him: "Why will you not admit the Church of Rome to be the Catholic Church?" Philpot replied: "Because it follows not the Primitive Catholic Church, nor agrees with it -- no more than an apple is a nut."

Saverson then remarked: "I wonder [if] you will stand so stedfast in your error -- to your own destruction!" Philpot retorted: "Where is there one of you all, that ever hath been able to answer any of the godly learned Ministers of Germany who have disclosed your counterfeit religion? Which of you all, is able to answer Calvin's *Institutes*?"

Saverson savagely sniped back. Concerning Calvin, he sarcastically said: "A godly minister indeed -- of cutpurses and runagate traitors!"

In Philpot's Sixth Examination, his interrogator Lord Rich exploded. "All heretics do boast of the Spirit of God, and every one would have a church by himself -- as Joan of Kent and the Anabaptists. I myself had Joan of Kent a week in my house, after the writ was out for her to be burned.... But she went wilfully unto the fire; was burned -- and so do you now!"

To Lord Rich, Philpot responded: "As for Joan of Kent, she was a vain woman (I knew her well) and an heretic indeed.... She stood against one of the manifest articles of our faith -- contrary to the Scriptures." For Anabaptist Joan had stood against infant baptism.

In Philpot's Seventh Examination, Bishop Bonner slandered him. Philpot then calmly replied: "Your libel, my lord, contains two special points. The first pretends that I am of your diocese.... The second is that I -- being baptised in the Catholic Church and in the Catholic Faith -- am gone from them. This is not so! For I am of that Catholic Faith and Church which I was baptised into.... I am of the same Catholic Faith, and of the same Catholic Church which is of Christ -- the pillar and ground of the truth!"

Bishop Bonner bit back: "Your godfathers and godmothers were of another faith than you are now!" But Philpot protested: "I was not baptised either into my godfather's faith or my godmother's -- but into the Faith and into the Church of Christ!"

Asked Bishop Bonner: "How know you that?" Replied Philpot: "By the Word of God, which is the touchstone of faith and the limits of the Church."

### **251. Philpot's last stand: ever loyal to his infant baptism!**

Philpot's Eleventh Examination was before the Bishops of Durham and Chichester and others. Durham asked Philpot: "Will you be of the same Catholic Faith and Church with us, which you were baptised in and your godfathers promised for you and hold as we do -- and then you may be out of trouble?" Philpot replied: "I am of the same Catholic Faith and Catholic Church I was baptised into -- and in that I will live and die."

Chichester then insisted: "Are you of the same Faith your godfathers and godmothers were -- or not?" Philpot responded: "I cannot tell certainly what Faith they were of. But I am of the Faith I was baptised into -- which is the Faith of Christ. For I was not baptised into the Faith of my godfathers -- but in the Faith of Christ."

Philpot further wrote to the members of a Christian Congregation, exhorting them to refrain from papist idolatry. He insisted that "we can do no greater injury to the true Church of Christ -- than to seem to have forsaken her....

"Woe be unto him by whom any such offence cometh! Better it were for him to have a millstone tied about his neck, and to be cast into the bottom of the sea [*cf.* Matthew 18:1-6]! Such are traitors to the truth -- like unto Judas who with a kiss betrayed Christ. Our God is a jealous God, and cannot be content that we should be of any other than of that Unspotted Church of which He is the only Head -- and wherein He hath planted us, by baptism."

Philpot also wrote a letter of encouragement to the discouraged Christian John Careless. There, he urged him not to be too 'care-full' (or 'full of cares'). Instead, like his name, he should rather be 'care-less.'

Persuaded Philpot: "The Spirit Which is in you, is mightier than all the adversary's power.... Tempt, he may -- and lie wait at your heels, to give you a fall unawares. But overcome, he shall not.... For you are sealed up already with a lively faith, to be the child of God for ever....

"Whom God hath once sealed for His own -- him He never utterly forsakes.... Since God hath willed you, at your baptism in Christ, to be 'care-less' -- why do you make yourself 'care-full'? Cast all your care -- on Him!"

While in jail, Philpot further wrote to a fellow prisoner who had begun to doubt the lawfulness of infant baptism. Philpot cited from both Scripture and the Patristics. Then he concluded: "Antiquity is on our side.... The Anabaptists have nothing but lies, for them. And new imaginations -- which feign the baptism of children to be the pope's commandment!"

Rome was furious. Understandably, in 1555, the pope's puppet 'Bloody Mary' then burned the Pro-testant Philpot -- at the torture stake. But heaven above was richer. For thereby heaven had gained yet one more citizen.

## **252. The anti-Anabaptist 1563f *Thirty-nine Articles* of the Church of England**

"In the Church of England," writes the great Presbyterian Rev. Professor Dr. B.B. Warfield,<sup>426</sup> "the *Thirty-nine Articles* in their final form are thoroughly Protestant and Reformed. And many of the greatest English theologians...from the very earliest day of the Reformation have repudiated the 'cruel judgment' of the Church of Rome as to the fate of infants dying unbaptized."

Thus Rt. Rev. Bishop John Hooper, who was martyred under 'Bloody Mary' in 1555, condemned<sup>427</sup> "the ungodly opinion that attributeth the salvation of man unto the receiving of an external sacrament..., as though the Holy Spirit could not be carried by faith into the penitent and sorrowful conscience except it ride always in a chariot and external sacrament."

So too Rev. Dr. Richard Hooker -- in his famous 1593 *Ecclesiastical Polity*. He admitted the unavoidable failure of baptism in the case of Christian children, cannot lose them salvation.<sup>428</sup>

Now the *Thirty-nine Articles* of 1563 and 1571 are but the revision of the *Forty-two Articles* of 1553. As regards the former, Bicknell has shown<sup>429</sup> specifically that Article I (on "Faith in the Holy Trinity") was indeed "called forth by the teaching of the Anabaptists, who were reviving all the ancient heresies." Bicknell further insisted<sup>430</sup> that Article II (on the "Son of God which was made very man") had as its object "to oppose the revival of ancient heresies on the Person of Christ by Anabaptists."

Article IV ("Of the Resurrection of Christ") was worded, explained Bicknell,<sup>431</sup> "so as to assert...also the reality of our Lord's risen and ascended manhood -- in opposition to a form of Docetism revived by the Anabaptists, which regarded our Lord's humanity as absorbed into His divinity after the resurrection." Article V 'Of the Holy Ghost' -- Bicknell maintained<sup>432</sup> -- is "one of the new Articles added in 1563...due to the revival of ancient heresies by the Anabaptists."

Article VI ("Of the Sufficiency of the Holy Scriptures for Salvation") was directed against "certain among the Anabaptists [who] regarded all Scripture as unnecessary," explained Bicknell.<sup>433</sup> "An Article of 1553 describes them as those 'who affirm that Holy Scripture is given only to the weak and do boast themselves continually of the Spirit -- of Whom (they say) they have learnt such things as they teach, although the same be most evidently repugnant to the Holy Scripture.' In

other words, if men claim to be under the immediate guidance of the Holy Spirit and to have received a personal revelation -- does not this supersede Scripture? Such a view ignored the corporate and social nature of all truth."

Article VII ("Of the Old Testament") stated *inter alia* that "no Christian man whatsoever is free from the obedience of the Commandments which are called Moral." Bicknell has shown<sup>434</sup> that the Article was "directed against...errors...maintained by sections of Anabaptists."

Of those Anabaptists, "some rejected the Old Testament entirely, and claimed -- in virtue of their illumination by the Spirit --to be superior even to the Moral Law contained in it." Similarly, also Article VIII ("Of the Three Creeds"), explained Bicknell,<sup>435</sup> "was composed as a protest against Anabaptists who rejected all creeds" in general -- and in particular the Nicene, the Athanasian, and the Apostles' Creeds.

Article IX ("Of Original or Birth Sin") -- Bicknell maintained<sup>436</sup> -- was "directed against the Pelagian views of Anabaptists." The 1553 Article, after the words 'as the Pelagians do vainly talk' -- had the further words 'which also the Anabaptists do nowadays renew.' Observed Bicknell: "This sufficiently shows the object of the Article."

Article X ("Of free will") -- Bicknell elucidated<sup>437</sup> -- asserted "the need of grace against Pelagian Anabaptists." Article XV ("Of Christ alone without Sin") -- Bicknell has insisted<sup>438</sup> -- "was directed against certain Anabaptists who denied our Lord's sinlessness."

### **253. Continuation of the Anti-Anabaptist *Thirty-nine Articles***

Article XVI ("Of Sin after Baptism") -- thus Bicknell<sup>439</sup> --was "aimed at Anabaptist errors." The 1553 Article dealt with blasphemy against the Holy Ghost,<sup>440</sup> and dealt with what the Anglican scholars Maclear and Williams have rightly called<sup>441</sup> "erroneous views...reproduced in the sixteenth century by a section of the Anabaptists who appeared in great numbers in Essex and Kent." Indeed, they have drawn attention to "a letter from Bishop Hooper to Bullinger, June 25 1549, describing the appearance of the Anabaptists in England."<sup>442</sup>

Then there is Article XVIII ("Of obtaining eternal Salvation only by the name of Christ"). It too, Bicknell has shown,<sup>443</sup> "is aimed at Anabaptists" -- namely such as "rejected Christ as Saviour and treated any definite Christian belief as unimportant."

Article XIX ("Of the Church") -- thus Bicknell<sup>444</sup> --"would...exclude various Anabaptist sects." Indeed, the 1553 Article also stated that "all men are bound to keep the Moral Commandments of the Law."

This -- Maclear and Williams have insisted<sup>445</sup> -- "had reference to the teaching of a branch of the Anabaptists who 'by putting forth the plea of preternatural illumination made themselves superior to the Moral Law.' Indeed, they "circulated opinions respecting it -- most evidently repugnant to the Holy Scripture."



Article XXIII ("Of Ministering in the Congregation") -- thus Bicknell<sup>446</sup> -- showed that "the Anglicans wished to oppose Anabaptists who held...to ecclesiastical anarchy." Article XXV ("Of the Sacraments") -- Bicknell elucidated<sup>447</sup> -- had as "its object...to condemn as inadequate, teaching about the sacraments held by Anabaptists."

Similar was Article XXVI ("Of the Unworthiness of the Ministers which hinder not the Effect of the Sacrament"). That, stated Bicknell<sup>448</sup> -- would "condemn the idea of Anabaptists that the personal holiness of the minister was a necessary condition for any valid preaching of the Word or ministration of the Sacraments."

Article XXVII ("Of Baptism") insisted that "the Baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ." Bicknell has stated<sup>449</sup> that this was "aimed at (i) the inadequate view of Baptism taken by...the Anabaptists; (ii) the denial of Infant Baptism." Similarly, Article XXVIII ("Of the Lord's Supper") according to Bicknell<sup>450</sup> "excludes...Anabaptist views which made the Lord's Supper a mere love feast."

Article XXXVII ("Of the Civil Magistrates"), Bicknell has shown,<sup>451</sup> would "condemn Anabaptist attacks on the authority of the State." Also Article XXXIX ("Of a Christian man's oath"), explained Bicknell,<sup>452</sup> is against "the objection of the Anabaptists...to the use of oaths."

Article XXXVIII -- "Of Christian men's Goods, which are Not Common" -- merits more attention. It states that "the riches and goods of Christians are not common as touching the...title and possession of the same, as certain Anabaptists do falsely boast." According to Bicknell,<sup>453</sup> this Article was drawn up because "certain Anabaptists advocated communism."

Rev. Professor Dr. Philip Schaff has pointed out<sup>454</sup> that "in the *Forty-two Articles* of Edward VI, there are four additional Articles -- on the Resurrection of the Dead, the State of the Souls of the Departed, Millenarians, and the Eternal Damnation of the Wicked." These Articles, Schaff added,<sup>455</sup> are: "against the Anabaptist notion of the psychopannychia (XL)"; and "against the millenarians (XLI)," compare "the *Augsburg Confession* where the Anabaptists and others are condemned." All of these additional Articles, as Maclear and Williams have explained,<sup>456</sup> refer to the heresies of "the Anabaptist sect whose theories had previously been denounced."

#### **254. Thomas Becon on the salvation of those dying in infancy**

According to Warfield,<sup>457</sup> "many of the greatest English theologians, from the very earliest days of the Reformation -- even among those not most closely affiliated with Geneva -- have repudiated the 'scrupulous superstition' of the Church of Rome as to the fate of infants dying unbaptized...'and far different from the opinion of the Church of England.'" Thus the *Reformation of the Ecclesiastical Laws*, drawn up by a Commission with Cranmer at the head of it...(published by Parker in 1571)....

Already in the fifteen-sixties, with his treatise *The Demands of Holy Scripture*, the famous Rev. Thomas Becon -- Chaplain to Archbishop Cranmer and to Protector Somerset -- had raised

the question 'What if the infants die before they receive the sacrament of baptism?'" Becon then himself answered his own question, as follows:-

"God's promise of salvation unto them is not for default of the sacrament [de]minished, or made vain and of no effect. For the Spirit is not so bound to the water that He cannot work His office when the water wanteth.... In the chronicle of the apostles' Acts [10:44f], we read that while Peter preached the Holy Ghost came upon them that heard him. Yea, and that -- before they were baptized.

"By the reason whereof Peter brast out in these words, and said: 'Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?' True Christians, whether they be old or young, are not saved because outwardly they be washed with the sacramental water -- but because they be God's children by election through Christ."<sup>458</sup>

In his *Catechism* which he wrote for his own covenant children, Becon further declared:<sup>459</sup> "I will be thy God, and the God of thy seed' [Genesis 17:7]. Again, 'I will pour out My Spirit upon thy seed and My blessing upon thy buds' [Isaiah 44:3]....

"With the children of the faithful, God hath made a sure and an everlasting covenant.... Holy Scripture in every place attributeth our salvation to the free grace of God, and not either to our own works or to any outward sign or sacrament....

"Baptism is to Christians what circumcision was to the Jews -- not a thing that makes righteous but 'a seal of righteousness' [Romans 4:11] and a sign of God's favour toward us.... Therefore 'if any of the Christian infants, prevented by death, depart without baptism..., they are not damned but saved by the free grace of God.... They have faith, and be endued with the Spirit of God!'"

Condemning baptismal regeneration, Becon then added thereanent: "They therefore that teach and hold this doctrine -- are not only enemies to the salvation of the infants.... They also utterly obscure (yea and quench) the grace and election of God and the secret operation of the Holy Ghost, in the tender breast of the most tender infants -- and attribute to an external sign more than is right."

## **255. The English Anabaptists called the 'Family of Love'**

Also the [*circa* 1554-1600] Rev. Professor Dr. Richard Hooker took a similar position. He maintained:<sup>460</sup> "There may be in divers cases life, by virtue of 'inward baptism' -- even when outward [baptism] is not found.... Grace is not absolutely tied into sacraments."

Further: "There is a presumed desire and even purpose in Christian parents and the Church, to give these children baptism.... Their birth of Christian parents marks them, according to Scripture, as holy." First Corinthians 7:14.

They are made holy by the grace of God. "He Which...from heaven hath nominated and designed them unto holiness, by special privilege of their very birth" (and **not** because of their subsequent baptism). Thus even the Anglican Hooker.

Yet the heresies of the Neo-Marcionitic and Neo-Manichaeic Paulicians and even of the antitrinitarian Servetus himself were already afoot even in Britain! Indeed, prominent among the British Anabaptists was the so-called 'Family of Love' in England.

As Williams has explained:<sup>461</sup> "The English 'Familists' were communitarian pacifistic Anabaptists." They, "like the Paulicians and the Servetians, received believers' baptism at the age of thirty."

They were very well-described by John Rogers, in his 1579 book on *The Horrible Sect of Gross and Wicked Heretics naming themselves the 'Family of Love.'* There, explained Rogers, "marriage is made by the brethren.... These had never met before.... All men not of their congregation, or revolted from them, are as dead.... If they have anything to do touching their temporal things, they must do it...through one of their bishops."<sup>462</sup>

Rome rides again -- toward the sunset of the modern Moonies! California -- here I come! Weirdo's of the world -- unite!

The *Forty-two Articles*, however, effectively checked the further spread of English Anabaptism. Nevertheless, by 1587 the majority of the population of Norwich alone consisted of refugee Dutch Anabaptists.<sup>463</sup>

Yet they were stoutly opposed by Anglicans and Puritans alike. Compare the English Presbyterian Thomas Cartwright's 1589 book *The Anabaptists' Error Confuted*. Consequently, in 1593 some English 'Barrowists' fled to Holland -- where they soon became Anabaptists.<sup>464</sup>

## **256. Summary: baby belief from Nicea to the Reformation**

In this chapter, we have seen that the (325 A.D.) *Council of Nicea* and the *Arabic Canons* both mentioned baptism. Asterius the Sophist stated that the eighth day after birth was the best time to receive this seal. Gregory Nazianzen advocated such sealing during infancy; alleges the demons stole Biblical sprinkling for their own pagan initiations; and insisted that all repetitions of Christian baptism are wrong.

Cyril of Jerusalem regarded baptismal sprinkling as a prerequisite for a youth's first communion service. Zeno of Verona called baptism a second circumcision. And Basil the Great exhorted that all covenant infants be baptized.

Gregory of Nyssa, though regarding even unbaptized covenant babies as blessed, also saw Elijah's outpouring of the water on Mt. Carmel as a figure of Christian baptism. The *Apostolic Constitutions* taught similarly -- and added that "you must also baptize your infants and 'bring them

up in the nurture...of the Lord.'" Indeed, the *Pseudo-Clementina* even went so far as to state that no unbaptized person can enter into God's Kingdom.

Ambrose taught that both John the baptizer and Christ's Apostles sealed even infants. Chrysostom called baptism 'painless circumcision' -- for even "little children." The A.D. 397 and the 401 Synods of Carthage taught that even the Donatists baptized babies, just as the Universal Church did. Jerome called the neglect of infant baptism a grievous sin -- which even the Pelagians did not commit. And, even though Augustine toward the end of his life strongly advocated baptismal regenerationism, he sometimes also quite rightly presupposed faith within covenant babies even before their baptism.

Although Theodore of Cyrus and Cyril of Alexandria sometimes took the latter 'calvinistic' view -- the Early Middle Ages soon eclipsed it, in favour of absolute baptismal regenerationism. Thus, Justinian made infant baptism compulsory -- even though sprinkling was still maintained in the *Old Gotho-Gallican Collect*. But ritualistic submersionism increased in most of the churches. For soon the dominant theory was: the more water used, the more sins washed away!

Islam quickly all but annihilated the many varieties of Christianity -- from Persia to Morocco. Eastern Orthodoxy reached its zenith in the thought of the baptismal regenerationist John of Damascus. Thereafter too, the mediaeval church continued to deteriorate.

Ritualistically, the Slavic Churches opted for mandatory triple submersion. Plagued by ever-increasing baptismal regenerationism within, and by Neo-Semimanichaeian antipaedobaptist heresies without (like those of the Paulicians, the Cathari and the Petrobrusians) -- the Church Universal somehow muddled along into the Late Middle Ages.

Roman Catholic scholasticism reached its peak under Thomas Aquinas. A consistent baptismal regenerationist, he preferred submersion to sprinkling -- the more water, the merrier!

Yet movements for genuine reform, such as those of Waldo and Wycliffe and Huss, re-affirmed their commitment to the validity of all triune baptisms. That they did -- in spite of their own misgivings about the regenerationistic claims then being attributed to the rite.

After becoming an almost exclusively submersionistic establishment, Late-Mediaeval Roman Catholicism somewhat relented in favour of sprinkling. But the Church was soon to diverge into various different directions.

Some fell away into the apostasy of the Renaissance. Others lapsed into 'Mid-Bohemian' rebaptism, and later into Anabaptist revolutionism. Luther and Zwingli reformed a large part of Christ's Church -- at the Protestant Reformation. The Waldensians and the Bohemian Brethren finally became Calvinists. Rome herself reacted sacramentalistically -- by way of updating herself as the Counter-Reformation.

Romanism thus again denied the presence of pre-baptismal saving grace and faith in those baptized (whether as infants or as adults). Even today, it still 'transubstantiates' the sacrament of

baptism from being a Scriptural seal of an already-present faith. It changes baptism into a 'magical mandrake' claimed to create a love and a faith the previous existence of which it wrongly denies.

It took the Protestant Reformation in general and Calvinism in particular to correct this error. The Pre-Calvinian Swiss Reformers all did so -- by returning to the Biblical and Early-Patristic view of 'Baby Belief Before Baptism.'

Both initially and consistently, Luther re-affirmed his antirebaptistic commitment to triune baptism. While castigating Rome for imprisoning the Church in 'Babylonian captivity' -- he sought to get people to understand their baptism, and to live by the grace of God Who had sealed them there. Opposing both ancient Donatism and the Neo-Donatism of the Anabaptists, Luther solidly upheld the Word of God -- against both the reactionaries and the revolutionists.

Zwingli did the same. He was initially somewhat more sympathetic than was Luther toward the Anabaptist view of baptism. However, his own ongoing study -- and especially the increasing catabaptistic fanaticism of the Anabaptists -- finally led him to wash his hands of them altogether.

Indeed, Zwingli ultimately understood the sealing nature of baptism even better than did Luther. Naturally, all of the Protestant Reformers -- Lutheran, Zwinglian and Calvinist -- also very solidly repudiated the baptismal regenerationism re-asserted in 1545*f* by the Romish *Council of Trent*.

The Anabaptists themselves had richly deserved to be repudiated by the Reformers Luther and Zwingli. For they had not only opposed the Protestant Reformation. But, by themselves promoting revolution under colour of challenging Romanism, they had also greatly obscured and indirectly discredited the work of Luther and Zwingli in the eyes of the Roman Catholic establishment.

Their violent opposition to non-anabaptistic baptisms in general (including those administered by Protestants) -- and to infant baptism and organized denominations in particular -- had brought Europe into an extremely explosive state. Indeed, Karl Marx's communist colleague Friedrich Engels warmly commended the Anabaptists for this achievement.

Many of the Anabaptist leaders became not only sex-sodden socialists, but also dangerous apostates. As a direct result of their revolutions, some one hundred and fifty thousand persons perished in civil disobedience and seditious bloodshed. Many Anabaptists denied either the trinity and the incarnation of the Son of God (or both). Even the more pacifistic Dutch Mennonites, were riddled with heresy. As a group, the Anabaptists did incalculable harm -- in setting the European stage for the Anti-Christian French and Bolshevik Revolutions.

Some Anabaptists were enthusiastic polygamists. Many advocated community of goods -- and community of women. All of them downplayed the family, and thoroughly detested infant baptism. Yet they themselves rebaptized principally by pouring, and not by submersion. Indeed, also the later Baptists continued to prefer pouring, until deep into the seventeenth century. Then,

especially in their London and Philadelphia 'Confessions' -- these Baptists immersionistically reacted against the sprinkling of infants prescribed in the Presbyterian *Westminster Confession*.

The glorification of the Anabaptists by certain modern Baptists, is quite astonishing. Luther rightly recognized Anabaptism as the logical conclusion of rebaptistic Cyprianism and revolutionary Donatism. His views were enshrined in his *Augsburg Confession* and later perfected in the *Formula of Concord* -- both of which set out the errors of the Anabaptists.

Anabaptism was revolution, not reformation. Indeed, it was a catabaptist catastrophe universally opposed not just by Roman and Greek Catholicism -- but also by all the Protestant Reformers, without exception.

The Early Lutheranism of Luther and Melanchthon sometimes emphasized prebaptismal faith within covenant children, and has always insisted that baptized babies possess real faith. Especially the former position was progressively emphasized by Zwingli. The same was done by Bucer, Capito, Hedio, Oecolampadius, Myconius, the *First Basle Confession*, the *First (and Second) Helvetic Confessions*, Peter Martyr, Wishart, Aretius, Laski, the *Hungarian Reformed Confession*, Bullinger, Micron -- and Edward VI's England.

On the basis of Luther's foundation, and Zwingli's walls -- Calvin would next come and build the roof of the edifice of the Protestant Reformation. For -- as we shall see in our next chapter -- that genius of Geneva would soon elevate both prebaptismal faith and the Christian baptism of infants to their highest pinnacle yet.

## ENDNOTES

- 1) *Council of Nicea*, canon 2.    2) *Ib.* canon 9.
- 3) *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* (hereinafter referred to as *NPNF*), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1971, XIV, p. 24.
- 4) *Arabic Canons* (attributed to the Council of Nice), can. XXII (in *NPNF* XIV p. 47) & *Arabic Canons* XXX (in *NPNF* XIV p. 47).
- 5) See Wall's *op. cit.* I pp. 160-62, citing Optatus Milevitanus's *On the Donatist Schism* III (*prope finem*) and Augustine's *Against Cresconius* II:3 -- and D.F. Wright's *Optatus (fourth century)*, in ed. Douglas's *op. cit.* p. 731.
- 6) *African Code* (419 A.D.), Ancient Epitome of canons XLVII & XVIII (cited in *NPNF* XIV p. 464).
- 7) *African Code*, canon CX (cited in *NPNF* XIV pp. 496f); and the *Ancient Epitome* of canon XLVIII of the *African Code* (as cited in *NPNF* XIV p. 464).
- 8) Greg. Naz.: *Oration* 43:10f & 70f.    9) Wall's *op. cit.* I pp. 165-68.
- 10) So cited in Stander & Louw's *op. cit.* pp. 110-13.    11) *Op. cit.*, at n. 21.    12) *Orat.* 7:4f.    13) *Orat.* 8:4f.
- 14) *Orat.* 18:8f.    15) Greg. Naz.: *Concerning Holy Baptism*, *Oration* 40:11,17.
- 16) *Ib.*, *Oration* 40:28. Greek in Wall's *op. cit.* I p. 117.    17) Greg. Naz.: *On the Holy Lights*, *Oration* 39:1-3,17.
- 18) Greg. Naz.: *Discourse Against the Arians*, *Oration* 34:17.
- 19) Cyril of Jerusalem: *Catechetical Lectures* 3:4.12.16 etc.    20) Thus J. Jeremias: *Inf. Bap.* p. 94.
- 21) Zeno of Verona: *Tract on Baptism* I:13.    22) Basil: *Homily 13* and his *Against Eunomias* III:5.
- 23) Basil's *Exhortatory Oration on Baptism*, Benedictine ed., Paris, 1721, Tom. II, p. 113 (cited in Wall's *op. cit.* I p. 132).
- 24) Theodoret: *Church History* IV:19.    25) Socrates *Church History* IV:26
- 26) Greg. Nys.: *On the Untimely Death of Infants*, in Migne's *Patrologia Graeca et Latina* XLVI:161-92.
- 27) Greg. Nys.: *On the Baptism of Christ*, in Migne's *Patrologia Graeca et Latina* XLVI:592.
- 28) Amb.: *On Abraham* II:11:81,84.    29) Amb.: *On Elijah* 84-85.
- 30) Amb.: *Exposition of the Gospel of Luke* 1:37 (in Wall's *op. cit.* I p. 138).    31) See n. 28 above.
- 32) Aug.: *Against Julian* I:2 (in Wall I p. 138).    33) J. Chrysostom: *39th & 40th Homilies on Genesis*.
- 34) J. Chrys.: *21st Homily on Ephesians* (6:1-4).
- 35) J. Chrys.: *Homily to Neophytes* (cited in Aug: *Against Julian the Pelagian* I:6:22), and his *Homilies* 40 on Gen. 17, and *Hom.* 3:7 on II Cor.
- 36) J. Chrys.: *23rd Homily on the Acts of the Apostles* (9:3).    37) Theodoret of Cyrrihus: *Heretical Fables* V:18:4.
- 38) Isidore of Pelusium: *Epistles* III:195.    39) Chrysostom's *Homilies on Second Corinthians* I:6 (on II Cor. 1:4f).
- 40) J. Chrys.: *Homily on First Corinthians* 7:14.    41) 397 Third Synod of Carthage, can. 48.
- 42) 401 Sixth Synod of Carthage, can. 7.
- 43) Wall: *op. cit.* I p. 176. Inconsistently, the two leading Pelagians (Pelagius and Coelestinus) both accepted infant baptism. See Wall's *op. cit.* I p. 264.
- 44) 418 Sixteenth Synod of Carthage, can. 2.
- 45) Augustine: *The Literal Meaning of Genesis* X:23ff, as cited in Wall's *op. cit.*, ed. 1862, I p. 242. The 1982 Newman Press (N.Y.) edition of Aug. (*op. cit.* X:14:25) has: "Even an infant as long as he is alive should be baptized...."
- 46) Aug.: *Against Julian the Pelagian* III:5:1.
- 47) Cited in Augustine's *First Book to Boniface* 22, and *Second Book to Boniface* 25.
- 48) Wall: *op. cit.*, 1836 ed., I pp. 477f.    49) Jerome: *Epistles* 123 & 79.    50) Jer.: *Ep.* 108:1-3.
- 51) Jer.: *Ep.* 107:6.    52) Jer.: *Ep.* 108.    53) Jer.: *Ep.* 39.    54) Jer.: *Ep.* 66.    55) Jer.: *Ep.* 108:32.
- 56) Jer.: *Commentary on Matthew* 28:19.
- 57) Jerome: *Dialogue Against the Pelagians* III:17-19, and comp. his *Ep.* 107.6.
- 58) Jerome: *Books VII & XI* (in Migne: *op. cit.*).    59) Jer.: *Ep. to Jovinus* I:7:22.
- 60) Paulinus: *Questions for Jerome* (in Wall's *op. cit.*, 1836 ed., I pp. 343f).
- 61) Jer.: *Reply to Paulinus* in Jerome's *85th Epistle* (in Wall's *op. cit.*, 1836 ed., I pp. 343f).
- 62) Aug.: *Confessions* I:6:7b & 9:14 & 10:19.    63) *Ib.* IX:6:14.    64) Augustine *Epistles* 98 (23).
- 65) Wall: *op. cit.* I p. 144.
- 66) Augustine: *Sermons on New Testament Lessons* [XXXVI:11-13 (LXXXVI Ben.)] on Mt. 19:21.
- 67) Aug.: *Baptism* III:17:22.    68) Aug.: *Against Julian* 6:18 and *Original Sin* 32 & 38.    69) Aug.: *Ep.* 187:11:34.
- 70) In Aug.: *Lit. Meaning Gen.* X:23, Newman Press, N.Y., ed. 1982, II p. 127.

- 71) Aug.: *Questions on Leviticus* 84.
- 72) Augustine: *Against Cresconius* II:3 & *On the Donatist Schism* V:10 p. 89 (cited in Wall's *op. cit.* I pp. 100f).
- 73) Aug.: *The Lord's Sermon on the Mount* I:16:45. 74) *Op. cit.*, 1836 ed., I pp. 243f.
- 75) Aug.: *On Forgiveness of Sins and Infant Baptism* I:24:37 (= 412 A.D.). 76) 57:17. 77) IV:16:18f.
- 78) Aug.: *On Forgiveness* III:9:4f. 79) Aug.: *On Forgiveness* III:16:8f.
- 80) Pelagius: *Exposition on St Paul's Epistles* (as cited in Aug.: *On Forgiveness of Sins and Infant Baptism* III:16:8).
- 81) *Ib.* I:58:30. 82) *Ib.* II:41:25. 83) I:16:45. 84) III:21:12. 85) I:35:32.
- 86) See in Aug.: 89th *Epistle [to Hilary]*. 87) Cited in Aug.: *On Original Sin*, chs. 17f.
- 88) Aug.: 194th *Epistle* [to Sixtus Bishop of Rome]. 89) Aug.: *On Orig. Sin*, II:3:4ff & II:26:23.
- 90) Wall's *op. cit.*, I pp. 246. 91) See Aug.: *On the Gift of Perseverance*, ch. 12.
- 92) Aug.: *On the Merits of Sins*, III:12. 93) II:25:41. 94) Aug.: *On Forgiveness* III:21:12.
- 95) II:19:17 & II:36:31 & II:44:39. 96) *Concerning the Baptism of Tiny Children*. 97) *On Psalm 78*.
- 98) *Institutes of the Christian Religion* IV:19:16, citing Augustine's: *Old Testament Questions* Bk. III; his 80th *Homily on John 13*; and his *On Baptism Against the Donatists* Bk. V. See too in ch. IV??? at our nn. 494 & 539 & 541 & 594 below. \*\*\* ??? ??? ??? ???
- 99) For a good Calvinian refutation of these unbiblical baptismal views of Augustine, see at nn. 614-16 (in F.N. Lee's *Baptism Does Not Cleanse!*, M.Div. dissertation, Whitefield Theological Seminary, Lakeland Fla., 1990).
- 100) Aug.: *On the Soul and its Origin* I:9:8. 101) *Ib.* I:10:9f. 102) *Ib.* I:11:9. 103) *Ib.* I:34:19.
- 104) *Ib.* II:13:9f. 105) *Ib.* II:17:12. 106) Aug.: *Treatise on Rebuke and Grace* 20-23.
- 107) *Op. cit.* pp. 136ff & 164f. 108) *Apostolic Constitutions* VI:1:3 & VI:2:5 & VI:3:14f.
- 109) Pseudo-Dion.: *Ecclesiastical Hierarchy* 7:11.
- 110) *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* 7:8:1 & 11:26:7f & 11:27:2, and *Pseudo-Clementine Recognitions* 6:9. Rev. Prof. Dr. Joachim Jeremias observes (Origins} p. 28): "The passages concerned, occur in the *Homilies* as well as in the *Recognitions* -- and are therefore to be attributed to the earliest version of the *Pseudo-Clementines*, which came into existence about A.D. 220 - 230."
- 111) *Pseudo-Clementine Homilies* 13:4:4 & 13:21:2f & 15:1:2 cf. Phil. 4:3.
- 112) Most of these pseudepigraphical documents are discussed at the very end of Vol. I in Wall's *op. cit.*
- 113) J. Jeremias: *Inf. Bap.* p. 95 n. 2. 114) Wall's *op. cit.* pp. 104f & 382f.
- 115) Cyril of Alexandria: *Commentary on John VII*, in Migne's *Pat. Graec.* 74,79. 116) Leo Gt.: *Ep.* 37 (166).
- 117) Ayres's *op. cit.* pp. 379f; and Theodoret's *Opera* III p. 151, ed. Paris 1642 (in Wall's *op. cit.* I p. 242).
- 118) Wall's *op. cit.* I pp. xxxviii, 498ff & 510f. 119) Iren.: *Her.* I:21:4. 120) Wall's *op. cit.* I p. xlii.
- 121) *Ib.* I pp. 412 & 523. 122) Epiphanius: *Heresies* I:22-24. 123) *Ib.* I:8.
- 124) *Op. cit.* I p. 591 (cf. too pp. 514 & 516) and II ch. 7. 125) *Inf. Bap.* p. 87.
- 126) Assemani: *Oriental Bible* I:221. 127) *Op. cit.*, 1891 ed. pp. 8ff; and 1897 ed. p. 150 & n. 1.
- 128) Fulgentius: *On Faith to Peter*, ch. 27. 129) Greg. Gt.: *Exposition of Job* 1:16.
- 130) Greg. Gt.: *Moralium* ix & xii. 131) *Two Stud.* pp. 150f. 132) See Ayres: *op. cit.* pp. 610-24.
- 133) Compare J.D.C. Fisher's *Christian Initiation: Baptism in the Mediaeval West. A Study in the Disintegration of the Primitive Rite of Initiation* (S.P.C.K., London, 1965).
- 134) John of Damascus: *On the Orthodox Faith* IV:9.
- 135) Theophylact of Bulgaria: *On John VIII*, in Migne *Pat. Graec.* 124,20. 136) *Op. cit.* II pp. 426f.
- 137) Schaff: *Ch. Hist.* IV pp. 574-79.
- 138) E. Yamauchi: *Manichaeans* (in ed. T. Dowley: *The History of Christianity*, Lion Handbook, Anzea books, Surry Hills NSW, 1978 rep., pp. 48f).
- 139) Schaff *Ch. Hist.* V pp. 472f, 475, 477.
- 140) Paul D. Steeves: *The Paulicians and the Bogomils* (in ed. T. Dowley: *op. cit.*, pp. 245f).
- 141) Bernard of Clairvaux: *Epistle* 240. In *Works*, Paris, 1586 ed., II p. 275.
- 142) Bernard: *Sermons on the Canticles* 65 & 66. Cited in Wall's *op. cit.* II pp. 260ff & 277.
- 143) Cited in Wall's *op. cit.* II pp. 258f.
- 144) Schaff: *Ch. Hist.* V pp. 483-85; S. Miller's *op. cit.*, p. 30; Hulse's *op. cit.* p. 6 n. 1.
- 145) Wall: *op. cit.* I p. xlv & II p. 273. 146) *Ib.* I p. 497 & II pp. 240ff & 270f.
- 147) M. Luther's *Postille on Matthew 8:1*, in his *Works*, Weimer ed., I:172 pp. 81f (cited in L. Verduin's *The Reformers and their Stepchildren*, Paternoster, Exeter, 1964, p. 196).
- 148) Wall's *op. cit.* I p. 497 (cf. Ayres's *Christian Baptism*, Kelly, London, n.d.).
- 149) A.H. Newman: *History of Anti-pedobaptism* Philadelphia, 1897, p. 61.



- 150) S. Miller: *Infant Baptism*, in *Baptism and Christian Education* (Presb. Heritage, Dallas, 1984 rep., pp. 28-30).
- 151) 1655 *Waldensian Confession* art. 33 (cf. 29 & 31), in Schaff's *Creeds* III pp. 757 & 766-69.
- 152) *Augsburg Confession* art. 10. 153) Thomas Aquinas: *Summa Theologiae* III Q. 66-69. 154) *Ib.* Q. 60,2.
- 155) Schaff: *Ch. Hist.* V p. 671.
- 156) *Sum. Theol.* P. III; Qu. LXVI; *De Bapt.* art. 7 (cited in Schaff's *Ch. Hist.* III p 250 n 3). 157) *Summa* Q. 62,4-5.
- 158) *Ib.* Q. 68,1. 159) *Ib.* V pp. 708f (citing Thomas's *Summa* III.62.6). 160) *Ib.* III.66.9; 67:3; 68:9; 72:1.
- 161) Schaff: *Ch. Hist.* V p. 711. 162) *Part.* iii, *Quaest.* 66, *Art.* 7. 163) *Sentences* IV:13:2:2.
- 164) *Ib.* p. 712 (compare Thomas's *Summa* P. III *qu.* LXVI and his *On Baptism* art. vii).
- 165) See Steitz's *op. cit.* (in Schaff-Herzog's *ERK* I p. 201).
- 166) F.F. Bruce *Bible (English Versions)* and R.G. Clouse Wycliffe, *John (c. 1329-1384)* in ed. Douglas's *op. cit.* pp. 127 & 1064; R. Vaughan *Tracts and Treatises of John de Wycliffe, D.D.*, Wycliffe Society, London, 1845, pp. lxxxviii, 140-43, 151, 301; H.B. Workman: *John Wyclif*, Clarendon, Oxford, 1926, II, pp. 40 & 416.
- 167) Schaff: *Ch. Hist.* VI p. 361.
- 168) Cf. too J. Wycliffe's *Triologue* IV:11 & *Dialogues* IV:4 fol. 118f (ed. 1525). Cited in Wall's *op. cit.* II pp. 212ff.
- 169) Vaughan: *op. cit.* pp. 156 & 159 cf. p. 59.
- 170) *Op. cit.* I p. 466 & II pp. 215ff, citing W. Brute from Foxe's *Martyrology* (2nd ed. I p. 453).
- 171) Foxe: *Book of Martyrs*, 2nd ed., I, p. 485. See too Book II pp. 94-96 in the version edited by Rev. Dr. A. Clarke (Ward & Lock, London, n.d.).
- 172) R. Dimmock: *Answer to the Lollards* (around 1390), cited in Wall's *op. cit.* II p. 307.
- 173) Thus Schaff's *Ch. Hist.* VI pp. 258f,370f,387f; and esp. W.G. Dixon's *The Romance of the Catholic Presbyterian Church*, Board of Religious Education, Presbyterian Church of Australia, Melbourne, 1930, pp. 26f.
- 174) *Op. cit.* I p. 466 (& II p. 217).
- 175) 3 Kenya St., Wavell Heights, Brisbane, Australia -- citing Schaff's *Church History* (VI p. 381); Luther's *Works* (Muhlenberg, Philadelphia, 1960, American ed., XXXI, pp. 307,313,321; XLVIII, p. 153; XXXII pp. 123,128f,3,56,71,74f); *The Works of Martin Luther* (Holman ed., Philadelphia, 1915, II pp. 140f & 171); and Luther's *Writings* (Concordia, St. Louis, Walch ed., 1881, XV col. 1639, XIX cols. 70-71, & XV cols. 783-7).
- 176) Thus Schaff: *Creeds of Christendom*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1983, I pp. 566f; & *Ch. Hist.* VI pp. 397f.
- 177) *Op. cit.* p. 197.
- 178) E.G.A. Boeckel: *Confessions of the Evangelical Reformed Churches*, Brockhaus, Leipzig, 1847, pp. 779f & 789f.
- 179) *Ib.* pp. 811f. 180) M. Luther: *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (1520), Kok, Kampen, 1959, pp. 12.
- 181) *Inst.* IV:2:11-12. 182) See Schaff's *Ch. Hist.* VII p. 611.
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- 186) M. Luther: *Concerning the Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, in Walch's *Luther's Collected Works*, XIX,76.
- 187) "*Fides infantilis...ne illudatur majestas Sacramenti et Verbi.*" Cited in Berkouwer's *Karl Barth and Infant Baptism*, Kok, Kampen, 1947, p. 55.
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- 193) K.R. Davis: *Anabaptism and Asceticism*, Herald, Scottsdale Pa., 1974, pp. 206f.
- 194) F.N. Lee: *A Christian Introduction to the History of Philosophy*, Craig, Nutley N.J., 1969, pp. 142f.
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- 199) R.D. Linder's *Zwickau Prophets*, art. in ed. Douglas's *op. cit.* pp. 1072f. 200) E. Hulse: *op. cit.*, pp. 14f.
- 201) R.G. Clouse: *Muenzer, Thomas (before 1490-1525)*, art. in ed. Douglas's *op. cit.* p. 684.
- 202) *Rad. Ref.* pp. 45f & 50. 203) Cited in Williams & Mergal's *op. cit.* pp. 61 & 65 n. 28.
- 204) Thus Williams's *Rad. Ref.* p. 54. 205) *Rad. Ref.* p. 55. 206) Hulse: *op. cit.* pp. 16f; West: *op. cit.* p. 244.
- 207) Estep's *op. cit.* p. 69 nn. 2 & 15, citing H.C. Vedder's *Balthasar Huebmaier*.
- 208) Schaff: *Ch. Hist.* VIII pp. 76 n. 2 & 77f.
- 209) B. Hübmaier's *Concerning Christian Baptism of Believers*, trans. G.D. Davidson, p. 121. Cited in Estep's *op. cit.* p. 60.
- 210) B. Hübmaier's *Discussion of Mr Ulrich Zwingli's 'Little Table Book on Infant Baptism'*, 1526 (in Hübmaier's *Works*, trans. G.D. Davidson, 1939), pp. 132-33 & 92-93. Cited in Estep's *op. cit.* pp. 158f & 175f.
- 211) Estep's *op. cit.* pp. 164.
- 212) Original title: B. Hübmaier's (1527) *On Infant Baptism; Oecolampadius etc.; a Discussion Held by the Preachers at Basle with Several Anabaptist Authorities*. The latter phrase is the title of a 1525 work by Oecolampadius, to which Hübmaier was now replying. See Estep's *op. cit.* pp. 165f & 176 n. 32.
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- 216) J.H. Landwehr's art. *Hübmaier (Balthasar)*, in the *Christian Encyclopaedia*, Kok, Kampen, II, p. 652.
- 217) See Cunitz's art. *Huebmaier*, in Schaff-Herzog's *ERK*, II, p. 1029.
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- 223) M. Luther's 1530 *The Eighty-Second Psalm Translated and Explained*, in his *Works* (Muhlenberg ed.), IV pp. 287, 298, 313.
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- 229) *Augsburg Confession* arts. 5, 9, 12, 13, 16, 17. 230) P. Melancthon: *Apology* (1531), art. 4 & 200f.
- 231) See our text in ch. I above at its nn. 242 to 249. 232) *Formula of Concord*, 1576 (1584) art. 12.
- 233) *Dev. of Doct. of Inf. Salv.* (1891), p. 26.
- 234) See for several such quotations brought together, Laurence's *Bampton Lectures* (1804, ed. 1820, p. 272).
- 235) J. Gerhard's *Loci Theologici*, ed. Cotta, vol. IX., p. 284. 236) *Dev. of Doct. of Inf. Salv.* (1897), p. 173.
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- 238) *Formula of Concord* XII:1 heading & XII:1:IV.
- 239) *Saxon Articles* II, V & VII: against "the false and erroneous doctrine of the Calvinists on Holy Baptism."

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243) I.A. Dorner: *System of Christian Doctrine*, ET, Clark, Edinburgh, 1882, IV pp. 282 (citing Luther's *Catechismus Major* 544, 47f, 546).

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255) Schaff's *Ch. Hist.* VIII p. 83: "Hätzer...was beheaded for adultery and bigamy." 256) *Ib.* p. 75.

257) See his *Christian Introduction of the Zurich Council to the Pastors and Preachers* (in the section 'Concerning the Abrogation of the Law').

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259) *Op. cit.* p. 17. Compare P. Toon: *Grebel, Conrad (1495?-1526)*, art. in ed. Douglas's *op. cit.* p. 429.

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- 307) E. Hulse: *op. cit.*, p. 11.
- 308) Menno: *op. cit.* pp. 16-23 & 414 (cited in Berkouwer's *op. cit.* pp. 80f & 89).
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- 322) Schaff's *Creeds I* p. 841; & *Ch. Hist. VII* pp. 442f.
- 323) See his *Rad. Ref.* pp. XX, 268-73, 311-17, 322f, 335f, 605f, 621f, 858f. 324) *Ib.* p. 133.
- 325) See Schaff's *Creeds I* p. 844 n. 3 para. 2; and W.J. M'Glothlin's art. *Anabaptism* (in J. Hastings's *Encyclopaedia of Religion & Ethics*, Clark, Edinburgh, 1925, I, xii & 406f).
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- 337) Simons's *op. cit.* f. 155 sqq., 175 sqq., 471, 751, 881 sqq.; Philips's *op. cit.* f. 32 sqq. & 269 sqq.
- 338) Simons's *op. cit.* f. 30a, 176, 756b, 811; Philips's *op. cit.* f. 34.
- 339) Simons: *Opera Omnia* f. 778, 264sq. & 493. See too Philips: *op. cit.* f. 32 & 264.
- 340) Simons: *op. cit.* f. 155sq., 175sq., 471sq., 751sq., 881sq.; Philips: *op. cit.* f. 32sq. & 269sq.
- 341) Simons: *op. cit.* f. 30a, 176, 756b, 811; Philips: *op. cit.*, f. 34. 342) Ch. 17.
- 343) Cited by J.C. Wenger in *Mennonite Quarterly Review XII*: 148. See too J.J. Kiwiet's *Pilgram Marbeck*, Oncken, Kassel, 1957, pp. 101f.
- 344) J. Oecolampadius: *Instruction Against Rebaptism*, cited in Kramer's *op. cit.* p. 159.
- 345) J. Oecolampadius: *Answer to Balthazar Hübmaier's 'Little Book Against... Infant Baptism' (1527)*, in Kramer's *op. cit.* p. 159.
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- 350 Arts. 20-21 (21-22). The official Latin text runs: "*non nudis signis, sed signis simul et rebus constant. In baptismo enim aqua signum est; at res ipsa regeneratio adoptioque in populum Dei.... Baptisma quidem ex institutione Domini lavacrum regenerationis quam Dominus electis suis, visibili signo per ecclesiae ministerium (qualiter supra expositum est) exhibeat. Quo quidem sancto lavacro infantes nostros idcirco tingimus, quoniam e nobis (qui populus Domini sumus) genitos populi Dei consortio rejicere nefas est tantum non divina voce huc designatos, praesertim quum de eorum electione pie est praesumendum.*" See too Schaff's *Creeds* III pp. 223-24 & p. 224 n. 2.
- 351) Arts. 25f (26f).
- 352) Thus (Rev. Principal Prof. Dr.) John Macleod's *Scottish Theology in Relation to Church History*, Free Church Pubs., Edinburgh, 1943, p. 15. The writer possesses a copy personally autographed by Principal Macleod.
- 353) First published by Rev. Wm. Goode, in 1850. See Schenck: *op. cit.* p. 42.
- 354) P. Martyr: *Common Places* (or *Loci Communi*), I:4:16 (cf. IV:100), cited in Warfield's *Dev. Doct. Inf. Salv.* 1891 p. 40).
- 355) *Ib.*, ET, Vautrollier, IV:8 pp. 113-19.
- 356) P. Martyr: *Common Places* (or *Loci Communi*), Classis IV, Geneva, 1529 ed., cap. 8, p. 381 sqq. Cited in Kramer's *op. cit.* pp. 169f. Also in A. Kuyper Sr.'s *E Voto Dordraceno: Explanation of the Heidelberg Catechism*, Wormser, Amsterdam, 1894, III p. 59; and in Kuyper's *On the Sacraments* (in his *Dogmatic Dictations*, Kok, Kampen, 2nd ed., 1909, IV p. 142).
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- 359) Cf. G. Wishart's *Confession of Faith of the Churches of Switzerland*. Translated from the Latin by George Wishart. MDXXXVI (1536).
- 360) Art. 21.
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- 367) *Decrees of the Council of Trent* V:1. Cited in J. Calvin's *Tracts and Treatises*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1958 ed., III pp. 79f.
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- 369) *Decrees of the Council of Trent* VII (Of the Sacraments in General. I). Cited in Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.*, III p. 163.
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- 372) *Decrees of the Council of Trent* VII (Of Baptism. III). Cited in Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.*, III p. 165.
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- 445) *Op. cit.*, pp. 16 and 236f & n. 1. 446) *Ib.* p. 404. 447) *Ib.* pp. 442f. 448) *Ib.* pp. 443f.
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## **IV. JOHN CALVIN ON BABY BELIEF BEFORE BAPTISM**

It was particularly Calvin who adequately stressed the blessings of covenant babies. He showed that infant baptism seals God-given prenatal faith in tiny covenant children. Especially he and his followers -- the Calvinists -- upheld the full teaching of Holy Scripture and of the Early-Patristic Church on this very important matter.

The Bible itself terms circumcision "a seal of the righteousness of faith" possessed before the eighth-day circumcising of covenant infants. Romans 4:11*f* *cf.* Hebrews 11:9. At Calvary, Christ replaced circumcision with baptism and its sprinklings. Colossians 2:11*f* and Hebrews 6:1*f* & 9:10*f*. So the Bible-believing Calvin concluded that also baptism is "a seal of the righteousness of faith" possessed also by covenant infants before they are baptized as such.

### **257. The Post-Calvinian and Anti-Calvinistic attack against infant faith**

Since Calvin, the empiricistic 'Enlightenment' of the seventeenth century has attacked this epistemology of covenantal Calvinism. Furthermore, in the eighteenth century the arminianizing 'Great Awakening' treated the covenant seed as if they were merely baptized pagans. Indeed, the nineteenth century's 'sawdust trail' revivalism further depuritanized and depresbyterianized especially the United States -- and turned it into an overwhelmingly (Ana)Baptist culture.

Consequently, many modern Presbyterians -- particularly in the United States and other 'americanized' areas -- now quite wrongly deny that covenant infants should themselves be regarded as little Christians. Even some 'Anti-Kuyperian' Neo-Calvinists (*sic*) falsely regard Abraham Kuyper (rather than St. Paul or John Calvin) as the architect of this viewpoint -- which they themselves thoroughly reject. Such seek its origin hardly more than a hundred years ago!

However, the plain truth is that this view of Kuyper is also that: of Holy Scripture; of the Ancient-Patristic Church; of John Calvin; and of all Historic Calvinist theologians. Indeed, it remained utterly dominant -- right until Neo-Arminianism (*via* the 'New Light' and especially *via* the 'New School' deviations from strict Calvinism) progressively assailed it during the hundred years from 1740 till 1840.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, the historic view had *de facto* been desacramentalized -- progressively and de-seal-ingly. Next, the full Old-Calvinist views about infant faith and the baptism of babies were vehemently denied.

Consequently, many modern Quasi-Calvinists today -- falsely allege Calvin taught that even covenant babies cannot believe before their own infant baptism -- if not even for many years thereafter. Such Quasi-Calvinists teach that infants receive the sacrament in infancy only as a formal 'invitation' to a purely-future repentance. They regard it as merely an invitation -- which those infants can and should answer only when they reach an 'age of discretion' (*sic*).

The fact is, however, that this arminianizing view was strongly opposed by John Calvin himself -- long before Abraham Kuyper did exactly the same. It is true Calvin and Kuyper certainly taught that covenant infants should "improve their baptism" -- by a personal profession of faith when they get older; and through constant re-repentances and daily increases in faith for ever thereafter too. Yet they also clearly taught that those infants were and are to be deemed to possess incipient faith already -- even prior to their infant baptisms.

The Neo-Arminian view (of 'no-faith-till-after-infancy'), is not the view of Holy Scripture. Nor is it the view of the Early-Patristic Church. We shall now seek to show that it was certainly not the view of John Calvin. Consequently, it should not be the view of any self-styled modern 'Neo-Calvinists' either.

Properly understanding Calvin's true views about this subject, is a matter of very great importance. So in the following paragraphs we gladly risk committing even the indiscretion of 'theological overkill.'

First, we shall give a short account of Calvin's life -- with specific reference to his baptismal beliefs. Second, we shall present telling excerpts from Calvin's *Commentaries* on relevant Bible passages. Third, we shall give copious quotations from his 1536 master work *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*. Finally, we shall present further evidence from his later works -- until the 1564 date of his death.

## **258. The early life and baptismal beliefs of John Calvin**

John Calvin was born in France to a religious mother -- on 10th July 1509. He was baptized soon after his birth -- in the Romish Cathedral of Noyen.

His mother was a very dedicated Roman Catholic woman. Calvin later wrote that he well remembered how she had taken him, when a small boy, to one of the churches in town.

His father was Registrar to the Ecclesiastical Court, and Notary Fiscal to the Roman Catholic Bishop. At an early age, his father enrolled him for the priesthood.<sup>1</sup>

Calvin's commitment to Christ gradually ripened, especially after studying the Word of God. The Netherlands' Reformed Church's Rev. Professor Dr. R. Schippers of the Free University in Amsterdam believes Calvin's principal conversion to the Lordship of Christ and indeed thereby to Protestantism, took place only after long soul-searching. It occurred after many years of thorough methodological investigation of the problematics involved -- and also of the writings of the Reformation.<sup>2</sup>

When Calvin was suddenly converted to recognizing the Lordship of Christ -- around the age of twenty-four -- he seems to have seen this as his own yielding to the Triune God Who had previously sealed him at his infant baptism many years earlier. Only in 1533 did he undergo that internal crisis of conversion to Christ. That was followed, three years later, by the first edition of his great work: *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*.



The 1536 first edition of his *Institutes* Calvin dedicated to his (Roman Catholic) sovereign, Francis King of France. Already right at the front of it, in the *Preface*, Calvin was defending himself against the Romish charge that the Calvinists were Anabaptists.

However, together with the Romanists Calvin too opined that the "tumults and disputes" of Anabaptism -- "ought to be ascribed to the malice of Satan...by means of his Catabaptists and other portentous miscreants."<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, Calvin had written his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* -- precisely to persuade King Francis that the Calvinists stood with the Romanists against those Satanic Anabaptists.

Later, in 1557, Calvin first published the *Preface* to his *Commentary on the Psalms*. There, he furnished it with an account of some of the events leading up to his earlier conversion (and then to his production of the *Institutes*) --about a quarter of a century earlier.

In that *Preface* to the Psalms, the Reformer wrote:<sup>4</sup> "When I was as yet a very little boy, my father had destined me for the study of theology" -- in order to become a priest in the Roman Catholic Church. But "God -- by the secret guidance of His providence -- at length gave a different direction to my course.... [Around 1533] God by a sudden conversion subdued and brought my mind to a teachable frame."

At that time, however, "certain wicked and lying pamphlets were circulated" by the persecuting French Romanists. They cruelly assailed the true Protestants -- only obliquely, yet very effectively.

They did so, stated Calvin, by "stating that none were being treated with such cruelty -- except Anabaptists." For such were among "seditious persons, who by their perverse ravings and false opinions were overthrowing not only religion but also all civil order."

Explained Calvin: "It appeared to me, that unless I opposed them to the utmost of my ability -- my silence could not be vindicated from the charge of cowardice and treachery. This was the consideration which induced me to publish my *Institutes of the Christian Religion*" -- in 1536.

## **259. The mature Calvin's commitment to covenant infant faith before baptism**

In his *Institutes*, Calvin repudiated<sup>5</sup> the above-mentioned Romish allegations that the Biblical Protestants -- those who witnessed for the purity of Christ's Gospel -- were "Anabaptists and seditious persons," as was so foully then being claimed. Indeed, the very actions of the revolutionary Anabaptists themselves even toward the Calvinists -- clearly indicated the untruthfulness of the above Anti-Calvinistic allegations of the Romanists.

For, as Calvin next stated, also "the Anabaptists began to assail us" -- namely for opposing their sedition, including their revolutionary repudiation of infant baptism for covenant children. Clearly, the anarchistic Anabaptists had broken with the Historic Church altogether. The Romanists, and the Protestants, had not.

Yet the Romanists were indeed, as Calvin then called them, "the internal enemies of the Church." For although they constantly continued "boasting mightily of the Gospel of Christ -- nevertheless, they rush against me with greater impetuosity than against the open adversaries of the Church" (such as the often-antitrinitarian Anabaptists).

Why did the Romanists so oppose Biblical Protestants like Calvin? According to the latter, it was "because I do not embrace their gross and fictitious notion concerning a carnal way of eating Christ in the sacrament." Nor did Calvin embrace their other gross and fictitious notion -- viz. that of sins being washed away *ex opere operato*, by way of an alleged 'baptismal regeneration.'

Yet, unlike the Anabaptists, Calvin nevertheless warmly embraced infant baptism in general. Indeed, he never repudiated the validity of trinitarian baptisms -- even when administered by Rome in particular.

In his *Institutes*, Calvin condemned specifically the antitrinitarian "Servetus -- not the least among the Anabaptists."<sup>6</sup> Indeed, as we have previously seen in the *Prefatory Address* to the *Institutes* which he sent to the Romish King Francis I of France, Calvin specifically classified these "Catabaptists" as being among the various "portentous miscreants" who then tarnished civilization. Consequently, he ascribed their evils "to the malice of Satan."

Some four years after first publishing the *Institutes*, Calvin married a presbyterianized Ex-Anabaptist widow in 1540. She was, of course, never rebaptized on becoming a Presbyterian like Calvin.

Their later-born eldest child was baptized in infancy. Their subsequent children were never baptized -- because dying shortly after birth.<sup>7</sup>

These examples of baptism and non-baptism in Calvin's own immediate family, are most instructive. Calvin, baptized in infancy by the Church of Rome, was never rebaptized. Nor was his wife -- after being affused as an adult in the Name of the Trinity by Dutch Anabaptists.

Their eldest child, expected to live, was baptized at Geneva in the Swiss Presbyterian Church. Their other children were seen to be dying, soon after their births. Expected next to be seen only in glory, they were deliberately left unbaptized. Not one member of the entire family -- neither Calvin, his wife, nor any of their three infants -- was ever submersed (or 'rebaptized' in any way whatsoever) after becoming Protestants.

So, when Calvin previously prayed for a wife -- God gave him a godly and convinced Presbyterian woman who had priorly been converted from Anabaptism. When their three children died in infancy, only one -- who alone looked like living -- was brought to baptism.

Finally, Calvin died at fifty-five years of age -- after constantly 'improving' his own infant baptism till the very end of his earthly life. Just before his own death, he wrote on Ezekiel 16:20f that (even uncircumcised or unbaptized) early-dying covenant babies die as children of God.<sup>8</sup>

## **260. The unfallen Adam was 'just' or righteous -- without circumcision**

We shall later return to the *Institutes* for its doctrine of infant salvation before Paedobaptism in detail. At this point, we first set out Calvin's cogent comments on many Bible passages on the same subject. We start with Calvin's view of the uncircumcised and sinless Adam before the fall.

Calvin rightly recognized Adam's solidarity with his children, both before and after the fall. Genesis 1:26-28; 2:23-25; 3:15-21; 4:1-4; Hosea 6:7f; Romans 5:12f. If Adam had never sinned, all of his children too would have been devoid of sin. Genesis 2:7-9 & Ecclesiastes 7:29.

Very significantly, not just uncircumcised adult believers like Adam and Noah but also their uncircumcised seed or descendants like Seth and Shem were and are included in God's promises. Genesis 1:28 to 2:3 and 9:1-7.

Declared Calvin:<sup>9</sup> "The intention of Moses in beginning his Book [of Genesis] with the creation of the world, is to render God as it were 'visible to us' in His works.... For he [Moses] does not here put forward divinations of his own, but is the instrument of the Holy Spirit.... For he does not transmit to memory things before unheard of -- but...consigns to writing facts which the [Pre-Mosaic] Fathers had delivered...as from hand to hand through a long succession of years, to their children....

"Can we conceive that man was so placed on the Earth as to be ignorant of his own origin -- and of the origin of those things which he enjoyed? No sane person doubts that Adam was well-instructed respecting them all. Was he indeed afterwards dumb [*cf.* Genesis 5:1f]? Were the holy Patriarchs so ungrateful, as to suppress in silence such necessary instruction? Did Noah, warned by a divine judgment so memorable, neglect to transmit it to posterity [*cf.* Genesis 10:1f]? Abraham is expressly honoured with this eulogy -- that he was the teacher...of his family (Genesis 18:19)....

"We ought not to doubt that the creation of the world, as here described [in the Book of Genesis], was already known through the ancient and perpetual tradition of the Fathers.... After the world had been created, man was placed in it as in a theatre..... He was endued with understanding and reason -- that, being distinguished from brute animals, he might meditate on a better life and might even tend directly towards God Whose image he bore engraven on his own person."

For, to One Another, the three Persons of the Triune "God said: 'Let Us make man in Our image'.... So God created man.... He created them male and female. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply!'" Genesis 1:26-28.

Adam was God's image from the first moment of his existence onward. Even then, he must have had knowledge of the Lord -- precisely in order to be able to image Him. Colossians 3:10. To be fully human, means to know God. Even after the fall, Adam's children (as God's broken images) are still human -- from their very conception onward. *A fortiori*, they would, as "images" intact, have known God even more -- if Adam had never fallen at all.

## **261. Calvin on the righteous condition of the human race before the fall**

Observed Calvin:<sup>10</sup> "As man was undoubtedly created to meditate on the heavenly life, so it is certain that the knowledge of it was engraven on the soul.... God has provided the soul of man with intellect, by which he might discern good from evil...and might know what to follow.... To this, He has joined will, to which choice belongs. Man excelled in these noble endowments in his primitive [or primordial] condition -- when reason, intelligence, prudence and judgment sufficed not only for the government of his earthly life, but also enabled him to rise up to God and eternal happiness....

"Adam was made the depository of the endowments which God was pleased to bestow on human nature.... The qualities which Adam lost, he received for us not less than for himself.... They were gifts not to a single man, but attributes of the whole human race.... **Godly parents** do in some measure **contribute** to the **holiness of their offspring**....

"This is by the blessing of God...to Whom nothing is acceptable but righteousness, innocence and purity..... This is carefully taught in Scripture. For the Preacher says, 'Lo, this only have I found, that God made man upright'..... Ecclesiastes 7:29.... Man, by the kindness of God, was made upright."

On Genesis 1:26-28 and 5:3, Calvin commented that "Paul says that we are transformed into the image of God [again,] by the Gospel. And, according to him, spiritual regeneration is nothing else than the restoration of the same image (Colossians 3:10 and Ephesians 4:23f).... Adam was endued with a right judgment; had affections in harmony with reason; had all his senses sound and well-regulated.... Adam with his wife was formed for the production of offspring, in order that men might replenish [or fill] the earth....

"God intends the human race to be multiplied by generation indeed.... For He has joined the man to his wife -- that they might produce a divine, that is, a legitimate seed.... Beginning at holy and chaste marriage, He proceeds to speak of the production of offspring.... That pure and lawful method of increase, which God ordained from the beginning, remains first. This is that Law of Nature, which common sense declares to be inviolable.... Moses traces the offspring of Adam...to the first origin of our nature.... If he had remained upright, he would have transmitted to **all** his children what he had received."

On Ephesians 4:23f and 6:1, Calvin further commented that "the rule of a godly and holy life is to live not by our own spirit but by the Spirit of Christ.... Adam was at first created in the image of God -- so that he might reflect, as in a mirror, the righteousness of God.... The regeneration of the godly is indeed, as is said in Second Corinthians 3:18 -- nothing else than the **re-form-ation** of the image of God in them.... The design in re-generation is to lead us back -- from error, to that end for which we were created....

"The **Law of Nature**...is received by all nations.... The obedience of children is decreed by the authority of God.... Parents are to be obeyed.... The promises annexed to the Commandments,

are intended to attract us.... The promise is of a long life.... The present life is not to be despised among the gifts of God."

Finally, commenting on the parallel Colossians 3:9f and 3:20, Calvin remarked: "The 'new man'...is he who is re-form-ed by the Spirit of Christ to the obedience of righteousness.... It is nature re-stored to its true integrity by the same Spirit.... The end of our regeneration...is that we may be made like God, and that His glory may shine forth in us....

"Man represents as in a mirror the wisdom, righteousness and goodness of God. He speaks somewhat differently in Ephesians [4:24], but the meaning is the same.... He enjoins it upon children to obey their parents, without exception.... We see, from daily experience, the advantage of a liberal education."

## **262. Fallen Adam and his elect children justified without circumcision**

God told Satan right after man's fall: "I will put hatred between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed. He shall crush your skull; and you shall bruise His heel." Then to the woman God said: "I will greatly multiply...your conception.... You shall bring forth children." Further, "unto Adam and also to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them." Genesis 3:15-21.

Very clearly, this clothing of those forgiven sinners gave a preview of the way in which baptism now clothes those presumed to be regenerated children of God. Galatians 3:27. Also very clearly, godly parents are to see to it that even their infants get clothed -- in infancy.

So "Adam knew Eve his wife. And she conceived...and said, 'I have receive a male [child] from the Lord!'" Genesis 4:1. Soon after his birth, that little one was doubtless not left naked by his parents -- but provided with clothes which pointed to the sin-covering work of the coming Saviour.

Here Calvin observed:<sup>11</sup> "After Adam had by his own desperate fall ruined himself and all his posterity..., all the pious who have since lived -- were sustained by the very same promise of salvation by which Adam was first raised from the fall." This promise obviously redounded also (and even particularly) to the benefit of godly women -- and their godly infants.

Commented Calvin:<sup>12</sup> "Victory is promised to the human race through a continual succession of ages. I explain, therefore, the seed to mean -- the posterity of the woman generally.... The human race, which Satan was endeavouring to oppress, would at length be victorious....

"Eve gives thanks to God for having begun to raise up a posterity through her.... She embraced, by faith, the promise concerning the bruising of the head of the devil through her seed.... While Eve congratulates herself on the birth of a son, she offers him to God."

The Bible soon goes on to declare: "Adam knew his wife again, and she bare a son, and called his name Seth. 'For God,' said she, 'has appointed me another seed'.... And to Seth...also, there was born a son.... Then men began to call upon the Name of the Lord." Genesis 4:25f.

Commented Professor Dr. Calvin:<sup>13</sup> "It embraces generally the whole worship of God.... Moses...commends the piety of one family which worshipped God in purity and holiness.... There is no doubt that Adam and Eve with a few other of their children were themselves true worshippers of God....

"We may readily conclude that Seth was an upright and faithful servant of God.... After he begat a son like himself and had a rightly constituted family, the face of the Church began distinctly to appear -- and that worship of God was set up which might continue to posterity.... Seth was [conceived or] born a sinner. But afterwards he was renewed by the grace of the Spirit."

### **263. Enoch and Noah and their elect children uncircumcised yet justified**

Thus, after man's fall, yet before the institution of circumcision in Abraham's day, it is obvious that many were justified by God's grace -- through saving faith alone. This was accomplished without their ever receiving any sacrament of initiation (such as circumcision or baptism). Thus: Adam, Eve, Abel, Seth, Enoch, *etc.*<sup>14</sup>

The never-circumcised Noah "found grace" in the eyes of God. He was justified, or made just. Indeed, he was then also pronounced to have been made just -- and therefore to be just, in the eyes of God. Then God brought Noah and his family to safety, inside the ark -- quite before the rainstorm began. Only thereafter were they all 'baptized' -- by the rainwater falling on the roof of the ark.<sup>15</sup> So they were justified, before they were "baptized."

We might point out that not just Noah and his family but even all the animals with him in the ark were advantaged by God's covenant. The mere fact that those animals could not understand what was going on, did not mean that they could not be preserved. Nor, after the flood, does their ongoing inability to understand the covenantal significance of the rainbow -- cause them to forfeit the benefits of that covenant. Genesis 6:18-22 and 9:8-17.

As Calvin commented:<sup>16</sup> "Noah should be safe.... The covenant with him is confirmed.... His family shall be preserved, for his sake.... He is commanded to lay up...for his whole family.... Noah and his family safely escaped.... Peter taught that Noah's deliverance from the universal deluge was a figure of baptism [First Peter 3:21).... Noah -- believing the promise of God -- gathered himself, his wife, and his children together."

After the flood, "God blessed Noah and his children and said to them: 'Be fruitful and multiply.... I will establish My covenant with you and with your seed after you...for perpetual generations.'" Genesis 9:1-12.

Commented Calvin:<sup>17</sup> "God blessed Noah and his sons.... The design of God concerning the new restitution of the world was revealed unto them.... Those four men and their

wives...know that the care of producing offspring is pleasing to Himself, and may have confidence that a progeny shall spring from them which shall diffuse itself through all regions of the earth.... By this word, He addresses all the posterity of Noah and renders His gift common to all ages....

"God, as in a matter of present concern, makes a covenant with Noah and his family.... He transmits His covenant to posterity.... The ignorance of the Anabaptists may be refuted, who deny that **the covenant of God is common to infants**.... God promises salvation to a thousand generations"

A little later, Abraham too was justified in full -- long before he was circumcised.<sup>18</sup> Even after the later instituting of circumcision, no Israelitic woman -- Israelitic by birth or by choice -- was ever circumcised. Indeed, that was not even possible. Yet many such women were justified without circumcision -- such as Sarah, Rahab, Ruth and Elisabeth *etc.*<sup>19</sup>

Conversely, Esau (and probably also Ishmael) -- though circumcised in childhood -- was never justified.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, David's first-born son by Bathsheba was justified before and apparently without circumcision -- before he then died in infancy.<sup>21</sup>

For circumcision was only for those physically alive who seemed likely to go on living. It was never for the dying. Nowhere in God's Word do we detect even an attempt religiously to circumcise the dying -- whether they be dying infants or dying adults. At Calvary, circumcision was replaced by baptism.<sup>22</sup> So modern sacramentalists who scurry to baptize the dying, are far removed from the scenario of Scripture.

We would go even further. With Calvin, we would argue that the Older Testament knows of the religious circumcising only of those deemed to be spiritually alive. Those deemed to be dead in their sins -- whether infants or adults -- never had the rite of circumcision religiously administered to them. Of course, such circumcisees might subsequently well end up being exposed as infidels. Indeed, in Newer Testament times, exactly the same is true of those baptized.

#### **264. Abraham and his male babies were in covenant before their circumcision**

Now Abraham had already<sup>23</sup> been justified by God -- long before both he and his entire circumcisable household were commanded to be circumcised.<sup>24</sup> Indeed, as already seen above<sup>25</sup> -- circumcision never justified anyone.

Yet, after the institution of circumcision, it was nevertheless very disadvantageous for circumcisable covenantal babies to be left uncircumcised. For God Himself declares to Abraham: "I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and your seed after you in their generations for an everlasting covenant -- to be a God to you, and to your seed after you.... The uncircumcised male child whose flesh of his foreskin is not circumcised, shall be cut off from his people. He has broken My covenant." Genesis 17:6-14.

This can only mean that the male Israelite was conceived and **born within** the covenant, **prior to his subsequent circumcision** -- and that he himself was thus in covenant with God from

his very first coming into being embryonically.<sup>26</sup> Otherwise it would not be possible for the infant, through the neglect of his own parent, to have "broken" the covenant -- if and when he was not later circumcised on the eighth day after his birth.

Moreover, the female Israelitess -- whether embryo, baby, child or adult -- was always uncircumcisable. Yet she too was in covenant with Jehovah -- even prior to her birth, and indeed throughout her earthly existence.<sup>27</sup>

Consequently, it is not circumcision -- compare, similarly, baptism -- which establishes the covenant. Yet non-circumcision -- compare, similarly, non-baptism -- is certainly one of the ways a covenant already binding before circumcision (and/or before baptism), can be broken.<sup>28</sup>

From Abraham's time onward, all believers who then left their circumcisable infants uncircumcised (before Calvary) -- thereby cut their own children off from membership in the visible community of believers. After Calvary, exactly the same could occur in respect of the baptism which there replaced circumcision.

Indeed, this occurs even today -- when Baptist Christians leave their own baptizable infants unbaptized. For baptism now, like circumcision then, is a token and sacrament of God's covenant of grace.

It is certainly injurious to adult believers (as well as to their children) -- for the former to leave their infant children outside of the visible believing community. Yet even this great sin<sup>29</sup> cannot deprive those infant children of any faith in Christ they possess before baptism (and keep on possessing even if never baptized).

Hence, whether infants or adults, unbaptized believers today -- just like uncircumcised believers before Calvary -- are nevertheless justified. Thus they are 'safe' -- both for time and for all eternity.

## **265. Genesis 17's infant circumcision in Calvin's *Institutes***

Said the Lord to Abraham: "Behold, My covenant is with you!... You must keep My covenant therefore -- you and your seed after you in their generations! This is My covenant which you shall keep between Me and you and your seed after you -- every male child among you shall be circumcised.... He who is eight days old, shall be circumcised among you.... He who has been born in your house and he that has been bought with your money, must needs be circumcised."

So "Abraham took Ishmael his son and all that had been born in his house and all that had been bought with his money, every male among the men of Abraham's house -- and circumcised the flesh of their foreskin on that same day, as God had said to him.... So the Lord said 'Shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing?... For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him -- and they shall keep the way of the Lord.'" Genesis 17:4-23 and 18:17-19.



On these vital verses of Holy Scripture, Calvin made many important statements. Here we restrict ourselves to what he says regarding the apparently 'saved status' (to the human eye) of young covenant children -- even before their infant circumcision.

In his *Institutes*, Calvin remarked<sup>30</sup> that "there is a promise of mercy to thousands" of generations. This is "a promise which is frequently mentioned in Scripture and forms an article in the solemn covenant made with the Church: 'I will be a God to you, and to your seed after you' (Genesis 17:7)....

"Moreover, in regard to the second part of the promise -- viz. the blessing of God -- its extending beyond the limits of the present life was still more clearly confirmed by the words 'I will be the God of your seed after you' (Genesis 17:7). If He was to manifest His favour to the dead by doing good to their posterity -- much less would He deny His favour to themselves.... God, Whose kindness is not impeded by death, does not deprive the dead of the benefit of His mercy -- which, on their account, He continues to a thousand generations....

"When the Lord enjoins Abraham to observe circumcision (Genesis 17:10), He premises that He would be a God to him and to his seed.... These words include the promise of eternal life.... What benefit redounds from the observance, both to believers who bring their children to the church to be baptized, and to the infants themselves to whom the sacred water is applied?

"That no one may despise the ordinance as useless or superfluous..., any one who would think of ridiculing baptism under this pretence would also ridicule the divine ordinance of circumcision [Colossians 2:11-13].... For the divine symbol communicated to the child, as with the impress of a seal, confirms the promise given to the godly parents and declares that the Lord will be a God not to him only but [also] to his seed....

"I am not moved by the objection that the promise [alone] ought to be sufficient to confirm the salvation of our children. It has seemed otherwise to God.... Let those then who embrace the promise of mercy to their children, consider it as their duty to offer them to the Church -- to be sealed with the symbol of mercy.... We ought to stand greatly in awe of the denunciation that God will take vengeance on every one who despises to impress the symbol of the covenant on his child (Genesis 17) -- such contempt being a rejection and as it were abjuration of the offered grace."

## **266. Calvin's Commentary on Genesis 17 & 18 anent infant circumcision**

In his *Commentary of Genesis*, Calvin also stated<sup>31</sup> that all Israelites "who had departed from the unity" of the faith -- are "immediately accounted strangers." Yet he added that before they might so depart, "it is the evident doctrine of Paul concerning the natural descendants of Abraham that they are 'holy branches' which have proceeded from a 'holy root' (Romans 11:16)....

"Therefore, nothing is more certain than that God made His covenant with those sons of Abraham who were naturally to be born of Him.... The gratuitous adoption of God belongs to them all in common.... All Israelites were of the household of the Church, and sons of God, and heirs of eternal life....

"We are plainly taught that this was a spiritual covenant, not confirmed in reference to the present life only; but one from which Abraham might conceive the hope of eternal salvation.... He Who is the God of the living, not of the dead, promises to be a God to the children of Abraham."

Calvin further explained that "God threatens punishment only to despisers." What, then, exactly, does this mean?

This means those who formerly despised infant circumcision -- and those who today despise infant baptism. Where there was no actual despising or rejection of the sacrament for the covenant infant, however, the mere lack of infant circumcision (or baptism) did no harm to those infants. Of course, some harm might well devolve upon adults who despised infant circumcision (and who still despise infant baptism).

Calvin continued: "The uncircumcision of children would do them no harm, if they died before the eighth day. For the bare promise of God was effectual to that salvation.... The salvation of the race of Abraham was included in that expression, 'I will be a God to your seed.' And although circumcision was added as a confirmation, it nevertheless did not deprive the word of its force and efficacy....

"If any [covenantal] infants were deprived by death of the tokens of salvation -- He [God] spared them.... For they had done nothing derogatory to the covenant of God. The same reasoning is at this day in force, respecting baptism.... To consign to destruction those infants whom a sudden death has not allowed to be presented for baptism -- before any neglect of parents could intervene -- is a cruelty originating in superstition. But that the promise belongs to such children, is not in the least doubtful....

"As God 'adopts' the infant son in the person of his father, so when the father repudiates such a benefit -- the infant is said to [be] cut...off from the Church.... God indeed will not acknowledge those as among His people, who...[do] not bear the mark and token of adoption....

"Moses now commends the obedience of Abraham, because he circumcised the whole of his family -- as he had been commanded.... He must, of necessity, have been entirely devoted to God, since he did not hesitate.... We next see how faithfully his family was instructed.... Abraham diligently took care to have them prepared for due obedience.... He held them under holy discipline....

"Abraham is admitted to the counsel of God, because he would faithfully fulfil the office of a good householder -- in instructing his own family.... Lest any one should suppose that this kind of doctrine belongs only to strangers, the Lord specially appoints it for the sons of Abraham -- that is, for the household of the Church....

"Moses intimates that Abraham...instructed his children in the fear of the Lord and governed his household well.... They who are negligent in this part of their duty, cast off or suppress as much as in them lies the grace of God. Therefore, [so] that the perpetual possession of the gifts of God may remain to us and survive to posterity -- we must beware lest they be lost through our neglect."

## **267. God threatened the disobedient Moses, but not his uncircumcised son**

Centuries later, almost incredibly, Moses himself neglected to circumcise his own son Gershom. Significantly, God then threatened with death not the infant Gershom -- but his wayward father Moses. For, in an inn, on Moses' way back to Egypt -- "the Lord met him, and sought to kill him."<sup>32</sup>

Now God here sought to kill Moses -- for neglecting to give circumcision as the sign of the covenant to his infant child. So, to prevent the threatened death of her husband, Moses' unordained wife Zipporah -- herself then circumcised their son, and threw his foreskin at Moses' feet.

"Then she said: 'You are surely a husband-of-blood to me!' Then He [God] let him [Moses] go. Thus she said: 'You are a husband-of-blood!' -- because of the circumcising."<sup>33</sup>

To put this in church-historical terms, we may say that Moses (the Presbyterian) had lapsed from strict obedience to God -- by temporarily becoming a *de facto* antipaedocircumcisional or 'antipaidobaptistic' Baptist. For he had neglected -- himself to circumcise his infant son. His presbyterianized wife, however -- though overenthusiastically herself administering the sacrament -- had commendably remained a loyal paedocircumcisional or 'paedobaptistic' Presbyterian.<sup>34</sup>

Now Romanists believe all unbaptized infants are lost. However, they could hardly hold that all uncircumcised infants --including even all Israelitic females -- were previously lost. For that would strain even their doctrine of the essential sinlessness of the virgin Mary -- had she died, obviously uncircumcised if not also uncircumcisable, when still an infant.

Yet Romanists love pointing to this unusual, non-normative circumcision performed by the unordained woman Zipporah. They do so, to try and justify their own practice of permitting the emergency baptism of dying infants. Indeed, in their Romish hospitals they permit even the unordained nurses to act thus -- whether the latter profess to be Christians, or not.

However, Rome here overlooks the fact that this unquestionably valid (because unrepeatable yet singular and highly irregular) act of Zipporah -- can no way be made normative as a *regula* alias a general rule. Still less can it be made to apply to the completely different case of dying infants.

For Rome here also overlooks the fact that it was not the uncircumcised healthy infant Gershom but only the circumcised and threatened adult Moses that was then dying. The wrath of God was kindled not by Gershom's lack of being circumcised -- but by Moses' sinful neglect to circumcise that baby boy.

Calvin commented:<sup>35</sup> "Why should Zipporah have taken a sharp stone or knife, and circumcised her son -- had she not known that God was offended at his uncircumcision?... Moses had provoked God's vengeance.... He was terrified by the approach of certain destruction.... The cause of His affliction was shewn him.... It would otherwise never have occurred to himself or his wife to circumcise the child to appease God's wrath....

"The child [Gershom] was not duly [alias *regula*-rly] circumcised.... It was improper in itself.... We must not take this as an example [to follow].... The confusion of Zipporah, and the stupor of Moses, were pardoned.... She rashly hastened to circumcise her son.... Let us then learn from hence, to use reverently the sacraments which are the seals of God's grace -- lest He should severely avenge our despisal of them!"

## **268. No basis in Zipporah's action for Romanism's emergency baptism**

What, though, of the Romanists' practice? Explained Calvin: "Their folly is confuted, who wish to obtain a colour for 'baptism by women' from this passage. For they contend that if infants be in danger of death, they may properly be baptized by women -- because Zipporah circumcised her son. But they will themselves allow that, if a man be present, a woman could not lawfully [or regularly] administer this sacrament. It is a perversion, then, to lay down a rule -- from a confused and hasty act."

In his *Appendix to the Tract on the True Method of Reforming the Church*, Calvin added<sup>36</sup> the following: "The example of Zipporah is quoted, in which some -- pleasing themselves more than they ought -- betray their own want of discernment.... First, even on their own shewing, the cases of circumcision and of baptism are different. For they do not say that that ancient symbol [of circumcision] was absolutely necessary.

However, some object: 'But there is a danger that he who is sick, may be deprived of the gift of regeneration -- if he decease without baptism.' In his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin responded:<sup>37</sup> "By no means. Our children, before they are born, God declares that He adopts for His own.... How much evil has been caused by the dogma...that baptism is necessary to salvation....

"For when the opinion prevails that all are lost who happen not to be baptized in water -- our condition becomes worse than that of God's ancient people [Genesis 17:7-12 & Second Samuel 12:12-23]. In that case, Christ will be thought to have come not to fulfil but to abolish the promises. Since the promise which was then effectual in itself -- [the promise] to confer salvation before the eighth day -- would [then] not now be effectual without the help of a sign....

"Children who happen to depart this life before an opportunity of baptizing them in water, are not excluded from the Kingdom of heaven.... Unless we admit this position, great injury is done to the covenant of God -- as if in itself it were weak.... Its effect depends not either on baptism or on any accessaries.

"The sacrament is afterwards added, as a kind of seal." It is added "not to give efficacy to the promise as if in itself invalid, but merely to confirm it to us.

Hence it follows that the children of believers are not baptized in order that, though formerly aliens from the Church, they may then for the first time become children of God." To the contrary.

They "are received into the Church by a formal sign because, in virtue of the promise, they previously belonged to the body of Christ. Hence if, in omitting the sign, there is neither sloth nor contempt nor negligence -- we are safe from all danger."

The Calvinistic *Westminster Confession* makes a most important statement right after citing Exodus 4:24<sup>f</sup> anent the sacrament of initiation. For it states<sup>38</sup> that "grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it -- or that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated."<sup>38</sup>

## **269. Moses: fleshly circumcision pointed to that of the heart**

Moses told the People of Israel: "I have set the land before you. Go in and take possession of the land which the Lord swore to your [fore]fathers Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, to give unto them and to their seed after them!" Deuteronomy 1:8.

In a sermon on that text, Calvin declared: "Children which come from Christians, are already chosen by God to be His Flock and of His Household, and God **has** taken them to Himself **already**, even **before** they come out of their mother's womb. Is not the knowledge of such doctrine an excellent strengthening to us, when we see that God has given our salvation a ground to build upon **before** we were **born** or created? Yes." Yes indeed!

Very important is the circumcision of the heart -- mentioned by Moses in Deuteronomy 10:16. Calvin here commented:<sup>39</sup> "To 'circumcise the heart' is equivalent to cleansing it.... Circumcision is, as it were, the solemn consecration -- whereby the children of Abraham were initiated unto the worship of God and true piety, and at the same time were separated from heathen nations to be His holy and peculiar people.... They were to be admitted to this elementary rite in their infancy, so that by its visible sign they might learn that the defilements of the flesh and the world were to be renounced....

"God had chosen them as His people...to prove that they differed from heathen nations and that they were circumcised in spirit no less than in the flesh. For Paul declares that they alone are truly Jews who are circumcised 'inwardly' as he says, and not those who only have to boast of 'the letter' of circumcision. Romans 2:28-29. Therefore, the Prophets frequently taunt the transgressors of the Law by calling them 'uncircumcised' -- although they bore the visible sign in their flesh."

Yet Moses assured the Israelites that there was hope for them even after future apostasy! For even then, if they would nevertheless return to the Lord -- "God will circumcise your heart, and the heart of your seed" *etc.*<sup>40</sup>

Here, Calvin commented<sup>41</sup> that "this promise...would be the chief advantage of their reconciliation -- that God should endow them with the Spirit of regeneration. There is a metaphor in this word circumcise. For Moses alludes to the legal sign of consecration whereby they were initiated into the service of God. The expression, therefore, is equivalent to his saying -- 'God will create you spiritually to be new men'....

"Whatever God offers us in the sacraments, depends on the secret operation of His Spirit. Circumcision was then the sacrament of repentance and renewal, as baptism is now to us. But 'the letter' as Paul calls it (Romans 2:27), was useless in itself -- as also now many are baptized to no profit.

"So far then is God from resigning the grace of His Spirit to the sacraments, that all their efficacy and utility is lodged in the Spirit alone.... Still, it is not His intention to restrict the circumcision of the heart to the subsequent course of their lives -- as if it depended on their own will and choice to 'circumcise' themselves, before God should work in them.... In fact, He regenerates by His Spirit."

## **270. Calvin on Joshua: circumcision for children of God-professing adults**

In Joshua 5:2-8, at God's command, Moses' successor Joshua circumcised the people of Israel. For they had lapsed into uncircumcision while on their way through the wilderness.

Because of that widespread delinquency, Joshua soon thereafter told the Israelites: 'As for me and my household -- we will serve the Lord!' Joshua 24:15. For he would not only preach Paedocircumcision to others, and administer it to them. By his own example and that of his family, he would also practise it personally -- both 'puritanically' and precisely.

Indeed, he would do so especially by then and thereafter training his own covenant children to serve the Lord lifelong. For thus were they to 'improve' the sacrament they had received in infancy.

As Calvin explained of the backsliding and anabaptizing antipaedocircumcisional Israelites:<sup>42</sup> "They did not desist from circumcising their children the very first day after their departure [from Egypt], but only after they had been obliged to retrace their steps through their own perverseness.... None were circumcised on the way, after they had set out.... For it is said that their sons...were circumcised by Joshua....

"The real object of Joshua was...to renew and confirm the covenant which had already been made with God.... To impress them [the antipaedocircumcisionalized or apostate and 'anabaptized' people] with a feeling of shame -- he declares that he and his household will persevere in the worship of God."

Let us put the above in church-historical terms! After the exodus, the previously Presbyterian people of God had lapsed into an 'anabaptistic' Antipaedocircumcisionism or 'Antipaedobaptism' -- and had thus become *de facto* Baptists. But the faithful and paedocircumcisional or 'paedobaptistic' Joshua now 'represbyterianized' them.

Indeed, he did so not by impossibly attempting to recircumcise the circumcised -- but by circumcising all those of them and their infants who had grown up uncircumcised. He also did so -- by declaring that, whatever the people themselves would thenceforth do, at least he **and his household** would paedocircumcisionally and 'presbyterianly' serve the Lord.

### **271. The Psalmist trusted in God before he was born**

Later, David said to God: "You are He Who took me out of the womb. You made me hope -- [even] when I was on my mother's breasts.... You are my God -- from my mother's womb." Psalm 22:9f.

Here we are told, under the infallible inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that David had already put his "hope" or trust or confidence in God -- even before he had been weaned. "I" thus hoped or confided in God -- wrote David -- even "when I was on my mother's breasts."

Nay, more. David added: "You made me hope" even before my birth. For "You are my God from my mother's womb."

Calvin's comments here disclose much insight. For he noted<sup>43</sup> that God had caused David "to confide" in Him --before he was weaned, and even before his birth. Observed Calvin of David: "'I was cast upon You from the womb.' That is, I was left in Your hands in the womb. 'You are my God from my mother's belly.'"

Calvin then immediately applied the above also to other believers. Said he: "We have experienced Him to be a Father from our earliest infancy."

For, as far as covenantal babies are concerned, "He is said to give them confidence" or *fiducia* alias absolute assurance of faith. Indeed, "God in this manner, by His grace, anticipates little infants -- before they have, as yet, the use of reason."

### **272. The Lord upheld the God-trusting psalmist from his mother's womb**

Similarly, the psalmist later declared: "You are my hope, O Lord God. You are my trust, from my youth. By You I have been upheld -- from the womb." Psalm 71:5f.

Here, Calvin commented<sup>44</sup> that the psalmist had "trust or confidence" in God -- even while the Lord was "nourishing his hope" during his tenderest youth. For the psalmist "not only celebrates the goodness of God which he had experienced from his childhood -- but also those proofs of it which he had received **previous to his birth**....

"Have we not equal reason to marvel that the infant, shut up within its mother's womb, can live in such a condition?... The Spirit therefore justly rebukes this ingratitude, by commending to our consideration this memorable instance of **the grace of God** which is exhibited **in our birth and generation**.

"When we are born into the world...the mother do[es] her office [or duty].... Yet did not God -- putting, so to speak, His 'hand' under us -- receive us into His bosom?" Yes! Hence, as Calvin added,<sup>45</sup> "David had learned by continual experience even **from his infancy** -- that nothing is better than **to lean** exclusively **upon** the true **God**."

After relating his afflictions, the psalmist victoriously exults to the Lord at the end of Psalm 102: "The children of Your servants shall continue. And their seed shall be established before You."

Here Calvin commented:<sup>46</sup> "When it is said that the seed of God's servants shall be established before His face, the meaning is... 'the seed' and 'children' of the godly... who do not turn aside from the faith of their parents. Successive generations are expressly pointed out, because the covenant extends even to future ages."

In Psalm 105:6-10, we read: "O you seed of Abraham..., you children of Jacob!... He has remembered His covenant for ever, the word which He commanded to a thousand generations. This covenant He made with Abraham, and His oath to Isaac... for an everlasting covenant."

Here Calvin commented<sup>47</sup> of the Israelites: "Before they were born children of Abraham, they were already heirs of the covenant." Why? "Because they derived their origin from the holy fathers."

Similarly in Psalm 139:13-16. For there Calvin explained how God was formingly and savingly shaping David after he was conceived but still before he was born. Indeed, shaping David not just physically, but also spiritually – even when he was still in his mother's womb.

### **273. Calvin on Isaiah's doctrine anent the prenatal faith of covenant infants**

On Isaiah 46:3-4, Calvin commented<sup>48</sup> that God "'carries' His people like a mother who carries the children in her womb" -- and that He has "nourished that people like a infant taken from its mother's womb." Indeed, "God did not begin to act as the **father** and nurse of His people **only** from the time when they were born."

To the contrary. God "also 'begat them' spiritually (James 1:18)." Consequently, added Calvin in explanation of these passages, "I do not object to extending the words so far as to mean that they were brought as it were out of the bowels of God into a new life and hope of an eternal inheritance."

In Isaiah 49:1, the Prophet declared: "Jehovah has called me from the womb"; and "from my mother's belly He has had my name in remembrance." Here, Calvin commented<sup>48</sup> "that Isaiah says far less than the occasion demands -- when he says that he was 'called from the womb.' For he had been called long before.

"But...the Prophet does not describe the commencement of the period -- as if it were only from the womb that God began to call him. But it is as if he had said, 'Before I came out of the womb -- God had determined that I should hold this office.'

"In like manner, Paul also says that he was 'set apart from the womb' (Galatians 1:15).... To Jeremiah [1:5] also it is said, 'Before you came forth from the womb, I knew you.'"



## **274. Calvin on Jeremiah anent prenatal sanctification and heart-circumcision**

Thus the Lord said also to Jeremiah (1:5) -- "Before you came forth out of the womb, I sanctified you!" Commented Calvin:<sup>49</sup> "God declares that He knew Jeremiah before He formed him in the womb.... 'Before you came forth from the womb, I sanctified you'.... It is nothing strange that God declares that He had sanctified Jeremiah...in the womb."

Through Jeremiah (4:4), Jehovah also said to His wayward people: "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your hearts!" Because adult circumcision of the heart was necessary, this clearly implies that the previous circumcision of their flesh had not regenerated them.

Commented Calvin of Jeremiah's contemporaries:<sup>50</sup> "Circumcision was their great boast; but only before men.... Hence the Prophet bids them not to value what was of no importance, but to become 'circumcised' before Jehovah.... When God commanded the seed of Abraham to be circumcised (Genesis 17:10-12), it was not His object to have a small portion of skin cut off.... He had regard to something higher -- even that 'you should be circumcised in heart.'

"The Prophet, in short, teaches us here what Paul has more clearly explained (Romans 2:29).... The external sign is worthless -- except accompanied by the reality within.... In the same manner, baptism with us may be called 'the letter' -- when there is no repentance and faith.... Though God circumcises the heart..., men are to 'circumcise' themselves....

"The same is the case with baptism. For when Paul exhorts the faithful to fear God and to lead a holy life, he refers to baptism. It is yet certain that men do not bestow on themselves what God signifies by the sign of baptism. But He counsels them to seek from God the grace of His Spirit, that they might not in vain be sealed by the external rite of baptism -- while destitute of its reality."

God then also predicted that He "will punish all the circumcised together with the uncircumcised." Jeremiah 9:25-26. He mentioned Egypt together with Judah -- and grouped the latter with Edom, Ammon, Moab and "all nations uncircumcised." For "all the house of Israel are uncircumcised in the heart."

## **275. Calvin on heart-circumcision in Jeremiah**

Here, Calvin commented<sup>51</sup> "that God threatens vengeance on the Jews...because they were circumcised and still retained 'uncircumcision'.... There was a mixture which corrupted the sacredness of circumcision and made it like the uncircumcision of the Gentiles.... All were uncircumcised in heart; that is, all the Jews....

"The Prophet...had reference to the Jews who, being degenerated, thus adulterated God's covenant and at the same time violated circumcision so that it differed nothing from

uncircumcision.... The Jews are classed with the Gentiles, so that he ascribes even to them 'uncircumcision'.... The circumcision of each is vain, and is like uncircumcision....

"He names the circumcised together with the uncircumcision.... It is indeed true that the Idumeans were circumcised.... But their circumcision was altogether a mockery, as Esau had departed from the Church of God. The circumcision of the elect people [Israel] was in itself efficacious. But, as they had alike fallen into superstitions, they were like the uncircumcised....

"The Prophet...denounces vengeance on the Jews as well as on the Egyptians, and names the circumcised with the uncircumcision; for the latter had uncircumcision, the former circumcision.... Thus they had blended profane and sacred things together.... By saying that 'all nations' were uncircumcised, he doubtless includes the Israelites.... The Jews would have otherwise denied that they deserved to be classed with the Gentiles. But the Prophet deprives them of every excuse, and says that they were but one nation, having no difference: 'All these nations,' then, 'are uncircumcised'....

"He says the Jews are 'uncircumcised in heart'.... Circumcision might have been pleaded by them. Hence the Prophet says that though they had the visible symbol in the flesh, they were yet uncircumcised in heart.... For God cares not for the external symbol, but has regard to the chief thing -- the circumcision of the heart. It is a common thing with Moses and the Prophets to call an unrenewed heart 'uncircumcision' and to say that the people are uncircumcised in heart....

"The same is the case now. When we boast of baptism alone and are at the same time destitute of repentance and faith, our boasting is absurd and ridiculous.... Literal baptism avails hypocrites nothing, for they receive only the naked sign.... Therefore we must come to the Spirit of baptism; to the thing itself. For the interior power is renovation, when our old man is crucified in us and when we rise again with Christ into newness of life." So, grace before baptism -- must also be followed by grace after baptism, too.

## **276. Ezekiel: God says tiny covenant infants are "My children"**

The Lord promised His people: "I will give them one heart, and I will put a new Spirit within you." Ezekiel 11:19. Yet He first rebuked the Israelites for killing their own infants -- whom He Himself called "My children." Ezekiel 16:20f. Indeed, it certainly seems that God was calling them this -- even before their infant circumcision.

Calvin commented<sup>52</sup> on this passage: "Here God places Himself in the position of a parent -- because He had adopted the people as His own.... All their offspring were His sons, since [at least until later disproved]...all who spring from the people ought to be esteemed His children.... They are called 'sons of God'....

"The Jews [as too all other peoples] were naturally accursed, through being Adam's seed. But by supernatural and singular privilege, they were exempt and free from the curse -- since

circumcision was a testimony of the adoption by which God had consecrated them to Himself. Hence they were holy.... As to their being impure, it could not...abolish God's covenant.

"The same thing ought at this time to prevail.... For we are all born under the curse. And yet, God acknowledges supernaturally as His sons all who spring from the faithful -- not only in the first or second degree, but even to a thousand generations.... So Paul says that the children of the faithful are holy -- since...the **adoption of God** remains fixed. First Corinthians 7:14."

The Prophet also predicts "a covenant of peace" accompanied by "showers of blessing." Ezekiel 34:25f. God promises: "I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them a heart of flesh -- so that they may walk in My Statutes.... I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean.... I will cleanse you. I will give even a new heart to you, and I will put a new Spirit within you. And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh." Ezekiel 36:25-27.

God further promises His people that He will put "My Spirit in you" -- and also in "their children and their children's children for ever." Ezekiel 37:14,25. "For I will pour out My Spirit upon the house of Israel." Ezekiel 39:29.

Commented Calvin:<sup>53</sup> "In Ezekiel also it is said, 'I will set up one Shepherd over them, and He shall feed them.... I will make with them a covenant of peace.' Ezekiel 34:23-25.... The good work thus begun...means the very commencement of conversion in the will.... 'I will put My Spirit within you'.... Ezekiel 36:26f....

Conversion is undoubtedly in the hand of God.... He promises that He will give some a heart of flesh.... Ezekiel 36:26.... In Ezekiel...the Lord promises, 'Then will I sprinkle you with clean water'.... Those sprinkled with the Spirit, are restored to the full vigour of life.... Ezekiel 36:25.... "I will put My Law," says He, 'in your hearts, and make you to walk in My precepts'.... Ezekiel 36:27."

Through Ezekiel (44:7), God further corrected the Hebrews -- because they had also "brought [adult pagans] into My sanctuary -- strangers uncircumcised in heart, and uncircumcised in flesh!" Yet He also predicted the later arrival of baptism -- as the 'full of hope' New Testament sign and seal of regeneration.

## **277. Malachi: the 'godly seed' at the coming of Jehovah's Angel**

The Old Testament ends with wonderful statements in the prophecies of Malachi. There we are told that God made only one wife for Adam, "in order that He might seek a **godly seed**" and "a **godly seed.**" Malachi 2:14. As Calvin observed:<sup>54</sup> "He sought then the seed of God."

Jehovah then predicts: "Behold, I will send My messenger, and He shall prepare the way before Me.... Then the Lord, whom you seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Angel of the Covenant." Malachi 3:1.

Commented Calvin:<sup>55</sup> "This passage ought doubtless to be understood of John the baptizer, for Christ Himself so explains it.... John the baptizer was the 'messenger' of Christ.... Christ our Lord...is promised by another title, 'the Angel...of the Covenant'....

"The prophet [Malachi] says that Christ would 'sit to purify the sons of Levi.... He [Christ] shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers.'"<sup>56</sup>

This latter would be effected first through John the baptizer -- and then, more importantly, by his divine half-cousin Jesus Christ as the Angel of the Covenant Himself. Thereafter, without John, Christ would start and continue to effect it through His Apostles and their ministerial successors. Indeed, all of this would come to pass -- at the inauguration of the Newer Testament.

### **278. The Holy Spirit filled John the baptizer -- from his mother's womb**

An angel messenger from God brought good news to Zacharias -- the father-to-be of John the baptizer. The angel gave that new father a very precious assurance about John, his unborn son, who as then had not yet even been conceived. Said the angel concerning John: "He shall be filled with the Holy Ghost -- even from his mother's womb." Luke 1:15.

This infilling with the Holy Spirit occurred in John prenatally -- long before he could possibly have been either circumcised or baptized. Indeed, nowhere in Holy Writ are we told that John himself ever received baptism at all.

It seems he never did. For John later admitted to Christ before himself baptizing the Saviour: "I need to be baptized -- by You!" Matthew 3:14. Indeed, Scripture itself later implies<sup>57</sup> that John the baptizer had not himself received baptism. Yet John had still been filled with the Holy Spirit -- even before his birth.

Calvin here commented<sup>58</sup> about the unborn John that "the power and grace of the Spirit would appear in him.... Even from the womb, he shall excel in the gifts of the Spirit.... 'From the womb' means from his earliest infancy.

"The power of the Spirit, I acknowledge, did operate in John -- while he was yet in his mother's womb.... Let us learn by this example that, from the earliest infancy to the latest old age, the operation of the Spirit in men is free."

Six months after the conception of John in the womb of his mother Elisabeth, Jesus was conceived in the womb of Elisabeth's cousin Mary. Luke 1:36. In an absolutely unique way, Jesus too was filled with the Holy Spirit prenatally. He, our great High Priest, was not baptized till the commencement of His priestly ministry -- when about thirty years of age.<sup>59</sup> Yet even in His human nature, He had been indwelt by the Holy Ghost -- ever since His conception.<sup>60</sup>

As Calvin commented regarding Jesus:<sup>61</sup> "He was conceived in a remarkable manner, by the power of the Holy Spirit.... The truth of His human nature is not inconsistent with His deriving

peculiar honour above all others from His divine generation -- having been conceived out of the ordinary way of nature by the Holy Spirit....

"Christ, because He was conceived by a Spirit-ual power, is called 'the Holy Seed'.... Yet He contracted no defilement from a sinful nature. For the Spirit of God kept Him pure, from the very commencement.... This was done not merely so that He might abound in personal holiness -- but chiefly so that He might sanctify His Own people."

### **279. John the baptizer prenatally acknowledged his Saviour Jesus**

Soon after Christ's conception, Mary was "found to be with child by the Holy Spirit." So God assured Joseph that the One Who "had been conceived" within Mary his betrothed, had been so conceived by the Holy Ghost. Matthew 1:18-20.

"Mary arose in those days...and saluted [her cousin] Elisabeth.... When Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the baby leaped up in her [Elisabeth's] womb. Then Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost and she said [to Mary]...: 'As soon as the sound of your salutation echoed in my ears, the baby leaped up in my womb for joy.'" Luke 1:39-44.

Very clearly, the unbaptized Spirit-filled John -- three months before his own birth -- joyfully acknowledged the not-yet-baptized yet already Spirit-filled Jesus soon after His conception. Also the unbaptized Elisabeth herself "was filled with the Holy Ghost." And the unbaptized Mary, commented Calvin,<sup>62</sup> "cherished in her heart by faith the Son of God as already conceived in her womb."

Inside Elisabeth, continued Calvin, John leaped up joyfully. For "the babe started [or was startled] -- by a secret movement of the Spirit.... Elisabeth affirms that her cousin [Mary] was 'blessed' -- on account of the blessedness of her child [Jesus].... She [Mary] is justly called 'blessed' -- on whom God bestowed the remarkable honour of bringing into the world His Own Son, through Whom she had been Spirit-ually re-new-ed."<sup>63</sup>

Mary herself was renewed without baptism. Indeed, perhaps Calvin is here implying that she was renewedly sanctified -- precisely by becoming pregnant. Consequently, also her son Jesus was holy from His very conception onward. Cf. First Corinthians 7:14.

Nor is the case of the prenatally-sanctified John unique. To the contrary. Calvin clearly tells us<sup>64</sup> that "God gave in the case of John whom He sanctified from his mother's womb -- a proof of what He might do in others."

### **280. Was John the baptizer regenerated before his birth?**

The prenatally Spirit-filled John the baptizer (Luke 1:15) thus joyfully acknowledged the prenatal Christ (Luke 1:41). In so doing, John indicated that he himself had already been

regenerated -- at least a full three months before his own birth and infant circumcision. For none other than regenerates can acknowledge the Saviour with joy.

Right after John's birth, his father Zacharias prophesied that John would go out before the Lord Messiah to prepare His ways. That 'dawning' Messiah was 'the Dayspring from on high.'

Previously at His Own conception -- and also when soon thereafter acknowledged by the prenatal John -- that Messianic Dayspring had already started dawning. That dawn would endure until the birth of Christ nine months later, as the Light of the world.

That great Sun would then shine forth in a blaze of light, at His birth and thereafter. Yet even six months before Christ's birth, at the birth of his half-cousin John, this was already known. For John's father Zacharias even then exulted that the Messiah "has visited us -- to give light to them that sit in darkness." Luke 1:79.

Commented Calvin:<sup>65</sup> "The mere sight of his son, while still a child, led Zacharias to discourse in so lofty a strain respecting the grace and power of Christ before He was born.... The Holy Spirit bore testimony, while He was still in His mother's womb."

After John's birth and infant circumcision, "the child grew and became strong in spirit." Luke 1:59 & 1:80. Calvin commented<sup>66</sup> this "implies that the great and uncommon excellence of the child gave proof that there [already] dwelt in him a Heavenly Spirit," cf. Luke 1:15-17 & 1:41-44. Thereafter "John remained unknown in the deserts...till the day on which the Lord had purposed to bring him into public view..., though he was fully aware of his calling."

## **281. The sinless Jesus was holy from His human conception onward**

Six months after John's birth, Jesus Himself was born. One week later, He -- the sinless One -- was circumcised. Luke 2:21. Then, when Jesus was later reaching puberty, "the child grew and became strong in Spirit, filled with wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him."

In due time, He approached teenage. For then "He was twelve years old.... And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favour -- with God and man." Luke 2:40,42,52.

Here Calvin commented<sup>67</sup> about Christ that "the endowments of His mind grew with His age. The gifts and graces of the Spirit grew also and increased in Him. Hence we infer that this progress or advancement relates to His human nature. For the divine nature could receive no increase.

"But a question arises. From the time that He was conceived in His mother's womb -- did He not abound in all fullness of spiritual gifts? For it appears absurd to say that the Son of God [ever] wanted anything that was necessary to perfection.

"The reply is easy.... He chose not only to grow in body, but to make progress in mind.... Christ received, in His human nature, according to His age and capacity, an increase of the free

gifts of the Spirit -- so that 'out of His fullness' (John 1:16) He may pour them out upon us. For we draw grace -- from out of His grace."

## **282. John the baptizer demanded faith before baptizing**

With the later commencement of the mature ministry of John the baptizer, circumcision now began to yield to baptism. It is clear that when John baptized -- he did not believe that baptism regenerated. To the contrary. He looked for evidences of the prior existence of renewal and repentance and faith in the people -- before he baptized them.

Thus John came -- "preaching in the desert of Judea and saying, 'Repent!'" Indeed, "John the baptizer was in the desert, preaching a baptism of repentance."

This was his message to all the believing people -- whether crowds, tax-collectors, soldiers, or the infant children of suchlike -- before he would baptize any of them. Thus, "all the people and even the publicans who heeded him, having been baptized with the baptism of John, declared God to be just." Matthew 3:2; Mark 1:4f; Luke 3:10,12,14 & 7:29.

"Matthew," commented Calvin,<sup>68</sup> "relates the substance of John's doctrine as uttered by John himself.... Mark has one word more.... He says, 'he [John] came baptizing and preaching the baptism of repentance'.... In substance, there is the most perfect agreement. For they all connect repentance with the forgiveness of sins."

Luke (3:3) says John came "preaching the baptism of repentance." Here, Calvin commented<sup>69</sup> that "a sacrament...is not a dumb ceremony exhibiting some unmeaning pomp without doctrine. But the Word of God is joined to it, and gives life to the outward ceremony. By 'the Word' -- I mean not mutterings of a magical character made by some exorcist between his teeth, but what is pronounced with a clear and distinct voice and leads to the edification of faith" -- that is, of faith already present.

Further: "John 'baptized unto repentance'.... The meaning, power and nature of that baptism are the same as ours.... It is incorrect to say that the baptism of John is different from the baptism of Christ" (in Christianity).

## **283. Calvin on John's demand for repentance before baptism**

Still more, continued Calvin:<sup>70</sup> "John preached 'the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.' Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3.... You will speak most correctly, therefore, if you call baptism the sacrament of penitence -- seeing it is given to those who aim at repentance to confirm their faith, and seal their confidence."

Indeed, Holy Scripture itself clearly states that John "baptized" the faithful precisely while the latter were "confessing their sins."<sup>71</sup> Here, Calvin commented:<sup>72</sup> "The confession was a testimony of repentance. For, as the Lord in the sacraments brings Himself under obligation to us.... So it is our duty, on the other hand, to reply to Him.... That men may come forward in

a right manner to be baptized, confession of sins is demanded from them. Otherwise, the whole performance would be nothing but an idle mockery."

Holy Scripture further states: "All the people...who heeded him, having been baptized with the baptism of John, declared God to be just." Luke 7:29. Commented Calvin:<sup>73</sup> "This is a very remarkable expression. Those who respectfully embrace the Son of God and assent to the doctrine which He has brought, are said to ascribe righteousness to God....

"The word 'justify' applies generally, no doubt, to everything connected with the praises of God.... Since faith 'justifies' God..., unbelief must be blasphemy against Him." However, as regards those who professed repentance and came to John requesting baptism for themselves and their families -- "it was already an evidence of their piety that they presented themselves to be baptized."

#### **284. John the baptizer refuses to baptize unbelieving Pharisees**

Calvin commented further<sup>74</sup> that John "addresses directly the Pharisees and Sadducees." John then "at the same time addresses, through them, a warning to all -- not to hold out a hypocritical appearance of repentance, instead of a true affection of the heart."

Calvin then asked challengingly: "If John, the organ of the Holy Spirit, employed such severity of language in his opening address to those who voluntarily came to be baptized and to make a public profession of the gospel -- how ought we now to act towards the avowed enemies of Christ...? Most certainly, if you compare the Pope and his abominable clergy with the Pharisees and Sadducees -- the mildest possible way of dealing with them, will be to throw them all into one bundle."

John commanded the Pharisees: "Yield therefore fruits worthy of repentance!" Matthew 3:7f. Commented Calvin: "Repentance, which is attested by words, is of no value -- unless it be proved by the conduct.... It ought to be observed that 'good works' (Titus 3:8) are here called 'fruits of repentance.' For 'repentance' is an inward matter which has its seat in the heart and soul, but afterwards yields its fruits in a change of life."

Yet John refused to baptize the obviously faithless (however 'religious' they were). For "when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to baptism, he said to them: 'You brood of snakes! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Therefore, bring forth fruits which evidence repentance! And don't think to tell yourselves, "We have Abraham as father!"'" Matthew 3:7f.

Thus the unrepentant and unbelieving "Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God, against themselves -- not having been baptized by John." They would not repent. So John never baptized them. Luke 7:30. As Calvin here commented:<sup>75</sup> "The scribes, in despising the baptism of John, shut against themselves -- through their pride -- the gate of faith."

While John baptized the penitent adult members of the covenant together with their covenant children, he refused to baptize the impenitent snake-like hypocrites and their brood of



little snakes. Nevertheless, it was still a great sin for the Pharisees to refuse to repent. For such a profession of repentance was necessary then, as it is now -- in order to be able to receive baptism for oneself and for one's children.

### **285. John's baptism of the righteous Jesus Christ our Lord**

It surely needs no demonstration that the Son of man Jesus Christ was righteous<sup>76</sup> in the eyes of God, and had faith in Him even before baptized by John.<sup>77</sup> For Jesus trusted in God even when but a boy.<sup>78</sup> Indeed, it seems obvious that the tiny human being Jesus faithfully trusted in God even prenatally -- ever since the very time of His conception onward.<sup>79</sup>

As Jesus always had been and always would be uniquely sinless,<sup>80</sup> there could be no question of Him being regenerated at any time -- neither before, nor during, nor after His baptism. Certainly there was no baptismal regeneration -- then.<sup>81</sup>

Yet, He was baptized not for Himself but for us. Hence, through His baptism, we ourselves 'partake'<sup>82</sup> at our baptism<sup>83</sup> -- of the very baptism administered by John to Jesus.

But that is a baptism which did not regenerate. Accordingly, neither does our own baptism regenerate us today.

At the baptism of the man Christ Jesus, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him anew. This then occurred, even though that Spirit had previously indwelt Him ever since His conception.<sup>84</sup>

He the Unregeneratable -- He Who Alone regenerates others -- was at His baptism apparently ingrafted into the sins of His people. This happened -- so that they, once regenerated by Him, could at their baptisms be ingrafted into their sinless Saviour.

As Calvin commented anent Christ's baptism:<sup>85</sup> "This was the first time that the Spirit was seen descending upon Him. Not that before this He had been empty of the Spirit -- but now He is, as it were, consecrated with a solemn ceremony [baptism].... When He wished to make Himself known to the world, He began with baptism. He therefore received the Spirit on that occasion -- not so much for Himself, as for His people."

On Christ's actual water baptism, Calvin commented further:<sup>86</sup> "For what purpose did the Son of God wish to be baptized? This may be learned in some measure from His answer.... He received the same baptism with us -- in order to assure believers that they are ingrafted into His body and that they are 'buried with Him in baptism' so that they may rise to 'newness of life.' Romans 6:4....

"Christ received baptism...so that He might render full obedience to the Father. And the special reason was, so that He might consecrate baptism in His own body -- that we might have it in common with Him.... There was no doubt...that Christ had no need of His baptism.... It was for the sake of others, that baptism was asked [by Him].... It is for the benefit of others, and not for His own, that Christ asks to be baptized." Also for the benefit of covenant infants.

Right after the baptism of Jesus, God the Father said from heaven: "This One is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased!" Matthew 3:16f. This was said of Christ [the 'Anointed One'] -- the son of man, everlastingly, throughout the future. Yet it was not at His baptism that Christ the son of man became God's Own Son.

Indeed, ever since His conception -- long before His baptism -- He had already been the Son of God. Indeed, even at His conception -- like Adam before the fall, Christ also had been the perfectly just son of man.<sup>87</sup> Yet unlike Adam prior to his creation, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity has always been the Son of God -- unchangeably, and from all eternity past.

## **286. According to Calvin the passage John 3:3-8 does not refer to baptism**

Soon after Jesus commenced His public ministry, He told the Jewish ruler Nicodemus: "Except a person be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.... The Spirit keeps on blowing wherever He wants to, and you hear His sound. But you cannot tell where He is coming from, and where He is going. So is everyone" -- including covenant infants -- "who has been born [or (re)generated] by the Spirit."<sup>88</sup>

If anything, the above words of Jesus clearly militate against a mechanical regenerationism -- such as that which Rome alleges is accomplished by and during baptism. For the above words imply that the continually renewing work of the Spirit -- the work of ongoingly causing those once regenerated to keep on seeing and to keep on entering into God's Kingdom -- can no way be restricted to whatever might or might not happen only at the very moment of being baptized with water.

Indeed, such of the elect as die in fetushood and especially during early embryhood, generally die unbaptized (even in Roman Catholic hospitals). Yet they so die -- only after being **justified without baptism**. Therefore, in their cases at least, they get justified before birth -- and without getting baptized at all.

Calvin himself commented:<sup>89</sup> "To 'see' the Kingdom of God, comes to the same thing as 'entering into' the Kingdom.... They are mistaken who think the Kingdom of God means heaven.

"It is rather the spiritual life which is begun by faith in this world, and daily increases according to the continual progress of faith. So the meaning is that no man can be gathered truly into the Church, and be reckoned among the children of God -- until he has first been renewed."

## **287. Matthew 9:2 clearly proves God's grace toward believers' children**

Later, when Jesus was in His Own city of Nazareth, "they brought to Him a paralytic -- lying on a bed. But Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the paralytic: 'Child, cheer up! Your sins have been forgiven you.'" Matthew 9:2.

Note here that the paralytic child (*paralutikon...teknon*) did not and could not come to Jesus in his own paralyzed strength. So others brought him to Jesus. "They brought to Him" the "paralytic...child" -- *prosepheron Autō; paralutikon...teknon*.

Note further that the Bible here mentions not the faith of the paralytic child himself -- but the faith of those [his parents?] who brought that child to Jesus. For the Bible here speaks of "their faith" (*tēn pistin autōn*).

Note yet further that Scripture does not say that the sins of the paralytic child were forgiven him because of that child's own faith (although he too probably indeed did believe in Jesus). Scripture says that the sins of that child were forgiven him because of the faith of those who brought him to Jesus.

Scripture says further that the child's sins were then forgiven -- not that they could be forgiven if and when he himself later believed in Christ. Forgiven! Not 'shall be forgiven' -- but rather: have been forgiven!

For Jesus assured him: "Child, cheer up! Your sins have been forgiven you!" *Apheōntai soi hai hamartiai sou!* Note that this word *apheōntai* is perfect indicative passive!

Calvin's comment on the above event<sup>90</sup> -- "with regard to all believers" -- is short and sweet. "By their faith, the grace of God is extended to their children -- and their children's children -- even before they are born."

## **288. Matthew 18:3f on the tiny one who believed in Jesus**

Jesus Himself once placed "a little child" of the covenant amid His adult Disciples. Then He told them: "Unless you keep on being converted and keep on becoming like little children -- you shall no way enter into the Kingdom of heaven...."

"Whosoever shall give offence to one of these little ones who believes in Me -- it were better for him that...he were drowned.... Beware of despising these little ones!" Matthew 18:3-6.

Notice that Jesus is here claiming that not just only this particular little one believed in Him. Jesus is here claiming that this particular little one who believed in Him -- was but one of a whole class of little ones that believe in Him. Indeed, "whosoever shall give offence to [but] one of these little ones who believes in Me -- it were better for him that...he were drowned!"

It is especially adults who must "beware of despising these little ones" that believe in Jesus. For Jesus is here rebuking specifically His adult Disciples.

Here, Calvin commented<sup>91</sup> of Jesus' words to His adult Disciples: "He holds up to them 'a little child' as an emblem of humility.... Paul bids us be 'children' not 'in understanding' but 'in

malice' (First Corinthians 14:20).... The tender age of little children is distinguished by simplicity.... They are properly and justly held out by Christ as an example....

"To the example of 'little children' must be referred the conversion of which He now speaks.... God embraces with wonderful love the 'little ones.' It would be strange indeed that a mortal man should 'despise' or treat as of no account those whom God holds in such high esteem.... We ought therefore to 'beware of despising' their salvation."

### **289. Calvin on the salvation of Zacchaeus's household**

In Luke 19:1-10, we are told how Jesus saved an entire household in Jericho. This clearly implies the justification even of the tiniest baby therein.

"A man named Zacchaeus...sought to see Jesus.... He climbed up into a sycamore tree to see Him... When Jesus came to the place..., Jesus said to him, 'Today salvation has come to this house -- inasmuch as he [Zacchaeus] too is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man came to seek and save what was lost.'"

Calvin commented<sup>92</sup> "that the mind of Zacchaeus contained some seed of piety. In this manner, before revealing Himself to men, the Lord frequently communicates to them a secret desire by which they are led to Him -- [even] while He is still concealed.... He does not disappoint them, but manifests Himself in due time....

"We need not wonder if He bestows this honour on one who was already drawn to Him by a secret movement of the Spirit.... He is never sought in vain by those who sincerely desire to know Him.... Submissiveness and obedience must be regarded as the beginning of faith....

"The conversion of Zacchaeus was an astonishing work of God.... Conversion was an undoubted pledge of the divine adoption. He [Jesus] justly concludes from it -- that 'this house' is a possessor of 'salvation.' Such too is the import of the words. For since Zaccheus is one of the 'children of Abraham,' He [Jesus] argues that his 'house' is saved....

"God, when He adopts the head of a family, promises that He will be a God even to his whole house. 'Salvation' is, with propriety, extended from the head to the whole body.... 'Zacchaeus' not less than the other Jews...is 'a son of Abraham'.... That his former life may not seem to have shut against him the gate of salvation, Christ argues...He was sent by the Father to 'save those who were lost.'"

### **290. Calvin's refutation of the Anabaptists from Matthew 19:13f**

"Then were there brought to Him little children, that he should put His hands on them." Matthew 19:13. Declared Jesus of these tiny covenanters: "Permit the little children, and do not forbid them -- to come to Me! For the Kingdom of heaven is of such as these." Matthew 19:14.

Once again, Jesus is not giving a special case. He is not claiming that merely one (highly exceptional) little child belonged to His Kingdom. Jesus is here asserting that the Kingdom of heaven belongs to persons precisely like those little children. They were covenant children, brought to Jesus by their believing parents. They were very little children. Indeed, Luke (18:15f) clearly calls them *brephē* alias 'unweaned babies' or "infants."

Some Anabaptists believed baptism was not essential for salvation; but others believed the opposite. In chiding the latter kind of Anabaptist heretics, Calvin observed<sup>93</sup> that "baptism being, as they hold, necessary to salvation -- they, in denying it to infants, consign them all to eternal death. Let them now consider what kind of agreement they have with the words of Christ, Who says [in respect of covenantal 'little children' or *paidia*] that 'of such is the Kingdom of heaven!' Matthew 19:14." Compare too specifically the word "infants" in the parallel passage Luke 18:15f.

Here these Anabaptists often wished to ignore this text altogether -- until they had first tried to repudiate both infant regeneration and infant baptism. Explained Calvin: "In regard to the meaning of this passage, they will [or want to] extract nothing from it -- until they have previously overthrown the doctrine which we have already established concerning the regeneration of infants."

On this same passage, Calvin commented even further: "The Anabaptists....refuse baptism to infants, because [they say] infants are incapable of understanding that mystery which is denoted by it. We, on the other hand, maintain that since baptism is the pledge and figure of the forgiveness of sins and likewise of adoption by God, it ought not to be denied to infants whom God adopts and washes with the blood of His Son....

"Infants are renewed by the Spirit of God, according to the capacity[!] of their age -- till that power which was concealed within them, grows by degrees and becomes fully manifest at the proper time.... Hence it follows that they were renewed by the Spirit, to the hope of salvation.

"In short, by embracing them, He [Jesus] testified that they were [already] reckoned by Christ among His flock. And if they were partakers[!] of the spiritual gifts which are represented by baptism -- it is unreasonable that they should be deprived of the outward sign" of holy baptism.

## **291. Christ's Great Commission presupposes faith within covenant infants**

In Christ's Great Commission, Jesus Himself commands His ambassadors to go and preach *kē ruxate* -- and then to baptize those who would believe the preached Gospel. Mark 16:15f. For He enjoins those evangelizing ambassadors (His Ministers of the Word and Sacraments) to "go disciple all nations" --*mathēteusate panta ta ethnē*. Matthew 28:19.

This obviously means the people in those nations -- including that large percentage of such people which constitutes the babies and the children in all those nations. Christ's preaching ambassadors -- His Ministers of the Word and Sacraments -- are thus to keep on baptizing them:

*baptizantes autous.* Then His ambassadors are further to "keep on teaching them" -- *didaskontes autous.*

Commented Calvin:<sup>94</sup> "The meaning amounts to this, that by proclaiming the Gospel everywhere, they should bring all nations to the obedience of the faith and...that they should seal and ratify their doctrine by the sign of the Gospel.... It is said in Mark, 'he that shall believe and be baptized shall be saved.'

"By these words, Christ...by a sacred bond...connects baptism with doctrine.... But as Christ enjoins them to teach before baptizing, and desires that none but believers shall be admitted to baptism -- it would appear that **baptism is not properly administered, unless when it is preceded by faith.**" This means that the baptism of infants themselves deemed to be devoid of faith -- though still a valid baptism -- is an improperly administered baptism.

"On this pretext, the Anabaptists have stormed greatly against infant baptism. But the reply is not difficult.... Christ orders them [His Ministers] to convey to all nations the message of eternal salvation -- and confirms it by adding the seal of baptism....

"On what condition does God adopt as children those who formerly were aliens? It cannot indeed be denied that, when He has once received them [the aliens] into His favour, He continues to bestow it on their children and their children's children.... Therefore, that promise which was formerly given to the Jews, must now be in force towards the Gentiles -- 'I will be your God, and the God of your seed after you.' Genesis 17:7."

## **292. Calvin on "he who believes and is baptized"**

Mark (16:16) gives us additional information in his inspired version of Christ's Great Commission. There, Christ is recorded to have said that "he who has started [and continues] to believe, and who has been baptized -- shall be saved." On the other hand, "he who does not start [nor continue] to believe -- shall be damned." Note the order: first, believe; then, be baptized!

Thereanent, Calvin commented:<sup>95</sup> "Christ enjoins...that **none** but **believers** shall be admitted to **baptism**. It would appear that baptism is not properly administered, unless when it is **preceded** by faith....

It cannot indeed be denied that, when He has once received them [aliens] into His favour, He continues to bestow it on their children and their children's children.... I maintain therefore that it is not rash to administer baptism to infants, to which God invites them when He promises that He will be their God....

"Salvation is promised to believers. For by believing in the Only-Begotten Son of God..., they are reckoned among the children of God.... Baptism is joined to [and thus comes after] the faith.... 'They who shall believe and be baptized, shall be saved.'"

We now briefly summarize the sacramental implications to believers of Christ's Great Commission as a whole. Calvin observed<sup>96</sup> that "the nature of the apostolic function is clear from

the command 'You must go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature!' Mark 16:15.

"No fixed limits are given them, but the whole world [including its infants] is assigned to be reduced under obedience to Christ -- so that by spreading the Gospel as widely as they could, they might everywhere erect His Kingdom.... When our Lord sent forth the Apostles, He gave them a Commission...to preach the Gospel and baptize those who believed.... Matthew 28:19."

"Baptism contributes to our faith.... It is His will that all who have believed, be baptized.... We are to receive it in connection with the promise: 'he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved.' Mark 16:16."

### **293. Be baptized: for the promise is to you and to your children!**

On Ascension Day, Jesus reminded His Apostles that John had truly "baptized [them] with water." Acts 1:5*f*. Yet He then added that they would also soon "be baptized with the Holy Spirit" -- namely on Pentecost Sunday, and indeed by Jesus Himself. Acts 2:32*f* *cf.* Mark 1:8. This would be accomplished not by a submersion under but by an outpouring of the Spirit. Indeed, He was shed forth from on high -- and then came and sat upon the Disciples. Acts 2:3,17*f*,33.

Now this 'baptismal' outpouring of God's Spirit on Pentecost Sunday attracted the attention even of many unconverted bystanders. Peter accordingly then preached the Gospel to those witnesses. Thus he told them: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you -- in the Name of Jesus Christ.... For the promise is to you, and to your children." Consequently, "they that gladly received his word, were baptized." Acts 2:38-41.

Note once again the order: first, repent; then, be baptized! Both adults and their babies thus need to repent and to become believers -- before being baptized. Of course, repentance is to keep on increasing and to continue recurring life-long -- and therefore also post-baptismally. Yet the beginnings of repentance should first be there, even in babies -- before any baptism is administered (either to infants or to adults).

He who has repented toward God and who trusts or believes in Jesus, is obviously already regenerate -- before his baptism. Regeneration should thus precede baptism. It was only after Peter's listeners had received his preached word -- by believing it --that they were then baptized.

### **294. Calvin's baptismal comments on Acts 2:38*f***

Commenting here, Calvin insisted<sup>97</sup> that "we can be reconciled to God only by the intercession of the death of Christ.... Our sins cannot be purged and done away -- other than by His blood.

"Peter recalls us to Him -- by Name. He put baptism...as the seal -- by which the promise of grace is fulfilled.... Not that those who desire to be accounted faithful, and have their place

already with the Church, are to make a beginning in this [reception of baptism] -- but that they are to continue to proceed in it [their post-baptismal faithfulness to Christ]....

"Baptism...is nothing else but a sealing of the blessings which we have through Christ.... Baptism is a help for confirming and increasing our faith.... The promise was made first to the Jews, and then to their children, and finally...to the Gentiles.... God reckons the children with the fathers, in the grace of adoption.

"This passage therefore sufficiently refutes the Anabaptists, who deny baptism to the children of the faithful while they are still infants -- as though they were not Members of the Church.... Peter spoke thus, because God adopted one nation as peculiarly His Own. And circumcision bears evidence that the right of adoption was shared even by infants....

"God made a covenant with Abraham when he [Isaac] was not yet born -- because he [Isaac] was the seed of Abraham.... So Peter teaches that all the children of the Jews are covered by the same covenant -- because the word continues in force which says 'I will be the God of your seed!'" Compare Genesis 17:7.

Calvin further observed<sup>98</sup> that Abraham "received the sign of circumcision [as] a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had, [while] yet being uncircumcised; so that he might be the father of all them that believe [Romans 4:11f].... The election of God reigns freely....

"He was pleased specially to embrace the seed of Abraham with His mercy -- and for the better attestation of it, to seal it by circumcision.... To the same effect is the declaration of Peter to the Jews: 'The promise is unto you and to your children.' Acts 2:39."

### **295. Acts 3: The Abrahamic covenant predicted Christian baptism**

Shortly after Pentecost Sunday, Peter spoke to some still unconverted Jews. Even to them, he said: "You are the sons of the prophets and of the covenant which God made with your fathers, saying to Abraham: 'And in your seed shall all of the families of the earth be blessed!' To you first, God -- having raised up His Servant [Jesus] -- sent Him to bless you, to turn each of you away from your iniquities." Acts 3:25.

Here, Calvin correctly commented<sup>99</sup> that "God made His covenant with our fathers.... Therefore we who are their descendants, are included within it.... Peter....affirms that this is applicable within the Kingdom of Christ -- that God's adoption extends to the children as well as the fathers....

"Thus the grace of salvation may be extended to those who are not yet born. I grant that many who are the children of the faithful according to the flesh, are counted 'bastards' and 'illegitimate.' Romans 9:7. Because by their unbelief, they banish themselves from the family of the holy. But this in no way prevents God from calling and admitting the seed of the godly into the fellowship."

By 'bastards' Calvin does not here mean professing unbelievers outside the covenant. He here means false members of the Visible Church herself. Indeed, even those spiritual 'bastards'



-- conceived and born within the covenant of grace -- are to be regarded, initially, as partaking of the grace of God. Accordingly, they are to be baptized even in tenderest infancy.

They are priorly, and also then and there, to be regarded as holy before baptism -- and therefore to be baptized. They are then deemed to be members of the holy family of Christ's Church. Only if, subsequently, they clearly manifest their faithlessness -- should the initial estimate about them be revised. If and when that occurs, it is -- as Calvin has stated -- only "because by their unbelief, they banish themselves from the family of the holy."

Calvin observed further<sup>100</sup> that Peter "calls them 'the children of the covenant'.... Not widely different from this is the other passage of the Apostle [Romans 4:11f]...in which he regards and describes circumcision performed on infants as an attestation to the fellowship which they have with Christ.... The Lord, in the Second Commandment of His Law, engages to be gracious to the seed of His servants -- for a thousand generations."

#### **296. Acts seven: circumcision and the faith of Abraham**

A little later, Stephen witnessed to the Judaists about their need to believe in Jesus. Stephen told them that God had enabled "our father Abraham" to obey Him (and had therefore given him faith). Thereafter, God further "gave him the covenant of circumcision.... Abraham begot Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day." Acts 7:2-8.

Here Calvin commented<sup>101</sup> on how Stephen "acknowledges that circumcision is a divine covenant.... At the same time, he shows that the Jews are in the wrong if they place the origin of their salvation in the external symbol....

"Abraham was called -- and the land and redemption were promised to his seed -- before he was circumcised. It is plain enough that the glory of the whole race does not depend on circumcision....

"Paul uses the same argument in the fourth chapter of Romans (4:11). For since Abraham obtained righteousness and was pleasing to God when he was uncircumcised, he [Paul] infers from this that circumcision is not the cause of righteousness....

"Circumcision was given by God to be a sign of His grace. Yet adoption preceded it, in order and in time....

"God first of all promises to Abraham the things that He later confirms by circumcision here." This is "so that we may realize that unless signs are preceded by the Word, they are empty and worthless."

### **297. Were also the infants of believing Samaritan adults baptized?**

Philip now preached the Gospel to the Samaritans. "When they believed" his preaching, many of them "were baptized, both male and female." Acts 8:12f.

Calvin commented here:<sup>102</sup> "The fact that baptism came after faith, is in accordance with Christ's institution with regard to strangers. Mark 16:16. For they ought to have been ingrafted into the body of the Church by faith -- before receiving the sign.

"The Anabaptists are being quite absurd, in trying to prove from these verses -- that infants must be kept back from baptism. Men and women could not have been baptized -- without making open confession of their faith. But they were admitted to baptism on this condition -- that their families were consecrated to God at the same time. For the covenant is in these terms, 'I will be your God, and the God of your seed.' Genesis 17:7."

### **298. The Ethiopian eunuch was justified by God long before he was baptized**

On the road to Gaza, Philip next met "a man of Ethiopia who...had come to Jerusalem for to worship." Soon Philip "preached Jesus to him." This already-believing Ethiopian then asked Philip: "What hinders me to be baptized?" Acts 8:27-36.

Then Philip said: 'If you believe with all your heart, you may.' And he answered and said: 'I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God!' "Then he commanded the chariot to stand still. So both went down toward the water, both Philip and the eunuch. Then he [Philip] baptized him." Acts 8:37f.

Now "the eunuch to whom Philip was sent," observed Calvin,<sup>103</sup> had already "been endued with some degree of faith" even before meeting Philip. Were that not the case -- the Ethiopian "would never have incurred the fatigue and expense of a long and difficult journey to obtain an opportunity of worship [in Jerusalem].

"I admit," continued Calvin,<sup>104</sup> "that in some respects the...faith was not explicit." Indeed, that previously unexplicit faith of the Ethiopian was akin to the unexplicit faith of the family of Cornelius -- before the latter met Peter (as chronicled in Acts 10). It was also somewhat akin to the unexplicit faith of covenant infants before they actually profess that faith in God. Calvin therefore compared the pre-baptismal faith of the Ethiopian with the pre-baptismal faith of Cornelius. For "it is certain that they [both] were imbued with...a slender foretaste of Christ.

"Baptism is...the appendix of faith, and therefore subsequent in order.... Fanatics stupidly and wrongly attack infant baptism on this pretext.... [However:] Those who are to be baptized, must be ingrafted into the Church [Visible] -- since Christ distinguishes only the members of the family of the Church with this sign.... The children of the godly, are born sons of the Church and are from the womb numbered among the members of Christ. Because God adopts us on the principle that He is also the Father of our children....

"Christ initiates infants to Himself for this purpose that -- as soon as their age and ability to understand will allow -- they yield themselves to Him as Disciples" (alias Pupils). This is done, so that having [previously] been baptized by His Spirit they may know by the discernment of faith -- His power which is represented in baptism."

### **299. Antisacramentarianism too is disproved by the Ethiopian's baptism**

Calvin's above comments demolished Romanism's sacramentalistic and essentially magical '*ex opere operato*' view about baptism. Other remarks of his put paid also to the 'purely symbolic' or *nuda signa* view of those espousing antisacramentarianism. That is the theory that baptism is just a 'mere empty sign.' In that view, the sacrament is nothing but 'an unimportant token' which no way actually seals or increases one's already-present pre-baptismal faith.

Here, Calvin now discussed<sup>105</sup> the baptismal views of Antisacramentarians. "But Philip (they say), replied to the eunuch who asked to be baptized: 'If thou believest with all thine heart -- thou mayest.' Acts 8:37. What room [say the Antisacramentarians] is there for a confirmation of [such pre-baptismal faith by] baptism -- when faith [pre-baptismally] fills the whole heart [already]?"

Replied Calvin: "I in my turn ask them, Do they not feel that a good part of their heart is void of faith? Do they not perceive new additions to it, every day? There was one [sarcastic Antisacramentarian] who boasted that he grew old -- while learning. [Yet] thrice miserable...are we Christians, if we grow old without making progress -- we whose faith ought to advance through every period of life!"

Antisacramentarian objectors next added: 'If faith is increased by means of the sacraments, the Holy Spirit is given in vain!' To this, Calvin responded: "I admit indeed that faith is the proper and entire work of the Holy Spirit.... But for the one [pre-baptismal] divine blessing which they [the Antisacramentarians] proclaim -- we [Calvinists] count three!

"For first, the Lord teaches and trains us by His Word [before baptism]. Next, He confirms us by His sacraments [during their administration]. Lastly, He illumines our mind by the light of His Holy Spirit [also after having received them]....

"Therefore, with regard to the increase and confirmation of faith -- I would remind the reader...that in assigning this office to the sacraments -- it is not as if I thought that there is a kind of secret efficacy perpetually inherent in them, by which they can of themselves promote or strengthen faith. But because our Lord has instituted them, for the express purpose of helping to establish and increase our faith.

"The sacraments duly perform their office only when accompanied by the Spirit.... A pious mind is confirmed in faith -- by means of the sacraments.... The sacraments do not avail one *iota*, without the energy of the Holy Spirit.... Yet, in hearts previously taught by that Preceptor, there is nothing to prevent the sacraments from strengthening and increasing faith."

### **300. Cornelius and his family trusted God long before their baptisms**

Cornelius -- and apparently his family too -- was already "regenerated" prior to Acts 10:2. This was long before they all received their baptisms at the command of Peter, in Acts 10:48.

Long before Peter arrived on the scene in Caesarea, the Gentile officer Cornelius was already "a devout man, and one who feared God with all his house.... He prayed to God always."

Indeed, also his own soldiers called him "a just man and one that fears God." Acts 10:2,22,31,35,45,47,48.

Peter too perceived that Cornelius -- and his whole household too -- had for quite some time continually been "fearing Him and working righteousness." Hence, Peter finally concluded: "Can anyone forbid water, that these [members of Cornelius's whole household] should not be baptized?" So he commanded them to be baptized in the Name of the Lord."

Commenting on this,<sup>106</sup> Calvin stated: "Since baptism is an appendage to the spiritual grace -- a man who receives the Spirit is at the same time fit to receive baptism.... The inference that ignorant men draw from this -- that infants must be debarred from baptism -- is absolutely groundless.... **Believers' children, who are born within the Church, are members of the family of the Kingdom of God -- from the womb....**

"God has **adopted the children of believers before they are born....** This testimony...powerfully refutes the superstition of the Papists, who bind the grace of the Spirit to the signs.... Luke narrates that men who had not yet been initiated in baptism -- were already endowed with the Holy Spirit [Acts 10:1f,22,25]. He is showing that the Spirit is not shut up in baptism."

Peter soon gave a report to the other Apostles -- about this pre-baptismal faith of Cornelius's household. Acts 11:1f. Explains Peter: "John indeed baptized with water.... Inasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as he did to us who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ -- who was I, that I could withstand God [by withholding baptism from them]?" Acts 11:16f.

Here, Calvin again castigated the Anabaptists:<sup>107</sup> "Those who are opposing infant baptism, are waging war on God.... Those men are cruelly rejecting from the Church those whom the promise of God adopts into the Church.... Those whom God honours with the name of sons -- they deprive of the external symbol" of infant baptism!

### **301. The actions of Paul in Antioch condemn the Anabaptists**

Paul told the Jews in the synagogue of Pisidian Antioch that God had fulfilled the promises made to the fathers. He had now fulfilled those same promises to their children. For God had raised up Jesus from the dead. Acts 13:14,32f.

Calvin here commented:<sup>108</sup> "It is certain that Paul is here speaking about the natural children who derived their origin from the holy fathers.... Certain fanatics [the Anabaptists], who make allegories out of everything, imagine that no account is to be taken here of descendants -- but only of 'faith.' But with a fiction like that -- they are making meaningless the sacred covenant of God, which says: 'I will be your God, and the God of your seed.' Genesis 17:7....

"Those who are born children of Abraham according to the flesh, are also to be **regarded** as God's spiritual children -- unless they cut themselves off by their own unfaithfulness. For the branches are holy by nature [alias by conception and birth], because they have been produced from a holy root -- unless they are polluted by their own fault. Romans 11:16.... It is by faith that God separates His own."

### **302. Jerusalem General Assembly vindicates Church as "New Israel"**

The first General Assembly of the Christian Church, meeting in Jerusalem around 49 A.D., refuted the views of certain misguided and unestablished Christians. Formerly, the latter had come over from the sect of the Pharisees. Yet they were still saying it was necessary to circumcise Gentiles who proselytized -- even to Christianity! The Elders and Ministers of the first [Presbyterian] General Assembly of the New Testament Church, however, decided that Gentile Christians did not need to be circumcised -- but indeed needed to keep God's Moral Law. Acts 15:1-5f,23-29f.

Here, Calvin commented:<sup>109</sup> "The Gentiles were ingrafted into the people of God, without circumcision.... The Jews had been prepared for faith, by circumcision.... Ceremonies were given to the people of old, only in order to help their faith.... Harm is being caused to the Gentiles, if more is demanded from them than God wishes....

"When He has made them equal to the holy people, and thought them worthy of the honour of adoption -- it is a shameful and absurd thing for them to be rejected.... Faith alone is enough for them -- lacking ceremonies though they [such converted Gentiles] may be."

### **303. Infant faith at the 'household baptisms' in Philippi and Corinth**

At Philippi, we read of Lydia that "the Lord opened" her heart. Consequently, "she attended to the things which were spoken by Paul.... Then she was baptized, and her household." Acts 16:14-15.

Calvin commented here<sup>110</sup> that "God had been effectively at work in Lydia. For there is no doubt that she genuinely embraced the faith of Christ, and gave her allegiance to Him -- before Paul admitted her to baptism.... The Lord blessed her godly devotion -- so that she [also] had the members of her **household** [to be] obedient."

In this matter, the important businesswoman Lydia -- apparently the manageress of her considerable household -- saw to it that all its members were baptized. For, explained Calvin, "thus Abraham -- the father of the faithful -- was commanded to circumcise all his servants, along

with himself.... He is commended for the care with which he organized his house [Genesis 17:24f and 18:18f].... This duty is demanded of the head of a household."

While still in Philippi, Paul and Silas urged an anxious jailer:<sup>111</sup> "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved -- you and your household!" So the jailer "was baptized, he and all his, straightaway.... He rejoiced, believing in God with all his household."

Here, Calvin commented:<sup>112</sup> "Faith is not a trivial or arid opinion about unknown things, but a clear and distinct knowledge of Christ derived from the Gospel.... Let us keep the faith that is united to the Word of God....

"The keeper [of the jail]...dedicated his whole household to God. The grace of God is also reflected in that -- because He suddenly brought a whole family to godly unanimity.... The inward result of faith is described.... The joy...of which Luke speaks here, is a singular blessing -- which individuals derive from their faith."

Thus we are told that in Philippi, Lydia "was baptized and her household" -- and also that the jailer too "was baptized, he and all his..., believing in God with all his house." These household baptisms clearly imply infant baptism (and therefore a presumed pre-baptismal faith even in such infants). Acts 16:14-15 & 16:32-34.

As Calvin explained:<sup>113</sup> "Everyone must now see that Paedobaptism...receives such strong support from Scripture.... They [infants] are not expressly excluded, when mention is made of any baptized family. Acts 16:15,32. What man of sense will argue from this, that they were not baptized?"

For "baptism...is not less applicable to children, than to those of more advanced years.... Benefit redounds from the observance -- both to believers who bring their children to the church to be baptized, and to the infants themselves.... The divine symbol communicated to the child -- as with the impress of a seal -- confirms the promise given."

It was similar in Corinth. "Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed in the Lord -- with his whole household. And many of the Corinthians -- hearing -- believed. And they were baptized" -- soon thereafter. Acts 18:8.

This information is very important. It relates to Crispus and his whole household (including all his infants). It also relates to many other Corinthian Christians such as all the members of the baptized household of Stephanas. First Corinthians 1:12-17f; 3:6f; 6:11; 7:14; 12:13; 16:15. However tiny some of them probably were -- they were all rebuttably regarded as believers already, even before any of them received baptism.

### **304. Circumcision was never righteousness but it sealed that of faith**

Paul assured the Roman Christians: "Faith was reckoned unto Abraham as righteousness. How, then, was it reckoned? When he was in circumcision -- or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.... Abraham [later] received the sign of circumcision, a seal

of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised." Abraham then received this seal of circumcision, "so that he might become the father of all those that believe (though not circumcised) -- in order that righteousness might be imputed to them too." Romans 4:9-11.

This can only mean that covenant infants received circumcision as the sign of faith even when they were still **babies**. It certainly seems to suggest that the infants of a belief-professing parent were **themselves** regarded as **believers** -- even while yet infants, and even before they could be circumcised.

For the Bible suggests that those circumcised in infancy received the same benefit thereby as did those circumcised as adults. Thus, not just the adultly-circumcised "Abraham" but also the infantly-circumcised "Isaac and Jacob" were "the heirs with him of the same promises." Hebrews 11:8-9.

Paul would soon make a claim (in Romans 8:9) which certainly corroborates his above statement in Romans 4:11 that circumcision was a sign of **faith**. Here is the claim: "If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not one of His." This clearly implies infant faith -- at least in such covenanters who die while yet babies.

For also infants need to be regenerated by God's Spirit. Such of God's elect as die in fetushood, are obviously regenerated before it is possible for them to be baptized. Cf. the *Decrees of Dordt* I:17 and the *Westminster Confession of Faith* 10:3. Consequently, it is clear that at least such early-dying babies are regenerated -- without being baptized. In their case at least, baptismal regeneration is obviously impossible -- and thoroughly false.

### **305. Abraham the 'father of believers' trusted God before being circumcised**

It has been seen that Abraham was justified already -- before he was circumcised. Presumably, so too were his elect descendants -- very many of whom were circumcised in infancy.

Yet some of his descendants -- such as probably Ishmael and certainly Esau -- were never regenerated.<sup>114</sup> *A fortiori*, it thus seems clear that neither Abraham himself nor any of his descendants -- whether elect or not -- was ever regenerated during circumcision. Indeed, that is very strong evidence against Romanism's *ex opere operato* sacramentology.

Here, Calvin commented:<sup>115</sup> "Abraham possessed righteousness before he had circumcision.... It [circumcision] did not justify.... It had another very excellent use, *viz.* the office of sealing and as it were ratifying the righteousness of faith.... It tends to confirm the righteousness of faith already obtained in uncircumcision....

"As now in baptism there are two parts, so formerly in circumcision there were two parts -- which testified both to newness of life, and to the forgiveness of sins.... In the case of Abraham, **righteousness preceded circumcision**.... There is now no necessity for circumcision, where baptism exists....

"Circumcision does not justify.... Because Abraham was justified by faith [before circumcision], the same argument also holds good for us. We deny, therefore, that men are justified by baptism --since they are justified by the same faith as that of Abraham."

Continued Calvin:<sup>116</sup> "The seals which are affixed to diplomas and other public deeds are nothing, considered in themselves.... Yet this does not prevent them from sealing and confirming, when they are appended to writings. It cannot be alleged that this comparison is a recent fiction of our own --since Paul himself used it, terming circumcision a seal (Romans 4:11).

"There he expressly maintains that the circumcision of Abraham was not for justification, but was an attestation of the covenant -- by the faith of which he had previously been justified.... Sacraments, therefore, are exercises which confirm our faith in the Word of God."

Calvin went on:<sup>117</sup> "Circumcision was enjoined on Abraham and his posterity.... [Circumcision] abrogated, the two sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper...were instituted....

"**Circumcision** was to them [the Old Testament Israelites] what Paul says it was to Abraham -- viz. a sign of the righteousness of faith (Romans 4:11); viz. a seal by which they were more certainly assured that their faith, in waiting for the Lord, would be accepted by God for righteousness.... We shall have a better opportunity elsewhere of following out the comparison between circumcision and baptism."

Calvin further observed<sup>118</sup> that God "appointed circumcision, by which symbol the Jews were taught.... They were thereby raised to the hope of eternal life. Therefore the Apostle, to prove that the Gentiles as well as the Jews were the children of Abraham, speaks in this way: 'Faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness...so that he might be the father of all them that believe..., who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham which he had while yet uncircumcised.' Romans 4:9-12....

"To the time appointed by the divine decree, he [Abraham] was the father of circumcision. But when, as the Apostle elsewhere writes (Ephesians 2:14), the wall of partition which separated the Gentiles from the Jews was broken down -- also to them access was given to the Kingdom of God..... He [Abraham] became their father, and that without the sign of circumcision -- its place being supplied by baptism."

### **306. Romans 4:11 demolishes the arguments of the Anabaptists**

The Anabaptists, concluded Calvin,<sup>119</sup> rightly "add that baptism is a sacrament of penitence and faith." But then they wrongly state that "as neither of these is applicable to tender infancy, we must beware of rendering its meaning empty and vain -- by admitting infants to the communion of baptism.

"But these darts are directed more against God than against us. Since the fact that circumcision was a sign of repentance -- is completely established by many passages of Scripture. Jeremiah 4:4. Thus, Paul terms it a seal of the righteousness of faith. Romans 4:11....



**Children** are **baptized** for [also] future repentance and faith.... The seed of both **lies** in them -- by the secret operation of the Spirit."

### **307. Even babies, stained by original sin, need regenerating**

In the next chapter -- Romans five -- Paul deals with the wretched status before God of the fallen Adam and his unregenerate descendants. Yet there, the Apostle deals also with the blessed status before God -- of Christ the unfallen Second Adam, together with that of all His adopted children after their regeneration. Thus, at Romans 5:17, Paul indicates that those "who receive the abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness -- shall keep on reigning in life, through the One, Jesus Christ."

Here, Calvin rightly commented:<sup>120</sup> "Since Christ surpasses Adam, the sin of Adam is overcome by the righteousness of Christ.... The blessing of life reigns and flourishes more and more, through the abundance of grace.... It is necessary, however, to be a believer -- in order to enjoy the righteousness of Christ. For we attain to fellowship (*consortium*) with Him -- by faith.

"Fellowship with Christ is communicated to infants [of believers] in a peculiar way. They **have** the right of adoption in the covenant, by which they come into communion with Christ. I am referring to the children of the godly, to whom the promise of grace is directed. (*De piorum liberis loquor, ad quos promissio gratiae dirigitur*)."

So, according to Calvin, "it is necessary to be a believer -- in order to enjoy the righteousness of Christ." Further, "we attain to fellowship with Him -- by faith." It follows, that even infants must have faith -- in order to be able to fellowship with Christ.

Clearly, the infants of the godly are themselves among the faithful. By "adoption...they come into communion with Christ." For even "fellowship with Christ is communicated to infants" --of believers. Hence, also while yet infants -- they are immediately entitled to receive baptism as the sign of belonging to that fellowship of those who trust in the Saviour.

### **308. After baptism we may no longer continue in sin**

Paul next encourages the Christians in Rome to keep on believing in Him. They had already trusted in Christ before their baptisms. So Paul now enjoins them to continue doing so even thereafter -- and indeed, also for the rest of their lives.

Rhetorically, the Apostle asks them: "Shall we continue remaining in sin, so that grace may abound? May that never be! How shall we who have died to sin, keep on living in it any longer?"

"Don't you know that as many of us as have been baptized into Christ, have been baptized into His death? We have therefore been 'funeralized' together with Him, by baptism, into death. Consequently, just as Christ has been raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father -- we too

shall likewise keep on walking 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." Romans 6:1-5.

The 'seed of faith' was already in the seed-bed or heart of the unbaptized Christian (regardless of his age) -- before he was planted together with Christ, symbolically through His Own baptism. Thus 'watered' -- that pre-baptismal seedlike faith then grows further. Thereafter too, it keeps on increasing yet more -- in the strong sunshine of God's ongoing grace.

In his comment hereon,<sup>121</sup> Calvin here connected a Christian's own baptism to his fellowship with Christ. "This fellowship of His death is the focal centre of baptism.... The efficacy of Christ's death appears from the moment when we are received into His grace.... This power is not apparent in all the baptized. For Paul, because he is speaking to believers, connects the reality [grace] and the effect [faith] with the outward sign [baptism]....

"Whatever the Lord offers by the visible symbol [baptism], is confirmed and ratified by their faith. In short, he teaches us what the truth of baptism is -- when rightly received.... For we never [anabaptistically] have naked and empty symbols (*nuda et inania symbola*) -- except when our ingratitude and wickedness hinder the working of the divine beneficence." Nor does or could baptism itself possibly create **pre**-baptismal incipient faith already present.

### **309. Esau obviously not regenerated during his circumcision**

To the "Israelites" -- Paul goes on to declare -- pertain "the adoption...and the promises." Romans 9:4-13. Yet not all those are 'Israel' [alias 'princes of the Triune God'] -- who are from Israel. Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children [of God]. But 'In Isaac shall your seed be called.' That is what God told Abraham. Genesis 21:12.

Paul continues: "Rebecca also conceived, by...our father Isaac.... The [twin] children not yet having been born..., so that the purpose of God according to election might stand..., it was said to her: 'The elder shall serve the younger!'" Genesis 25:23. "Thus it has been written: 'Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated!'" Malachi 1:2-3.

"It is," Calvin here commented,<sup>122</sup> "of some importance to be descended from saints and men loved by God -- since God has promised the godly fathers mercy towards their children, even to a thousand generations [Exodus 20:6] -- particularly in the words addressed to Abraham and Isaac and Jacob.... The promise was given to Abraham and to his seed [Genesis 17:4-7f], but in such a way that his inheritance does not relate to all of his descendants.... [However,] the defection of some does not prevent the covenant from remaining firm....

"It was the will of the Lord that His covenant should be sealed as much in Ishmael and Esau as in Isaac and Jacob.... Not all the children of Abraham are the children of God.... The promise of salvation has been offered to them -- and confirmed by the symbol of circumcision.... However, many of them reject this adoption -- by their ingratitude....

"Jacob and Esau...were both the children of Adam, sinners by nature.... God's will was to show to the younger son a peculiar favour" -- and indeed even before his circumcision. "As if

to say... 'I chose Jacob..., induced to this course by My mercy alone -- and not by any worthiness in his works.'

Calvin concluded:<sup>123</sup> "Granted that Jacob was elected for a worth to be obtained by future virtues -- to what end did Paul say that he was not yet born?... If the reason is asked, Paul assigns it. Romans 9:6.... Those only are accounted sons, who are born of the pure and legitimate seed of doctrine" -- before their circumcision.

### **310. Holy parental roots produce holy offshoots for holy baptism**

Of course, those truly regenerate from conception onward, will inevitably later produce fruit to evidence this. Later lack of fruit indeed rebuts the presumption of regeneration before birth and baptism. Yet, until such later fruitlessness might result -- prenatal sanctification is certainly to be presumed. For a root-like faithful parent right then certainly seems to sanctify his or her branch-like offspring.

As Paul has insisted: "If the root be holy, so are the branches.... The branches...do not bear the root, but the root [the branches].... The branches...stand by faith.... [Yet] some of the branches [may later] be broken off...because of unbelief." Romans 11:16-20.

Commented Calvin:<sup>124</sup> "Paul bids us look back upon Abraham and the patriarchs.... He concludes, therefore, that a hereditary holiness had passed from them to all their posterity.... Because a father is just, he does not immediately transfer his integrity to his son. But because the Lord sanctified Abraham to Himself on condition that his seed also be holy, and therefore bestowed holiness not only upon the person of Abraham but also upon his whole race -- Paul rightly argues from this that all the Jews have been sanctified in their father Abraham....

"Descendants have the same relationship to their parents from whom they spring, as the lump has to the first fruits, or the branches to the tree. It is not surprising, therefore, that the Jews are sanctified in their father.... We should never think of the rejection of the Jews -- without being struck with dread and terror. The one thing which caused their ruin, was their despising of the divine judgment.... They were not spared, though they were natural branches. What then will become of us [Gentile 'Christians'] who are wild and alien branches -- if we become excessively insolent?!"

Nevertheless, among the Old Testament Israelites, their uncircumcised baby girls were rightly regarded as children of God -- until such time as they might later prove to be unfruitful. So too were their uncircumcised baby boys (before their circumcision when eight days old). Indeed, because baptism has now replaced circumcision, each tiny child of a Christian parent should similarly be regarded as a child of God even before baptism -- until such time as he or she might later prove to be unfruitful.<sup>125</sup>

Explained Calvin:<sup>126</sup> "Those who are born children of Abraham according to the flesh, are also to be regarded as God's spiritual children -- unless they cut themselves off by their own

unfaithfulness. For the branches are holy by nature, because they have been produced from a holy root -- until they are polluted by their own fault. Romans 11:16."

Calvin concluded <sup>127</sup> that even "the ungodliness of one of the parents, does not prevent the children from being born holy [First Corinthians 7:14].... So Paul argues in Romans 11:16 that all Abraham's descendants are holy -- because God had concluded a covenant of life with him. 'If the root is holy, so are the branches' -- he says.... The same covenant of salvation which had its beginning with the seed of Abraham, is extended to us. The children of believers are exempt from the common condition of mankind.... The Lord admits them to His Church, by His Word." Cf. Luke 1:38f with First Corinthians 7:14.

### **311. Believing parents generate children that are holy**

Paul goes on to discuss holy matrimony with the Corinthian Christians. He tells them that, to avoid fornication alias illicit sexual activity, every man should have his own wife -- and *vice-versa*. He calls sexual intercourse within marriage a *charisma* alias a charismatic gift. Indeed, he urges married persons not to withdraw themselves sexually from one another for long -- without mutual consent.

Paul insists that a Christian brother (*e.g.* one who came to faith only after his marriage to an unbeliever) should not withdraw himself even from an unbelieving wife -- nor *vice-versa*. For also within even such a marriage, the God-given faith of the believing marriage partner 'sanctifies' the other partner -- especially in respect of the sex act and its possible fruitful consequences.

Thus, the believing spouse is God's means of making holy any child that may be conceived as a result of marital intercourse. For that believing spouse's faith sanctifies or overshadows the lack of faith in his or her unbelieving marriage partner. Consequently, the resultant children are not unclean -- but holy.

At the singular and miraculous conception of the sinless Jesus, the Holy Spirit uniquely overshadowed Mary. This rendered her blessed, specifically as regards her immaculate conceiving of our sinless Saviour.

Consequently, her first-born child -- her Saviour, the holy Jesus -- was altogether sinless. Luke 1:34-38 and 1:46-50. *Mutatis mutandis*, at the normal conception of an ordinary covenant child, the God-given faith of an imperfect yet sanctified husband overshadows even an unbelieving wife -- and *vice-versa*.

To be sure, all descendants of the fallen Adam and Eve (with the sole exception of the God-man Jesus) -- because of the transmission to them of Adam's original sin at their very conception -- were shapen in iniquity and conceived in sin. Job 14:1-4f and Psalm 51:5.

This is why even Christian children are sinners, and tend to commit sin -- and to keep on committing it. Yet, in spite of that, Christian children of Christian parents are also to be regarded

as washed in the blood of Jesus and hence cleansed and holy -- even from their conception onward. Romans 11:16 and First Corinthians 7:14.

For the God-given faith of an imperfect yet sanctified parent certainly overshadows even the faithlessness of an unbelieving spouse. That is so especially during marital intercourse, which sometimes results in the conception of children. Cf. Ezra 9:2 & Malachi 2:14-15.

Such children are therefore covenant children. For children of at least one faithful parent -- though certainly not sinless! -- are not faithless and unclean, but holy like the faithful parent. Such children not merely have a potential to become clean or holy at a later stage. They are already cleansed and therefore holy -- even from their very conception onward. Indeed, they consequently have an even greater potential for increased personal holiness.

### **312. Babies generated by a believer are deemed to have been cleansed before baptism**

As Paul explains: "If any [Christian] brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is pleased to keep on dwelling with him -- let him not put her away! And [if] the [Christian] woman who has a husband that does not believe, and if he is pleased to keep on dwelling with her -- let her not leave him!

"For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the [believing] wife; and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the [believing] husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean. But now, they are holy.... Circumcision is nothing; and uncircumcision is nothing -- but the keeping of the Commandments of God" [such as the Seventh Commandment in this case] is everything." First Corinthians 7:12-14,19.

No way should such children of a believing parent ever be regarded as unholy children who -- only long after their infant baptisms -- will hopefully only some day become holy. No! These children are holy already -- from their conception onward.

This implies, of course, that such children qualify for holy baptism -- as soon as they have been born. Yet they are already federally **holy before baptism**. Indeed, it is precisely for that reason that they are to be baptized. For "circumcision is nothing." Likewise, also baptism is nothing -- as regards making anyone holy.

Covenant children, already holy -- are entitled and obliged to receive holy baptism to seal their prebaptismal status -- as soon after their birth as is convenient. Genesis 17:12f and Colossians 2:11f. Because holy before baptism -- it is quite clear that it then cannot be baptism itself which makes them holy.

Yet it is not from just before their infant baptism that these children are already holy. For they are holy also before their birth. Indeed, they are holy even from their very conception onward. Their later postnatal baptism simply confirms that they were -- and are -- already holy.

As the Calvinistic *Westminster Confession of Faith* (X:1-3) correctly teaches: "All those whom God hath predestined unto life...He is pleased...effectively to call by His Word and Spirit...

to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ, enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God.... Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit."

Indeed, as also the equally-Calvinistic *Westminster Assembly's Directory for the Publick Worship of God* helpfully adds regarding every living covenant child soon after his or her birth, "the child to be baptized...is to be presented....by the father" [or alternatively by the mother] -- who must obviously be a professing Christian. For, "in case of his [the father's] necessary absence," the child is alternatively to be presented "by some **Christian** friend [such as the wife] in his place -- professing his [the father's or the mother's own] earnest desire that the child may be baptized." Acts 8:36f & First Corinthians 7:14.

The *Westminster Directory* continues: "**Before baptism** the Minister is to use some words of instruction...touching the institution...of this sacrament, shewing that...it is a seal of the covenant of grace.... The seed and posterity of the faithful -- born within the Church -- have, by their birth, interest in the covenant and right to the seal of it..., no less than the children of Abraham in the time of the Old Testament.... Children by baptism are solemnly received into the bosom of the **Visible Church**, distinguished from the world and them that are without [or outside the covenant]. They are **Christians** and federally holy before baptism, and **therefore** are they baptized."

The Minister "is also to admonish all that are present to look back to their baptism; to repent of their sins against their covenant with God; to stir up their faith; to improve and make right use of their baptism and of the covenant sealed thereby betwixt God and their souls. He is to exhort the parent...to bring up the child [not into but] in the knowledge of the grounds of the Christian religion and in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" in which the child was conceived and born..

"He [the Minister] is to baptize the child with water...by pouring or sprinkling of the water on the face of the child.... He is to give thanks and pray...that the Lord would still continue and daily confirm more and more...the infant now baptized.... If he [the child] shall be taken out of this life in his infancy -- the Lord Who is rich in mercy would be pleased to receive him up into glory."

### **313. Calvin: a holy parent produces holy infants**

Paul in First Corinthians 7:12-16, Calvin commented,<sup>128</sup> "is speaking here not about the contracting of marriage[s] -- but about **maintaining** those which have already been entered into." Naturally, believers are not to get intimately involved with unbelievers -- nor to marry them. Yet if after two unbelievers marry one another, one of them becomes a Christian -- that believer is then to maintain the marriage, for as long as the unbelieving spouse is willing to do so.

Continued Calvin: "A believer can [then] live with an unbeliever, with a clear conscience. For, as far as sexual intercourse and ordinary everyday relations [within marriage] are concerned,

the unbeliever is sanctified -- so that he or she does not contaminate the believer with his or her [the unbeliever's] uncleanness.

"In the meantime, this sanctification [*ipso facto*] is of no personal benefit to the unbelieving partner..... The believer is not contaminated by intercourse with him or her, and the marriage itself is not profaned." Neither are the resultant children profane -- but holy.

"A question arises from that. If the faith of a Christian husband or wife sanctifies a marriage, it follows that all the marriages of unbelievers are unclean.... [Yet] it would be naive to infer from this, that marriage in their case is in the same class as fornication. Because, no matter how unclean it is to them, it [marriage as such] is nevertheless pure in itself --seeing that it has been ordained by God....

"'Else were your children unclean' [says Paul]. This is an argument based on the effect. 'If your marriage was unclean -- then the children born of it would be unclean. But they are holy. Therefore, your marriage also is holy' [even when a believer's own spouse is not a believer]. Therefore, just as the ungodliness of one of the parents does not prevent the children from being born holy -- so, it does not stand in the way of the marriage itself being undefiled....

"The children of believers are set apart from others, by a certain privilege -- so that they [the former] are regarded as holy in the Church.... The fact that the Apostle ascribes a special privilege to the children of believers here, has its source in the blessing of the covenant -- by the intervention of which the curse of nature is destroyed.... Those who were by nature unclean -- are consecrated to God by His grace....

"So Paul argues in Romans 11:16 that all Abraham's descendants are holy, because God had concluded a covenant of life with him. 'If the root is holy, so are the branches' -- he says. And God calls all who are descended from Israel -- His sons....

"The same covenant of salvation which had its beginning with the seed of Abraham, is extended to us.... The children of believers are made exempt from the common condition of mankind -- in order to be set apart for the Lord.... Why should we keep them back from the sign [of the covenant]? If the Lord admits them [the infant children of believers] to His Church by His Word -- why should we deny them the sign?... 'Circumcision is nothing'.... Baptism has taken the place of the legal symbol, so that [now] it is sufficient if we are circumcised by the Spirit of Christ."

### **314. All the Israelitic fathers were baptized by the cloud**

Paul soon goes on to remind those same Corinthian Christians -- together with their tiny infants -- "that all our fathers were under the cloud.... They all got themselves baptized unto Moses in the cloud." First Corinthians 10:1-2. That is to say, the faithful Israelites -- including their covenant children and even their babes-in-arms -- were all baptized, by the cloud, during their exodus from Egypt.

Calvin commented here:<sup>129</sup> "Paul says, first of all, that there is no point of difference between the Israelites and us.... The Church of God was in their midst, as in ours today. They had the same sacraments [in substance], to be testimonies to them of the grace of God.... 'They were all under the cloud'.... They had [in substance] been furnished with the same signs of the grace of God. For the sacraments are tokens by which the Church of God is discerned.

"Paul deals...with baptism, and he teaches that the cloud which protected the Israelites...was indeed like baptism.... Anyone who will give proper attention to these things, will find nothing absurd in what Paul says. More than that, he will see both in spiritual substance and visible form -- the closest agreement between the baptism of the Jews and ours."

### **315. All the Christians had been baptized and drenched**

Shortly thereafter, Paul further tells those same Corinthian Christians -- together with their tiny infants -- something similar. He tells them: "by one Spirit we have all been baptized into one body" -- and "we have all been drenched into one Spirit." First Corinthians 12:13.

This seems to refer to their ingrafting into the Visible Church -- by water-baptism.<sup>130</sup> It seems to apply also to the infant believers<sup>131</sup> of those who themselves profess faith in Christ.

Calvin<sup>132</sup> here commented:<sup>133</sup> "Proof of this is provided by the effect of baptism. Paul says: 'By baptism we are ingrafted into the body of Christ -- so that we are bound together, joined each to the other as members, and live the one life. Therefore he who wants to remain in the Church of Christ, must necessarily devote himself to this fellowship'.... The baptism of believers...is efficacious through the grace of the Spirit....

"Baptism is...a symbol.... Believers actually do receive the reality with the sacrament.... Baptism is an ingrafting [of one already deemed to be a believer] into the body of Christ [alias the Visible Church]. However, so that no one might suppose that this is effected by the outward symbol -- Paul adds that it is the work of the Holy Spirit."

Calvin further explained<sup>134</sup> what Paul means when "he says...'by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body.' First Corinthians 12:13." Paul, maintained Calvin, linked it to "fellowship with Christ in the sacrament.... As when he says 'As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.' Galatians 3:27....

"Baptism...is a sign of our confession.... We have entered into the [Visible] Church of God, so that with one consent of faith and love -- we may live in concord with all believers. This last was Paul's meaning.... First Corinthians 12:13....

"Paul comprehends the whole Church...when he says that...by baptism we are ingrafted into the body of Christ. First Corinthians 12:13. We infer that infants, whom He enumerates among His members, are to be baptized -- in order that they may not be dissevered from His body."



### **316. Circumcision and baptism and faith in Galatians**

Paul next explains to the Galatian Christians that even Abraham had been justified through faith. Galatians 3:6. This had occurred before his circumcision -- just as Abraham's Christian descendants had themselves been justified through faith before receiving their baptism which replaced circumcision. Genesis 15:6 *cf.* 17:7-27.

As Paul reminds those Galatian Christians (both infant and adult): "You are all the children of God -- by faith in Christ Jesus.... Many of you were baptized into Christ. You have put on Christ.... And if you are Christ's -- then you are indeed Abraham's seed." Galatians 3:26-29.

Clearly, the faith in Christ of "all" Christians -- is here said to precede the baptism of "many" of them. Such infants as have faith in Christ before their baptism, are already in Christ. Consequently, baptism itself does not regenerate them. Instead, it seals their prebaptismal status.

Calvin here commented:<sup>135</sup> "They are the children of God. It would not be enough to say that we have passed out of our childhood -- unless it were added that we are freemen. For age does not change the state.... The fact of their being the children of God, proves their freedom. How? By faith in Christ. For to all who believe in Him, is given the privilege of being the sons of God. Therefore, it is at the same time brought to pass that we are set free by faith -- when we are adopted by means of it....

"The argument that they have put on Christ because they have been baptized, seems weak. For baptism is far from being efficacious in all.... To be a child of Abraham is...being a member of Christ.... Faith is always joined in relation to the promise."

Calvin concluded:<sup>136</sup> "Our faith receives from baptism...its assuring us not only that we are ingrafted into...Christ, but so united to Christ Himself as to be partakers of all His blessings.... Hence, Paul proves us to be the sons of God from the fact that we put on Christ in baptism. Galatians 3:27....

"Moses and the prophets reminded the people of the thing meant by circumcision -- which, however, [also] infants received. To the same effect, Paul says to the Galatians 'As many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.' Galatians 3:27."

### **317. Paul to the Ephesians: 'one faith' before 'one baptism'**

Paul reminds also the Ephesian Christians -- that the Spirit Himself had called them unto baptism. He explained: "There is...one Spirit -- even as you have been called...; one Lord, one faith, one baptism." Ephesians 4:4-5.

Here, the very order seems significant. There is firstly, the Spirit Who had called them to become Christians. There is secondly, the faith which was then given to those who had been

called. Then there is, thirdly, the baptism subsequently received by those already in receipt of the faith previously given.

In a sermon on Ephesians 4:1-5, Calvin wrote:<sup>137</sup> "St. Paul's intention here is not to separate baptism from the gospel, but he has rather added it as a visible mark.... If we (at the first acquaintance) do not understand the unity of faith..., by baptism...it is just as if God had printed the mark of adoption in our hearts -- to show that we are His."

### **318. Also the offspring of the Ephesian Christians were themselves "saints"**

In the first chapter of his Epistle to the Ephesians, Paul addresses the Ephesian Christians as "the saints" and "the faithful." Ephesians 1:1. In the last chapter, he includes even their offspring as being among those faithful saints. For there, he states that also their "children" were already "in the Lord." Ephesians 6:1.

There, Paul quotes the Fifth Commandment of God's Law of the Covenant. Then he immediately further enjoins: "You fathers, do not keep on irritating your children; but do keep on rearing them in the nurture and admonition of the Lord!" Ephesians 6:2-4.

Here, there is no injunction for Christian fathers to transfer --nor to 'transubstantiate' -- their own 'pagan' children into Christians by baptizing them. Instead, Paul here enjoins 'Christian fathers to keep on rearing their own Christian children in -- yes, with-in -- the Lord's nurture.

For such children are not pagans who need to be brought into the covenant. Instead, such children are themselves Christians -- needing only to be brought up in the covenant with-in which they were born; nay more, within which they were conceived.

What is needed, is the baptismal affirmation that these covenant infants were -- and are -- themselves Christians. What is not needed is the myth of baptismal transubstantiability of tiny pagans into little Romanists.

### **319. Ephesians six clearly condemns all brands of Anabaptism**

Ephesians six thus condemns Romanistic baptismal regenerationism. Yet still less do covenant infants deserve the baptismal deprivation to which some antipaedobaptistic Anabaptists subject Christ's little lambs -- as if the latter were still unclean (and uncleansable while yet tiny).

Such Anabaptists believed Christ's little lambs could not get cleansed at all -- until they began to grow up. They would themselves first need to develop an assumed ability to sin. And that, Anabaptists thought, could be achieved only when children had reached the apocryphal 'age of accountability' (alleged to be around seven years old).

Yet other Anabaptists believed the opposite -- namely that all infants were to be regarded as clean (or as cleansed) at least until they had grown up to some extent. However, on that basis -- these Anabaptists should have baptized all such infants, even during their infancy.

But the fact is that even the infants of believers were conceived in sin and prenatally shapen in iniquity. Psalm 51:5. Yet the infants of believers are further regarded as those who have also begun to trust or hope in the Lord -- even prenatally. Psalm 22:9f.

Consequently, after their birth, they are **not** to be brought into covenant with God. **Instead**, they are then to be recognized as having been in that covenant even from conception -- and accordingly to be baptized in early infancy.

Thereafter, they are not to be led into or unto Christianity. Instead, their Christian parents are enjoined to bring them up in the nurture (or childhood-training) of the Lord<sup>138</sup> --the nurture in which they were conceived, and within which they were born. First Corinthians 7:14 *cf.* Ephesians 6:4.

Calvin himself here commented<sup>139</sup> that "kind and liberal treatment keeps children in reverence for their parents, and increases the readiness and cheerfulness of their obedience.... Paul goes on to say 'let them be cherished kindly!' For the word *ektrephein* ['to rear'] unquestionably conveys the idea of gentleness and friendliness.... [He] adds 'in the discipline and correction of the Lord'.... Keep them -- in the discipline of the Lord!... Correct them -- also when they go astray!"

Yet once again, even the latter implies that covenant children are born in a state of **faith-ful**-ness -- and are therefore to be regarded as then possessing Christian faith which they still obviously cannot as yet profess. For one cannot subsequently become un-faithful and thus "go astray" from something good -- unless one was previously on the right road from which one could go astray.

### **320. Philippian Christians told: "We are the circumcision!"**

Paul also writes to the Philippian Christians. He assures them: "We are the circumcision, we who keep on worshipping God in the Spirit.... I was circumcised the eighth day" *etc.* Philippians 3:3-5.

Here Calvin commented:<sup>140</sup> "We are the true seed of Abraham, and heirs of the testament which was confirmed by the sign of circumcision.... Here someone will ask whether truth excludes the sacraments. For the same thing might be said of baptism and the Lord's supper. I answer, that...circumcision gave way to baptism.... Believers have the true circumcision."

It is true that God alone knows the hearts of men, and especially of unborn covenant children. Yet, until the latter might later evidence gross waywardness -- they too should be treated as regenerate.

For it is "believers" that "have the true circumcision" (thus Calvin). And such covenant infants -- previously entitled to receive circumcision -- were therefore to be regarded as tiny believers even before receiving that circumcision (and/or the baptism which has now replaced it).

### **321. Colossian Christians "circumcised" because baptized**

Writing to the Colossians, Paul addresses them similarly to the way in which he wrote to the Ephesians.<sup>141</sup> For he calls also the Colossian Christians "saints and faithful brethren in Christ." Colossians 1:2. Indeed, among that number, he includes even "children." Colossians 3:20.

Paul further declares to the Colossians that also baptized Gentile Christians "had been circumcised with a circumcision made without hands -- with the stripping off of the body of flesh by the circumcision of Christ." For, he explains: "You have been funeralized together with Him in baptism -- in which you have also been raised up through the faith of the operation of God Who raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He enlivened together with Him -- having forgiven you all trespasses." Colossians 2:11-13.

Clearly, this passage teaches that baptism has now replaced circumcision. Accordingly, it surely implies that infant baptism has therefore come in the place of infant circumcision. And it certainly presupposes the same Christian faith in tiny infants before their baptism -- as it does in their adult parents.

Calvin commented here<sup>142</sup> as regards "spiritual circumcision...that we obtain this through baptism, so that it may be more clear that there is no practice of circumcision under the reign of Christ. For someone might otherwise object: 'Why do you abolish circumcision [in the flesh], on the pretext that its effect is in Christ? Was not Abraham also circumcised spiritually? And yet, this did not prevent the sign [of circumcision in the flesh] being added to the reality.'"

Calvin answered the above, by showing that "Paul anticipates such an objection -- by mentioning baptism. Christ, he says, accomplishes in us 'spiritual circumcision' -- not through means of that ancient sign [of circumcision in the flesh] which was in force under Moses, but by baptism. Baptism therefore is a sign of the thing exhibited which...was figured [or represented] by circumcision.... 'You were,' he says, 'dead in uncircumcision'.... But God has called you to Himself -- from circumcision."

To Calvin, then, baptism has thus replaced circumcision. Hence infant baptism has replaced infant circumcision. In both cases, the prior regeneration of the infants of believers is already presupposed -- before giving him or her the sacrament sealing his or her prior initiation into the covenant of grace.

### **322. Women should rear and keep covenant children in the faith**

Writing to Timothy, Paul insists<sup>143</sup> that woman shall continue to be happy<sup>144</sup> or "keep on being 'saved' in child-rearing."<sup>145</sup> Christian women are happy when educating or rearing children

in the Christian faith. They continue to be happy thus -- provided the children<sup>146</sup> themselves "remain"<sup>147</sup> in faith...and holiness."<sup>148</sup> First Timothy 2:15.

Of course, it is not rearing children -- whether her own or those of other people -- which justifies a woman. Merely giving infants a Christian education -- very commendable though this undoubtedly is -- does not in itself remove an educator's own sins from before the face of a just and a sin-hating God. Yet it certainly does spare or 'save' the educator from a life of meaninglessness. Indeed, it makes the educator happy.

Thus, rearing or educating children indeed keeps a godly woman eminently contented -- provided she rears or educates those [Christian] children well. Reared in that way, they themselves are then to remain in the Christian nurture imparted to them by that godly woman. (See again, Ephesians 6:1-4 above.)

Calvin commented<sup>149</sup> on First Timothy 2:15 that "the Apostle is dealing here not merely with bearing children, but with...bringing them up.... The Vulgate translates: 'in bearing children, if they continue in faith'.... This clause was usually taken to refer to the children."

The verse thus refers to the religious instruction which covenant mothers are to give to their own tiny covenant children. By extension, it seems to apply also to the way in which Ministers of the Word and Sacraments -- as well as Trinitarian Teachers in Christian Dayschools -- are to instruct the children of other covenanters. See Psalm 119:99; John 21:15; Acts 22:3; Second Timothy 1:3-5; and Titus 2:3f.

### **323. Timothy's spiritual nourishment from the womb onward**

Now Timothy's own mother had long been a "believing" (alias a 'faithful') Hebrew woman. Consequently, young Timothy had himself been reared from fetushood<sup>150</sup> as a long-time "Disciple" of the Lord Jesus Christ -- even before his birth and his yet later baptism/circumcision.<sup>151</sup> Second Timothy 3:14f.

However, since then, the youthful Timothy had been ordained as a Minister of the Word -- and indeed also as Presbytery's Evangelist. So Paul strongly reminded Timothy: "Keep on being nourished up in the words of the faith...which you have kept on attaining [or following].... Don't let anybody keep on despising your youth!"<sup>152</sup> First Timothy 4:6-12.

Now this implies that Timothy had already "been nourished" in "the faith" -- from a very early age. Indeed, this process of nourishing -- ever since then -- had continued without ceasing. Consequently, not only was the youthful Timothy still in the faith. He had also been nourished in that faith -- ever since he, when yet an infant, first imbibed his faithful mother's milk even before his baptism.

In his comment hereon, Calvin compellingly argued<sup>153</sup> that we need to "take the participle [*entrephomenos* alias 'keep on being nourished'] as a passive -- as confirming what he [Paul] has just said about Timothy's education. It is as if he [Paul] had said [to Timothy], 'Having rightly been instructed in the faith from your infancy, and having (so to speak) sucked in sound doctrine

with your mother's milk, and having made till now continual progress in it -- take pains by a faithful ministry to prove that you are still the same!

"This interpretation also brings out the root meaning of the verb [*entrephesthai* alias 'to be nourished up']. Faith means here the sum of Christian teaching.... The phrase 'which you have followed' indicates his perseverance."

### **324. The faith of Timothy and his mother and grandmother**

Indeed, Paul knows that the Christian Disciple Timothy had been reared not only by a believing mother -- but, almost simultaneously, also by a believing grandmother. This is why the Apostle later encourages Timothy, when the latter had become a youth,<sup>154</sup> to keep on standing in the Christian faith in which he had been reared.

Writes Paul to the youthful Timothy: "I thank God...when I keep on remembering<sup>155</sup> the unfeigned faith<sup>156</sup> in you.<sup>157</sup> It has kept on dwelling<sup>158</sup> first<sup>159</sup> in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice; and, I have been persuaded,<sup>160</sup> in you too."<sup>161</sup> Second Timothy 1:3-5.

The Apostle knows that the "faith" he sees in Timothy, had "first" dwelt in that youth's grandmother and mother too. Indeed, that faith had kept on dwelling in both of the latter.<sup>162</sup> Now, Paul was persuaded that this same kind of faith had kept on dwelling in Timothy too.<sup>163</sup> For the faith which Paul was now seeing in Timothy, had also previously been dwelling in the latter -- even before he had become a youth.

Indeed, Paul here seems to be saying he is sure<sup>164</sup> that a continuing faith in Christ keeps on dwelling in Timothy too -- precisely because it first did so in his grandmother, and in his mother who had reared him from fetushood onward.<sup>165</sup> For Paul had become 'surely' and perfectly "persuaded" that an ongoing unfeigned faith in Christ had long been dwelling even in Timothy.<sup>166</sup> Therefore Paul now tells that youth: "I keep on remembering the unfeigned faith which had kept on dwelling...in you."<sup>167</sup>

Calvin commented<sup>168</sup> that Paul here "commends both Timothy's faith, and that of his grandmother and mother.... When anyone has made a good and brave beginning, his progress should give him courage to advance further.... Examples from his own family circle are stronger enticements to him to press on.

"Thus, he [Paul] sets before him [Timothy] -- his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice, by whom he was reared in his infancy in such a way that he could suck in godliness along with his mother's milk.... Timothy from his boyhood...was so imbued with reverence and faith in God -- that it was a living seed which later increased and grew."

In a sermon,<sup>169</sup> Calvin explained what it means "when Saint Paul says to Timothy that 'he knows the faith [of his mother and grandmother] also dwells in him.' He is not speaking of that faith which he then had presently [when Timothy was a young adult] but of the faith which he had even from his childhood..., wherein he had been instructed even from the beginning." Indeed, the

latter phrase "from the beginning" probably implies that Timothy's Christian instruction had started from his beginning -- namely even at his conception.

### **325. Timothy knew the Sacred Scriptures even from his own fetushood onward**

Paul soon goes on to urge Timothy: "You must continue [or 'keep on remaining']<sup>170</sup> in the things you have learned<sup>171</sup> and you have been assured of,<sup>172</sup> knowing from whom<sup>173</sup> you have learned<sup>174</sup> them. Even from fetushood,<sup>175</sup> you have known the Holy Scriptures<sup>176</sup> which are able to keep on giving you wisdom<sup>177</sup> unto salvation through faith in Christ<sup>178</sup> [Jesus]...so that the man of God may keep on remaining equipped,<sup>179</sup> having been furnished thoroughly<sup>180</sup> unto every good work." Second Timothy 3:14-17.

Here it seems that the youth Timothy had long ago learned and been assured about certain things. He received that learning and assurance especially through his mother and grandmother, and probably even prenatally from his own fetushood onward. These things seem to have focussed on the salvation in Christ revealed in the Holy Scriptures. This, Timothy seems to have become acquainted with especially from his Bible-believing mother and even before his birth.

Indeed, it further seems that Timothy already knew and was assured of that salvation in Christ -- through his own God-given faith even when still a fetus. Paul now urges the youth Timothy to keep on remaining in those things which he had been taught even when a tiny infant and thereafter.

Timothy was now a mature "man of God." Yet, in order to be able to perform every good work, he still needed to keep on remaining perfectly equipped. This perfect equipping followed -- precisely after Timothy had already thoroughly been furnished especially by His Bible-believing mother even from his own covenantal fetushood onward.

We have previously noted some of Calvin's comments on Timothy, applicable to the time when the latter was still a baby. Calvin had already commented<sup>181</sup> on the "faith in which he [Timothy] had been reared from childhood." That would include the Christian instruction the unborn Timothy received while in the womb of his Bible-believing and Bible-pondering mother.

Calvin now further went on to comment<sup>182</sup> that Timothy himself had also "been accustomed from his boyhood to read the Scriptures." This "was a powerful urge to fidelity. For this long-established habit can make a man much better prepared to meet any kind of deception.

"It was a wise care that in ancient times was taken, to make sure that those who were intended for the Ministry of the Word should from their boyhood be instructed in the solid doctrine of godliness.... Thus, if anyone has acquired from his youth [alias his infancy] a knowledge of the Scriptures, he should count it a special blessing of God."

### **326. Hebrews: God sprinkled our hearts before baptism washed our bodies**

The inspired writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, after referring to "repentance from dead works," goes on to refer also to the "doctrine of baptisms." Hebrews 6:1-2. Here Calvin commented:<sup>183</sup> "The children of believers were baptized as infants, since they were adopted from the womb."

The Epistle to the Hebrews does not then go on to suggest that it is the baptismal water which has cleansed us. Instead, it soon goes on to declare that it is the sprinkling with the blood of Christ which has cleansed us. Hebrews 9:14.

Thus, our heart has been cleansed internally -- by being sprinkled with the blood of the Saviour by the Holy Spirit. Only thereafter was our body externally washed -- with pure water, symbolically. Hebrews 10:22.

For the holy writer declares: "Let us keep on drawing near, with a true heart!" Indeed, let us do so "in full assurance of faith -- having had the hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and having had the body washed with pure water."

### **327. Hebrews: without faith God cannot be pleased (even by babies)**

It should not be thought the above in any way excludes infant faith prior to infant baptism. For the holy writer never suggests: 'without baptism it is impossible to please the Lord.' Yet he indeed goes on to declare that "without faith it is impossible to please...[the Triune] God" -- in Whose Name we are thereafter to be baptized. Hebrews 11:6 *cf.* 6:2.

Here, Calvin explained<sup>184</sup> that the mediaeval baptismal regenerationists alias "the Schoolmen..., under cover of the Spirit and grace..., hide the divine mercy.... They quote from an Apostle: 'he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is the Rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.'"

"But," added Calvin, "they observe not what the method of seeking is" -- namely by faith alone. Indeed, this is a faith which should precede baptism. It also precedes any human act which might merit a reward. "For without faith it is impossible to please God." Consequently, even babies need faith in Christ -- in order to be able to please God.

As Calvin further explained:<sup>185</sup> "There is no sanctification without union with Christ.... Everything which man thinks, designs and performs -- before he is reconciled to God by faith -- is cursed. It is not only of no avail for justification, but it merits damnation. And why do we talk of this, as if it were doubtful -- when it has already been proved by the testimony of an Apostle that 'without faith it is impossible to please God?'" Hebrews 11:6!



### **328. Hebrews: Noah's household was justified by faith before being baptized in the flood**

The holy writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews then immediately goes on to add: "By faith Noah, having been warned by God about things not yet seen..., prepared an ark to save his household. By which [ark] he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith." Hebrews 11:7.

This, of course, was long before the waters of the flood. Of the latter, New Testament baptism is the antitype or fulfilment.<sup>186</sup>

The Bible itself states that even before the waters of the flood -- 'Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord.' Genesis 6:8.

Calvin commented<sup>187</sup> that "here Noah is declared to have been acceptable to God.... Whence, however, did he attain this integrity -- but from the pre-venting [or pre-ceding] grace of God? The commencement, therefore, of this favour -- was gratuitous mercy. Afterwards the Lord -- having once embraced him -- retained him..., lest he should perish with the rest of the world."

Further, continued Calvin:<sup>188</sup> "The Lord assigns as His reason for preserving Noah, that He knew him to be righteous" -- before the waters of the flood. "Only one man was left, who then cultivated righteousness -- for whose sake He [God] was propitious to his whole family."

As regards the members of Noah's family, explained Calvin, the Triune God "adopts them to Himself in Christ -- and justifies them by His mere mercy.... He also regenerates them by His Spirit -- to new life and righteousness.... The waters, after they had covered the earth for a time, would again cease." Yet Noah was justified by God alone -- and before he encountered the waters of the flood.

Calvin went on:<sup>189</sup> "It was a wonderful example of virtue that, when the whole world was indulging its pleasures without care or restraint and promising itself impunity, Noah alone had regard to the vengeance of God.... In the midst of the ruin of the whole world, he had no doubt that he would be saved.... The Apostle [Hebrews 11:7] gives the credit for this outstanding virtue, to faith.... In all ages, men were never approved by God...except by faith....

"Noah...was warned of things to come but not yet visible.... He built the ark.... By building it, he condemned the world.... He was the heir of righteousness which is by faith.... Noah paid...respect to the Word of God.... Therefore the faith which he had in the Word of God, pre-pared him for obedience to God -- proof of which he afterwards gave by building the ark....

"The work of building the ark was long and laborious, [and] was hindered by the daily scoffings of unbelievers... They insulted the holy man on every side.... The world was condemned by the ark.... Why was the ark the custodian of the safety of a single family -- except in virtue of the fact that the wrath of God spared a righteous man from perishing with the ungodly? If he had not survived, the condemnation of the world would not have been so clear....

"The last thing which the Apostle says [Hebrews 11:7], we must notice in the person of Noah. Moses [Genesis 6:9] says that he was a just man.... Faith was the cause and root of this justice.... The Apostle says [Hebrews 11:7] that this is shown by the facts.... No one ever really gives himself in obedience to God, unless he relies on the promises of His paternal loving-kindness -- and has faith that his life will be accepted by Him....

"The life of no man, however holy -- when it is measured by the standard of God -- can please Him without pardon. Justice must therefore of necessity rest on faith." This means faith before the flood as a picture of baptism -- and thus, faith before baptism too.

The holy writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews soon thereafter states: "By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents." It then gives the reason for this action: "because they saw he was a proper child." By faith! Hebrews 11:23.

### **329. Peter: born again of incorruptible seed as newborn babies**

The Apostle Peter assures Christians of their eternal security -- by faith in Christ. Peter does so, by reminding them their election is manifested precisely "through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus." First Peter 1:2.

According to Calvin's *Theme on the First Epistle of Peter* to Christians, that Apostle "exhorts them to holiness.... They had been born again by God's Word." So Peter therefore "makes mention of their spiritual infancy."

Later commenting on the previously mentioned verse, Calvin explained that Peter "adds two things to sanctification" -- [firstly] obedience, and [secondly] sprinkling. Here Peter "seems, by obedience, to understand newness of life; and by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, the remission of sins."

It is by Christ, Peter goes on to assure us, that "you keep on believing in God.... So that your faith and hope might continue being in God.... [For you] have been born again, not by corruptible seed but by incorruptible, by the Word of God which keeps on living and remaining [in you], for ever.... This is the Word which by the Gospel has been preached to you. Therefore while you continue putting off all malice..., as newborn babies you are to keep on desiring the sincere milk of the Word so that you may keep on growing in Him" -- or: thereby! First Peter 1:21 to 2:2.

Here Calvin commented<sup>190</sup> that Peter is speaking of those "who believe.... Since they are new men and 'born again' of God, it behooves them to shape their lives worthily of God and of their spiritual rebirth. This seems to be connected with a verse in the next chapter [First Peter 2:2] about seeking the milk of the Word -- so that their way of living might correspond with their birth [alias their generation].... Peter's object is to teach us that we cannot be Christians without regeneration.... Man is...nothing but an earthly...and empty creature -- unless [and until] he is born again.... It is God alone Who regenerates us....

"As we have been born again -- he [Peter] requires from us a life like that of infants.... He enumerates...the sincere milk of the Word.... What pertains to infancy, is honest simplicity.... Milk is called that 'way of living' which is suitable to innocent nature and simple infancy....

"In case anyone thinks that he [Peter] is commending an infancy that is void of understanding but full of fatuity, he meets this objection." For "none of the elect is called away from the present life, without being previously sanctified and regenerated by the Spirit of God.... The Spirit acknowledges no sanctification save that from incorruptible seed -- that is, the Word of God.... First Peter 1:23f.

"We confess, indeed, that the Word of the Lord is the only seed of spiritual regeneration. But we deny the inference that therefore the power of God cannot regenerate infants. This is as possible and easy for Him, as it is wondrous and incomprehensible to us. It were dangerous to deny that the Lord is able to furnish them with the knowledge of Himself -- in any way He pleases."<sup>191</sup>

### **330. The Petrine connecting of the Noachic downpour with household baptism**

Peter goes on to say that Christ, Who had suffered and died, had been quickened too. Thus, he had been resurrected "by the Spirit -- in Whom He had gone and preached to the imprisoned spirits who previously disobeyed when once the patience of God had waited in the days of Noah during the preparation of the ark, into which few (that is eight) persons were safely brought." They were "safely brought through" that ordeal -- by or through water. And baptism, the antitype of this, now keeps on saving us -- not [as] the laying off of the filth of the flesh, but [as] an answer of a good conscience toward God -- by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." First Peter 3:18-21.

Here, it should be noted that the justification of Noah (and of his family) took place not by the floodwater but by God alone --and indeed quite before the advent of that water.<sup>192</sup> The eight members of Noah's family were not saved or preserved by water -- but only by God. Peter's passage here says that covenant baptism (like that of Noah's whole family) is the prayerful answer to God of our [already cleansed] "good conscience" *etc.*

From this Petrine passage, Calvin refuted both Anabaptists and Romanists -- in one fell swoop. Argued the Reformer:<sup>193</sup> "Moses and the prophets reminded the people of the thing meant by circumcision -- which, however, infants received.... [Here the Anabaptists] contend that nothing is left for Paedobaptism.... [However,] delusion misleads them....

"The truth of circumcision consisted in the same answer of a good conscience.... But He Himself shows that the answer of a good conscience forms the truth of circumcision -- and at the same time commands infants to be circumcised.... Nothing more of present effect is to be required in Paedobaptism, than to confirm and sanction the covenant which the Lord has [already] made with them" -- before baptism.

### **331. First John on regeneration also in tenderest infancy**

Writes the apostle John: "I am writing to you, fathers, because you know Him Who is from the beginning. I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one. I have written to you, little children, because you know the Father." First John 2:13.

John, commented Calvin,<sup>194</sup> "now begins to enumerate different ages -- to show that what he had taught, was relevant to each of them.... He mentions three ages.... Into these three degrees, John divides the course of human life....

"The Apostle infers that the Gospel is well adapted to young children, because there they find a Father.... We are all like orphans, until we come to the grace of adoption through the Gospel. Hence, what he declares of the young -- is common also to the old."

For the Apostle John further insists: "Whosoever has been [re]generated by God, does not keep on committing sin. For His seed keeps on remaining in him: and he cannot keep on sinning, because he has been [re]generated by God." First John 3:9.

This can only mean that if one has been regenerated even ere birth or in tenderest infancy, before infant baptism -- God's seed, the seed of faith, is thereby sown in one's heart. Then and thereafter, it consequently starts to grow forthwith.

Calvin here observed:<sup>195</sup> "The hearts of believers are so effectually governed from above, that they follow with undeviating affection. 'Whosoever has been born from God, does not keep on committing sin. For His seed remains in him.' First John 3:9."

Calvin also explained<sup>196</sup> what John means when he "says that 'Whosoever has been born from God, does not keep on committing sin; for His seed keeps on remaining in him.' First John 3:9. He soon gives the reason, 'This is the victory that keeps on overcoming the world: even our faith.' First John 5:4."

On this latter passage, Calvin further commented<sup>197</sup> that "all who are begotten by God, overcome the world.... Now he [John] also expresses the way to overcome... He places the victory over the whole world in faith." Consequently, even infants need this faith in Christ their Victor -- in order to get justified.

### **332. John's Revelation implies the faith of infant covenanters**

In the last book of the Bible, John declares about Christian believers: "Jesus Christ...loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood." Revelation 1:5. Very clearly, it is not the water of baptism but the Saviour's blood which washed away sins -- past tense.

John goes on to explain that the Spirit of God the Father promises to give all who are overcomers -- a white stone with a new name written on it. Revelation 2:17. Christ's Spirit also

promises to write the Name of God upon them. Revelation 3:12. For they are to be sealed in the Name of the living God. Revelation 7:2 & 14:1.

John also explains that "the seal of the living God" -- apparently baptism -- is the sign whereby "the servants of our God are sealed on their foreheads." Revelation 7:2-3. This 'sealing' implies that the recipients of this seal already belonged to God, in Whose Name they were now sealed.

Without doubt, this sign is intended even for the infants of such adults as profess faith in Christ. Such infants are themselves to be regarded as being among the faithful. For how could the 144,000 sealed persons mentioned there -- the sum total of all twelve of the various tribes of Israel -- be devoid of infants? Revelation 7:4!

As John goes on to point out, it is not just Jesus Christ Himself -- holy from His conception onward -- Who was conceived within a godly woman and brought forth for His bride (alias the Church of God). Revelation 12:5. In a somewhat different sense, the same is also true of "the rest of her seed who keep the Commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ." Revelation 12:17. Indeed, those others of "the rest of her seed" are (as it were) Christ's younger brothers and sisters -- His subordinate fellow-members of His Own Church.

These are not they who receive the mark of the beast on their hands *etc.* But these are they who belong to that perfect number of "hundred forty-four thousand" from all of the tribes, having the "Father's Name written upon their foreheads." These are "the saints...that keep the Commandments of God and the faith of Jesus." Revelation 13:16 & 14:1-12.

Especially in glory, the Visible Church is regarded as sacred -- a holy city. Indeed, there it is seen to be the New Jerusalem or the bride of the Lamb. Revelation 21:2-9. So John goes on to declare that "there shall in no way enter into it anything that defiles, nor whosoever keeps on working abomination or keeps on telling a lie. But [only] those who have been written in the Lamb's book of life." Revelation 21:27.

Precisely at this very point, Calvin searchingly asked:<sup>198</sup> "How are infants regenerated...? We answer -- that the work of God, though beyond the reach of our capacity, is not therefore null.... If they [infants] are born sinners..., they must either remain unaccepted and hated by God -- or be justified. And why do we ask more -- when the Judge Himself publicly declares that 'except a man [alias a person] be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God?' John 3:3....

"Infants who are to be saved -- and that some are saved at this age, is certain -- must without question previously be regenerated by the Lord.... They bring innate corruption with them from their mother's womb. They must be purified, before they can be admitted into the Kingdom of God -- into which shall not enter anything that defiles. Revelation 21:27."

John's last description is that of the eschatological destination in glory of the "pure river of water of life" -- and of all those benefitted thereby (including Christ's little ones). That water irrigates the grove of fruitful trees of life -- on the renewed earth. The Lamb Himself shall be

there. "And His servants shall serve Him. And they shall see His face. And His Name shall be on their foreheads." Revelation 22:1-4.

Yet of those who will have had the Christ-ian Name impressed upon their foreheads, it is only His serv-ants who will be there. Matthew 28:19 *cf.* Luke 1:59-64 (*q.v.*). These are they who will first have trusted in Him -- before following and serving Him. They will have done this -- before being impressed with God's Triune Name -- unto the final goal of their Christian baptism.

As John declares: "The nations of them which are saved, shall walk in the light" of the New Jerusalem. "And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it." Revelation 21:24 & 21:26. Indeed, what nation has no babies? "And he showed me a pure rive of water.... And they shall see His face; and His Name shall be in their foreheads." Revelation 22:1 & 22:4

### **333. Calvin said sacraments strengthen faith already present**

In the 1536 edition of his famous *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Calvin made many important observations about the Christian belief of covenant babies (and about the disbelief of other babies). All infants, he stated, have the sinfulness of the first Adam's unrighteousness imputed to them from their conception onward. Accordingly, they need (and some often have) the sinless 'seed' of the righteousness of the Second Adam Jesus Christ implanted into them -- at an equally early age.

Once Adam's unrighteousness has been imputed to all infants at their conception, it becomes their own unrighteousness. Explained Calvin:<sup>199</sup> "Even infants, bringing their condemnation with them from their mothers' womb, suffer not for another's but for their own defect. For although they have not yet produced the fruits of their own unrighteousness, they have the seed [thereof] implanted in them."

On the other hand, the seed of Christ's righteousness is implanted into many covenant babies -- even before their birth. Once this has occurred, they are justified for ever. Even the apostasy of their own parents -- then or thereafter -- cannot change that infant justification. Indeed, even the apostasy of their immediate parents -- as distinct from the godliness of their grandparents or earlier covenant-keeping forebears --cannot annul the covenant status of the tiny children concerned.

Calvin therefore drew a parallel between circumcised yet backslidden Old Testament Israelites on the one hand -- and baptized yet heretical Romanists on the other. Calvin indeed acknowledged the many errors of Romanism. Yet he also seemed to assume that early-dying infants conceived of Christ-professing Romish parents, should still be treated as God's people.

By this is meant infants who die before being baptized, or at any rate before being raised in that tarnished and syncretizing yet by no means pagan communion. Such children should be presumed to be just as regenerate as were early-dying Israelites during Old Testament times of gross backslidings and doctrinal deviation among the adult Hebrews.

Thus Calvin declared:<sup>200</sup> "In ancient times, there remained among the Jews certain special privileges of a Church.... The covenant of the Lord continued there [among the impious Israelites].... Nor could circumcision be so profaned by their impure hands, as not still to be a true sign and sacrament of His covenant. Hence the children who were born to them, the Lord called His Own (Ezekiel 16:20).... By special blessing, they...belonged to Him."

### **334. Infant baptism and Calvin's definition of a sacrament**

Also in relation to infant baptism, Calvin defined<sup>201</sup> "what a sacrament is." He declared that "it is an external sign by which the Lord seals on our consciences His promises of good-will toward us, in order to sustain the weakness of our faith -- and [by which] we in our turn testify our piety towards Him.... We may also define [it] more briefly, by calling it a testimony of the divine favour toward us, confirmed by an external sign with a corresponding attestation of our faith toward Him." Very clearly, this definition presupposes faith -- before circumcision (formerly) and baptism (currently) -- also in respect of covenant infants themselves.

Calvin continued:<sup>202</sup> "From the definition which we have given, we perceive that there never is a sacrament without an antecedent promise -- the sacrament being added as a kind of appendix with the view of confirming and sealing the promise and giving a better attestation or rather in a manner confirming it.... [A sacrament] does not so much confirm His Word, as establish us in the faith of it.... As our faith is slender and weak..., sacraments therefore are exercises which confirm our faith in the Word of God."

Calvin also referred "Galatians 3:27" and "First Corinthians 12:13" especially to baptism. For there, he explained<sup>203</sup> that "however the ungodly and hypocrites may by their perverseness either suppress or obscure or impede the effect of divine grace in the sacraments -- that does not prevent them [the sacraments], where and whenever God is so pleased, from giving a true evidence of communion with Christ.... The sacraments are truly termed evidences of divine grace, and as it were seals of the goodwill which He entertains toward us. They -- by sealing it to us -- sustain, nourish, confirm and increase our faith."

The great Genevan added<sup>204</sup> that "the Lord...confirms us by His sacraments.... He illumines our mind by the light of His Holy Spirit and opens up an entrance into our hearts for His...sacraments which would otherwise only...fall upon our sight, but by no means affect us inwardly....

"With regard to the increase and confirmation of faith..., in assigning this office to the sacraments -- it is not as if I thought that there is a kind of secret efficacy perpetually inherent in them..., but because our Lord has instituted them for the express purpose of helping to establish and increase our faith....

"A pious mind is confirmed in faith by means of the sacraments.... The sacraments do not avail one *iota*, without the energy of the Holy Spirit.... Yet, in hearts previously taught by That Preceptor -- there is nothing to prevent the sacraments from strengthening and increasing faith" already priorly present.

"The sacraments," explained Calvin,<sup>205</sup> "are confirmations of our faith.... The Lord...spiritually nourishes our faith by means of the sacraments.... Neither ought our confidence to be fixed on the sacraments, nor ought the glory of God to be transferred to them. But, passing beyond them all -- our faith and confession should rise to Him.... Ancient writers intended...to intimate that sacraments are the signs of sacred and spiritual things...[so] that they may contribute to our faith in God.... [Sacramental] mysteries would be frigid (as has been seen), were they not helps to faith."

### **335. Sacramentalism is just as wrong as anti-sacramentarianism**

Calvin repudiated both the Zwinglian and the Gnesio-Lutheran as well as the Romish views of baptism. Having just distanced himself from reactionary anti-sacramentarianism ('baptism is merely a sign') -- Calvin next<sup>206</sup> repudiated the mechanical sacramentalism of "others who ascribe to the sacraments a kind of secret virtue which is nowhere [in Holy Scripture] said to have been implanted in them by God."

The false notion "that the sacraments...justify and convey grace," explained Calvin, "is plainly from the devil. For first, in promising a righteousness without faith, it drives souls headlong on destruction. Secondly, in deriving a cause of righteousness from the sacraments -- it entangles miserable minds....

"What is a sacrament, [when] received without faith -- but most certain destruction to the Church? For, seeing that nothing is to be expected beyond the promise, and the promise no less denounces wrath to the unbeliever than offers grace to the believer -- it is an error to suppose that anything more is conferred by the sacraments, than is offered by the Word of God and obtained by true faith.

"From this, another thing follows -- viz. that assurance of salvation does not depend on participation in the sacraments, as if justification consisted in it. This, which is treasured up in Christ alone..., may be completely enjoyed without this seal. So it is true, as Augustine declares, that there may be invisible sanctification without a visible sign."

Even regarding the ancient people of God, Calvin declared<sup>207</sup> that "things which were done to assist and establish their faith, were also sacraments.... They are testimonies of grace and salvation from the Lord. So, in regard to us, they are marks of profession by which we openly swear by the Name of God, binding ourselves to be faithful to Him.... Sacraments are ceremonies by which God is pleased to train His people first to...strengthen faith within, and secondly to testify our religion to men."

### **336. Calvin: baptism seals faith already present**

Coming now to the sacrament specifically of baptism, Calvin explained<sup>208</sup> that it is "given us by God primarily to strengthen our faith in Him" or to "be conducive to our faith in Him" -- also so that "it may serve the purpose of a confession among men.... Baptism contributes to our



faith" -- but does not originate it. For it is "a sign and evidence of our purification..., a kind of sealed instrument by which He assures us that all our sins are...covered and effaced."<sup>209</sup>

Calvin went on:<sup>210</sup> "Those who receive baptism with true faith, truly feel the efficacy of Christ's death in the mortification of their flesh -- and the efficacy of His resurrection in the quickening of the Spirit.... Our faith receives advantage from baptism.... It is now clear how false the doctrine is which some long ago taught, and others still persist in -- that by baptism we are exempted and set free from original sin."

To the contrary -- continued Calvin -- even after their baptism, unregenerate "infants bring their condemnation with them from their mother's womb." Yet "believers become assured by baptism that this condemnation is entirely withdrawn from them, since (as has been said) the Lord by this sign promises that a full and entire remission has been made" for them already -- before their baptism. "Baptism serves as our confession before men, inasmuch as it is a mark by which we openly declare that we wish to be ranked among the people of God; by...which, in short, we publicly assert our faith."<sup>211</sup>

### **337. Baptism is given to strengthen faith already there**

So faith precedes baptism. As Calvin explained:<sup>212</sup> "Our children, before they are born, God declares that He adopts for His own -- when He promises that He will be a God to us, and to our seed after us. In this promise, their salvation is included.... How much evil has been caused by the dogma, ill expounded, that baptism is necessary to salvation!... For when the opinion prevails that all are lost who happen not to be baptized in water -- our condition becomes worse than that of God's ancient people."

"As if His grace were [now] more restrained, than under the Law! In that case, Christ will be thought to have come not to fulfil but to abolish the promises.... [In that case,] the promise which was then effectual in itself to confer salvation before the eighth day [compare Genesis 17:7-12 with Second Samuel 12-23] -- would not now be effectual without the help of a sign" such as baptism. But no! Quite the contrary. See Acts 2:38f and Colossians 2:11f.

Calvin further insisted (in the 1559 edition of his *Institutes*)<sup>213</sup> that "children who happen to depart this life before an opportunity of baptizing them in water, are not excluded from the Kingdom of heaven.... Unless we admit this position, great injury is done to the covenant of God, as if [it] in itself were weak -- whereas its effect depends not either on baptism or on any accessories. The sacrament is afterwards added as a kind of seal -- not to give efficacy to the promise as if in itself invalid, but merely to confirm it to us....

"Hence it follows that the children of believers are not baptized in order that, though formerly aliens from the Church, they may then for the first time become children of God. But rather are [they] received into the Church by a formal sign because, in virtue of the promise, they previously belonged to the body of Christ (*quia promissionis beneficio iam ante ad Christi corpus pertinebant*).

"Hence, if, in omitting the sign, there is neither sloth nor contempt nor negligence -- we are safe from all danger.... The better course, therefore, is to pay such respect to the ordinance of God -- as not to seek the sacraments in any other quarter than where the Lord has deposited them. When we cannot receive them from the Church, the grace of God is not so inseparably annexed to them that we cannot obtain it by faith according to His Word."

In the 1536 edition of his *Institutes*, Calvin stated:<sup>214</sup> "The children have faith, in common with the adults. But nobody should take this in the sense as if I wish to say that faith always begins from one's mother's womb (*a matris utero semper inchoari fidem*). For the Lord sometimes calls adults too -- sometimes earlier, and sometimes later. But I am only saying that all of God's elect enter into everlasting life by faith -- at whatever time of life they may be removed from this prison of destruction."

In the 1539 edition, he added that he "would not wish to claim, anent the children, that they are endowed with the same faith as we (*eadem esse fide praeditos quam nos experimur*)."

In the 1550 edition, he added further: "or that they possess a 'faith knowledge' equal to that of ours (*aut omnino habere 'notitiam fidei' similem*)."

Nevertheless, Calvin insisted throughout -- that early-dying elect infants do have faith in Christ (faint and embryonic though that faith indeed may be).

### **338. The covenant with Abraham proves infant baptism**

Calvin further referred to the ancient promise made to Abraham and all His spiritual descendants: 'I will establish My covenant between Myself and you, and your seed after you in their generations, as an everlasting covenant -- to be a God unto you and to your seed after you.... This is My covenant which you people shall keep -- between Me, and you people, and your seed after you. Every male among you shall be circumcised.... He who is eight days old, shall be circumcised among you; every male in your generations.' Genesis 17:7-12.

The great Genevan here observed<sup>215</sup> that "prior to the institution of baptism, the people of God had circumcision in its stead.... When the Lord enjoins Abraham to observe circumcision, Genesis 17:10, He premises that He would be a God unto him -- and to his seed.... These words include the promise of eternal life -- as our Saviour employs it to prove the immortality and resurrection of believers. 'God,' says He, 'is not the God of the dead but of the living.' Matthew 22:32....

"We have therefore a spiritual promise given to the fathers in circumcision, similiar to that which is given to us in baptism -- since it figured to them both the forgiveness of sins, and the mortification of the flesh.... The thing figured, is one and the same -- viz. regeneration.... Hence it is incontrovertible that baptism has been substituted for circumcision, and performs the same office.

"Baptism is properly administered to infants, as a thing due to them. The Lord did not anciently bestow circumcision upon them, without [first] making them [viz. the elect] -- partakers of all the things signified by circumcision.... The covenant remains firm and fixed.... It is no less applicable to the children of Christians in the present day, than to the children of the Jews under

the Old Testament.... They are **partakers** of the thing signified. How can they be denied the sign?... If they obtain the reality -- how can they be refused the figure?"

For "the covenant which the Lord once made with Abraham, is not less applicable to Christians now -- than it was anciently to the Jewish people.... The children of the Jews...were made heirs of that covenant.... They were separated from the heathen [and] were called a **holy seed**.... For the same reason, the children of Christians, or those who have only one believing parent, are called 'holy' and, by the testimony of the Apostle, differ from the impure seed of idolaters." First Corinthians 7:14, compare Ezra 9:2 and Nehemiah 9:2.

"Jesus Christ...took the little [covenant] children in His arms.... Matthew 19:13.... Our Saviour, in ordering little [covenant] children to be brought to Him, adds the reason -- 'of such is the Kingdom of heaven'.... If it is right that children should be brought to Christ -- why should they not be admitted to baptism, the symbol of our communion and fellowship with Christ? If the Kingdom of heaven is theirs -- why should they be denied the sign?"

### **339. Calvin refuted the Anabaptist views against Paedobaptism**

Speaking of the Anabaptists, Calvin added:<sup>216</sup> "The assertion they disseminate among the common people, that a long series of years elapsed after the resurrection of Christ, during which Paedobaptism was unknown -- is a shameful falsehood. Since there is no writer -- however ancient -- who does not trace its origin to the days of the Apostles....

"It remains briefly to indicate what benefit redounds from the observance both to believers who bring their children to the church to be baptized and to the infants themselves.... No one may despise the ordinance.... Any one who would think of ridiculing [infant] baptism under this pretence, would also ridicule the divine ordinance of [infant] circumcision....

"The divine symbol communicated to the child, as with the impress of a seal, confirms the promise.... I am not moved by the objection that the promise [itself] ought to be sufficient to confirm the salvation of our children [even without the sign of baptism]. It has seemed otherwise to God....

"Let those, then, who embrace the promise of mercy to their children -- consider it as their duty to offer them to the Church, to be sealed with the symbol of mercy, and [to] animate themselves to surer confidence on seeing with the bodily eye the covenant of the Lord engraven on the bodies of their children.... Children [themselves] derive some benefit from their baptism.... When they have grown up, they are thereby strongly urged to an earnest desire of serving God -- Who has received them as 'sons'...before, from non-age."

Calvin continued:<sup>217</sup> "We have no doubt that in distinguishing the children of God from bastards and foreigners, that the election of God reigns freely.... Paul declares that the Jews were sanctified by their parents." See Romans 11:16. "He elsewhere says that the children of Christians derive sanctification from their parents." First Corinthians 7:14. "God is so good and liberal to His people, that He is pleased as a mark of His favour to extend their privileges to the children [generated or conceived by and] born to them."

### **340. Calvin's disproof of the Anabaptist denial of infant regeneratability**

Calvin next disproved<sup>218</sup> the Anabaptists' objection that 'spiritual regeneration is not applicable to earliest infancy.' For 'how' -- they ask Calvinists -- 'are infants regenerated?'

Here Calvin replied: "We answer that the work of God -- though beyond the reach of our capacities [fully to understand it] -- is not therefore null" in infants. For such "infants who are to be saved" -- and that some are saved at this age is certain -- must, without question, previously be regenerated by the Lord....

"The Judge Himself publicly declares that 'except a man be born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God.' John 3:3.... God gave, in the case of John the Baptist -- whom He **sanctified from his mother's womb** (Luke 1:15) -- a proof of what He might do in others [compare Luke 1:41-44].... The child not yet born would be filled with the Holy Spirit [compare Luke 1:15 & 1:41f].... Instead of attempting to give a law to God, let us hold that He sanctifies whom He pleases in the way in which He sanctified John -- seeing that His power is not impaired."

Continued Calvin:<sup>219</sup> "Christ was sanctified from earliest infancy [from His conception onward], so that He might sanctify His elect in Himself at any age.... He was conceived by the Holy Spirit, so that -- completely pervaded with His holiness in the flesh which He had assumed -- He might transfuse it [His holiness] into us.... In Christ...we have a proof that the age of infancy is not incapable of receiving sanctification (*infantiae aetatem non usque adeo a sanctificatione abhorrere*)....

"We set down as incontrovertible, that none of the elect is called away from the present life without previously being sanctified and regenerated by the Spirit of God.... We deny...the power of God cannot regenerate infants. This is as possible and easy for Him to do, as it is wondrous and incomprehensible to us. It were dangerous to deny that the Lord is able to furnish them with the knowledge of Himself in any way He pleases."

The Anabaptists, however, 'deem it very absurd to attribute any knowledge of God to infants.' But Calvin replied<sup>220</sup> that **covenantal infants** "are said now to receive some part of that grace of which they are to have the full measure shortly after[wards]....

"Some of those whom death hurries away in the first moments of infancy, pass into life eternal. They are certainly admitted to behold the immediate presence of God. Those, therefore, whom the Lord is to illumine with the full brightness of His light -- why may He not, if He so please, **irradiate at present with some small beam**...before He delivers them from the prison of the flesh" or lets them die in infancy and then takes their souls to glory?

### **341. Infant circumcision foreshadowed infant baptism**

Calvin continued:<sup>221</sup> "Circumcision was a sign of repentance.... Jeremiah 4:4.... Thus, Paul terms it a seal of the righteousness of faith. Romans 4:11.... God ordered circumcision to be performed on the bodies of infants [Genesis 17:10f].... Since God imputed circumcision, the sign

of repentance and faith, [even] to infants -- it should not seem absurd that they are now made partakers of baptism."

Thus, the Christian believers' infant "children are baptized for...[ongoing] repentance and faith. Though these are not yet formed in them [fully], yet the **seed** of both lies hidden in them by the secret operation of the Spirit" --*arcana tamen Spiritus operatione utriusque semen in illis latet*. Still, even regenerated babies understand all of this only in a babylike way, and certainly not with the adult comprehension they will one day attain.

Now the Anabaptists rightly argue that baptism 'is not to be given to any but those who are capable of such feelings' of 'regeneration and renewing.' Titus 3:5. But then, explained Calvin, "neither ought circumcision -- which is designated 'regeneration' -- to be conferred on any but the regenerate [Colossians 2:11-13)....

"They [the Anabaptists] always remain caught in this dilemma. The command of God to circumcise infants was either legitimate and exempt from cavil, or deserved reprehension. If there was nothing incompetent or absurd in it, no absurdity can be shown in the observance of Paedobaptism."

Calvin went on:<sup>222</sup> "If those on whom the Lord has bestowed His election...depart this life before they become adults -- He, by the incomprehensible energy of His Spirit, renews them in the way which He alone deems expedient.... We are born sinners.... We stand in need of forgiveness and pardon from the very womb.... God does not preclude this age from the hope of mercy, but rather gives assurance of it. Why should we deprive it [this 'age' of prenatal infancy 'from the very womb'] of the sign [*viz.* baptism] -- which is much inferior to the reality?"

For "infants receive forgiveness of sins. Therefore, they are not to be deprived of the sign.... By baptism, Christ intends to attest the ablution by which He cleanses His Church. It would seem inequitable to deny this attestation to infants, who are justly deemed part of the Church -- seeing they are called heirs of the heavenly Kingdom [Matthew 19:13f].... Infants whom He enumerates among His members, are to be baptized."

Calvin continued:<sup>223</sup> "The Lord, when He chose Abraham..., **after** his faith in the promise, made him partaker of the sacrament [of circumcision].... The infant [Isaac] born to him...is included in the promise by hereditary right from his mother's womb.... The children of believers...are partakers of the covenant.... There is no reason why they should be denied the sign, [just] because they are unable to swear to its stipulations....

"The Lord sometimes declares that the children born to the Israelites are begotten and born to Him. Ezekiel 16:20f & 23:37. For He undoubtedly gives the place of 'sons' to the children of those to whose seed He has promised that He will be a Father.... Children deriving their origin from Christians -- as they are immediately on their birth [and indeed even from their very conception or generation onward] received by God as heirs of the covenant -- are also to be admitted to baptism."

### **342. Even prenatal babies and infants all need to be born again**

Continued Calvin:<sup>224</sup> "No man, until renewed...by the Spirit, can enter the Kingdom of God. This moreover plainly explodes the fiction of those who consign all the unbaptized to eternal death.... What will they make of a youth who, after being imbued duly and properly with the rudiments of piety, while waiting for the day of baptism is unexpectedly carried off by sudden death? The promise of our Lord is clear. 'He who hears My Word and believes in Him Who sent Me, has everlasting life and shall not come into condemnation but has passed from death to life.' John 5:24. We nowhere read of His having condemned him who was not yet baptized."

Consequently: "We must not deem baptism so necessary as to suppose that every one who has lost the opportunity of obtaining it, has forthwith perished.... Moreover, baptism being as they [certain Anabaptists] hold necessary to salvation -- they, in denying it to infants, consign them all to eternal death. Let them now consider what kind of agreement they have with the words of Christ, Who says that 'of such is the kingdom of heaven.' Matthew 19:14.... We have already established the doctrine concerning the regeneration of infants."

Of Jesus, Calvin concluded:<sup>225</sup> "It is certain that infants are blessed by Him [Matthew 19:13-15 *cf.* 18:1-6; Mark 10:13-16; Luke 18:15*f*]. It follows that they are freed from death.... I admit that all the posterity of Adam, born of the flesh, bear their condemnation with them from the womb. I hold that this is no obstacle to the immediate application of the divine remedy.... When the office of teaching was committed to the Apostles, they were not prohibited from baptizing infants [Matthew 28:19]....

"Servetus [the antipaedobaptistic and anabaptistic unitarian] cannot show that by divine appointment, several years must elapse before the new spiritual life begins. Paul's testimony is that, though lost by nature, the children of believers are holy by supernatural grace.... Who can infer...that baptism is to be denied to infants whom...the Lord consecrated to Himself by gratuitous adoption?... By baptism, they are admitted into the fold of Christ [the Visible Church]....

"The design of Satan in assaulting Paedobaptism with all his forces, is to keep out of view and gradually efface that attestation of divine grace which the promise itself presents to our eyes. In this way, not only would men impiously be ungrateful for the mercy of God, but be less careful in training their children to piety. For it is no slight stimulus to us to bring them up in the fear of God and the observance of His Law, when we reflect that from their birth they have been considered and acknowledged by Him as His children!"

### **343. Calvin disproves the rejection of infant baptism by Servetus the Anabaptist**

Calvin's defence of his own baptismal views against those of the anti-trinitarian and anti-paedobaptist heretic Servetus, are full of instruction. "Servetus, not the least among the Anabaptists" -- observed Calvin<sup>226</sup> -- "wrongly assumes that 'infants...are unable to believe.' To Servetus, for that reason all infants still 'lie under condemnation.'"

Replied Calvin regarding Christ: "Seeing it is certain that [covenantal] infants are blessed by Him, it follows that they are freed from death.... Servetus cannot show that by divine appointment several years must elapse before the new spiritual life begins. Paul's testimony is that...the children of believers are holy by supernatural grace [Romans 11:16 and First Corinthians 7:14]....

"Servetus [himself] afterwards adds that no man becomes our brother, unless by the spirit of adoption -- which is only conferred by the hearing of faith." Calvin answered: "Who will presume from this, to give [or prescribe] the law to God -- and say that He may not ingraft infants into Christ by some other secret method?"

Servetus, continued Calvin, "objects that Cornelius was baptized after receiving the Holy Spirit.... He objects that infants cannot be regarded as new men....

"But what I have said again and again," responds Calvin, "I now repeat.... From non-age...God takes His own methods of regenerating."

In several letters to Servetus, Calvin made even more pertinent remarks. "We acknowledge no use of baptism -- as long as this promise is not received by faith.... Yet one receives the promise not just for oneself, but likewise for one's children."<sup>227</sup>

"We say that Christ extends His hand to the children of holy parents as soon as they are born or conceived (*'simul ac nascitur'*) -- in order to liberate them from the general guilt of sin."<sup>228</sup> "The children whom God gathers from this life, are without doubt regenerated by the secret working of the Spirit."<sup>229</sup>

Furthermore, the Spirit of God can indeed work in children to justify them. This Calvin pointed out in his work entitled *Refutation of the Errors of Michael Servetus* the antitrinitarian Anabaptist.

"We sense that the Kingdom of God starts in men" alias human beings, explained Calvin,<sup>230</sup> "when they are regenerated. For we indeed say they are 'regenerated' -- when they are illuminated through faith in Christ, when their hearts are reformed in obedience to God, and summarily when the image of God is restored in them."

For argument's sake, continued Calvin,<sup>231</sup> let us for a moment "here reason after the manner of Servetus." But then, "would there not be a plausible complaint against God...that He is cruel?" For in that case God, though "gratuitously condoning the crimes of His [adult] enemies -- had [then] not rescued from death His own most innocent images [namely covenantal infants]."

However, Calvin himself responded: "Whomsoever Christ blesses, He exempts from the curse of Adam and the wrath of God.... [Covenantal] infants, it is known, were blessed by Him (Mark 10:16). Therefore, they are exempt from the wrath of God."

### **344. John Calvin's *Catechisms* on infant faith and baptism**

In his 1537 *Instruction in Faith*, Calvin presented the essence of his 1536 *Institutes* in popular form. There, he wrote to [infantly baptized] older Christians -- especially to prepare them for their first communion service (but not before their teenage).

Said Calvin:<sup>232</sup> "Baptism has been given to us by God -- first to help our faith in Him, and secondly [to help] our profession of faith before men.... Baptism serves likewise as our acknowledgment of faith in the sight of men.... We rightly baptize our children, since they are already participants in the eternal covenant through which the Lord promises that He will be the God not only of us but also of our posterity." Genesis 17:1-14.

In his 1541 *Geneva Catechism*, Calvin stated<sup>233</sup> that "the effect follow[s] the use of the sacraments...when we receive them by faith." Consequently, "the water" of baptism is "by no means" a "washing of the soul.... The legitimate use of baptism" requires that "we baptize infants." Furthermore, "the Minister ought...not to give it to every one who is clearly unworthy of receiving it..., because it cannot be done without insulting and profaning the sacrament."

Here, maintained Calvin, only such "infants" as were already "worthy" -- are to be baptized. Very clearly, this implies a prebaptismal 'worthi-ness' not just in believing parents, but also in their covenant children themselves. It is this God-given 'worthi-ness' -- that of Christ Himself graciously imputed to these babies -- which makes them "worthy" of baptism even while yet infants.

Significantly, this *Geneva Catechism* -- "Calvin's Catechism" -- was later approved by the Church of Scotland, and joined to the latter's *Book of Common Order*. See Crespin's (1606) *Catechism or Manner to Teach Children the Christian Religion*. The sub-title here further describes this work as one "wherein the Minister Demandeth the Question and the Child Maketh Answer." This Catechism is then said to have been "made by the Excellent Doctor and Pastor in Christ's Church, John Calvin."<sup>234</sup>

In Calvin's 1541 *Ecclesiastical Ordinances*, we similarly read that "baptism is not to take place except at the hour of preaching.... The names of the children, together with the names of their parents, are to be recorded.... Strangers are not to be accepted as godparents, but only Christian persons who are also members of our own communion -- since others are not capable of promising the Church to instruct the children as they should."<sup>235</sup>

### **345. Infant baptism in Calvin's 1542 *Liturgical Forms***

Apparently in 1542, Calvin adapted his Strassburg *Form of Administering Baptism* for use in Geneva. He also did the same in respect of his *Brief Form of a Confession of Faith*.<sup>236</sup>

In the former, the baptismal formula, he declared<sup>237</sup> that God "is pleased to incorporate us into His Church by baptism." By this, he means the Visible Church -- and not the invisible



Kingdom of God into which the covenant child is already deemed to have entered quite prior to his infant baptism.

Among these 1542 *Liturgical Forms*, Calvin stated:<sup>238</sup> "Our gracious God, not contenting Himself with having adopted us for His children and with having received us into the communion of His Church, has been pleased to extend His goodness still farther to us -- by promising to be our God and the God of our seed to a thousand generations.... Hence, though the children of believers are of the corrupt race of Adam, He [the Triune God] nevertheless accepts them in virtue of this covenant -- and adopts them into His family.

"For this reason, He was pleased from the first (Genesis 17:12) that in His Church, children should receive the sign of circumcision -- by which He then represented all that is now signified to us by baptism. And as He gave commandments that they should be circumcised [future tense], so He adopted them [past tense] for His children -- and called Himself their God, as well as the God of their fathers....

"The Lord Jesus Christ came down to earth not to diminish the grace of God His Father, but to extend the covenant of salvation.... There is no doubt that our children are heirs of the life which He has promised to us....

"Hence St. Paul says (First Corinthians 7:14) that God sanctifies them from their mothers' womb, to distinguish them from the children of pagans and unbelievers. For this reason, our Lord Jesus Christ received the children that were brought to Him" by believing parents -- "by declaring that the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them."

Now right before the administration of the infant baptism, Calvin would ask the parents who professed their own Christianity -- "to be careful to instruct it [the child] in all this doctrine, and generally in all that is contained in the Holy Scriptures *etc.*"

Apparently also in 1542, in his *Brief Form of a Confession of Faith*, Calvin further declared<sup>239</sup> that the "sacraments be added to the preaching of the Word, as seals by which the promises of God are sealed on our hearts.... Thus I join with the signs -- the very possession and fruition of that which is therein offered to us."

"Since the promise of adoption reaches even to the posterity of believers -- I acknowledge that the infants of believers ought to be received into the [Visible] Church by baptism... In this matter, I detest the ravings of the Anabaptists."

### **346. Calvin's *Antidote to the Romish Articles of Paris***

Still in 1542, we find Calvin publishing his *Antidote to the 'Articles Agreed Upon by the [Romish] Faculty of Sacred Theology of Paris'*.<sup>240</sup> There, Calvin reminded as to how "Paul teaches that the children of believers are born holy. First Corinthians 7:14. And indeed, baptism would not at all be suitable to them -- if their salvation were not already included in this promise: 'I will be a God to them, and to your seed after you.'" Genesis 17:7.

"For they [the children of believers] do not become the sons of God through baptism. But because...they are heirs of adoption -- therefore the Church admits them to baptism."

Significantly, added Calvin, we never read that the great saint "John [the baptizer] was baptized -- though he was the Minister of baptism to others." Yet nevertheless, he was indeed justified -- even without baptism. Indeed, he seems to have been justified when filled with the Holy Spirit even before he was born. Luke 1:15f & 1:41f.

Calvin concluded: "In Abraham, the father of the faithful, the righteousness of faith preceded circumcision. So, in the children of the faithful, in the present day -- the gift of adoption is **prior** to baptism. According to the words of the promise: 'I will be a God to your seed.' Genesis 17:7."

The above very clearly establishes the rightness of baptizing the infants of believers. Yet it should not be taken to imply that Calvin wanted children of believers baptized at any price. For the very next year -- in October 1543 -- he wrote<sup>241</sup> to the ecclesiastical officers in Mompelgard that if a political potentate or a prince wished to enforce 'baptism by women' -- they were to oppose it, even unto blood.

Nor were such baptisms in any way necessary. For elect "infants may obtain salvation without baptism," explained Calvin. "We hold that baptism, instead of regenerating or saving them, only seals the salvation of which they were previously partakers."

### **347. Calvin on infant baptism in his treatise *Against the Anabaptists***

Calvin's treatise *Against the Anabaptists* consists of two parts. The first part is his 1544 *Brief Instruction for Arming All the Good Faithful Against...the Errors of the Common Sect of the Anabaptists*. The second part is his 1545 [*Treatise*] *Against the Fantastic and Furious Sect of the Libertines*.

Calvin's first part is against the Anabaptists in general. There, he refuted their common declaration that 'baptism...ought to be administered to those who request it for themselves -- not for infants, as is done in the pope's kingdom.'

To this declaration, Calvin responded:<sup>242</sup> "Infant baptism is not a recent introduction, nor are its origins traceable to the papal church.... It has always been a holy ordinance observed in the Christian Church.... They [the Anabaptists] will not accept this similitude that we acknowledge between circumcision and baptism [Colossians 2:11f etc.].... Nevertheless, God did not fail to command little children to be circumcised." Genesis 17:7f.

Calvin went on to combat the view that the matter signified must always fully precede the sign. He explained: "It is to dispute against God, to wish that the truth always goes ahead of the sign.... It is sufficient that any faith whatever follows -- at least in part."

Yet those words "at least in part" -- '*pour le moins en partie*' -- presuppose the probability of a 'small faith' also in the child of the covenant. This is already a fruit of the regeneration of that baby -- again prior to his or her own infant baptism.<sup>243</sup>

The second part of Rev. Professor Dr. John Calvin's treatise is against the Libertine branch of the Anabaptists in particular. There, he demolished especially: their pseudo-pentecostalism; their heresy anent soul-sleep; their sexual immorality; and their communistic rejection of private property.<sup>244</sup>

### **348. Calvin's 1545 Latin-language *Catechism of the Church of Geneva***

Calvin's 1545 Latin-language *Catechism of the Church of Geneva*, is also very important in this regard. There,<sup>245</sup> he had the catechumen answer his catechizer: "Baptism is a kind of entrance into the Church."

The words "the Church" here mean the Visible Church -- and not the Church Invisible alias the Kingdom of God. This is obvious from subsequent statements in the *Catechism*. There, baptism is described as the sign (but not the reality) of "regeneration" -- namely "when the water is poured upon the head."

In that regard, the catechizer then asked the catechumen a very important question. Namely: "Do you think that the water is a washing of the soul?"

To this, the catechumen then replied: "By no means! For it were impious to snatch away this honour from the blood of Christ, which was shed in order to wipe away all our stains and render us pure and unpolluted in the sight of God. First Peter 1:19; First John 1:7. And we receive the fruit of this cleansing, when the Holy Spirit sprinkles our consciences with that sacred blood. Of this, we have a seal -- in the sacrament."

Calvin's words "poured" and "sprinkled" here clearly showed his view as to the preferred mode of baptism. So too his 1545 *Form of Administering the Sacraments*, where he wrote: "Then the Minister of baptism pours water -- on the infant."

Moreover, the word "seal" here presupposes that the baptizee was already presumed to have faith -- before his baptism. At his baptism, that presumed faith was then sealed. And thereafter, life-long, the thus-sealed baptizee was to be urged (at frequent intervals) faithfully to serve the Lord Christ continually.

This does not mean that the baptism might need to be (re)validated subsequently -- nor that such 'validation' ever could occur. Nor does it mean that the baptism itself could thereafter ever be invalidated -- for example, if the presumption as to the presence of prebaptismal faith were later to be rebutted (as indeed it might). For the actual existence of present or future faith in either an infant baptizee or an adult baptizee, does not confirm the baptism. To the contrary, it is baptism which confirms faith -- whether past, present, and/or future.

Never could that baptism itself therefore be repeated. Yet, continuing acts of faith should constantly be repeated -- ideally not just before baptism, but also during baptism and ongoingly for ever thereafter.

### **349. Calvin's distinction between the right and a valid use of baptism**

The above right use of baptism, is thus carefully to be distinguished from its valid use. Thus, Dr. Calvin's *Catechism* insisted that "the right use of baptism consists of faith and repentance." At least from time to time, we should certainly experience the abiding and inhabiting presence of the Holy Ghost within us. For "we must feel His **Spirit** dwelling in us.... Indeed, we should constantly exercise ourselves in aiming at the mortification of our flesh -- and at obedience to the righteousness of God."

The above applies not only to adult converts but also to infant baptizees. For "these things are requisite to the legitimate [alias the proper] use of baptism." Nevertheless, especially as regards the situation when "we baptize infants," it can be seen that "it is not necessary [for the **validity** of the baptism] that faith and repentance should always precede baptism. They are only required [alias 'solicited'] from those whose age makes them capable of both."

Of course, a hypocritical profession by an adult prior to his baptism does not invalidate baptism as such. That is, it still would not necessitate his ever needing to be re-baptized later -- in the event of his subsequent conversion. *Mutatis mutandis*, the same applies when the presumption as to the exercising of pre-baptismal faith by the infant -- might later get rebutted.

That rebuttal too would then no way invalidate his prior baptism as such. What would then be required -- in respect of both infant and adult baptizees -- would be not a rebaptism, but a (re)conversion.

Calvin's *Catechism* accordingly continued: "While Moses and all the Prophets teach that circumcision was a sign of repentance; and was, even as Paul declares, the sacrament of faith [or the 'sign' and 'seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while yet uncircumcised'] -- we see that infants were not excluded from it. Deuteronomy 30:6; Jeremiah 4:4; Romans 4:11."

The question which catechumens are to be asked about covenant infants which next follows, is this: "But are they now admitted to baptism for the same reason that was valid in circumcision?" Calvin's answer ran: "The very same! Seeing that the promises which God anciently gave to the people of Israel, are now published through[out] the world."

An anti-anabaptistic question soon followed. "Do you think that if infants are denied baptism, something is thereby deducted from the grace of God -- and it must [in that case] be said to have been diminished by the coming of Christ?" Answer: "That is indeed evident! For the sign being taken away, which tends very much to testify the mercy of God, and confirm the promises -- we should [then 'lack' or] want an admirable consolation, which those of ancient times enjoyed."

The argument then concluded. "God, under the Old Testament, in order to show Himself the Father of infants -- was pleased that the promise of salvation should be engraven on their bodies by a visible sign. It were unbecoming to suppose that, since the advent of Christ, believers have less to confirm them.... The force and...the substance of baptism are common to children. To deny them the sign -- which is inferior to the substance -- were manifest injustice."

Calvin's *Catechism* was approved by the Protestant Reformation's Church of Scotland, for use in that denomination. See *The First Book of Discipline*<sup>246</sup> of John Knox and his associates. It is apparently noted also in the 1580 *Second Scottish Confession* of John Craig,<sup>247</sup> which was itself resubscribed to by the various ranks in Scotland<sup>248</sup> -- repeatedly between 1581 and 1651. See too Horatius Bonar's *Catechisms of the Scottish Reformation*<sup>249</sup> and G.C. M'Crie's *Confessions of the Church of Scotland*.<sup>250</sup>

### **350. Calvin's Ministerial Register anent baptism**

In 1546, the above was fleshed out in the *Register of the Ministers of the Church in Geneva*. There, according to the presbyterial decree (of Calvin<sup>251</sup> and others), it was decided that "baptism shall only be administered "at the same time as the sermon.

"The Ministers, moreover, shall admonish the people to link it with the catechism. The children to be baptized, shall be brought in when...the sermon begins. Their fathers shall be present." For those fathers or parents, being communicant members, would then and there need to promise publically to raise their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord. Ephesians 4:4-6 & 6:1-4.

Here, very clearly, it is seen that Calvin was determined to eradicate -- from among Protestants -- the last remnants of Romish superstition concerning any real need for godparents at baptisms. Indeed, he here also emphasized that there can, for Protestants, never be an 'emergency' need of baptism -- such as by midwives or nursemaids -- in respect of a suddenly dying baby.

Rome had made the use of godparents very fashionable. Consequently, this had become regarded as highly desirable -- if not a necessity -- at infant baptisms performed in the Romish Church. Often these 'godparents' were themselves but unknowledgeable children -- such as the baby's own older yet still immature nephew or niece.

Rome had also decreed that even nursemaids working for Romish parents -- even if Mohammedan or Pagan maidservants -- should be told to perform 'emergency baptisms' on the unbaptized infants of their mistresses, if the babies suddenly seemed to be dying before a priest could be summoned. For those babies were not to be permitted to die unbaptized and -- according to Rome -- thereby miss out on going to heaven.

So Calvin here rejected all godparents -- except where knowledgeable and mature communicant members of the Protestant Church who could be expected and required to execute what they would be promising. And Calvin here also moved against all baptismal administrations by ex-romanistic midwives, nursemaids and nurses in hospitals -- who, in their remnantal

superstitiousness, might perhaps be tempted themselves to baptize unbaptized ailing babies (or even adults).

Hence Calvin continued:<sup>251</sup> "No godparent shall be accepted as sponsor for a child -- unless...at least fifteen years old; of the same confession with us; and has been duly instructed." Further: "If midwives usurp the office of baptizing, they shall be reprimanded or punished according to the seriousness of the offence...under penalty of being placed for three days on bread and water and a fine of three sou's [alias fifteen centimes]. And all who consent to it and do not report it, shall be subject to the same penalty."

All such superstitious 'emergency baptisms' (*sic*), needed to be discouraged as strongly as possible. For, as Calvin further pointed out,<sup>252</sup> salvation does not depend upon the baptism of a person. Baptism does not confer upon infants the power of becoming sons and heirs of God. Because the infants of believers are already to be deemed to be in that position before their baptism, the grace of adoption is sealed by their baptism. "Otherwise," conceded Calvin, "the Anabaptists would be right to deny such infants this sacrament."

### **351. The challenge to Calvin of Rome's Tridentine baptismal views**

In 1545-47, Rome enacted important decrees on baptism at her great Ecclesiastical Council of Trent. There, she decreed:<sup>253</sup> "Whosoever denies that the guilt of original sin is remitted by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ which is conferred in baptism..., let him be *anathema*!"

Quite wrongly, Trent then added that baptism comes to "the damned" (alias those condemned in Adam's original sin). In actual fact, however, baptism should be given only to the "de-damned" -- namely to those (whether adults or infants) who have **been** justified, by grace, through faith in Christ and His work

Trent wrongly claimed that baptism itself "totally expunges" the guilt of all pre-baptismal sin -- as if baptism had no sacramental reference to the guilt of post-baptismal sin! Trent further falsely alleged that baptism itself -- as if by magic -- "translates" a man from the state of death into spiritual life. "The instrumental cause [of justification] is the sacrament of baptism which is the sacrament of faith -- without which justification is never obtained." Thus Trent.

Trent continued:<sup>254</sup> "Whosoever shall say that by these [seven] Sacraments...grace is not conferred *ex opere operato* (from the work performed), but that faith alone in the divine promise suffices to obtain grace -- let him be *anathema*!"

Now Trent finished setting forth the Romish doctrine of baptism at her Seventh Session -- on 3rd March, 1547.<sup>255</sup> Calvin then responded -- in his *Antidote to Trent* -- on 21st November, 1547.<sup>256</sup>

### **352. Calvin's baptismal response to Trent's Sixth Session**

In his *Antidote to Trent*, Calvin first responded to her Sixth Session. Only thereafter, did he respond to her Seventh Session.

In his response to the Sixth Session of Trent's Romish dogmatologists, Calvin observed: "If we grant their postulate that grace is procured in the sacraments *opere operato*," observed the genius of Geneva,<sup>257</sup> "a part of merit is separated from faith -- and the use of the sacraments is in itself effectual for salvation." However, "the Apostle is a witness that they [the sacraments] are of no avail -- unless **received by faith**....

"We ought to turn our thoughts not only to the sprinkling of water.... God reconciles us to Himself.... The belief and certainty of this reconciliation, which is daily repeated even to the end of life, He seals to us by baptism."

In Calvin's 1547 *Antidote to Trent* -- published in 1551 -- he roundly declared<sup>258</sup> that these Tridentine Romanists had "been pleased to exclude from the Kingdom of God infants who have been snatched away before they could be offered for baptism." Objected the Reformer: "As if nothing were meant when it is said [precisely in Holy Scripture] that the children of believers are **born holy**! First Corinthians 7:14.

"Nay," continued Calvin, "on what ground do we [Paedobaptist Protestants] admit them [the children of believers] to baptism -- unless that they are the heirs of promise? For did not the promise of life [**already previously**] apply to them -- it would be a profanation of baptism to give it to them." (*Nisi iam antea ad eos pertineret vitae promissio, baptismum profanaret quisquis daret.*) "God has adopted them into His Kingdom. How great injustice is done to His promise, as if it were not of itself sufficient for their salvation....

"The salvation of infants is included in the promise in which God declares to believers that He will be a God to them and to their seed. In this way, He declared that those deriving descent from Abraham were born to Him. Genesis 17:7. In virtue of this promise, they are admitted to baptism because they are considered members of the Church. Their salvation therefore has not its commencement in baptism -- but, being already founded on the Word, is sealed by baptism" (namely subsequently).

"I neither can nor ought to let pass the very great [Romish] absurdity of calling baptism alone the 'instrumental' cause [of justification].... Baptism is the sacrament of faith.... It [baptism] is nothing else than an appendage of the gospel. They [the Romanists] therefore act preposterously in assigning it the first place.... Whosoever, postponing the Gospel, enumerates baptism among the causes of salvation -- by so doing gives proof he knows not what baptism is."

### **353. Trent's Seventh Session on baptism -- and Calvin's Antidote**

The 1546 Seventh Session was Trent's most important, on baptism. There, the Romanists declared:<sup>259</sup> "Whosoever shall say that baptism is free, *i.e.*, not necessary to salvation -- let him be *anathema*!"

In 1547, Calvin responded:<sup>260</sup> "We acknowledge that the sacraments are intended not only to maintain but [also] to increase faith" already present. "But these horned gentry" -- alias these mitred gentlemen at Trent -- "mean something else. For they pretend that the sacraments have a magical power which is efficacious -- without faith.

"This error destroys the relation which the Scriptures uniformly establish between the sacraments and faith.... The sacraments are nothing but instrumental causes [alias means] of [non-regeneratingly] bestowing grace upon us -- and are beneficial and produce their effect only when they are subservient to faith."

Continued Calvin:<sup>261</sup> "There is a twofold grace in baptism" -- both (1) before it, and (2) during its administration. In the pre-baptismal grace, "both remission of sins and 'regeneration' are offered to us" -- namely by grace alone, and through faith alone. During the later administration of baptism -- these benefits are sealed.

As to the pre-baptismal grace, explained Calvin, "we teach that full remission is made but that regeneration is only begun and goes on making progress during the whole of life." Accordingly, the stain of ongoing "sin really remains in us." For it "is not instantly in one day extinguished by baptism" -- as Rome wrongly teaches in its false doctrine of baptismal regenerationism.

As to the baptismal grace -- regeneration, **already** (rebuttably) presumed to exist in the baptizee (pre-baptismally), is thereby signified and sealed. Precisely for this very reason, prior regeneration can in no way be effected or engineered by baptism itself.

Rightly does the Calvinist Rev. Professor Louis Berkhof remark<sup>262</sup> that Calvin uses the term 'regeneration' to comprehend not only the first (pre-baptismal) inception of everlasting life in Christ. Calvin also uses the same term to refer as well to the subsequent manifestations of that grace -- also after baptism, and throughout the rest of our earthly life.

### **354. Syncretism between Romanism and Pseudo-Protestantism anent baptism**

Germany was now strongly divided into Romish and Protestant factions. In 1541, German Romish theologians met together in Regensburg with conciliatory Protestants. Together, they drew up the *Ratisbon Colloquy* -- as a consortium.

By 1546-47, Emperor Charles V of Germany -- very desirous of restoring the unity of his factionalized country -- had issued the *Interim Declaration of Religion*.<sup>263</sup> This was apparently little more than an expanded version<sup>264</sup> of the 1541 *Ratisbon Colloquy*.



States the *Interim*: "Let the Ancient Ceremonies used in the Sacrament of Baptism all be retained -- viz. Exorcism, Renunciation, Profession of Faith, Christ, &c! For they tend to figure and shew forth the efficacy of this Sacrament."<sup>265</sup>

Calvin is seen to have given a quick response to the above -- in his 1547 treatise titled *The True Method of Giving Peace to Christendom and Reforming the Church*. There, he insisted<sup>266</sup> that it is not at all the water of baptism but instead "the Spirit of God" to which it points us "Who sprinkles our soul with the blood of Christ. First Peter 1:2."

This *Interim*, declared Calvin, was by and large little else than "an undisguised transcript of Popery."<sup>267</sup> For this very reason, we find Calvin rightly calling it: the *Adultero-German Interim*.<sup>268</sup>

For Calvin saw right through that strategem. He shrewdly discerned it as but a deceptive attempt by the Romish Emperor Charles V to lure German Protestants back into a re-united 'Holy Roman Empire' under the Emperor himself as one of the chief tools of the Pope in Rome.

Nowhere was the re-romanizing intent of the *Interim* more glaring, than in respect of its doctrine on baptism. There, it boldly declared:<sup>269</sup>

"It is necessary to man for salvation, that he be regenerated into a new creature -- seeing that otherwise he is by nature a child of wrath -- Christ Himself instituted the Sacrament of Baptism to be the laver of that Regeneration, which is not less necessary to the new and spiritual life than carnal nativity is to the natural life.... This Sacrament therefore washes, sanctifies, justifies us....

"In regard to the office of Baptism -- though it belongs chiefly to Priests -- yet a layman may rightly and usefully baptize in case of necessity.... Let the Ancient Ceremonies used in the Sacrament of Baptism all be retained -- viz. Exorcism, Renunciation, Profession of Faith, Chrism, &c! For they tend to figure and shew forth the efficacy of this Sacrament." Thus far the *Adultero-German Interim*.

### **355. Calvin's attacks on the 'Adultero-German Interim' regarding baptism**

Calvin immediately wrote against this *Interim Declaration of Religion*. Then, in 1547, he published that refutation -- under the title '*The Adultero-German Interim*': to which is added '*The True Method of Giving Peace to Christendom and of Reforming the Church*.'<sup>270</sup>

In this tract of his, *The True Method of Reforming the Church* (short title), Calvin was forthright from the very outset. For there he declared:<sup>271</sup> "I am not here debating with Turks and Jews, who would wish the Name of Christ utterly extinguished; nor with grosser Papists, who demand from us an open abjuration of true doctrine. But [I am...debating here] with the contrivers of a kind of specious pacification who leave us a Half-Christ -- but in such a manner that there is no part of His doctrine which they do not obscure or bespatter with some stain of

falsehood. And this artifice for deforming piety they send forth -- so help them -- under the name of reformation!"

Specifically referring to infant baptism, Dr. Calvin declared<sup>272</sup> that "Paedobaptism had...derived its origin from circumcision.... The offspring of believers are **born holy**: because their children, while **yet in the womb**, before they breathe the vital air, **are included in the covenant of eternal life**" -- *antequam vitalem spiritum hauriant, **cooptati** tamen sunt in foedus vitae aeternae*. Nor indeed are they admitted into the [Visible] Church by baptism on any other ground -- than that they **belonged to the body of Christ before they were born**. He who admits any others to baptism, profanes it....

"How could it be lawful to put [baptism as] the sacred impress of Christ -- on strangers? Baptism must therefore be **preceded by adoption**. This [adoption] is not the cause merely of a partial salvation -- but bestows salvation entire, and is afterwards ratified by baptism."

### **356. Calvin's baptismal Appendix against syncretism**

Some of the teaching from Calvin's above-mentioned tract on *The True Method of Reforming the Church*, is repeated almost *verbatim* -- at the outset of his approximately 1548 *Appendix*. This is often called, in its own right: *Appendix to the Tract on 'The True Method of Reforming the Church.'*

Calvin wrote this *Appendix* to refute a sacramentalistic censure of himself that had been made by an anonymous printer. The latter had misprinted the German edition of Calvin's original document (*The True Method of Reforming the Church*). The printer had done so, it would seem, under the influence of another.

Many suspect that other influence to have come from a prominent and fanatically Anti-Calvinistic Ultra-Lutheran, such as either Flaccius Illyricus or Joachim Westphal. At any rate, the document seriously misrepresented Calvin's own views regarding the sanctification of infants -- and anent baptism by women.<sup>273</sup>

The anonymous printer, remarked Calvin, had "corrupted and mutilated" the "German copy" or edition of Calvin's 1547 tract on *The True Method of Reforming the Church*. So now, almost a year later, Calvin was issuing his *Appendix* to that tract -- in order to present his true views on these matters especially to the German public.

In his *Appendix*, after repeating most of the above-mentioned three paragraphs of his tract on *The True Method of Reforming the Church*, Calvin further went on<sup>274</sup> to insist: "If any one at this time maintains Paedobaptism keenly, and on strong grounds, I am certainly in the number.... [Yet] I disapprove of the absolute necessity which they [the Romanists and the Ultra-Lutherans] urge too strongly, and do not admit that a child who from sudden death has not been able to be presented for baptism -- is therefore excluded from the Kingdom of God."

"The children of believers, before they were begotten, were adopted (by the Lord) -- when He said: 'I will be your God and the God of your seed.' Genesis 17:7. That in this promise the

baptism of infants is included, is absolutely certain.... The genuine children of Abraham even before they were born, are the heirs of eternal life. Since the promise of God places them in the same position....

"I maintain that they [covenant infants] may obtain salvation without baptism.... Because the promise which assigns life to them while still in the womb, has sufficient efficacy in itself. Hence it is, that Paul makes honourable mention of them as holy -- First Corinthians 7:14 intimating that they are separated from the common race of mankind by virtue of the covenant."

### **357. Continuation of Calvin's anti-syncretistic Appendix**

Now Ppaedobaptism" alias the baptism of infants, continued Calvin,<sup>275</sup> "rests on this ground -- that God recognizes those who are presented to Him by our ministry [when baptizing them], as already His Own.... He anciently called all who derived their origin from Israel, His Own [Ezekiel 16:20-21]. And justly! For the offspring was holy, as Paul teaches. Romans 11:16 [cf. too First Corinthians 7:14]....

"Believers beget their children not by the Spirit, but [by] the flesh. The natural condition of all, therefore, is in this alike -- that they are obnoxious...." That is to say, they are subject not only "to sin" but also to "eternal death."

However, "the special privilege which the Apostle attributes to the children of believers, flows from the covenant. By the supervening of this, the curse of nature is destroyed.... Those who were by nature unholy, are consecrated to God by grace....

"I then infer that [even covenant] children have need of regeneration. But I maintain that this gift comes to them by promise, and that baptism follows as a seal.... John the baptizer was sanctified from the womb....

"Christ...ordered that not saints only or the children of saints, but that all nations should be baptized" -- and what nation can ever exist, without its own infant children? Exodus 12:37 and First Corinthians 10:2. Yet "I say that baptism is profaned --if we admit aliens....to it, without distinction....

"Those who were formerly aliens, are ingrafted into the Church. This, Paul teaches. Romans 11:20.... Aliens are indeed called to baptism by the Voice of Christ, but are adopted previously into the family.... Thus Abraham [himself] was of the household [of the faithful] -- before he received the sign of circumcision. In regard to the young, as God comprehends them also under the covenant, they are no longer reputed aliens -- but are heirs of grace, as we learn from Peter's discourse [Acts 2:38f]....

"The infant [of a believer] is included in the covenant by hereditary right -- even from its mother's womb.... The children of believers, without the help of understanding, are partakers of the covenant. There is no reason why they should be kept from the sign [viz. baptism, just] because they cannot swear to the stipulations of the covenant. But he who is an infidel, being

descended of wicked parents, is regarded as an alien from the communion of the covenant -- until he is united to God by faith."

### **358. Are emergency baptisms by nursemaids proper and praiseworthy?**

Throughout this *Appendix to the True Method of Reforming the Church*, Calvin was refuting the sacramentalistic anonymous printer. For the latter had misprinted the German edition of Calvin's tract on *The True Method of Reforming the Church*. There, the printer had tried to make it appear that Calvin himself favoured emergency baptism by nursemaids!

Wrote Calvin of the printer:<sup>276</sup> "He asks whether baptism is to be denied to a Jew or a Turk, if they request it. Here, everybody sees under what gross hallucination he labours -- in assuming that those are [still] aliens, to whom He [God] assigns faith." For unbaptized Jews and Turks who request baptism, thereby show that they have already embraced the Christian faith -- secretly at least -- even before their baptism.

"When I say that baptism is profaned if it is bestowed on 'aliens'" -- Calvin continued -- by 'aliens' "I mean...not those...who, dead in themselves, seek life in Him [Christ].... By 'aliens' are to be understood not all [those] who have been[!] alienated from God by sin -- but those whom He still[!] keeps from His Kingdom. Our ministry [of baptizing] does not extend to them....

"Such are all those to whom baptism is not destined by the command of God." This anonymous printer who, unlike Calvin, himself favoured 'emergency' baptisms -- observed Calvin -- "never considers what distinction there is between the children of Christians and Turks" (alias the infants of Moslems).

Calvin continued:<sup>277</sup> "From the same source [viz. the anonymous printer], flows the delirious dream of making women administer baptism -- in what he calls 'a case of necessity'.... This opinion, rashly conceived under the darkness of the Papacy, has so prevailed -- that there are many from whose minds it can scarcely be eradicated....

"All admit that the right and office of baptizing, is not ordinarily competent to a woman.... I am not unaware that the pretended necessity is wont to be inferred from the words of Christ: 'Unless a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the Kingdom of God.' John 3:5.

"Led away in old time by a similar error, they [the Papists and other ritualists] gave the bread and cup of the eucharist to infants. Because it is written 'Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink His blood, you have no life in you!' John 6:53. But in the present day, even the Papists -- blind though they be -- do not stumble at this stone!

"I know not how it happened that they placed the absolute necessity in baptism -- though this is absurd. And that -- while they admit of some modification in the case of adults, they shew themselves indeed inexorable only to infants. They grant that a man of adult age may be saved without baptism -- provided he has a wish for it. Why then should not the pious vows of parents exempt a new-born infant from punishment?"

Calvin continued:<sup>278</sup> "We are agreed that infants [of believers] ought to be baptized, and that the omission of the sign is not optional.... I verily admit that all die in Adam, and that infants no less than adults need the redemption of Christ."

In infant baptism, however, "the parent may see the salvation which the Lord has promised in His Word -- sealed and...engraved on the body of his child.... He may not be seen to neglect the badge which has been given to **confirm** faith..., so that **the child** may bear the ensign of Christians [even] unto the grave."

### **359. Non-Lutheran Calvinists 'de-zwinglianized' the Swiss churches**

Probably early in 1548, we find Calvin from Geneva writing to the Zurich Reformer Bullinger about the new *Confession of Faith* the two of them were then drawing up. Here their aim was to try and unite the Swiss Reformed Churches, and indeed also to protect them from the baptismal inexactitudes of both Lutheranism and Romanism.

Declared Calvin:<sup>279</sup> "Children do not receive the Spirit of regeneration at the same moment as they are baptized." To the contrary, covenant children usually receive that "Spirit of regeneration" before their own infant baptism.

In November 1548, the first draft of that new Confession -- the *Tigurine Consensus* [alias the 'Agreement of Zurich'] -- was ready. Here, we find an attempt by Calvin [and Bullinger] to unite both branches of the Swiss Reformed Church -- Calvinist and Zwinglian -- in a common doctrine of the sacraments. The *Consensus* was constantly improved. Ultimately, it was embraced by all of the Swiss Reformed Churches -- in Zurich, Geneva, Basle, Biel (Bienne), Berne, Coire, Milhausen, Neuchatel, St. Gall, Schaffhausen, and the Grisons.

Thus the Swiss Reformed congregations -- never Lutheran -- were now 'de-zwinglianized' and thoroughly 'calvin-ized.' The Lutherans in general, however, were displeased with the *Consensus*. Indeed, particularly Westphal -- the Ultra-Lutheran extremist -- raged furiously.<sup>280</sup>

Already on 13th March 1549, Calvin<sup>281</sup> and the Company of Pastors in Geneva sent *Articles concerning the Sacraments* to the Synod of Ministers in the State of Berne (both French-speaking and German-speaking). There, 'Article Six' and 'Article Seven' insist that in baptism and in the supper "the material element of water or bread or wine [as distinct from the Spirit working therethrough] in no way offers us Christ.... Hence the error of the Papists is overthrown, who gaze on the elements and attach the confidence of their salvation to them."

### **360. The Zurich Articles anent the sacraments**

These *Articles concerning the Sacraments* were then finalized, in and as the *Agreement of Zurich*, on 1st August 1549. There, Calvin further stated that "the sacraments...have also these ends: to be marks and tokens of Christian profession...; to incite gratitude (thanksgiving); and to be exercises of faith....

"The testimonials and seals of His grace...are verities.... He Himself will beyond all doubt make good to us inwardly by His Spirit what the sacraments symbolize to our eyes and other senses, viz. [prior] possession of Christ.... We believe that all who by faith embrace the promises therein offered, do spiritually receive Christ.... They who have before been made partakers of Christ, do continue and renew their communion....

"The water, bread or wine by no means present Christ to us.... We must look rather to the promise whose office it is to lead us to Christ.... Faith makes us partakers of Christ... Hence the error of those who superstitiously worship (*obtupescunt*) the elements.... For the sacraments apart from Christ, are nothing.... It is God alone Who works by His Spirit.... In using the instrumentality of the sacraments, He thereby neither infuses into them His Own power nor abates in the least the efficiency of His Spirit....

"Paul advises us that 'he who plants, is nothing; [so too] neither he who waters [or baptizes] -- but God Who keeps on giving the increase [is everything].' First Corinthians 3:7.... The sacraments...are nothing. For they will be of no avail, except God work the whole....

"The sacraments are sometimes called seals; are said to nourish, confirm and promote faith; and yet the Spirit alone is properly the seal, and the same Spirit is the [pre-baptismal] Originator and Perfecter of our faith. For all these attributes of the sacraments occupy a subordinate place -- so that not even the least portion of the work of our salvation is transferred from its Sole Author to either the creature or the elements" of the sacraments.

"God does not exert His power promiscuously in all who receive the sacraments.... Just as He enlightens unto faith none but those whom He has foreordained unto life -- so by the hidden power of His Spirit, He causes only the elect to receive what the sacraments offer.... **Nothing is received in the sacraments -- except by faith**.... Each one receives according to the measure of his faith....

Especially in the 'Nineteenth Head' of this *Agreement of Zurich* we read that "believers before and without the use of the sacraments communicate with Christ." Here Calvin insisted: "The use of the sacraments [itself], confers on unbelievers [absolutely] nothing more -- than if they had abstained therefrom. Indeed, [it] is only pernicious to them. So, without their use -- the verity which they [the sacraments] symbolize, endures to those who believe." Consequently, even before baptism and irrespective of baptism, "believers receive the reality which is there figured" in baptism.<sup>282</sup>

"Thus, in baptism...Paul's sins...had **already** been washed away before [Acts 9:5-18 & 22:8-16]. Thus also baptism was -- to Cornelius.... He had **already** received the gift of the Holy Spirit [Acts 10:1-48 & 11:12-17]. So in the Supper, Christ...imparted Himself to us before -- and abides continually in us forever.... In the sacraments, [our] faith is confirmed."<sup>283</sup>

### **361. Baptismal water does not cleanse but seals salvation**

The previously-mentioned *Confession* (or *Mutual Consent in regard to the Sacraments*), alias the *Tigurine Consensus* or the *Agreement of Zurich* between the Ministers in the Church of

Zurich and John Calvin of Geneva, was published in 1551. It was expounded in an *Exposition* -- itself published in 1554. "This *Confession*," said Calvin's successor Beza, "knit Bullinger and Calvin and the Churches of Zurich and Geneva in the closest ties."<sup>284</sup>

In the 1554 *Exposition* itself, Calvin showed<sup>285</sup> that Ultra-Lutherans like Westphal were very unlike Luther himself (who had died in 1546). For "Luther, whose imitators they would fain be thought, is too well known to all.... He could not bear that the sacraments should be regarded merely as external marks of profession and not also as badges and symbols of divine grace....

"Without making further mention of a man [like Luther] whose memory I revere, and whose honour I am desirous to consult -- let me declare my opinion simply.... They [Ultra-Lutherans] hear us [Calvin-ists] confess on the one hand that the sacraments are neither empty figures nor mere external badges of piety, but seals of the divine promises.... On the other [hand], they are instruments by which God acts effectually in His elect.... They are signs distinct from the things signified....

Calvin continued:<sup>286</sup> "Augustine (in his *Eightieth Homily on John*) truly and wisely teaches that the elements become sacraments only when the Word is added -- not because it is pronounced, but because it is believed.... Our Saviour pronounces the Apostles clean...because of the Word which they had heard from Him -- not because of the baptism with which they had been washed.... What can a mortal and earthly man do, by pouring water on the heads of those whom he baptizes -- if Christ does not pronounce from above that He washes their souls by His blood, and renews them by His Spirit?

"We therefore truly conclude that it is not at all by the material of water...that we obtain possession of Christ and His spiritual gifts.... We are conducted to Him by the promise -- so that He makes Himself ours and, dwelling in us by faith, fulfils whatever is promised and offered.... God alone performs whatever we obtain by the sacraments.... The reality of baptism was not wanting to Cornelius who, previous to the washing of water -- had been sprinkled with the Holy Spirit of God."

### **362. (Ultra-)Lutherans were informed that Calvin opposes baptismal regenerationism**

Sadly, Calvin had to refute not merely Romish but also Ultra-Lutheran sacramentalism. Thus, his 1556 *Letter to Clauburger* -- the Magistrate of Frankfurt -- defended the beliefs of French Calvinist refugees living in that German Lutheran city (which was then preponderantly Ultra-Lutheran). For those French Calvinists (together with the absentee Calvin as their mentor in Switzerland) were being accused by their opponents in Frankfurt -- of holding unacceptable baptismal views.

""As Calvin observed to Clauburger:<sup>287</sup> "I was very much surprised that, when they [the opponents] lately maintained that infants should rather be baptized at home and even by women, than that they should depart out of this life without baptism -- they odiously brought an accusation against me." However, as far as the Lutheran and Romish practice of emergency baptism is concerned -- explained Calvin -- "on what slight grounds has this error been propagated!"

For, as Calvin next pointed out: "Baptism is not conferred on children in order that they may become sons and heirs of God. But, because they are **already** considered by God as occupying that place and rank -- the grace of **adoption** is **sealed** in their flesh **by the rite of baptism**."

"Otherwise, the Anabaptists are in the right -- in excluding them [the covenantal infants] from baptism. For unless the thing signified by the external sign can be predicated of them -- it will be a mere profanation to call them to a participation of the sign itself.

"But if any one were inclined to refuse them baptism -- we have a ready answer. They are **already** of the flock of Christ, of the family of God -- since the covenant of salvation which God enters into with believers, is common also to their children. As the words import: 'I will be your God -- and the God of your seed after you!' Unless this promise [Genesis 17:7] had preceded -- certainly it would have been wrong to confer baptism on them....

"If a sudden death carry off any one who shall have embraced the gospel of Christ -- will they therefore doom him to destruction, [just] because he has been deprived of the outward washing with water? Do not ancient histories furnish us with some examples of martyrs who were dragged away by tyrants to execution -- before they had presented themselves for baptism? And for this want of water -- will the blood of Christ be of no avail to the holy martyr, who does not hesitate to shed his own blood for the faith of the gospel in which is placed the common salvation of all?!"

Calvin next made a most startling and unforgettable statement. For he implied that -- as regards their doctrine of the absolute necessity for baptism -- the Ultra-Lutherans are further away from the Scriptures than were the Romanists themselves!

He declared: "Assuredly, the Papists were more moderate" -- than these Anti-Calvinistic Ultra-Lutherans. For "the Papists...at least in this case of necessity" -- as regards the salvation of unbaptized adults desiring baptism -- "substitute for the washing of water, the 'baptism' of blood."

Retorted Calvin himself: "Unless we choose to overturn all the principles of religion -- we shall be obliged to confess that the salvation of an infant does not depend on, but is only sealed by, its baptism. Whence it follows -- that it [baptism] is not rigorously nor absolutely necessary."

### **363. Calvin refuted the Ultra-Lutheran Westphal on the sacraments**

Already back in 1551, the *Consensus Tigurinus* had been published -- evidencing how Zwingli's successor Bullinger had embraced Calvin's view of the sacraments.<sup>288</sup> This had enraged Westphal. For, after the death of Luther in 1546, Westphal and other Ultra-Lutherans had gone very quickly 'way beyond' the views of the great German Reformer.

In some respects, this was proper. Thus, these Ultra-Lutherans (or 'Gnesio-Lutherans') were severely anti-papal. In other respects, however, their views were improper. For they



developed a sacramentology almost as mechanical as that of Rome herself (and in some respects even more rigid). Indeed, they even regarded Calvinism as being worse than Romanism!

One of these Gnesio-Lutherans, Westphal, now viciously assailed the Swiss Reformers. For he: massively misrepresented Calvinist sacramentology; bitterly attacked Calvin; and even accused the Genevan genius of heresy!

We see Calvin replying, in 1554 -- with his *First Defence*. We find him making a *Second Defence* -- in 1556. We also see him giving his *Third Defence* -- alias his *Last Admonition to Joachim Westphal* -- in 1557.

Calvin's 1554 *First Defence* is not particularly relevant to our present subject. Not so, however, his *Second Defence* and its accompanying *Pastoral Letter*. 1556 saw the publication of Calvin's *Second Defence of the Faith concerning the Sacraments (in answer to Joachim Westphal)*. Calvin introduced this *Defence* -- with an accompanying *Pastoral Letter* to the Church of Saxony and Lower Germany.<sup>289</sup>

In that initial *Pastoral Letter*, Calvin protested<sup>290</sup> that his accompanying *Second Defence* had "been extorted" from him. The very reluctant Calvin felt he had been 'forced' into writing it -- "if I were not, by my silence, to betray the truth of Christ." For all within the last decade, complained the Genevan Reformer, "certain ferocious men" -- like the Ultra-Lutheran Westphal -- even "exceed the barbarism of the Papacy!"

Calvin then explained that even "Joachim Westphal...writes that my books were highly esteemed and relished by the men of his sect [of Ultra-Lutherans] -- at the time when they thought that I differed from the teachers of the Church of Zurich [such as Zwingli's successor Bullinger and others]. Whence the sudden alienation now? Is it because I have abandoned my opinion?"

Apparently not. For, ever since becoming a Protestant, Calvin had not abandoned his Biblical opinions about the sacraments. He had not abandoned Calvinism and become a Zwinglian. If anything, it was the Zwinglians who had changed by embracing Calvin's views -- and the Gnesio-Lutherans who had changed by 're-romanizingly' going far beyond the sacramental views of Luther and Melancthon.

It was not Calvin who had changed his own Protestant sacramentology. To the contrary, it was the Gnesio-Lutheran Westphal who had changed his. For, after proceeding far beyond Luther's milder views, Westphal had become an Ultra-Lutheran --and was now accusing Calvin himself not just of Zwinglianism but even of Anabaptism!

Calvin observed that even Westphal himself "does not disguise...the hatred which this man [Westphal] bears to those against whom he has once declared war.... He assails the very doctrine which he himself formerly favoured!"

### **364. Calvin's Second Defence against Westphal on baptism**

In his *Second Defence* itself Calvin recalls<sup>291</sup> that "when on beginning to emerge from the darkness of Papacy and after receiving a slight taste of sound doctrine -- I read in Luther that Zwingli and Oecolampadius left nothing in the sacraments but bare and empty figures, I confess I took such a dislike for their writings that I long refrained from reading them...before I [myself] engaged in writing."

Calvin thus admitted his initial ignorance of Zwingli's sacramentology. Yet Calvin also insisted he himself had always stated exactly what he personally believed. "I never, by employing an ambiguous mode of expression, captiously brought forward anything different from my real sentiment. After I thus made my appearance without disguise, none of the [Lutheran] dissentients then in highest fame and authority, gave any sign of offence.

"For I was afterwards brought into familiar intercourse with the leading advocates and keenest defenders of Luther's opinions, and they all vied in showing me friendship. Nay, what opinion Luther himself formed of me after he had inspected my writings, can be proved by competent witnesses. One will serve me for many -- Philip Melancthon.

"It happened afterwards, unfortunately, that Luther...was in private again flaming against the [Zwinglian] Zurichers.... The vehemence of his nature sometimes carried him farther than was meet.... I did, however, the only thing that was left for me -- I lamented in silence....

"There was not [yet then] a proper agreement between myself and the...teachers of the Church of Zurich" such as Zwingli's successor Bullinger. So "it was thought well on both sides that a testimony of our [1549] *Mutual Agreement [on the Sacraments]* should be published [in 1551f]....

"Who can [justly!] call this -- 'fuel' for a new conflagration? One Joachim Westphal started up -- and...shouting 'to arms!' threw everything into confusion.... If the doctrine which we profess is false, let him -- after furnishing himself with the Oracles of Scripture...and the consent of the Church -- come forward....

"One of his [Gnesio-Lutheran] companions...ventured to give out, among other follies, that my *Commentary on Genesis* is filled with fierce invectives against Luther -- though there, from respect to him, I refrained more than a hundred times from mentioning his name..... All sound and pious readers will give me credit for having treated him [Luther] with no less honour than was due to an illustrious servant of Christ....

"He [Westphal] utters a fouler falsehood against us..., mixing us up with the Anabaptists.... He next attacks our venerable brother John a Lascus....

"He inveighs against Oecolampadius.... In vain does he endeavour to find a subterfuge in my acknowledgment that Oecolampadius and Zwingli, at the commencement of this dispute, from

being too intent on refuting superstition -- did not speak of the sacraments in sufficiently honourable terms....

"Westphal certainly pays little honour to Luther.... Westphal is sorry without cause that I attempted a...reconciliation between Luther and Zwingli, when I wished to bury their unhappy conflicts....

"**We** [Calvin and the Calvinists] teach...that if believers would find Christ in heaven -- they must begin with the Word and Sacraments.... We too maintain that baptism always remains the same, be the Minister or receiver who he may.... I agree with the [Lutheran] *Confession of Augsburg*....

"Westphal...proceeds to quote several passages from the different writings of Zwingli.... He gives me Zwingli as a companion....

"Although the defence of Zwingli would be just..., fifteen years ago [thus in 1541] I publicly stated where I was dissatisfied with the pleadings of both parties" -- the Lutherans and the Zwinglians.

### **365. Continuation of Calvin's Second Defence against Westphal**

Continued Calvin: "'I have accused Thomas Münzer [the Anabaptist].... It is here worth while to touch in passing on the particular things at which he [Westphal] expressly carps. The first is, that we [Calvinists] sometimes allow children to die unbaptized....

"Joachim [Westphal] holds the necessity for baptism to be so absolute -- that he would sooner have it profaned by illicit usurpation, than omitted when the lawful use is denied." For Westphal would sooner see unordainable nursemaids baptize infants -- than see an ordained Calvinist Minister exercise his godly discretion not to baptize a dying baby!

"The thing that offends him [Westphal], he immediately after[wards] discloses. It is because we give hopes that infants may obtain salvation without baptism. Because we hold that **through baptism** they are neither regenerated nor saved, but the **salvation is sealed** of which they were **previously** partakers. (*Per baptismum non regenerari aut salvari, obsignari illic tantum salutem, cuius prius fuerint participes.*)"

Calvin, however, drew the correct conclusion. "If the salvation of infants is *included in* [alias en-closed within] the element of water -- then the covenant by which the Lord adopts them is made void." For that covenant with the infants antecedes their baptism during their infancy.

Calvin now effectively proceeded to use sarcasm against the Gnesio-Lutheran view that lost babies become saved precisely during their infant baptisms. Calvin challenged Westphal: "Let an Anabaptist come forward! Let him maintain 'that [baptism as] the symbol of regeneration is improperly conferred [by Ultra-Lutherans like Westphal] on the cursed children of Adam' --whom [thus Westphal] the Lord has not yet called to the fellowship of His grace!

Calvin then explained that "Westphal must remain dumb" against such an attack by Anabaptists. "The only defence that can avail him -- is [the Calvinistic defence] that the grace which was offered in the person of their parents, is common to them" [*viz.* common to both those parents and their infant children]. That is, the same grace that was in the Christ-professing parents, was also deemed to be common to their infants -- even before the latter were baptized.

"Hence," concluded Calvin, "it follows that they [the covenant children] are not...regenerated by baptism. Yet therefrom they ought to be debarred -- if God did not rank them among the members of His Son.

"With what face can he [Westphal] deny infants the title of 'holy' -- by which Paul distinguishes them?" Here Calvin was referring to First Corinthians 7:14, which teaches that covenant children are holy even from conception onward. Calvin continued: "If the readers will look at this passage as it is explained in our *Catechism* -- they will pronounce...that our [Calvinistic] children trained in such rudiments have much sounder views than this veteran theologian [Westphal the Ultra-Lutheran] has derived from his speculations....

"O Luther! How few imitators of your excellence have you left!" For instead, the now deceased Luther seemed to have left behind him an increasing host of offbeat Gnesio-Lutherans. They first magnified and then perpetuated his very few errors -- but rarely imitated his excellence. "O Luther," complained Calvin, "how many apes [there are] of your holy boasting" -- 'apes' who falsely claim to follow Luther, but who actually do little else but blindly canonize his few errors without correcting them!

Westphal was but a half-baked and only-semi-learned imitator of Luther's few errors. For Westphal himself was not a man of much doctrinal ability. Consequently, Westphal attacked those of his opponents who were learned -- such as the genius of Geneva.

For this reason, Westphal [just like a modern American Fundamentalist] maintained that "there is good ground for the common proverb, 'The unlearned make no heresies'" -- implying that only the learned, like Calvin, had the intelligence to invent and the ability to promote heresies. Replied Calvin: "[But] what then did the Anabaptists do? What M nzer? What the Libertines?" For they were all not very learned, if not indeed intellectually ignorant -- yet nevertheless still very effective heretics!

Calvin said that Westphal then "flees to his common asylum -- the regular custom of those [Gnesio-Lutheran] men being to take shelter under the name of Luther.... He [Westphal] assigns [to] us [Calvinists] for patrons -- Carlstadt, Schwenckfeld and others of like [Anabaptist] stamp.... I long ago wrote against Schwenckfeld.... The whole world is my witness!"

### **366. Calvin's Second Defence against Westphal (further continued)**

Continued Calvin:<sup>292</sup> "Westphal...asks why I say that infants begotten of believers are holy and members of the Church before they are baptized? I answer -- so that they may grow up the more into communion with Christ (*ut magis coalescant in Christi communionem*).... The effect

of the sacraments...makes those who were **already** ingrafted into the body of Christ, to be united to Him more and more."

However, "there are many sheep of Christ outside the Church -- just as there are many wolves dwelling within.... Let Westphal...answer...as to the three thousand men whom Peter gained over to Christ by his first sermon; also as to Cornelius, and others. If he [Westphal] denies that they were members of the Church before baptism -- then, according to him, faith and repentance have no effect....

"What then remains -- but for Westphal to concede that in some measure...there were members of the Church who were afterwards initiated into its society by baptism? Thus, the sins of Paul were 'washed away' in baptism -- though he had obtained pardon of them previously, by faith!

"There is nothing to prevent our applying this to infants.... For either, the covenant by which God adopts them is vain, and the promise void. Or, those whom God declares to be of His flock -- are not wholly strangers!

"God gives the name of 'sons' -- to those whom the inheritance of salvation has been promised in the person of their parents. By what title can He be their **Father** -- if they in no way belong to the Church? There is nothing, however, to prevent His sealing this grace and confirming anew the same thing that He had given before. It is strange that Westphal denies this right to infants. Though without it -- he could not properly admit them to baptism!"

Calvin went on:<sup>293</sup> "While I acknowledge that we become members of the Church [Visible] by baptism -- I deny that any are duly baptized, if they do not belong to the body of the Church [Invisible]. It is not ours to confer the sacraments on all and sundry. But we must dispense them according to the rule prescribed by God.

"Who authorized you, Westphal, to bestow the pledge of eternal life -- the symbol of righteousness and renovation -- on a profane person lying under curse? Were an Anabaptist to debate with you, I presume your only valid defence would be that baptism is rightly administered to those whom God adopted before they were born -- and to whom He has promised that He will be a Father." But precisely that defence, is Calvinistic -- not Gnesio-Lutheran!

Continued Calvin: "If God did not transmit His grace from parents to children -- to admit new-born infants into the Church [Visible] would be a mere profanation of baptism. But if the promise of God under the Law caused **holy branches** to proceed from a **holy root** -- will you restrict the grace of God under the gospel or diminish its efficacy, by withholding the testimony of adoption by which God distinguishes infants [of believers from the children of unbelievers]?" See Romans 11:16 and First Corinthians 7:14!

### **367. Calvin's Second Defence against Westphal (concluded)**

Calvin concluded: "The Law ordered infants [of God-professing parents] to be circumcised on the eighth day [Genesis 17:7-12f]. I ask whether that was a legitimate ingrafting into the

Church of God? Who dares deny that it was? But Scripture declares them to have been holy from the womb -- being the offspring of a holy race. In other words, for the reason for which Paul teaches -- that the children of believers are now holy!

"Westphal argues as if God were not at liberty gradually to perfect the faith of His people.... I hold that those whom God has already set apart for Himself, are rightly brought for baptism.... We are...speaking of...an **adoption** manifested by the Word which **sanctifies infants not yet born**.... Baptism is a solemn recognition...; a true and effectual sealing of the promise; a pledge of sacred union with Christ. It is justly said to be the entrance and reception into the [Visible] Church....

"If Westphal does not admit this rule -- the Apostles waited foolishly and against reason, till those whom they were afterwards to admit to baptism should be made sons of God." Acts 2:38-39. For on Westphal's hypothesis, it was not through faith before baptism but instead through baptism itself that Peter's listeners on Pentecost Sunday became Christians -- before they could be regenerated!

Thus, "according to his [Westphal's] dogma, they ought to have [been] baptized first -- lest the Church, by receiving them into her bosom as already holy, should render baptism superfluous. Unless indeed with the same equity with which he denied hospitality to the pious exiles of Christ, he [Westphal] expunge those who are regenerated by the Spirit from the Kingdom of heaven!" [For some of the details of the Gnesio-Lutheran German Westphal's mistreatment of those exiled French Calvinists, see Calvin's *Letter to Clauburger* above.]<sup>294</sup>

Calvin went on:<sup>295</sup> "Cornelius, before he was baptized with his household, having received the Holy Spirit..., justly held some place among the children of God. The baptism which was afterwards added, Westphal must hold to be preposterous -- if he insists that none are to be admitted to it but strangers....

"This disposes of another calumny, where he [Westphal] says that some of us [Calvinists] -- while holding that infants...before eternal ages had been adopted as sons -- are afterwards visibly ingrafted [by baptism] into the body of Christ.... The question between us turns on infants. He [Westphal] contends that by baptism they become members of Christ and heirs of life. By what passage does he confirm this view? Clearly, by none -- except perhaps by Mark 16:16."

Yet, Calvin continued,<sup>296</sup> it is precisely "from this passage [Mark 16:16]...that the **order** appointed by Christ is **overthrown** -- if **faith** do **not** precede **baptism**." But it indeed does!

Their error" -- explains Calvin of Westphal and his Gnesio-Lutherans -- is obvious. Here in this passage Mark 16:16, "Westphal breaks forth and extracts from it, like oil from stone, that salvation is given to infants by baptism!" Yet the passage itself distinctly places faith **before** baptism -- in its words: he who **believes** and is **baptized**!"

### **368. Calvin's 1557 Last Admonition to Joachim Westphal**

Westphal quickly reacted to the above. Thus, at the very beginning of his own 1557 *Last Admonition to Joachim Westphal*, we read that Calvin declared:<sup>297</sup> "Joachim Westphal has published a letter.... Having there promised that he is going to answer the charges of John Calvin -- he mournfully deplores that I have treated him more harshly than the Anabaptists, Libertines and Papists....

"Westphal's complaint that I have treated him more unmercifully than Papists, Libertines and Anabaptists -- the reader will perceive, from my writings, to be most false. To render their pernicious errors, by which all religion is corrupted, detestable to all the pious -- I depict them [the Papists and the Libertines and the Anabaptists] in their true colours.

"In this matter, Westphal does not disapprove of my severity.... But as soon as he himself is touched, he cries out that all charity is disregarded....

"Westphal has fallen upon a witty device to elude me.... In order to 'prove' that we [Calvinists] overturn the [Lutheran] *Confession of Augsburg*, he introduces as our 'opponent' Philip Melanchthon, its most distinguished author -- a man alike admirable for piety and learning.... As the *Confession of Augsburg* has obtained favour with the pious, Joachim with his faction began long ago to do as is common with men destitute of argument -- to obtrude it upon us as a shield of authority....

"In regard to the *Confession of Augsburg* my answer is that, as it was published [in 1541] at Ratisbon [alias Regensburg] -- it does not contain a word contrary to our [Calvinistic] doctrine.... There cannot be a more competent interpreter than its author [Philip Melanchthon], to whom as his due all pious and learned men will readily pay this honour. To him, I boldly appeal.... Thus Westphal, with his vile [or cheap] garrulity, lies prostrate."

From the very beginning of the Protestant Reformation in 1517 till the time Calvin was writing these words in 1557, just like all of the Reformers Melanchthon too had deepened his insights into the true teachings of Holy Scripture. Accordingly, Calvin rightly accused Westphal: "Whosoever shall say that Philip [Melanchthon] has added nothing by the labour of forty years -- does great wrong to him individually, and to the whole Church.... Philip can no more be torn from me, than he can from his own bowels....

"There is no reason why Westphal, while pretending differently, should indirectly charge him [Melanchthon] with having begun to incline to us [Calvinists] -- only after Luther was dead [in 1546]. For when more than seventeen years ago [and thus before 1540] we conferred together on this point of doctrine, at our first meeting not a syllable [of the text of the *Augsburg Confession* at that time] required to be changed.

### **369. Conclusion of Calvin's Last Admonition to Joachim Westphal**

"Nor should I omit to mention Gaspar Cruciger, who from his excellent talents and learning stood next (after Philip) highest in Luther's estimate, and far beyond all others. He [Cruciger] so cordially embraced what Westphal now impugns, that nothing can be imagined more perfectly accordant [with the Lutheran Cruciger] than our [Calvinistic] opinions....

"Though I were silent, all see that it is perverse hatred to Philip (Melanchthon) which makes them [the Gnesio-Lutherans] 'humbly' -- not to say sordidly -- flatter Westphal. Matthias of Illyria [the Croatian Gnesio-Lutheran Vlacic alias Flaccius Illyricus]...has consulted ill for his reputation.... However [much] he may now put a black mark upon me -- it is not very long since, in his own hand, he deigned to address me with respect....

"We [Calvinists] do not give the body of Christ to be swallowed by Judas as well as by Peter.... As Christ instituted a sacrament, His words ought to be expounded sacramentally -- according to the common usage of Scripture.... A kind of perpetual rule in regard to all the sacraments, is that the sign receives the name of the thing signified....

"All sacramental modes of expression have a like principle.... The sacraments of the Old and New Testament are of the same kind.... Baptism is external washing, and yet is a spiritual laver.... Circumcision was a sign, and yet the thing was at the same time offered [almost always precisely to infants].... God, Who was pleased to give circumcision to His ancient people as a pledge of His adoption, did not deceive His children....

"We [Calvinists] teach nothing at variance with the [Lutheran] *Confession of Augsburg*.... We appeal to Philip (Melanchthon) who wrote it.... Let Philip, as often as it is thought proper, be called upon to explain his own meaning. Meanwhile, they [the Gnesio-Lutherans] only prove themselves contumacious -- by dissenting from their [own] Lutheran] confession....

"The petulance of Westphal and his [Gnesio-Lutheran] fellows could not but be odious to learned and right-hearted men -- all the most learned of Luther's friends and disciples having declared their satisfaction with my [Calvinist] doctrine. I mentioned two -- Gaspar Cruciger and Vittus Theodorus....

"But what do the [Gnesio-Lutheran] men of Bremen on their part adduce? To retain quiet possession of their status, they pronounce high eulogiums on the magnanimity of Luther. These I readily admit.... But to extol his defects as if they were virtues, is foolish and preposterous affectation....

"Still less excusable, is the fervour of their rash zeal in basely and shamefully corrupting Scripture -- in order to adorn Luther.... They dishonour the name of Luther not less than the Egyptians did the body of Jeremiah by worshipping his sepulchre..., Luther having always held the principle that it was not permitted (either to himself or to any other mortal) to be wise above the Word of God."



### **370. Calvin's equal opposition to both Anabaptists and Romanists**

In his *Confession of Faith in the Name of the Reformed Churches of France*,<sup>298</sup> Calvin (according to Beza) insisted that "since baptism is a treasure which God has placed in His Church -- all the members ought to partake of it. Now we doubt not that little children born of Christians are of this number, since God has adopted them -- as He declares.

"Indeed, we should defraud them of their right -- were we to exclude them from the sign which only ratifies the thing contained in the promise.... Children ought no more in the present day to be deprived of the sacrament of their salvation, than the children of the Jews were in ancient times -- seeing that now the manifestation must be larger and clearer than it was under the Law. Wherefore, we reprobate all [Anabaptist] fanatics who will not allow little children to be baptized."

In 1559, the *Confessio Fidei Gallicana* or the *French Confession of Faith* was written -- principally by Calvin. It was presented by Beza to Charles IX, the Romish King of France, in 1561. It was revised in 1571 for the Basque Protestant Queen of Navarre -- as the *Confession of Rochelle*.<sup>299</sup>

It rightly declared:<sup>300</sup> "We condemn the papal assemblies --as the pure Word of God is banished from them; their sacraments are corrupted or falsified or destroyed; and all superstitions and idolatries are in them. We hold then that all who take part in these acts and commune in that Church, separate and cut themselves off from the body of Christ.

"Nevertheless, as some trace of the Church is left in the Papacy, and the virtue and substance of baptism remain, and as the efficacy of baptism does not depend upon the person who administers it, we confess that those baptized in it do not need a second baptism. But, on account of its corruptions, we cannot present children to be baptized in it [the papal Church] without incurring pollution."

The *Gallicana* further explained<sup>301</sup> that "the sacraments are added to the Word for more ample confirmation -- so that they may be to us pledges and seals of the grace of God, and by this means aid and comfort [or strengthen] our faith. First Corinthians 10...; Romans 4:11; Acts 22:16; Galatians 3:27; Ephesians 5:26....

"Baptism is given as a pledge of our adoption.... We are baptized only once. Yet the benefit (*'le profit'*) it symbolizes to us, reaches over our whole lives and to our death -- so that we have a lasting witness that Jesus Christ will always be our justification and sanctification."

"It is a sacrament of faith and penitence.... God received little children into the Church with their fathers. We say, upon the authority of Jesus Christ, that the children of believing parents should be baptized. Matthew 19:14 and First Corinthians 7:14."

Finally, also against the Anabaptists, the *Gallicana* added:<sup>302</sup> "We believe that God wishes to have the world governed by laws and magistrates.... He has put the sword into the hands of

magistrates to suppress crimes against the First [Table] as well as against the Second Table of the Commandments of God.

"We must therefore, on His account, not only submit to them as superiors, but honour and hold them in all reverence as His lieutenants and officers, whom He has commissioned to exercise a legitimate and holy authority.... We detest all those who would like -- to reject authority; to establish communism (*communauté*) and confusion of property; and [to] overthrow the order of justice."

### **371. Calvin assured Knox that Romish infants are covenant children**

Also in 1559, we see Calvin writing a letter to his ex-student the Scottish Reformer John Knox. "God's promise," Calvin there explained,<sup>303</sup> "comprehends not only the offspring of every believer in the first line of descent -- but extends to thousands of generations [Exodus 20:5f and Isaiah 59:20f]....

"The interruption of piety which has prevailed in Popery, has not taken away from baptism its force and efficacy.... Offspring descended from holy and pious ancestors [such as godly mothers and grandmothers], belong to the body of the Church -- though their fathers and grandfathers may have been apostates." It is thus, even though it is often so that "baptism is prostituted" in Romanism -- and elsewhere too. Compare: Isaiah 59:21; Acts 16:1; First Corinthians 5:1f & 6:9-20 & 7:14; Second Timothy 1:5.

Continued Calvin: "No just reason suffers children to be debarred from their initiation into the Church [Visible], in consequence of the bad conduct of only one parent.... In the meantime, we confess that it is indispensable for them to have sponsors" who are proper persons -- such as the other parent whose conduct and walk of life is acceptable.

### **372. The hatred of the Gnesio-Lutheran Heshusius for Calvin's sacramentology**

Most unfortunately, the godly Lutheran Melancthon died in 1560. The Gnesio-Lutherans now grabbed the opportunity to repudiate the dead saint -- and to accuse him of crypto-calvinism. Worse than Westphal and rivalling Flaccius Illyricus himself -- Tilemann Heshusius now led the pack.

In 1561, we find Calvin writing his work *The True Partaking of the Flesh and Blood of Christ in the Holy Supper*. It targets on that Gnesio-Lutheran Heshusius (alias the German Hesshus or Hesshusen), and shows the absurdity of accusing the Calvinists of Anabaptism.

Hesshus had connected regeneration to the very time of baptism. Indeed, he had even declared 'that the Calvinists are Manichees and Marcionites' -- and had accused Calvin and the latter's followers of committing blasphemy 'worse and more execrable than the Papists.' As the celebrated church historian Rev. Professor Dr. Philip Schaff has observed: "Tilemann Heshusius...outluthered Luther and outpopped the pope!"<sup>304</sup>

Responding to Heshusius, Calvin remarked<sup>305</sup> that "dishonest rabid men...make me the special object of their virulence.... A foul apostate by the name of Staphylus has lately started up.... From another quarter, one named Nicholas le Coq has begun to neigh against me. At length, from another sink, comes forth Tilemann Heshusius....

"O Philip Melanchthon! For I appeal to thee who art living in the presence of God with Christ, and waiting for us there -- until we are united with thee in beatific rest. Thou hast said a hundred times, when weary with labour and oppressed with sadness thou didst lay thy head familiarly on my bosom: 'Would, would that I could die on this bosom!' Since then [the death of Melanchthon in 1560], I have wished a thousand times that it had been our lot to be together.... The growlings of Staphylus indeed were severely chastised by thee.... Thou didst complain to me privately of [the Gnesio-Lutheran] Le Coq."

### **373. Continuation of Calvin *versus* Heshusius on the sacraments**

Calvin continued: "Let Staphylus, the hireling rhetorician of the Pope, keep prating.... Staphylus has advertised himself for sale.... After Luther began to stir up the camarilla of the Papacy, many monstrous men and monstrous opinions suddenly appeared. What affinity with Luther had the Münsterians, the Anabaptists?... Did he ever lend them his support? Did he subscribe their most absurd fictions?

"Nay, with what vehemence did he oppose them -- in order to prevent the spreading of the contagion. He had the discernment at once to perceive what noxious pests they would prove.... Neither Luther nor any of us [Calvinists] ever gave the least countenance to those who, under the impulse of a fanatical spirit, disseminated impious and detestable errors....

"[The Romanist] Staphylus...classes Luther, Melanchthon, myself and many others as new Manichees -- and afterwards...repeats that the 'Calvinists' are Manichees and Marcionites.... The [Gnesio-Lutheran] Cock (Le Coq)...with his vile beak declares me a corrupter of the *Confession of Augsburg*....

"But what shall I do with [the Gnesio-Lutheran] Tilemann Heshusius who, magnificently provided with a superb and sonorous vocabulary, is confident of prostrating by the breath of his mouth anything that withstands his assault?... From many places where he wished to make a quiet nest for himself, he has been repeatedly driven by his own restlessness. Thus expelled from Gossler, Rostock, Heidelberg, Bremen -- he lately withdrew to Magdeburg....

"Let the reader consider how fiercely he sneers and tears at his master, Philip Melanchthon, whose memory he ought sacredly to revere.... Though there is some show about him [Heshusius], he does nothing more by his magniloquence than vend the old follies and frivolities of [the Gnesio-Lutheran] Westphal and his fellows.... What pious synod then would suit his choice, unless it were one in which two hundred of his companions or thereabouts...should, according to a custom which has long been common with them, declare us to be worse and more execrable than the Papists."

### **374. Heshusius's Gnesio-Lutheran sacramentology finally rejected by Calvin**

Calvin continued:<sup>306</sup> "Are we not, independent of baptism [in infancy], cleansed by the blood of Christ and regenerated by the Spirit?" Indeed: "Let him [Heshusius] then accuse Paul of blasphemy -- for saying that Christ is formed in us like the *foetus* in the womb [*cf.* Psalm 22:9-10 and Second Timothy 1:3-5 & 3:14-15]. His well-known words to the Galatians are: 'My little children, for whom I again travail, as in birth -- until Christ Jesus be formed in you.' Galatians 4:9....

"The objection of Heshusius is, 'What then is to become of an infant which, immediately after being baptized, dies without having received the Supper?'" Heshusius asked this -- declared Calvin -- "as if I were imposing a law on God; or denying His power of working when He pleases, without the aid of the Supper. For I hold, with Augustine, that there may be invisible sanctification without the visible sign....

"John the baptizer was never admitted to the Supper [nor even to baptism]. And yet, surely, this did not prevent him from possessing Christ? All I teach, is that we attain to fellowship with Christ gradually [or step-by-step].... Thus, it was not without cause" when Christ "added the supper to the Gospel -- and to baptism. Hence, though God calls suddenly away from the world many who are children not in age merely but in faith -- yet one spark from the Spirit is sufficient to give them a life" immortal unto all eternity.

Finally, Calvin refuted the Gnesio-Lutheran Heshusius's consubstantiationism as regards the supper. Here, the genius of Geneva went on to point out that even Heshusius did not accept consubstantiation as regards the other sacrament of holy baptism. Seeing that also the Gnesio-Lutherans repudiated the blasphemous sin-cleansing claims of Rome's 'magical' mass -- Heshusius and his fellows should *a fortiori* also abandon all sin-cleansing notions even as regards the baptism of either adults or infants.

Explained Calvin:<sup>307</sup> "The sacraments of the New Testament, *viz.* baptism and the supper, are of the same nature.... As in baptism the water is not called the Holy Spirit except by a metaphor, so neither can the bread of the supper be called the body of Christ except allegorically or, according to Calvin, metonymically....

"Scripture plainly declares...that we put on Christ in baptism and are washed by His blood [First Corinthians 6:11 & Galatians 3:27f & Ephesians 5:25f] . We remark that there is no reason why He should be said to be more present in the supper, than in baptism....

"There is no room for this evasion, in baptism." Consequently, the symbolic water of baptism is no more to be conjoined to the blood of Christ -- than the symbolic bread of the supper is to be conjoined to His flesh. As such, also infant baptism does **not produce faith**, but -- just as the Lord's supper itself -- rather **strengthens** and seals a faith already **priorly present**.

### **375. Calvin shows how to get concord between Calvinists and Lutherans**

Also in 1561, we find Calvin publishing his document on *The Best Method of Obtaining Concord* between the Calvinists and the Lutherans<sup>308</sup> -- especially as regards their sacramentology. There, Calvin argued<sup>309</sup> "that the sacraments are not only marks of outward profession before men -- but are testimonies and seals of the promises, giving a stronger confirmation to our faith....

"Their use is twofold -- to sustain our consciences before God, and to testify our piety before the world.... The grace or virtue of the Spirit is not inclosed [or 'closed in'] by the external signs....

"They help forward the salvation of the elect; and, instead of conferring anything on others [the non-elect], rather turn to their destruction.... Sacraments are of no avail, **unless** they are received in faith.... [They are] external helps [which are] only added to meet the weakness of our capacity."

The rest of Calvin's document tried to reach agreement with the Lutherans about the nature of the Lord's supper. Implicitly, however, this certainly indicates the large measure of agreement they had reached anent the other sacrament. For Calvinists and Lutherans were quite at one regarding the properness of infant baptism, and also its unrepeatability.

### **376. Calvin's 1562 Confession of Faith**

"The sacraments" were also discussed in Calvin's 1562 *Confession of Faith*. It declared:<sup>310</sup> "We hold them to be at once an attestation to the grace of God, to ratify it in us." It also regarded them as "external signs by which we declare our Christianity before men....

"The sacraments are, as it were, seals -- to seal the grace of God in our hearts and render it **more** authentic.... They are not vain or elusory figures -- since God...gives them to us for confirmation of our faith.... Moreover, since God has placed the sacraments as a sacred deposit in His Church, we believe that individuals are not to use them apart.... The use of them ought to be common to the assembly of the faithful.... They ought to be administered by the Pastors, to whom the charge and dispensing of them has been committed."

Calvin continued:<sup>311</sup> "We hold, then -- that **baptism** is a spiritual washing and sign of our regeneration.... We ought to apply it during the whole period of our life -- in order to confirm us the promises which **have been given us**.... Since baptism is a treasure which God has placed in His Church, all the Members ought to partake of it.

"Now we doubt not that little children born of Christians are of this number -- since God has adopted them, as He declares. Indeed, we should defraud them of their right -- were we to exclude them from the sign [of baptism], which only ratifies [or confirms] that thing contained in the promise....

"Children ought no more in the present day to be deprived of [baptism as] the sacrament of their salvation -- than the children of the Jews were in ancient times [deprived of corresponding circumcision].... Now, the manifestation must be larger and clearer than it was under the Law. Therefore, we repudiate all fanatics who will not allow little children to be baptized."

Against the Anabaptists, Calvin declared that the covenant seed are "children who belong to the Church [Invisible] -- before they depart their mother's womb."<sup>312</sup> Again: "I everywhere teach that no one can be condemned justly and perish -- except on account of actual sin.... To say that the countless mortals taken from life [in infancy], are precipitated from their mothers' arms into eternal death -- is a blasphemy to be universally detested."<sup>313</sup>

### **377. Calvin on the baptismal heresies of Castelio and Servetus**

Yet the above 'actual sin' -- naturally also includes the imputed original sin of Adam, which lies at the root of all subsequent human sins (also in babies and even in the unborn). For, apparently against the blasphemous heretic Castelio, Calvin proclaimed:<sup>314</sup> "I detest this blasphemy -- wherever it is publically exposed.... You deny that it is lawful and right in God to condemn any mortals -- unless it be on account of sin committed" by them themselves, personally.

"Well now!" retorted Calvin. "Numberless mortals are taken out of life -- while yet perfect infants. You had better then commence your virulent war against God Himself, Who casts innocent babes just taken from the wombs of their mothers under the guilt of original death" -- unless, as Calvin himself clearly taught elsewhere, those infants first be born again (prior to their pre-baptismal early deaths).

In his *Refutation of the Errors of Michael Servetus*,<sup>315</sup> Calvin declared that the Spirit of God can work not only in a man capable of learning, but also in children. Thus, elect babies of believers always acquire for themselves a personal faith in Christ (however small) -- before dying during infancy. Even early-dying unborn covenantal infants do so. For, explained Calvin, also "little children need regeneration."<sup>316</sup> Indeed, continued Calvin, "only those who have been sanctified by the Word already -- are qualified to receive the sign" of baptism.

"Yet, whenever a believing parent conceives a foetus" -- according to Calvin<sup>317</sup> even that very act of "generation is like the holy olive tree, of which the faithful fathers are the holy root producing holy branches.... The fathers are the firstfruits, who sanctify the whole harvest." Romans 11:16.

Calvin proclaimed:<sup>318</sup> "I do not doubt that the infants whom the Lord gathers together from this life, are regenerated by a secret operation of the Holy Spirit." Thus, "Christ extends His hand to the children of holy parents as soon as they are born [or even conceived] simul ac nascantur -- in order to liberate them from the general guilt of sin (*ut a communi reatu absolvat*)."<sup>319</sup>

For the "ordinary visible mode of calling (by hearing the Word) -- which the Lord upholds -- no way prevents Him from exercising, as has been seen, a hidden power of the Spirit in children. Moreover, when Paul says 'faith is by hearing' [Romans 10:17], it certainly does not by these

words impose a necessity upon God whereby the Word never draws disciples to Himself by way of a secret instigation."<sup>320</sup>

Indeed, a true covenant parent will practise daily family worship with his or her whole household. In this way, the regularly read Word of God is transmitted to the conceived and unborn child(ren) present inside of the listening mother -- even before the birth(s). Moreover, there is further exposure of such unborn child(ren) even to the preaching of the Word -- every time the pregnant mother attends weekly worship in Church.

### **378. The majority of Calvin's own infants died justified but unbaptized**

The cases of the various baptisms in Calvin's own family circle, are most instructive. He, John Calvin, was baptized only in infancy -- and indeed in the French Roman Catholic Church in Noyon. He was never rebaptized elsewhere, in any way whatsoever.

His wife Idelette had been (re)baptized as an adult by an Anabaptistic sect in the Netherlands. After being converted to the Reformed faith only thereafter, she had embraced Presbyterianism. Still later, after being widowed, she had married Calvin. She was, of course, never rebaptized upon becoming nor while thereafter remaining a Presbyterian (right up to the time of her death).

Their eldest child was baptized by Calvin in the Reformed Church at Geneva -- and then died in early infancy. Calvin refused baptism to their subsequent children -- because dying very shortly after their birth. Yet those children had been justified, of course, by the blood of Christ -- before they were born; from their faithful father's loins; and from their faithful mother's womb.<sup>321</sup> Romans 11:16 and First Corinthians 7:14.

### **379. Solace if believers' infants suddenly die unbaptized**

Calvin's compassion toward those whose children were dying or dead -- nourished by the similar experiences of his own infantly dying children -- needs to be recounted. Whenever the children of believers died before they could receive baptism during a regular church service, Calvin urged the parents not to doubt the salvation of those children. For God had promised to receive them.<sup>322</sup>

Calvin once comforted a worried Christian gentleman of Turin, whose baby had died unbaptized. Wrote the Reformer:<sup>323</sup> "Do not fear, but rely boldly on God's promise -- 'I am the God of your seed.'" Genesis 17:7.

To a Christian in Provence, Calvin wrote a most instructive letter about the condition of the former's child -- which had died before receiving baptism. Apparently, both of the parents of the child had been Roman Catholics at the time of the conception. However, during the pregnancy, it seems the parents had both become Protestants at heart. For even then they had resolved, after the birth, to join the Reformed Church -- and then to have the child baptized there.

Sadly, however -- very soon after the birth -- the child suddenly and unexpectedly died unbaptized. This was before the parents in fact had sufficient time to adjust themselves, as new Members of the Reformed Church.<sup>324</sup>

Wrote Calvin:<sup>325</sup> "Dearly beloved brother! I have learned that God has, within these few days, visited you with a twofold affliction. First, in taking to Himself[!] the child with which He had blessed you.... Next, that some worthy brethren are scandalized -- because you did not have...[the child] baptized in time, though the means were within your power....

"If your intentions had been to reside in those parts as one of them -- you could not, without offending God and your neighbours, have brought up your child without having it baptized. Not that those who present their children to be polluted with Popish superstitions are to be held excusable. But your intention was quite different....

"You were desirous to take refuge, even before the period of your wife's confinement, in the bosom of the [Reformed] Christian Church.... Should this [at that time] be found impracticable, you thought of conveying the child [into the Reformed Church] soon after its birth -- along with its mother -- in order to have it baptized according to the ordinance of God....

"Now [however,] God has been pleased to deprive you of that blessing" of having your child baptized at all, and indeed specifically in a Reformed Church. "Your intention was both pious and praiseworthy.... Your child has been deprived of baptism, which is the sign of salvation.... Its condition is not the worse for that, before God....

"By what are our children saved?" They are saved by God -- "by [His]...saying, I am the God of your offspring." Genesis 17:7. "But for that -- they would not be capable of even being baptized!"

"We must not conclude that all the children who die without baptism go to perdition.... On your part, there has been no contempt of the sacrament. It brings no prejudice to the salvation of your child that it died before you had leisure to have it baptized."

### **380. Anabaptists and Romanists not too dissimilar on baptism**

It was the Romish Cardinal Sadoletto who absurdly insinuated that the Calvinists were essentially the same as the Anabaptists. In his reply, Calvin turned the tables. For he then demonstrated that the Anabaptists should rather be compared -- to the Romanists.

"Similitude is there in appearance, between the Pope and the Anabaptists," explained Calvin.<sup>326</sup> "Satan never transforms himself so cunningly, as not in some measure to betray himself.... The principal weapon with which they [the Romanists and the Anabaptists] both assail us, is the same. For when they boast extravagantly of the Spirit -- the tendency certainly is to sink and bury the Word of God, that they may make room for their own falsehoods."

Against both Anabaptists and Romanists, Calvin again insisted: "Paul teaches that the children of believers are born holy (First Corinthians 7:14).... They do not become the sons of



God through baptism. But because in virtue of the promise they are heirs of adoption, therefore the Church admits them to baptism.... As in Abraham the father of the faithful, the righteousness of faith preceded circumcision -- so in the children of the faithful in the present day, the gift of adoption is prior to baptism."<sup>327</sup>

Calvin also declared<sup>328</sup> to both the Anabaptists and the Romanists that "the Spirit of God must...be to us both an earnest and a seal. Romans 8:15. He it is Who...sprinkles our souls with the blood of Christ. First Peter 1:2.... I do not, however, concede to them that Paedobaptism had its origin in the tradition of the Church. It certainly appears to be founded on the institution of God, and to have derived its origin from circumcision....

"The offspring of believers is born holy -- because their child(ren), while yet in the womb, before they breathe the vital air, are included in the covenant of eternal life. Nor indeed are they admitted into the [Visible] Church by baptism on any other ground than that they belonged to the body of Christ before they were born.... How could it be lawful to put [baptism as] the sacred impress of Christ -- on strangers? Baptism must therefore be preceded by the gift of adoption, which is...afterwards ratified by baptism."

### **381. Calvin's view of baptism not Anabaptist, Lutheran, Romish or Zwinglian**

Surveying Calvin's ever-deepening understanding of baptism, it is clear his views were neither Anabaptist, Lutheran, Romish nor Zwinglian. In his lifelong attempt to 'improve' his own baptism, it is clear he capitulated neither to church tradition nor to contemporary whims about that ordinance. Instead, he was thoroughly Biblical.

He himself received baptism, unpeatedly, as an infant -- and indeed in the Romish Church. Precisely out of faithfulness to that baptism as such, he attacked the obvious errors of Romanism. Yet he never advocated the rebaptism of protestantized ex-Romanists. Not one of his Ex-Romish associates was ever rebaptized, and Calvin himself condemned all such rebaptisms as essentially erroneous.

Instead, Calvin sought to move Romanists and Ex-Romanists and all other baptized persons to 'improve' their baptism -- precisely by their becoming Protestants (and by nominal Protestants becoming dedicated Protestants). Consequently, the repeated Romish allegations that Calvin was himself an Anabaptist -- were utterly absurd. Indeed, as he remarked in his *Preface to King Francis of France*, Calvin wrote his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* precisely to disprove that outrageous lie.

Neither Luther nor Melanchthon but indeed the Gnesio-Lutherans like Westphal and Heshusius tended to classify Calvin together with those heretics who rejected infant baptism. Some of those antipapal Gnesio-Lutherans so stressed the absolute necessity of baptism, that they (unlike Rome) even denied salvation to those who died unbaptized yet while desiring baptism. In this, Calvin felt they were even more in error than the Romanists themselves.

If a few of the Zwinglians regarded Calvin as 'Semi-Romish' in his baptismal views, most of them became 'Calvinists' in this regard -- after further studying the matter. They came to see

with Calvin and from Scripture -- that baptism is not at all simply the candidate's own personal testimony to Christ's lordship. Indeed, they also came to see that baptism is not merely a sign pointing people to Christ, but also a seal by which the Lord Himself actually confirms the elect and strengthens their prebaptismal faith.

To the Anabaptists, Calvin's baptismal views were essentially Romish and invalid. To Calvin, both their own rebaptizings and their neglect of infant baptism were grave sins. Yet he rightly regarded the Anabaptist baptizings of their own adult descendants or mature offspring, as fully valid and unrepeatable.

Consequently, Calvin never rebaptized Ex-Anabaptist converts to Presbyterianism. Yet, at such conversions, he insisted on baptizing all of their viable unbaptized infants, together with their other living children.

### **382. Calvin's patient presbyterianizing of teachable Anabaptists**

Calvin not only wrote at least one tract against Anabaptism. He also won several Anabaptists for Paedobaptism. There was the former Anabaptist Pastor Jan Stordeur and his wife Idolette. Under Calvin's teaching both of them recanted their errors and then, without rebaptism, joined the Presbyterian Church. After Jan's death, Calvin himself married the widow Stordeur. By her, Calvin had three infantly-dying children -- only one of whom lived longed enough to receive baptism.

Calvin lovingly won over also the Anabaptist Leaders Herman of Gerbehaye and Count John Bomeromenus. Writing to Farel,<sup>329</sup> Calvin exulted that "the Lord from time to time bestows something which refreshes us. Herman, who disputed against us at Geneva, besought me to appoint a day for conferring with him. In regard to infant baptism, the human nature of Christ, and some other points, he now acknowledges that he had fallen grievously into error....

"This affords good hope.... [His companion] Count John has at length presented his boy, rather big for his age, to be baptized. I have long borne with his [the Count's] weakness, since he told me that he thought he had good reason for delaying. At length, he said that he no longer cared for those [his former associates the Anabaptists] whose perverseness could by no means be worn out or subdued."

Three weeks later, Calvin again wrote<sup>330</sup> to Farel: "Herman has, if I am not mistaken, in good faith -- come to the fellowship of the Church.... He accepted instruction on the freedom of the will, the deity and humanity of Christ, rebirth, infant baptism, and other things. Only on the question of predestination did he hesitate.... He asked that this might not prevent his being received into the communion of the church -- with his children.

"I received him with fitting readiness.... I gave him my hand in the name of the church. Then I baptized his little daughter, who was over two years old.... He is a pious man. When I admonished him to lead others to the right way, he said: 'That is the least that I can do -- to exert myself no less in building up, than I did before in tearing down.'"

### **383. Baptist misallegations that Calvin's writings favour submersionism**

Certain "Reformed Baptists" (*sic*) seem oblivious of Calvin's 20<sup>th</sup> April 1556 *Sermon on Deuteronomy* 30:6. There he declares: "At this day in Baptism...the water is **poured** upon the **head** of a little child.... The infant indeed is baptized by the hand of another.... We indeed do baptize **with** water.... Let us mark well that...the Minister lays the water on the **child's head**."

Ignoring the above, these "Reformed Baptists" (a *contradictio in terminis*) delight in quoting from Calvin's *Commentary on John's Gospel* (3:22) that "John and Christ administered baptism by total immersion...."<sup>331</sup> Yet they neglect to add that such 'im-mersion' (or 'putting into') is not the same as sub-mersion. For all Presbyterian Ministers 'im-merse' (but **never** sub-merse) their fingers in baptismal water, before sprinkling babies therewith.

Such "Reformed Baptists"(!) also neglect to complete Calvin's above sentence. For it soon goes on to say that "we must not worry overmuch about the outward rite, so long as it accords with the spiritual truth and the Lord's institution and rule." Indeed, three paragraphs later, Calvin added: "The Law appointed various baptisms for the Jews.... A new rite of purifying is introduced by Christ and by John" the baptizer. John 3:25 and 1:25-33 *cf.* First Kings 18:33*f* and Matthew 11:12*f* & 17:10*f*.

Interestingly, Calvin elsewhere makes it clear that such baptismal purifyings practised by the Israelites -- were always accomplished by pouring or sprinkling. Thus, commenting on Hebrews 9:10-20, he explained:<sup>332</sup> "When there was a sprinkling of hyssop and scarlet wool, there is no doubt that this represented the mystical sprinkling that comes by the Spirit.... Christ uses His Spirit in place of sprinkling, to wash us with His blood."

Indeed, even in John chapters 1 to 4, we see the same teaching in respect of water baptism. Thus, in his comment on the words of John the baptizer in John 1:31*f* -- 'I came baptizing with water' and 'I have beheld the Spirit descending as a dove and [the Spirit] remained upon Him [Jesus Christ]' -- Calvin said<sup>333</sup> that Christ was here "consecrated with a solemn ceremony.... When He wished to make Himself known to the world, He began with baptism. He therefore received the Spirit on that occasion -- not so much for Himself, as for His people. And the Spirit descended."

Again, commenting on John 3:5, Calvin added:<sup>334</sup> "We sometimes hear of Christ baptizing **with** the Holy Spirit.... It is as if Christ had said that no one is a son of God, until he has been renewed by water -- and that this water is the Spirit Who cleanses us anew and Who, by His power poured upon us, imparts to us the energy of the heavenly life."

Yet again, Calvin's comment also on John 3:34 is relevant. There, he declared "that God, the inexhaustible Fount of all good, does not at all exhaust Himself when He bountifully and plentifully pours out His gifts on men."<sup>335</sup>

Also on John 4:2, Calvin commented:<sup>336</sup> "Not only does Christ baptize inwardly by His Spirit, but the very [baptismal] symbol that we receive from a mortal man -- should be regarded in the same light as if Christ Himself had put forth His hand and stretched it out to us.... This

suffices to refute the Anabaptists, who maintain that baptism is vitiated by the vice of the Minister, and disturb the Church with this madness." Compare too Calvin's comments on Acts 1:5 and 2:17,33,38f.

#### **384. Do Calvin's *Institutes of the Christian Religion* teach submersionism?**

Some "Reformed Baptists" delight in quoting even from Calvin's *Institutes*. There, they tell us, Calvin declared:<sup>337</sup> "It is evident that the term baptize means to immerse, and that this was the form used by the ancient Church."

Conveniently, such "Reformed Baptists" here neglect to quote Calvin's original French words. They run: "*c'est une chose **de nulle importance**, si on baptise en plongeant du tout dans l'eau celui qui est baptisé, ou en **repandant seulement** de l'eau sur lui.... Car le signe est **représenté en l'un et en l'autre**."* Namely: "it is a matter **of no importance** whether one baptizes by entirely immersing into the water, or by **only sprinkling** the water onto him.... For the sign is **represented by both the one and the other**" -- emphases mine (F.N. Lee).

Now here, Calvin's word 'immerse' (French *plonger*) is not the same as the word 'submerge' (French *submerger*). For Presbyterian Ministers indeed 'immerse' their fingers in the baptismal water -- without 'submerging' the **candidate under** that water.

Moreover, Baptists are here quoting (in English translation) only the last part Calvin's sentence. In its entirety, it states: "Whether the person baptized is to be wholly immersed, and that whether once or thrice, or whether he is only to be sprinkled with water, is not of the least consequence. Churches should be at liberty to adopt either, according to the diversity of climate -- although it is evident that the term baptize means to immerse, and that this was the form used by the ancient Church."

Here, the word 'ancient' is neither the word 'apostolic' nor the word 'original.' Indeed, Baptists omit to add that (in the original French) -- Calvin here actually wrote "that the custom of thus entirely immersing, was anciently observed in the Church."

It is undeniable that Calvin himself here uses the French word for "ancient" (*anciennement*) -- and not the French word for "originally" (*originairement*). So too above, we have used the appropriate English word 'anciently' to translate Calvin's own French word *anciennement*.<sup>338</sup> That latter word, in this context, hardly means specifically 'during apostolic times' -- but certainly refers particularly to the mid-patristic period, especially after the rise of the heresy of baptismal regenerationism.

#### **385. Calvin on the *apostolic* baptism of households -- by *sprinkling***

Regarding baptism during the apostolic period, Calvin has commented at Acts 8:37f on Philip's baptism of the eunuch. There the Swiss Reformer explained: "Fanatics stupidly and wrongly attack infant baptism.... The children of the godly are born sons of the Church, and are

numbered among the members of Christ from birth.... Christ initiates infants to Himself.... The practice...is for the Minister only to sprinkle the body or the head."<sup>339</sup>

Calvin's further remarks on First Peter are most instructive, specifically as regards the apostolic baptizing of infants by sprinkling. "The Spirit of God," explained Calvin against the Anabaptists,<sup>340</sup> "sprinkles our souls with the blood of Christ. First Peter 1:2.... I do not, however, concede to them that Paedobaptism had its origin in the tradition of the Church. It certainly appears to be founded on the institution of God, and to have derived its origin from circumcision."

Commenting on the above-mentioned apostolic verse First Peter 1:2, Calvin elsewhere added<sup>341</sup> that "we are sprinkled by the blood of Christ.... There seems to be [here] an implied allusion to the ancient rite of sprinkling.... The sprinkling of blood was done by the hand.... The Holy Spirit sprinkles our souls with the blood of Christ."

After his remarks about sprinkling, Peter soon goes on to describe regenerated babies and then the 'baptizing' of the whole household of Noah. There it is suggested that this latter occurred by the downpour of the rainwater during the great flood. First Peter 1:2,23f; 2:1-2f; 3:15-21.

Commented Calvin:<sup>342</sup> "The dead [now], who in the time of Noah were [then still alive yet] unbelieving..., were drowned by the deluge.... Peter ascribes **salvation** only to the [undrowned!] **family** of Noah...within the ark.... In the common ruin of mankind, the **family** of Noah alone escaped.... Our baptism is an antitype (*antitupon*) of the 'baptism' of Noah.... He was preserved, together with his small **family**. So today...baptism is to us an entrance into life....

"The external symbol is not sufficient, unless baptism be received really and effectually.... Partial [alias prejudiced] men like [the spiritualistic Anabaptist] Schwenkfeld pervert this testimony ridiculously.... At the same time, we must beware of another evil -- such as prevails among the Papists.... In not distinguishing as they ought between the thing [signified] and the sign [following], they stop at the outward element and fix in that their hope of salvation."

Thus Calvin reminded both Anabaptists and Romanists that this godly **family** [of Noah] **had** been justified already -- even before the deluge. Genesis 6:9f. Furthermore, the same applies to circumcision -- for which baptism has now been substituted. Colossians 2:11-13. For, declared Calvin,<sup>343</sup> "Moses and the prophets reminded the people of the thing meant by circumcision -- which, however, infants received" too.

The Anabaptists, explained Calvin,<sup>344</sup> "contend that nothing is left for Paedobaptism.... Delusion misleads them.... The truth of circumcision consisted in the same 'answer of a good conscience' [First Peter 3:21]....

"He himself shows that 'the answer of a good conscience' forms the truth of circumcision -- and at the same time commands infants to be circumcised.... Nothing more of present effect is to be required in Paedobaptism, than to confirm and sanction the covenant which the Lord has made with them" -- namely made with those covenant infants even before their infant baptisms.

The following is what Calvin wrote in his *Catechism*. To the catechizer's question about the meaning of the sacrament of initiation, Calvin has the catechumen answer that, in respect of new members of the Church Visible: "Baptism is a kind of entrance into the Church...when the water is poured upon the head."<sup>345</sup>

Calvin also wrote: "We maintain...that in baptism...the forehead is sprinkled with water."<sup>346</sup> Indeed, in his *Catechism of Geneva*, he declared:<sup>347</sup> "The meaning of baptism...is set before us, when the **water** is poured upon the head.... We receive the fruit of this cleansing, when the Holy Spirit sprinkles our consciences with that sacred blood. Of this, we have a seal -- in the sacrament.... The Minister of baptism pours water on the infant."

Further, explained Calvin,<sup>348</sup> "Augustine...wisely teaches that the elements become sacraments only when the Word is added.... Our Saviour pronounces the Apostles clean...because of the Word which they had heard from Him -- not because of the baptism with which they had been washed.... What can a mortal and earthly man do, by pouring water on the heads of those whom he baptizes -- if Christ does not pronounce from above that He...washes their souls by His blood and renews them by His Spirit?"

### **386. Calvin on the lifelong duty of "improving" one's baptism**

In a sermon on Deuteronomy twelve, Calvin did not urge his listeners to get rebaptized as adults -- but instead, indeed to 'improve' their infant baptisms. Observed the genius of Geneva:<sup>349</sup> "We see that God is contented.... His will is that in our baptism we should have such an assurance of our washing and cleansing by the grace that is purchased for us in our Lord Jesus Christ, as should continue with us for ever. Have we that? We must hold ourselves contented with it!"

Again, in a sermon on Deuteronomy thirty-one, Calvin declared:<sup>350</sup> "As soon as our children be born, they be carried to baptism. And there, God doth show that His will is that they should be as of His household. Therefore when an infant is thus declared to be a member of our Lord Jesus Christ..., should he not -- when he cometh to age of understanding -- endeavour to learn that he was created by God?"

For God, "having created him after His own image, hath vouchsafed also to choose him to be of the number and company of His people -- and has placed him in the body of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the end he should be partaker of the inheritance of salvation. Considering so many and so inestimable benefits received at God's hand -- ought he not, say I, to give himself wholly to Him and to His service?" Of course he should!

In his *Theme of the Epistle to the Romans*, at the front of his famous *Commentary* on that Epistle, Calvin discussed saving faith before and during and after circumcision. Indeed, there he clearly linked it -- to saving faith before and during and after baptism.

Explained Calvin:<sup>351</sup> "In chapter four, he [Paul] argues from an example which he lays down as being clear.... Since Abraham is the father of the faithful, he ought to be regarded as a **pattern**

and general type.... Scripture testifies that Abraham obtained righteousness, when he was uncircumcised....

"In chapter six, he [Paul] turns to the sanctification which we obtain in Christ.... Paul maintains here that we cannot receive righteousness in Christ, without at the same time laying hold on sanctification. He takes his argument from baptism, by which we are admitted into fellowship with Christ.

"We are buried with Christ in baptism -- so that we may die to ourselves, and be raised through His life to newness of life. It follows therefore that no one can put on the righteousness of Christ without regeneration. Paul uses this as the basis of exhortation to purity and holiness of life."

Indeed, later commenting specifically on Romans 6:3, Calvin explained<sup>352</sup> that "Christ destroys sin in His people.... We are initiated into faith in Him.... We truly grow up in the body of Christ (*in Christi corpus vere coalescere*).... Baptism means that, being dead to ourselves, we may become new creatures" -- that is, keep on so becoming, for the rest of our lives.

Hence, as Calvin declared in his last *Confession of Faith*.<sup>353</sup> "Baptism is a spiritual washing and sign of our regeneration.... We ought to apply it during the whole period of our life -- in order to confirm us the promises which have been given us.... Baptism is a treasure which God has placed in His Church. All the Members ought to partake of it."

### **387. Infants even of ungodly covenant parents are still God's children**

Calvin's last important written work, was his *Commentary on Ezekiel*. He apparently began to write it<sup>354</sup> on 20th January 1563. That was long after the Romish Council of Trent had finished<sup>355</sup> expostulating on baptism, during her Seventh Session in 1547.

Trent's last eighteen sessions<sup>356</sup> had hardly mentioned baptism at all. They seem to do so only in a passing reference to post-baptismal penance -- when simply re-iterating the false statement that "baptism itself is for those who have not as yet been regenerated."<sup>357</sup> The Tridentine Council then finally terminated<sup>358</sup> her remaining work -- regarding the various post-baptismal Romish sacraments, purgatory and indulgences<sup>359</sup> -- on 4th December 1563.

Calvin started expounding Ezekiel<sup>360</sup> on 20th January 1563. He reached Ezekiel chapter twenty, some time between February 1564 and his death in May 1564. His incomplete commentary on Ezekiel (chapters one to twenty) was first published by his successor Beza<sup>361</sup> -- on 18th January 1565.

That was fully more than a year after the final termination of the Council of Trent. Consequently, Calvin's clear teaching in his *Commentary on Ezekiel* -- as to the abiding holiness of the tiny covenant children even of ungodly parents -- is irrefutably Calvin's last word on that subject.

Now in Ezekiel's time, around 594 B.C., some of the covenantal babies in Jerusalem had been slain even by their own wicked Hebrew parents (under the influence of Paganism). Yet those infants were also the children of their Other Parent. For they were God's infants too. Ezekiel 16:20-21 & 20:26 (compare First Corinthians 7:14).

While commenting on the above passages in Ezekiel, Calvin also made his last statement about the baptism of covenant infants -- in 1564. Thus, only very shortly before his death, we find Calvin commenting<sup>362</sup> on Ezekiel's people in Jerusalem that "God places Himself in the position of a Parent....

"He had adopted the people as His Own.... All their offspring, were His sons.... God's treaty with the people was a marriage. All who spring from the people, ought to be esteemed His children."

### **388. Calvin's final doctrine of prebaptismal presumptive regeneration**

Once again, we here encounter Calvin's well-known doctrine of the prebaptismally-presumed regeneration of all early-dying covenant infants. Indeed, inasmuch as all covenant infants could die during their infancy -- Calvin also presumed, rebuttably, that all covenant infants had already been regenerated.

Furthermore, Calvin believed that covenant babies should continue to be deemed regenerate -- unless and until the contrary clearly became evident. If they should live long enough, this regeneratedness would be manifested through their behaviour -- during their later life. Compare Romans 11:16-21.

So, argued Calvin<sup>363</sup> anent the covenant infants mentioned in Ezekiel 16:21 & 20:26, "God therefore calls those who were thus slain -- 'His sons.' Just as if a husband should reproach his [abortionist] wife with depriving him of their common children.... Children are more precious than all goods.... A father is more grievously injured, if children are taken away.... God here pronounces...[to Israel His wife]: 'you have born them -- unto Me.'"

Calvin continued:<sup>364</sup> "The Jews were naturally accursed, through being Adam's seed. But by supernatural and singular privilege, they were exempt and free from the curse -- since circumcision was a testimony of the adoption by which God had consecrated them to Himself. Hence, they were holy.... As to their being impure, it could not...abolish God's covenant.... And so Paul says that the children of the faithful are holy -- since baptism does not lose its efficacy, and the adoption of God remains fixed. First Corinthians 7:14." Compare too Romans 11:16.

Calvin here clearly stated: "The same thing ought at this time to prevail in the Papacy. For we are all born under the curse. And yet God acknowledges supernaturally as His sons all who spring from the faithful -- not only in the first or second degree, but even to a thousand generations.... Paul says that the children of the faithful are holy, since...the adoption of God remains fixed. First Corinthians 7:14.... "In the Papacy, such declension has grown up through



many ages -- that they have altogether denied God.... And yet, it is certain that a portion of God's covenant remains among them....

"The Prophet [Ezekiel 20:26] touches on only one kind of superstition, but...he means all kinds by which the Jews vitiated God's pure worship. For this superstition was very detestable -- to pass their sons through the fire, and to consecrate them to idols.... God claimed the first-born as His Own, and wished them to be redeemed.... Was it not monstrous to pass through the fire and to offer to idols those who were specially devoted and sacred to God?"

Soon after writing the above unfinished *Commentary on Ezekiel*, Calvin died on 27th May 1564. Born in Romish France of a godly mother, and baptized during infancy in the Roman Catholic Church, he never ceased to work for reformation. He wanted ongoing reformation for himself -- when yet a Romanist, and also after becoming a Protestant. Luke 22:31-32 & Romans 12:1-2. He also wanted ongoing reformation for Christ's Church -- whether Romish, or Protestant. Hebrews 9:10 to 10:22, and Revelation 2:1-5f to 3:19.

### **389. Summary: Calvin on baby belief before baptism**

Rev. Professor Dr. John Calvin opposed baptismal regeneration. Against that heresy, he himself clearly taught the following.

Firstly, all sons of Adam (except Jesus) are sinners -- from their very conception onward.<sup>365</sup> Ever since the fall, all (except Jesus) are by nature subject to the wrath of God. They cannot enter into or even see the Kingdom of God -- unless they are regenerated or 'born again' at some time before they die.

Secondly, there is a difference between unborn believers and unborn unbelievers. God Himself puts that difference there. The difference is prenatal, and grounded in divine election from all eternity. Thus the babies of unbelievers are to be regarded as unclean, but those of believers as holy.<sup>366</sup>

Thirdly, regeneration generally precedes regular baptism. Calvin presumed that at least believers' children dying in infancy get regenerated and receive the "seed of faith" before they die. Because all unborn babies can die any second, Calvin also presupposed that all "covenant children" who do die before baptism -- were made holy in the sight of God at or soon since their conception, and thus long before their birth and infant baptism. Calvin further presupposed (though quite rebuttably so) that all conceived in the covenant were to be regarded as already holy -- until and unless the contrary is ever evidenced later, through their (mis)behaviour during the course of their earthly lives.<sup>367</sup>

Fourthly, baptism itself never regenerates and is no cause or part of justification. Because Calvin rebuttably regarded covenant children as already holy before birth, he denied that baptizing them after their birth can make them holy. Such baptism can at the most only seal already-holy children as members of the Visible Church. For sacraments do not inaugurate justification. Through saving faith, they only strengthen sanctifying grace already present in the baptizees and in their fellow believers.<sup>368</sup>

Further. Baptism is not for the dead nor for the dying but only for those deemed to be living (both spiritually and physically).<sup>369</sup>

And lastly. Baptism should be given only to those who already seem to be believers (whether infants or adults).<sup>370</sup>

To Calvin, then, baptism is only for believers (whether infants or adults). Because baptism is intended for believers alone, he opposed baptizing anyone who does not seem to believe in Christ already. For this reason, he urged the baptism of only those adults who profess faith in Christ -- together with the baptism of the children of such adults alone. For only such children would already seem to possess "the seed of faith."

So, Calvin prohibited the baptism (in the congregations of his own Reformed Church) of the children of such adults as do not themselves rightly profess Christ. Yet he indeed presupposed the prebaptismal regeneratedness of the babies of all those who successfully applied for the baptism of their infants. If the Session of Elders deemed the parental applicant to be a believer -- also his or her baby was deemed to be a believer, and the application for baptism of the infant was accordingly approved. Genesis 17:7f; Romans 11:16; First Corinthians 7:14; Colossians 2:11f.

Such babies were never to be rebaptized later -- not even if and after both of their parents subsequently repudiated Christianity. To Calvin, all baptisms are essentially unrepeatable. For all rebaptisms are both impossible and sinful. Acts 8:12-23; Romans 6:1-11; Colossians 2:11-13; Hebrew 6:1-8; Revelation 7:2-4 & 14:1.

Himself born of a godly mother, the holy child of the covenant John Calvin was rightly baptized in infancy. Thereafter always improving but never repeating his infant baptism, he kept on serving God all his life. Then, after death, he joined the ranks of those who believe and have been baptized -- in heaven above. Mark 16:16 and Revelation 22:4.

## **ENDNOTES**

- 1) T.H.L. Parker: *John Calvin -- A Biography* (Westminster, Philadelphia), 1975, pp. 1-3; W.F. Dankbaar: *Calvin -- His Way and Work*, Callenbach, Nijkerk, 1957, pp. 1-2.
- 2) R. Schippers: *John Calvin -- his Life and Work*, Kok, Kampen, 1959, pp. 21-23.
- 3) J. Calvin's 1536 *Preface to Francis King of France*, para. 7, in the Reformer's *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Clarke, London, ed. 1957, I p. 17.
- 4) J. Calvin's *Preface to his Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1963, I pp. xl-xlix.
- 5) *Inst.* IV:17:13-15. 6) *Ib.* IV:16:31.
- 7) T.B. van Halsema: *This Was John Calvin*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1959, pp. 96 & 121.
- 8) J. Calvin: *Commentaries on the First Twenty Chapters of the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1948 rep., II, pp. 119-22.
- 9) See Calvin's *Argument* preceding his *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses called Genesis*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1948 ed., I pp. 58-65.

10) Calvin's *Inst.* I:15:6-8 & II:1:7-10; and his *Comm. on Gen.* I pp. 94 & 97f & 228 (= on Gen. 1:26-28 & 5:3); and his *Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians and Colossians*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, ed. 1965, pp. 190ff & 212ff & 349ff (on Eph. 4:23ff & 6:1ff and on Col. 3:9ff).

11) *Argument preceding Comm. on Genesis*, I p. 65. 12) *Comm. on Gen.* (3:15), I pp. 170f.

13) *Comm. on Gen.* (4:26 & 5:3), I pp. 223f & 229.

14) Gen. 3:15-21; 4:2f,25f; 5:21f; Heb. 11:4-6 (all before Gen. 17:7-10f).

15) Gen. 6:8f & 7:1-11. See too below at: Heb. 11:7f; I Pet. 3:20f; II Pet. 2:5.

16) *Comm. on Gen.* (6:18 & 7:17), I pp. 258f & 273.

17) *Comm. on Gen.* (9:1,3,10); I pp. 289 & 292 & 297f. 18) Gen. 15:6 cf. 16:1,16 & 17:1-10,26.

19) Ruth 4:10-13; Lk. 1:5f; Heb. 11:11,31,35. 20) Gen. 17:12-26; Rom. 9:6-13; Heb. 12:14-17.....

21) II Sam. 11:27 & 12:15-23. Compare Gen. 17:12 & 21:4 with II Sam. 12:18. 22) Rom. 4:1-25 & Col. 2:11-13.

23) Gen. 15:6 cf. 16:1,16 & 17:1-10,26. 24) Gen. 15:6; 17:7-27; 21:4; Rom. 4:9-11; Heb. 11:8-16.

25) See our text at nn. 9 to 21 above. 26) Gen. 17:7-14 (cf. Judg. 13:5-25; Ps. 139:13-14; Jer. 1:5; I Cor. 7:14).

27) Gen. 30:21; 34:7-16; I Sam. 1:11f; Lk. 1:28-55. 28) Gen. 17:2-14. 29) Gen. 17:14; Ex. 4:24-26; Lk. 7:30f.

30) Calvin on Gen. 17:7f (in his *Inst.* II:8:21 & II:10:9 & IV:16:3,9) 31) *Comm. on Gen.* 17:4-14 & 17:23 & 18:19.

32) Ex. 4:23f. 33) Ex. 4:25f.

34) For an extended discussion of this very important passage, see F.N. Lee's *Have You Been Neglecting Your Baby?* (Jesus Lives, Wavell Heights, Australia), 1981, pp. 5-7 & 12 nn. 39-42.

35) *Comm. on Ex.* 4:24f. 36) Calvin's *Tracts and Treatises*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1958, III, pp. 356-58.

37) *Inst.* IV:15:20-22. 38) *Ib.* 28:5op, citing Rom. 4:11; Acts 10:2,4,22,31,45,47; 8:13,23.

39) *Comm. on Dt.* 10:16, in his *Harmony of the Pentateuch*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1948f, I, pp. 357.

40) Dt. 30:2-6. 41) *Comm. on Dt.* 30:6.

42) J. Calvin: *Commentaries on the Book of Joshua* (5:2f & 24:15), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, n.d., pp. v & 78f.

43) *Comm. on Ps.* 22:9f (in his *Commentary on the Book of Psalms*, I-V, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1963).

44) *Comm. on Ps.* 71:5f. 45) *Comm. on Ps.* 71:17. 46) *Comm. on Ps.* 102:25. 47) *Comm. on Ps.* 105:6-10.

48) J. Calvin: *Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Isaiah*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, I-IV, 1947.

49) *Comm. on Jer.* 1:5 (in his *Commentaries on the Book of the Prophet Jeremiah*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, I-V, 1948).

50) *Comm. on Jer.* 4:4. 51) *Comm. on Jer.* 9:25f. 52) *Comm. Ezek. II* (on Ezk. 16:20f).

53) *Inst.* II:6:3 & II:3:6 (cf. II:3:10) & III:24:16 & III:1:3; and Calvin's *Antidote to the Sixth Session of the Acts of the Council of Trent* (in *Tracts & Treat.* III pp. 110f).

54) *Comm. on Mal.* 2:14 (in his *Commentaries on the Twelve Minor Prophets*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, n.d., V pp. 558f).

55) *Comm. on Mal.* 3:1f. 56) *Comm. on Mal.* 3:3 & 4:5f. 57) Mt. 11:11 cf. Jh. 1:17f & Acts 18:25 to 19:5.

58) *Comm. on Lk.* 1:15, in *Harmony of the Evangelists*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1948f, I, pp. 17f.

59) Lk. 3:21-23 cf. Lev. 8:12f & Num. 4:1-3. 60) Lk. 1:35f & Mt. 1:18-20 cf. Lk. 2:40,52.

61) *Comm. on Lk.* 1:35. 62) *Comm. on Lk.* 1:39f. 63) *Comm. on Lk.* 1:41f. 64) *Inst.* IV:16:17.

65) *Comm. on Lk.* 1:79. 66) *Comm. on Lk.* 1:80.

67) *Comm. on Lk.* 2:40 (French: *Avec l'aage des dons et graces d'Esprit croissoyent aussi et augmentoyent en Luy...en dons et graces de l'Esprit*).

68) *Comm. on Mt.* 3:2. 69) *Comm. on Lk.* 3:3. 70) *Inst.* IV:19:17.

71) *Ebaptizonto...exomologoumenoi* (in both Mt. 3:6 & Mk. 1:5). 72) *Comm. on Mt.* 3:6 & Mk. 1:5.

73) *Comm. on Lk.* 7:29. 74) *Comm. on Mt.* 3:7f & Lk. 3:8. 75) *Comm. on Lk.* 7:29. 76) Heb. 7:26.

77) Mt. 3:14-15. 78) Lk. 2:40,49,52. 79) Ps. 22:9f is, of course, Messianic (cf. 22:16f).

80) Lk. 1:31-35, & Heb. 4:15. 81) Mt. 3:17 & Lk. 3:22.

82) Mt. 20:22; compare *Second Helvetic Confession* ch. 20.5. 83) Rom. 6:3f & Col. 2:12. 84) Lk. 1:35-48.

85) *Comm. on Jh.* 1:32.

86) *Comm. on Mt.* 3:13f (French: *Que c'est pour le profit des autres, et non pas pour le sien, que Christ demande d'estre baptizé*).

87) Lk. 3:22,23,38 cf. Gen. 1:26-27 & 5:1-2.

88) Jh. 3:5-8 (*Ean mē tis gennēthē; anōthen, ou dunatai idein tēn basileian tou Theou.... To Pneuma hopou thelei pnei, kai tēn phōnēn Autou akoueis, all' ouk oidas pothen erchetai kai pou hupagei. Houtōs estin pas ho gegennēmenos ek tou Pneumatos*).

89) *Comm.* on Jh. 3:3-8. 90) *Comm.* on Mt. 9:2. 91) *Comm.* on Mt. 18:2-10. 92) *Comm.* on Lk. 19:1-10.  
93) *Inst.* IV:16:26 & *Comm.* on Mt. 19:14. 94) *Comm.* on Mt. 28:19.  
95) J. Calvin: *Harmony of the Evangelists*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, III pp. 386f (on Mk. 16:16). Cf. H.E. Gravemeijer's *Reformed Doctrine of Faith*, Wiarda, Sneek, 1888, II p. 116 n. 1.  
96) *Inst.* IV:3:4-6 & IV:15:1. 97) *Comm.* on Acts 2:38-39. 98) *Inst.* IV:16:13-15. 99) *Comm.* on Acts 3:25.  
100) *Inst.* IV:16:15. 101) *Comm.* on Acts 7:8. 102) *Comm.* Acts 8:12-16. 103) *Inst.* III:2:32.  
104) *Comm.* on Acts 8:37. 105) *Inst.* IV:14:8-9. 106) *Comm.* on Acts 10:47. 107) *Comm.* on Acts 11:17.  
108) *Comm.* on Acts 13:32f. 109) *Comm.* on Acts 15:7f. 110) *Comm.* on Acts 16:15. 111) Acts 16:27-34.  
112) *Comm.* on Acts 16:31-34. 113) *Inst.* IV:16:8-9. 114) Rom. 9:4-13 cf. Gal. 4:22-30 & Heb. 11:8-9.  
115) *Comm.* on Rom. 4:9-11. 116) *Inst.* IV:14:4-6. 117) *Inst.* IV:14:20,21. 118) *Inst.* IV:16:13.  
119) *Inst.* IV:16:20. 120) *Comm.* on Rom. 5:17. 121) *Comm.* on Rom. 6:3-4. 122) *Comm.* on Rom. 9:5-12.  
123) *Inst.* III:22:4,11 & IV:2:3. 124) *Comm.* on Rom. 11:16-21.  
125) Rom. 11:16-22 cf. I Cor. 7:14 & Col. 2:11-13. 126) *Comm.* on Acts 13:32-33. 127) *Comm.* on I Cor. 7:14.  
128) *Comm.* on I Cor. 7:14-19. 129) *Comm.* on I Cor. 10:1-2.  
130) I Cor. 12:13 (*Kai gar en heni Pneumati hēmeis pantes eis hen sōma ebaptisthēmen..., kai pantes [eis] hen Pneuma epostisthēmen*). To us, and to many others, it certainly seems that *epostisthēnen* is here clearly co-ordinate to its antecedent *ebaptisthēnen*. Consequently, the having "been baptized" would then be identical to the having "been drenched" or "watered." See the same word *epotisen* or "watered" in I Cor. 3:6, cited with obvious reference to water baptism in the Calvinistic W.L.C. 161s. See too F.N. Lee's article *What Does First Corinthians 12:13 Really Teach?* (Brisbane, 1989).  
131) I Cor. 12:13 cf. 1:2,16; 3:2-9; 7:14; 10:1-2; 13:11; 14:20,23; 16:15.  
132) Calvin here rightly argues that the first part of I Cor. 12:13 ("by one Spirit we have all been baptized into one body") indeed refers to water-baptism. He then goes on to say he is "not certain" about the meaning of the rest of that same sentence ("we have all been drenched into one Spirit"). Indeed, Calvin says he himself "rather" inclines to a different "opinion" about that latter matter. Apparently, he does not take the two clauses of the verse to be a repetitive couplet (as we do). Instead, he suggests that the second part moves on from the first part's water-baptism -- to discuss the second sacrament of the Lord's supper. We ourselves, however, see also the second part as explanatory of the first. We therefore render the verse: "you have all been baptized" alias "drenched." Calvin has nevertheless very fairly drawn attention also to this other "opinion" (which we ourselves espouse). This other opinion, explains Calvin, is that Paul also in the second part of the verse (as indeed in the first part) is still "speaking about baptism" -- rather than about the Lord's Supper. See Calvin's *Comm.* on I Cor. 12:13.  
133) *Comm.* on I Cor. 12:13. 134) *Inst.* IV:14:7; 15:15 & 16:22. 135) *Comm.* on Gal. 3:26-29.  
136) *Inst.* IV:15:6 & 16:21.  
137) *22nd Sermon on Ephesians*, in *John Calvin's Sermons on Ephesians*, finished being delivered 1559, ed. 1562, Banner of Truth, London, 1979 rep., p. 331.  
138) Eph. 6:4, "rear them in the nurture...of the Lord" (*ektrephete auta en paideia,...Kupiou*). Not 'transport them into the Lord's nurture' (which would require something like '*pherete auta eis paideian Kupiou*')! Note this usage of the imperative *phere* in II Tim. 4:13.  
139) *Comm.* on Eph. 6:4. 140) *Comm.* on Phil. 3:3-5. 141) Col. 1:2 & 3:20; compare Eph. 1:1 & 6:1-4.  
142) Calvin's *Commentary on Colossians* (2:11-13), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1948. 143) I Tim. 1:12 & 2:15.  
144) In I Tim. 2:15a, "continue to be happy" translates *sōthēsetai*. Obviously, both in the context (2:15bcd & 3:11 etc.) as well as according to common sense, *sōthēsetai* could not possibly here mean that childless ladies (and all young girls) cannot have their sins forgiven until and unless they themselves actually (re)produce children!  
145) In I Tim. 2:15b, *teknogonia* must (in principle) mean not the (re)production of children but rather the rearing and the training of them. For compare 2:15cd's "if they" (namely the children taught by the woman) "remain in faith...and holiness." Compare too the young widow in 5:14, who is to "guide the house" alias to 'rule her home' -- teachingly! Also see Tit. 2:3-5.  
146) In I Tim. 2:15c, *meinōsin* (plural) refers to the children implicit in 2:15b's *tekno-gonia*. It cannot mean the (singular) "woman" referred to in 2:14b and the "she" implicitly referred to in the (singular) *sōthēsetai* at 2:14a.  
147) In I Tim. 2:15c, *meinōsin* means that the children *keep on remaining* "in faith and...holiness" (as stated in 2:15d).  
148) In I Tim. 2:15d, the children being reared (in 2:15b) must even previously have been "in faith...and holiness" (as stated in 2:15d). Compare I Cor. 7:14 & Eph. 6:4b. These children being reared must previously have been "in

faith...and holiness" (I Tim. 2:15bd), precisely in order to be able to "remain" in it (2:15c) through the 'saving' teaching of them by the godly child-rearing woman mentioned in 2:15a & 2:15b!

149) Calvin's *Commentary on First Timothy* (2:15), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1948. Although Calvin himself then goes on questionably to apply "if they continue in faith" to the (singular) 'woman' rather than to the (plural) children implied in *teknologia* -- his comment here is otherwise excellent.

150) II Tim. 3:15's "from a child" (*apo brephous*) here seems to mean "from a fetus onward" (cf. Lk. 1:41-44). Compare I Tim. 2:15's "childbearing" (*teknogonia*).

151) Acts 16:1-3. "Then came he [Paul] to Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple [*mathētes*] was there, named Timothy: the son of a certain woman who was a believing Jewess [*huios gunaikos Ioudaias pisteōs*].... Him [Timothy] would Paul have to go forth with him [Paul]; so he [Paul] took and circumcised him [Timothy], because of the Jews which were in those quarters. For they all knew that his [Timothy's] father was a Greek."

152) I Tim. 1:3,18; 4:6,12-14; 6:11. The translation of I Tim. 4:6 in our own text above, thus renders the Greek ("*entrephomenos tois logois tēs pisteōs kai tēs kalēs didaskalias hē parēkolouthēkas*"). I Tim. 4:12 has: "Let no man despise your youth"; *mēdeis sou tēs neotētos kataphroneitō*. See Calvin's *Comm.* on I Tim. 4:6 (and also his *Commentary on Second Timothy* (1:5), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1948, as given below).

153) *Comm.* on I Tim. 4:6. 154) See n. 152 above.

155) II Tim. 1:5a. The *TR*, *P* & *D* all have *lambanōn*, "I keep on remembering."

156) II Tim. 1:5b; "unfeigned faith," *anupokritou pisteōs* (lit.: 'non-hypocritical trust').

157) II Tim. 1:5c; "in you" (*en soi*). Compare the same expression in II Tim. 1:5g. See n. 161 below.

158) II Tim. 1:5d; "dwelt" (*enōkēsen*, aorist with still-continuing consequences). 159) II Tim. 1:5e; "first" (*prōton*).

160) II Tim. 1:5f; "I am persuaded" (perfectly "persuaded" or *pepeismai*, perfect passive).

161) II Tim. 1:5g; "in you too" (*kai en soi*). Compare n. 156. 162) II Tim. 1:5cd; compare nn. 157 & 158 above.

163) II Tim. 1:5g; compare n. 161 above. 164) Compare n. 160 above. 165) II Tim. 1:5 & 3:14f.

166) II Tim. 1:5cg. 167) II Tim. 1:5a-g (*lambanōn tēn en soi anupokritou pisteōs...enōkēsen...en soi*)!

168) *Comm.* on II Tim. 1:5.

169) *2nd Sermon on Second Timothy* (1:5), in *John Calvin's Sermons on Timothy and Titus*, 1579 ed., Banner of Truth, Edinburgh, 1983 rep., p. 684.

170) II Tim. 3:14a. To be able to "keep on remaining" or *mene* (present continuous imperative) in things about which one has already learned and been assured of, implies not only long-standing knowledge but also conscious 'assurance' or *fiducia* about those things!

171) II Tim. 3:14b; "you have learned" (*emathes*, strong aorist, with continuing consequences).

172) II Tim. 3:14c; "you have been assured" (*epistōthēs*, aorist passive, with continuing consequences).

173) II Tim. 3:14d; "from whom." In *TR* & *D* and other manuscripts, "whom" is singular (*tinōs*) and implies Timothy's mother. See II Tim. 1:5's "your mother"; and especially 3:15a's "from a fetus" in n. 175 below.

174) II Tim. 3:14e; "you have learned" (*emathes*, strong aorist, with continuing consequences). See too at n. 171 above.

175) II Tim. 3:15a. "From a child" (*apo brephous*) here seems to mean "from a fetus onward" (cf. Lk. 1:41-44). See too at II Tim. 1:5 above. Also compare I Tim. 2:15's "childbearing" (*teknogonia*). Elsewhere, *brephos* is further used to refer to a tiny child from between less than a week to about three months old (Lk. 2:12-21; 18:15; Acts 7:19-20; I Pet. 2:2).

176) II Tim. 3:15b; "you have known the Holy Scriptures" (*[ta] hiera grammata oidas*, where *oidas* is a strong aorist with continuing consequences. See too at nn. 171 & 172 above.

177) II Tim. 3:15c; "able to keep on giving you wisdom" (*ta dunamena se sophisai*, where *sophisai* is an aorist infinitive with still-continuing consequences).

178) II Tim. 3:15d; "salvation through faith in Christ" (*sōtērian dia pisteōs tēn en Christō*), implying that Timothy already had such "faith in Christ" even when still a fetus. See II Tim. 3:15a in n. 175 *etc.* above.

179) II Tim. 3:17a; "so that the man of God may keep on remaining equipped" (*hina artios ēi ho tou Theou anthrōpos*, where *artios* denotes an already-completed action).

180) II Tim. 3:17b; "having been furnished thoroughly" (*exērtismenos*, perfect passive, again denoting an already-completed action).

181) Calvin's *Theme on Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy* (in his *Comm.* on 2nd Tim.).

182) *Comm.* on II Tim. 3:14-15. 183) J. Calvin's *Commentary on Hebrews* (6:2), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1948.

184) *Inst.* III:11:15. 185) *Ib.* III:14:4. 186) Gen. 6:8-9 & 7:1-4 cf. I Pet. 3:20-21 & II Pet. 2:5.

187) *Comm. on Gen.* (6:8f) cf. I Pet. 3:20-21. 188) *Comm. on Gen.* 7:1-4. 189) *Comm. on Heb.* (11:7).  
 190) J. Calvin's *Commentary on First Peter* (1:20-25 & 2:1-2), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1948. 191) *Inst.* IV:16:18.  
 192) Gen. 6:8f & 7:1f; cf. Heb. 11:6-7 (above) & II Pet. 2:5 (below). 193) *Inst.* IV:16:21.  
 194) *Commentary on First John* (2:13), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1948. 195) *Inst.* II:3:10. 196) *Ib.* II:5:10.  
 197) J. Calvin's *Comm. I Jh.* (5:4). 198) *Inst.* IV:16:17. 199) *Inst.* II:1:8. 200) *Inst.* IV:2:11.  
 201) *Ib.* IV:14:1. 202) *Ib.* IV:14:3 & IV:14:6. 203) *Ib.* IV:14:7. 204) *Ib.* IV:14:8-9.  
 205) *Ib.* IV:14:12-13. 206) *Ib.* IV:14:14. 207) *Ib.* IV:14:15-19.  
 208) *Ib.* IV:15:1 (as translated in Wendel's *Calvin*, Collins, London, 1965, p. 318).  
 209) *Id.* (as rendered in the Beveridge translation, Clarke, London, 1957, II, p. 513). 210) *Ib.* IV:15:5,6,10.  
 211) *Ib.* IV:15:10-13. 212) *Ib.* IV:15:20.  
 213) *Ib.* IV:15:22, 1559 ed.; compare the 1550 ed. where it is located in a discussion of the Lord's supper (*Corpus Reformatorum*, ed. G. Baum, E. Cunitz & E. Reuss, Brunswick, 1863-1900) I:1038. See too Calvin's *Opera Selecta* (ed. P. Barth & W. Niesel, Munich, 1926-36).  
 214) Calvin: *Corp. Ref.* I:118 & I:982 (compare too I:1038, in n. 213 above). The historical development of the above-mentioned penultimate paragraphs of this section of *Inst.* IV:15:22, is most interesting (in the 1536, 1539, 1550 and 1559 editions of the *Institutes*). See G. Kramer's book *The Connection between Baptism and Regeneration*, De Vecht, Breukelen, 1897 (pp. 137f, 140f, and 143 & n. 2). Compare the two paragraphs immediately preceding with the two paragraphs immediately succeeding this present footnote reference 214 in the main text of this present study.  
 215) *Inst.* IV:16:3-7. 216) *Ib.* IV:16:8-9. 217) *Ib.* IV:16:15. 218) *Ib.* IV:16:17.  
 219) *Ib.* IV:16:18 (cf. Kramer's *op. cit.*, p. 136 n. 1). 220) *Inst.* IV:16:19. 221) *Ib.* IV:16:20.  
 222) *Ib.* IV:16:21-22. 223) *Ib.* IV:16:24.  
 224) *Ib.* IV:16:25-26; cf. too Calvin's *Sermons on Daniel* (9:19-20a), ed. Calvin Translation Society; and his *Op. Omn.* 41:577.  
 225) *Ib.* IV:16:31-32. 226) *Inst.* IV:16:31. 227) *Corp. Ref.* VIII:483. 228) *Corp. Ref.* VIII:615.  
 229) *Corp. Ref.* VIII:494. 230) *Corp. Ref.* VIII:483,489,493.  
 231) *Ib.*, as cited in J.E. Stagg's *Calvin...on Universal Salvation of Infants*, Presbyterian Committee on Publication, Richmond, n.d. pp. 105-6.  
 232) *Instruction in Faith*, ed. Fuhrmann, Lutterworth, London, 1949, ch. 28.  
 233) In *Tracts and Treatises*, II, pp. 33 & 85f. 234) See Schenck's *op. cit.* p. 40.  
 235) Cited in P.E. Hughes: *The Register of the Company of Pastors of Geneva in the Time of Calvin*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1966, p. 44.  
 236) Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* II pp. 99B & 113f & 129f. 237) *Ib.* pp. 114f.  
 238) In *Tracts & Treat.*, II, pp. 99B & 113f; cf. too p. v "Contents" (pp. 99B - 129) & pp. 129f.  
 239) Cited in *ib.* pp. 134f. 240) *Ib.* I, pp. 69f.  
 241) *Corp. Ref.* X:625 (as cited in Kramer's *op. cit.*, p. 111 n. 1. See too *Corp. Ref.* 9:101, as cited in R.S. Wallace's *Calvin's Doctrine of the Word and Sacrament*, Geneva Divinity School Press, Tyler Tx., 1982, p. 196 nn. 4 & 5.  
 242) J. Calvin: *Brief Instruction for Arming All the Good Faithful Against the Errors of the Common Sect of the Anabaptists*, in his *Treatises Against the Anabaptists and Against the Libertines*, Baker, Grand Rapids, ed. 1982, pp. 44f.  
 243) *Op. Omn.* VII:61, and Compare Kramer's *op. cit.* p. 142.  
 244) J. Calvin: [*Treatise*] *Against the Fantastic and Furious Sect of the Libertines*, Geneva, 1545 (in his *Treat. Against Anab. & Libert.*, pp. 170f,213-35,232f,279f,282(n.5),287f,290f,299-336.  
 245) Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.*, II, pp. 33 & 86f. See too esp. Wall's *op. cit.* II p. 400.  
 246) J. Knox & Others: *The First Book of Discipline*, ch. VII:2 alias VII:V(5)2: "Take care of the children and youth of the parish, to instruct them in the first rudiments -- especially in the *Catechism*\* as we have it now translated in the *Book of the Common Order* called the *Order of Geneva*." Adv. Maxwell Bradshaw, Procurator of the Presbyterian Church of Australia, gives a significant footnote: "\*That is, Calvin's Catechism." F.M. Bradshaw: *Basic Documents on Presbyterian Polity*, Christian Education Committee, Presbyterian Church of Australia, Sydney, 1984, p. 26.  
 247) J. Craig: *Second Scottish Confession*: "Publick Catechismes...which hath been for many years..., professed in this Kirk and Kingdom [of Scotland] as God's undoubted truth, grounded only upon His Holy Word." Here, the plural 'Catechismes' can only mean especially Calvin's *Catechism* of 1645, and the *Heidelberg Catechism* of 1563.

248) Namely in 1581, 1590, 1638, 1639, 1640, 1650 and 1651. See *The Subordinate Standards of the Free Church of Scotland*, Church Offices, Edinburgh, 1933, pp. 266-67.

249) H. Bonar: *Catechisms of the Scottish Reformation*, Nisbet, London, 1886, p. 1.

250) G.C. M'Crie: *Confessions of the Church of Scotland*, Macniven & Wallace, Edinburgh, 1906, pp. 8-11 & 78.

251) Compare Hughes: *op. cit.*, pp. 53 & 55f. 252) Cited in Schenk: *op. cit.*, p. 15.

253) *The Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent* V:3 & 5 and VI:4:8 (cited in Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.*, II, pp. 79f).

254) Sess. VII, *Of the Sacraments in General*, can. VIII.

255) Schaff: *Creeds of Christendom*, Baker, Grand Rapids, 1983, II pp. 118f.

256) Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* III pp. 19f. 257) Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* III pp. 176 & 182.

258) See Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.*, III, pp. 109f & 116f (against can. 5 & 8 of the *Sixth Session of the Council of Trent*). Compare too Calvin's *Op. Omn.* VII:444.

259) *Of the Sacraments in General* can. 5 & 9, in Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* III p. 165.

260) See Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.*, III, pp. 174 & 176f (*Antidote* against can. 5 & 9-10 on the *Sacraments in General* and against can. 10 *On Baptism*) of the *Seventh Session of the Council of Trent*.

261) In *Corp. Ref.* XXXV:425. 262) *Manual of Reformed Doctrine*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1933, p. 235.

263) In Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* III p. 189. 264) *Ib.* pp. 232f.

265) *The Interim or Declaration of Religion of His Imperial Majesty Charles V -- Being a Constitution prescribing the Mode in which the States of the Holy Roman Empire [in Germany] should mutually conduct themselves and treat each other until the decision of a General Council*, ch. 26:1. In Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* III pp. 190 & 235.

266) J. Calvin: *The True Method of Giving Peace to Christendom and Reforming the Church*. In *Tracts & Treat.* III pp. 189, 240, 253 & 276.

267) Beveridge's *Translator's Preface* pp xi-xii, in Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* III.

268) Thus in Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* III pp. 193f.

269) *Interim Declaration of Religion*, ch. 15:1-2 & 15:6 & 26:1; in Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* III pp. 209f & 235.

270) Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* III pp. 189f. 271) *Ib.* pp. 240f.

272) *Ib.* pp. 269 & 275f. See too Kramer's *op. cit.*, p. 111 n. 1 & p. 122 n. 2.

273) Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* III pp. 344f. Citing *Corp. Ref.* VII & XLII, Kramer's *op. cit.*, pp. 143f & 145f n. 3, attributes the authorship to Flaccius.

274) Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* III pp. 346f (compare Kramer's *op. cit.* pp. 122 n. 2). 275) *Ib.* pp. 348f.

276) *Ib.* pp. 351f. 277) *Ib.* pp. 351f. 278) *Ib.* pp. 354f. 279) *Corp. Ref.* VII:704.

280) Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* (II pp. 199-220); See A.A. Hodge's *Outlines of Theology* (Nelson, London, 1879, pp. 651f); Boeckel's *op. cit.*, 1847, pp. 173f); R.B. Ives's art. *Zurich Agreement* in ed. Douglas's *op. cit.* p. 1072; and Schaff's *Creeds* (I pp. 471).

281) Heads of Consent 7-13, 15, 17-19a; as cited in A.A. Hodge's *op. cit.*, pp. 651f. For the Nineteenth Head -- that statement that "believers before and without the use of the sacraments, communicate with Christ" -- see Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* II p. 218. See too (ed.) P.E. Hughes's *op. cit.*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1966, pp. 100-2, 115f, and especially pp. 121f.

282) Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* II p. 218. 283) Head of Consent 19b; as cited in A.A. Hodge's *op. cit.*, p. 654.

284) Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* II p. 199. 285) *Ib.* pp. 224f. 286) *Ib.* pp. 227f.

287) *Sel. Works: Tracts & Let.*, VI Pt. 3, pp. 278f. 288) See in Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* II pp. 199 & 245.

289) *Ib.* II pp. 246f. 290) *Ib.* II pp. 246f.

291) *Ib.* II pp. 252f, 264f, 267, 275f, 296, 305f, 308f, 313, 319f, 325, 328 & 333 (compare Kramer's *op. cit.*, pp. 146f).

292) Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* II pp. 336f (compare Kramer's *op. cit.*, p. 147).

293) Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* II pp. 338f. 294) See our text between nn. 286 & 288 above.

295) Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* II pp. 339f.

296) *Ib.* pp. 340f (*prodesse ut semen, dum in terram proiicitur, quod licet non eodem momento agat radicem, vel germinet, non tamen est inutile: quia nisi hoc modo satum temporis successu germen non emitteret*).

297) J. Calvin's *Last Admonition to Joachim Westphal* (1557), in Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* II pp. 346f, 398, 417f, 427f, 439f, 467f, 473f.

298) J. Calvin's *Confession of Faith in the Name of the Reformed Churches of France*, ch. 26.

299) Schaff's *Creeds* I pp. 493f. 300) Calvin's *Conf. Faith in Name Ref. Ch. of France*, ch. 28.

301) *Ib.* chs. 34 & 35. 302) *Ib.* chs. 39 & 40.

303) *Selected Works of John Calvin*, Baker, Grand Rapids, 1983, VIII, pp. 73f. 304) *Ch. Hist.*, VIII pp. 671f.

305) Calvin's *True Partaking of the Flesh and Blood of Christ in the Holy Supper*, in his *Tracts & Treat.* II pp. 497f.

306) *Ib.* pp. 534f. 307) *Ib.* p. 564.

308) J. Calvin's *The Best Method of Obtaining Concord [between the Calvinists and the Lutherans]*, in his *Tracts & Treat.* II pp. 573.

309) *Ib.* pp. 575f.

310) J. Calvin's *Confession of Faith* [1562], art. 24 (in Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* II pp. 137 & 152f).

311) *Ib.* art. 26. 312) Calvin's *Treat. Ag. Anab. (Article One: Baptism)*, p. 48.

313) Calvin as cited in the *Presbyterian and Reformed Review*, Oct. 1890, pp. 634-35.

314) J. Calvin's *Defence of the Secret Providence of God*; as cited in Stagg's *op. cit.*, p. 100), and in Cole's *Calvin's Calvinism*, Wertheim & Macintosh, 1856 ed., p. 117.

315) *Corp. Ref.* VIII:489,493. 316) *Ib.* VII:42. 317) *Ib.* VII:680; compare VII:493f & IX:114.

318) *Ib.* VIII:494, compare *Op. Omn.* (Amsterdam ed.) VIII:522.

319) *Corp. Ref.* VIII:615. See Kramer's *op. cit.*, *op. cit.* p. 135 n. 1.

320) *Corp. Ref.* VIII:616. *Sed hunc ordinarium vocationis modum (ex auditu Verbi) quem tenet Dominus, minime obstore, quominus occultum vim Spiritus in pueris, ubi visum est, exerceat. Imo quum dicit Paulus, fidem esse ex auditu, ne his quidem verbis imponitur Deo necessitas quin arcano instinctu ad Se trahat discipulos!* Calvin apparently said this in his *Letters to Servetus* from about 1547 onward, published in 1554. Compare *Corp. Ref.* XI:895f. See too Kramer's *op. cit.* pp. 136 & 137 n. 1, p. 142 nn. 3 & 4, & p. 146 para. 2.

321) See T.B. van Halsema's *This was John Calvin*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1959, pp. 96 & 121.

322) *Corp. Ref.* VII:9. 323) *Ib.* XV:227-8. 324) See *Sel. Works*, VI p. 71 n. 1. 325) *Ib.* pp. 71f.

326) Calvin, J.: *Reply to Sadoleto*, in Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* I p. 36.

327) Calvin, J.: *Antidote to the [Romish] 'Articles Agreed Upon by the Faculty of Sacred Theology of Paris'*, Art. I, in Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* I pp. 74f.

328) Calvin, J.: *Refutation of the 'Adultero-German' Interim Declaration on the True Method of Reforming the Church*, in Calvin's *Tracts & Treat.* III pp. 253,269,275.

329) Calvin, J.: *Sel. Works*, IV:1 pp. 172f. 330) Cited in G.H. Williams's *op. cit.* pp. 590f.

331) Calvin, J.: *John's Gospel*, I, p. 78. 332) Calvin, J.: *Comm. on Heb.*, p. 126.

333) Calvin, J.: *The Gospel of John*, I, p. 35. 334) *Ib.* p. 65. 335) *Ib.* p. 84. 336) *Ib.* p. 88.

337) *Inst.* IV:15:19.

338) *Ib.*, Beveridge translation, Clarke, London, 1957, II, p. 524 n. 2: "*Combien que le mot mesme de baptiser signifie du tout plonger et qu'il soit certain que la coustume d'ainsi totalement plonger, ait été anciennement observé en l'Eglise.*" Here, note that Calvin uses the word *anciennement* -- and not the word *originairement*!

339) Calvin, J.: *The Acts of the Apostles 1-13*, I, pp. 253f.

340) Calvin, J.: *Refut. of 'Adultero-German' Interim*, in his *Tracts & Treat.* III pp. 253,269,275.

341) *Comm. on 1st Pet.*, in his *Epistle of Paul to Heb. & First & Second Ep. of St Pet.*, p. 231. 342) *Ib.* pp. 293f.

343) See n. 193. 344) *Comp. Inst.* IV:16:21. 345) See n. 245. 346) *Inst.* IV:19:11.

347) Calvin, J.: *Catechism of the Church of Geneva -- Of the Sacraments* (1545), in his *Tracts & Treat.* II pp. 86f. Cf. Wall's *op. cit.* II p. 400.

348) *Tracts & Treat.* II pp. 227f.

349) J. Calvin: *Sermons on Deuteronomy*, Banner of Truth, Edinburgh, ed. 1987, pp. 500 & 505 (30-40).

350) *Ib.* pp. 1078 & 1083 (29-47). 351) *Op. cit.* pp. 7f. 352) *Ib.* p. 122. 353) *Op. cit.* art. 26.

354) J. Calvin: *Commentaries on the First Twenty Chapters of the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, ed. 1948f, I, p. xlvii & II p. 3.

355) Trent's last statement on baptism itself was made at her *7th Session*, on 3rd Mar. 1547. See Schaff's *Creeds* II pp. 118f.

356) After her *Seventh Session* in 1547, Trent's doctrinal pronouncements only resumed at her *Thirteenth Session* (on 11 Oct. 1551). This was followed by another seventeen sessions. Only some of those (the Fourteenth and also the Twenty-first to and including the Twenty-fifth Sessions) address doctrinal matters. See Schaff's *Creeds* II pp. 126-206.

357) After her 1547 Seventh Session, Trent does not further refer to baptism. The only exception to this, is a brief reference at [the 25 Nov. 1551] Second Chapter of the Fourteenth Session ("On the difference between the Sacrament of Penance and that of Baptism"). That Second Chapter on 'Penance' then calls it "a laborious 'kind of baptism'...for those who have fallen after baptism." It then further simply (re-)states that "baptism itself is for those who have not as yet been regenerated." See Schaff's *Creeds* II pp. 139 & 141, and especially p. 143.



358) Thus Schaff's *Creeds* II pp. 198 & 205. 359) Thus Trent's 13th up to and including her last or 25th Session.

360) *Comm. on Ezk.*, I p. xlvii & II pp. 3 & 346. 361) *Ib.*, I pp. xxxv & xlv (*cf.* xlviii).

362) *Comm. on Ezk.* 16:20. 363) *Comm. on Ezk.* 16:20.

364) *Comm. on Ezk.* 16:21 & 20:26 (II pp. 122 & 120f & 316f).

365) See: Calvin's *Comm.* on Ps. 51:5, Jh. 3:3-8, Rom. 5:12-17 & Eph. 2:1-3; his *Inst.* IV:16:17f; his *True Meth. Giv. Peace* (with its *Append.*; in *Corp. Ref.* VIII:615; and his *Op. Omn.* VIII:522).

366) See: Calvin's *Comm.* on Gen. 17:7-14, Ex. 11:7 - 13:5, Ps. 22:9f; Lk. 1:15-45, Rom. 9:11f, 11:16, I Cor. 7:14 & II Tim. 1:5f; his *Serm. on Eph.* 1:7-10; his *Inst.* IV:16:5f, 17f, 24f; his *Lit. Form for Admin. Bap.*; and his *True Meth. Giv. Peace*.

367) See: Calvin's *Comm.* on Ezk. chs. 20-21, Mt. 19:14, Acts 2:38f, 10:47, 16:15, 22:16, Rom. 4:10-12 & Heb. 6:2; his *Inst.* IV:16:20f; his *True Meth. of Giv. Peace*; his *Antid. to Trent*; his *2nd Def. Vs. Westphal*; and his *True Partak. Holy Sup.*

368) See: Calvin's *Comm.* on Gen. 17:14, I Cor. 1:17, 12:13, Gal. 5:3, Eph. 5:26, Tit. 3:5 & Heb. 6:2; his *Antid. to Arts. of [Rom.] Paris Theol. Fac.*; his *True Meth. Giv. Peace*; his *Append. True Meth. Reform. Church*; his *Antid. to Trent*; his *Cons. Tig.*; his *2nd Def. Vs. Westphal*; and his *Let. to a Chr. Gent. of Provence* (in his *Sel. Works*, Baker, Grand Rapids, 1983, VI pp. 71f).

369) See: Calvin's *Comm.* on Dt. 30:6, Jer. 4:4, 9:25f, Rom. 2:25-29, 6:1-9, I Cor. 10:1-6 & 15:29; his *Inst.* IV:15:20f; his *True Meth. Giv. Peace*; his *2nd Def. Vs. Westphal*; and his *Op. Omn.* XV:227f.

370) See: Calvin's *Comm.* on Gen. 17:7f, Mk. 16:16, Acts 3:25, 8:12-16, 8:37, 13:33, Rom. 11:16 & I Cor. 7:14; his *2nd Def. Vs. Westphal*; and his *Let. to Farel* (in *Corp. Ref.* XIV:567).

## **V. BABY BELIEF FROM KNOX TILL THE WESTMINSTER STANDARDS**

John Knox had become a Romish priest in the same year that Calvin as a Protestant published the first edition of his *Institutes of the Christian Religion* -- in 1536. Knox's countryman George Wishart, having himself embraced Protestantism, had returned from Switzerland with the *First Helvetic Confession*. It was during the year of Wishart's martyrdom in his native Scotland, that Knox himself became a Protestant -- in 1545.

A decade later, Knox went to Europe. There he studied under Calvin, and helped edit the famous *Geneva Bible*. It was therefore with first-hand knowledge that Knox called Calvin's Geneva "the most perfect school of Christ that ever was on the earth since the days of the Apostles."<sup>1</sup> Thus, long before the time of Calvin's death in 1564, Knox had already become a fully committed Calvinist.

### **390. John Knox a paidobaptistic Calvinist before leaving Geneva**

Knox was one of the Ministers of the English-speaking congregation of Marian refugees -- in Geneva. There they employed the "Form and Prayers and Ministration of the Sacrament *etc.* used in the English Congregation at Geneva and approved by the famous and Godly learned man M. John Calvin."

Thus Knox himself, in the words of the appropriate heading in his later *Works*.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, Knox's *Genevan Service Book* is derived in almost every respect straight from Calvin -- even as regards Calvin's baptismal services.

In 1557, while in Dieppe and before returning to Scotland, Knox wrote some letters to his brethren and 'lords professing the truth' in Scotland. One such letter was recently edited by Kevin Reed and republished under the title: *A Warning Against the Anabaptists*.<sup>3</sup> There,<sup>4</sup> Knox condemns those who "have separated themselves from the society and communion of their brethren in[to] sects damnable and most pernicious."

Those sectarian Anabaptists, conceded Knox, really do "have a zeal.... But alas, it is not according to knowledge.... This sort of men fall from the society of Christ's little flock, with contempt of His sacraments and holy ordinances by us truly maintained." Indeed, "they require a greater purity than ever was found in any congregation since the beginning."

Knox now immediately went on to insist that the Anabaptists "shall not escape judgment and condemnation." This is so, declared Knox, "because they do despise Christ Jesus and His holy ordinances."

Indeed, the Anabaptists were not at all like the 'apostolic age' Christians who had been ejected from Judaism's "synagogue of Satan." Mark 13:9-13 and Revelation 2:9 & 3:9. Nor were the Anabaptists like the Protestants who had just been removed from the Romish

Neo-Babylon. Revelation 17:5 and 18:4; compare Second Thessalonians 2:3-17f. Rather were the Anabaptists exactly analogous to the Proto-Gnostics -- who opposed the apostolic Christians, and who castigated their infant baptism. Colossians 2:9-23 (*q.v.*).

Just a few paragraphs after writing his above-cited words, Knox wrote that even though "the Papists are busy to espy our offences, faults and infirmities..., they are not the enemies most to be feared. For...of the other [Anabaptist] sort of whom before we have somewhat spoken, the craft and malice of the devil fighting against Christ is more covert and therefore more to be feared."

Just think of it -- Anabaptism "more" to be feared than even Romanism! For the Anabaptists, insisted Knox, were "privy blasphemers of Christ Jesus; supplanters of His dignity; and manifest enemies to the free justification which comes by faith in His blood."

### **391. After returning to Scotland Knox still heeded Calvin on baptism**

Having safely returned to Scotland, Knox communicated with Calvin on 27th August 1559 -- *inter alia* about the administration of baptism.<sup>5</sup> Calvin then responded<sup>6</sup> to the baptismal problems mooted by Knox, and told him "it be lawful to admit to the sacrament of baptism the children of [Romish] idolaters and excommunicated persons."

For "the interruption of piety which has prevailed in Popery." explained Calvin, "has not taken away from baptism its force and efficacy.... Offspring descended from holy and pious ancestors belong to the body of the Church, though their fathers and grandfathers may have been apostates" -- Isaiah 59:21 and Romans 11:11-32. Indeed, provided the "conduct of only one parent" was satisfactory -- "we see no reason for rejecting any child for whom a due pledge has been given."

### **392. Knox's anti-Anabaptist Scottish writings after 1559**

In 1560, Knox himself wrote a considerable treatise with the title: *An Answer to a Great Number of Blasphemous Cavillations Written by an Anabaptist and Adversary*. There, he told the Anabaptists that "with the Pelagians and Papists, you have become teachers of free will and defenders of your own justice."

He added: "our poison is more pestilent than that of the Papistry was in the beginning."<sup>7</sup> Indeed, he added elsewhere: "We damn the error of the Anabaptists who deny baptism to appertain to children."<sup>8</sup>

Once more, Knox had again insisted that Anabaptism is worse than Papism. For the Anabaptist "poison is more pestilent than that of the Papistry was in the beginning."

Soon after Knox's return to Scotland, the Scottish Reform Party -- under the leadership of the six Johns (John Knox, John Spottiswood, John Willock, John Row, John Wynram and John

Douglas) -- began to dominate the national religious scene. At the invitation of the Scottish Parliament, the six Johns offered the *Scots Confession*.

This was subtitled their "*Confession of Faith Professed and Believed by the Protestants within the Realm of Scotland...grounded upon the Infallible Truth of God's Word.*" After ratified and approved by Parliament, it remained the doctrinal standard of the Scottish Church right down till 1647. Only then would it be replaced -- by the *Westminster Confession of Faith*.<sup>9</sup>

### **393. The First Scots Confession: covenant infants are to be baptized**

The Christian Church, explained the *First Scots Confession*,<sup>10</sup> is that body which professes to "believe in one God -- Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Matthew 28:19.... This Kirk...is universal.... It is therefore called the communion...of saints who, as citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem, have the fruit of inestimable benefits -- one God, one Lord Jesus, one faith, and one baptism. Ephesians 4:5.... We comprehend the children with the believing parents. Acts 2:39."

According to this *First Scots Confession*,<sup>11</sup> the "sacraments...were instituted by God...to exercise the faith of His children and...to seal in their hearts the assurance of His promise.... Romans 6:3-5 & Galatians 3:27.... If the recipient does not understand what is being done, the sacrament is not being rightly used."

The language here is very precise. It does not say that as long as the recipient's parent understands the sacrament and believes in the Lord Jesus, his or her infant may forthwith be baptized (even though still without any personal understanding).

To the contrary. It says even in respect of the infant that "if the recipient[!] does not understand what is being done, the sacrament is not being rightly used."

Naturally, the infant could then understand only in a purely infantile way. Yet such an infantile understanding is nevertheless to be presupposed, wherever baptism is "being rightly used"

Indeed, "the fathers under the law...had two chief sacraments -- that is, circumcision and the passover.... Genesis 17:10f & Numbers 9:13.... Now, in the time of the Gospel, we have two chief sacraments..., that is, baptism and the supper.... Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15f; Luke 22:19f.... These sacraments, both of the Old Testament and of the New, were instituted by God...to make a visible distinction between His people and those who were without."<sup>12</sup>

The *First Scots Confession* then concludes:<sup>13</sup> "We abandon the teaching of the Roman Church.... They even allow women, whom the Holy Ghost will not permit to preach in the congregation, to baptize....

"We hold that baptism applies as much to the [infant] children of the faithful as to those who are of age and discretion. And so we condemn the error of the Anabaptists, who deny that [infant] children should be baptized.... Colossians 2:11f; Romans 4:11; Genesis 17:10; Matthew 28:19."

### **394. The First Book of Discipline and triune baptism**

In December 1560, the first Scottish General Assembly of the Reformed Church (Presbyterian) asked the authors of the *Scots Confession* to prepare also a practical supplement. This latter was the *First Book of Discipline*. When ready, it simply endorsed the *Order of Geneva* -- as regards the section on the administration of baptism.<sup>14</sup>

So it was the 'form of baptism' used in Switzerland's Geneva that -- by way of the *First Book of Discipline* written by Knox and other Scottish Calvinists -- was incorporated into the *Book of Common Order* for use within the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. The conviction of the writers of that *Book of Common Order*, was thus the Biblical perception that the children of believers are Christians already, before being baptized in their infancy.

Indeed, these covenant children were regarded as having been sanctified by the Holy Spirit from their very conception -- and hence from even before their birth.<sup>15</sup> It is precisely because they were deemed to be already federally holy before baptism -- that they were entitled to receive that sacrament.

The *First Book of Discipline* provides that "to Christ Jesus...of necessity it is that His holy sacraments be annexed.... They be two, to wit, baptism and the holy supper.... The *Order of Geneva* which now is used in some of our churches, is sufficient to instruct the diligent reader how that both these sacraments may be rightly ministered....

"In baptism, we acknowledge nothing to be used except the element of water only.... Anabaptists, Arians, or other such [are] enemies of the Christian religion.... Baptism may be ministered whensoever the Word is preached.... Many are deceived, thinking that children be damned if they die without baptism." This is indeed a "gross error."<sup>16</sup>

Rev. Dr. J.K. Cameron, Professor of Church History at the University of St. Andrews, makes a valuable comment in respect of this very point in the *First Book of Discipline*. "The doctrine of the mediaeval Church that infants who die without receiving baptism were consigned to limbo," explains Cameron,<sup>17</sup> "was rejected by Calvin and Calvinists."

So, the *First Book of Discipline* endorses the Calvinist Knox's Swiss *Order of Geneva* -- as regards its own section on the administration of baptism.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, this *Order* says that by "baptism, once received, is signified that we (both infants as well as others of age and discretion) -- being strangers from God [previously] by original sin -- are received into His family and Congregation with full assurance."<sup>19</sup>

Next year, 1561, the *Preface* to that *First Book of Discipline* appeared. The *Preface* states<sup>20</sup> that "our infants appertain to Him [God] by covenant, and therefore ought not to be defrauded of those holy signs and badges whereby His children are known from infidels and pagans. Genesis 17; Colossians 2; Acts 2."

Still describing covenant children, the *Preface* then continues: "They be contained under the name of God's people.... Remission of sins in the blood of Christ Jesus doth appertain unto

them by God's promise.... Paul...pronounceth the children begotten and born (either of the parents being faithful) to be clean and holy. First Corinthians 7....

"The Holy Ghost assure[s] us that infants be of the number of God's people and that remission of sins doth also appertain to them in Christ.... Almighty God [is] their Father." For they are "His children bought with the blood of His dear Son."

### **395. The Belgic Confession versus the Council of Trent**

The whole of the United Netherlands from Friesland to Flanders had been badly attacked by the anarchy of Anabaptism, especially from 1526 to 1546. After that, during Romish persecution, the Belgian Calvinist Guido de Bré s had been a refugee in England --from 1548 till 1554. There, he had greatly been strengthened by the Calvinism of those supporting King Edward VI. He then returned to the Netherlands, where he continued his struggle against the Romanists and especially against the Anabaptists.

This can be seen in his famous 1562 *Belgic Confession*. For it attacks both the Romish and the Anabaptist doctrines of baptism -- and indeed many of the other Anabaptist and Romish doctrines too.

The 1545 Romish Council of Trent had made a very important statement. It had said:<sup>21</sup> "If anybody denies that by the grace conferred in baptism the guilt (*reatum*) of original sin is remitted; or even asserts that the whole (*totum*) of that...sin is not taken away...or not imputed -- let him be accursed!"

This long-standing Romish heresy of baptismal regenerationism is flatly refuted in the 1562 *Belgic Confession* of the Dutch Reformed Church. The *Belgica* was later adopted as the official doctrinal standard of the Dutch Reformed family of denominations worldwide.

Now the *Belgica* states that "through the disobedience of Adam, original sin is extended to all mankind. Romans 5:12f; Psalm 51:7; Romans 3:10; Genesis 6:3; John 3:6; Job 14:4." This "is a corruption of the whole nature" or character of fallen humanity. Indeed, it is "an hereditary disease wherewith infants themselves are infected even in their mother's womb. Isaiah 48:8 & Romans 5:14.... Nor is it by any means abolished or done away with by baptism."<sup>22</sup>

Trent had stated that baptism itself remits the whole (*totum*) of original sin, together with its guilt (*reatum*). Indeed, Trent had further alleged<sup>23</sup> that this is done *ex opere operato* (alias quite mechanically). So the *Belgica* now replied, to the contrary, that original sin is not by any means abolished or done away with by baptism. Thus the 1561 original French-Walloon text.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, also the first Flemish-Dutch version.<sup>25</sup>

After the printing in 1564 of the Romish *Canons of Trent*,<sup>26</sup> the Dutch Reformed Synod of 1566 added to its *Belgica* the words 'nor totally eradicated.' The appropriate phrase in this article of the amended *Belgica* thus states about original sin: "Nor is it by any means abolished nor totally eradicated by baptism."<sup>27</sup>

The official North-Netherlands translation, published in Middelburg in 1611, is in some respects even stronger. That reads: "even by baptism itself it was not totally abolished nor wholly eradicated."<sup>28</sup> Taking this together with the Walloon and the Latin texts, the meaning is thus: original sin is not, as indeed taught by the Romanists, either 'totally abolished' or 'wholly eradicated' by baptism.<sup>29</sup>

Only the blood of Jesus totally abolishes both the guilt and the stain of original sin -- and of all other sins flowing from it. Yet baptism refers to both. This is why it is important to give the exact focus and location of the Romish baptismal error.

Rome does **not** err in **associating** baptism with the washing away of sin. Rome errs in denying that the sins of early-dying unbaptized fetuses are washed away by grace through fetal faith in the cleansing blood of Christ alone. Rome errs in assuming that sin is washed away by baptism itself (rather than only by the blood of Christ to which baptism refers). Indeed, Rome errs yet further: in restricting the significance of baptism to the washing away only of pre-baptismal sin (through the blood of Christ alone) -- instead of the washing away of all sins: past, present and future.

### **396. The Belgica condemns also the Anabaptist view of baptism**

The *Belgica* then further proceeds to attack<sup>30</sup> both the Romanist and the Anabaptist doctrines of baptism. It declares that God ordained the "sacraments for us..., to nourish and to **strengthen** our faith. Romans 4:11; Genesis 9:13; 17:11....

"We believe and confess that Jesus Christ..., having abolished **circumcision** which was done with blood -- hath instituted the sacrament of baptism **instead** thereof.... [By] the sacrament of baptism...we are received into the [Visible] Church of God and separated from all other people and strange religions, [so] that we may wholly belong to Him Whose ensign and banner we bear. Colossians 2:11; First Peter 3:21; First Corinthians 10:2.... Therefore He has commanded [not just adults but] all those who are His to be baptized with pure water, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Matthew 28:19....

"This signifies to us that as water washes away the filth of the body when poured upon it, and is seen on the body of the baptized when sprinkled upon him, so does the blood of Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost internally sprinkle the soul...by the sprinkling of the precious blood of the Son.... First Corinthians 6:11; Titus 3:5; Hebrews 9:14; First John 1:7; Revelation 1:6."

Against the submersionism of mediaeval Romanism and the Unitarian Anabaptists, the *Belgica* here hammers home -- the **Biblical mode** of baptism. Thus it insists that the baptismal water is "poured upon" [and "poured upon"] or "sprinkled upon" [and "sprinkled upon"] the believer -- to show how the Holy Spirit does "internally sprinkle" and save the soul "by the sprinkling" of the blood of Jesus *etc.*

Further, continues the *Belgica*: "We believe that every man who is earnestly studious of obtaining life eternal, ought to be but once baptized with this only baptism, without ever repeating the same. Mark 16:16; Matthew 28:19; Ephesians 4:5; Hebrews 6:2. Since we cannot be born

twice. Neither does this baptism only avail us at the time when the water is poured upon us and received by us -- otherwise we would always have our head in the water -- but also throughout the whole course of our life. Acts 2:38 & 8:16.

"Therefore we detest the error of the Anabaptists who are not content with the one only baptism they have once received.... The infants of believers..., we believe, ought to be baptized and sealed with the sign of the covenant, Matthew 19:14 & First Corinthians 7:14 -- as the children in Israel formerly were circumcised upon the same promises which are made unto our children. Genesis 17:11f.... Christ shed His blood no less for the washing of the **children** of the **faithful** than for adult persons. Colossians 2:11f.... What circumcision was to the Jews -- that baptism is to our children."

Only subsequently (namely at or after teenage) are baptizees to be admitted to the Lord's supper. The purpose of the latter is "to nourish and support those whom He hath **already** regenerated and incorporated into His family. John 3:6.... We detest the error of the Anabaptists and other seditious people and in general all those who reject the higher powers and magistrates, and would subvert justice. Second Peter 2:10." Indeed, such Anabaptists would also "introduce a community of goods, and confound that decency and good order which God hath established among men. Jude 8 & 10."

### **397. Guido De Brés's 1570 book against the Anabaptists**

The author of the *Belgica* -- Guido de Brés -- defended the baptism of covenant children elsewhere too. He did so, and also attacked rebaptism, in his other (1570) work: *The Radical Origin and Foundation of the Anabaptists*.

There he stated:<sup>31</sup> "These two things we must observe in baptism. Namely, (1) the sign of water used as a seal, and (2) the body of those who have the truth of baptism.... The truth of baptism is also to be recognized in baptism.... That is the internal washing of souls in the blood of Christ...through the fellowship which we have with Him....

"One should note...to whom the sign of baptism applies. Holy Scripture clearly teaches us that it applies to the entire household of God; to the whole body of His congregation; that is, to all of those who are **His** people, both **small** and large.... Little **children**...[of the covenant] have the **sproutings of faith**.... One cannot include them among the unbelievers, until they come to their years or understanding....

"Between these two [believers and unbelievers], there is no intermediate position before God.... God regards them as and reckons them to be -- of the number of those who **believe** in the Son.... By grace and through Christ, the little children are regarded and reckoned by God as possessing all the virtues which [believing] adults possess -- by understanding, and through **faith** in the same Christ."<sup>32</sup>

The little children of the covenant, continued De Brés,<sup>33</sup> "are without contradiction the people of God.... The **little children** are also **regenerated**, by the power of God which is incomprehensible to us." From Luke 1:15 & 1:36 and Jeremiah 1:15 and First Corinthians 7:14



and Matthew 19:14 and Deuteronomy 30:6 and Acts 10:47 and Romans 8:7 -- it can be seen that the Holy Spirit is well able to work in children.

"Although the work of God is hidden to our understanding, notwithstanding, it is still true. Now it is certain and definite that God regenerates even children and make them new creatures -- namely those whom He justifies."<sup>34</sup>

The Anabaptists essentially say<sup>35</sup> that "the small members of the body [alias the Church] are not enlivened by the Spirit of the body -- because they are small." Yet the Apostle says "that those who do not have Christ's Spirit, do not belong to Him [Romans 8:9]. But these little children do belong to Christ. Therefore, they have Christ's Spirit."

All children are indeed under the curse -- "except the children of believers who have been redeemed from such perdition by God's gracious acceptance and through the power of the promise and of the covenant.... Now, it is certain and sure that God even regenerates the little children. I say He makes those whom He saves, into new creatures.... They possess both rebirth and renewal...through Christ the Second Adam in His Spirit.... Regeneration is nothing other than an internal washing and purification."<sup>36</sup>

Further: "According to the testimonies of God's Word, they [covenant babies] are incorporated and ingrafted into the death of Christ.... Similarly, a cutting is ingrafted into a tree and then draws the power and substance of that tree toward itself and partakes thereof [Romans 11:16]."<sup>37</sup>

De Brés concluded:<sup>38</sup> "The tiny little children receive the sign of regeneration and of renewal (*viz.* baptism). They are separated from the world before they come to years.... They are blessed and elect before the Lord, Who regenerates them and renews them through his Spirit. But when they come to a suitable age..., we teach and instruct them in the doctrine of baptism and get them to know that they should think of this Spirit-ual regeneration all the days of their lives -- of which they receive the sign in their young days....

"The little children are renewed by God's Spirit according to the measure and comprehension of their age. And this divine power, which is hidden within them, grows and gradually increases [*cf.* Luke 1:15f,41f,80].... They are redeemed, sanctified and regenerated from perdition -- even though natural corruption still remains in them. For they possess such regeneration not through their own goodness, but through the sole goodness and mercy of God in Jesus Christ."

### **398. Ursinus presumed covenant children were regenerated before their infant baptism**

Rev. Dr. Zacharias Ursinus was the German Reformed Professor of Theology in Breslau in 1557, and later in Heidelberg. He was personally acquainted with Zwingli, Bullinger, Peter Martyr Vermigli, Calvin and Olevianus. Together with the latter, who had himself studied with Calvin in the Genevan Academy, Ursinus composed the famous *Heidelberg Catechism*.

Ursinus himself wrote<sup>39</sup> that "those are not to be excluded from baptism, to whom the benefit of remission of sins and of regeneration belongs. But this benefit belongs to the infants of the Church. For redemption from sin by the blood of Christ, and by the Holy Ghost the Author of faith, is promised to them no less than to the adults....

"We deny the proposition which denieth that **infants do believe.** For infants of believers regenerated by the Holy Spirit have an inclination to believe, or do believe by inclination. For faith is **[with]in** infants -- potentially, and by disposition.... Godly infants who are in the church, have...an inclination...to godliness -- not by nature indeed, but by the **grace** of the covenant.

"Infants **have** the Holy Ghost, and are regenerated by Him.... John was filled with the Holy Ghost, when as yet He was in the womb [Luke 1:15-44f]; and it was said to Jeremiah [1:5], '**Before thou camest out of the womb, I sanctified thee.**'

"If infants have the Holy Ghost -- then, doubtless, He worketh in them regeneration...unto salvation. As Peter saith [Acts 10:47f], 'Who can forbid water -- from them who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?'

"Therefore, Christ numbered **little children** amongst **believers.** 'He that offendeth one of these little ones which **believe** in Me' -- it were better for him that a heavy stone were tied round his neck and he were drowned (by total submersion permanently). Matthew 18:6. Consequently, "unto baptism, regeneration by the Holy Ghost and faith or an inclination to faith and repentance sufficeth."

In his own *Small Catechism*, Ursinus stated<sup>40</sup> that "the first reason why children are to be baptized, is that the Holy Spirit works in them too." Indeed, that Holy Spirit "moves them to believe and to obey God -- even though they are not yet able to believe in an adult way."

The children of believers are themselves Christians, "to whom the benefit of the forgiveness of sin and regeneration belong."<sup>41</sup> Thus, "the Holy Spirit teaches them according to the ability and the manner of their years."<sup>42</sup> "Infants **believe** in their own way, or in the way of their age. For they have a tendency to believe. **Faith** is a power in infants. It consists of inclination, and not of action as in adults."<sup>43</sup>

Indeed, in his *Treasure Book*, explaining the *Heidelberg Catechism* (which he co-authored), Ursinus stated that "one should not admit that children [of the covenant] cannot believe at all.... They **believe** in such a way as agrees with their young age, namely by tending to believe. That tendency is indeed either **faith**, or a part and a **beginning** thereof....

"One may not label as 'unfruitful' the tiny little trees which have just been planted, but which bring forth fruit only at the appropriate time -- even though they do not yet yield fruit. Similarly, one must not place the children [of the covenant] among the number of the unbelievers..., but among the believers. For they have the tendency (*inclinatio*) and the ability (*potentia*) to believe. This tendency they have not from the flesh, but from the Holy Spirit and from the grace promised to them."

### **399. Ursinus: babies not regularly baptizable unless priorly regenerated**

At least half of the paedobaptistic rationale for infant baptism well rests on the presumption of regeneration in the babies concerned.<sup>44</sup> For Ursinus regarded "regeneration" and "the donation of the Holy Spirit" as identical.<sup>45</sup> Indeed, Ursinus categorically claimed:<sup>46</sup> "Only the regenerate lawfully<sup>47</sup> receive baptism. The church administereth baptism [lawfully] to...only those whom she ought to account in the number of the regenerate."

In his work *Concerning the Baptism of Infants*,<sup>48</sup> Ursinus said that covenant infants "are regenerated and belong to the people of God and to the body of Christ.... The gift of the Holy Spirit applies to the children of believers even before faith and conversion.... In general, it is from the covenant and the divine promise that one judges children to have been gifted with the Holy Spirit.... They are to be regarded as partakers of the Spirit of regeneration, by virtue of their birth in the Church and by power of the promises of God.... The actual reason why anyone should be baptized, is not faith and profession but regeneration...[and] the gift of the Holy Spirit.... All believers are to be baptized; and only believers are to be baptized."

Christ regards the children of believers, as believers. This is seen especially in Matthew 18:6. This is because in such children, "the Holy Spirit certainly works regeneration and good tendencies and new movements and whatsoever else is necessary for salvation." It is not [just] because of their birth from Christian parents, but "because of the infinite mercy of God....that they are regarded as covenanters, and distinguished from the children of Pagans and Moslems."<sup>49</sup>

Indeed, covenant children should be baptized: first, "because all who belong to the covenant, should be"; second, because "remission of sins and regeneration belongs to them; third, because infant baptism "is designed to distinguish the church from all the various sects"; and fourth, because "baptism occupies the place of circumcision."<sup>50</sup> The sacraments do not confer grace, but we get the sign because it is presupposed we already have the thing signified -- as even children know.<sup>51</sup>

### **400. Olevianus on the prebaptismal presumed regeneration of covenant infants**

The German Reformed theologian Caspar Olevianus studied under Calvin at the Geneva Academy, and became a Professor of the Latin School in his birthplace Treves in 1559. Together with his colleague Ursinus, he composed the *Heidelberg Catechism* in 1562. He had a strong influence in the German Palatine, where Datheen later composed his own famous *Baptismal Formula*.

Olevianus regarded [infant] baptism as a means of assuring believers that they had been regenerated by the Spirit of God.<sup>52</sup> Indeed, Olevianus put covenant children on the same basis as their believing parents, assuming that in the former too both renewal and sanctification unto a godly life had already commenced.<sup>53</sup>

Stated Olevianus:<sup>54</sup> "The grace of Christ or the covenant of grace...is offered not just to parents, but to the parents and their children together. The parents...are to accept that the

promises are not just entrusted for their own salvation, but also for the salvation of their seed or their children....

"Thus, our children are holy -- by way of the covenant of grace.... See First Corinthians 7:14 and Ezra 9:2.... The promise of the Gospel has been made expressly to our children, Deuteronomy 30:6.... God consummated internally that which He promises externally. Titus 3:3-8..... Everlasting life is sealed by the testimony of the Holy Spirit and imparted by the Holy Spirit."

#### **401. The 1563 Heidelberg Catechism on unrepeatable baptism**

In 1563, the above-mentioned two Calvinists Olevianus and Ursinus of the German Reformed Church produced their famous *Heidelberg Catechism*. It quickly became one of the chief standards in the Presbyterian Church of Scotland.<sup>55</sup> An early translation of it appears in Dunlop's 1591 *Collection of Confessions of Faith...of Publick Authority in the Church of Scotland*. Indeed, it was repeatedly reprinted in English by public authorities both before and after the 1643<sup>f</sup> Westminster Assembly -- namely in 1591, 1601, 1615, 1633, 1645, 1728, 1851 and 1861.

The *Heidelberg Catechism* became a standard in various Northern American Presbyterian denominations. Indeed, it also became one of the fundamental confessions of the Dutch Reformed and the German Reformed family of presbyterial denominations especially in Southern Africa (and indeed world-wide). It has so remained, ever since.<sup>56</sup>

The *Catechism* teaches<sup>57</sup> that since the fall of Adam and Eve, we are now "so corrupt that we are wholly prone to all wickedness...unless we are born again by the Spirit of God. John 3:5." Consequently, all of the unregenerate will "also be punished with extreme *viz.* everlasting punishment both of body and soul."

The *Heidelberger* clearly presupposes the regeneration of covenant infants prior to their infant baptism. Its chief co-author Zacharias Ursinus himself has commented that this is so. Also its other co-author Caspar Olevianus has made similar claims.

It further states<sup>58</sup> that "faith proceed[s] from the Holy Ghost Who...confirms [or strengthens] it by the use of the sacraments. Matthew 28:19 & Romans 4:11.... The Holy Ghost...assures us by the sacraments that all our salvation depends upon that one sacrifice of Christ. Romans 6:3 & Galatians 3:27." He does this, by "holy baptism and the holy supper. First Corinthians 10:2-4."

Now this catechism was designed to promote church unification between Calvinists and Lutherans. Also to this end, it asks: "How is it signified and sealed unto you in holy baptism, that you have a part in the one sacrifice of Christ on the cross?" And how are you "assured by holy baptism that you are a partaker of the one sacrifice of Christ?"

The *Heidelberger* then answers that, in baptism, "Christ has appointed the outward washing with water.... Matthew 28:19 & Acts 2:38." Indeed, He has "added the promise that I am

washed with His blood and Spirit from the pollution of my soul (that is from all my sins) -- as certainly as I am washed outwardly with water by which the filthiness of the body is commonly washed away. Mark 16:16; Matthew 3:11; Romans 6:3; Mark 1:4; Luke 3:3."<sup>59</sup>

Thus, to the *Heidelberg*, baptism refers to "the one sacrifice of Christ." In the latter, I am washed -- from all my sins." Accordingly, baptism is to signify and to seal this -- once and for all.

We are next told<sup>60</sup> that "to be washed in the blood and Spirit of Christ" means "to receive from God the forgiveness of sins...and also to be renewed by the Holy Ghost and sanctified as members of Christ in order that we may more and more die unto sin and lead a godly and unblamable life. Hebrews 12:24; First Peter 1:2; Revelation 1:5; John 1:33; Romans 6:4; Colossians 2:11." For by this baptismal "sign, He [God] may assure us that we are spiritually cleansed from our sins...by the blood and Spirit of Jesus...as truly as we are externally washed with water. Mark 16:16 & Galatians 3:27."

The *Heidelberg* further asks: "Are infants [of believers] also to be baptized?" It then replies that "infants are to be baptized...since they as well as adults are included in the covenant and Church of God.... Genesis 17:7; Acts 2:39; First Corinthians 7:14; Joel 2:16.... The blood of Christ and the Holy Ghost...is promised to them no less than [to] adults.... Matthew 19:14; Luke 1:15; Psalm 22:10; Acts 2:39....

"They also must therefore be incorporated by baptism as the sign of the covenant into the Christian Church and be distinguished from the children of unbelievers -- as was done in the Old Covenant or Testament by circumcision, in the place of which baptism has been instituted in the New Covenant. Acts 10:47; First Corinthians 12:13 & 7:14; Genesis 17:14; Colossians 2:11-13."<sup>61</sup>

Throughout, then, according to the *Heidelberg Catechism*, [infant] baptism seals faith in the recipient. It is a **faith** rebuttably presumed to be present **before** baptism in the one about to be baptized. It is a faith to be **strengthened by baptism**. Indeed, it is a **faith** which is to be expected to **increase** thereafter -- both from before baptism and ever since.

#### **402. The 1564 Romish Profession of the Tridentine Faith**

Rome responded immediately. Just six months after the death of Calvin, on 13th November and 9th December 1564 the papal bulls of Pius IV appeared. Together, these became known as the (anti-reformed) *Profession of the Tridentine Faith*. This was then made binding upon all Romish priests and teachers. Thereafter, it gradually came to be used as a *de facto* creed for converts to Romanism from Protestantism and from 'Eastern Orthodoxy'.<sup>62</sup>

The **positive** bearing of this *Tridentine Profession* on baptism, is well stated in its very first article: "I, [name], with a firm faith..., believe in one God the Father Almighty...; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God...; and in the Holy Ghost.... I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins...."

The **negative** bearing which that Romish document has on our present subject, is in its articles 4 and 5 summarizing the *Tridentine Creed*. There it is stated: "I also profess that here are truly and properly seven sacraments...necessary for the salvation of mankind, though not all for every one, to wit: baptism, confirmation, the eucharist, penance and extreme unction, holy orders and matrimony.... I embrace and receive all and every one of the things which have been defined and declared in the holy Council of Trent concerning original sin and justification."<sup>63</sup>

Here, Protestants can certainly agree with the statements in the *Tridentine Profession* that "I acknowledge one baptism" and that "baptism...cannot be reiterated." For the rest, the above-mentioned (sacramentalistic) sections of that creed -- together with some of its other sections, here uncited, should be rejected *in toto*.

#### **403. Strong baptismal regenerationism in the 1566 Roman Catechism**

In 1566, we see the Papists publishing their *Romish Catechism from the Decrees of the Council of Trent* (alias the *Catechismus Romanus ex Decreto Concilii Tridentini*) -- known in short as the *Roman Catechism*. Not Trent but Pope Pius IV himself actually enacted this influential document.

Substantially finished in 1564, it was published in 1566. It was and is intended for teachers -- not for pupils. Copiously does it set out its lavish doctrine of the sacraments. Significantly, it was and is directed especially against Calvin's brand of Protestantism.

Its theology is that of a syncretism between Aquinas and Augustine. Amusingly, it for that reason upset the Jesuits. Omitting the rosary and the Tridentine teaching on indulgences, it also treats of matters not discussed at Trent -- such as papal authority, and limbo for the unbaptized.<sup>64</sup>

The *Roman Catechism* decrees that Romish teachers are to believe and to teach not just that the Roman Catholic Church exists. It insists that people should also put their trust in her.

For "he who has entered into the Church through baptism, can be assured against all danger of everlasting death. But those outside of her, are swallowed up by their misdeeds -- just as happened to those who were not taken up into the ark. This is what God has determined about the Church."<sup>65</sup>

The *Roman Catechism* decrees that a "sacrament...has the power of both signifying and effecting both sanctification and justification." It declares that baptism is "the sacrament of regeneration through water." Consequently, both the "good" and the "bad" enjoy its benefits.<sup>66</sup>

Baptism, continues the *Roman Catechism*, is necessary for salvation. Indeed, "even Jews and unbelievers and heretics -- when necessity impels -- are permitted to do this work." For "perfect conversion is posited -- in a new birth through baptism." Indeed, "baptism is prescribed by the Lord for all men."<sup>67</sup>

The *Roman Catechism* also claims that baptism effects "an infusion of grace," wiping out all taints in the soul. It allegedly engineers an "infusion of virtues" -- such as faith, hope and love.

It brings about "the opening up of the gate of heaven" -- so that those dying immediately after baptism, before they sin afresh, are stated to go straight to glory.

According to this *Catechismus Romanus*, baptism is therefore necessary for justification. Consequently, children dying without baptism are lost, because of original sin inhering in them.<sup>68</sup>

To the *Roman Catechism* even the infants of Roman Catholic parents are regarded as lost -- until those infants themselves get baptized. Shockingly, it declares that "the law of baptism has been prescribed by the Lord for all human beings. Thus, those who are not regenerated by the grace of God's baptism, are brought forth unto everlasting misery and perdition from their parents -- be the latter believers, or unbelievers."<sup>69</sup> Indeed, even "for the little children, no other way of obtaining salvation is left -- than through the administration of baptism."<sup>70</sup>

#### **404. The Roman Catechism: no salvation without baptism**

In just one phrase, according to the *Roman Catechism* -- baptism is essential to salvation. Consequently, it regards even Roman Catholic children dying without baptism as lost -- because of unforgiven original sin inhering in them. Insists the *Tridentine Catechism*: "Unless men" alias human beings "be regenerated to God through the grace of baptism -- they are born to everlasting misery and destruction, whether their parents be believers or unbelievers."<sup>71</sup>

Of course, this does not necessarily mean that unbaptized babies go to hell. But it does mean that they, according to the *Roman Catechism*, cannot get to heaven.

Yet Scripture (and therefore also Bible-believing Calvinism) clearly teaches that they can. At least very many of them, certainly do. Indeed, Calvin further taught that all early-dying (baptized and unbaptized) babies of believing parents -- unquestionably go straight to glory.

No wonder that, shortly after the formulation of the *Roman Catechism*, the famous Romish theologian Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621) himself condemned Protestantism! For he believed that after death, all unbaptized children and babies go not to heaven but to limbo.<sup>72</sup>

Naturally, all this denies the presence of pre-baptismal saving grace and faith in those baptized. Indeed, it would invest the Romish concept of baptism itself with quasi-sorcerous properties. Thus, it would 'transubstantiate' the sacrament of baptism from being (as it is) the Scriptural seal of an already-present faith. It would change baptism into a 'magical mandrake' claimed to create a living faith -- the prior existence of which latter, in the baptizee, Rome wrongly denies.

Only in Calvinism does not just Chalcedonian christology but also sane sacramentology come into its own. There is thus no transubstantiation nor consubstantiation at either baptism or the Lord's supper. For there is: no baptismal regeneration; no rebaptism; and no mass.

Yet even in Romanism, there was some later softening of baptismal regenerationism. Thus Nicholas Malebranche tried to accommodate Romanism with Cartesianism -- -- and to blunten the objections even of Calvinism. For he supposed children, at the time of their infant baptism,

already to possess -- a love for God.<sup>72a</sup> See N. Malebranche: *Search After Truth*, London, ed. 1700, I p. 56 & II p. 126.

#### **405. The influence of the *First Swiss Confession* on the *Second Helvetica***

In the same year as its own appearance, the baptismal regenerationism of the *Roman Catechism* was decisively repudiated by the *Second Helvetic Confession* of the Swiss Reformed Churches. It was written, as "the most elaborate and the most catholic [alias universal] of the Swiss Confessions" (thus Schaff), chiefly by Calvin's associate the great Reformed theologian Henry Bullinger. However, probably even Peter Martyr Vermigli also played a small part in drawing up this great document.<sup>73</sup>

The 1536 *First Helvetic Confession* had been composed by Calvin's associates Bullinger, Myconius, Megander, Leo Judae, Bucer and Capito. There, the first Swiss Protestant Reformers had declared<sup>74</sup> that "these sacraments...are not merely empty signs -- but consist of signs and the things signified. For in baptism, the water is the sign. The signified thing itself, however, is regeneration and adoption in the family of God....

"In baptism...the Lord exhibits to His elect...a 'bath of regeneration'.... We baptize our children in this holy bath.... It would be unfair if we were to rob those born from us (who are God's people) -- of the fellowship of God's people" (namely the parents of such infants). For "our children...are those whose pious election is to be presumed. Titus 3; Acts 10; Genesis 17; First Corinthians 7; Luke 18."

The above-mentioned *First Swiss Confession* of the Calvinist Bullinger and others, was expanded considerably -- in the *Second Swiss Confessio* of Bullinger and Vermigli. Precisely and particularly in this latter -- once again written largely by Calvin's associate Bullinger -- the baptismal regenerationism of the *Decrees of Trent* and the *Tridentine Profession* and also of the *Catechismus Romanus* was utterly refuted.

This is seen especially where Bullinger's *Second Swiss Confession* faithfully expresses the Calvinistic doctrine of baptism. At the same time, however, it also refutes especially the baptismal heresies not only of Romanism but also of Anabaptism. (Recall Bullinger's major work: *The Origin, Progress and Sects of the Anabaptists*.)

#### **406. The 1566 *Second Helvetic Confession* on covenant infants**

Declares the *Second Helvetica*:<sup>75</sup> "We believe and teach that the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, was from all eternity.... He took flesh of the virgin Mary.... We therefore do abhor...especially the blasphemies of [the Anabaptist] Michael Servetus. Micah 5:2; John 1:1; Matthew 1:25....

"The sacraments are baptism and the Lord's supper.... The author of all sacraments is not any man, but God alone. Men cannot institute sacraments.... The symbols have God's promises annexed to them, which require faith....



"There is but one baptism in the Church of God.... It is sufficient to be once baptized.... Baptism, once received, continues for all of life and is a perpetual sealing of our adoption.... To be baptized in the Name of Christ is...to be called after the Name of God; that is to say, to be called a son of God<sup>76</sup>....

"Inwardly, we are regenerated, purified and renewed by God through the Holy Spirit.... Outwardly, we receive the assurance of the greatest gifts -- in the water by which also those great benefits are represented."<sup>77</sup> So: "We are **baptized**, that is, washed or sprinkled."<sup>78</sup>

"God also separates us from all strange religions and peoples, by the symbol of baptism -- and consecrates us to Himself as His property.... Hence we are enlisted in the holy military service of Christ -- so that all our life long, we should fight against the world [and] Satan and our own flesh.... "Baptism should not be administered in the Church by women or midwives.... For Paul deprived women of ecclesiastical duties, and baptism has to do with these.

"We condemn the Anabaptists, who deny that new-born infants of the faithful are to be baptized."<sup>79</sup> For, according to evangelical teaching, of such [infants of the faithful] is the Kingdom of God (Luke 18:16)<sup>80</sup> -- and they are written in the covenant of God (Acts 3:25).... Why, then, should the sign of God's covenant not be given to them? Why should those who belong to God...and are [deemed to be] in God's Church<sup>81</sup> [Invisible] -- not be initiated [into his Visible Kingdom] by holy baptism? We condemn the Anabaptists."<sup>82</sup>

#### **407. The influence of the *Rhaetian Confession* on the *Second Helvetia***

We should perhaps also mention the *Rhaetian Confession*. Though restricted to the more alpine areas of Switzerland, it was directed specifically against Swiss Anabaptism.

According to Rev. Prof. Dr. Curtis,<sup>83</sup> "at a Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Rhaetian Alps, approval was given in 1552 to a Confession -- the *Confessio Rhaetica* -- drawn up by Saluz Gallicus, and intended to establish a uniform system of doctrine in place of the existing theological chaos in which Anabaptist...and pantheistic teachings mingled.

"In 1553 it was submitted to Bullinger, who cordially approved of it.... Thereafter for centuries, in spite of the subsequent...recognition of the *Second Helvetic Confession*, it remained the authoritative Rhaetian formula."

Internationally, however, the *Rhaetica* was not well-known. Yet this hardly mattered. For its influence was still internationalized -- via the impact of the *Second Helvetic Confession* which roots in it.

#### **408. The influence the *Second Helvetica* and Beza on the Church of Scotland**

At this point, the Swiss-American theologian Rev. Professor Dr. Philip Schaff's comments are seen to be full of wisdom. Declares Schaff:<sup>84</sup> "The Anglican Church...makes certain the

salvation of all baptized infants dying in infancy, and leaves the possibility of salvation without baptism an open question. The Roman Church makes infant salvation without baptism impossible. The Lutheran Church makes it at least improbable. The Calvinist Churches make it certain in the case of all the elect, without regard to age."

For the classic Swiss Calvinists believed regeneration is usually prebaptismal. It is always effected only by the Sovereign God immediately -- and never through baptism mediately. Romans 4:11f. They asserted that baptism was only for the living, and not for the dying. Romans 6:3-13f. They rejected 'emergency baptisms' for the terminally ill, and deliberately allowed them to die unbaptized. First Corinthians 1:17.

Switzerland's Calvinists indeed upheld the relative necessity for living believers -- whether titanic or tiny -- to receive baptism. Thus they strongly disapproved of Protestants allowing their own healthy infants to remain unbaptized. Genesis 17:14. Indeed, they further disapproved most strongly of any baptizee ever getting himself or herself 'rebaptized' by the Anabaptists (or by anyone else). Hebrews 6:1-6.

Theodore Beza, Professor of Greek in Lausanne, became the famous Genevan successor to Calvin -- after the latter's death. According to Beza,<sup>85</sup> it is "by means of the faith [with]in pious parents, that children who are born or to be born -- are holy." Yet also such children themselves "are given the ability (*dunamei*) to believe."

Indeed, even such tiny "children...possess...a seed (*semen*) of faith." So "they are regarded as the Lord's inheritance, and filled with the Holy Spirit -- Who, in His time, reveals His power in them." Cf. 139:7f and Luke 1:41-44.

Here are some very pertinent quotations from Beza's 1558 book *The Christian Faith*: "The Anabaptists greatly err by opposing the baptism of infants.... Although they may not have faith with its effects such as those who are of age -- they may, however, have the seed and germ of it [*i.e.*, of faith]; seeing that the Lord has sanctified them from the mother's womb (First Corinthians 7:14).... We presuppose in general that they are children of God -- who are born of a believing father and mother, or when one of the two is a believer (Genesis 17:7)."<sup>86</sup>

Further, "as regards children born in the Church, one should presume the election of all of them, without limitation."<sup>87</sup> Beza even recommended, to the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, the *Second Helvetic Confession* -- with its teaching anent the "adoption" of covenant children as "sons of God" (who "belong to God" even as "newborn infants").

Significantly, certain 'Superintendents' and Ministers in the Church of Scotland -- were soon writing<sup>88</sup> to Calvin's successor Beza. They declared that the recently-published doctrine of the 1566 *Second Swiss Confession* was precisely "what we have been teaching constantly these eight years [1558-66] -- and still by the grace of God continue to teach in our churches, in the schools, and in the pulpit."

Furthermore, the Presbyterian Church of Scotland -- on 25th December 1566 -- gave official sanction to the *Second Swiss Confession*. For the Scottish General Assembly then decided to "ordain the same to be printed, together with an epistle sent by the Assembly of the Kirk of

Scotland approving the same." Too, Calvin's *Catechism* was also sanctioned by the Church of Scotland -- and was, subsequently, usually adjoined to the Scottish Presbyterian *Book of Common Order*.<sup>89</sup>

#### **409. Zanchius on presupposed prebaptismal regeneration in infant baptizees**

The great Italian Reformer Jerome Zanchi(us) was Professor of Old Testament at Strassburg -- and, from 1568 onward, Professor of Systematic Theology at Heidelberg. Said he:<sup>90</sup> "The precondition of receiving baptism, is that the baptizees have been gifted with the Spirit of faith....

"There is no doubt about this as regards adults. But what about children?... Augustine and others give...answer to this: 'They are baptized on the faith of the Church and of the parents.'

"However, I would add that they themselves too need to be gifted with the Spirit of faith.... For he who does not have the Spirit of Christ, does not belong to Christ (Romans 8:9)."

So, "elect children of believers," explained Zanchius,<sup>91</sup> "must nevertheless be gifted with the Spirit of faith -- if they are to enter into everlasting life." All covenant children should be regarded as having been born again -- until "by exhibiting continual misdeeds or apostasy from the Church, they demonstrate that they never received a true Christian faith or the Spirit of Christ" at all.<sup>92</sup>

However, very many covenant "children, just like some adults, are given the Spirit of faith before baptism." By that faith, they: are incorporated into Christ; acquire the forgiveness of sin; and are born again.... He who has received this gift before baptism, receives in baptism not only the sealing and confirmation but also the increase thereof. For the Spirit of Christ works powerfully in the administration of baptism to the elect." Indeed, "we must believe that an infant of faithful parents is already baptized with the baptism of the Spirit -- seeing it is in the covenant."<sup>93</sup>

#### **410. Peter Datheen on presumed regeneration before infant baptism**

Dathenus alias Peter Datheen was born of Romish parents, probably in Flanders. However, he embraced Protestantism -- when only nineteen. In 1550, he went to Britain, where he studied the Bible under Laski and Micron. In 1555, he was appointed Minister of the exiled Dutch Reformed congregation in Frankfort (Germany).

The next year, he met Calvin personally. That led to a lifelong correspondence with the great Genevan Reformer.

Datheen settled down at Franckenthal in the German Palatine, where the influence of Calvin and of Olevianus was already strong.<sup>94</sup> It was largely Datheen who wrote the *Baptismal Formula* soon to be used by the Dutch Reformed family of denominations ever since.<sup>95</sup>

In his 1571 *Protocol* alias *The Entire Transactions of the Dialogue* with the Anabaptists at Franckenthal, Datheen declared:<sup>96</sup> "We believe that the children of believers are to be numbered among the believers, and not among the unbelievers.... The children of Christians are children of God...only because adopted...[as] members of the body of which Christ is Saviour." Indeed, if they were "not members of God's [Invisible] Church..., they could not even be saved."

Datheen continued:<sup>97</sup> "The children of Christians have this blessed fellowship with the eternal and true God -- the Father and Son and Holy Ghost -- unto everlasting life. For this reason, they are called 'holy.' Therefore the children of Christians ought and must rightly be baptized.... They are truly holy [Romans 11:16 and First Corinthians 6:11 & 7:14].... They obtain the cleansing and the forgiveness of sins, through the blood of Jesus."

Even the promise of the baptism of the forgiveness of sins and the gifts of the Spirit, apply to such children. However, in Acts 2:38-39, Peter does not say those children get the promise only "when they grow up and accept the promise.... But he speaks of the present time: the promise is to you and your children!"<sup>98</sup>

Datheen concluded:<sup>99</sup> "By grace, the children of believers have been accepted as children of God. They have the forgiveness of sins, the Spirit of sanctification, and the testimonies of everlasting salvation.... In First Corinthians 7, Paul says of the children of believers: 'But now, they are holy.'" So too in Acts 10. Inasmuch as our children have just like us received the Spirit of adoption and acceptance: unto childhood [of God]; unto sanctification; unto salvation -- we can just as little refuse to them too the water, as we can to ourselves....

"If the infants who die at that young age are not born again unto children of God by grace through the operation of the Holy Spirit and through the blood of Jesus Christ -- as Christ teaches in John three -- they could not be saved. Consequently, we conclude that children must be born again in order to be saved.... They are regenerated unto everlasting life."

#### **411. Overview of chief baptismal developments in Britain from 1360 till 1707**

England herself had clearly seen massive (Pre-)Reformation, under the 1360*f* antipapal Paedobaptist Wycliffe, and later again under the 1526*f* Paidobaptist Tyndale. Under the 'Welsh King' Henry Tudor VIII, England had amalgamated with Wales to form the United Kingdom. She then broke with Rome, and embraced the teachings of Luther. Bucer's friend Thomas Cranmer the Reformed Archbishop of Canterbury (and Thomas Cromwell the English Vicar-General) then steered the Protestant Anglican State Church away from both Romanism and Anabaptism -- and specifically in the direction of Calvinism (alias consistent Christianity).

Continental Reformers like Bucer, de Brés, Laski and Micron for some time resided and promoted Calvinism in England.<sup>100</sup> Indeed, it was especially under Henry's young son King Edward VI and his Regent the Lord Protector Somerset from 1547 onward, that the Church of England was progressively calvinized -- also under the direct influence of John Calvin himself.<sup>101</sup>

This led to the Protestant *English Confession of Faith*, alias the *Forty-two Articles*. These were drawn up by Archbishop Cranmer and the godly Bishop Ridley in 1551, and apparently

ratified by the King and accepted by the House of Bishops at Canterbury in 1553. Significantly, they attacked both Romanism and Anabaptism. For details, see the end of the previous chapter.

Sadly, Edward soon died. His successor, the fanatical Romanist Queen Mary of England (1553-58), viciously suppressed Protestantism -- although many of the Marian exiles were then influenced in Switzerland by Bullinger and Calvin. However, Mary's successor -- the Protestant Queen Elizabeth -- again refavoured Protestantism. So, at the 1562 Synod of London and with the recommendation of the new Archbishop of Canterbury Matthew Parker (a close friend of the Reformer Martin Bucer), the *Forty-two Articles* were shortened. In that form they were adopted (in Latin) as the *Thirty-nine Articles*. Later, they were finally revised and published in English -- in 1571.

They are clearly Calvinistic. They state<sup>102</sup> that "**baptism** is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference whereby Christian men are discerned from others..., but it is also a **sign** of regeneration or new birth whereby -- as by an instrument -- they that receive baptism rightly, are grafted into the Church [Visible].

"The promises of the forgivenesses of sin, and of our adoption to the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed. Faith is confirmed and grace increased -- by virtue of prayer unto God. The baptism of young children is in any wise to be retained in the Church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ."

The *Irish Articles* of 1615 would later greatly help puritanize the various churches in the British Isles, and -- after further input from the 1618f 'T-U-L-I-P' Synod of Dordt -- also massively influenced the 1643f *Westminster Assembly*. Then, a half-century later, in 1707, South Britain (alias England and Wales) -- still somewhat Puritan -- would amalgamated with the then Calvinistic Scottish North to form Great(er) Britain.

In that way, over the years, the United Kingdom of Great Britain became proponderantly Paedobaptist and clearly Calvinistic. To understand the details of how this came about, let us now go back to North Britain (alias Scotland), and note especially her ongoing contribution to the promotion of Calvinism throughout the island.

#### **412. Post-Knoxian baptismal views of the early Scottish Presbyterians**

We have seen that the Presbyterian Church of Scotland gave official recognition to the *Second Helvetic Confession*. It did the same to the *Heidelberg Catechism*.

The *Heidelberger* was widely used in Scotland. An early translation appears in Dunlop's 1591 *Collection of Confessions of Faith...of Public Authority in the Church of Scotland*. Significantly, that Catechism was repeatedly printed by public authority in Scotland -- right down to and even after the British Civil War, in the later times of Oliver Cromwell.<sup>103</sup>

The *Form of Baptism* used in Geneva, was -- by way of the *First Book of Discipline* of John Knox and others -- soon incorporated into the ever-expanding *Book of Common Order* of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Also Calvin's *Catechism* was approved by the Reformed

Scottish Church. It too was usually adjoined -- to the *Book of Common Order*.

Rev. Dr. William McMillan, in his book *The Worship of the Scottish Reformed Church 1550 - 1658*, points out that the conviction of the writers of the *Book of Common Order* is the Biblical view that the children of believers are Christian by conception and birth. It is because they are already federally holy before baptism, that they are entitled to receive that sacrament. Significantly, this same view -- in almost the very same words -- was later reflected by the Westminster divines in their 1645 *Directory for the Public Worship of God (On Baptism)*.

The Presbyterian Church of Scotland also developed further Standards of its own. The *Second Book of Discipline* -- drawn up by Andrew Melville and a Committee of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland -- was approved without dissent in 1578. In 1581, it was ordered to be recorded.

It states: "Unto the Pastors only, appertains the administration of the sacraments."<sup>104</sup> Yet "it pertains to the Eldership to take heed that the Word of God be purely preached..., the sacraments rightly administered, the discipline rightly maintained."<sup>105</sup>

The *Second Book of Discipline* expresses the typical views of mature Presbyterians like Andrew Melville. It was approved without dissent by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in 1578.

#### **413. Anti-Anabaptism in the Second Scots Confession**

The Ex-Dominican priest John Craig became a Protestant, and was later in 1562 appointed Knox's collegiate minister at St. Giles Presbyterian Church in Edinburgh. In 1570, he became Chaplain to James VI of Scotland. The latter himself later became King James I of the United Kingdom of England and Scotland -- and then commissioned the translation of the authorized 'King James Version' of the English Bible.

Craig drafted the first *Scots Catechism* (and was also largely responsible for the 'National Covenant' alias the 1580 *Second Scots Confession*).<sup>106</sup> In his *Catechism*, when referring to the infant children of believing parents, Craig asked the question: "What comfort have we by their baptism?" And he answered: "This, that we rest persuaded they are inheritors of the Kingdom of heaven."<sup>107</sup>

Craig's 1580 *Second Scots Confession* was subsequently ratified as a 'National Covenant' by the King and Council and Court and People of Scotland in 1581. There, that *Confession* condemns "that Roman Antichrist" with "his cruel judgment against infants departing without the sacrament: his absolute necessity of baptism."<sup>108</sup>

Declares that document:<sup>109</sup> "We abhor and detest all contrary religion and doctrine. But chiefly all kind of papistry in general.... In special, we detest and refuse the usurped authority of that Roman antichrist...; his erroneous doctrine against the sufficiency of the written Word...; the nature, number and use of the holy sacraments; his five bastard sacraments...added to the ministration of the true sacraments without the Word of God; his cruel judgment against infants

departing without the sacrament; his absolute necessity of baptism."

Here the *Second Scots Confession*, a great document, rightly detests "the Roman antichrist" and condemns Rome for wrongly teaching that unbaptized infants are lost. In 1580 the household of the King of Scotland, and in 1581 and thereafter persons of all ranks, subscribed to this *Second Scots Confession*. Together with an addendum, it was then compounded into the *National Covenant*.

#### **414. The Frisian Alting on the regeneration of covenant babies**

Around 1580, the famous Protestant Reformer Menzo Alting recorded the *Protocol or Complete Acts of the Dialogue at Embden in East Frisia* -- about regeneration.<sup>110</sup> He defined rebirth as a renewal "which God works in us through His Spirit, whereby He imparts to us...the power of the death and resurrection of Christ."<sup>111</sup>

Alting then gave eight reasons, with prooftexts, for (rebuttably) presuming the regeneration of covenant children. First, Genesis 3:15. Second, First Corinthians 7. Third, Jeremiah 31 and Deuteronomy 30. Fourth, John 3 *cf.* Acts 2 & Isaiah 44. Fifth, Galatians 4. Sixth, Second Corinthians 5. Seventh, John 3 -- because children must be born again, in order to enter into the Kingdom of God. And eighth, First Corinthians 15 -- because those born from the flesh must first be born again to enter the Kingdom.<sup>112</sup>

Fruit-trees as such should not be confused with their later fruits -- as if they **only** become fruit-trees when **seen** to be bearing fruit. Nor, in Romans 7, was the regenerate adult Paul any more devoid of sin than tiny regenerate sinners.<sup>113</sup> Indeed, to deny that covenant babies should be deemed already regenerate, is "to voiden God's promises and make them useless --and to regard God as untruthful."

For God "cannot lie. And he who has received a promise from God...yet who may not actually enjoy the promise, has a vain and useless promise."<sup>114</sup> Consequently, "as soon as the promise of the Holy Spirit is given to children -- just so soon are even the gifts of the Holy Spirit given to those children."<sup>115</sup> "For how can a branch enjoy the power and the life of the vine, if it is not in the vine? Again, how can a twig partake of the sap from the Root -- if it has not yet been engrafted into the tree?"<sup>116</sup>

Furthermore: "The little children of the covenant also have God as their Father, the Son as their Saviour, and the Holy Spirit as their Sanctifier; and therefore they are entitled to be baptized."<sup>117</sup> The Anabaptists "intolerably want to limit the infinite invisible power of the Holy Spirit...to the 'power' of their own external eyes...and blind sight, [by saying that] children have no rational souls, just because we cannot see the[ir] souls with our eyes.... But it can be seen in Acts two that Peter says that 'the promise is to you and your children' simultaneously."<sup>118</sup>

For: "The Word preached to the parents and thus appropriated by them, is also appropriated by the children too -- through wonderful operations of the Holy Spirit.... The gift of the Holy Spirit produces faith in the children of God, just as a fruit-tree produces fruit. For faith is called a fruit of the Spirit. Galatians five."<sup>119</sup>

#### **415. Vander Heyden's Anti-Anabaptism in the Dutch Reformed Church**

The famous nobleman Caspar vander Heyden, a former associate of the great Polish Calvinist John Laski himself, was Moderator of the great Dutch Reformed Synods of Emden in 1571 and Dordrecht in 1574. In 1580, he shortened the *Baptismal Formula* of Laski-Micron-Datheen. He updated and edited it as his own *Instruction in the Christian Religion Taught and Practised in the Reformed Evangelical Churches and Schools of the Netherlands*.<sup>120</sup> Thereafter, he published his own Anti-Anabaptist *Short and Clear Proofs of Holy Baptism*.<sup>121</sup>

In that latter work, Vander Heyden stated<sup>122</sup> that "the rebirth...is a power which God works in us by His Spirit in an incomprehensible manner.... One may not exclude children from these receptions of the Holy Spirit and from regeneration.... In Christ, they are engrafted like branches, so that they can participate in His life....

"Again, he who does not have the Spirit of Christ, does not belong to Him.... Just as our children are not just reckoned to be dead in Adam but are actually dead in spirit, so too they are not just reckoned to be alive in Christ but are actually in spirit engrafted into Him, as branches so as to be able to partake of His life....

"How can children become pure and holy..., except through the Holy Spirit and regeneration and ingrafting into Christ...? How can children be in the covenant and in the Church of God, without the Spirit of God and rebirth...? The reception of the Holy Spirit...in tiny children, takes place passively, so that they love and please God. Then He also gives them grace as they grow up, so that in due time they bring forth their fruits....

"Seed rests for a time in the earth, and takes root before one sees from its fruit that it has germinated.... The root of understanding and of reason has been poured into all children, as soon as they receive life.... God has planted a seed and a root of regeneration in the children of the covenant.... In time, the fruits of the Spirit germinate from it. For he who has been baptized with Christ in His death, also grows from Him, like a tender shoot on a vine....

"The chief reasons for baptism are not our...professions or obediences, as the Anabaptists think; but God's covenant, the promises of grace, the forgiveness of sins, the ingrafting and adoption into the Church of God, and the impartation of the Holy Spirit *etc.*.... Whenever children are in the Household and Church of God..., they are then also attested and sealed to have been washed from their sins and renewed by Christ's blood and Spirit."

#### **416. The first part of the Dutch Reformed Baptismal Formula**

We now come to the *Baptismal Formula* of the worldwide Dutch Reformed family of denominations. This was first approved at the 1581 Dutch Reformed Synod of Middelburg.<sup>123</sup> After being drawn up from that of the London Reformed Refugee Congregation of Laski and Micron, and by Datheen in the German Palatinate,<sup>124</sup> it was edited by Vander Heyden in 1580 (after being commissioned to do so by the 1574 Synod of Dordrecht which itself shortened it).



Vander Heyden himself stated that Datheen in 1565 had requested him to draw up the ecclesiastical ordinances.<sup>125</sup> At any rate, this *Baptismal Formula* soon became the standard form used throughout the Germanic Reformed world.

Its first part is derived from the German Reformed Palatinate's *Baptismal Formula* (and, more remotely, from Calvin and Micron). There it states that "we with our children are conceived and born in sin, and therefore are children of wrath -- so that we cannot enter into the Kingdom of God except we are born again. This the dipping in or sprinkling with water teaches us, whereby the impurity of our souls is signified to us.... Holy baptism witnesses and seals to us the washing away of our sins through Jesus Christ.

"Therefore we are baptized in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. For when we are baptized in the Name of the Father, God the Father witnesses and seals to us that He makes an eternal covenant of grace with us.... When we are baptized in the Name of the Son, the Son seals to us that He washes us in His blood from all our sins, incorporating us into the fellowship of His death and resurrection, so that we are freed from all our sins and accounted righteous before God....

"When we are baptized in the Name of the Holy Ghost, the Holy Ghost assures us by this holy sacrament that He wishes to keep on dwelling in us and sanctifying us as members of Christ, applying to us that which we have in Christ -- namely the washing away of our sins and the daily renewing of our life, till we shall finally be presented without spot or wrinkle among the assembly of the elect in life eternal....

"We are by God through baptism admonished...unto a new obedience, namely that we cleave to this one God -- Father, Son and Holy Ghost; that we trust in Him, and love Him with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our mind, and with all our strength; that we forsake the world, mortify our old nature, and walk in a new and godly life. And if we sometimes through weakness fall into sin, we must not on that account despair of God's mercy, nor continue in sin, since baptism is a seal and undoubted testimony that we have an eternal covenant of grace with God.... Since then baptism has taken the place of circumcision, infants are to be baptized as heirs of the Kingdom of God and of His covenant."

Further, "although our young children do not understand these things" -- that is, although our babies while still tiny cannot yet fully grasp all of this nor confess any of it -- "we may not on that account exclude them from baptism. For, as they are [like us] without their knowledge partakers of condemnation in Adam, so are they again [like us] received unto grace in Christ.... Genesis 17:7.... Acts 2:39.... Mark 10:16.

"Since then baptism has taken the place of circumcision [Romans 4:11f & 6:1f and Colossians 2:11f], infants are to be baptized as heirs of the Kingdom of God and of His Covenant. And parents are in duty bound further to instruct their children herein.... That this holy ordinance of God may now be administered to His glory, to our comfort, and to the edification of His Church -- let us call upon His Holy Name!"

#### **417. The second part of the Dutch Reformed Baptismal Formula**

The second part of this *Dutch Reformed Baptismal Formula* now follows. It is a prayer -- to be rendered right before the administration of the baptism. It is derived *via* Micron from Zwingli (and, more remotely, from Luther and the Mediaeval Church).

"There, the baptism of children is compared to the preservation of Noah's family in the ark (*cf.* First Peter 3:18-21) and to the whole Israelitic nation at the Red Sea (*cf.* First Corinthians 10:1-4). And there, God is implored "graciously to look upon these children of Yours [*cf.* Ezekiel 16:20*f*] and incorporate them by Your Holy Spirit into [the Visible Church of] Your Son Jesus Christ."

Here are the opening sentences of this Dutch Reformed prayer: "O Almighty and Eternal God! You Who through Your strict judgment saved and preserved Noah and his household through Your great mercy. You Who drowned the reprobate Pharoah together with all his men in the Red Sea, but sent [the men and women and children and babies of] Your people Israel through it, as by dry land, by which baptism was depicted for us We beseech You, be pleased of Your infinite mercy graciously to look upon these children of Yours, and incorporate them by Your Holy Spirit into [the Visible Church of] Your Son Jesus Christ!"

The development of this part of the *Dutch Reformed Baptismal Formula* -- from mediaeval times, through Luther and Zwingli, into its Calvinistic form as above -- is very instructive. For this section of the Dutch Reformed *Formula*, comparing household baptism to the experience of Noah's family in the ark, and to that of the Israelitic families at the Red Sea, is derived ultimately from mediaeval formulas. Those latter, however, misinterpreted the Noachic verses and Exodus passages of Holy Scripture -- mistaking them to imply baptismal regeneration.

Since the Middle Ages, those mediaeval formulas underwent improvement in *The Germanized Little Baptism Book* of Martin Luther. He still insisted that regeneration occurred during baptism -- but not because of baptism.

The Zwinglian amendment of those mediaeval baptismal formulas, was rather reactionary. It quite severed baptism from regeneration. It anticipated the latter as a purely later possibility -- to be hoped for only in the future, at some time after the baptism.

Indeed, immediately after the baptism it sometimes even added a petition that God might at some yet later time "be willing to impart the light of faith to the heart" of the baptized -- "so that he might be incorporated into Your Son" at that later time. This latter petition, however, was altogether averse to Zwingli's (and Luther's and Calvin's) own presumption of prebaptismal infant faith.

The post-Zwingli *Zurich Formula* of the Reformed congregation, however, differed from both the Lutheran and the Zwinglian versions of the *Baptismal Formula*. Neither of the latter ever stated that baptism seals regeneration -- a **regeneration** implicitly already accomplished. But the Reformed formula did so emphasize such baptismal sealing -- and still does.

#### **418. The third part of the Dutch Reformed Baptismal Formula**

In the *Dutch Reformed Baptismal Formula*, the above prayer before the infant baptism is directly followed by the exhortation to the parents. This was derived by Datheen from Laski. There, before immediately thereafter proceeding to the baptism of the infant, the parents are required first to affirm this exhortation -- and publically to give an affirmative answer to it. Here is the exhortation:-

"Beloved in the Lord Jesus Christ, you have heard that **baptism** is an ordinance of God to seal His covenant to us and to our seed. Therefore it **must** be observed for that end, and not out of custom or superstition. That it may then be manifest that you are thus minded, you are to answer sincerely....

"Do you acknowledge that, although **our children** are conceived and born in sin and therefore are subject to all misery and even to condemnation itself -- they nevertheless have been sanctified in Christ too (Ezekiel 16:20 and First Corinthians 7:14] -- and therefore, as members of His Church, **ought** to be baptized?"

After the parents answer affirmatively before the whole congregation, "the Minister of God's Word, in baptizing, shall say: '**Name** [of the infant], I baptize you in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen!'"

#### **419. The fourth part of the Dutch Reformed Baptismal Formula**

Especially in the final prayer of thanksgiving immediately after the administration of the baptism itself, the post-Zwingli *Zurich Formula* of the Reformed Church clearly implies that the baptism itself had just "sealed" infant faith already deemed to be present pre-baptismally. Compare Luke 1:15-44 & Romans 4:11f.

The last part of the *Dutch Reformed Baptismal Formula* is the prayer of thanksgiving after the administration of the sacrament. The prayer was derived by Datheen immediately from the German Reformed Palatine (where Calvin's student Olevianus laboured), and ultimately from Laski.

It states: "Almighty God and merciful Father! We thank and praise You that You have forgiven us and our children all our sins through the blood of Your beloved Son Jesus Christ, and received us through Your Holy Spirit.... You have adopted us to be Your children, and sealed and confirmed this to us by holy baptism....

"Will You be pleased always to keep on governing these baptized children by Your Holy Spirit, so that they may keep on receiving a Christian and godly education! May they keep on increasing and growing up in the Lord Jesus Christ, so that they may keep on acknowledging Your fatherly goodness and mercy which You **have** shown to them...under our only Teacher...and High Priest Jesus Christ.... May they keep on overcoming sin, the devil and his whole dominion -- in order that they may eternally praise and magnify You and Your Son Jesus Christ, together with the Holy Ghost: the one only true God! *Amen!*"<sup>126</sup>

#### **420. Evaluation of the Dutch Reformed Baptismal Formula**

Without doubt, this *Dutch Reformed Baptismal Formula* throughout presupposes that covenant children have already been regenerated before their baptism. It assumes that they are therefore to be expected to serve God after their infant baptism, and indeed increasingly so, for the whole of the remainder of their earthly lives. Cf. Romans 6:1-4,13f,22.

As Rev. Professor Dr. Abraham Kuyper Sr. points out, the exhortation in the *Dutch Reformed Baptismal Formula* states that covenant children "**have been sanctified** in Christ, and should therefore be baptized as those who are Members of His Church.... Our *Formula* expresses this prevenient work of God's grace, with the words: **sanctified in Christ**. These words may not be weakened.... That they **are** Members of His Church, cannot be understood other than that the implantation of the hidden germ of the new life has **already** taken place within them."<sup>127</sup>

"Our **children** do not become Members of Christ's Church only when baptized. But they are Members.... It is in that capacity that they are entitled to be baptized.... It is **as a child of the Church** that this child should be baptized."<sup>128</sup>

Further: "The prayer of thanksgiving is especially beautiful in that it contains such a choice profession about the children of the covenant having been sanctified. The Church does **not** pray that the baptized children might be brought to faith, but it gives praise and thanks that we with our children have been received as Members of Christ and as children of God -- and that this sanctified state of the little children has been sealed in and through baptism....

"In this prayer the congregation does not ask that these baptized children might be brought to Christ -- but that they, as those already brought, may be led further through the grace of God and may always be governed by the Holy Spirit. Not so that they might be ingrafted into Christ, but so that they -- having been ingrafted into Him -- might grow and increase **in Him**."<sup>129</sup>

"The prayer of thanksgiving...is altogether in agreement with the prior confession: 'baptism now seals...that God **has** received us and **our children** as **His children**'.... The Church has baptized these children, at God's command, in the **presumption** that they belong to His elect.

"Upon that presumption rests the final prayer in this thanksgiving -- that the Lord God 'be pleased always to govern these baptized children with His Holy Spirit, so that they grow up and increase in the Lord Christ.' For naturally, that is something which could never be said of an unregenerate."

#### **421. The 1581 Synopsis of Purer Theology on Infant Faith**

The famous *Synopsis of Purer Theology* appeared in 1581. There, the Reformed Theology Professors at Leiden -- Drs. Polyander, Rivetus, Thysius and Walaëus -- declared<sup>130</sup> that only "**believers**' children should be baptized." For "only those for whom the signified matter is intended, should also receive the sign of that matter."

The *Synopsis* continued:<sup>131</sup> "We regard as such, children who are born of believing and covenanted parents -- according to God's promise in Genesis 17 ['I will be a God unto you and to your seed'].... Circumcision...was a seal of the same covenant [Romans 4:11].... In its place, baptism succeeded. Colossians 2:11.... The actual sign cannot be denied to those to whom the thing signified belongs -- as the Apostle Peter eloquently testifies. Acts 10:47 & 11:17 [*cf.* 2:38f]....

"From Ephesians 5:26, it is seen the Apostle says that Christ loved His Church and gave Himself over for her -- and cleansed her through the washing of the water in the Word. Hence -- [wrongly] either the little children of believers are not part of the Church for which Christ gave Himself; or [rightly] even the little children are purified by the washing of the water of the Word.

"For nobody can deny that the benefits of Christ's blood and Spirit belong to the children of believers -- unless he wants them excluded from salvation.... Nobody may enter the Kingdom of God, save he who has been born again.... John 3:5.... Nobody is Christ's, who does not have Christ's Spirit. Romans 8:9."

Further: "We do, with the Scripture, pre-require **faith** and repentance in all that are to be baptized, at least according to the judgment of charity.... And that -- also in **infants** that are within the covenant, in whom...we affirm that there is the **seed** and Spirit of **faith** and repentance."<sup>132</sup>

#### **422. The Belgian Reformed Jean Taffin: covenant infants are believers**

The celebrated Walloon theologian Jean Taffin was Librarian of Granvelle -- before becoming a Protestant. Thereafter a warm supporter of Vander Heyden, Taffin served Calvinist congregations first in Germany and then in Belgium -- before also becoming a close personal friend and then the Court Preacher of King William of Orange.

In his 1580*f Instruction Against the Errors of the Anabaptists*, Taffin stated<sup>133</sup> that covenant children in the Bible -- "without being taught; and without professing their **faith**; and without production of the fruits of repentance or improvement of their lives -- are Members of Christ, children of God, **justified** and sanctified." Indeed, "salvation in Christ applies to the children of believers -- according to the testimonies of the covenant."<sup>134</sup>

Covenant infants, explained Taffin,<sup>135</sup> are themselves believers. For three reasons. "First, because they themselves possess the same grace of salvation which adult believers and penitents do. Second, because they have been engrafted into Christ -- to bear the fruits of faith and repentance once they have come to their mature years. Third, because when God speaks of unbelievers and impenitents -- He means those of mature age who do not believe in Christ.... Therefore, the young children of believers, engrafted into Christ by virtue of the covenant -- may not be placed among the number of the unbelievers!"

Continued Taffin:<sup>136</sup> "The young children of believers belong to Christ.... From this, it follows that they possess the Spirit of Christ.... Romans 8:7." Indeed, "when it is said they are 'holy' (according to First Corinthians 7:14), this is noted as to their second birth. They have been

regenerated by the Spirit of Christ.... They have been born again.... The renewal of the Holy Spirit is in them...even though they themselves do not and cannot yet show this nor bear its fruits."<sup>137</sup>

It is true some of these infants may later backslide and finally prove to be unbelievers. But while they are tiny, concluded Taffin, "there is more reason to **presume their faith in God**.... Christ says 'of such is the Kingdom of heaven' -- more so than adults, who profess their own 'faith'.... Love obliges us to regard the young children of believers as children of God and as born again...until they might reveal the contrary, after coming to their understanding.... Consequently, I conclude they should be baptized" in infancy.

#### **423. The Anti-Anabaptist baptismal views of Francis Junius**

The great French Reformed theologian Rev. Professor Dr. Francis Junius studied under Calvin and especially Beza -- before himself becoming Professor of Theology at Heidelberg from 1584 onward, and at Leyden from 1592 onward. After the 1560f appearance of the *Geneva Bible*, Junius furnished its book of Revelation with valuable footnotes. All of this was constantly reprinted in many editions of the English-language *Geneva Bible* -- which so shaped Puritan Britain and the early American Colonies.<sup>138</sup>

Indeed, Junius's *Theological Theses on Paedobaptism*<sup>139</sup> still remains a classic. This is so, quite apart from his very charitable wish that the early-dying children even of unbelievers might well be wished and perhaps even assumed to have been regenerated before their death.<sup>140</sup>

Far more demonstrably, Junius also stated that "faith in its first action...is required [before baptism].... For it is inseparable from the person covenanted or to be baptized.... It is an error to maintain absolutely that children cannot believe. For they have the **beginning of possessing faith**, because they possess the Spirit of **faith** (*Spiritus fidei*)....

"Elect infants are born again when they are ingrafted into Christ; and this is sealed to them, when they are baptized." Furthermore: "Nobody positively unbelieving is fit for baptism. But children" are not thus unfit. "For Christ empowers them."<sup>141</sup>

In his 1592 book *Nature and Grace*, Junius also wrote: "None of us is so wild...as to condemn...infants *simpliciter*.... Although they are in themselves and in our common nature condemnable -- it does not follow that we ought to pass the sentence of condemnation upon them. What then? Will they be saved? We hold that all those will be saved who belong to the covenant and who belong to election. But those infants belong to the covenant who sprang from covenanted parents -- whether immediately (*i.e.* from covenanted father and mother), or...mediately (*i.e.* from covenanted ancestors [*cf.* Isaiah 59:21] even though the continuity has been broken).

"As God says, He 'will shew mercy unto thousands of generations.' Exodus 20[:6].... God sanctifies by the covenant as His Own, some from the number of unbelievers -- for the sake of the covenant, we mean, that ancestors received.

"Some also, however, belong to the election. For God has not cut off from Himself the right and authority to communicate more widely the grace of His own election to those of whom it cannot be said that either their parents or ancestors belonged to the covenant. For just as of old He called into the covenant afresh, according to His election, those who were not in the covenant, in order that they might be in it [Genesis 17:10-27 especially verses 12b & 27b] -- so also in every age the same benefit may be conferred by His most free action....

"Why may this not happen to infants as well as to others?... Out of charity, we [then] presume that those whom He calls to Himself as infants...are rather saved -- according to His election."

#### **424. Trelcatius Sr. and Jr. on infant faith in covenant children**

In 1587, (Lucas) Trelcatius Senior became Professor of Reformed Theology at Leyden . He stated that covenant "**infants have the seed of faith**" -- *'fidem habent infantes in sementi'*.<sup>142</sup> He also stated that "the child of believing parents is sanctified, although not [yet] producing the fruits of conversion."<sup>143</sup>

His son, Lucas Trelcatius Junior, also became a Professor of Theology at Leyden. He stated that covenant children have Christian faith "in a passive and imputed sense -- when, from the covenant and promise of God, the 'righteousness of faith' [Romans 4:11] is attributed to the children."

He further stated that "**the children have faith...as a seed** [or *sementi*] -- not as a fruit to be harvested" yet. That seed is deposited in the covenant infant "by the hidden power of the Spirit -- [yet] not by external demonstration" until later . "But the difference in age [between an infant and an adult] does not destroy the unity of faith" within both. "For one and the same righteousness of faith is sealed both in the parents as well as in the children."<sup>144</sup>

#### **425. Gellius Sneecanus on 'imputed faith' in covenant infants**

The Frisian Gellius Sneecanus of Franeker was a kindred spirit of Laski and Bullinger. His 1588 book *The Basis...of God's Covenant of Grace, of the Sacramental Sign, and of Baptism* -- written especially against the Anabaptists -- still remains a classic . There, he maintained that even Mark 16:16 presupposes an 'imputed faith' within covenantal babies.<sup>145</sup>

This, argued Sneecanus, is because "Christ is not here dealing only with the profession of faith in particular" -- the actual essence of which, children do not yet possess. "But he is here dealing with the imputation of **faith** and of righteousness, which embraces 'every creature' alias the entire seed of the believers unto a thousand generations" -- both the children as well as the parents. Thus, covenant children too need to have such a faith. "For the imputation of faith and the righteousness of the saved, stretches just as far as does the grace of the evangelical doctrine and the promise of salvation."

Snecanus then gave nine proofs [and hundreds of quotations] to prove that such children are born again. Then he added: "The children may no more be excluded from regeneration, than they could be excluded: from the covenant; from God's mercy; from the power of the death of Christ; yea, from the number of the believers and from the Kingdom of God. These things are the more important attributes, entities and operations of regeneration.... Consequently, the children ought also in no way to be hindered from baptism."<sup>146</sup>

#### **426. James Kimedoncius on infant faith within covenant children**

The fiery Calvinist James Kimedoncius received his doctoral degree in theology at Heidelberg in 1576 (where Zanchius himself gave the address). After being deprived of his university appointment there by the Gnesio-Lutheran, Prince Louis VI, Kimedoncius became a Professor in the new Belgian Calvinistic seminary at Ghent in 1578. There, he trained many renowned theological students, like the celebrated Old Testamentian William Baudartius (one of the translators of the later 1637 *Dordt Dutch Bible*), and the famous writer of the *Short Compendium* (Herman Faukelius himself).

After being elected Moderator of the 1586 Synod of the Hague, the 1587 Synod of Delft asked Kimedoncius to translate the Bible. Then he was appointed Professor of Theology at Heidelberg, in 1590.

In 1589, the Anabaptist Diereck Philips had published a 'Confession' -- with the title: *Concerning the Baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ*. Against this, Kimedoncius then published an *Answer*.

In his *Answer*, Kimedoncius stated:<sup>147</sup> "The Holy Spirit is promised and also **imparted** to the **children** no less than to adults. Consequently, it follows that the children too are born again.... Were Jeremiah and John not sanctified and filled with the Holy Spirit from their mother's womb? Jeremiah 1:5 & Luke 1:15.... Regeneration, and the childhood and inheritances of the children of God -- cannot be divorced from one another.... If the children cannot be born again -- how then can children even be heirs of God?"<sup>148</sup>

As Members of the one spiritual body, continues Kimedoncius, "all are made alive and joined to one another by one and the same Spirit, the Spirit of life, in Christ -- both children and adults -- so that the Spirit of God is not idle or unemployed even in the children."<sup>149</sup> He who alleges that these children do not partake of the Spirit of Christ, "not only slanders the covenant of God which He has erected with us and with our seed [Genesis 17], but would also exclude the children from all salvation -- inasmuch as there is no salvation outside Christ's body, His holy congregation."<sup>150</sup>

Kimedoncius concluded that baptism is a visible witness and confirmation of the salvation which they have in Christ. Covenant infants are, "together with their parents, in the covenant of grace and included in the Church -- and therefore possess that which is signified by baptism."<sup>151</sup>

#### **427. Jeremiah Bastingius on covenant infants' actual faith**



The celebrated Jeremiah Basting was trained by Beza, Ursinus and Olevianus. He attained his doctorate at Heidelberg in 1575. Thereafter, he was repeatedly offered professorships at Leyden.

In 1594, he published his *Explanations of the [Heidelberg] Catechism on the Christian Religion*. There, in dealing with Question 74 on infant baptism, he argued<sup>152</sup> that "children are not promised the forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit less than adults are....

"The sign and external ceremony can no way be denied those who are promised and given the things signified, such as forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit.... The immature little children are promised and given the forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit. How then can the element of water fairly be withheld from the young children?"

After next quoting Matthew 19:14 and John 3:5, Basting continued about covenant infants: "Their rebirth cannot be doubted. This is even strengthened by the fact that regeneration is a work of the Holy Spirit.... The Holy Spirit causes faith. They [infants of believers] undoubtedly have the Worker of faith within them."

Basting concluded<sup>153</sup> it would be arrogant "to say that the children have no ability to believe at all. For we nevertheless have the testimonies that they do possess the Holy Spirit....

"Scripture certifies there are only two kinds of people in the world" -- the believers, and the unbelievers. . "The little children of the believers are not numbered among the unbelievers; but, together with their parents, among the believers."

Indeed, "it appears that the little children: not only have forgiveness of sin; and are citizens of the heavenly Kingdom; and have the grace and favour of the heavenly Father from Him through Christ. But they have even been regenerated."

#### **428. Gomarus: the Holy Spirit operates within covenant babies**

The well-known Belgian Reformed Flemish theologian Rev. Dr. Francis Gomarus -- the later 'T-U-L-I-P' hero of the 1618-19 Synod of Dordt which formulated the famous 'Five Points of Calvinism' -- had studied under Calvin's friends Sturm and Junius and Ursinus and Zanchius in Europe. Gomarus also studied under the learned British Puritan John Rainolds at Oxford, and under William Whittaker and William Perkins at Cambridge from 1582-84 -- before himself becoming Professor of Theology at Leyden in 1594.

Held Gomarus:<sup>154</sup> "Baptism belongs to everybody...in whom the **Holy Spirit is operating.** That is the case **with the tiny little children of believers.** Consequently, baptism cannot be denied to them."

In his *Disputations on the Sacraments*, Gomarus added:<sup>155</sup> "The internal covenant is the reciprocal connection between God -- and those who have been gifted with the Spirit of the living God. There, God graciously promises to be and continually to remain their God and Redeemer -- through fellowship with Christ and His benefits, and conversely...by their serving Him in faith

and continual obedience.

"Consequently, circumcision is called not only a sign of the covenant but also a seal of the righteousness of faith (Romans 4:11). Baptism is a seal of spiritual grace to the children. They have the Spirit. Therefore, they should be baptized."<sup>156</sup>

#### **429. Ruardus Acronius on born-again babies before their infant baptisms**

Ruard(us) Acron(ius) of Leeuwarden was a famous Frisian Reformed theologian. In 1596, Acron 'dialogued' with -- alias debated against -- the noted Anabaptist leader Pieter Van Ceulen. In his own *Protocol or the Entire Acts of the Dialogue Held at Leeuwarden in Friesland*, Acronius insisted<sup>157</sup> that covenant children "had really...been born again." Consequently, "these same children -- for these and other reasons -- ought to be baptized."

Acronius cited many Bible texts in support of this . His passages included: Genesis 3:15 & 17:7 & 22:18; Matthew 19; Mark 10:13; Luke 18:15; John 6:37-39 & 15:5; Romans 6:5; First Corinthians 3:23; and Ephesians 5:23-32. "From all of which," he explained, "is revealed that the children of the covenant are implanted in Christ as living branches -- and have fellowship with Him as His true Members."

This saving implantation of believers into Christ, continued Acronius,<sup>158</sup> takes place usually before baptism. He then gives his reason for so thinking.

For "all adults and also young children of the covenant are first of all actually and internally implanted in the Lord Christ and His Church -- neither through baptism nor through profession, but through that everlasting mercy of God whereby He admits both us and our seed into His covenant.... Through holy baptism, as Paul declares in First Corinthians 12:12f, this acknowledgment is confirmed."

The tiny children of the covenant have truly been born again. To establish this, Acronius here cited: Deuteronomy 30:6; Psalm 22:11; Isaiah 44:3; Jeremiah 31:33; Luke 1:15; John 3:3; Acts 2:39; Romans 6:5 & 8:9 & 8:30; First Corinthians 1:30 & 7:14 & 15:50; Second Corinthians 5:17; and Ephesians 2:10." In addition, Acronius further even cited Sirach 1:16 and Esdras 1:37 -- from the Apocrypha.<sup>159</sup>

"From all these and similar [passages]," explained Acronius,<sup>160</sup> "it is clear that the children of the promise possess the Spirit of faith and of power, and that they are sanctified by Him as much as is necessary for their salvation -- even though those same sanctifications do not immediately manifest themselves, on account of the youngness of the children."

After that, covenant children need a strictly Christian education. For, continued Acronius,<sup>161</sup> "they must not degenerate -- as old adults can degenerate." Thus, baptized infants "by lawful means, are [to be] daily led to godliness -- more and more." Yet, "if God were not powerful in the children through His Spirit -- education would be useless."<sup>162</sup>

Nevertheless, whenever "the youth increase in evil, it occurs largely through the tardiness or neglect of those who ought to educate them in the fear of the Lord from infancy onward.... Deuteronomy 4:9 & 6:20 and Psalm 78:4.... All of us are by nature inclined to evil....

"We have never said that all children of the covenant must necessarily be born again in their childhood.... However, in agreement with the word of Paul in Second Thessalonians 2:13 and according to the judgment of charity, we ought to hope the best of everybody -- until the matter manifests itself."<sup>163</sup>

#### **430. Some lesser sixteenth-century Reformed theologians on infant faith**

There were also many other lesser Reformed theologians in sixteenth-century Europe, who equally presupposed the pre-baptismal regeneration of covenantal infants.<sup>164</sup> Thus Rotterdam's Caspar Grevinchoven, in his 1599 book *A Thorough Study of Baptism and Rebaptism*, said:<sup>165</sup> "Our children are regarded and reckoned to be born-again believers.... Because of the promise, our children have the Holy Spirit."

Middelburg's John Seu, in his 1601 *True and Thorough Proofs...of Child Baptism*, declared:<sup>166</sup> "All those who belong to us...ought to be baptized and regarded as holy...and regenerated by the operations of the Holy Spirit." This presumption should continue at least "until they might prove themselves to be ungodly in profession and works."

Harlem's Peter Bontemps wrote his *Short Proof of the Manifold Errors of the Anabaptists or Mennonites* in the Netherlands. There, after citing Jeremiah 31 and Acts 2, he declared<sup>167</sup> that "the tiny children of the believers have the seed of faith."

Leyden's James Du Bois, in his *Infant Baptism Proved and Defended from the Words of the Apostle in Acts 2:38-39*, made the promise of the Spirit the foundation of infant baptism.<sup>168</sup> Indeed, in his *Certainty About Infant Baptism*, he charitably (though rebuttably) presumed that all tiny covenant children possess "the beginnings of rebirth" and "the good root which the Holy Spirit has wrought in them."<sup>169</sup>

Enkhuizen's Abraham Donselaer and Venhuizen's Peter James Austro-Sylvius together wrote a book against the Anabaptists. There they declared that "the Spirit of regeneration by His operations even plants the tree of sanctification in the children, who produce their fruit at the right time when they grow up."

They further insisted that covenant children are "intended among the number of the believers" -- and that such infants possess "the Spirit of regeneration Who works faith [in them] as well as in adults." Indeed, they show that "the children of believers partake of the Holy Spirit by virtue of the covenant."<sup>170</sup>

Also Herman Moded, Herman Buschius, John Tay(us), Abraham Costerus, Gerald Nicolai, Francis Lanspergius, John Amsping(ius), and Adrian Vossenholius all took similar positions. So too did especially Herman Faukelius (the writer of the famous *Short Compendium* of the Heidelberg Catechism).<sup>171</sup>

#### **431. Monolithic opposition of all the Reformers to Anabaptism**

Quite the entirety of the first generation, and also the majority of the second generation of Protestant Reformers -- were all infantly-baptized in the Roman Catholic Church. Not one of them was ever subsequently 'rebaptized' in a Protestant Church. In varying degrees, all of them seem to have presumed (rebuttably) the regeneratedness of covenant infants even before their baptism as babies.

Indeed, many of them aggressively assailed the Anabaptist doctrines. Thus: Martin Luther;<sup>172</sup> Ulrich Zwingli;<sup>173</sup> John Calvin;<sup>174</sup> John Knox;<sup>175</sup> Guido de Bres;<sup>176</sup> Peter Datheen;<sup>177</sup> Menzo Alting;<sup>178</sup> Jean Taffin;<sup>179</sup> Francis Junius;<sup>180</sup> Lucas Trecaltius Sr.;<sup>181</sup> Lucas Trecaltius Jr.;<sup>182</sup> Gellius Sneecanus;<sup>183</sup> James Kimedoncius;<sup>184</sup> Peter Bontemps;<sup>185</sup> and many others.<sup>186</sup>

Most of them also fulminated against Romanism's false doctrine of baptismal regenerationism -- and Lutheranism's incorrect teaching as to the almost absolute necessity for baptism. Thus Calvin, Beza and Alsted -- as well as the three *Brandenburg Confessions* from 1614 onward.<sup>187</sup>

Also the famous Lutheran theologian Rev. Professor Dr. John Gerhard has well understood the position of the Calvinists. In his own 1610-22 *Loci Communi [Theological Common Places]* (ed. 1769 IX: 281), Gerhard explained that the Reformed theologians Calvin and Beza and Sadeel and Ursinus and Gentilis and Musculus all affirmed "the infants of believers all alike -- whether baptized or unbaptized -- are rightly **holy** from their mothers' **womb**."

Indeed, continued Gerhard, Calvinists regard such infants as holy not by baptism but precisely "by the inheritance of the promise." Consequently, he concluded, according to Calvinism such persons -- immediately after an early death even before their infant baptism -- "enjoy eternal salvation in the covenant and company of God."

#### **432. Constant influence of Continental Calvinism on seventeenth-century Britain**

In concluding the above survey of the baptismal theology of the sixteenth-century Calvinists, it needs to be re-emphasized that the European Reformers not only massively influenced the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, but also the Anglican Church in England. Both sixteenth- and seventeenth-century British Puritans were massively influenced by the Paedobaptist and Anti-Anabaptistic Reformed theology of the Continent.

Thus, the Scots Wishart and Knox both studied in Switzerland. Not just Peter Martyr Vermigli and Jan Laski but also Micron and Gomarus all studied and worked in England.

Indeed, there was a constant stream of heavy correspondence between the Reformed Churches in Switzerland and both the Anglicans and the Presbyterians in Britain. That was so, especially between Bucer and Calvin and Bullinger and Peter Martyr on the one hand -- and Knox

and Hooper and Jewel and Cranmer and Somerset *etc.* on the other.

As the American, Church History Scholar Rev. Professor Dr. Lewis Bevens Schenck has well stated in his important book *The Presbyterian Doctrine of Children in the Covenant*,<sup>188</sup> Calvin and Bullinger and Beza were well-known in both Elizabethan and Puritan England. In 1587, Calvin's *Catechism* was ordered by statute to be used in the British universities. His *Institutes* became the chief textbook of theology in Oxford and Cambridge. Indeed, the *Decades* of his associate Bullinger were for some time the manual of the clergy in Britain. This was Swiss 'covenant theology' -- and the Britons would soon develop it yet further.

According to the Schaff-Herzog *Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge*, the 1548-1595 Lancashire Puritan Theologian Rev. Dr. William Whittaker was a man of great learning -- very staunch in his Protestantism and Calvinism. Whittaker, who was Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, wrote a very important book titled *On Sacraments in General*. There (I:3:15), he insisted: "God renews elect infants by the power of His Spirit.... In the case of infants..., I think sprinkling sufficient" -- when baptizing them. See too his *Pre-Lectures on the Sacrament of Baptism* Q.1. c.2 p. 216 (Frankfurt 1624).

Also the great Puritan Rev. Professor Dr. William Perkins [1558-1602] did not differ. He too, according to Schaff-Herzog, was a High Calvinist -- and indeed an 'Extreme Calvinist' in doctrine. Thus Perkins, in his *How to Live Well* (I:486), maintained: "We are to judge that infants of believing parents dying in their infancy, are justified."

Henceforth, the 'covenant theology' of 'federalism' on the European Continent was even more forcefully expressed in the writings of the English Puritans and other Britons. Compare John Preston's 1629 *Treatise on the New Covenant*. There was also John Ball's *Treatise on the Covenant of Grace*. It was published in 1645 after his death -- and was heartily recommended by the Westminster divines Ashe, Burgess, Calamy, Cawdrey, Hill and Reynolds.

Explains Rev. Dr. A.F. Mitchell in his book on *The Westminster Assembly*: "The doctrine of the covenants...some assert to have been derived from Holland. I think myself now, after careful investigation, entitled to maintain that there is nothing taught in the [Dutch] Confessions which had not been long before in substance taught by Rollock and Howie in Scotland -- and by Cartwright, Preston, Perkins, Ames and Ball (in his two catechisms) in England.... Ball on the *Covenant of Grace*...contained all that has been admitted into the *Westminster Standards* or generally received on this head among British Calvinists."

Rev. Dr. C.G. M'Crie, in his famous book *Confessions of the Church of Scotland*, insists<sup>189</sup> that "with the English Puritans of the seventeenth century, federalism was in general favour and use." Also Dr. William Adams Brown, in his work *The Essence of Christianity*, rightly states<sup>190</sup> that covenant theology is "a characteristic feature of the early English Puritanism -- appearing in the writings of Cartwright, Ball and Ames in England as well as of Rollock and Howie in Scotland."

Thus too Rev. Professor Dr. B.B. Warfield, in his great book *The Westminster Assembly and Its Work*. There, Warfield rightly argues<sup>191</sup> that also the 1647 *Westminster Confession* followed the general scheme of federal theology then maintained both in Britain and on the

Continent. This, he insists, was the dominant position and the best presentation of Reformed Thought.

The situation at the end of the sixteenth century was well summarized by the great Anglican baptismal scholar Rev. Dr. William Wall in his famous book *The History of Infant Baptism*, which he wrote about a hundred years later. Even at that later time, observed Wall,<sup>192</sup> "all the National Churches in Europe are paedobaptist.... So are those in Asia."

Thus the "Armenians, Jacobites, Maronites, Christians of St. Thomas [in India] *etc.*....do all baptize infants. The Copts and Abyssinians do both of them baptize their infants forty days after their birth.... Some Dutchmen in England" (as Anabaptist refugees from the Continent) then rejected infant baptism -- "but no Englishmen...in the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary, and Queen Elisabeth" then did so.

### **433. Infant faith of covenant babies in the early seventeenth-century Church**

Coming now to the beginning of the seventeenth century, the events leading to the great international 1618f Calvinistic Synod of Dordt are of crucial importance. They are also very important indeed in understanding even the later Westminster Assembly of Calvinistic Theologians in Britain.

In 1602, the Synod of South Holland expressed the need for a *Formula for Baptizing Adults*. This was accepted the following year. It began as follows.<sup>193</sup>

"Children of Christian parents, although they understand not this mystery, must indeed be baptized by virtue of the covenant. Yet it is not lawful to baptize those who are come to years of discretion, except they first be sensible of their sins and make confession both of their repentance and their faith in Christ.... Therefore, it is not lawful now to baptize any other adult persons than such as have been taught the mysteries of holy baptism by the preaching of the Gospel, and are able to give an account of their faith by the confession of the mouth."

Significantly, the very language of this *Formula* presupposes the adult baptismal candidate's prior regeneration. Implicitly, it also does the same in respect of covenant infants -- before their baptism in terms of the earlier *Formula* for them.

For the adult candidate is rightly told that baptism "signifies and seals the washing away of sins by Jesus Christ," and that it "warns and obliges" them to yield "a new obedience." The candidate is then asked before baptism whether he or she "believe[s] that Christ has been given you as a Saviour by God?"

He or she is further asked whether "through faith you receive forgiveness of sin in His blood?" Indeed, he or she is also asked whether "you have become a Member of Jesus Christ and His Church, by the power of the Holy Spirit?"

Hereafter, the Calvinists' struggle against the Anabaptists now lessened -- even as their struggles against rising Arminianism increased. Yet also the latter, unintendingly, made them

aware of the absolute nature of predestination -- even in the salvation of infants while still tiny, and especially when dying in infancy before professing their faith.

For the Arminians more and more insisted in a 'free-will' personal profession of faith -- before they would accept that a person had become a Christian. Yet the Calvinists more and more insisted on a 'free-grace' possession of faith. This God alone gives -- to whom He will, and at whatever age He will -- and even in tenderest infancy, before any personal profession is possible!

In 1606, Carolus Gallus published his *Hammer of the Anabaptists*. There he declared:<sup>194</sup> "Who then now scolds the children of our believers, and does not regard them as born-again children of God? They, just as much as the adults, partake of God's covenant of grace....

"They have not only the mere prediction.... But they also truly partake of all the graces of the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of childship and of regeneration.... Even the little children too certainly have the commencement of these things. Consequently, they are also soon sealed with the covenantal seal and sign of baptism."

In 1607, Reginald Donteclock in his *Thorough Investigation...of Predestination or God's Eternal Election*, declared<sup>195</sup> that the children of the covenant "are to be reckoned among the believers.... They have been called, together with their parents."

Elsewhere he wrote "about the children of believers, who die in their youngness." Here, he explained,<sup>196</sup> "one should judge that, because of God's covenant in which they stand, they were all elected unto salvation -- and shall all together be justified."

William Bucanus added in 1609: "It is not to be denied that the seed even of faith is poured into elect infants."<sup>197</sup> Similarly, Robert Puppis gave twenty-six reasons in his 1611 *Proof of Infant Baptism*.<sup>198</sup>

In his *Protecting Infant Baptism*, Puppis further roundly declared:<sup>199</sup> "There are even internal fruits of the Holy Spirit in the little children.... For He regenerates them and makes them holy.... By daily attempts, we must arouse the power of the Holy Spirit -- so that they should not degenerate the way adults can."

#### **434. Baby faith in Acronius's and Hommius's Scriptural Conference**

In the same year, 1611, the famous Ruardius Acronius and Festus Hommius published their book *Scriptural Conference*. There they insisted<sup>200</sup> that "not just adults who believe in Christ ...but also the children of the covenant are to be regarded as elect -- as long as they indeed do not manifest the contrary."

According to the *Heidelberg Catechism*, the Holy Spirit Who works faith is assigned to the children not less than to the adults. "Small children born of believing parents, have received the Holy Spirit of regeneration.... According to the judgment of love, all [covenant infants] are to be regarded as having the Spirit of regeneration -- as long as they do not publically manifest the

contrary....

"According to the same judgment of love, we are to believe the same of **all** small children born of believing parents -- until such time as they themselves, after growing up, might exhibit themselves differently. For the common promise has been made to these children. Acts 2:39."

#### **435. Alsted and Alting on the presumed regeneration of covenant infants**

We now turn to the covenantal views of great German Calvinist Reformer John Henry Alsted. He was Professor of Philosophy from 1610 onward -- and of Theology as from 1619.

In his *Theological Polity*, Alsted declared:<sup>201</sup> "Some are given faith during their tender youth.... For justifying faith is given only to the elect. Yet it is also given to all of them, by name and by number. As to its seed or root, it is given even to elect **children**....

"Scripture knows of only two classes of men: believers and unbelievers. John 3:5-6. Yet there are indeed two distinguishable kinds of actions of faith.... By the first, faith originates; by the second, it operates. Those elect children who die in infancy, possess faith in the first action [or faith of the first kind]...in seed.... This is why the elect children are baptized."

Similarly, Heidelberg Professor of Theology Henry Alting (the son of the renowned Menzo Alting)<sup>202</sup> stated that "children of believers are **born holy**.... By virtue of their birth, they are not heathen but **Christians**.... They are born holy, and are born as covenanters."<sup>203</sup>

"They **have** the holiness [of the Spirit] **within** them.... They are capable of being sanctified [further].... They are justified through their **own** faith, which...is a movement of the Holy Spirit suitable to them -- yet hidden to us.

"This Holy Spirit, given to the children, is not idle in them.... The Spirit helps believers with unutterable groanings [Romans 8:26]. Similarly, He works movements in children which are inexplicable to us."<sup>204</sup>

As Calvinists, "our first position against the Lutherans who teach that [God through] baptism [itself] produces an active faith, is that tiny **little children do not have an active faith**....

"Our second position, against the Anabaptists, is that the tiny little children are implanted with a **seed of faith** from which the later act of faith is born."<sup>205</sup>

Apparently still discussing the views of Lutherans [and especially of Romanists], Alting stated that "they make salvation dependent on an external thing -- because they imagine that the child is lost eternally if death occurs before the baptism with water has taken place. They do not know that the salvation of the children depends on the grace of election and of the covenant."

In actual fact, however, "infants of believers **have** some seed of faith. At a more mature age, it goes forth to act. It accedes outwardly by human initiation, but inwardly [and priorly] by the Holy Spirit -- with a greater effect."<sup>206</sup>



#### **436. The anti-Lutheran 1614 Brandenburg Confession on covenant infants**

In their Markish or *Brandenburg Confession*<sup>207</sup> of 1614, German Reformed Theologians such as Pelargus of Frankfurt and Füssel of Berlin<sup>208</sup> sought to defend themselves against hateful attacks from some of the Lutherans. This *Confession* presents a very high view of infant baptism. Yet it also rightly points out that baptism is of no use to unbelieving recipients.

"It helps them just as little as circumcision helped unbelievers. For this reason, the children of faithful Christians who are not able to receive holy baptism on account of the dire danger of death -- are no way to be damned. For the Son of God says: 'he who believes and is baptized, shall be saved; but he who does not believe, shall be damned' [Mark 16:16]."

The *Brandenburg Confession* then approvingly quotes the non-baptistic Luther against the later and baptistic Gnesio-Lutherans. "For Mr. Luther has well written in his *Church Reading*: 'It has always unanimously been agreed in all ages that if anybody has believed, yet died unbaptized -- he will not therefore be damned. For the case may somehow occur that somebody believes, but nevertheless is hurried away by death before he receives the baptism he desires. And this can happen with young children before, during, or after their birth. But they may have been dedicated and entrusted to Christ before that, by the prayer of their parents or by other believers. For [cf. Matthew 19:14] He said in His Word: "Permit the little children to come to Me!"'"

#### **437. The Anti-Anabaptist and Anti-Romish 1615 Irish Articles**

Very important are the 1615 *Irish Articles*. For, as Rev. Professor Dr. Philip Schaff and Rev. Professor Dr. Benjamin B. Warfield both rightly claim,<sup>209</sup> the *Westminster Confession of Faith* itself was influenced chiefly by these *Articles*.

Already in 1566, the Protestant Church of Ireland had drawn up twelve short articles. After the founding of Dublin University in 1591, the Protestant Irish Church convoked in 1613, and drew up one hundred and four new articles -- largely under the leadership of the godly Puritan, James Ussher (who later became the Episcopalian Archbishop of Dublin).

The *Irish Articles* are strongly Anti-Anabaptistic. They provide<sup>210</sup> that "the laws of the realm may punish Christian men with death for heinous and grievous offences.... The riches and goods of Christians are not common, as touching the right...and possession of the same -- as certain Anabaptists falsely affirm....

"Although in the visible Church the evil be ever mingled with the good, and sometimes the evil have chief authority in the ministration of the Word and Sacraments: yet, forasmuch as they

do not the same in their own name, but in Christ's, and minister by His commission and authority, we may use their ministry both in hearing the Word and in receiving the Sacraments.

"Neither is the effect of Christ's ordinance taken away by their wickedness.... It is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching or ministering the Sacraments in the Church, unless he be first lawfully called and sent to execute the same."

These *Irish Articles* are also very strongly Calvinistic, and reflect the Puritanism then prevalent in Trinity College Dublin. They are 'presbyterianizing' in character, and are very strong on predestination and reprobation. Indeed, they apparently presuppose regeneration even before infant baptism.

They insist<sup>211</sup> that "baptism is not only an outward sign of our profession and a note of difference whereby Christians are discerned from such as are not Christians. But much more a sacrament of our admission into the Church, sealing unto us our new birth by the communion which we have in Jesus Christ.

"The baptism of infants is to be retained in the Church as agreeable to the Word of God. In the administration of baptism -- exorcism, oil, salt, spittle and superstitious hallowing of the water are for just causes abolished."

#### **438. John Maccovius on infant faith in covenant babies**

In the same year the *Irish Articles* were adopted (1615), the Polish Reformed nobleman Jan Makovsky (alias John Maccovius) was appointed Professor of Theology in Friesland. Maccovius had studied under the famous Calvinist Keckermann of Danzig -- and then also successively in Prague, Coblenz, Heidelberg, Marburg, Leipzig, Wittenberg and Franeker. At the latter University he received his doctorate under the Frisian Reformed Calvinist, Professor Lubbertus.

Many Polish and Hungarian as well as Dutch and Frisian theological students soon came to study under Maccovius at Franeker. Even during the last hundred years and down to our present day, Maccovius's influence in the Reformed Churches has been vast -- especially through his warm admirers and propagators Rev. Professor Dr. Abraham Kuyper Sr., Rev. Professor Dr. H.H. Kuyper, and Rev. Dr. Abraham Kuyper Jr.

Wrote Maccovius:<sup>212</sup> "Actual faith is not the cause of regeneration [but a necessary and an immediate effect thereof].... For, if it were the cause of regeneration -- the children could not be regenerated. And that is ridiculous.... They **are born again**. After all, our regeneration -- just like the infusion of other possessions -- involves our having faith."

Speaking of newly-born covenant children, Maccovius asked and answered:<sup>213</sup> "**Do such little children have faith?** Yes, they **do**. Though they do not have it actively, they do possess **implanted faith**. For **they have been born again** [cf. James 1:17-21]. Thus, they do indeed possess an implanted faith." Hence, "the children are to be baptized."<sup>214</sup> Indeed, "they are in the covenant as regards their internal fellowship."<sup>215</sup>

Further: "The Kingdom of heaven belongs to the children. According to God's institution, it accompanies justification and regeneration.... Yet the effect...only shows itself in its own time through genuine evidences. For the seed of the Sacraments as well as of the Word remains at rest in the earth for as long as it pleases God" -- before it later germinates.<sup>216</sup>

#### **439. Dordt on baptisms in the Church of the papal antichrist**

Hot on the heels of the 1615 *Irish Articles*, and immediately after the appearance of many of the writings of Maccovius, we come to the meeting of the greatest international gathering of Calvinists ever held up to that time. It convened in Holland as the (1618f) *Synod of Dordt* -- of immortal 'T-U-L-I-P' fame.

There at Dordt, international representatives met to hammer out the 'Five Points of Calvinism.' They came from the Republic of the United Netherlands, from French-speaking Wallonia in the south of Belgium, from the Frisian-speaking regions near the borders of Germany and Denmark, from the many various German states, from the Swiss Republics, and from the United Kingdom of Great Britain.

The Synod of Dordt opposed the Arminians with the 'five points' of Calvinism -- '**t-u-l-i-p**' (Viz. **t**otal depravity, **u**nconditional election, **l**imited atonement, **i**rrresistible grace, and the **p**erseverance of God in the saints). In its *Preface*, it also denounced "the tyranny of the Romish Antichrist and the terrible idolatry of the papacy." Indeed, it even denied the necessity of baptism for salvation -- and made several important statements of great baptismal importance.

First. Humans are elected unto faith -- and not because of their faith. Thus Dordt stated that "election is the unchangeable purpose of God whereby before the foundation of the world He hath out of mere grace according to the sovereign good pleasure of His will chosen from the whole human race...a certain number of persons...unto redemption in Christ."<sup>217</sup>

Second. Such elect ones also include many babies. For Dordt insisted<sup>218</sup> that "the children of believers are holy not by nature but by virtue of the covenant of grace in which they, together with the parents, are comprehended. Godly parents have no reason to doubt the election and salvation of those their children whom it pleases God to call out of this life in their infancy. First Corinthians 7:14; Genesis 17:7; Isaiah 59:21; Acts 2:39."

Third. Dordt reminds us of Christ's own words in Holy Scripture about God's revelations to tiny tots within the covenant of grace. For it cited the Saviour's statement: "I praise You, Father..., that You have revealed these things...to the little children.... Matthew 11:25f!"<sup>219</sup>

Fourth. Dordt re-endorsed the Dutch Reformed *Formula for the Baptism of Children* (of Laski, Micron, Datheen and Vander Heyden).<sup>220</sup> This helped standardize the doctrine of prebaptismal presumed regeneration of covenant infants -- throughout the Calvinistic world.

Fifth. The Swiss Reformed theologians at Dordt said there -- in respect of "the children of believers" -- that "by virtue of the covenant" of grace, "God is their God." They said that "Paul calls them 'holy' when...born of a believing father or mother."

They said that "the Lord of heaven declares them to be heirs of the heavenly Kingdom." They further added that "we confidently hope the best about them, whenever they die in their infancy."<sup>221</sup>

Sixth. The Republic of Bremen's Reformed theologians at Dordt said that "God loves...the children of believers," which is "why they are holy in respect of the covenant." Consequently, "they are incorporated by holy baptism in order to confirm this."<sup>221</sup>

Last. One of Dordt's articles<sup>222</sup> against the Remonstrants (or Arminians) ascribed both the commencement and the preservation of grace in the elect, to the Word alone. It ascribed to the sacraments only the conservation, continuation and perfection of previously-begun saving grace.<sup>223</sup>

#### **440. The Calvinian *Postscript* in the Deliverance of Dordt on dying infants**

Dordt's *Postscript* refuted the Arminian allegations that the Calvinistic view of predestination "is nothing more than the interpolated doctrine of the Stoics, Manichees, Libertines and Turks." Indeed, according to these untruthful allegations of the Arminians, the Calvinists were stated to believe "that many children of the faithful are torn guiltless from their mother's breasts and tyrannically plunged into hell -- so that neither baptism nor the prayers of the church at their baptism can at all profit them."<sup>224</sup>

Of course, it is indeed true that Calvinists believe "neither baptism nor the prayers of the church at their baptism" can regenerate either infants or adults. Yet it would also seem the Arminians themselves actually believed that the baptizing of people, and especially the (magical) "prayers of the church at their baptism," perhaps can regenerate people. Significantly, the Arminians easily lapsed either into repeated symbolic rebaptisms -- or alternatively into incipient baptismal regenerationism.

According to Warfield,<sup>225</sup> the language of Dordt's *Postscript* here reveals a very interesting background. From that we learn that Calvin had already sarcastically challenged Castellio: "Put forth now your virulence against God, Who 'hurls innocent babes torn from the breasts of mothers into eternal death [*sic*]!'"

Explains Warfield: "The mode of expression is Calvin's *reductio ad absurdam* (or rather *ad blasphemiam*) [not of Calvin's own but] of *Castellio's* opinions. Nevertheless, the Remonstrants [alias the Arminians] allowed themselves, in their polemical zeal, to apply the whole sentiment to the Orthodox [alias against the Calvinists] -- and that, even in still more sharpened form (namely, with reference to **believers'** children.

"This very gross calumny [of the Arminians -- namely, the false allegation that Calvinists teach 'that many children of the faithful are torn guiltless from the breasts of mothers and tyrannically plunged into hell' [and allegedly by God Himself] -- the Synod [of Dordt rightly] repels.

"Its *Deliverance* was [then] subjected to a very sharp and not very candid criticism by Episcopius" the Arminian. Yet the *Deliverance of Dordt* was not altered. Defying the objections of the Arminians, it still stands -- unamendedly.

#### **441. Festus Hommius on infant faith in covenant babies**

The Stated Clerk of the Synod of Dordt was Rev. Dr. Festus Hommius. He became Regent of the Leyden State College in 1619.

A fiery opponent of Arminianism, he had been a leading spokesman at the Synod of Dordt. Indeed, as previously pointed out -- together with Acronius, Hommius had already in 1611 made an important declaration about infant regeneration.

Hommius himself wrote the work *Theological Disputations Against the Papists*. This was a work which had an important impact on the later Westminster divine, Rev. Dr. George Gillespie.<sup>226</sup>

There,<sup>227</sup> Hommius added that the children of believers "may not be reckoned among the positive unbelievers.... Because they do possess faith in its first actions, at the root and in the seed, and indeed through the internal operations of the Holy Spirit."

Indeed, concluded Hommius, covenant infants and others "that receive the sacraments -- have this grace, before they receive them [the sacraments]. Neither are any to be admitted to the sacrament, who may be justly supposed not to be justified and sanctified."<sup>228</sup>

#### **442. Walaeus and Rivetus: infant faith within tiny covenanters**

Also in 1619, the famous Flemish Reformed theologian Anthony Walaeus, one of the authors of the former (1581) *Synopsis of Purer Theology*, became Professor of Theology at Leyden. Speaking of covenant children, he himself then said:<sup>229</sup> "Baptism accompanies regeneration, the commencement (*initium*) of which **precedes** it (*antecessit*)."

For baptism assures us of the powerful work of the divine promises within us, and also at the same time of the fulfilment or at least of an increase of the preceding gifts. So "we therefore say that the children must be reckoned among the believers, because the seed or the Spirit of faith is in them.... Some have the acting possession, and other have the inclination of faith."

Sacraments, continued Walaeus,<sup>230</sup> instrumentally confirm and increase faith. But they do not begin nor work faith and regeneration where the latter did not previously there exist.

Similarly, the French Reformed theologian Andre Rivet(us), who co-authored the 1581 *Synopsis of Purer Theology*, also became a Professor at Leyden (in 1620). He said<sup>231</sup> that covenant infants have "the beginnings of possessing...the seed of **faith**.... For as the Kingdom of heaven belongs to them, so too does the Spirit of faith (Matthew 19:14)....

"By grace, they are said to incline to faith -- just as by their natural existence they also incline toward sin.... Wherever death overtakes them at birth or before their birth, we believe that God intervenes with His justifying and regenerating grace."

#### **443. The influence of the 1618f Council and Decrees of Dordt upon Britain**

We have previously seen<sup>232</sup> that the Stated Clerk of the Synod of Dordt later had a considerable influence upon the leading Westminster Assembly Theologian Rev. Dr. George Gillespie. It also needs to be remembered that James the First of Great Britain -- who authorized commissioning the translation of the King James Bible in 1611 -- himself sent British delegates to the Synod of Dordt in 1618.

At least five Britons are known to have attended the Synod of Dordt -- and to have circulated its doctrine in Britain thereafter. They are: Bishop George Landaff of Wales; Rev. Prof. Dr. John Davenant and Rev. Professor Dr. Samuel Ward, both of Cambridge; Rev. Dr. Thomas Goad of London; and Rev. Dr. Walter Balcanqual of Scotland.<sup>233</sup>

Indeed, there is some evidence that the Synod was attended even by the great British Puritan Rev. Dr. William Ames (who soon thereafter became Professor of Theology at Franeker in Friesland). In his work *Bellarmino Unnerved* -- directed against a leading Romish Theologian -- Ames attacked not the validity but indeed the falsely-claimed efficacy of baptism administered in the Church of Rome.

Explained Ames:<sup>234</sup> "Regeneration is a part of the promises, and applies to the children of the believers in a special way.... People are baptized because they **are** regarded as children of God, and not so that they should begin to become sons. Otherwise, there would be no reason not to baptize the children of unbelievers as well as children of believers."

Indeed, "the infants of the faithful are not to be forbidden this sacrament.... The covenant, and the first seal of the covenant also, does pertain to them.... In the very beginning of regeneration, of which baptism is a seal, man is merely passive.... There is no outward action required, as in the other sacrament [the Lord's supper], but only a passive receiving. Infants are as capable of this sacrament in respect of the chief use of it, as those of age are."<sup>235</sup>

The great Rev. Professor Dr. Francis Gomarus and his student Gisbert Voetius had both attended the 1618f Synod of Dordt. Gomarus had taught in Britain toward the end of the previous century, and clearly asserted infant faith in covenant babies.<sup>236</sup>

Voetius would soon become the greatest theologian in seventeenth-century Holland. Dr. Kaajan rightly represents Voetius as being "kindred in spirit to the Scottish and English Puritans."<sup>237</sup> Voetius's own doctrine of the prebaptismal regeneration of covenant infants was itself strongly influenced by that of the Englishman Cornelius Burgess -- one of the two Assessors, and indeed often the Acting Moderator, of the later Westminster Assembly itself.

#### **444. Voetius's baptismal agreement with the Englishman Burgess**

Rev. Dr. Voetius became the world-famous Professor of Theology and Oriental Languages at Utrecht. Discussing the Dutch Reformed *Baptismal Formula* of 1581, he insisted<sup>238</sup> that covenant infants "are entitled to baptism: not because they are 'regarded' as members of the covenant, but because as a rule they **actually** already **'possess'** the first **grace**. And for this reason, and this reason alone, it [the *Formula*] reads 'that our children...**have been sanctified** in Christ, and **therefore** ought to be **baptized**.'"

Voetius also wrote:<sup>239</sup> "In elect children belonging to the covenant, there is a first implantation of regeneration by the Holy Spirit. Thereby, the beginning and the seed of faith is implanted. From this, conversion and vital renewal must later take place at their own time. However, I reject (*improbo*) that regeneration takes place after baptism. For the opinion of our Reformed theologians are well-known. Baptism does not effect regeneration, but it is the sign of a regeneration which has **already** occurred. (*Efficacia baptismi non in producenda regeneratione, sed in iam producta obsignata*)....

"From the seed (*e semine*)..., the actual dispositions and habits are sustained by the ingrafted operation of the Holy Spirit in His Own time.... Just like a seed, the abilities and possession of faith make their appearances by fresh acts of the Holy Spirit in their own time." All born in the covenant, who die before coming to an age of discretion, are believed to partake of heavenly salvation.<sup>240</sup>

Voetius explained further:<sup>241</sup> "Those are said to be 'born again' who are born in God's covenant -- having been sanctified by the Holy Spirit from the womb onward.... A certain gift or spiritual grace has been poured out upon or impressed into them by the Holy Spirit. This both inheres and remains in them.... This is the seed and 'root of faith' and its radical beginning (*radicale...principium* or 'wortelbeginself').

"The very first regeneration (*primo prima regeneratio*) occurs in the children of the covenant as soon as they are **born**" --indeed, even at their congenital *genesis* (alias their conception). Later, when "educated in the fellowship of the Church and through all kinds of *stimuli* from the divine Word, they feel the implanted root of regeneration begin to germinate within them -- under the concurrent arousings of the Spirit." Then, in their maturity, the final stage of 'conversion' breaks forth.<sup>242</sup>

"From the covenant, the regeneration and the election of children is to be presumed.... The power of baptism does not consist of producing regeneration, but in sealing regeneration **already** accomplished."<sup>243</sup>

Voetius, in his *Disputation on the State of the Elect before Conversion*, stated<sup>244</sup> that all elect infants of believers are regenerated in infancy. He gave an affirmative answer -- to the question as to "whether those externally elected or covenanted, have all singularly been internally covenanted and sanctified and regenerated from their mother's womb.

"In elect and covenanted infants, there is a place for the Holy Spirit's initial regeneration -- whereby there is a beginning and a seed of actual conversion and renovation.... The opinion [of Reformed theologians] should be noted, that the efficacy of baptism lies not in producing regeneration -- but in signifying what has been produced **already**.... Daily experience teaches that

faith and piety, in life and in death, is discerned in tiny children before the age of reason."

Paul too "was regenerated in infancy -- to which Galatians 1:15 is perhaps able to be referred." As the son of a godly mother, also Augustine was regenerated and even incompletely converted prior to his years of bondage to heresy and immorality. "One cannot doubt his prior regeneration initially. It is only that the actual conversion was incomplete."

Perhaps most significantly of all, Voetius later publically expressed his own agreement with the 'infant faith' views of the Englishman Rev. Dr. Cornelius Burgess (the Assessor and Acting Moderator of the Westminster Assembly itself). Burgess had published his own views in his 1629 *Treatise on the...Regeneration of Elect Infants*.

Thereafter, Voetius commented:<sup>245</sup> "The opinion of the author pleases me.... He insists that in the elect and covenanted infants, there is room for the initial regeneration of the Holy Spirit -- by which is impressed the beginning and seed of actual conversion or renovation, which is to follow in its own time."

#### **445. Further Dutch Reformed theologians on infant faith (after Dordt)**

Also Voetius's friend, Rev. Dr. Jan Cloppenburgh of Amsterdam, rightly refuted both Arminians and Anabaptists. Cloppenburgh later became Professor of Theology in Hardewyk, and subsequently even in Franeker.

In his work *The Gangrene of Anabaptist Theology*. Cloppenburgh insisted<sup>246</sup> that covenant children "**possess the seed of faith within them**.... It [faith] not merely follows but also precedes [baptism] -- and is accompanied by the fulfilments of the promises....

"From their childhood onward, they have been separated by the Spirit of Christ.... They have the communion of the Holy Spirit Who works faith in them...by infusions of spiritual gifts and abilities of faith and hope and charity."

Indeed, "the matter signified in baptism is...the communion of the Holy Spirit Who preserves them.... We therefore presuppose (*supponimus*) that the infants of believers are ingrafted into Christ by a secret immediate operation of the Holy Spirit."<sup>247</sup> Compare too the earlier British Puritan William Perkins' *Golden Chain*.<sup>248</sup>

There were also many other 1620f Calvinistic theologians in Holland who took similar positions. Here are the views of a few of them.

Thus, the Synod of Dordt Theologian Godfrey Udeman later said that "**all Reformed Ministers agree that the seed of faith...is in the children of believers**.... They also possess the Spirit Himself.... Conversion is a fruit of regeneration" which, in turn, is "the foundation for holy baptism."<sup>249</sup>

Similarly, John Kuchlin, in his *Theological Theses Concerning Infant Baptism*, said<sup>250</sup> that one should not deny rebirth to children. Again, Cornelius Geselius stated<sup>251</sup> that "the children of



Christians are born unto everlasting salvation."

Mark Boerhave declared<sup>252</sup> that "the children cannot be excluded from the seed of faith and of regeneration." For "it is false that the children not yet have and enjoy the promise."

Also Petrus de Witte insisted<sup>253</sup> that "the seed of faith" is in the covenant children -- otherwise, if they were not born again, they would be lost if they were to die in those years without "the Spirit of regeneration." Indeed: "Of the children of believers it is not to be doubted but that they shall be saved, inasmuch as they belong to the covenant.... The children of unbelievers, we leave...to the judgment of God" -- and to His mercy.

Francis Burmannus spoke specifically about "children's faith." For even in infants, he explained, "the beginnings of regeneration and the seeds of new life" and therefore "the Spirit as the Producer of faith are not lacking."

Burmannus further compared the waters of the Noachic flood with the baptismal water -- as the sign and seal of the death of Christ. He regarded even the floodwater as "a picture of the same preservation and purification." Just as Noah and all his household were saved inside the ark "when the rainwater fell upon the ark" -- declared Burmannus -- "so too does Christ save believers and their children."<sup>254</sup>

#### **446. Other Continental Reformed theologians on infant faith (after Dordt)**

The famous German Reformed theologian Amand Polan(us) of Polansdorf maintained<sup>255</sup> that "the Holy Spirit is promised to the children, and He is also truly given to them. He is not idle in them, but they are sanctified and regenerated by Him.... Saving faith is in the heart of those children elected unto everlasting life....

"The Holy Spirit arouses tendencies and movements in them according to the measure of their capacity. When they get older, He gradually increases and strengthens their abilities.... Saving faith is thus present in the children as a commencing possession, and as a seed which the Spirit has sowed in their hearts."

Similarly, the French Reformed Theologian Samuel Desmaret (alias Maresius). He was Professor of Theology at Sedan in 1625, and at Groningen in 1642. Maresius stated<sup>256</sup> in respect of covenant children that "the Holy Spirit works regeneration in them unto [everlasting] life.... Consequently, the children of believers...are regarded as temples of the Holy Spirit Who lives in them in His own way."

In 1625, the noted German Reformed Theologian Gerald Voss(ius), having declined an offered professorship at Cambridge, was appointed to the Chair of Greek at Leyden. In his *Disputes Concerning Baptism*, Rev. Professor Dr. Vossius declared:<sup>257</sup> "I judge that the fruit of the Holy Spirit is not just such as we exercise..., but that He also unites us with Christ our Head.... Just as [our] children do have rational souls though cannot yet reason, so too do they possess the

## Holy Spirit....

"Just as the children (because they possess souls that can reason) are reckoned among the number of humanity -- so too (because they have obtained the Holy Spirit) they are, and are to be regarded as being, among the number of those regenerated: as children of God; as Members of Christ; and as partakers of the fellowship of the saints....

"They are susceptible to the Spirit of faith, from Whom their souls receive a spiritual and supernatural existence.... Without this Spirit, the young children could not be united to Christ...or partake of the privileges of the Church brought to mind by the symbol" of baptism.

In Basel we find the Swiss Calvinist, Rev. Professor Dr. John Wolleb(ius). He was then Professor of Old Testament, and stated<sup>258</sup> in 1626 that "baptism, by which the elect are received...and sealed to the remission of sins and rebirth through the blood of Christ and through the Holy Spirit, by external sprinkling (*aspersio*) with water, is the first sacrament of the New Covenant....

That "the word 'baptism' means...'sprinkling' [is] evident from Mark 7:4.... The subject of baptism is all the people of the covenant, including their children who are reckoned among the number of the covenant people.... It is by no means proper to exclude from baptism those whom Christ wished to have brought to Him.

"The words used...in Luke 18:16 [*pais* and *brephos*] -- both are emphatic as designations for 'children'.... The reason added by Christ [Matthew 19:14] -- 'of such is the Kingdom of heaven' -- [shows that] the sign of the covenant belongs to everyone to whom the Kingdom of heaven and the covenant of grace are given. And this covenant is given to the children [Genesis 17:7]....

"Children are not without faith and reason. Although they do not have those things fully developed, yet they have them in seed and root.... If baptism is once received with the essentials of baptism performed, it is not to be repeated. For this reason, our Church accepts Roman Catholic baptism -- not on account of the abuses which are combined with it, but because the child has been baptized into the Name of the Holy Trinity."

On the eve of the Westminster Assembly, the Polish Reformed theologians Nigrinus and Berg drew up the 1645 *Thorn Declaration* for their King (Wladislaw IV). There,<sup>259</sup> they insisted that the sacraments "do not work or impart grace through their mere operation.... The power of the promise must be received with true faith....

"Baptism is...to children born in the Church as well as to adults.... We do not regard this necessity as so unconditional that he who leaves this life without baptism, either as a child or as an adult...is therefore necessarily damned.... It is not the lack but the despising of the sacrament which damns." Compare *Westminster Confession* 28:5.

## **447. James Alting and Jacob Trigland on infant faith**

We also mention Rev. Dr. James Alting. He was the son of the great German Reformed theologian Rev. Professor Dr. Henry Alting of Heidelberg University -- who had stated that "children of believers are born holy."<sup>260</sup> James was the grandson of the renowned Menzo Alting -- who has compared covenant infants to tiny fruit-trees not yet old enough to bear fruit.<sup>261</sup>

James Alting was ordained in England, where he befriended the British Puritans and Westminster divines Rev. Dr. Twisse (the Moderator) and Rev. Dr. Reynolds (the probable drafter of the baptismal chapters 27 & 28 in the *Westminster Confession*). Thereafter, James Alting was appointed Professor of Theology at Groningen in Holland.

Also in the Netherlands, Rev. Professor Dr. Jacob Trigland, the Leyden Old Testamentian, wrote his famous work *Scourge for Exorcising the Troublesome Spirit of Arminianism* -- in 1634. There, he stated<sup>262</sup> that "we embrace all those in love who wear any external and apparent signs of God's grace [such as infant baptism]. According to the judgment of love, we must regard them as God's elect."

In the case of children, continued Trigland, such a sign is also "birth from believing parents." Consequently, such children are to be regarded as being among the elect -- "as long as they do not evidence the contrary."

Trigland asked his Arminian opponents: "Have the young children of believers truly been born again and sanctified by the Holy Spirit? If not -- how can they then have been saved...and why were they then baptized, inasmuch as baptism is 'the washing of regeneration' [*cf.* Titus 3:5] alias the sign of regeneratedness?"

Together with others, Trigland also wrote a *Contra-remonstrance...against the Remonstrance* -- that is to say, a Protest against the 'Remonstrance' of the Arminians. Therein,<sup>263</sup> he and his fellow Calvinistic co-authors insisted that the Kingdom of heaven belongs to little covenant children too. By virtue of Matthew 19:14 *etc.*

#### **448. Infant faith on the road to Westminster in Britain and America**

Before he had died in 1635, the British Puritan Rev. Dr. Richard Sibbes, Professor at Holy Trinity in Cambridge, made some very important statements. Sibbes declared<sup>264</sup> that "we must not think if a child die before the sacrament of baptism, that God will not keep His covenant." For "He is the God of our children from their **conception** and birth [First Corinthians 7:14]....

"Can they be the children of wrath and the children of God both at one time? I answer, Yes.... Whence, we see a ground of baptizing infants -- because they are in the covenant.... Good parents may hope for a blessing upon their children -- because God is their God, and the God of their seed....

"Infants that die in their infancy...are within the covenant.... They have the seed of believing, the Spirit of God, in them.... If when they come to years, they answer not the covenant of grace and the answer of a good conscience..., all is frustrate.... [However,] we leave

infants to the mercy of God."

What was the situation in Early Colonial America? There, the French Reformed Presbyterians in Florida in 1562, then the English Reformed Anglicans in Virginia, next the Dutch Reformed Calvinists in New York, thereafter the Congregationalist Pilgrims in New England from 1620 onward, and finally the American Puritans less than a decade later -- all propounded the baby belief of covenant infants before their baptism. See Leland Ryken's book *Worldly Saints*.<sup>265</sup>

Early Colonial America thus regarded the babies of believers as themselves belonging to God -- born to Him by way of covenant. A typical example is the famous Thomas Shephard, one of the New England Puritans. A Presbyterian, Shephard arrived from England in 1635. As did many of the Early American divines, he promptly wrote a *Catechism*.<sup>266</sup>

Discussing the wicked heart even of the elect while yet unregenerate, in his writing *The Church Membership of Children*<sup>267</sup> Shephard stated that "the Lord promiseth that the seed of His people shall have this heart taken away." Explained Shephard: "Baptism now seals.... Even to infants, the seal is to confirm the covenant...."

"Children of whom you cannot say that they are faithful personally...may lie under God's covenant of begetting faith by some means -- [with] in them.... You are not to cast them out, but accept them as God doth. The children of godly parents...are to be accounted of God's Church -- until they positively reject the Gospel."

Very significantly, it was American Puritans like Shephard -- namely Cotton, Hooker and Davenport<sup>268</sup> -- who were invited to attend and to advise the Westminster Assembly in 1643. Only certain circumstances prevented this. For the Americans were later quick to ratify the *Westminster Standards* -- in their own *Cambridge Platform*, at their 1648 Synod of New England Congregationalists in Massachusetts.

#### **449. Baptist Professors on the origin and development of the (Ana)Baptists**

The American Rev. Dr. Robert G. Torbet was Professor of Church History at Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary (from 1934-51). In 1950, he made some very important statements in his book *A History of the Baptists*.

According to Torbet,<sup>269</sup> the left-wing Professor Dr. "Walter Rauschenbusch, of [Colgate] Rochester Baptist Theological Seminary" in New York State, exhibited a "willingness to identify Baptists with the socially-radical Anabaptists." Similarly, even Rev. Professor Henry C. Vedder, the well-known Baptist and Church Historian at Crozer Theological Seminary from 1894 to 1927, noted the Anabaptists' "aversion to oath-taking and holding public office."

Wrote Payne in the *Baptist Quarterly*: "Baptists cannot be separated from...other...groups of the sixteenth century." For there is indeed a "relationship between the early English Baptists and the Continental Anabaptists.... The Mennonite influence was responsible in part for the first Baptist witness."

Torbet himself admitted that "the false claims made by Thomas Münzer (1490-1525), a socialist and leader in the Peasants' War of 1525, and the horrors of the Münster Rebellion ten years later under...Melchior Hofmann and Jan Matthys, combined to bring the Anabaptists into complete disrepute.... The extravagant cruelty and wanton destruction of the visionaries who sought to establish the millennial kingdom in Münster, made an indelible impression.... The fanatics of Münster were a potential menace to law and order" -- and "taught resistance, against government, by the sword....

"Anabaptist teaching was to be found in England quite early in the sixteenth century. Large numbers of this sect came in 1528...until 1573, when...some fifty thousand were in the country.... The earlier Anabaptist refugees were disciples of Melchior Hofmann's fanatical teaching....

"In 1530...Archbishop Warham at the command of Henry VIII condemned an Anabaptist book.... In 1549, during the reign of Henry's son Edward VI, Bishop Latimer's sermons contained warnings against this 'sect of hereticks.' He accused them of being anarchistic."

With commendable candour, the Baptist Torbet then went on to provide further alarming details: "English Anabaptists known as the 'Family of Love'...were present in the country during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, who came to the throne in 1558. This sect had its origin on the continent with Henry Nicholas (Niklaes), a native of Münster, who migrated to Amsterdam in 1530.... [In 1546,] he wrote a little book still to be found in the Mennonite library at Amsterdam, entitled *Of the Spiritual Land of Promise*....

"In this work he advocated and defended 'spiritual marriage,' somewhat akin to Mormon teaching.... On the continent, 'naked-runners,' as they were called, appeared in many cities. These 'naked-runners,' who reputedly were Anabaptist fanatics, seem to have been Nicholas' disciples. The sect, as transplanted to England, was known as 'Familists' -- and gained an unsavory reputation for immorality....

"Christopher Vitell, a Southwark joiner..., translated many of Nicholas' writings from the Dutch into English.... Bax, an able historian of the Anabaptist movement, admits...the historical connection between the 'Family of Love' and Anabaptists generally."

Fifty years later, concluded Torbet, the exiled English (Ana)Baptist "Smyth's congregation of some eighty persons seems to have had a separate existence [from Robinson's *Pilgrim Father* Congregationalists] in Amsterdam.... He [John Smyth] felt that a Minister should not preach with any manuscript before him, not even a translation of the Scriptures.... Smyth finished a tract against infant baptism, *The Character of the Beast* ['666'], on March 24th 1609.... Smyth, undoubtedly under the influence of the Waterlander Mennonites, became an Anabaptist....

"He baptized himself.... Since they worship[p]ed in a block of buildings belonging to a Mennonite merchant..., Smyth came increasingly under Mennonite influence." After Smyth's death in Amsterdam in 1610, his colleague and successor Thomas Helwys issued a *Declaration of Faith*, denying that baptism "appertaineth to infants." Then, with his flock, he returned to England -- to establish its first Baptist Church in 1611.

#### **450. Many modern Baptists say their pioneers derive from the Anabaptists**

Were we to wish, we could dwell for a long while on some of the quainter views of many of the more sectarian Anabaptists. We could also point to the naked submersions of some, and the forward-leaning triple immersions of others, within groups of German Baptists.<sup>270</sup> However, instead of examining those extraordinary eccentricities, we rather proceed straight to the British and Anglo-American Baptists -- who finally adopted the baptismal mode of backward-leaning and fully-clothed onefold submersion.

Yet, in light of all the foregoing, the esteem of certain modern Baptists for the apostate Anabaptists is absolutely appalling. We have already seen<sup>271</sup> claims to this effect in the writings of the Baptists Torbet, Rauschenbusch and Payne.<sup>272</sup> Other specialists in the history of the Baptists agree.<sup>273</sup> Indeed, even the modern British Particular Baptist Erroll Hulse has insisted<sup>274</sup> that "we should call the orthodox evangelical Anabaptists of the Reformation 'Baptists' -- and not 'Anabaptists.'"

Speaking specifically of the situation in England and America, Hulse has continued: "The General Baptists...had their origin in John Smyth (d. 1612).... His study of the Scriptures brought him to practise believers' baptism.... In March 1639, [Roger] Williams and eleven others were baptized, and the first Baptist Church in America was constituted."

It should be observed, however, that after Smyth had 'baptized' himself -- or rather 'rebaptized' himself (and rebaptized himself) -- he was 're-re-baptized' by the Dutch Mennonite Anabaptists (by way of pouring). It should also be observed that after Williams was submersed, he later renounced that immersion as invalid -- because administered by one as then not yet himself submersed.

As the Scottish Baptist J.G.G. Norman has reminded us,<sup>275</sup> John Smyth, "father of English General Baptists..., baptized himself." This he did in 1609; by affusion; and on foreign soil. Worse yet. After thus become a Mennonite, Smyth personally embraced their heretical christology.<sup>276</sup>

Even more startlingly, the noted English Baptist Rev. Professor Dr. West has drawn attention to what he regarded<sup>277</sup> as "the first statement by an Englishman arguing for believers' baptism. It is Smyth's pamphlet: *Character of the Beast*." Sadly, that is a diatribe -- 666! -- against the historic Christian Church's apostolic practice of infant baptism. The latter must be renounced, held Smyth, as "profanation" and as the baptism of "Antichrist."<sup>278</sup>

After Smyth's death in Amsterdam while a Mennonite in 1610, his colleague and successor Thomas Helwys in 1611 drew up the first English *Baptist Confession*. At first, he pelagianizingly denied original sin. Always, he maintained an Arminian soteriology.<sup>279</sup> Indeed, Helwys's *Baptist Confession* -- while indeed confining baptism only to those who have confessed Christ -- still says nothing about submersion.<sup>280</sup> However, he not only identified Romanism with the first beast of Revelation thirteen -- but the Church of England as the second.<sup>281</sup>

Smyth and Helwys were both Arminian (Ana)Baptists. The first so-called 'Calvinistic' or Particular Baptist congregation was formed, in England, only in the 1630s. Yet this new denomination was soon using submersion, by 1638. Then, following that innovation -- in 1641, Edward Barber was the first English Arminian or General Baptist to advocate dipping.<sup>282</sup>

Yet the sympathetic Professor Williams of Harvard has made an honest admission. For even he admits<sup>283</sup> that "the adoption by English Baptists of the practice of immersion ultimately derived from the Minor Church of Poland...introduced into Holland by the [unitarian] Socinians."

#### **451. The arrival and expansion of (Ana)Baptists in North America**

The famous American-Swiss Church Historian Rev. Professor Dr. Philip Schaff has informed us<sup>284</sup> that "in America the Baptists trace their origin chiefly...to Roger Williams.... He was charged with advocating certain opinions supposed to be dangerous."

These included the viewpoints: "that the magistrate ought not to punish offences against the First Table [of God's Law]; that an oath ought not to be tendered to an unregenerate man; [and] that a regenerate man ought not to pray with the unregenerate, though it be his wife or child....

"He [Roger Williams] was immersed by Ezekiel Hollyman -- and, in turn, immersed Hollyman and ten others. This was the first Baptist church on the American Continent [in 1639]. But a few months afterwards, he renounced his rebaptism -- on the ground that Hollyman was unbaptized [meaning unsubmersed], and therefore unauthorized to administer the rite to him."

Clearly, it never dawned on Roger Williams that nobody had baptized John the baptizer. Yet it was John (and apparently by pouring or sprinkling) who baptized Jesus Christ. And it is the Latter's baptism alone which gives validity to all Christian baptisms.

Incredibly, the doctrinally wayward Roger Williams even pleaded<sup>285</sup> for the complete toleration of Islam, Judaism and Paganism. He read Dutch well; knew of the political concepts of the Dutch Anabaptists; and accordingly rejected the British and American Puritans and their christonomic theocracy.<sup>287</sup> Unfortunately, the Dutch (Ana)Baptistic heresies of Roger Williams have now massively corrupted especially the United States.

As even the Baptist Hulse has indicated,<sup>288</sup> "the Baptist World Alliance has published the statement that in 1975 there were 33,800,000 adherents throughout the world. Over 29,600,000 of these are in North America."

Hulse could and should have added that nearly all of the latter reside in the Southern States (of the U.S.A.). There, Baptists themselves often boast -- there are almost more Baptists than people.

What Hulse indeed has added,<sup>289</sup> is that "the statistics might represent nominal Baptists only -- that is, people who have little if any religious conviction but when asked what religion they profess will say 'Baptist.' This is especially so in areas where there is little cost to discipleship.... In some areas, such as the Southern States of America, membership may be almost as nominal as

it is in State Churches of other countries. The great majority may have recorded a decision for Christ, but show no evidence of a saving change."

#### **452. British (Ana)Baptist Confessions of the seventeenth century**

Very clearly, the Pro-Mennonite Leonard Verduin was quite wrong in regarding the Anabaptists as the Reformer's stepchildren. The truth is, the Anabaptists were the Romanists' stepchildren --and even more heretical. Yet Baptists like Torbet and Hulse have nevertheless regarded the Anabaptists as the ancestors of the Baptists. This implies that the Baptists are the 'stepchildren' of the Anabaptists -- and therefore also the 'great-stepchildren' of the mediaeval Romanists.

The Baptist Estep has alleged<sup>290</sup> that "baptism by immersion was inaugurated by 1641" -- and thus no more than several years prior thereto. He should have conceded that these so-called immersions were not at all then being "inaugurated" -- but were merely a restoration of the mediaeval submersions of baptismally regenerationistic Romanism.

In July 1643, the National Assembly of infant-sprinkling British Puritans had convened at Westminster. Swiftly the (Ana)Baptists reacted. Arising out of their disputation against the leading Anglican Puritan Rev. Dr. Daniel Featley, they quickly produced their 1644 *Confession of the Seven Churches of London*.<sup>291</sup>

Thus they issued their *Confession of Faith of those churches which are commonly...called 'Anabaptist'*.<sup>292</sup> This alleged a single submersion to be the only valid form of baptism. Therein, it alleged that the candidate's total submersion (alias dunking or dipping under the water) -- is indeed necessary.

It was, of course, intended purely as an approximate declaration of faith. For it possessed no binding power over British Anabaptists in general -- and not even over those seven submersing congregationalistic congregations in London which framed that document.

Nevertheless, after almost a century of absence from England, the (Ana)Baptists had now returned there in increasing strength. This is evident from the title of Featley's memorable 1645 work *The Dippers Dipped -- or the Anabaptists ducked and plunged, over head and ears, at a disputation in Southwark*.

There Featley explained Featley: "This fire in the reigns of Queen Elizabeth, King James, and our gracious sovereign [Charles I] -- till now was covered in England under the ashes.... But of late...this sect hath rebaptized hundreds of men and women together in the twilight -- in rivulets and some arms of the Thames.... They boast of their great draught of fish...; the Anabaptists, of forty-seven churches."

Many of those British (Ana)Baptists were premillennialists and vegetarians. After the production of the sacramental portions of the British Puritans' *Westminster Confession*, the *London Baptists' Confession* was published again in 1646. This time, however, it appeared with



several additions and alterations.

Held this (Ana)Baptist Confession: "Baptism is an Ordinance of the New Testament...to be dispensed only upon persons professing faith.... The way and manner of the dispensing of this ordinance, the Scripture holds out to be dipping or plunging the whole body under water.... The word *baptizo*, signifying to dip under water -- yet so as with convenient garments both upon the administrator and subject, with all modesty."<sup>293</sup>

#### **453. Anti-Anabaptist background of Britain's Westminster Assembly**

Rev. Professor Dr. Mitchell of St. Andrews University is the great authority on the theology and literature of the Westminster period. He has demonstrated quite conclusively<sup>294</sup> that the order followed by the Westminster divines in their *Westminster Confession of Faith*, is that of the *Irish Articles*.

By 1643, the influence of Calvin was dominant throughout the British Isles. By the latter phrase, is meant: England, Wales, Ireland, Scotland, Cornwall, Cumbria, the Isle of Man, and the Channel Islands.

Britain was already exporting Calvinism -- to Holland, Ireland, North America, and elsewhere. Indeed, also from Continental Europe -- the ongoing influence of Post-Calvinian Calvinism very much further strengthened the already strong native Calvinism of Great Britain herself.

For not just the 1615 *Irish Articles* but also the 1618f Synod of Dordt and its 'T-U-L-I-P' *Decrees* (alias the 'Five Points of Calvinism') had a massive influence on the 1643f Westminster Assembly. Mercifully, Britain in general and the 1643f Westminster Assembly in particular was steered away from heterodox Continental Anabaptism. Indeed, even the belated 'English Baptists' from 1611 onward -- remained only on the fringes of Anabaptism and were then much influenced by British Puritanism.

As Schenck remarks<sup>295</sup> in his book *The Presbyterian Doctrine of Children in the Covenant*: "The whole series of Reformed Confessions, as well as the best Reformed theologians, were drawn upon to aid in the task of the Westminster Assembly. There was such interaction between the Continent, Scotland and England in the scholastic maturing of Reformed thought -- that little room was left for the question of relative dependence....

"The theology of the Westminster Standards -- the *Confession of Faith*, the *Larger* and *Shorter Catechisms* -- was Calvinistic. For, by 1643, the influence of Calvin was dominant -- both in England and in Scotland."<sup>296</sup>

Rev. Professor Dr. B.B. Warfield adds that Westminster's work was done in the light of the whole body of Reformed thought. Rev. Professor Dr. Mitchell insists that Westminster imposes no other 'Calvinistic' doctrines than those explicitly or implicitly in the earliest *Confession* drawn up for the English Reformed Church at Geneva, which Knox pastored and which was adopted at the very beginning of the Scottish Reformation. Indeed, even the 'New School Presbyterian'

leader Rev. Professor Dr. Henry Boynton Smith declared that there is nothing in the *Westminster Standards* not to be found expressly set forth in the writings of Calvin.<sup>297</sup>

Let us now first note some of the leading theologians at Westminster, and their views on infant faith. Then let us see how certain key texts of Holy Scripture on faith and baptism are understood in the *Westminster Standards*. Then let us systematically look at the *Westminster Standards* themselves on this same subject.

#### **454. Anti-Anabaptist views of the individual Westminster divines**

Of the 113 major delegates to the Westminster Assembly, we ourselves know of none who questioned infant baptism. Nor do we know of any who doubted the holiness of covenant children *before* their infant baptism!

Westminster delegates included the famous Robert Baillie, William Bridge, Anthony and Cornelius Burgess, Jeremiah Burroughs, Edmund Calamy, Joseph Caryl, Thomas Coleman, Thomas Gataker, and George Gillespie. They also included Thomas Goodwin, William Gouge, William Greenhill, Alexander Henderson, Joshua Hoyle, John Lightfoot, Stephen Marshall, Philip Nye, Edward Reynolds, Lazarus Seaman, William Spurstow, and William Twisse.<sup>298</sup>

Also the famous and godly Episcopalian Puritans John Lightfoot and John Selden frequently attended the Westminster Assembly. In addition, the renowned James Ussher, author of the celebrated *Irish Articles*, was a delegate (and thus truly the veritable 'father' of Westminster) -- though not known to have attended the Assembly itself. Similarly, the eminent John Wallis -- author of the book *A Defence of Infant Baptism* -- was chosen to be one of the Secretaries of the Westminster Assembly (though not actually a Member of it).

We have already noted the influence of the Synod of Dordt's spokesman Rev. Dr. Festus Hommius on the Westminster divine Rev. Dr. George Gillespie.<sup>299</sup> We have also referred to the great Utrecht Professor Rev. Dr. Voetius's agreement with the 'infant faith' views of Westminster's Rev. Dr. Cornelius Burgess.<sup>300</sup> We have further adverted to the friendship between Rev. Dr. James Alting, later Professor in Groningen, and the Westminster theologians Rev. Dr. Reynolds and the Assembly's Moderator Rev. Dr. Twisse.<sup>301</sup> Let us now look at the 'infant faith' views of some of these Westminster theologians themselves.

#### **455. Anti-Anabaptist views of Westminster's Cornelius Burgess**

Already in 1629, Rev. Dr. Cornelius Burgess had written his famous work on *The Regeneration of Elect Infants [as] Professed by the Church of England*. Burgess was a leading 'Presbyterian' in the 'Church of England' (and the later Prolocutor of the Westminster Assembly itself).

There, he condemned the views of those who "advance baptism too high" -- as well as the views of those who "depress it as much too low." While rightly insisting that all of God's elect should be baptized, he also insisted that they will still unquestionably be saved -- even if dying

unbaptized, whether as infants, or as adults.

The principal point handled in that work, is "that all elect infants...do ordinarily receive from Christ...the Spirit of regeneration as the...first principle of spiritual life." This they receive, "for their solemn initiation into Christ, and for their future actual renovation in God's good time -- if they live to years of discretion."<sup>302</sup>

Regarding baptism, Burgess explained:<sup>303</sup> "Some admit [or profess] the efficacy of it unto remission of sin in infants elect. But any present [*viz.* pre-baptismal] work of the Spirit unto regeneration in them [the infants], they either flatly deny or refuse to acknowledge. Against all these errors, and particularly the last, the Church of England hath justly opposed herself in her public doctrine.... The things on all hands agreed upon, are these.... Some infants may and do receive the Spirit, to unite them unto Christ **before** baptism....

"All elect infants do ordinarily...receive the Spirit of Christ...as the root and first principle of regeneration.... I speak...with reference only unto such infants as die **not** in infancy.... As for the rest of the elect who die infants, I will not deny a...work sometimes...**before baptism**, to fit them for heaven." As Warfield rightly observed: "The relation of this sentence to the statement in the [Assembly's] *Westminster Confession* [10:3], is obvious." (See his *Two Studies in the History of Doctrine*, Christian Literature Co., New York, p. 216.)

According to the great Voetius,<sup>304</sup> "the opinion of this author -- Cornelius Burgess, *Tractatus de baptismati regeneratione electorum infantium*, Oxford 1629 -- pleases me.... He insists that in the elect and covenanted infants, there is room for the initial regeneration of the Holy Spirit, by which is impressed the beginning and seed of actual conversion or renovation -- which is to follow, in its own time."

Burgess also preached<sup>305</sup> a famous sermon to England's House of Commons on Jeremiah 1:5 (the text where God told that prophet: 'before you came forth from the womb, I sanctified you'). The *Minutes of the Sessions of the Westminster Assembly* show that Burgess led in the debates and processes of that Assembly. He helped draw up the wording of the *Westminster Directory for the Publick Worship of God* (with its statement that covenant children "are **Christians** and federally **holy before baptism**"). Indeed, the revision and editing and preparing of the final manuscript of the *Westminster Standards* -- were all entrusted to him.

As Rev. Robert Benn Vincent of Alexandria (La.) wrote in his own study on *The Efficacy of Baptism in the Westminster Confession of Faith*:<sup>306</sup> "Burgess affords a wonderful opportunity for ascertaining the full meaning of the efficacy of baptism in the *Confession*.... His work was directed specifically to the question of the efficacy of baptism. It shows Burgess's vast knowledge of a wide spectrum of Reformed theologians....

"Burgess was one of the most influential members of the Assembly.... Burgess served throughout the Assembly as one of its two Assessors 'to take the place of the Prolocutor' [or Moderator] -- in the event of his absence or illness. In view of the declining health of [the Prolocutor] Dr. Twisse, these positions proved to be of great importance."

Another Westminster divine, Rev. Dr. "Robert Baillie, comments...that 'Dr. Burgess, a very active and sharp man, supplies -- so far as is decent -- the Prolocutor's place'.... Burgess was Chairman of the First Committee (of the three major Committees which drafted the *Confession*).... When the work of the Assembly on the *Confession of Faith* was finished, Burgess was given the task of transcribing it....

"Rogers concludes [in his *Scripture in the Westminster Confession* that] 'Dr. Burgess, an Assessor of the Assembly, transcribed the whole of the *Confession* and, in doing so, reviewed it with the aid of the Drafting Committee of which he was a Member.... He presented it to the Assembly.... Edward Reynolds is the one person who was a Member of all three [Drafting] Committees.... Next to him in importance, ranks Burgess'.... Burgess also views, in charity, all baptized infants as possessing that which baptism signifies." Brilliantly, he argued: 'but the judgment of charity must have a certain foundation to build upon -- else it is not the judgment of charity, but foolish and sinful credulity void of all judgment!'

#### **456. Anti-Anabaptist views of Westminster's George Gillespie**

The great Rev. Dr. George Gillespie, one of 'the Scottish Presbyterian Commissioners at Westminster, was accustomed approvingly to cite a whole string of Reformed authorities -- Calvin, Bullinger, Beza, Ursinus, Hommius, the *Belgic Confession*, the *Decrees of Dordt*, Pareus, Walaeus and others. Speaking of **infant baptism**, he himself added<sup>307</sup> that "the sacrament is not a converting but a confirming and sealing ordinance..., to seal unto a man that interest in Christ and in the covenant of grace which he **already** hath. The sacraments do not give any grace, but do declare and show what God hath given.

"**Baptism** is intended **only** for the **redeemed** of the Lord." As regards God's people in Biblical times, "the youngest of their infants were baptized.... Washings in the Old Testament...are mentioned. Ezekiel 16:4; First Corinthians 10:2. Thereof infants as well as aged persons were partakers.... I add another text. Ephesians 5:26. There, the Apostle...saith that Christ 'loved the Church'.... Are not the children of the faithful part of this Church which Christ loved?"

Of course they are! For "the Spirit was also poured out from on high, and there is an influence of grace from above -- according to the good pleasure of God's will upon so many as are ordained to eternal life." Also "baptism...is efficacious to all the Members of Christ, young and old, by virtue of the Word of promise and covenant of grace sealed in that sacrament."<sup>308</sup>

#### **457. Anti-Anabaptist views of Westminster's John Lightfoot**

We have already seen in a previous chapter that the famous Episcopalian Puritan Rev. Professor Dr. John Lightfoot was quite convinced that John the baptizer baptized not just penitent Israelites but also their infants. At the Westminster Assembly, Lightfoot later supported the Presbyterians -- especially as regards the presumed prebaptismal regeneratedness of covenant infants. He was a highly respected Theologian; an outstanding Talmudic and Classical Scholar;

and sometime Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge University.

Discussing the action of those who profess Christ in bringing their infants to Jesus, Lightfoot declared:<sup>309</sup> "Their bringing therefore must needs be concluded to be in the name of disciples....

That Christ would so receive them and bless them..., He doth -- and asserteth them for disciples...to whom the kingdom of heaven belonged" even prior to His blessing of them. Indeed, Christ then lays His hands on them precisely "to own [or acknowledge] them as belonging to His Kingdom."

For "those that believe, brought their infants to Christ -- [so] that He might...mark them for His by His blessing.... Christ...favours again that doctrine which He had laid down. Matthew 18.... The infants of believers were as much disciples and partakers of the kingdom of heaven as their parents."

#### **458. Anti-Anabaptist views of Westminster's Stephen Marshall**

The Westminster divine Rev. Dr. Stephen Marshall made many similar statements. He was a famous English Presbyterian commissioned by his Parliament to go and meet the Scots and persuade some of them to attend the Westminster Assembly.

Reference is made especially to Marshall's 1644 *Sermon on the Baptizing of Infants*, preached at Westminster Abbey Church. There, he stated concerning covenant babies<sup>310</sup> that "ever since God gathered a...select number out of the world to be His kingdom..., He would have the infants of all who are taken into covenant with Him to be accounted His -- to belong to Him...and not to the devils....

"He having left all the rest of the world to be visibly the devil's kingdom, will not for His own glory's sake permit the devils to come and lay visible claim to the sons and daughters begotten by those who are the children of the most High.... The covenant be the same.... Children belong to it.... They are to be owned [or acknowledged] as Covenanters, and to be admitted to the distinguishing or discriminating sign betwixt God's people and the devils.... So long as any person is visibly a Member of the Kingdom of Christ, we have no cause to doubt their election and salvation, until they visibly show the contrary....

"God made the covenant with Abraham, and promised for His part to be the God of him and his seed.... We, as Abraham, are tied...to instruct our children and bring them up for God -- and not for ourselves nor for the devil.... If it be said they are not capable of being disciples -- I answer: 'Even as capable as the infants of Jews and proselytes were, when they were made disciples'.... To belong to Christ, and to be a disciple of Christ, or to bear the Name of Christ -- is all one.... Such infants do belong to Christ, and bear the Name of Christ....

"To whom the inward grace of baptism doth belong, to them belongs the outward sign. They ought to have the sign who have the thing signified.... The infants of believers, even while they are infants, are made partakers of the inward grace of baptism.... Therefore they may and ought to receive the outward sign of baptism....

"That the infants of believers even while they are infants do receive the inward grace as well as grown men -- is...plain...by that speech of the Apostle who says they are holy." First Corinthians 7:14. Our Saviour says expressly, Mark 10:14, that to such belongs the Kingdom of God....

"In the working of that inward grace of which baptism is the sign and seal, all who partake of that grace are but mere patients and contribute no more to it than a child doth to its own begetting.... Therefore infants as fit subjects to have it wrought in them...are in on more fitness to receive this grace when it is given them, in respect either of any faith or repentance which they yet have....

"It being the primary intention of the covenant of grace...to show what free grace can and will do to miserable nothing -- to cut miserable man off from the wild olive and graft him into the true olive; to take away the heart of stone; to create in them a heart of flesh; to forgive their iniquities; to love them freely -- what does the most grown man in any of these, more than an infant may do?

"Being only passive in them all..., of this first grace is the sacrament of baptism properly a seal.... Who ever will deny that infants are capable of these things, as well as grown men -- must deny that any infants dying in their infancy are saved by Christ."

#### **459. Marshall on Mark 16:16 and infant faith**

Referring to Mark 16:16 -- 'he that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned' --against the (Ana)Baptists Marshall would "frame their own argument thus, against the salvation of infants. 'All unbelievers shall be damned; all infants are unbelievers; therefore, they shall be damned'....

"If they say this text is meant of grown men, of the way which God takes for the salvation of grown men, [and that] infants are saved another way, upon other conditions -- the same say we of infant baptism. The text means of the condition of baptizing of grown men. Infants are baptized upon other conditions.

"If they say infants, though they cannot have actual faith, they may have virtual faith, faith in the seed and root -- the same say we. If they say, though infants have not faith, yet they may have that which is analogous to faith -- the same say we. They have somewhat which has analogy to faith -- and as effectual to make them capable of baptism as of salvation.

"Infants may be born again, while they are infants.... Infants have their original sin pardoned; be united to Christ; have His image stamped upon them.... Concerning the exercise of these graces and the augmentation of them in infants..., infants are capable of the [confirmatory] grace of baptism. We are sure."

The above sermon was addressed by Marshall to the Commissioners from Scotland, and also to the rest of the Westminster Assembly at the time it was actually in session. From the Assembly's *Minutes*, one reads of how Marshall presented his book to it (after dedicating the book to the Commissioners). The Assembly's formal motion that Marshall be congratulated, was carried -- and the Prolocutor accordingly thanked him.<sup>311</sup>

#### **460. Anti-Anabaptist views of Westminster's Edward Reynolds**

The Westminster divine Rev. Dr. Edward Reynolds -- a friend of Rev. Professor Dr. James Alting -- was the Puritan Anglican Bishop of Norwich. He swore allegiance to the *Solemn League and Covenant* in 1644. According to Rev. Prof. Dr. Jack B. Rogers in his book *Scripture in the Westminster Confession*,<sup>312</sup> Reynolds was the most important single member of the Westminster Assembly.

Reynolds served on the 'Committee of Twenty-Two' which examined Ministers presented by the Parishes. He was -- together with Burgess, Harris, Herle, Hoyle, Gataker and Temple -- one of the seven chief authors of the *Westminster Confession*. Indeed, he was the only person who was a member of all three major Drafting Committees which worked on the preparation of the *Confession*.

More than anybody else, it was probably Reynolds who drafted chapters 27 and 28 (of the *Confession*) on the subject of baptism. Indeed, even earlier, Reynolds himself had already written:<sup>313</sup> "The promises and Word of grace, with the sacraments, are all but as so many sealed deeds to make over into all successions of the Church -- so long as they contain legitimate children and observe the laws of their part required --an infallible claim and title....

"The nature of a sacrament is to be representative of a substance; the sign of a covenant; the seal of a purchase; the figure of a body; the witness of our faith; the earnest of our hope; the presence of things distant; the sight of things absent; the taste of things inconceivable; and the knowledge of thing that are past knowledge."

#### **461. Anti-Anabaptist views of Westminster's Samuel Rutherford**

Then there is perhaps the best-known Westminster Assembly's Member of all. We refer to the unforgettable University of St. Andrews Professor -- Rev. Dr. Samuel Rutherford (of *Lex Rex* fame).

Explained Rutherford:<sup>314</sup> "Children must have, from their being born of believing parents, under the New Testament, some covenant privileges.... It is mercy to be born in Zion. Psalm 87:3-6 & Malachi 1:18.... What holiness is it that is called 'federal' or 'covenant' holiness, when it is in infants? Cf. First Corinthians 7:14.

"It is...holiness of the seed.... The faith required of these to be baptized, Acts 8:37 and Mark 16:16, is real saving faith.... Only these, whether old or young, that are *tali modo visibili federati* -- 'such as...visibly in covenant' and called (cf. Acts 2:39) -- are warrantably baptized....

For they cannot be baptized against their will, Luke 7:29-30.... Anabaptists prove no salvation...for the saving of the infants born of believing parents -- more than for the saving of Pagans and their infants."

Further: "Infants born of covenanted parents, are in covenant with God because they are born of such parents as are in covenant with God. Genesis 17:7.... Positive favours are bestowed on infants.... Christ laid His hands on them and blessed them, making them a fixed copy of the indwellers of His Kingdom... They are clean and holy, by covenant holiness....

"Who they are, who are to be baptized -- it is presumed they give some professed consent to the call.... What ground is there to exclude sucking children? For...there is no Name under heaven by which men [alias human beings] may be saved, but by the Name of Jesus....

"Since Christ prayed for infants and blessed them -- which is a praying for them -- He must own [or acknowledge] them as 'blessed' in Christ in Whom all the nations of the earth are blessed.... It is false that the promise is made only to the aged... It is made to their children [too].... For the way of their **believing** -- we leave it to the Lord."<sup>315</sup>

#### **462. Anti-Anabaptist views of Westminster's William Twisse**

We must also refer to the ailing Moderator of the Westminster Assembly itself. We mean, of course, the pious Prolocutor --Rev. Dr. William Twisse -- the good friend of the renowned presumptive prebaptismal infant regenerationist Rev. Professor Dr. James Alting of Groningen University.

Twisse turned down a Professorship in Theology at Franeker in Friesland. He preferred to be Chaplain to Princess Elisabeth, the daughter of King James himself. To Elisabeth, Twisse expounded John 3:5, on the universal necessity of regeneration --and First Peter 2:2, on the need for even new-born babies to grow in grace."<sup>316</sup>

#### **463. Anti-Anabaptist views of Westminster's James Ussher**

To the above, we should also add the name of the Puritan Archbishop James Ussher of Dublin. Regius Professor of Divinity at Trinity College in 1607, it was he who had launched the 1615 Calvinistic *Irish Articles*. According to Rev. Professor Dr. B.B. Warfield<sup>317</sup> and others, it is especially Ussher's *Irish Articles* which served as the model for the *Westminster Confession* itself. In many cases, the latter follows the very wording of the former.

Ussher became the Episcopalian Archbishop of Armagh, for the Church of Ireland, in 1625. A friend of Rev. Professor Dr. Samuel Rutherford for whom he once preached, Ussher was invited to be one of the Commissioners at the Westminster Assembly. Undoubtedly, he was indeed its real father.

James Ussher himself stated<sup>318</sup> that "touching the children of Christians, we are taught and account them holy. First Corinthians 7:14.... Sacraments are seals of the promise of God in



Christ...wherein by certain outward signs...Christ...is signified, conveyed and sealed unto the heart of a Christian...to instruct, assure and possess us of our part in Christ... The sin of Adam is imputed to children.... Even so the righteousness of Christ may be, and is -- by God's secret and unknown way -- to elect infants....

"Baptism to every elect infant is a seal of the righteousness of Christ, to be extraordinarily applied by the Holy Ghost -- if it die in its infancy.... Infants baptized...are born in the Church.... Baptism is effectual in infants...and to all those that belong unto the election of grace.... We in the judgment of charity do judge [thus] of every particular infant" so born in the covenant.

"Infants are not capable of the grace of the sacrament by that way whereby the grown are.... Yet it follows not that infants are not capable in and by another way.... It is the application of Christ's righteousness that justifies us, not our apprehending it. God can supply the defect of faith by His sanctifying Spirit Who can do all things on our part which faith should do....

"We have no reason to think but that even before...the act of baptism, the Spirit of Christ does unite the soul of the elect infant to Christ and clothe it with His righteousness and impute unto it the title of a son or daughter by adoption and the image of God by sanctification, and so fit it for the state of glory.... Infants elect have Christ and all His benefits sealed up unto them, in the sacrament of baptism."

#### **464. Anti-Anabaptist views of Westminster's John Wallis**

Also Rev. John Wallis was an eminent divine chosen to be one of the secretaries of the Westminster Assembly (though not actually a Member of it). He wrote on the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*. He also authored a very relevant book called *A Defence of Infant Baptism*.

In the latter, he showed<sup>319</sup> that "we have no reason to doubt but many children very early, and even before their birth, may have the habits of grace infused into them -- by which they are saved.... For as the habits of corruption, which we call Original Sin, by propagation -- so may the habits of grace, by infusion, be inherent in the soul long before (for want of the use of reason) we are in capacity to act."

#### **465. Old Testament passages on baptism cited in the Westminster Standards**

Let us now look at the *Westminster Standards* themselves. They naturally reflect the above baptismal views known to have been held by the above-mentioned Westminster divines Burgess, Gillespie, Lightfoot, Marshall, Reynolds, Rutherford, Twisse, Ussher and Wallis -- and others.

First, we note Westminster's use of the relevant passages of Holy Scripture. What do they teach on the subject of infant faith in covenant children?

Genesis 3:15 describes the solidarity between the serpent-hating woman and her seed. The *Westminster Confession of Faith* refers to that text to show that "the Visible Church...consists of

all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children."<sup>320</sup>

Genesis 17:7-14 discusses God's instituting of the sacrament of initiation for believers and their children. The *Confession* explains<sup>321</sup> this shows that "the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized."

Exodus 4:24-26 describes Moses' one-time non-administration of the sacrament of infant circumcision (as the forerunner of baptism). Here, the *Confession* insists<sup>322</sup> "it be a great sin to condemn or neglect this ordinance."

Ezekiel 16:20f refers to tiny babies slaughtered by their own hypocritical covenant parents. It records that God Himself nevertheless calls those infants "My children." The *Confession* cites this passage to show that "the Visible Church consists of those who profess the true religion, together with their children."<sup>323</sup>

#### **466. Passages on baptism in the Gospels cited in the Westminster Standards**

Coming to the New Testament, the *Confession* states that neither unbelievers nor their infants should be baptized. It teaches that only "the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized."<sup>324</sup> Indeed, in Luke 7:30, we are told the Pharisees rejected the counsel of God -- in not being baptized by John. To the Westminster divines, this shows "it be a great sin to condemn or neglect this ordinance."<sup>325</sup>

In John 3:5-8, Jesus Himself insists no human being can enter or even see the Kingdom of God -- until he or she has been born again by the Holy Ghost. The *Westminster Confession*<sup>326</sup> quotes this passage to prove that "elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated...through the Spirit." The *Confession* also cites it to show that "the efficacy of baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered."

The *Westminster Standards* repeatedly refer to the incident of Jesus blessing very young covenant children -- in Mark 10:13f and Luke 18:15f. The *Standards* cite this action of His, to prove that "elect infants, dying in infancy, are...saved by Christ." They also quote it to show that infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized.<sup>327</sup>

The *Standards* also refer to the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19. This is cited to prove that baptism contains a promise of benefit to worthy receivers<sup>328</sup> -- and to prove that (infant) baptism seals and signifies substantially the same spiritual things as did (infant) circumcision.<sup>329</sup> It is also quoted to show that the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized.<sup>330</sup> For such infants already possess an interest in the covenant of grace -- among the baptized nations (not one of which is devoid of very many infants).

#### **467. Passages on baptism in the Acts cited in the Westminster Standards**

In Acts 2:36-39, Peter assures the men of "all the house of Israel" that the promise of salvation was for them and their children. This is quoted in the *Confession* to prove that "elect

infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit." It is also cited to demonstrate that the Visible Church consists of those that profess Christ, together with their children.<sup>331</sup> Indeed, it is further quoted to show that such infants are to be baptized.<sup>332</sup>

This passage is cited also in the *Larger Catechism*. There, it is given as a proof that baptism seals those who are within the covenant of grace<sup>333</sup> -- and that it is to be administered even to infants.<sup>334</sup>

In Acts 8:13f, we learn that the heart of Simon the magician was still not right with God -- even after his reception of baptism. Significantly, the *Westminster Confession* cites this passage when denying<sup>335</sup> "that all that are baptized --are undoubtedly regenerated."

The *Larger Catechism* does the same.<sup>336</sup> It does so to prove that "the sacraments become effectual means [not of justification but] of salvation [alias preservation] -- not by any power in themselves...but only by the working of the Holy Ghost." There is no *opus operatum* in baptism.

The passage Acts 8:36-38, on the baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch, is twice referred to in the *Westminster Standards*. It is quoted there, to prove that those who actually profess faith in Christ are to be baptized. It is also cited there, to show that baptism is not to be administered to any who are outside of the Visible Church till they so profess their Christian Faith.<sup>337</sup> Consequently, it clearly regards covenant children as being inside the Church even before their baptism.

The *Standards* also refer to the baptism of the family of Cornelius. He was called both righteous and faithful, even before his baptism. To Westminster, this shows -- about baptism -- that "grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it."<sup>338</sup>

#### **468. Passages on baptism in Romans cited in the Westminster Standards**

The *Westminster Standards* repeatedly cite Romans 4:11f. That verse describes circumcision as the sign and seal of the righteousness by grace and through faith which Abraham received before being circumcised. The *Confession* quotes this verse to prove: that sacraments are signs and seals of the covenant of grace;<sup>339</sup> that infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized;<sup>340</sup> and that it is not so, that nobody can be saved without baptism.<sup>341</sup>

The same passage Romans 4:11 is also quoted by the *Larger Catechism*. There, it shows: that sacraments are instituted by Christ, and that they seal all other graces;<sup>342</sup> that children of professing parents should themselves be baptized;<sup>343</sup> that all other blessings are sealed to us in baptism;<sup>344</sup> and that baptism seals the covenant.<sup>345</sup>

Romans 6:1-5 declares that believers have been buried and resurrected with Christ in baptism, and are to keep on walking in newness of life. Time and again do the *Westminster Standards* refer to this passage.

They cite it to prove that baptism solemnly engages its recipients to serve God.<sup>346</sup> For it seals Christians and ingrafts them<sup>347</sup> into Christ's body, and gives them an incentive to keep on walking in newness of life.<sup>348</sup> It obliges them to keep on obeying Christ.<sup>349</sup> Indeed, it seals their adoption and resurrection unto everlasting life.<sup>350</sup>

Westminster also cites this passage yet further. It does so, to prove that we have a post-baptismal and a life-long duty of "improving our baptism"<sup>351</sup> -- especially in times of temptation and when we witness baptism being administered to others.<sup>352</sup>

It is also quoted to urge baptized Christians to draw strength from Christ's death and resurrection. This is for the mortification of their own sin, and for the quickening of the grace they have previously received. It is also designed to encourage them to keep on walking in holiness and righteousness.<sup>353</sup>

Romans 8:9 declares that "if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not one of His." This passage is rightly cited in the *Confession* to prove that "elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit."<sup>354</sup>

Romans 11:16f teaches, regarding the covenant people, that the branches really are holy -- as long as the root is. This is quoted in the *Westminster Standards* to show that the Visible Church includes those who profess the true religion, together with their children.<sup>355</sup> It is cited to prove that the children of believers are themselves to be baptized.<sup>356</sup> Indeed, it is also quoted to demonstrate that visible churches are made up of visible saints together with their children.<sup>357</sup>

In Romans 15:8, Paul stated that "Jesus Christ became a Minister of the circumcision on behalf of the truth of God -- unto the confirmation of the promises made to the fathers." The *Westminster Standards* cite this passage to prove that God instituted the sacraments to put a visible difference between church members and the rest of the world.<sup>358</sup> They also quote it to show that the benefits of Christ's mediation are sealed to those who are within the covenant of grace.<sup>359</sup>

#### **469. Passages on baptism in First Corinthians cited in the Westminster Standards**

First Corinthians 7:14 clearly teaches that the infant children of at least one believing parent "are holy" already, and apparently even from their very conception onward -- and not that they are unholy, but (hopefully) might yet become holy. The *Westminster Confession* cites this important passage to prove that "the Visible Church...consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children."<sup>360</sup> It also refers to the passage -- to demonstrate that "the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized."<sup>361</sup>

The passage is cited also in the *Larger Catechism* -- to prove that "infants descending from parents, either both or but one of them professing faith in Christ and obedience to Him, are...within the covenant and to be baptized."<sup>362</sup> Indeed, that *Catechism* again refers to it to show that "baptism is to be administered but once with water, to be a sign and seal of our regeneration and ingrafting into Christ -- and that, even to infants."<sup>363</sup>

First Corinthians 12:13 reminds Christians they have all been baptized and drenched with the same Spirit. This important text is cited no less than ten times in the *Westminster Standards*. In the *Confession*, it is quoted to show: that the true religion is professed by baptism; that the efficacy of the sacrament depends upon the work of the Spirit; and that it is intended for the solemn admission of the party baptized into the Visible Church.<sup>364</sup>

In the *Larger Catechism*, the same text is cited to prove that the Visible Church is made up of those who profess the true religion, and of their children. It further demonstrates that Christ's Spirit alone gives power to the sacrament. It is also cited: to spur Christians unto love and communion with one another; to show that the parties baptized are thereby solemnly admitted into the Visible Church; and to remind them that they have all been baptized by the same Spirit into one body.<sup>365</sup>

The same text is cited in the *Shorter Catechism*, to refer to the working of the Spirit in those who by faith receive the sacraments.<sup>366</sup> Indeed, in the *Westminster Form of Presbyterial Church Government* -- it is further quoted to prove that "there is one general Church Visible held forth in the New Testament."<sup>367</sup>

#### **470. Passages on baptism in other Epistles cited in the Westminster Standards**

Galatians 3:27 states that all who have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. This verse is repeatedly cited by the *Westminster Standards*. They do so to prove: that baptism is a seal of one's ingrafting into Christ and all other graces; that baptism solemnly admits into the Visible Church; that it encourages one to live by faith; and that it is a sign and seal of regeneration even to infants.<sup>368</sup>

In Ephesians 6:1-4, Christian parents are not enjoined to bring their children into Christianity -- but rather to raise them within the Visible Church. For Christian parents are to raise their children "in the teaching and nurture of the Lord." Thus, the children of believers are already "in" or within the covenant -- even from their conception till their birth, and beyond.

Such children -- in the memorable words of the *Westminster Directory for the Publick Worship of God*<sup>369</sup> -- "by baptism are solemnly received into the bosom of the Visible Church, [and] distinguished from the world and them that are without" alias outside of the covenant of grace. For "they are Christians and federally holy before baptism, and therefore are they baptized."

Consequently, it is as "Christians" that such covenant infants are to be baptized. And it is still as Christians that, after baptism, those same covenant infants are to be raised and admonished in the nurture of the Lord. Ephesians 6:1-4.

Colossians 2:11-13 teaches that [infant] baptism has now replaced [infant] circumcision. The *Westminster Confession*<sup>370</sup> cites this passage to prove that baptism is a seal of regeneration. It also quotes the passage to show that grace really is exhibited therein -- and conferred by the Holy Ghost to His elect in God's appointed time. The *Larger Catechism* quotes it to establish that

children of believers are to be baptized. It also cites it to show that baptism is a seal of God's covenant -- and that we are to improve our own baptism life-long.<sup>371</sup>

First Peter 3:21 refers to the 'baptism' of Noah and his whole family inside the ark. The *Westminster Confession*<sup>372</sup> cites this passage to prove that the efficacy of a sacrament does not depend upon the piety or intention of him that administers it. The *Larger Catechism* quotes it<sup>373</sup> to establish: that the sacrament was instituted by Christ's Spirit; that inward and spiritual grace is thereby signified; and that blessings are sealed to us in that sacrament.

The same text is cited by the *Standards*<sup>374</sup> also to show that "the sacraments become effectual means [not of justification but] of salvation" alias preservation. Indeed, even this is there said to occur -- "not by any power in [the sacraments] themselves...but only by the working of the Holy Ghost."

First John 5:12 states that "he who has the Son, has life." This is the case also with all elect infants who die before their birth. Consequently, they are justified before their infant deaths -- and often without ever being baptized.

Thus both regeneration and faith always precede baptism -- in the case of fetally-dying elect infants, and also where elect infants die unbaptized (notably within a week after their births as per Genesis 17:12f). Accordingly, the *Confession*<sup>375</sup> cites this text to show that "elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit."

Also Revelation 1:5 declares that Christ "washed us from our sins in His own blood." This text is cited in the *Westminster Larger Catechism*<sup>376</sup> to prove that baptism is a sign and seal of the remission of sins solely by the blood of Christ.

#### **471. The Westminster Directory opposes romanizing baptismal regenerationism**

The Westminster Assembly's *Directory for the Publick Worship of God* was adopted by the Presbyterian General Assembly of the [Reformed] Church of Scotland on February 3rd 1645. It commends<sup>377</sup> "the blessed Reformation" -- and opposes "the Liturgy used in the Church of England" which had so comforted the "Papists" that they were "not a little confirmed in their superstition and idolatry, expecting rather our return to them than endeavouring the reformation of themselves." Consequently, because "God...at this time calleth upon us for further reformation..., we have...resolved to lay aside the former Liturgy...and have agreed upon this following *Directory* for all the parts of publick worship....

"Baptism...is not...to be administered in private places or privately..., and not in the places where fonts in the time of Popery were unfitly and superstitiously placed.... [Covenant] children...are Christians, and federally holy before baptism.... The inward grace and virtue of baptism is not tied to that very moment of time wherein it is administered.... The fruit and power thereof reacheth to the whole course of our life.... Outward baptism is not so necessary that, through the want thereof, the infant is in danger of damnation."

"After reading of the Word..., the Minister who is to preach is...to pray...for the conversion of the Jews, the fulness of the Gentiles, the fall of antichrist, and the hastening of the second coming of our Lord; for the deliverance of the distressed churches abroad from the tyranny of the [Romish] antichristian faction, and from the cruel oppressions and blasphemies of the [Islamic] Turk."

Without question, the baptismal passages of the *Westminster Directory* are strongly directed against Romanism. However, they are directed also against Anabaptism -- and with even greater strength.

#### **472. Anti-Anabaptism in the Westminster Directory for Worship**

For we also read<sup>377</sup> in the *Westminster Directory* that "the child to be baptized...is to be presented...by the father" -- who must obviously be a professing Christian. For, "in case of his [the father's] necessary absence," the child is alternatively to be presented "by some Christian friend [such as the wife] in his place -- professing his [the father's or the mother's own] earnest desire that the child may be baptized." Acts 8:36f & First Corinthians 7:14.

The *Directory* continues: "Before baptism the Minister is to use some words of instruction...touching the institution...of this sacrament, shewing that...it is a seal of the covenant of grace, of our ingrafting into Christ and of our union with Him; [and] of remission of sins, regeneration, adoption, and life eternal.... Baptizing or sprinkling and washing with water signifieth the cleansing from sin by the blood and for the merit of Christ....

"The promise is made to believers and their seed.... The seed and posterity of the faithful -- born within the Church -- have, by their birth, interest in the covenant, and right to the seal of it..., no less than the children of Abraham in the time of the Old Testament.... The Son of God admitted little children into His presence, embracing and blessing them, saying, 'Of such is the Kingdom of God.'"

Further: "Children by baptism are solemnly received into the bosom of the Visible Church, distinguished from the world and them that are without [or outside], and united with believers.... All who are baptized in the Name of Christ do renounce...the devil, the world and the flesh.... They are **Christians** and federally holy **before baptism**, and **therefore** are they **baptized**."

The Minister "is also to admonish all that are present to look back to their baptism: to repent of their sins against their covenant with God; to stir up their faith; to improve and make right use of their baptism and of the covenant sealed thereby betwixt God and their souls. He is to exhort the parent...to bring up the child in the knowledge of the grounds of the Christian religion and in the nurture and admonition of the Lord....

"He is to baptize the child with water...by pouring or sprinkling of the water on the face of the child.... He is to give thanks and pray...that the Lord would still continue and daily confirm more and more...the infant now baptized.... If he shall be taken out of this life in his infancy, the Lord Who is rich in mercy would be pleased to receive him up into glory."

In debate the previous day, the Westminster Assembly had voted here to exclude 'dipping' as one of the approved modes of baptism -- 'dipping' alongside of the approved "pouring or sprinkling" as above. Thus John Lightfoot's *Journal of the Westminster Assembly*.<sup>378</sup> The debate was not, as Baptists often misstate it, on the meaning of the Greek word *baptizō* -- but on the propriety of baptizing by way of dipping at all.<sup>379</sup> Hence, dipping was rejected and thereby disallowed in British Calvinistic Puritan baptismal practice.

#### **473. The anti-Romish character of the Westminster Confession**

The Calvinistic *Westminster Confession* was completed on December 4th 1646 without proof-texts. The latter were added by April 26th 1647, and the text was approved by the Presbyterian General Assembly of the (Reformed) Church of Scotland on August 27th 1647. Both then and for ever since, it has (beneath the *Supreme Standard* of Holy Scripture) been the *Subordinate Standard* of all Presbyterian Churches everywhere.

It insists that "Popish monastical vows...are superstitious and sinful snares in which no Christian may entangle himself."<sup>380</sup> No way "hath the Pope any power or jurisdiction" over the civil magistrates.<sup>381</sup> "Such as profess the true reformed religion should not marry with infidels, Papists, or other idolaters."<sup>382</sup>

For "there is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor can the Pope of Rome in any sense be head thereof; but is that antichrist, that man of sin and son of perdition that exalteth himself in the church against Christ and all that is called God."<sup>383</sup> Indeed, "the Popish sacrifice of the mass...is most abominably injurious to Christ's one only sacrifice."<sup>384</sup> For "transubstantiation by consecration of a priest or by any other way, is repugnant not to Scripture alone but even to common sense and reason...and is the cause of manifold superstitions -- yea, of gross idolatries."<sup>385</sup>

Specifically as regards the sacrament of initiation, the *Confession* unequivocally rejects<sup>386</sup> the Romish theory of baptismal regenerationism. "The grace which is exhibited in or by the sacraments, rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them.... Romans 2:28f & First Peter 3:21."

Further:<sup>387</sup> "Baptism is a sacrament...[and] a sign and seal of the covenant of grace. Matthew 28:19; Romans 4:11; Colossians 2:11f.... Yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it, or that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated. Romans 4:11; Acts 10:2,4,22,31,45,47 & 8:13,23. The efficacy of baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered. John 3:5-8."

#### **474. The anti-Anabaptist character of the Westminster Confession**

It was hardly necessary for the *Westminster Confession* to condemn the Anabaptists by name. For earlier, it had already condemned their distinctive doctrines of revolutionism,<sup>388</sup> of pseudo-pentecostalism,<sup>389</sup> of opposition to oath-taking,<sup>390</sup> of anarchy,<sup>391</sup> of polygamy,<sup>392</sup> of adultery,<sup>393</sup> and of their communistic redistribution of private property.<sup>394</sup> Thus the *Confession*



had invoked "the power of the civil magistrate" against those who insist on the "publishing of such opinions or maintaining such practices as are contrary to the light of nature or to the known principles of Christianity." Further, it had also insisted that "in matters of weight and moment, an oath...ought to be taken."

It had declared too that God "hath ordained civil magistrates...and...armed them with the power of the sword...for the punishment of evil-doers." It had denied that it is "lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband, at the same time." Indeed, it had also insisted that the communion of the saints does not in any way "infringe the title or property which each man hath in his goods and possessions."

Specifically, the *Confession* now went on rightly to recognize the impropriety of Antipaedobaptism. For it now declared<sup>395</sup> that "sacraments are holy signs and seals of the covenant of grace immediately instituted by God to represent Christ and...to put a visible difference -- between those that belong unto the Church, and the rest of the world. Romans 15:8; Exodus 12:48; Genesis 34:14; Romans 6:3f.... The sacraments of the Old Testament...were, for substance, the same with those of the New. First Corinthians 10:1-4." Consequently, Antipaedobaptism is just as grave a sin as was Anticircumcisionism.

Particularly as regards baptism, the *Confession* insists<sup>396</sup> that it is to be administered precisely "by a Minister of the Gospel, lawfully called thereunto. Matthew 3:11; John 1:33; Matthew 28:19f.... Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary; but baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person. Hebrews 9:10,19-22 & Mark 7:4.... Also the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized. Genesis 17:7f; Galatians 3:9f; Colossians 2:11f; Acts 2:38f; Romans 4:11f; First Corinthians 7:14; Matthew 28:19f; Mark 10:13f; Luke 18:15....

The sacrament of baptism is but once to be administered to any person. Titus 3:5." Consequently, all rebaptisms -- such as most of the 'baptisms' administered by the (Ana)Baptists -- are essentially sinful.

#### **475. Specifically baptism in the *Confession of Faith***

The *Westminster Confession* declares<sup>397</sup> that "elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit. Luke 18:15f; Acts 2:38f; John 3:3-8; First John 5:12."

It also states<sup>398</sup> that "all those that are justified, God vouchsafeth...to make partakers of the grace of adoption. Ephesians 1:5 & Galatians 4:4-5.... They are taken into...the children of God. Romans 8:17 & John 1:12." Accordingly, they "have His Name put upon them. Jeremiah 14:9; Second Corinthians 6:18; Revelation 3:12." For they "receive the Spirit of adoption. Romans 8:15."

Indeed, they "have access to the throne of grace with boldness. Ephesians 3:12." For they "are pitied (like a Father pities His children). Psalm 103:13." Indeed, they are "sealed [un]to the day of redemption. Ephesians 4:30." Consequently -- from the above-mentioned "Name" of God "put" upon them when they were "sealed" -- the rightness also of covenant infants being

baptized as "the children of God" should be obvious.

Certainly also covenant infants are thoroughly capable of exercising a true faith (even if still but an infantile one). As the *Confession* explains,<sup>399</sup> the very "grace of faith whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls -- is the work of the Spirit of Christ in their hearts." It is not the work of their own human spirit, whether infantile or adult.

Now that "grace of faith...is ordinarily wrought by the ministry of the Word" -- such as by Bible reading during daily family worship, as regards even prenatal babies. "By the administration of the sacraments and prayer, it is increased and strengthened" -- and hence not initiated. For the initiation of that "grace of faith" already occurs presacramentally, and therefore prebaptismally.

Both before the fall and after Christ's redemption from the fall, explains the *Confession*,<sup>400</sup> "marriage was ordained...for the increase of mankind...and of the church with a holy seed. Malachi 2:15.... It is the duty of Christians to marry only in the Lord. First Corinthians 7:39. And therefore such as profess the true reformed religion should not marry with infidels, Papists or other idolaters. Genesis 34:14 ('We cannot...give our sister to one that is uncircumcised')."

Nevertheless, the *Confession* also rightly recognizes the validity of 'mixed' marriages between Christians and those of other religions.<sup>401</sup> Consequently, there is a validity and even a holiness in the children even of those believers who are married to unbelievers. First Corinthians 7:14. *A fortiori*, infant baptism was certainly intended also for the babies of mixed paedobaptist and antipaedobaptist Christian parentage.

For, according to the *Confession*,<sup>402</sup> "the catholick or universal Church which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect" -- and "the Visible Church...catholick...consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children.... Unto this catholick visible Church, Christ hath given the ministry, oracles and ordinances of God.... Matthew 28:19f." Clearly, this means that the ordinance of baptism has been given to be administered also to the infant children of God's covenant people.

The *Confession* teaches that, when approved, a baptismal candidate is to be given "admission" and "ingrafting" into "the Visible Church. First Corinthians 12:13; Romans 4:11; Colossians 2:11f; Galatians 3:27; Romans 6:5." It is "to be unto him a sign and seal of the covenant of grace. Romans 4:11 & Colossians 2:11f."<sup>403</sup> This is to be effected by his being "baptized in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost."<sup>404</sup>

Westminster also recognizes that "baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person. Hebrews 9:10-22; Acts 2:41; 16:33; Mark 7:4."<sup>405</sup> The fact that **baptism** is rightly administered by sprinkling -- clearly implies that it is not rightly administered by submersion.

Yet, although baptism is wrongly administered by submersion -- which submersion is therefore baptismally improper -- the *Confession* nevertheless does not regard baptism by submersion as invalid. Indeed, the *Confession* simply states that "dipping of the person into the water is not necessary." Consequently, one baptized by the irregular and wrong method of

submersion should never later be (re)baptized by the regular and right method of sprinkling.

Further:<sup>406</sup> "Not only those that do actually profess faith in and obedience unto Christ, but also the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized. Mark 16:15*f*; Acts 18:37*f*; Genesis 17:7*f*; Galatians 3:9*f*; Colossians 2:11*f*; Acts 2:38*f*; Romans 4:11*f*; First Corinthians 7:14; Matthew 28:19; Mark 10:13*f*; Luke 18:15....

"It be a great sin to contemn or neglect this ordinance. Luke 7:30 & Exodus 4:24*f*. Yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it, or that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated. Romans 4:11; Acts 10:2-47; 8:13-23; John 3:5-8."

#### **476. Baptism in the Westminster Larger Catechism in general**

In the *Larger Catechism*, which was approved by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland on July 2nd 1648, God's Commandments certainly have baptismal implications. Thus, the *Catechism* rightly states that the Second Commandment against image worship requires<sup>407</sup> not only the "preaching and hearing of the Word" but also "the administration and receiving of the sacraments." Significantly, it here cites the baptismal text Matthew 28:19.

The *Larger Catechism* next goes on to state that God's "Third Commandment requires that the...sacraments...be holily and reverently used in thought, meditation, word and writing."<sup>408</sup> Significantly, the Westminster divines at this very point<sup>409</sup> quote from the baptismal passage Hebrews 6:1-6.

The *Westminster Larger Catechism* declares:<sup>410</sup> "The sacraments become effectual means [not of justification but] of salvation [alias preservation] -- not by any power in themselves...but only by the working of the Holy Ghost.... First Peter 3:21; Acts 8:13-23; First Corinthians 3:6*f*....

"A sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ in His Church to signify, seal and exhibit unto those that are within the covenant of grace the benefits of His mediation; to strengthen and increase their faith.... Romans 4:11; 15:8; Exodus 12:48; Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:27."

The *Larger Catechism*<sup>411</sup> rightly defines baptism as "a sacrament of the New Testament wherein Christ hath ordained the washing with water in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost to be a sign and seal of ingrafting into Himself..., whereby the parties baptized are solemnly admitted into the Visible Church. Matthew 28:19; Galatians 3:26*f*; Mark 1:43; Revelation 1:5; Titus 3:5; Ephesians 5:25*f*; First Corinthians 15:29; Romans 6:4*f*; First Corinthians 12:13....

"Infants descending from parents, either both or but one of them professing faith in Christ and obedience to Him, are...to be baptized. Genesis 17:7*f*; Galatians 3:9; Colossians 2:11*f*; Acts 2:38*f*; Romans 4:11*f*; First Corinthians 7:14; Matthew 28:19; Luke 18:15; Romans 11:16."

Now both infant baptism and adult baptism are not to be repeated, but are indeed to be 'improved.' In the words of the *Larger Catechism*,<sup>412</sup> "the needful but much neglected duty of improving our baptism is to be performed by us all our life long -- especially in the time of temptation and when we are present at the administration of it to others." That is to be done "by serious and thankful consideration of the nature of it, and of...the privileges....sealed thereby. Colossians 2:11f & Romans 6:3-11."

More specifically, this means we are to be "humbled for our sinful defilement" of the sacrament of initiation -- and also by "our falling short of and walking contrary to the grace of baptism." By way of thankful obedience to the Triune God, we are constantly to reflect on "our solemn vow made therein" -- and to see to it that we and especially our children keep on "growing up" to assurance of pardon of sin and of all other blessings sealed to us in that sacrament. Romans 4:11f & First Peter 3:21." For the baptized, are "those that have therein given up their names to Christ" -- having been "baptized by the same Spirit into one body. Acts 2:38 & First Corinthians 12:13f."

For, in the words of the *Larger Catechism*:<sup>413</sup> "The sacrament...of baptism is to be administered but once, with water, to be a sign and seal of our regeneration and ingrafting into Christ, and that even to infants. Matthew 3:11; Titus 3:5; Galatians 3:27; Genesis 17:7f; Acts 2:38f; First Corinthians 7:14."

#### **477. Baptismal teaching of the Westminster Shorter Catechism**

The following magnificent words of the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*<sup>414</sup> are truly unforgettable: "Baptism is a sacrament wherein the washing with water in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be the Lord's. Matthew 28:19; Romans 6:4; Galatians 3:27.... The infants of such as are members of the visible church, are to be baptized. Acts 2:38f; Genesis 17:10; Colossians 2:11f; First Corinthians 7:14."

This statement in the *Shorter Catechism* was approved on July 28th 1648 by the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland. As such, it represents the last Westminster Assembly document to be adopted by the Scottish Presbyterians.

The modern evaluation of the 1648 *Westminster Shorter Catechism* by the famous Rev. Prof. Dr. B.B. Warfield is very significant. According to Warfield, the *Shorter Catechism* clearly implies the prior 'presumptive regeneration' of the covenant child being catechized -- before his or her first manducation in Holy Communion at teenage.

Explains Warfield:<sup>415</sup> "Only that is given which, in the judgment of its framers, is directly required for the Christian's instruction in what he is to believe concerning God, and what God requires of him.... The *Catechism* proceeds on the presumption that the Catechumen is a child of God."

#### **478. The reply to baptismal regenerationism of the Anti-Romish Westminster Assembly**

Let us now collect all the baptismal statements against Romanism and its false doctrine of baptismal regenerationism, from the various *Westminster Standards*. The following picture then emerges.

The *Westminster Directory for the Publick Worship of God* upholds<sup>416</sup> "the blessed Reformation" -- and opposes "Papists" by insisting that "baptism...is not...to be administered in private places" nor "in the places where fonts in the time of Popery were unfitly and superstitiously placed.... [Covenant] children...are Christians, and federally holy before baptism.... The inward grace and virtue of baptism is not tied to that very moment of time wherein it is administered.... Outward baptism is not so necessary that, through the want thereof, the infant is in danger of damnation....

"Before baptism, the Minister is to use some words of instruction...shewing that...the seed and posterity of the faithful born within the church have by their **birth** interest in the covenant and right to the seal of it.... He is to baptize the child...by pouring or sprinkling...without adding any other ceremony." By the latter, is meant the 'salt and spittle' -- as well as the submersions of mediaeval Romanism.

The *Westminster Confession* unequivocally rejects the Romish theory of baptismal regenerationism. "The grace which is exhibited in or by the sacraments, rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them."<sup>417</sup>

Once again: "Baptism is a sacrament...[and] a sign and seal of the covenant of grace.... Yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it, or that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated. The efficacy of baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered."<sup>418</sup>

Finally, the *Larger Catechism*<sup>419</sup> rightly defines baptism as "a sign and seal of ingrafting into Himself..., whereby the parties baptized are solemnly admitted into the Visible Church." As such, baptism no way admits into the Invisible Church -- as Rome so falsely teaches.

#### **479. The reply to the (Ana)Baptists of the Calvinistic Westminster Assembly**

The absurdity of the antipaedobaptistic allegations and the submersional suggestions contained in the 1644 *Baptist Confession* of the seven congregations in London, soon became apparent -- upon the 1646 publication of the *Westminster Confession* of the British Puritans. See Francis Nigel Lee's *I Confess!* (subtitled *Holy Scripture, the Westminster Confession, and the Declaratory Statement -- their Relationship to One Another in the Presbyterian Church of Australia*).<sup>420</sup>

Of the various Westminster Standards, the *Westminster Directory for the Publick Worship of God* had appeared already in February 1645. "Baptism," it then declared,<sup>421</sup> "is not unnecessarily to be delayed.... The child to be baptized...is to be presented by the father....

"Before baptism, the Minister is to use some words of instruction...shewing that...the seed and posterity of the faithful born within the church have by their birth interest in the covenant and

right to the seal of it." That is so because "they are Christians and federally holy before baptism, and therefore are they baptized.... He [the Minister] is to baptize the child with water...by pouring or sprinkling of the water on the face of the child."

In December 1646, the text of the *Westminster Confession of Faith* was adopted -- and in April 1647 its Biblical prooftexts. Here, the Westminster Assembly insisted<sup>422</sup> that "the first covenant made with man was a covenant of works wherein life was promised to Adam and in him to his posterity. Romans 10:5 & 5:12-20.... God gave to Adam a Law -- as a covenant of works by which He bound him and all his posterity to...perpetual obedience. Genesis 1:26f & 2:17; Romans 2:14f."

Earlier, the (Proto-Anabaptist and Proto-Arminian) Petrobrusians had denied that an infant could demonstrate his own 'worthiness' -- and thus they denied that he could be saved. For the Petrobrusians believed nobody could be justified until he himself had actually demonstrated that he was 'worthy' of being baptized. Accordingly, those Petrobrusians rejected the baptism of babies. So too did their descendants, the Anabaptists. So too do their stepchildren, the Baptists.

However, with one fell swoop, the Calvinistic *Westminster Confession* summarily declares<sup>423</sup> that "elect infants dying in infancy are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, Who worketh when and where and how He pleaseth. Luke 18:15f; Acts 2:38f; John 3:3,5; First John 5:12; Romans 8:9; John 3:8."

#### **480. The Westminster Confession and Catechisms 'annihilate' Anabaptism**

At man's creation, the *Westminster Confession* continues,<sup>424</sup> "marriage was ordained...for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue and of the church with an holy seed. Malachi 2:15.... The catholick or universal church which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect....

"The visible church which is also catholick or universal...consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion together with their children, and is the family of God. First Corinthians 7:14; Acts 2:39; Ezekiel 16:20f; Romans 11:16; Genesis 3:15 & 17:7.... Unto this catholick visible church Christ hath given the ministry, oracles and ordinances of God.... Matthew 28:19 & Isaiah 59:21." In the last two prooftexts, the baptism also of infants is clearly indicated.

Specifically, the *Confession* goes on,<sup>425</sup> "baptism is a sacrament...and seal of the covenant of grace.... Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary; but baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person. Hebrews 9:10-22; Acts 2:41 [cf. vv. 14-18 & 33] & 16:33; Mark 7:4." See too Psalms 77:15-20 & 78:12-16; Joel 2:16,23,28f; First Corinthians 10:1-2; and First Peter 1:2 & 3:20f.

"Also the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized. Genesis 17:7-9; Galatians 3:9,14 [& vv. 27f]; Colossians 2:11f; Acts 2:38f; Romans 4:11f; Mark 10:13f; Luke 18:15f.... It be a great sin to contemn or neglect this ordinance. Luke 7:30 & Exodus 4:24-26.... Baptism is but once to be administered to any person. Titus 3:5."

The *Westminster Larger Catechism* was adopted in October 1647. "God doth not leave all men to perish in the estate of sin and misery, but" -- it states<sup>426</sup> -- "bringeth them into an estate of salvation by the second covenant...of grace.... Under the New Testament...the same covenant of grace was and still is to be administered in...the administration...of baptism. Matthew 28:19f....

"Baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament wherein Christ hath ordained the washing with water...to be a sign and seal of ingrafting into Himself.... Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out[side] of the visible church.... Infants descending from parents either both or but one of them professing faith in Christ and obedience to Him are in that respect within the covenant and to be baptized. Genesis 17:7f; Colossians 2:11f; Acts 2:38f; Romans 4:11f; First Corinthians 7:14; Matthew 28:19; Luke 18:15f; Romans 11:16.... Baptism is to be administered but once..., and that even to infants."<sup>427</sup>

Finally, the *Westminster Shorter Catechism* was adopted in November 1647. It insists<sup>428</sup> that "baptism is a sacrament wherein the washing with water in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace and our engagement to be the Lord's. Matthew 28:19; Romans 6:4; Galatians 3:27. Infants of such as are members of the visible church, are to be baptized. Acts 2:38f; Genesis 17:10; Colossians 2:11f; First Corinthians 7:14."

#### **481. Influence of the Calvinistic Westminster Assembly on the Baptists**

Only in the *London Baptist Confession of 1677* (reprinted in 1688 & 1689), was a general declaration issued with an abiding authority among Baptists. Its full title was *A Confession of Faith put forth by the Elders and Brethren of many Congregations of Christians baptized upon Profession of their Faith.*<sup>429</sup>

This document has a deviant doctrine of baptism. For it contains the strange statement that "immersion or dipping of the person in water" is "necessary to the due administration of this ordinance."<sup>430</sup>

However, almost the entirety of the rest of this *London Confession of 1677* -- is truly excellent. For it was plagiarized almost exclusively from the paedobaptistic Puritans' *Westminster Confession of 1645*.

Of the latter, fortunately only the articles on Church Government and the Sacraments were perverted by the *London Confession* -- which, from 1742 onward, was also known (in North America) as the *Philadelphia Confession*. For the rest -- this Baptist borrowing from the *Westminster Confession*<sup>431</sup> is indeed quite the sincerest form of flattery.

Based upon the *London Confession of 1677*, the 1693 London General Assembly of the Particular Baptists adopted their *Baptist Catechism*.<sup>432</sup> The Particular Baptists and the General Baptists separated from one another from 1691 -- until 1891. Thereafter, the faction of the General Baptists became internationally predominant. Most unfortunately, precious little of the Calvinistic distinctives remains today -- among any brand of Baptists at all.

#### **482. The divines who approved of Westminster's baptismal teaching**

It should again be noted that many of the teachings regarding infant faith within covenant children, and anent the infant baptism of covenant children, are contained in all of the Westminster Assembly documents. All those teachings were endorsed and underwritten by the whole body of the godly theologians assembled at Westminster.

These included, in alphabetical order: John Arrowsmith; Simeon Ashe; Theodore Backhurst; Robert Baillie; Thomas Baylie; John Bond; Oliver Bowles; Willian Bridge; Anthony Burgess; Dr. Cornelius Burgess; Jeremiah Burroughs; Adoniram Byfield; and Richard Byfield.

They also included: Edmund Calamy; William Carter; Thomas Carter; Joseph Caryl; Thomas Case; Daniel Cawdrey; Dr. Humphrey Chambers; Dr. Francis Cheynell; Peter Clarke; Richard Cleyton; Thomas Coleman; John Conant; Edward Corbet; Philip Delme; Calibute Downing; Robert Douglas; John Dury; and John Earl.

Also included were: Thomas Ford; John Foxcroft; Hannibal Gammon; Thomas Gataker; John Gibbon; George Gillespie; George Gipps; William Goode; Dr. Thomas Goodwin; Dr. William Gouge; Stanley Gower; John Greene; William Greenhill; Henry Hall; Humphrey Hardwick; Robert Harris; Alexander Henderson; Charles Herle; Richard Heyrick; Gasper Hicks; Thomas Hill; Thomas Hodges; and Dr. Joshua Hoyle.

Further Westminster divines included John Jackson; Sir Archibald Jounston; John Langley; John Ley; John Lightfoot; John Lord Maitland; John De La March; Stephen Marshall; John Maynard; William Mewe; Thomas Micklethwait; Matthew Newcomen; Philip Nye; Henry Painter; Herbert Palmer; Edward Peale; Andrew Perne; John Philips; Henry Philips; Benjamin Pickering; Samuel De la Place; William Price; Nicholas Proffet; William Rathband; William Reyner; Edward Reynolds; Henry Roborough; and Dr. Samuel Rutherford.

Other Westminster divines were: Arthur Solway; Henry Scudder; Dr. Lazarus Seaman; Obadiah Sedgwick; Richard Simpson; Sidrach Simpson; Peter Smith; Dr. William Spurstow; Dr. Edmond Staunton; Peter Sterry; John Strickland; Francis Taylor; Dr. Thomas Temple; Christopher Tesdale; Thomas Thorowgood; Dr. Anthony Tuckney; and Dr. William Twisse.

Finally, there were also: Thomas Valentine; Richard Vines; George Walker; John Wallis; John Ward; John Whincop; John White; Jeremiah Whittaker; Dr. Henry Wilkinson; Thomas Wilson; Francis Woodcock; and Thomas Young.<sup>433</sup> Further appointees included one of the Secretaries, John Wallis; the great John Selden;<sup>434</sup> and the incomparable James Ussher.<sup>435</sup>

This is truly a "great cloud" of Anti-Romish and Anti-Anabaptist paedobaptistic witnesses -- alongside of Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses and Joshua *etc.* See Hebrews 11:7-29 and 12:1.

#### **483. Summary of baby belief before baptism from Knox till Westminster**



In this chapter, we first saw how Calvin's Anti-Anabaptist views anent the baby belief of covenant children before their infant baptism were affirmed by his student John Knox -- and reflected in the latter's writings. These views were reflected also in writings co-authored by Knox -- such as the *First Scots Confession*, and the *First Book of Discipline*.

These same views were also affirmed by Guido de Brés's *Belgic Confession*. That strongly opposed the baptismal regenerationism of Rome's Council of Trent. It also categorically condemned the Anabaptists, and championed the baptism of babies -- and indeed specifically by sprinkling. Also in his book *The Radical Origin and Foundation of the Anabaptists*, De Brés insisted that covenant children received sanctification from a godly parent at their very conception -- like a twig does from a tree (Romans 11:16).

Ursinus and Olevianus both shared this view of presumed prebaptismal regeneration of the covenant child. Indeed, it is reflected in their various writings -- and notably in their *Heidelberg Catechism*. This was constantly re-endorsed by the Presbyterian Church of Scotland -- from its 1563 inception, right through until 1861.

Rome froze her heresy of baptismal regenerationism into her 1564 *Profession of the Tridentine Faith* and her 1566 *Roman Catechism*. So Bullinger re-asserted the Reformed view of presumed prebaptismal regeneration of covenant children (and again condemned the Anabaptists) -- in his *Second Helvetic Confession*. This too was warmly upheld not only by Episcopalian Puritans in England, but also specifically (and repeatedly) by the Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

Both Calvin's successor Theodore Beza and the Italian Reformer Jerome Zanchius insisted that the elect babies of believers have personal faith in Jesus -- before their infant baptisms. So too did the Flemish Calvinist Peter Datheen, in his *Baptismal Formula* (subsequently used by the great Dutch Reformed family of denominations worldwide). Also in England, the Pre-Reformer Wycliffe's rejection of baptismal regenerationism, through Tyndale and Cranmer and the *Forty-two Articles*, greatly influenced Archbishop Ussher's *Irish Articles* -- as the direct ancestor of the *Westminster Confession of Faith*.

In the Church of Scotland, similar baptismal views were derived from Calvin's *Geneva Catechism* and *Form of Baptism*, the *Heidelberg Catechism*, and the *Second Helvetic Confession*. These were reflected in John Craig's *First Scots Catechism* and in his 1580 *Second Scots Confession*. Significantly, the latter condemned "that Roman Antichrist" with "his cruel judgment against infants departing without the sacrament" alias "his absolute necessity of baptism."

The presumed prebaptismal regeneration of the babies of believers was also taught by the Frisian Menzo Alting; by Caspar vander Heyden and his *Dutch Reformed Baptismal Formula*; by the 1581 *Synopsis of Purer Theology* (of Polyander, Rivetus, Thysius and Walaeus); by the Belgian Reformed Jean Taffin; by the French Reformed Francis Junius (author of the later notes on the Book of Revelation in the *Geneva Bible*); by the Dutch Reformed theologians Lucas Trelcatius Sr. & Jr.; by the Frisian Reformed Gellius Snecanus; and by the German Reformed James Kimedoncius and Jeremiah Bastingius.

The great hero of Dordt, the Flemish Reformed Francis Gomarus, also shared this view. So too did the Frisian Ruardus Acronius -- and a whole host of lesser sixteenth-century European Reformed theologians (such as Grevinchoven, Seu, Bontemps, Du Bois, Donselaer, Austro-Sylvius & Moded) -- and all three *Brandenberg Confessions* in Germany, from 1614 onward. All of this Continental Calvinism had an ongoing influence on Britain at the beginning of the seventeenth century -- thus the American scholars B.B. Warfield and L.B. Schenck, and the Scottish scholars A.F. Mitchell and C.G. M'Crie.

The great British Anglican William Wall points out that infant baptism was then the historic and the world-wide practice of the Christian Church -- apart from the dying Anabaptist sects in Eastern Europe, and their struggling stepchildren among the Mennonites in the Netherlands. The latter were stoutly opposed by the Dutch Reformed Church -- and her presumptive regenerationist theologians such as Gallus, Donteclock, Bucanus, Puppius, Hommius, and the Polish Reformed Maccovius in Friesland. Alsted and Alting did the same in Germany -- and so too did the godly Puritan Archbishop Ussher (in his 1614 *Irish Articles*).

The 1618<sup>f</sup> international *Decrees of Dordt* not only condemn the papal antichrist, but also clearly teach that "godly parents have no reason to doubt the election and salvation of those their children whom it pleases God to call out of this life in their infancy." For those *Decrees* uphold the words of Jesus in Matthew 11:25<sup>f</sup> that His Father had "revealed these things...to the little children." Indeed, the *Decrees of Dordt* also utterly repudiate the Arminian lie -- that Calvinists ever taught that the tiny "children of the faithful are torn guiltless from their mother's breasts, and tyrannical plunged into hell."

Both the *Irish Articles* and the *Decrees of Dordt* had enormous influence on Britain's 1545 *Westminster Standards*. So too did the similar baptismal views of Perkins, Ames, and Voetius. Cf. too the latter's successors Cloppenburgh, Udeman, Kuchlin, Geselius, De Witte, and Burmannus -- and the similar views of Polan, Desmaret, Vossius, Wollebius, the Polish Reformed *Thorn Declaration*, James Alting, Jacob Trigland, Richard Sibbes -- and the Colonial Americans Shephard, Cotton, Hooker and Davenport.

After sporadic outbreaks of heretical Anabaptism in England, only in 1610 did the exiled Englishman Smyth pouringly 'rebaptize' himself -- among the Dutch Mennonites. His pelagianizing colleague, the Arminian Helwys, established the first Baptist Church on British soil. However, it was only in 1641 that his successor Barber first advocated baptizing Englishmen by dipping alone.

A student of Dutch Mennonite and perhaps even Polish Unitarian writings, the American Roger Williams was submersed by Ezekiel Hollyman. Thus started the first Baptist Church in the New World (in 1639) -- even though Williams renounced his own 'baptism' as invalid, just a few months later. From such shaky foundations proceed the American ninety percent of the modern world's Baptists (the vast majority of whom reside exclusively in the Southeastern part of the United States).

In 1643, the *Confession of the Seven Baptist Churches of London* appeared. This was the first known written symbol in the history of the world ever to advocate submersion as the only

valid form of baptism.

Just a few years later, the British Puritans issued their irrefutable antidote -- at the Westminster Assembly. (Significantly, later Baptists 'borrowed' those Westminster Standards for themselves. Fortunately, therein they twisted only such of the Puritans' teachings which uphold Presbyterian church government and paedobaptism.)

Incorporating the very best of both British and Continental Calvinism, the *Westminster Standards* themselves are both Anti-Romish and Anti-Anabaptist. They reflect the mature views of leading presumptive prepaedobaptistal regenerationists -- such as Westminster Fathers like Burgess, Gillespie, Lightfoot, Marshall, Reynolds, Rutherford, Twisse, Ussher and Wallis. Indeed, they accurately explain the paedobaptistal significance of at least twenty-four Bible passages -- from Genesis 3:15 through Revelation 1:5.

The *Westminster Directory* rightly repudiates Romanism. It then claims that covenant children "are Christians and federally holy before baptism and therefore are they baptized." Indeed, it further states that "baptism is not so necessary that, through the want thereof, the infant is in danger of damnation."

The *Westminster Confession* insists that "elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated" -- irrespective of their being baptized or not. It condemns the Pope of Rome as "that antichrist" -- yet it also repudiates all rebaptisms (even in respect of converted Ex-Romanists). Indeed, it insists that "baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling"; that "infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized"; and that "it be a grave sin to contemn or neglect this ordinance."

The *Larger Catechism* reiterates much of this in greater detail. It regulates the proper administration of infant baptism, in terms of the Second and Third Commandments. Indeed, it also urges all the baptized to 'improve' their baptism -- by "growing up to assurance of pardon of sin, and of all other blessings sealed to us in that sacrament."

Never before had the baptismal beliefs of the Bible been summarized so faithfully as in these *Westminster Standards*. In a very real sense, the subsequent history of baptismal theology is little more than a series of footnotes to Westminster. However, those footnotes are not without importance to the Church today. So, in our subsequent chapter, it is to that 'series of footnotes' that we will next turn.

## ENDNOTES

- 1) Schenck: *op. cit.* pp. 35f. There, Schenck cites *inter alia* from J. Knox's *Works* (IV:240).
- 2) Schenck: *op. cit.* pp. 36f.
- 3) K. Reed: *A Warning Against the Anabaptists by John Knox*, Presbyterian Heritage, Dallas, 1984, pp. 1-3.
- 4) Knox's *Works* IV:261-74 (*cf.* IV:257-60), as cited in Reed's *op. cit.* pp. 21f.
- 5) Cited in *Sel. Works of John Calvin* (ed. Bonnet) VII:4 p. 73 n. 1.    6) *Ib.* pp. 74-76.
- 7) *Works* V:121f & 189 (cited in Reed's *op. cit.* pp. 4 & 13)
- 8) *Works* II:117 (cited in Schenck's *op. cit.* p. 38 at n. 121).    9) Schenck: *op. cit.* pp. 37f.
- 10) *First Scots Confession* chs. 16 & 18. In *The Book of Confessions*, Office of the General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Philadelphia, 1967, p. 3.16.
- 11) *Scots Confession* chs. 21-22.    12) *Scots Conf.* ch. 21.    13) *Ib.* chs. 22-23.
- 14) Knox's *Works* II:186 (cited in Schenck's *op. cit.* p. 38).
- 15) W. McMillan: *The Worship of the Scottish Reformed Church 1550 -1638*, Univ. of Glasgow Press, London, 1931, pp. 243-7.
- 16) *First Book of Discipline* ch. II 2nd Hd. 1-3; *cf.* IV 4th Hd. (1) 1-3; *cf.* XI 9th Hd. (1) 4. In F.M. Bradshaw: *Basic Documents on Presbyterian Polity*, Christian Education Committee, Presbyterian Church of Australia, 1984, pp. 11,14,36.
- 17) J.K. Cameron: *The First Book of Discipline*, St Andrews Press, Edinburgh, 1972, *in loco* n. 13.
- 18) Schenck's *op. cit.* p. 38, citing Knox's *Works* II:186.
- 19) Thus *The Liturgy of John Knox Received by the Church of Scotland in 1564*, Univ. Press, Glasgow, 1886, p. 13.
- 20) See C. Calderwood's *History of the Church of Scotland*, Wodrow Soc., Edinburgh, 1843, II, pp. 101f.
- 21) Sess. V:5. Here Trent's original Latin respectively reads: *reatum originalis peccati remitti negat* and *asserit non tolli totum*.
- 22) *Belgic Confession* art. 15. See too A.G. Honig: *Ref. Dog.*, pp. 639 & 646.
- 23) Sess. VII, cans. 8 & 9 ('On the sacraments in general').
- 24) Art. 15, *n'est pas aboli mesme par le baptisme*. See Gravemeijer's *Sin*, in his *op. cit.* II:9:16 p. 52.
- 25) Art. 15, *wert ook door de doope niet wechghenomen*. See Gravemeijer's *Sin*, in his *op. cit.* II:9:16 p. 53.
- 26) *Viz.* Trent's Sess. V:5. Thus Gravemeijer's *Sin*, in his *op. cit.* II:9:16 p. 54 & n. 1.
- 27) French-Walloon: "*Et n'est pas aboly mesme par le baptesme ou desraciné du tout*." Thus Gravemeijer's *Sin*, in his *op. cit.* II:9:16 p. 53 & n. 2.
- 28) The official Dutch text reads: *Zij is ook zelfs door den doop niet ganschelijk te niet gedaan noch geheel uitgeroeid*. The official Latin runs: *Neque vero hoc ipsum (citium haereditarium) per baptismum etiam penitus aboletur aut radicitus evellitur*. Here, even this Dutch text is still not totally beyond improvement. Better yet would have been: *Zij wordt...niet* (alias "It is...not"), instead of *Zij is...niet* (alias "it was...not"). For thus indeed both the Walloon and the Latin texts. Thus Gravemeijer's *Sin* in his *op. cit.* II:9:16 p. 53 n. 3.
- 29) Thus Gravemeijer's *Sin*, in his *op. cit.* II:9:16 p. 55.    30) *Belg. Conf. arts.* 33-36.
- 31) G. de Brés: *The Radical Origin and Foundation of the Anabaptists*, ed. 1608, Bk. III.
- 32) *Ib.* f. 200b,271b,215b,216a.    33) *Ib.* f. 252b,253a,255a.
- 34) *Ib.* f. 257a, *cf.* Kramer's *op. cit.* p. 207, and Kuyper's *Sacraments* (in his *Dict. Dog.* VI p. 140).    35) *Ib.* f. 268a.
- 36) *Ib.* f. 256a-b,257b,258a.    37) *Ib.* f. 260a,245ab.    38) *Ib.* f. 290a.
- 39) Z. Ursinus's *Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism*, Q. 74 (cited in C. Coleburn's *Scriptural, Confessional and Historical References re the Regeneration of Children, and their Status before the Lord and in the Church*, Brisbane, 1991, p. 10); and his *Christian Religion* Q. 74 (cited in Shedd's *Dogmatic Theology* (1894), Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1969 ed., III pp. 443f).
- 40) Z. Ursinus: *Small Catechism* (in *Collected Works* I pp. 39f), as cited in Wielenga's *op. cit.* p. 243.
- 41) Z. Ursinus: *Explication of the Catechism*, as cited in P.J.S. De Klerk's *Reformed Symbolics*, Van Schaik, Pretoria, 1954, p. 219.
- 42) Z. Ursinus: *Coll. Works* I p. 254, as cited in Kramer's *op. cit.* p. 182.
- 43) Z. Ursinus: *Coll. Works* II p. 428, as cited in Kuyper's *Sacraments* (in his *Dog. Dict.* VI p. 141). "*Infantes credunt suo modo seu pro modo aetatis, quia habent inclinationem ad credendum; fides est in infantibus potentia et inclinatione licet non actu ut in adultis.*"

- 44) Z. Ursinus: *Treasure Book* (as cited in Gravemeijer's *op. cit.* II p. 62 & III:20:14 pp. 170f, comp. Vander Honert's ed. of Ursinus on Q. 74 of the *Heid. Cat.* as cited in Kuyper's *Sacraments* in his *Dog. Dict.* VI p. 141).
- 45) Z. Ursinus: *Explic. of the Cat.*, as cited in *Coll. Works* I p. 251; compare too his *Treasure Book*, on Q. 70 of the *Heid. Cat.*
- 46) Z. Ursinus: *Thes. theol. (de bapt.)*, th. 12 misc. p. 125. Cited in T. Boston: *Complete Works*, Roberts, Wheaton, 1980 rep., VI pp. 137f.
- 47) Note that Ursinus is speaking only of the situation where baptism is lawfully received. Even where baptism is unlawfully received, it is nevertheless still valid and unrepeatable.
- 48) Z. Ursinus: *Concerning the Baptism of Infants*, in his *Coll. Works* II c. 1701,1700,1687,1694,1697.
- 49) Z. Ursinus: *Defence of the Catechism*, in *Coll. Works* II pp. 165sq.
- 50) Z. Ursinus: *Commentary on the Heidelberg Catechism*, Amsterdam ed., pp. 365-67.
- 51) Z. Ursinus: *Theological Tracts* p. 350; cited in Gillespie's *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*, London, 1st ed., III ch. 12.
- 52) Südloff p. 399, as cited in Kramer's *op. cit.* pp. 183f. 53) Südloff pp. 553f, in Kramer *op. cit.*
- 54) C. Olevianus: *The Essence of the Covenant of Grace*. Copinga's translation, Groningen, 1739, pp. 497f.
- 55) Schenck's *op. cit.* pp. 30 & 40; Schaff's *Creeds* I p. 537 n. 1; A. Stewart's *Creeds and Churches: Studies in Symbolics*, London, 1916, p. 156; G.C. M'Crie's *The Confessions of the Church of Scotland*, Macniven & Wallace, Edinburgh, 1909, pp. 11 & 78; Coleburn's *op. cit.* p. 15; comp. the *2nd Scots Conf.* at nn. 107f below.
- 56) Northern American denominations upholding the *Heidelberg Catechism* include (listed alphabetically): the CRC; the PCUSA; the PRC; the RCA; and the RCUS. Southern African denominations doing the same include: the AGK, the EGK, the GK, the NGK, the NGKA, the NGSK, the NHK, and the RCA.
- 57) *Heid. Cat.* QQ. & AA. 7-10. 58) *Ib.* QQ. & AA. 65-68. 59) *Heid. Cat.* Q. & A. 69.
- 60) *Heid. Cat.* QQ. & AA. 70 & 73. 61) *Heid. Cat.* Q. & A. 74.
- 62) *The Profession of the Tridentine Faith*. In Schaff: *Creeds* I p. 97, and II pp. 207f; compare art. *Roman-Catholic Church* (in Schaff-Herzog's *op. cit.*, III, p. 205).
- 63) *Ib.* p. 98 (I) & p. 99 (II:4-5). 64) *Ib.* p. 101. 65) *Cat. Rom.* I:10:17f (I ch. X, QQ. 17f).
- 66) *Ib.* II:1:14; II:2:4; I:10:6.
- 67) *Ib.* II:2:18f; II:2:23-33; II:2:38-39,44. Cited in Gravemeijer's *Sacraments*, in his *op. cit.* III:20:19 p. 118 & nn. 1 & 2 and pp. 120f. Cf. too the art. *Catechetics, Catechisms and Catechumens* (in Schaff-Herzog *op. cit.*, I, pp. 417f). 68) *Ib.* II,18-19,25-28,38-39,44. 69) *Ib.* II:2:30, in Gravemeijer's *op. cit.* III:20:19 p. 118 n. 2. 70) *Ib.* II:2:23.
- 71) *Ib.* II:2:18f; II:2:25-28. Cf. Warfield's *Dev. Doct. Inf. Salv.* (1891) p. 15.
- 72) R. Bellarmine: *On Purgatory* 2,6.73 Thus P. Toon's art. on *Peter Martyr [Vermigli]*, in ed. Douglas's *op. cit.*, p. 769.
- 74) Art. 20-21 (21-22). 75) *2nd Helv. Conf.* chs. 11,19-22,30.
- 76) Respectively "*nuncupari Nomine Dei*" and "*appellari filium Dei*".
- 77) Namely: "*foris autem accipimus oblationem maximorum donorum in aqua, qua etiam maxima illa beneficia repraesentantur.*"
- 78) Namely: "*baptizamur id est abluimur aut adspargimur*".
- 79) Namely: "*damnamus Anabaptistas, qui negant baptizandos esse infantulos recens natos a fidelibus*".
- 80) Namely: "*horum est regnum Dei*". 81) Namely: "*qui sunt peculium est in Ecclesia Dei?*"
- 82) Namely: "*Damnamus Anabaptistas*" (twice, in arts. 22 & 30). 83) *Op. cit.* p. 206. 84) *Creeds* I p. 644.
- 85) T. Beza: *Questions and Responses*, in *Theological Tracts*, 2nd ed., Geneva, 1575, III pp. 345f & I p. 322: "*Spiritu Sancto perfundo Qui Suo tempore virtutem in illis exerat.*" Thus Beza's tract *Abstersion of the Calumnies of Tilemann Hesshus*. Here Beza defends Calvin against the Gnesio-Lutheran Heshusius's attacks (because Calvin rejected Heshusius's own semi-magical baptismal views). See too Calvin's own treatise against Heshusius (in ch. IV at its nn. 304f above).
- 86) See too Beza's 1558 *The Christian Faith*, Lewes: Sussex: Christian Focus Christian Ministries Trust, ed. 1992, pp. 61-63.
- 87) T. Beza: "*Omnes infantes indefinite sunt electi praesumendi.*" Thus his *Ad Acta Colloqui Montisbelgardensis Respons.*, 3rd ed., Geneva, 1589, II pp. 101sq.
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- 89) *Ib.* p. 30 & n. 90.
- 90) J. Zanchius: *Theological Works on External Worship* IV c. 440. Cited in Kramer's *op. cit.* pp. 277f.
- 91) J. Zanchius: *Concerning the Predestination of the Elect*, VIII, c. 314. 92) *Ib.* VII, c. 318.

- 93) J. Zanchius: *Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians* (esp. p. 225 th. 13). Cited in (ed.) De Hartog's *Bib. Ref.*, pp. 300 & 302. Also cited in T. Boston: *Complete Works* Wheaton, 1980 rep., VI pp. 137f. Cf. ch. VI at its nn. 124ff below.
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- 96) P. Datheen: *The Entire Transactions of the Dialogue* (with the Anabaptists at Franckenthal), 1571 (Art. XII: Action 31, Q. 7; Action 25, Q. 6; and Action 33, QQ. 7 & 11).
- 97) *Ib.* Art. XII, Action 31, Q. 38; and Action 35, Q. 4. 98) *Ib.* Art. XI, Action 35, Q. 17; and Action 32, Q. 9.
- 99) *Ib.* Art. XII, Action 35, Q. 19; Action 34, Q. 11; Action 36, Q. 36.
- 100) See our text in ch. III above at its nn. 291ff & 316ff.
- 101) See J. Calvin's *Dedication of Commentary on First Peter to Edward VI*; his *Letters to King Edward*; and his 22nd Oct. 1548 letter to the regent Protector Somerset.
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- 104) Ch. V:7. 105) Ch. VII:12. 106) Art. Craig, John (1512-1600), in Douglas's *op. cit.* pp. 268f.
- 107) In Schenck's *op. cit.* p. 40 n. 128. 108) In Schaff's *Creeeds* III pp. 480 & 482.
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- 110) M. Alting: *Protocol or Complete Acts of the Dialogue at Embden in East Frisia*, fol. 128f, cited in Kramer's *op. cit.* pp. 215f.
- 111) *Ib.*, art. 58, rat. 8, f. 179. 112) *Ib.*, art. 59, rat. 4, f. 181b *et seq.* 113) *Ib.*, art. 62, rat. 2, f. 189b.
- 114) *Ib.*, art. 63, rat. 9, f. 193a. 115) *Ib.*, art. 63, rat. 9, f. 195a. 116) *Ib.*, art. 66, rat. 3, f. 204b.
- 117) *Ib.*, art. 9, act. 84, rat. 1, f. 249f. 118) *Ib.*, art. 9, act. 90, rat. 1, f. 265. 119) *Ib.*, art. 9, act. 90, rat. 1, f. 267b.
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- 126) Dutch Reformed Church of South Africa: *The Doctrinal Standards and Liturgy (Administration of Baptism to Infants of Believers)*, J.H. Rose, Cape Town, 1876, pp. 126-30. Comp. Wielenga's *op. cit.* pp. 15-23 & 20 n. 1 and p. 177 n. 1 and pp. 166f & 191f.
- 127) A. Kuyper Sr.: *E Voto Dordraceno [on the Heidelberg Catechism]*, Wormser, Amsterdam, 1894, III p. 51.
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- 130) Polyander and Others: *Synopsis of Purer Theology*, 1581, *Disp.* 44c & 47 v. 9. Cited in H. Heppe's *Reformed Dogmatics*, Baker, 1950 rep., p. 621.
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- 133) J. Taffin: *Instruction Against the Errors of the Anabaptists*, 1580f, p. 114; cited in Kramer's *op. cit.* pp. 223f.
- 134) *Ib.* p. 106. 135) *Ib.* p. 116. 136) *Ib.* p. 120. 137) *Ib.* pp. 122f.
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- 142) Cited in Kuyper's *Sac.*, in his *Dog. Dict.* IV p. 143.
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- 157) R. Acronius: *Protocol or the Entire Acts of the Dialogue Held at Leeuwarden in Friesland*, 1596, art. V, 83, f. 253f.
- 158) *Ib.*, art. IV, act. 67, f. 198.
- 159) For Jesus Sirach alias Ecclesiasticus 1:14-16, see the main text in our ch. II above at its n. 11. By "Esdras 1:37" Acronius apparently means II Esdras 1:37. Lange/Bissell in their *Commentary on the Apocrypha of the Old Testament*, however, observe (pp. 39 & 641) that II Esdras does not occur in the Greek Septuagint but only in the Latin Vulgate. They maintain that especially "chapter i-ii and xv-xvi, for instance, are later additions from a Christian hand... They are pervaded by an anti-Jewish spirit."
- 160) *Ib.*, art. V, act. 86, f. 263f. 161) *Ib.*, act. 85, f. 261. 162) *Ib.*, act. 88, f. 268. 163) *Ib.*, act. 84, f. 257.
- 164) See Kramer's *op. cit.* pp. 200 & 238.
- 165) C. Grevinchoven: *A Thorough Study of Baptism and Rebaptism*, 1599, f. 19b,20,20b,25b,26b.
- 166) J. Seu: *True and Thorough Proofs...of Child Baptism*, Middelburg, 1601, arts. 94 & 101.
- 167) Peter Bontemps: *Short Proof of the Manifold Errors of the Anabaptists or Mennonites*, Harlem, p. 550.
- 168) J. Du Bois: *Infant Baptism Proved and Defended from the Words of the Apostle in Acts 2:38-39*, esp. paras. 128,139 & 140.
- 169) J. Du Bois: *Certainty About Infant Baptism*, p. 242.
- 170) A. Donselaer & P.J. Austro-Sylvius: *Thorough and Clear Exhibition [against the Anabaptists] etc.*, ch. 11 p. 233b; ch. 9 p. 175; ch. 18 p. 561.
- 171) Cited in Kramer's *op. cit.* pp. 238-41. 172) See ch. III at its nn. 105f. 173) See ch. III at its nn. 167f.
- 174) See above in Ch. IV. 175) See above at nn. 4f.
- 176) G. de Brés: *The Radical Origin and Foundation of the Anabaptists*, Amsterdam, 1608.
- 177) P. Datheen: *Protocol of the Dialogue with the Anabaptists*, 1571.
- 178) M. Alting: *Protocol of the Dialogue with the Anabaptists*, 1580.
- 179) J. Taffin: *Instruction Against the Errors of the Anabaptists*, 1580f.
- 180) F. Junius: *Theological Theses on Paidobaptism*, ed. 1735. 181) L. Trelcatius Sr.: *Common Places*, 1587.
- 182) L. Trelcatius Jr.: *Scol. et Meth. Loc. Comm. S. Theol. Inst.* 183) G. Snecanus: *The Basis of...Baptism*, 1588.
- 184) J. Kimedoncius: *Answer to the Anabaptist Dirk Philip's 'On the Baptism of our Lord Jesus Christ,'* 1590.
- 185) P. Bontemps: *Manifold Errors of the Anabaptists or Mennonites*. 1602.
- 186) Thus Bastingius, Gomarus, Acronius, Grevinchoven, Seu, Du Bois, Donselaer, Venhuizen, Moded, Buschius, Tayus, Costerus, Nicolai, Langspergius, Amspringius, Vossenholius, and especially Faulkelius the writer of the *Short Compendium* of the Heidelberg Catechism). See in Kramer's *op. cit.* pp. 238-41.
- 187) On Calvin, see our previous chapter. Compare too Calvin's successor Beza's *Abstersion of the Calumnies of Tilemann Hesshus* the Gnesio-Lutheran. Brandenburg is the central province of Prussia, with Berlin as its capital. From the beginning of the seventeenth century onward, its Lutheran Hohenzollern princes embraced Calvinism. They sponsored the three *Brandenburg Confessions*: the 1614 *Confession of Sigismund* (or Siegmund); the 1631 *Leipzig Colloquy*; and the 1645 [Polish Reformed] *Declaration of Thorn*. Like the earlier *Heidelberg Catechism*, all three *Brandenburg Confessions* were moderately Calvinistic and similarly endeavoured to promote the union of German Calvinism and Lutheranism (which was finally effected in 1817). See Schaff's *Creeds* I pp. 554f, and E.G.A. Boeckel's *Confessions of the Evangelical Reformed Churches*, Brockhaus, Leipzig, 1847, pp. 435f.
- 188) *Op. cit.* pp. 42f. See too A.F. Mitchell's *Catechism of the Second Reformation*, p. xlii; and his *The Westminster Assembly, Its History and Standards*, Nisbet, London, 1873, pp. 216 & 235.
- 189) G.G. M'Crie: *Confessions of the Church of Scotland*, p. 70.

- 190) W.A. Brown: *The Essence of Christianity*, p. 107 n. 1.
- 191) B.B. Warfield: *The Westminster Assembly and Its Work*, New York, 1931, p. 56. Cf. Schenck's *op. cit.*, pp. 43f.
- 192) *Op. cit.* p. xliv. 193) *Doct. Stds. & Liturgy of Ref. Dutch Ch.*, p. 130.
- 194) C. Gallus: *Hammer of the Anabaptists*, 1606. Cited in Kramer's *op. cit.* p. 239.
- 195) R. Donteclock: *Thorough Investigation...of Predstination or God's Eternal Election*, 1607, pp. 30f; in Kramer's *op. cit.* p. 261.
- 196) R. Donteclock: *Concerning An Anonymous Writing* p. 50; quoted in the *Spirit of Complaint* p. 26, and cited in Kramer's *op. cit.* p. 262.
- 197) Cited by A. Kuyper's *Sac.* (in his *Dog. Dict.* IV p. 142). 198) R. Puppis's *Proof of Infant Baptism* (1611).
- 199) R. Puppis's *Protecting Infant Baptism*, cited in Kramer's *op. cit.* pp. 240f.
- 200) R. Acronius & F. Hommius: *Scriptural Conference*, The Hague, 1611, p. 21; cited in Kramer's *op. cit.* pp. 263f.
- 201) J.H. Alsted: *Theological Polity* IV contr. 5. 202) See our main text at nn. 110f above.
- 203) H. Alting: *Theological Problems* prob. 3, p. 488. 204) H. Alting: *Scriptural Theology*, Heidelberg, III, p. 321.
- 205) H. Alting, cited in Kuyper's *E Voto* III p. 59.
- 206) H. Alting's *Syllabus of Controversies* p. 263; cited by Pieper's *op. cit.* III pp. 279 & 280 n. 42. Also H. Alting's *Theological Problems*; cited by Kuyper's *Sac.* (in his *Dog. Dict.* IV p. 143).
- 207) See at n. 187 above. 208) Böckel's *op. cit.* p. 428 & n.
- 209) See Schaff's *Creeds* III p. 526, and Warfield's *The Westminster Assembly*, 1972 ed., pp. 176f.
- 210) *Irish Articles*, arts. 61f & 64f. 211) *Ib.*, arts. 89-91.
- 212) J. Maccovius: *Theological Polity* p. 141. Cited in ed. Arnold's *Maccovius Resurrected: Noted Works*. Quoted in Kramer's *op. cit.* pp. 261f.
- 213) J. Maccovius: *Theol. Pol.* p. 175. Also his *Theological Questions* loc. 42, c. 20, p. 105. Cited in Kuyper's *E Voto* III p. 57 and in his *Sac.* (in his *Dog. Dict.* p. 142).
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- 216) J. Maccovius: *Common Places* p. 833.
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- 219) *Decrees of Dordt*, ch. I, Rejection of Error 8. In Vander Waal's *op. cit.*, p. 65. 220) Barger: *op. cit.* p. 194.
- 221) Cited in H.H. Kuyper's *Hamabdil: On the Holiness of the Covenant of Grace*, Van Bottenburg, Amsterdam, 1907, p. 114.
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- 224) See *Conclusion*, in Vander Waal's *op. cit.* pp. 132f. 225) Warfield's *Dev. Doct. Inf. Salv.*, pp. 45ff & n. \*.
- 226) Cf. G. Gillespie's *Aaron's Rod Blossoming*, London, 1st ed., III ch. 12.
- 227) F. Hommius: *Theological Disputations Against the Papists*, disp. 44, thes. 3, p. 269.
- 228) F. Hommius: *Ib.*, p. 43; thes. 3. Comp. Gillespie's *Aaron's Rod*, III ch. 12.
- 229) "*Dicimus igitur infantes censendos esse inter credentes, quia semen seu Spiritus fidei in iis inest.*" A. Walaeus: *Religious Reference Handbook*, I p. 487b. See too A. Walaeus: *Collected Works* I p. 493. Cited in A. Kuyper's *Sac.* (in his *Dog. Dict.* IV p. 143).
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- 240) *Ib.* II p. 417. 241) *Ib.* pp. 403f. 242) *Ib.* 1.1. 243) *Ib.* pp. 412f.
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- 274) Hulse's *op. cit.* p. 21. 275) J.G.G. Norman's *Smyth, John (c.1565-1612)*, in Douglas's *op. cit.* pp. x & 911.
- 276) Estep's *op. cit.* p. 221. 277) West's *op. cit.* pp. 223f & 265f. 278) *Ib.* p. 220.
- 279) T. Helwys: *Baptist Confession*, 1611, art. 3 reads that "God imposes the necessity of sin on nobody." Compare Estep's *op. cit.* p. 222: "Helwys...in his first confession of faith...was one with Smyth in denying original sin.... Other aspects of an Arminian soteriology were retained."
- 280) A.M. Derham's *Helwys, Thomas (c. 1550 - c. 1616)*, in Douglas's *op. cit.* p. 459. See too the *Baptist Confession of 1611*, art. 10 (in Schaff's *Creeds* I pp. 857f).
- 281) *Ib.* p. 224. 282) R.S. Ward's *Baptism in Scripture and History*, pp. 58f. 283) *Rad. Ref.* p. 788.
- 284) Schaff's *Creeds* I pp. 849f.
- 285) R. Williams: *The Bloody Tenent of Persecution for Cause of Conscience Discussed*, ed. Edward Bean Underhill, Hanserd Knollys Soc., London, 1848, pp. 1-2: "It is the will and command of God that...a permission

of the most Paganish, Jewish, Turkish or anti-christian consciences and worships be granted to all men in all nations and countries." Cited in Estep's *op. cit.* pp. 226 & 235 n. 63.

286) Estep's *op. cit.* p. 228. 287) Cf. J. Cotton's *Abstract of the Laws of New England* (1641).

288) *Op. cit.* p. 7. Cf. too p. 92: "North America...29,681,927." World total = "33,749,228". 289) *Ib.* pp. 89-91.

290) *Op. cit.* p. 229. 291) P.J.S. de Klerk: *Reformed Symbolics*, Van Schaik, Pretoria, 1954, pp. 88f.

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298) J. Reid: *Memoirs of the Westminster Divines*, Banner of Truth, Edinburgh, 1982, I pp. 368 & II pp. 388-90.

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303) C. Burgess: *Regen. Elect Inf.*, pp. 4,2-3,19f,62. 304) G. Voetius: *Sel. Theol. Disp.* II:142.

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310) S. Marshall: *A Sermon on the Baptizing of Infants*, Coates, Bowtell, London, 1644, pp. 14,25f,32,26f,39,41f,45f & 51f.

311) Mitchell & Struthers: *Minutes*, Blackwood, Edinburgh, pp. 216f & 442f, Sessions 618 (April 9th 1646). Cited in Coleborn's *op. cit.*, April 1991, p. 24.

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313) E. Reynolds: *Meditations on the Holy Sacrament*, London, 1826 (1626?). Cited in Vincent's *op. cit.* pp. 18f & 30 n. 46.

314) 1642 *The Covenant of Life Opened*, Anderson, Edinburgh, 1655, I, chs. 13-14, pp. 72-91f; cf. too his *Triumph of Faith* (in his *Sermons VIII*).

315) *Id.*, cited in Coleborn's *op. cit.* pp. 21f. 316) Reid: *op. cit.* I p. 39. 317) See his *West. Ass.* pp. 176f.

318) J. Ussher: *Body of Divinity or the Sum and Substance of Christian Religion Catechetically Propounded* (1658), 4th ed., 1702 p. 165; and 5th ed., Owsley & Lillicrap, London, 5th ed., pp. 403,416f,426f.

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320) W.C.F. 25:2c. 321) W.C.F. 28:4m. 322) W.C.F. 28:5n. 323) W.C.F. 25:2c. 324) W.C.F. 28:4m.

325) *Ib.* 28:5n, citing Lk. 7:30. 326) W.C.F. 10:3mn and 28:6q.

327) W.C.F. 10:3m (citing Lk. 18:15f etc.) & 28:4m (citing Mk. 10:13f & Lk. 18:15f); and W.L.C. 166o (citing Lk. 18:15f).

328) W.C.F. 27:3ik. 329) W.C.F. 27:5l. 330) W.C.F. 28:4m and W.L.C. 166o. 331) W.C.F. 10:3m and 25:2c.

332) W.C.F. 28:4m compare W.L.C. 166o. 333) W.L.C. 162w. 334) W.L.C. 177s.

335) W.C.F. 28:5p (citing Acts 8:13,23). 336) W.L.C. 161s (citing Acts 8:13,23).

337) W.C.F. 28:4l and W.L.C. 166n. 338) W.C.F. 28:5o, citing Acts 10:2,4,22,31,45,47.

339) W.C.F. 27:1a & 28:1c. 340) W.C.F. 28:4m. 341) W.C.F. 28:5o. 342) W.L.C. 162t & 162y.

343) W.L.C. 166o. 344) W.L.C. 167s. 345) W.L.C. 176o.

346) *West. Conf.* 27:1e and *West. Larg. Cat.* 165m & 167r. 347) *West. Conf.* 28:1d. 348) *West. Conf.* 28:1g.

349) *West. Larg. Cat.* 162z. 350) *West. Larg. Cat.* 165k. 351) *West. Larg. Cat.* 167p.

352) *West. Larg. Cat.* 167q. 353) *West. Larg. Cat.* 167tw.

354) W.C.F. 10:3m, citing Rom. 8:9 (*ei de tis Pneuma Christou ouk echei, houtos ouk estin Autou*).

355) W.C.F. 25:2c. 356) W.L.C. 166o. 357) *Westmin. Form Presb. Church Government* d.

358) W.C.F. 27:1d. 359) W.L.C. 162w. 360) W.C.F. 25:2c. 361) W.C.F. 28:4m. 362) W.L.C. 166o.

363) W.L.C. 177s. 364) W.C.F. 25:2b & 27:3h & 28:1b. 365) W.L.C. 62w, 161s, 162a, 165l, 167pqy.

366) W.S.C. 91w. 367) W.F.P.C.G a.

368) W.C.F. 28:1d and W.L.C. 162y, 165fj, 167v, & 177rs which states that "baptism is...a sign and seal of our regeneration...even to infants."

369) *Westminster Directory for the Publick Worship of God*. Of the administration of the sacraments: and first, of baptism.

370) W.C.F. 28:1e & 6r. 371) W.L.C. 166o, 167p & 176o. 372) W.C.F. 27:3g. 373) W.L.C. 161s, 163c & 167s.

374) W.L.C. 161s, compare W.S.C. 91v. 375) W.C.F. 10:3. 376) W.L.C. 165g.

377) *Westminster Directory for the Publick Worship of God*. Of the administration of the sacraments: and first, of baptism, in *The Subordinate Standards of the Free Church of Scotland*, Free Church Offices, Edinburgh, 1933, pp. 288f.

378) J. Lightfoot: *Journal of the Westminster Assembly*, in his *Works* (1834 ed.) XIII p. 301.

379) See Ward's *Bapt. in Script. & Hist.*, p. 56. 380) *West. Conf.* 22:7. 381) *West. Conf.* 23:4.

382) *West. Conf.* 24:3. 383) *West. Conf.* 25:6. 384) *West. Conf.* 29:2. 385) *West. Conf.* 29:6.

386) *West. Conf.* 27:4. 387) *West. Conf.* 28:1,5. 388) *West. Conf.* 20:4. 389) *Ib.* 21:3. 390) *Ib.* 22:2.

391) *Ib.* 23:1. 392) *Ib.* 24:1. 393) *Ib.* 24:5. 394) *Ib.* 26:3. 395) *Ib.* 27:1-3. 396) *Ib.* 28:2-4,7.

397) W.C.F. 10:3. 398) W.C.F. 12:1. 399) W.C.F. 14:1. 400) W.C.F. 24:2-3. 401) *Ib.* 24:3-6.

402) *Ib.* 25:1-2. 403) *West. Conf.* 28:1. 404) *Ib.* 28:2(a), comp. *West. Larg. Cat.* 165. 405) *Ib.* 28:3.

406) W.C.F. 28:4-5. 407) *West. Larg. Cat.* 108r. 408) *Ib.* 112. 409) *Ib.* 113r (the second r).

410) W.L.C. 161-162. 411) *Ib.* 165f. 412) *Ib.* 167. 413) *Ib.* 177. 414) *West. Short. Cat.* 94 & 95.

415) *Op. cit.*, 1972 ed., pp. 66 & n. 112.

416) *Westminster Directory for the Publick Worship of God*. Of the administration of the sacraments: and first, of baptism, in *Sub. Stds.* pp. 288f.

417) *West. Conf.* 27:4. 418) *West. Conf.* 28:1,5. 419) *West. Larg. Cat.* 165f.

420) F.N. Lee: *I Confess! Holy Scripture, the Westminster Confession, and the Declaratory Statement: Their Relationship to One Another in the Presbyterian Church of Australia* (revised ed., Brisbane 1991), pp. 29f.

421) *Westminster Directory for the Publick Worship of God: Of the Administration of the Sacraments -- and first, of Baptism*, in the *Sub. Stand. Free Ch. Scot.* pp. 293f.

422) *West. Conf.* 7:2 & 19:1. 423) *Ib.* 10:3. 424) *Ib.* 24:2 & 25:1-3. 425) *Ib.* 28:1-7.

426) *West. Larg. Cat.* 30 & 35. 427) *Ib.* 165f & 177. 428) *West. Short. Cat.* 94.

429) See De Klerk's *op. cit.* p. 89. 430) Art. 29. 431) Schaff's *Creeeds* I pp. 835f,849f,855f. 432) *Ib.* pp. 88f.

433) Reid's *op. cit.* I pp. 368 & II pp. 388-90 and *The Subordinate Standards of the Free Church of Scotland*, Church Offices, Edinburgh, 1933 ed., pp. 12-13.

434) See F.N. Lee: *The Westminster Divine John Selden on Ancient British Law*, Jesus Saves, Brisbane 1989, p. 1 n. 1; cf. B.B. Warfield's *The Westminster Assembly*, and J.R. de Witt's *Jus Divinum: the Westminster Assembly and the 'Divine Right' of Church Government*, Kok, Kampen, 1969, pp. 25f.

435) See our main text above at its nn. 317-18.

## **VI. BELIEF WITHIN BABIES FROM WESTMINSTER TILL TODAY**

It was not just the Westminster divines John Jackson, Dr. Thomas Goodwin and Dr. Henry Wilkinson who wrote the well-known *Foreword* to the Westminster Standards -- the *Forward* known as *To the Christian Reader (Especially Heads of Families)*. In addition, also many other contemporary and notable Puritans participated in the writing of that *Foreword*. Therein, they heartily recommend the study of the *Westminster Standards*.

In alphabetical order, those other notable Puritans included: Samuel Annesley, William Bates, William Blackmore, Has. Bridges, Jeremiah Burwell, Joseph Church, Samuel Clark, Leo. Cooke, William Cooper, John Cross, Roger Drake, John Fuller, John Glascock, Thomas Gouge, George Griffiths, Matthew Haviland, Arthur Jackson, Thomas Jacomb, William Jenkin, James Jolliffe, Richard Kentish, and Obadiah Lee.

They also included: John Loder, Thomas Manton, James Nalton, Charles Offspring, John Peachie, Edward Perkins, Matthew Pool, Alexander Pringle, Francis Raworth, Samuel Rowles, John Seabrooke, John Sheffield, Samuel Slater, Samuel Smith, William Taylor, Ralph Venning, Thomas Watson, William Whittaker, and William Wickins.<sup>1</sup>

### **484. The 'infant faith' doctrine of the Puritan Thomas Manton**

Of the above, the famous Thomas Manton (1620-77) -- at the request of the Westminster Assembly -- himself composed the *Epistle to the Reader* of those *Westminster Standards*. Manton had been Oliver Cromwell's Chaplain in the English Civil War. He later welcomed back King Charles II, at the time of the Restoration. Indeed, he yet subsequently also participated in the 1661 Savoy Conference of English Anglicans and (mostly Presbyterian) Puritans. Picturesquely, Manton spoke of the infants of believers as being Christ's kingdom in the egg -- a prolific nursery of young flowers for Christ's Church.

"Religion was first 'hatched' in families," Manton explained<sup>2</sup> in his *Epistle to the Reader* (of the *Westminster Standards*). "A family is the seminary of church and state.... By family discipline, officers are trained up for the church. First Timothy 3:4, 'one that ruleth well his own house'.... It is comfortable, certainly, to see thriving nurseries of young plants.... Psalm 102:28, 'the children of Thy servants shall continue'....

"How careful should Ministers and parents be to train up young ones while they are yet pliable!... Families are societies that must be sanctified to God, as well as churches.... I know not what work should be fitter for their use, than that compiled by the Assembly at Westminster -- a Synod of as godly judicious divines...as England ever saw."

Scripture insists about God: "Without faith, it is impossible to please Him." Hebrews 11:6. This, declared Manton,<sup>3</sup> "concerneth the children of believing parents.... Children must have

some kind of faith, else they can never be accepted to life.... Infants come under the rule; therefore some kind of faith they must have.

"It were uncharitable and contrary to the rich grace of the covenant to deny salvation and eternal glory to infants. The Scripture sheweth that 'they are holy' and dedicated to God. First Corinthians 7:14.... Christ says, 'of such is the Kingdom of God.' Matthew 19:14....

"It is true the faith of the parents makes way for the interest of the children in the covenant. But every one is saved by his own faith. 'The just[ified] shall live by his own faith.' Romans 1:17.... Though Adam be a means to transfuse and bring sin, yet the faith of the parents could not involve and put [their child] into a state of salvation and acceptance with God....

"The question is concerning the infants of believing parents.... The question at present, is of the children of the covenant and those that are born within the pale of grace....

"Of those children, dying in infancy, I assert that they have...the seed of faith...in the covenant.... It must be so.... Socinians [alias Unitarians]...count the faith of infants a thing so impossible, that they say it is a greater dotage than the dream of a man in a fever....

"If infants had been born of Adam in innocency, they had been capable of original purity and of the principle and root of all faith.... Assent to the Word of God would naturally have been in them.... Infants, in their measure, should have been as Christ was. As soon as He was born [or even conceived], He was filled with the Holy Ghost.... This, according to their measure, would have been the condition of infants born of Adam -- if he had stood in innocency....

"Take nature as it is now corrupted. If they [infants] are capable of sin by nature -- why not of grace, by a work of the Spirit of God above nature?... The vital and vegetative force in any plant lies hid in the seed and root.... So infants...may have some impressions of the divine image upon their souls.... That it is not impossible, appears by those expressions in Scripture where some are said to be sanctified from the womb....

"So those expressions of trusting God from the mother's womb. David speaks it of his own person, as a type of Christ. Psalm 22:9, 'Thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts'.... Job saith, chapter 31:18, 'from my youth, he [the poor and needy] was brought up with me as with a father; and I have guided her [the needy widow, verse 16], from my mother's womb' -- meaning, he [Job] had a...disposition of pity put into him at his nativity. So also -- why may not a principle of faith be put into us in the womb, if God will work it?"

#### **485. Manton on covenant children being the 'bud' which later 'flowers'**

Manton continued: "God promiseth grace and glory to infants. Grace, Isaiah 44:3, 'I will pour out My Spirit upon thy seed, and My blessing upon thy offspring.' In the original, upon thy 'buds' -- where the Spirit is promised to be poured out upon infants.... On their 'buds' -- ere they come to grow up to stalk and flower.... Matthew 18:6, 'whosoever shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me' &c., there is the very word [*pisteuontōn*]: 'which **believe** in Me.' [Of] These 'little ones' [who 'believe'], Christ speaks not metaphorically, but literally.... In Luke

[18:15], it is called *brephos*, an 'infant' [and in Second Timothy 3:14-15 cf. 1:5, *apo brephous* apparently means: 'from fetushood']....

"What is the faith which children have?... They have the seed of faith or some principle of grace conveyed into their souls by the hidden operation of the Spirit of God, which gives them an interest in Christ and so a right to His merit for their salvation....

"Among the orthodox...all agree in the thing.... It is some work of the Holy Ghost which gives them [believing babies] a relation to Christ.... By virtue of this relation, they have an interest in His merit for the remission of sins and acceptance with God....

"It may be called the principle or the seed of faith. For so the work of the Holy Ghost is expressed. First John 3:9. 'Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin. For His seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God'.... By the sanctifying Spirit, all outward means are supplied and infants are enabled unto that which Dr. Ames calls 'a passive reception' -- by which they are in Christ, and united to Him.... We see many infants of believers, whom in charity we judge to be elect -- because the promise is made to them and their seed....

"We judge of the graft by the stock from whence it is taken, until it bring forth other fruit by which it may be discerned [Romans 11:16f]. So for children, we judge of them by their parents -- until they come to years of discretion and choose their own way....

"Here is comfort to believing parents concerning their children dying in infancy. We should not doubt of their salvation.... Nay, though they die without the seal of the covenant. The Hebrew children were murdered as soon as born, Exodus 1:22. Matthew 2:16, the children of Bethlehem shed their blood by martyrdom before they [could] shed their blood by circumcision.... Leave them in Christ's arms!

"To teach us confidence in the power of divine grace, God can shine into the dark hearts of children.... The Lord can shine into the hearts of infants. Therefore, do no doubt of it! You see what He can do in those that have not the use of reason. God can give the principle of grace. Isaiah 65:20, 'the child shall die'..., speaking of the grace of the Gospel....

"Oh, water the seed of grace! For aught you know, they may be sanctified from the womb. It is said of John the Baptist, Luke 1:15, 'he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb.' Oh, this will make them exert and put forth those hidden operations of grace which God worketh upon their souls! Therefore, water the seed of grace with the dew of education.... Consider, they are God's children; and you are only entrusted with them -- that you may bring them up!"

Further: "Consider the mercy of the covenant -- how it overflows! It is not only stinted [or allowed] to their persons, but runs over to their children. They [the latter] are beloved, for our [their parents'] sakes."

#### **486. Manton's Sermons: the solidarity between believing parents and their babies**

In his sermons, Manton added<sup>4</sup> that where there is "piety of parents..., the children of such...are to be accounted children of the covenant and belonging to the church -- till they do declare the contrary. Romans 11:16.... First Corinthians 7:14.... In their infancy, they are seasoned with good education.... There, God usually chooseth and bestoweth His special grace.... The grace of the covenant runneth most kindly in the channel of the covenant....

"Children are but the parents multiplied, and the parents continued.... God hath a great care of and blessing for the posterity of His servants.... They bring a blessing into their families.... Where the parent is in visible covenant, the children also are in visible covenant with Him -- as soon as born [meaning: conceived]. I say they are without scruple to be accounted children of the covenant and belonging to the church -- till they do declare the contrary.... Romans 11:16.... First Corinthians 7:14.... Acts 10:15.... Ezekiel 16:10 [cf. vv. 9 & 20f]; Romans 9:4....

"If they die in infancy, we need not trouble ourselves about their salvation. God is their God. Genesis 17:1.... Christ died for the Church, and they are part of the Church. Ephesians 5:26f.... God reckoneth upon it. Genesis 18:19....

"He presumeth that in these families, God is known and honoured.... They are not cast off, till they do even wrest themselves out of the arms of mercy.... Genesis 49:26, 'the blessings of thy father have prevailed'.... Genesis 18:19, 'I know that he [Abraham] will command his children and his household after him -- and they shall keep the way of the Lord.'"

In Ezekiel 16:20, that prophet reminded the backslidden people of Israel of "your sons and your daughters whom you have borne unto Me." Here Manton observed:<sup>5</sup> "Those that are born during our being in covenant with God, are born to God -- as the children born in marriage are reckoned to the husband. This is the high privilege which God puts upon His servants.... We judge of the graft, according to the tree from whence it was taken -- till it liveth to bring forth fruit of its own. So of children, according to their father's covenant."

#### **487. David Dickson: covenant babies regenerated in prebaptismal infancy**

Rev. Professor Dr. David Dickson, an orthodox Presbyterian elected by the Church of Scotland to her Chair of Divinity at Glasgow University, seems to have had a large share in drawing up the Westminster Assembly's 1645 *Directory for the Publick Worship of God*. In collaboration with James Durham, he also helped produce the famous *Sum of Saving Knowledge (or a Brief Sum of Christian Doctrine contained in the Holy Scriptures and holden forth in the foresaid Confession of Faith and Catechisms)*.

In 1647, Dickson published his *Exposition of the Evangel of Jesus Christ According to Matthew*. About 1650, he wrote his *Truth's Victory Over Error* (being the first commentary ever written about the *Westminster Confession*) -- and also his *Therapeutica Sacra* (on the method of healing the diseases of conscience concerning regeneration).<sup>6</sup>

In his *Truth's Victory Over Error*, Dickson asked: "Are elect infants, dying in infancy, regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit Who worketh when and where and how He pleaseth?" Echoing the *Westminster Confession* (10:3) itself, he answered, "Yes. Luke 18:15-16; Acts 2:38-39; John 3:3-5; First John 5:12."

Dickson himself then went even further. For he asked: "Do not the Anabaptists err, who maintain that no infants are regenerated?" Dickson then answered: "Yes."

Again, Dickson asked: "By what reasons are they [the Anabaptists] confuted?" He answered: "(1) Because John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb; Luke 1:15. (2) Because the Prophet Jeremiah was sanctified from his mother's womb; Jeremiah 1:5. (3) Because the promise is made to believing parents and to their children conjunctly; Genesis 17:7 and Acts 2:39. (4) Because of such, says Christ, is the kingdom of heaven; Matthew 19:14. (5) Because the Apostle calls children which are descended of but one parent in covenant with God, holy; First Corinthians 7:14. (6) Because God hath promised in the second command[ment] that He will shew mercy unto thousands that are descended of believing parents; Exodus 20:6...."

"To some infants of believers...the Spirit of Christ hath been given. Jeremiah 1:5; Luke 1:15; Matthew 19:14; Mark 10:13-14. And to them do the promises belong. Acts 2:39.... Some children before their baptism have been beloved of God Whose love is unchangeable. Romans 9:11-13. Others have been regenerated by the Holy Ghost; Luke 1:15. And some have also been comprehended within the covenant of grace; Acts 2:39."

In his *Therapeutica Sacra...Concerning Regeneration*, Dickson insisted that "the precise time of begun regeneration is not always observed nor known either by the regenerate man himself or by beholders of his way" [cf. John 3:5-8]. This "experience makes evident -- in many who from their infancy are brought up in the exercises of true religion, in whose conversion no notable change can be observed."

Finally, in his *Exposition of...Matthew* (19:13), Dickson observed that "little children of believers are neither excluded...from being Members of the Visible Church -- nor are they secluded from the Kingdom of Heaven which is above. Therefore they are not excluded from receiving the sign and seal of the right and entry to such grace -- namely the seal of the covenant, baptism. For it is said, 'of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.'"

#### **488. John Trapp: Christian children belong to Jesus**

Similarly, Dickson's contemporary, the famous English Bible Commentator and Puritan John Trapp -- commented<sup>7</sup> on Matthew 19:13-15 that Christ's adult "Disciples...held it a business below their Lord to look upon little ones. But...Christian children are the Church's nursery!"

"The devil seeks to destroy them, as he did the babes of Bethlehem. But Christ hath a gracious respect unto them, and sets them [alias Christ's Own infants] on a Rock that is higher than they..."



"'For of such is the kingdom.' That is, all the blessings of heaven and earth comprised in the covenant -- belong both to these and such as these. Matthew 18:3.... 'He laid His hands on them'.... By this symbol, He adopted [them] for His Own."

#### **489. Richard Baxter: covenant infants inwardly renewed before their baptism**

Around 1649, Rev. Dr. Richard Baxter, the great British Puritan Presbyterian, held that many infants are to be regarded as Christ's followers. Acts 7:38; 15:10; Luke 9:47-49; Romans 1:17; Matthew 23:37-39 and Revelation 11:15.

The children of the Israelites, Baxter explained, were admitted to the Old Covenant. Similarly, the children of Christians -- including infants adopted by them (*cf.* Genesis 17:10) -- are admitted to the New Covenant which replaced the Old. Thus, infant baptism is a sign to enter covenant children as Members of the Visible Church -- and to solemnize their dedication to Christ.<sup>8</sup>

It is significant that Baxter understood Matthew 23:37 (above) exactly as did Calvin -- namely, that Christ loved His Own tiny children in Jerusalem just as a mother hen loves her own little chickens. Indeed, Baxter declared:<sup>9</sup> "I know no man since the Apostles' days whom I value and honour more than Calvin -- whose judgment in all things one with another I more esteem and come nearer to."

Indeed, Baxter's own 1651 *Plain Scripture Proof of Infant Church Membership and Baptism* gave many arguments supporting this Calvinistic teaching. There, Baxter affirmed<sup>10</sup> that "in nineteen cases out of twenty our children -- consecrated to God in their infancy -- would grow up dutiful...and, before they reached mature age, recognize their membership by a personal act" of confessing Christ as Saviour.

Baxter also maintained that "grace is given to our children, as well as to us.... That it is so with the infants of believers, I have fully proved in my *Book of Baptism*....

"The grace of the remission of original sin, the children of all believers have at least a high probability of.... The grace of inward renewing of their nature and disposition...is a secret for us." That is, the renewal of the human nature of tiny covenant infants -- though indeed factual -- "is hidden even to their own parents."

Speaking of the Baptist Tombes, the Presbyterian Baxter further held: "We have a stronger probability than he mentioneth, of the salvation of all the infants of the faithful so dying.... Arguments will prove more than a probability -- even a full certainty -- of the salvation of all believers' infants so dying."

Because he presupposed prebaptismal faith within the covenant children themselves, Baxter also insisted on their infant baptism. This, of course, was not to initiate but rather to confirm infant faith already deemed to be present within them.

As Baxter himself explained in his *Review of the State of Christians' Infants*:<sup>11</sup> "God has kept me from the snare of Anabaptistry.... I lay not so much as some do on the mere outward act or water of baptism."

For Baxter was "believing that our heart-consent and dedication qualifieth infants for a covenant-right **before** actual baptism (which yet is Christ's regular solemnization and investiture).... Yet I make a great matter of the main controversy. Notwithstanding that I hereticate not the Anabaptists for the bare opinions' sake. Nor would I have them persecuted."

Indeed, we must say -- continued Baxter -- as did "the Synod of Dort [I:17]..., that 'believing parents have no cause to doubt the salvation of their children that die in infancy'.... It is very probable that this ascertaining promise belongeth not only to the natural seed of believers, but also to all whom they have the true power and right to dedicate in covenant to God" -- such as all children they might adopt, even from unbelieving strangers. See Genesis 17:12-27.

As even the Anglican baptismal scholar Rev. Dr. Wall admits: "I do not dislike that sentence of Mr. Baxter where...speaking of a child dying before actual baptism. He says...'that our heart-consent and dedication qualifies infants for a covenant-right **before** actual baptism.'"

#### **490. Christopher Love: the 'seed of grace' within elect covenant infants**

Similarly, also the Puritan Christopher Love made an important statement. In 1653, we find him declaring<sup>12</sup> that covenant infants have "habitual faith" -- alias incipient trust and "seminary grace" (alias the seminal 'seed of mercy') -- if they belong to the elect.

Such elect covenant infants, explained Love, can and do have sin -- also before they themselves are actually noticed to behave sinfully. So too, they also have saving grace -- **before** they themselves actually exhibit repentance.

#### **491. Thomas Brooks: baby baptism for the infants of the godly alone**

The Puritan Thomas Brooks was a graduate of Cambridge's Emmanuel College and a chaplain in the English Civil War. In 1653, we find him writing<sup>13</sup> that "baptism is to be administered to the children of believing parents who walk in the order of the Gospel."

Yet Brooks correctly continued: "I have refused -- and shall refuse -- to baptize the children of profane, ignorant, malignant and scandalous persons.... Such persons that are profane, ignorant, malignant, scandalous, &c., if they were now to be baptized themselves, ought not to be baptized -- they having no right to baptism. As these Scriptures...do evidence: Matthew 3:5-12; Mark 1:4f; Acts 2:38-41; Luke 3:3; Acts 13:24; 8:12; 8:31-40; 10:45-48; 18:8; 22:16f; &c. So [too] Psalm 50:16f [and]...Hosea 2:2f....

"The child" of the covenant, however, is to "grow up to manifest his own faith. As these Scriptures, among many others that might be produced, prove: Genesis 17:7f; Acts 2:39-41; First Corinthians 7:14; &c.....

Brooks concludes: "By administering that holy ordinance [of infant baptism] to the children of profane, ignorant, scandalous persons -- I shall make myself guilty of nourishing and cherishing in such wicked persons such vain opinions and conceits that cannot but be very prejudicial to their souls. As: that they have a right to that precious ordinance, when they have none; that God hath taken their children into covenant as well as the children of the best believers in the world, when He had not."

#### **492. William Guthrie: many are called from their earliest days**

Rev. William Guthrie lived from 1620 until 1665. At the time of his death, he was one of the most famous theologians in the Church of Scotland.

Discussing the regeneration of covenant infants, Guthrie declared<sup>14</sup> that "there are some called from the womb -- as John the Baptist was (Luke 1)." Again, others are called "in very early years, before they can be actively engaged in Satan's ways -- as Timothy (II Timothy 3:15)."

Guthrie concluded that there are **many** "who can apply these things to themselves." Such persons, then, "have much to say -- for their effectual calling from their youth" alias from their earliest days.

#### **493. The Antirebaptism of the Paedobaptist John Owen**

The famous Calvinistic Congregationalist Puritan Rev. Dr. John Owen -- perhaps the greatest British Theologian of all time -- certainly did not disagree with the above. He explained:<sup>15</sup> "There are two ways by which God saveth infants. First, by interesting them in the covenant, if their immediate or remote parents have been believers.... Secondly, by His grace of election."

In his work *The Chamber of Imagery in the Church of Rome Laid Open*, Owen rightly condemned Rome's *ex opere operato* view of the sacraments. Wrote Owen: "They turned the outward signs into the things signified. So in this [sign] of baptism, they make it to stand in the stead of the thing itself. Which is to make it, if not[!] an idol -- [then] yet an image of it."

Owen really opened up -- in his work against *A Display of Arminianism: being a Discovery [or Disclosure] of the Old Pelagian Idol 'Free-Will' etc.* There, he observed<sup>16</sup> that "original sin...hath in itself, even after baptism, the nature of sin."

Original sin, wrote Owen, is frequently and evidently taught in the Word of God -- "and...denied by the Arminians." The latter erroneously allege that "infants are simply in that estate in which Adam was before his fall." Saith [the Arminian] Venator: 'Neither is it at all

considerable, whether they be the children of believers or of heathens and infidels. For infants, as infants, have all the same innocency."

Responded Owen: "In this last expression, these bold innovators...have quite overthrown a sacred verity; an apostolic, catholic, fundamental article of Christian religion. But truly, to me there are no stronger arguments of the sinful corruption of our nature than to see such nefarious issues of unsanctified hearts....

"Even those infants of whose innocency the Arminians boast, are unclean in the verdict of St. Paul, First Corinthians 7:14 -- if not **sanctified by an interest in the promise of the covenant**....

We are truly, **intrinsically** and inherently sanctified by the Spirit and grace of Christ.... That wretched opposition to the power of godliness wherewith **from the womb** we are replenished, confirms the same truth.

In his famous tract *Of Schism*, Owen discussed his own Congregationalistic recognition of the validity of baptisms administered especially in the ritualistic Church of England. What should those seceding from that body, then think of their baptisms earlier received there?

There, he referred<sup>17</sup> to "our receiving our regeneration and new birth through the grace of God -- by the preaching of the Word and the saving truths thereof, here professed with the seal of it in our baptism.... We own [or acknowledge] ourselves to have been, and to be, children of the Church of England -- because we have received all this by the administration of the Gospel here in England."

Owen then distanced himself from the British Baptists. For he continued: "Here indeed we are left by them who renounce the baptism they have received in their infancy and repeat it again amongst themselves."

#### **494. Owen on the commanded baptism of infants specifically by sprinkling**

Coming next specifically to his writing on *Infant Baptism and Dipping*, Owen first dealt -- with the doctrine of Paedobaptism. He declared<sup>18</sup> that "the children of believers are all of them capable of the grace signified in baptism. And some of them are certainly partakers of it -- namely such as die in their infancy....

"Therefore, they [the children of believers] and indeed before they might 'die in their infancy'] may and ought to be baptized. For...unless they are regenerated or born again, they must all perish inevitably. John 3:3 [*cf.* 3:23-26 & 1:25-33].

"Their regeneration is the grace whereof baptism is a sign and token. Wherever this is -- there, baptism **ought** to be administered....

"God having appointed baptism as the sign and seal of regeneration" -- who is man to deny it? "Unto whom he denies it -- he denies the grace signified by it.... But this is contrary --

to...the nature and promises of the covenant; the testimony of Christ reckoning them to the Kingdom of God; the faith of godly parents; and the belief of the Church in all ages.

"It follows hence, unavoidably, that infants who die in their infancy -- have the grace of regeneration, and consequently...a right unto baptism..... Christ doth sanctify infants...of believing parents.... Christ, passing through all ages, evidenced His design to exclude no age -- to communicate His grace unto all sorts and ages."

Owen next dealt with the question of the right mode of baptism. While repudiating all unscriptural and also various post-biblical forms of baptism -- both the vertical submersionism of mediaeval Romanism (as well as the more recent backward-leaning immersionism of the British Baptists) -- he did not deny their baptismal validity.

"*Baptō*," held Owen, is "used in...Scriptures" like "Luke 16:24" and "John 13:26" and "Revelation 19:13.... Revelation 19:13 is better rendered, 'stained by sprinkling'.... The Hebrew word *tābal* is rendered by the Septuagint...[in] Genesis 27:31 'to stain by sprinkling' -- or otherwise, mostly by *baptō*.... It doth not signify properly 'to dip'....

"Aquinas [the Romanist] is for dipping of children.... But he maintains pouring or sprinkling to be lawful also.... He meddles not with the sense of the word -- as being too wise to speak of that which he understood not. For he knew no Greek....

"There is not one word nor one expression that mentions any resemblance between dipping under water and the death and burial of Christ.... Our being 'planted together in the likeness of His death' [Romans 6:4-6], is not our being dipped under water -- but 'the crucifying of the old man' [compare Hebrews 6:2-6]."

Hebrews (5:12 to 6:2) clearly associates baptism with babies. Later (10:22), it encourages adults to remember their earlier sealing. That was long after their little hearts[when yet babies] had been sprinkled from an evil conscience -- so that their bodies could thereafter be washed with pure water.

In his famous *Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews* (6:1f), Owen rightly commented:<sup>19</sup> "The **baptism** of Christ was the doctrine of Christianity, wherewith He was to '**sprinkle** many nations.' Isaiah 52:15 [*cf.* too 53:1-2's "**tender plant**" and 53:3-12's "**poured**"]. This is the first baptism of the Gospel....

"This repentance in the nature and kind of it, is a duty to be continued in the whole course of our lives.... Peter tells us that 'saving baptism' doth not consist in the washing away of the filth of the body, First Peter 3:21. Therefore, the expression must be figurative."

#### **495. The 'infant faith' doctrine of Cornelius Poudroyen the Voetian**

The famous Dutch Calvinist Cornelius Poudroyen popularized the views of Voetius -- who himself so greatly appreciated the 'infant faith' views of the famous Westminster divine Rev. Dr.

Cornelius Burgess. Indeed, in 1653, Voetius himself wrote the *Foreword* for Poudroyen's own work: *Catechizing from the Heidelberg Catechism*.

There, Poudroyen insisted<sup>20</sup> that believers' children themselves "**have the Holy Spirit** and the redemption from sin -- **just as the adults do.**" The question was asked: "Prove that the children have the Spirit of God?" Poudroyen replied: "First Corinthians 7:14 -- 'Otherwise your children would be unclean; but **now, they are holy.**'"

The next question asked: "Can one prove from this text, that the little children have the Holy Spirit?" Poudroyen answered: "Yes."

But "How?" -- asked the next question. "Because," answered Poudroyen, "one cannot be holy, without the Holy Spirit.... **Children [therefore] have faith.**"

Poudroyen elaborated yet further. Covenant infants, he affirmed, have "the root and seed of faith, from which the Holy Spirit ignites and inflames their spiritual zeal when they increase in years.... They have the Spirit of Christ.... Wherever the Spirit of Christ is, there too is faith -- whether an active faith, as in adults; or whether **the root** and origin **of faith**, as in **small children.**"

In passing, we mention that the greatest Calvinist of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries -- Rev. Professor Dr. Abraham Kuyper (Sr.) -- thought very highly of Poudroyen. So much so, that Kuyper republished Poudroyen's *Catechism* -- in 1891. Indeed, Kuyper himself even wrote a fresh *Foreword* to it -- as the great Voetius had done previously.

#### **496. The Anti-Anabaptist German Reformed theologian Cocceius**

The great German Reformed theologian Rev. Professor Dr. John Koch alias Johannes Cocceius is often called 'the father of federal theology.' He was trained by Bremen's Synod of Dordt delegates, Rev. Professor Dr. Ludwig Crocius and Rev. Professor Dr. Matthias Martinius.

Cocceius was, later still, further instructed in Friesland -- by two very famous covenant theologians. These were the great British Puritan Rev. Professor Dr. William Ames, and the renowned Polish Calvinist Rev. Professor Dr. John Maccovi(us).<sup>21</sup>

Cocceius's first polemic was against the Romanists and the Socinians. Thereby he showed himself to be indisputably a scholar of the very first rank (thus Rev. Dr. H. Kaajan).<sup>22</sup>

Cocceius has given us a very lucid statement against all rebaptism. He does so, apparently referring to the well-known baptismal passages in Hebrews (6:1-6 and 10:22-27). They read as follows:

'Leaving behind the first things of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on to perfection -- not again laying down the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, the doctrine of **baptism**.... For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened..., if they shall

fall away, to renew them again unto repentance -- seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh....

'We have had our hearts **sprinkled** from an evil conscience. Consequently, we have had our bodies **washed** with pure **water**.... If we keep on sinning wilfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more sacrifice for sins -- but a certain fearful looking out for judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.'

On the above passages, around 1648 we find Cocceius writing:<sup>23</sup> "The reason why baptism is not repeated, is to be sought not in the impression -- but in the thing signified.... If it were repeated, either it would not be teaching the ingrafting into Christ...or it would be teaching the imperfection and weakness of the first ingrafting -- as if communion with Christ might be rescinded and begun afresh!

"But...Christ cannot die a second time. So if, once a man has been united to Christ, he could not be separated from Him -- there could be no reparation! Hebrews 10:26."

Speaking of covenant infants, Cocceius therefore "confidently trusted...that these have **already been sanctified**." For John (the baptizer), explained Cocceius,<sup>24</sup> "being not yet born, saluted the Lord conceived -- with a leap!"

#### **497. The Anti-Anabaptist German Reformed theologian Wendelin**

In 1656, the famous German Reformed theologian Rev. Professor Dr. Mark Frederick Wendelin of Heidelberg -- after helping gain the victory for Calvinism over Lutheranism in the German Palatine -- wrote his great work *Christian System of Theology*. This was soon translated into both Dutch and Hungarian. Four years later, he further wrote his noted *Collation of Christian Doctrine from the Calvinists and the Lutherans*.

In the former work, Wendelin stated<sup>25</sup> that "the '**possessed faith**' which we attribute to infants, we truly call -- either 'the root' or '**the seed**' of faith." In the latter work, Wendelin stated that "baptism is not absolutely necessary to salvation. Many are saved even without baptism, both children and grown-ups."

#### **498. Lodensteyn: only children of holy covenanters to be baptized**

Around 1660, the famous Dutch Reformed Theologian, Rev. Dr. Jodocus van Lodensteyn began his career of serious writing. Lodensteyn had studied under both Voetius and Cocceius. Predictably therefore he himself thenceforth insisted<sup>26</sup> that, "in the event of the covenantal unholiness of both parents..., the child should not be baptized."

Lodensteyn explained:<sup>27</sup> "Our doctrine about this, is that one may **not baptize all children**, but **only the holy ones**. Such are children made holy or sanctified by faith..., as the Holy Spirit says. First Corinthians 7:14 . In consequence of this, we say they must be children of Christian parents. They must be children of believers..., in man's fallible judgment."

#### **499. The paedobaptistic Savoy Declaration of English Congregationalists**

In 1558, some two hundred Independent Puritans gathered together in London and drew up the *Savoy Declaration*. It was attended by leading British Congregationalists -- including William Bridge, Joseph Caryl, Thomas Goodwin, William Greenhill, Philip Nye and John Owen. The gathering quickly reached agreement, and then issued its *Declaration*.

This consists of three documents -- a Preface, a Church Polity, and the *Savoy Confession of Faith*. The latter, except for the chapters on ecclesiastical government, is essentially the same as the paedobaptistic *Westminster Confession* -- except that its postmillennialism is even more strongly expressed.

The latter is really remarkable -- considering that these Congregationalists' ailing political leader Oliver Cromwell died in that same year. Indeed, even then, the restoration of the British monarchy seemed likely soon to succeed.

What was therefore needed, was a Pan-Calvinist Alliance in Britain -- one grounded especially in a fresh coalition between paedobaptistic Congregationalists and Presbyterians. The commitment of both of those groups to the presumed regeneratedness of covenant children before their baptism in infancy, might greatly facilitate such a coalition.

#### **500. Flavel: holy covenant infants are holy twigs on holy branches**

The English Puritan Rev. Dr. John Flavel had been educated at Oxford University. He then became a Lecturer in Dartmouth. From about 1665 onward, he promoted the 'Happy Union' of Congregationalists and Presbyterians -- on the basis of the *Westminster Confession* and the *Savoy Confession* (as its 'Independent' counterpart).

In addition, he also wrote on infant salvation. He did so, especially in connection with Paul's picture of the cultivated olive-tree and its Israelitic branches. There, claimed Flavel, its fruitless "branches were broken off; then you [Gentile converts], having been a wild olive-tree, were grafted in amongst them.' Romans 11:17.

Wrote Flavel:<sup>28</sup> "It is clear to me beyond all contradiction from Romans 11:17..., that...God brake off the unbelieving Jews from the Church. Both parents and children together [of] the believing Gentiles...are as truly Abraham's seed as they [the Old Testament Israelites] were. Galatians 3:29.

For the believing Gentiles "were implanted or ingrafted in their room" -- alias in the place of the unbelieving Israelites. Such believing Gentiles thenceforth "as amply enjoy the privileges of that covenant, both internal and external, for themselves and for their infant-seed -- as ever any members of the 'Jewish' Church did or could do....



"The **children** of such believing parents, are **declared** to be federally **holy**. First Corinthians 7:14.... The unbelieving Jews...are by the Apostle persuaded to submit themselves to it. Acts 2:38f.

The Apostle Peter kept on "assuring them [the Hebrew people] that the same promise -- viz. 'I will be a God to thee and to thy seed after thee' -- is now as effectually sealed to them and their children by baptism, as it was in the former age by circumcision.... [Thus too] the Gentiles..., whenever God shall call them, shall enjoy the same privilege both for themselves and for their children also."

#### **501. Flavel: same sap in Christian as was in Israelitic branches and twigs**

Flavel continued:<sup>29</sup> "Such a condition of salvation, we assert faith to be in the New covenant grant. That is to say, the grant of salvation by God in gospel-covenant, is suspended from all men -- till they believe.... Matthew 18:3..., 'Except ye be **converted** and become **as little children**' -- ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven'....

"If the first-fruit be holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root be holy, so are the branches.' Romans 11:13-15. *I.e.*, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob -- being in covenant with God -- a federal holiness is from them derived to [alias transmitted into] the branches....

"Job 14:7-9, 'there is hope of a tree, though it be cut down, that it will sprout again -- and that the tender branch thereof will not cease. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof dry on the ground -- yet through the scent of water, it will bud and bring forth boughs like a plant'....

"The Gentile believers and their children do now enjoy -- by virtue of their interest in the same root.... [They] 'partake with them [the believing Israelites] of the root and fatness of the olive[-tree].'

"Certainly the sap is the **same** which the root sends into all the branches..., and is as plentifully communicated to the ingrafted as to the natural branches. For the watering of this olive[-tree] with the more rich and plentiful grace of the Gospel, must make the olive-tree as fat and flourishing as ever it was -- to supply all its branches, and more than ever before....

"Both their infants [the Old Testament Israelites' babies] and ours [Christians' covenant children] are comprehended in the parents -- as **twigs** are comprehended in the branch... Also in First Corinthians 7:14...and...Acts 2:38f....

"Abraham may say to all his children, as Christ does [in] John 15:4f -- 'I am the vine, ye are the branches' &c. I am He That sanctifies you....

"The federal holiness of children results from the immediate parent's faith or covenant interest, as well as from the remoter progenitors. Else we cannot understand how the Corinthians' children should be holy, or how the promise should belong to the children of them that are afar off -- viz. the Gentiles who...became ingrafted branches by **faith**, and so suck the

fatness of the olive[-tree] to themselves and **to their buds or children** as the natural branches did."

## **502. Witsius: covenant children to be regarded as regenerate (prebaptismally)**

From about 1670 onward, the great Rev. Dr. Herman Witsius -- Professor of Theology first at Franeker, then at Utrecht, and next at Leyden -- propounded his views of the covenant. In his *Economy of the Covenants*, he declared:<sup>30</sup> "By the same Word whereby the elect are called to communion with God and His Christ, they are also regenerated.... James...1:18....

"Here, all things are deep -- and wrapt up in mystery. Who can unfold to us the secrets of his own corporal birth? Who can distinctly declare in what manner he was poured out like milk, and curdled like cheese within the bowels of his mother [Job 10:10]?

"The prophet [David] himself cried out: 'I will praise Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made.... My substance was not hidden from Thee when I was [being] made in secret..., my substance yet being unperfect[ed].' Psalm 139:14-16....

"These things which regard the origin of our body...are involved in such darkness, as to frustrate the enquiries of the most sagacious. How much more involved, are the things that constitute our spiritual regeneration?... None can doubt [them] to be mystery all over."

Regeneration, continued Witsius, "is so necessary -- that without it there is no entering into the Kingdom of heaven. John 3:3-5.... We give this definition of it: 'Regeneration is that supernatural act of God whereby a new and divine life is infused into the elect person spiritually dead -- and that, from the incorruptible seed of the Word of God, made fruitful by the infinite power of the Spirit....

"There is not the least doubt but [that] regeneration is accomplished in a moment.... Heaven is open only to the actually regenerate, John 3:3....

"After a principle [alias a beginning] of spiritual life is infused into the elect soul by regeneration, divine grace does not always proceed therein in the same method and order.... The spirit of the **life** of Christ may lie as it were dormant...almost in the same manner as vegetative life in the seed of a plant....

"No vital operations can yet proceed therefrom -- though savingly united to Christ.... This is the case with respect to elect and **regenerate infants**, whose is the kingdom of God. They therefore are reckoned among believers and saints....

"Moreover, this spirit of a new life will even sometimes exert itself in vital actions in those who have received it in their infancy -- as they gradually advance in years.... God is pleased 'out of the mouth of babes and sucklings to ordain strength.' Psalm 8:2 [cf. Matthew 21:15f]. This has been especially observed in some dying children [see *Decrees of Dordt* I:17 and *Westminster Confession* 10:3]....

"It often happens that this principle of spiritual life which had discovered [or uncovered] its activity in the most tender childhood, grows up by degrees with the person. This is "after the example of our Lord, Who 'increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man' (Luke 2:52) -- and of John the baptizer, who grew and waxed strong in spirit (Luke 1:80).

"Such persons make continual progress in the way of sanctification -- and grow insensibly [both unawares and inconspicuously] 'unto a perfect[ed] man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.' Ephesians 4:13. We have an illustrious example of this in Timothy, 'who from a child [actually "from fetushood"] had known the Holy Scriptures' (Second Timothy 3:15) -- and who in his tender youth, to Paul's exceeding joy, had given evident signs of an unfeigned faith....

"It would be wrong to require those who, being regenerated in their infancy, have grown up all along with the quickening spirit -- to declare the time and manner of their passage from death to life. It is sufficient if they can comfort themselves and edify others with the fruits of regeneration and the constant tenor of a pious life. It is, however, the duty of all -- to recollect, not in a careless manner, the operations of the Spirit of grace on their hearts....

### **503. Witsius on the infant baptizing of regenerated covenant babies**

Witsius went on:<sup>31</sup> "Peter supplies us with another argument. Acts 2:38-39. 'Be baptized every one of you in the Name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost! For the promise is unto you and to your children'.... The promise of grace was made not only to parents, but also to their children. It therefore follows, that not only parents but also their children are to be baptized....

"Mention simply is made of children, without distinction of age. But also because God expressly promised to Abraham to be the God of his seed -- which He applies to an infant eight days old. Genesis 17:7-12. We add that Christ permitted little children to come to Him, laid His hands upon them, and declared that of such was the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 19:13-15. But whom Matthew calls *paidia*, 'little children,' Luke chapter 18:15 calls *brephē*, 'infants' [alias unweaned babies].... It is therefore evident that to infants are also made the promises of grace and salvation....

"Infants make [up or constitute] a part of the Church, which [symbolically] is purified by the washing of water.... They who belong to the Church of God, have a right to baptism.... Baptism is the sign of association with and seal of initiation into the Church. Acts 2:41....

"That infants belong to the Church, appears from this -- that when God commanded His Church to be gathered together, He did not suffer their 'little ones and those that sucked the breasts' to be absent. Deuteronomy 29:10-11 & Joel 2:16." Indeed, He even "protests that 'they were born unto Him.' Ezekiel 16:20."

Witsius concluded: "Here certainly appears the extraordinary love of our God -- in that as soon as we are born [or conceived], and just as we come from our mother [at later birth], He hath

commanded us to be solemnly brought from her bosom as it were into His own arms, [so] that He should bestow upon us in the very cradle the [baptismal] tokens of our dignity....

"He should put that song in our mouth: 'Thou didst make me hope, when I was upon my mother's breast. I was cast upon Thee, from the womb. Thou are my God, from my mother's belly. Psalm 22:9-10.... In a word, He should join us to Himself in the most solemn covenant -- from our most tender years. The remembrance of which, as it is glorious and full of consolation to us -- so in like manner it tends to promote Christian virtues and the strictest holiness through the whole course of our lives."

#### **504. Witsius on *The Efficacy of Baptism in Infants***

Witsius also wrote an important essay on *The Efficacy of Baptism in Infants*.<sup>32</sup> There, he taught that the baptism of covenant children -- seals communion with Christ and forgiveness of sin and regeneration.

Witsius explained: "There can hardly be any doubt that the statement regarding the regeneration of the children before baptism, according to the judgment of love, is the accepted view of the Dutch Church. In her *Baptismal Formula*, this question is put to parents who offer their children in baptism: 'Do you acknowledge that they are sanctified in Christ, and should be baptized as members of His congregation?' To this question, a confirmatory answer is required.

"Now this strengthens the views of those who place the initial regeneration of elect covenant children before baptism. So, I acknowledge I submit to this."

Witsius rejected<sup>33</sup> "the 'Romish' view that regeneration takes place during baptism.... It is irreconcilable with the baptizing of believing adults, in whom regeneration obviously already exists" -- or rather: already seems to exist.

Witsius also absolutely rejected the notion that regeneration can only come after infant baptism -- 'because children are incapable of being born again.' That is absurd, explained Witsius. For "if the children of believers were not to be regarded as such as [already] have communion with Christ and the Church -- they would have to be regarded as those who are under the wrath of God; in the power of the devil; and in the state of damnation.

"They would then, at least as regards their present state, not differ from the children of all others -- who stand very far outside the covenant of God. For no middle ground has been given. Those who are not of Christ, must still belong to Satan."<sup>34</sup>

However, "whenever God has adopted the elect children from their birth [or even their conception] into the fellowship of His covenant -- when He has united them with Christ and reconciled them with Himself in the forgiving of their original sin -- no reason can be given why He does not at the same time regenerate them." We "understand by 'regeneration' the grace of God through which the very first beginning of Spirit-ual life (*primo primum vitae spiritualis principium*) is poured into a human (*homini...infunditur*) who was spiritually dead."<sup>35</sup>

Witsius concluded:<sup>36</sup> "The children [of believers] are regenerated [in infancy], but the seed remains hidden for many years under the earth-clod. It is not choked by the thorns and thistles of youthful desires. Later, by addition of more grace, it finally surmounts the hindrances -- and germinates and breaks forth more strongly and fortuitously.... God is not only free to impart the grace of regeneration to the elect children before they receive baptism. It should be believed that He, as a rule, also does this."

### **505. Appreciations of Witsius's covenant theology by later theologians**

Witsius was much appreciated by the Scottish Presbyterians. They rightly regarded him as faithfully setting forth the correct and confessional view of the covenant. Even the famous Baptist, Rev. Dr. John Gill, commended Witsius. Indeed, Gill himself wrote the *Preface*<sup>37</sup> to the 1804 Edinburgh edition of Witsius's great work *The Economy of the Covenants between God and Man*.<sup>38</sup>

Also Rev. Professor Dr. William Cunningham, the later Professor of Church History of the Free Church College at Edinburgh, greatly appreciated Witsius. Wrote Cunningham:<sup>39</sup> "Witsius thought that no man could honestly and intelligently contend for the [alleged] truth of the doctrine that 'Christ had died for all men' -- until he had first enervated or explained away what was implied in the phrase.... There is much in the history of theological discussion to confirm this opinion" -- even as regards the salvation of those dying in infancy.

Witsius was also much appreciated by Princeton Seminary's Rev. Professor Dr. Lyman H. Atwater -- the colleague of the great Charles Hodge. In his own 1857 work *The Children of the Church and Sealing Ordinances*, Atwater approvingly affirmed:<sup>40</sup> "Witsius, having shown that many children of the pious prove [later] not to be children of God...[nevertheless rightly] says: 'Charity requires us to count them as beloved children of God, and as of His family -- till they evince the contrary by their depraved disposition and conduct.'"

Rev. Professor Dr. John Macleod, Principal-Emeritus of Edinburgh's Free Church College, expressed similar appreciation in his 1939 lectures delivered at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia.<sup>41</sup> Explained Macleod in his book *Scottish Theology*:<sup>42</sup> "Over and above Scottish works expository of the covenant (such as those of Rutherford, Patrick, Gillespie, Boston and other 'Marrow' divines), there were few books dealing with the subject that had more value put upon them -- than Herman Witsius on the *Economy of the Covenants*."

### **506. Thomas Watson: God's kingdom belongs to covenant children**

Also around 1670, Thomas Watson, the celebrated seventeenth century British Puritan, maintained the same doctrine. In his *Body of Divinity*,<sup>43</sup> he observed that "baptism...is a matriculation or visible admission of children into the congregation of Christ's flock....

"To such as belong to the election, baptism is a 'seal of the righteousness of faith'...and a badge of adoption. Romans 4:11.... The **infant** seed of believers may as well lay a claim to the

covenant of grace as their parents.... They cannot justly be denied baptism, which is its seal.... Does not **their** faith need strengthening, as well as [that of] others?"

Watson continued: "The practice of baptizing infants, may be drawn from Scripture by undeniable consequence.... Children during their infancy are capable of grace. Therefore they are capable of baptism.... The kingdom of heaven may belong to them.... Who then can forbid that the seal of baptism should be applied to them?... Children in their infancy, being God's servants -- why should they not have baptism...?"

Watson then concluded by assailing the Anabaptists by name. For he insisted that "how far God has given up many persons who are for deferring baptism to other vile opinions and vicious practices, is evident if we consult history -- especially if we read the doings of the Anabaptists in Germany....

"Those parents are to be blamed -- who forbid little children to be brought to Christ, and withhold from them this ordinance. By denying their infants baptism, they exclude them from membership in the Visible Church -- so that [to them] their infants are sucking pagans."

#### **507. John Edwards: unborn infants attached to the navels of their godly mothers**

We now come to the great British Puritan theologian Rev. Dr. John Edwards (1637-1716) -- not to be confused with the even greater and somewhat later American Puritan Rev. Professor Dr. Jonathan Edwards. A Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge, Dr. John Edwards taught there from about 1670 onward. Edwards wrote more than forty books. An admirer once called him: "The Paul, the Augustine, the Bradwardine, the Calvin of his age."

In his *Exercitation of Canticles*, John Edwards connected the "navel passage" Song of Songs 7:2 with First Corinthians 7:14. Those who are "against baptizing infants," he explained, "are ignorant and understand not what they do." Nor do they understand that although unborn covenant infants "are not able to take in spiritual nourishment after the ordinary way" -- there is another way, viz. 'navelly' alias **fetally**. (Cited by Gale, in Wall's *op. cit.* III p. 216.)

Referring to Song of Songs 7:2, Edwards then continued: "It may be done (as is said here) by the navel -- by that federal knot or link which ties them fast to their Christian and believing parents. Which, according to the best divines, is an unanswerable argument to prove the validity of infant baptism.

"For they [infants] belong to the covenant as they are the offspring of the faithful, and thence are pronounced 'holy' by the Apostle. First Corinthians 7:14.....

" The use of the navel is not only to convey nutriment to the *foetus*, but to fasten the *foetus* to the mother. Which denotes that intimate union and conjunction with the Church of Christ, our common mother, that is made by the baptismal performance."

### **508. John Henry Heidegger: the prebaptismal faith of covenant infants**

The Swiss Reformed Dr. John Henry Heidegger was Professor of Theology first in Steinfurt and later in Zurich. He wrote<sup>44</sup> that "the subject of baptism is God's faithful people...apart from any distinctions of race, sex and **age**.... [Therefore, both] adults and children are baptized."

By the word 'children' in our last paragraph here above, Heidegger meant only "those children who -- born in the Church's lap to believing parents -- rejoice in the covenant of grace, and likewise rightly rejoice in the seals of it.... The Holy Spirit applies to them the immediate merit of faith in Christ....

"**Regenerated and sanctified even in their mother's womb**..., baptism is presently the sign of a regeneration already made and persevering right up to death" - explained Heidegger. "However, that operation of the Holy Spirit is hidden.... For those who die in infancy, baptism is as surely the sign of regeneration and of ingrafting into Christ -- as their body is surely sprinkled with water."

### **509. Turretine: covenant children of unholy parents have radical faith**

The great theologian Rev. Professor Dr. Francois Turretine was the French-Swiss son of the noted Reformed theologian Benedict Turretine. The latter had himself studied under that famous 1618<sup>f</sup> Synod of Dordt delegate, the Italian-Swiss Rev. Professor Dr. John Diodati.<sup>45</sup>

Consequently, even the younger Turretin -- through his father -- had close links even with the Synod of Dordt itself. (That latter, of course, had categorically stated the regeneratedness of all early-dying infants of godly parents.)

Francois Turretine said that covenant "children are just as much to be baptized as adults."<sup>46</sup> For "**the faith of covenant infants...consists of an initial action in them**." That infant faith is "in root, not in fruit." It is characterized "by an internal action of the Spirit, not by an external demonstration in works."<sup>47</sup>

After Turretine's death in 1687, his *Theological Institutes* were published. This work was to have tremendous influence -- especially among North American Presbyterians.

Turretine added:<sup>48</sup> "Concerning the subject of faith, a question is mooted as to infants.... There are two extremes. 1, in defect, by the Anabaptists, who deny all faith to infants -- and under this pretext exclude them from baptism. 2, in excess, by the Lutherans, who to oppose themselves to the Anabaptists have fallen into the other extreme -- maintaining that infants are regenerated in baptism, and [thereby] actually furnished with faith....

"The orthodox [viz. the Calvinists], occupy the middle ground between these two extremes. They deny 'actual faith' to infants, against the Lutherans; and maintain that a seminal or radical

and 'habitual faith' is to be ascribed to them, against the Anabaptists.... We do not speak of the infants of any parents whomsoever..., but only of believers (or Christians and the covenanted)....

"**Seminal faith** is granted in infants.... Although infants have not 'actual faith' -- the seed or 'root of faith' cannot be denied to them -- which is **ingenerated in them from early age**, and in its own time goes forth in 'act'....

" By 'seed of faith' we mean the Holy Spirit, the Effector of faith and regeneration, as He is called, First John 3:9, as to the principles of regeneration and holy inclinations -- which He already works in infants, according to their measure, in a wonderful and to us unspeakable way....

"The promise of the covenant pertains no less to infants than to adults, since God promises that He will be the God of Abraham and of His seed. Genesis 17:7 & Acts 2:39.... They are also considered to be begotten in 'holiness' -- that is, in Christianity and not in Heathenism (which was a state of uncleanness and impurity)....

"Because the kingdom of heaven pertains to infants, Matthew 19:14, therefore also [does] regeneration -- without which there is no admittance to it. John 3:3-5.... There are examples of various infants who were sanctified from the womb, as was the case with Jeremiah and John the Baptist. Jeremiah 1:5 & Luke 1:15....

"We may fairly conclude hence, that infants can be made partakers of the Holy Spirit Who (since He cannot be inactive) works in them motions and inclinations suited to their age. Those are called 'the seeds of faith' or principles [alias 'begin-nings'] of sanctification."

#### **510. Formula Consensus Helvetica re-affirms covenant children's holiness**

The above-mentioned Heidegger of Zurich and Turretine of Geneva, together with Luke Gernler of Basel, in 1675 composed the *Formula Consensus Helvetica* alias the 'Swiss Form of Agreement' against the hypothetical universalism of Amyraut and others in the French School of Saumur. Obliquely, the *Formula* rightly seems to assume that also the infant children of Christians should themselves be regarded as possessing the same Christian faith -- and accordingly be baptized in the Name of the Holy Trinity.

For the *Formula* explicitly re-asserts "our *Helvetic Confession*"<sup>49</sup> (which professes the presumed election of covenant children).<sup>50</sup> The *Formula* also itself states<sup>51</sup> that even before man's fall, "that promise annexed to the covenant of works was not a continuation only of earthly life and happiness but the possession especially of life eternal...of both body and soul in heaven -- if indeed man ran the course of perfect obedience with unspeakable joy in communion with God....

"However, God entered into the covenant of works not only with Adam for himself, but also in him as the head and root with the whole human race -- who would, by virtue of the blessing of the nature derived from him, inherit also the same perfection, provided he continued therein. So Adam by his mournful fall, not only for himself but also for the whole human race that would be born of bloods and the will of the flesh, sinned and lost the benefits promised in the



covenant. We hold, therefore, that the sin of Adam is imputed by the mysterious and just judgment of God to all his posterity."

Yet fortunately there was also a Second Adam. For "Christ merited for those in whose stead He died, the means of salvation, especially the regenerating Spirit.... We are chosen in Christ to be holy and without blame, and moreover children by Him. Ephesians 1:4-5. But our being holy and children of God, proceeds only from faith and the Spirit of regeneration....

"Man by nature...from his birth, is the child of disobedience...and has that inability so innate that it can be shaken off in no way -- except by the omnipotent heart-turning grace of the Holy Spirit...through this saving knowledge of Christ and the Holy Trinity...in the whole sacred Trinity." Precisely for this reason, also covenant children are baptized in the Name of the Trinity. For, by grace, they already -- as infants -- share "this saving knowledge."

### **511. Ridderus: covenant infants have benefits "already inside of them"**

In Holland, the Voetian Francis Ridderus clearly signalled his own views on infant regeneration -- in the title of his treatise: *Baptism and Salvation for the Children of Christians*.<sup>52</sup> Ridderus was so convinced about this, that he even overstated his conviction!

"He who does not have a benefit from Christ when young," alleged Ridderus, "will never have a benefit from Him. If Christ were not to have died also for children -- His death would not avail for them when they grow up."<sup>53</sup>

Matthew 19:14 anent the little covenant children, Ridderus insisted, "refers to regeneration and to the covenant of grace. Not that they receive these through baptism, but as what was already inside of them.... In the little children, we recognize the Spirit and the seed of regeneration."<sup>54</sup>

### **512. Jacob Koelman: covenant children partake of regeneration**

With the above convictions, Francis Ridderus was by no means exceptional for his times. Another famous Voetian, Rev. Dr. Jacob Koelman, was just as vehement.

For Koelman insisted<sup>55</sup> "that the little children do partake of the spiritual benefits and blessings signified and sealed by baptism -- such as regeneration, sanctification, *etc.*" Indeed, he added, precisely "Christ says of these little children that of such is the Kingdom of heaven."

### **513. Campegius Vitringa Sr: God the Holy Spirit sanctifies covenant infants**

The great Rev. Dr. Campegius Vitringa Sr. was Professor of Oriental Languages and later of Theology at Franeker. He stated<sup>56</sup> that "children of believers are called holy."

Why? Because "they are sanctified by the Holy Spirit in their parents. Because God brings them His grace in their parents." First Corinthians 7:14.

For "when God hath begun to manifest His grace to the parents, or either of them, we may not presume otherwise than that He will confer the like grace upon their infants -- so long as the contrary does not appear."

Vitringa elsewhere drew his conclusions anent covenant children. "Justly do we presume, from the law of charity, that they have been sanctified by the Holy Spirit."<sup>57</sup>

#### **514. Bernard Smytegelt: God inserts grace into babies from the womb**

Also the famous catechism-writer Bernard Smytegelt observed:<sup>58</sup> "There are children in the Old and New Testament into whom God has inserted grace from the womb onward." Thus: "Timothy; John the baptizer; *etc.*)....

"Why should one refuse baptism to such?... God inserts His seed [into them] from their youngness onward." For it is precisely "as children" -- that these children have the promise. "They do not grow up wildly.... There are some, in whom God inserts grace while they are still young."

#### **515. William Brakel: regeneration during infancy**

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, the famous Voetian William Brakel became the most popular Systematic Theologian in Holland. Author of the famous work *Our Reasonable Religion*, he declared that "some are regenerated during childhood."

Brakel explained that "a little child, elected and reconciled in Christ before using the intellect, can be...changed...by the almighty power of God...and be sanctified in character.... The salvation of the child...is envisaged by the parents.... Even the child is acknowledged to have been sanctified in Christ."<sup>59</sup>

Brakel continued:<sup>60</sup> "Whether dying before or after receiving baptism, all children of covenanters are[rebuttably] to be regarded as saved -- by virtue of God's covenant in which they were born.... Even the children are acknowledged to have been sanctified in Christ....

"So too, they are to be regarded as true covenanters and children [of God] also when grown up." For they should continue to be so regarded -- "until they might indeed indicate that they are faithless in the covenant, and have no part of the promise."

## **516. Matthew Henry: slaves of God because children of His handmaid**

We next look at the famous Rev. Dr. Matthew Henry. For he was perhaps the most influential Calvinistic English-language Bible commentator of all time.

Around 1704, Henry remarked<sup>61</sup> on Second Samuel 12:15-25 regarding infant salvation: "Nathan had told David that the child should certainly die.... The child died when it was seven days old -- and therefore not circumcised.... Yet he [David] doth not therefore doubt of its being happy. For the benefits of the covenant do not depend upon the seals.

"Godly parents have **great** reason to hope concerning their children that die in infancy, that it is well with their souls in the other world. For the promise is 'to us and our seed' [*cf.* Genesis 17:7f] -- which shall be performed to those who do not put a bar in their own door, as infants do not."

Henry also made an interesting comment about the Christ-ian testimony made by Christ's half-cousin John (three months before the latter's birth) . Indeed, Henry also reflected on the witness given by the Israelitic children of the covenant alias the 'innocents' -- who were murdered by wicked King Herod (when they and Jesus were both but two years of age).

Wrote Henry: "A passive testimony was given...to the Lord Jesus...when He was in the womb. He was witnessed to -- by a little child leaping in the womb for joy, at His approach...

"At two years old, He had contemporary witness to Him -- [by those] of the same age. They shed their blood -- for Him Who afterwards shed His blood for them.... These infants were thus 'baptized with blood'...into the Church Triumphant."

Commenting on Christ's blessing of the tiny children in Mark 10:13-16, Henry wrote:<sup>62</sup> "He put His hands upon them -- denoting the bestowing of His Spirit upon them (for that is the 'hand' of the Lord), and His setting them apart for Himself. He blessed them with the spiritual blessings He came to give."

Elsewhere, in his *Treatise on Baptism*, Henry further insisted:<sup>63</sup> "Surely infants may be *foeder-ati* [alias those already 'covenant-**ed**'].... It is past dispute that they may have a benefit....

"Infants are **capable** of covenant relations, and of receiving and enjoying covenant privileges and benefits -- not only the external, but the internal. Hence, we not only read of those who were sanctified from the womb -- but are assured that John the Baptist 'was filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb.' Luke 1:15.

"And indeed, if children are capable of corruption, it would be very hard upon them to say that they are incapable of sanctification. That would be to give the first Adam a larger power to kill, than the second Adam hath to quicken....

"Who dares say that infants are not capable of **inherent** holiness or sanctification of the Spirit? He that saith infants cannot be sanctified -- doth in effect say that they cannot be saved.

For without holiness, no man [alias no person] can see the Lord.... He that can say this, must be a hard-hearted father!"

In dealing with his own children, Henry very much approached them in terms of their own prebaptismal sanctification and in terms of their own subsequent infant baptism. Thereafter, he often reminded them that they: had been born in the covenant; had been dedicated to God; and were obligated to serve Him. They should each say to themselves, so he told them:<sup>64</sup> 'I am Thy servant, because the son of Thy handmaid!' Psalm 116:16.'

Rev. Dr. Matthew Henry died in 1696, while expostulating in his famous *Commentary on the Holy Bible*. In his notes for that project, his comment on Hebrews 6:1-2 is very relevant.

"The doctrine of baptisms," wrote Henry, "is that of being baptized -- by a Minister of Christ with water, in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, as the initiating sign or seal of the covenant of grace." That should then have the effect of "strongly engaging the person so baptized to get acquainted with the New Covenant [and] to adhere to it.... This ordinance of baptism is a foundation to be rightly laid and daily remembered; but not repeated."<sup>65</sup>

### **517. Watts & Steuart: covenant children apparently within the Invisible Church**

Isaac Watts was not only a very famous hymnwriter. Theologically too, he further declared:<sup>66</sup> "In my opinion, so far as they [infants of believing parents] are in any way members of the Visible Church -- it is upon supposition of their being members of the Invisible Church of God."

Already the 1645 Westminster *Directory for Worship* had suggested that the Minister, right before baptizing covenant infants, should declare that baptism "is a seal of the covenant of grace" and "of our...regeneration...and life eternal" also for "the seed and posterity of the faithful born within the Church." For they "have, by their birth, interest in the covenant and right to the seal of it.... Of such is the Kingdom of God.... They are Christians, and federally holy before baptism, and therefore are they baptized."

Referring to this very passage, Walter Steuart of Pardovan made some very valuable remarks. He did so in his 1709 work: *Collections and Observations Methodiz'd -- Concerning the Worship, Disciple and Government of the Church of Scotland*.

Steuart there observed<sup>67</sup> that the infants of believing parents are here regarded as Christians. "Their baptism supposeth them to be Church Members, and doth not make or constitute them such. If we consider that the sacraments are Ordinances to be administered in the Church, and to the Church -- they necessarily suppose the pre-existence of a Church, and the child's previous right to that seal."

### **518. Venema and Mastricht: all covenant children apparently born under grace**

In Friesland, Rev. Dr. Herman Venema became Professor of Theology at Franeker. He insisted<sup>68</sup> that "all children of believers, as long as they are yet children, are in a relative state of grace together with their parents, through a special arrangement of God."

Rev. Dr. Peter á Mastricht was Professor of Theology at Utrecht. He wrote<sup>69</sup> that little children of the covenant should be baptized "because they partake of the benefits of the covenant of grace, of regeneration, and of the forgiveness of sin.... We are ordered in Holy Scripture to baptize as many as have received the Holy Spirit.... According to that Holy Scripture -- Luke 1:15 & Jeremiah 1:5 -- tiny children receive the Holy Spirit."

Mastricht further observed that "one truly regenerate...can for a time...be unconverted.... This is as clear as the sun, as regards those who are regenerated in the womb of their mothers -- like Jeremiah, John the Baptizer and Timothy."

According to Mastricht, the Protestant Reformers rightly believed that infants are indeed liable to reprobation because of the imputation to them of Adam's original sin. Unbelievers' early-dying "infants, because the Scriptures determine nothing clearly on the subject..., should be left to the Divine discretion."

This, of course, hardly implies that any dying in infancy are reprobate. Nevertheless, "concerning believers' infants...they judge better things."<sup>70</sup>

Mastricht added: "Baptism requires a certain acting faith in adults. In infants, however, it is content with the seed of faith -- requiring not more of an acting faith than does circumcision."<sup>71</sup> Furthermore, he concluded that even 'deedless' faith is possible -- as in small children, and also in adult believers while asleep."<sup>72</sup>

### **519. John á Marck(ius): the infant seed of believers have salvation**

Dr. John á Marck -- Professor of Theology first at Franeker, later at Groningen, and then at Leiden -- gave an interesting comment<sup>73</sup> on Matthew 28:19 as regards the early-dying children of believers. "Even in the sanctifying of their infant seed," stated Marckius, "we are nevertheless rightly assured that God has mercy upon them in Christ unto salvation."

Marckius further declared:<sup>74</sup> "We readily acknowledge and defend against Socinians and Anabaptists that the grace of the Spirit, according to the merits of Christ, has a place also in the elect and early-sanctified little children of believers. This grace some are accustomed to call...a 'seed of faith' [or] a 'root of faith'..... Sanctification applies also...to these little children....

"As to the infants of...believers, we have good hope -- because of God's promises (Genesis 17:7 *etc.*).... Concerning the individual persons of Gentiles [alias Pagans], and of infants born of unbelievers, we neither can nor wish to determine anything particularly."

Indeed, Marckius again reflected on this in a 1729 letter on *The Sanctification of the Children of Believers in Christ*. There,<sup>75</sup> he insisted that this holiness "of the Children of Believers" must be acknowledged by parents -- "as a firm part of their faith.

"For their children have partaken of true grace even from their very first moment.... They have been sanctified in Christ...by His grace which has already taken place so many centuries ago, in His time."

## **520. John Willison: God's kingdom belongs to covenant children**

Back in Britain, around 1720 the Scottish Theologian John Willison of Dundee was seen to declare<sup>76</sup> that "baptism is a sacrament of the New Testament annexed as a sign and seal of God's covenant with believers in Christ.... Baptism is not to be administered...to heathens and infidels, or persons openly scandalous.... The infants of believers...are to be baptized....

"Though infants do not actually profess their faith, as being incapable of it [professing their faith], yet they are to be ranked among believers -- as being the children of believing parents. For infants are but parts of the parents wrapt up in another skin, and to be accounted with them. As the root and branches are but one tree -- according to Romans 11:16.

"We are to judge of children by their parents -- till they [those infants] come to the use of reason and be capable to choose their own way.... Then indeed they can disinherit themselves by their degeneracy. But till then, we are to judge of them by the parents, as we do of a graft taken from a tree and implanted in a new stock....

"It is upon this account that God calls the children of His people 'His children' and children 'born unto Him' -- Ezekiel 16:20. Now if children have a covenant relation to God or be within the covenant (as children of believing parents certainly are), they have a right to the signs and seals of it also. Genesis 17:7; Deuteronomy 29:10-15; Acts 2:39....

"The Scriptures declare infants to be capable of the divine blessings of pardon, of the Spirit, of faith, of grace, and of glory; upon which account Christ kindly invites and takes them into His arms. See: Isaiah 44:3; 65:23; Jeremiah 1:5; Matthew 18:6; Mark 10:14-16; Luke 1:15. And therefore the sign and seal of these blessings must also pertain to them....

"Infants who are not capable to being taught, or of professing their faith, are to be deemed as parts of their parents -- and to be judge of by them, till they come to the use of reason. So that if parents be holy and among the blessed of the Lord, their infant offspring are to be deemed so with them -- according to Romans 11:16 and Isaiah 65:23."

## **521. Johan van der Honert: covenant children holy by the Spirit**

Rev. Dr. Johan van der Honert was Professor of Theology at Utrecht. He was also the author of a famous book about Ursinus on the *Heidelberg Catechism*.<sup>77</sup> According to him:<sup>78</sup> "In a way unknown and untraceable by us, God can and wishes to...work faith -- without which no

salvation for man will exist -- in the **children** whom He has chosen." This, however, occurs "not without the Holy Spirit -- but through His powerful operation."

Apparently, this noted theologian was to some extent impressed even by the Cartesian representation of the essence of the soul as existing in cogitation -- *cogito ergo sum*. For also on philosophical grounds, Van der Honert spoke of an **infant faith** --with **consciousness**.<sup>79</sup>

## **522. Benedict de Moor: covenant infants holy before baptism**

Even more powerful is the testimony of Rev. Dr. Bernard de Moor, Professor of Theology at Franeker. Commenting on the Dutch Reformed *Baptismal Formula*, he discussed its statement<sup>80</sup> that covenant children, though born in sin and subject to misery and condemnation, are nevertheless sanctified in Christ and therefore to be baptized as Members of His Church -- "*sanctificatos esse ideoque tanquam Membra Ecclesiae Ejus debere baptizari.*"

According to De Moor,<sup>81</sup> a promise of saving grace is given indefinitely to the children of believers. It is bestowed upon some of them in earliest infancy. Hence it is permitted, specially to entertain a good hope concerning children now offered in baptism by believing parents.

"The baptism of children is here founded on the charitable **presumption** that they will be proved to be partakers of the blessings it seals. Indeed, precisely in the covenant infant, "this disposition or tendency of the soul toward **belief** has proceeded from the regenerating grace of the Spirit. Even this regenerating grace itself can be called the seed or root of **faith**."<sup>82</sup>

## **523. The brothers Leydekker: covenant infants belong to Christ**

There were also other lesser Dutch Reformed theologians around 1750. Such included: M. & J. Leydekker, Groenewegen, Van Toll, Tuinman and Aemilius.

Melchior Leydekker held<sup>83</sup> that covenant children "must first be regarded as children of wrath in Adam, under sin -- and thereafter as children of grace in Christ, according to the covenant of grace.... They are also born again."

His brother Jacob Leydekker added<sup>84</sup> that First Corinthians 7:14 certainly implies "that God thus acts with covenanters by giving **internal** sanctifications to those He wishes." Further: "Godly persons' **infants are sanctified in Christ**.... That faith is true.... The [adult parental] believer is bound...to acquiesce in the promise given...and to trust in it...; to hope well concerning this infant which is to be baptized -- nay, to **believe that this infant belongs to Christ.**"<sup>85</sup>

## **524. Groenewegen & Van Toll: covenant children regenerate**

Henry Groenewegen added<sup>86</sup> that First Corinthians 7:14 indicates "a covenantal holiness whereby they [covenant infants] are **distinguished from the children of Pagans.** That also

involves sanctification by the Spirit, whereby they are prepared and kneaded by Him even from their mothers' wombs."

Abraham van Toll is convinced that the children of believers are themselves truly regenerate. For "God is truth. That which He promises, He faithfully fulfils. So nobody should doubt that He has therefore vivified, renewed, regenerated etc. -- the children for whom He is, according to His promise, a God."<sup>87</sup>

## **525. Tuinman & Aemilius: covenant infants already holy before their baptism**

Similarly, Rev. Carolus Tuinman declared that covenant children must be baptized -- because "they too possess what baptism signifies, namely the washing away of sin by the blood of Christ." They also possess "the Holy Spirit, Who is able as He pleases to work the seed of God and the root of the matter in children during their earliest age."<sup>88</sup>

Also Rev. Professor Dr. Robert Aemilius, the Regent of the State College at Leyden, insisted<sup>89</sup> that **covenant infants** "are called '**holy**' even when **not yet born.**" This is so, he explained, "because [they are] **already** regarded as partakers of the **salvational** benefits of the **covenant** -- such as the forgiveness of sins and regeneration."

## **526. 'Infant faith' Calvinism: America's primordial Christianity**

It was in the shape of the Anti-Anabaptist views of the French Reformed Church and the Dutch Reformed Church, that Christianity first took root in the New World. This was long before the arrival of other brands of Christianity -- such as the Baptists and the Romanists *etc.*

America's Calvinist pioneers, the French Reformed colonists, had settled near Rio de Janeiro in Brazil in 1555<sup>f</sup> and at St. Augustine in Florida in 1562 -- even before the death of their mentor John Calvin. From 1598 onward, they had started to colonize both Port Royal (in the later Nova Scotia) and Quebec. They fully upheld both infant faith within covenant children, as well as the infant baptism of those babies. So too did the Puritan Episcopalian planters, whose 1606 *Charter of Virginia* was distinctly Calvinistic.

Isolated Scots-Presbyterian congregations (practising the same kind of discipline together with its infant baptism) were found in Colonial America as early as 1614. The 1620 'Pilgrim Father' Calvinists -- though Congregationists -- were strongly committed to infant baptism. So too were the 1624 Dutch Reformed in New Amsterdam (later renamed New York) -- and the Calvinistic Puritans who settled in northern New England from 1629 onward.<sup>90</sup>

Only ten years later, in 1639, did the first rebaptisms take place in the New World. That occurred when the adults Roger Williams and Ezekiel Hollyman submersed one another -- and then constituted the first American Baptist Church (in Rhode Island).<sup>91</sup>

The 'New England Company' was formed in 1626 by the Puritan Minister Rev. John White. In 1629, the 'Massachusetts Bay Company' -- in England -- drew up *The Cambridge Agreement*.



That was an undertaking to migrate to America, "having weighed the greatness of the work in regard to the consequence -- God's glory and the Church's good.... By God's assistance, we will be ready with such of our several families as are to go with us."<sup>92</sup>

In that same year, 1629, the Puritan John Winthrop -- who later became the first Governor of Massachusetts -- drew up his *Reasons for Leaving England*. Explained Winthrop:<sup>93</sup> "The whole earth is the Lord's garden, and He hath given it to the sons of men with a general commission. Genesis 1:28 -- 'Increase and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it!'

"This was again renewed to Noah [Genesis 9:1-7]. The end is double and natural: that man might enjoy the fruits of the earth; and God might have His due glory from the creature. Why then should we stand striving here [in England] for places of habitation..., and in the meantime suffer a whole Continent [North America], as fruitful and convenient for the use of man, to lie waste without any improvement?"

### **527. Paedobaptistic North American Calvinism from 1620 till 1643**

As the famous modern American Theologian and Church Historian Rev. Professor Dr. John Gerstner has remarked:<sup>94</sup> "New England, from the founding of [New] Plymouth in 1620 to the end of the eighteenth century, was predominantly Calvinistic. It possessed a Calvinistic homogeneity....

"The theological pattern ranges from the homogeneous Dutch and Scottish Calvinism in parts of New York and Pennsylvania.... Pastor John Robinson, the spiritual father of the Pilgrims, was an ardent Calvinist." Indeed, the great Puritan Pastor Rev. John Cotton, who arrived in North America in 1633, exulted: "I love to sweeten my mouth with a piece of Calvin before I go to sleep."<sup>95</sup>

Especially the New England Calvinistic Puritans soon inundated the New World with Reformed Catechisms. In 1641, it was declared that the General Ecclesiastical Court of the American Puritans "desires that the Elders would make a Catechism for the instruction of youth in the grounds of religion."<sup>95</sup>

As Patricia Brooks observes<sup>96</sup> in her book *The Return of the Puritans*: "There was an overwhelming response to the request. John Davenport, John Cotton, John Eliot, Thomas Shepard, Richard Mather, John Fiske, John Norton, Seaborn Cotton, James Fitch, James Noyes and Samuel Stone each wrote one or more [catechisms].... John Cotton's *Spiritual Milk for American Babes*...later became part of the famous *New England Primer* -- along with the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*."

We have already seen that Shepard apparently assumed infant faith in covenant children. Indeed, we have also seen that in 1643 Cotton and Hooker and Davenport were invited to attend the Westminster Assembly<sup>97</sup> (which apparently also did the same).

## **528. The 1648 Cambridge Platform adopts the Westminster Standards**

In 1645, the New England Calvinist Rev. Dr. Richard Mather wrote about "those that were baptized in infancy by the covenant of their parents."<sup>98</sup> Indeed, in 1648, the Synod of Congregationalists in Cambridge (Massachusetts) ratified the *Westminster Standards* when enacting its own *Cambridge Platform*.

Declared the latter:<sup>99</sup> "This Synod, having perused and considered (with much gladness of heart and thankfulness to God) the *Confession of Faith* published by the late Reverend [Westminster] Assembly in England -- do judge it to be very holy, orthodox and judicious in all matters of faith, and do therefore freely and fully consent thereunto for the substance thereof."

The *Platform* also well referred<sup>100</sup> to "such Members of the Church as were born in the same...[and] baptized in their infancy or minority by virtue of the covenant of their parents." Behold, then, early Colonial America's strict subscription to the *Westminster Standards*!

Then, in 1657, the Massachusetts General Court (of Congregationalist Ministers) adopted Rev. Dr. Richard Mather's *Disputation Concerning Church Members and Their Children*. That latter resolved "to call on parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Ephesians 6:1-4.

Indeed, continued Mather, wherever parents acknowledge or "solemnly own the covenant in their own persons -- wherein they give up both themselves and their children unto the Lord, and desire baptism for them -- we see not sufficient cause to deny baptism unto their children."<sup>101</sup>

In 1662, the Massachusetts 'Cambridge Synod' again endorsed the *Westminster Standards*.<sup>102</sup> Then, in 1680, Rev. Dr. Increase Mather -- one of Rev. Dr. Richard Mather's many Calvinist 'clergymen sons' -- declared:<sup>103</sup> "We promise [by the help of Christ] that we will endeavour to walk before God in our houses, with a perfect heart....

"We will uphold the worship of God therein [in our homes] continually.... We will do what in us lieth, to bring up our children for Christ -- [so] that they may become such as they that have the Lord's Name put upon them [at their infant baptism] by a solemn dedication to God in Christ, ought to be."

In 1702, Rev. Dr. Richard Mather's grandson, the even more famous American Theologian Rev. Dr. Cotton Mather, looked back and wrote<sup>104</sup> that the first American-born "children of the faithful were [themselves] Church members, with their parents.... Their [infant] baptism was a seal of their being so....

"When our churches were come to between twenty and thirty years of age [since their establishment in America around 1620], a numerous posterity was advanced.... There was a numerous appearance of sober persons who professed themselves desirous to renew their baptismal covenant and submit unto the *Church Discipline* -- and so have their houses also marked for the Lord's," by receiving infant baptism for their descendants.

### **529. Anti-Anabaptism of Early American Scots-Irish Presbyterians**

All of the above excellent practices were further strengthened by the formal establishment of Scots-Irish Presbyterianism in America. This was achieved by the sending there, in 1683, of the Rev. Francis Makemie. Later, in 1706, he erected the Presbytery of Philadelphia (as the first American 'Regional Presbytery').<sup>105</sup>

In his doctoral dissertation, distinguished American Presbyterian Theologian Rev. Professor Dr. Morton H. Smith rightly observed<sup>106</sup> that as far as Scots-Irish Presbyterianism in America is concerned, the date of the first Presbytery meeting is believed to have been around 1705. In 1717, it was decided to form the first American Synod. In 1729, that Synod officially adopted the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. This expedited the admission to fellowship in sacred ordinances (such as baptism)."

The Synod or General Assembly of 1736 made an even more important declaration. For it declared that its Commissioners there and then had (re-)adopted and still do adhere to the *Westminster Confession, Catechism and Directory* -- without the least variation or alteration."

Soon thereafter, however, things rapidly started changing. For the arminianizing 'Great Awakening' -- about which later -- then began to sweep through many of the American denominations.

This soon split the American Presbyterian Church into an Old Side which opposed the 'Awakening' -- and a New Side which embraced it. The latter then went into schism from the former, and formed its own Synod in 1741.

However, in 1760 the two groups re-united -- on the basis of the *Westminster Standards*. Consequently, even after America's successful War of Independence against England from 1776 onward -- the 1789 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America still seems to have been quite strictly Calvinistic.

### **530. Colonial American Presbyterianism before the 1740f 'Great Awakening'**

Charles Hodge is quite the best historian of Early American Scots-Irish Presbyterianism. In 1839, he wrote his two-volume classic chronicle, *The Constitutional History of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America*.<sup>107</sup> The work traces the history of American Presbyterianism during colonial times.

As Hodge observed,<sup>108</sup> prior to the Adopting Act of 1729 (whereby the American Presbyterian Church officially adopted the *Westminster Confession*), "there is not a single Minister whose sentiments are known at all, who was admitted to the Church or allowed to remain in it...who is not known to have been not only a Calvinist but a rigid one...."

"There can be no stronger evidence of the Calvinistic character of the Church than that this new test of orthodoxy [the Adopting Act] was universally admitted -- and that there was not a single member of the Synod who objected to any one article in the *Confession of Faith*."

Least of all was there the slightest objection to the statement in the *Confession* (at 10:3) that "elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit." Nor was there any objection to the confessional statement (at 25:2) that "the visible church...consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion, together with their children." Still less did any baulk at the confessional statement (in 28:4) that "the infants of one or both believing parents *are to be baptized*."

Declares Professor Dr. Winthrop S. Hudson:<sup>109</sup> "By the end of the colonial period, the Congregationalists and the Presbyterians were the two largest American denominations. The Baptists and the Anglicans were roughly equal in size" -- yet still trailing behind Calvinistic Puritanism. "So pervasive was its influence that, as Schaff reports, even many of the Lutheran churches were remade in the Puritan image."

A confederated Republic was established in the new world in 1776f. At that time -- as later acknowledged<sup>110</sup> by the renowned nineteenth-century Swiss-American church historian Rev. Professor Dr. Philip Schaff -- the Christian Church in that nation thenceforth to be known as the United States of America, "owes her general characteristic" and "her distinctive image" to the Puritans of New England.

"To this New England influence, must be added indeed the no less important weight of Presbyterianism -- as derived [priorly from the French Huguenots and from the Dutrch Reformed] subsequently from Scotland and Ireland.

"But this may be regarded as in all essential respects the same life. The reigning theology of the country...is the theology of -- the *Westminster Confession*."

Yet, within a few brief decades of the establishment of the American Republic -- that infant-baptizing Calvinist nation had slidden into the razzamatazz of revivalism and the anarchy of Anabaptism! What then, we must ask ourselves, went wrong?

### **531. The 'Great Awakening' an anti-covenantal catastrophe**

According to Charles Hodge, it was the arminianizing 'Great Awakening' from 1740 onward -- which first started weakening American Presbyterianism.<sup>111</sup> This led to a whole chain of such 'revivals' (*sic*). As George P. Hays declares<sup>112</sup> in his book *Presbyterians*: "It is certain that the great 'revival' of 1800 entirely changed the moral aspect of the country."

What was the root of that so-called 'Great Awakening' in North America? Anticovenantal hyperindividualism! The New England 'Halfway Covenant' had been administering infant baptism to the babies of baptized yet non-communicant parents. The Congregationalist Rev. Solomon Stoddard had opened up the Lord's Supper also to those who did not even profess to be converted. These events heralded the advent of that desperate corrective known as the 'Great

Awakening.' The latter came in the shape of arminianizing and atomizing decisionism -- and its resultant 'sawdust trail.'

On the above-mentioned 'Great Awakening,' the noted American Presbyterian Church Historian Rev. Professor Dr. L.B. Schenck has made some very valid comments. We find them in his brilliant book *The Presbyterian Doctrine of Children in the Covenant: An Historical Study of the Significance of Infant Baptism in the Presbyterian Church in America*.

Observes Schenck:<sup>113</sup> "It was unfortunate that the 'Great Awakening' made an emotional experience involving terror, misery and depression the only approach to God.... Since these were not the experiences of infancy and early childhood, it was taken for granted children must -- or in all ordinary cases would -- grow up unconverted....

"The only channel of the new birth which was recognized, was a conscious experience of conviction and conversion. Anything else, according to Gilbert Tennent<sup>114</sup> (the inadequately educated and notorious Irish-American revivalist), was a fiction of the brain -- a delusion of the devil. In fact, he ridiculed the idea that one could be a Christian without knowing the time when [one like] he was otherwise."

Schenck himself then further comments<sup>115</sup> concerning this 'Great Awakening': "The presumption of regeneration in the case of children of the covenant, based upon the covenant promise, was largely displaced by the church's practice of recognizing as Christian only those who gave 'credible evidence' satisfactory to themselves of regeneration.

"Doubtless in the low state of Christian life, there had been previously a tendency to dwell too little on a spiritual experience of religion. The reaction from this, swung to the contrary extreme.... This was virtually a denial of the Calvinistic doctrine -- that presumably the child of believing parents was God's child from the beginning."

Rev. Jedediah Andrews was an eye-witness of these arminianizing events. In 1741 Andrews -- Minister of the First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia -- wrote to a friend: "A prevailing rule to try converts is that if you don't know when you were without Christ and unconverted *etc.*, you have no interest in Christ -- let your love and your practice be what they may....

"This is unscriptural.... I am of the mind [it] will cut off nine in ten, if not ninety-nine in a hundred of the good people in the world that have had a pious education"<sup>116</sup> -- and who truly know the Lord.

### **532. The Anti-Anabaptism of the great Congregationalist Jonathan Edwards**

The historic Calvinistic and original-American view -- that of 'family evangelism' through daily family worship -- was certainly still seen even at that time, in the greatest American scholar of all time himself. We refer, of course, to the erudite Congregationalist theologian -- Rev. Dr. Jonathan Edwards.

Edwards, who was appointed President of Princeton in 1757, still preferred the older doctrine. He explained<sup>117</sup> that "every family ought to be...a little church, consecrated to Christ and wholly influenced and governed by His rules.... Family education and order are some of the chief means of grace." Indeed, the godliness of many generations of Edward's descendants -- bears out the blessed consequences of that pious practice.

No doubt thinking of his own case, in Edwards's controversy with Williams he stated<sup>118</sup> anent godly parents' covenant children who were baptized as babies: "Infants **have** the habit of **saving** grace.... They have a new nature given them....

"But we know they cannot come by moral habits in infancy, any other way than by immediate infusion.... I hope I do truly find a heart to give up myself wholly to God, according to the tenor of the covenant of grace which was sealed in my baptism --and to walk in a way of obedience to all the Commandments of God...as long as I live!"

Elsewhere, Edwards asked: "What is the nature of a Christian Church? Who are fit for communion therein? What is the nature and import of baptism? How do you prove infant baptism?"<sup>119</sup>

He seemed to answer this question in his famous work *The History of Redemption*. There, he discussed Matthew 28:19. He showed<sup>120</sup> that it represents "Christ's appointment of the Gospel Ministry...to teach and baptize all **nations**" -- and therefore also all **families** within those nations. Indeed, it is "an ordinance to be upheld in the Christian Church -- to the end of the world."

Edwards implied<sup>121</sup> that baptism is just as unrepeatable as was circumcision. "God did expressly command all the nation of Israel to be circumcised." Similarly, covenant children are "admitted into the Church [Visible] and made Members after they are born, viz. by their baptism....

"Baptism is the only rite [or way] of admission into the Visible Church, applying it to the baptism of children.... It was ordained for the admission of the party baptized into the Visible Church." This, however, is to be distinguished from membership in the Church Invisible. For "a branch receives being in the tree and grows **in** it and **from** it..., being **born** in the covenant, born in the House of God."

Edwards went yet further<sup>122</sup> in his *Inquiry into the...Qualifications Requisite to a Complete Standing and Full Communion in the Visible Christian Church*. Here, careful note should be taken of Edwards's above word 'Visible' -- in his expression 'Visible Church.' Indeed, in that *Inquiry*, Edwards maintained: "All that acknowledge infant baptism, allow infants -- who are the proper subjects of baptism, and are baptized -- to be in some sort Members of the Christian Church.... I have **no doubts** about the doctrine of infant baptism."

### **533. Philip Doddridge and Thomas Boston: 'infant faith' within covenant children**

Back in Britain, the famous hymn-writer Philip Doddridge referred to the covenant infants blessed by Jesus. Doddridge stated:<sup>123</sup> "Let parents...bring their children to Christ by faith and...commit them to Him in baptism and by prayer! And if He Who 'has the keys of death and

of the unseen world' see fit to remove those dear creatures from us in their early days -- let the remembrance of this story comfort us and teach us to hope that He Who so graciously received these children, has not forgotten ours....

"They are sweetly fallen asleep in Him, and will be the everlasting objects of His care and love. 'For of such is the kingdom of heaven!'"

Around 1753, also the famous Scot and 'Marrowman' Thomas Boston of Ettrick rightly insisted that those baptized as church members be regarded as the "body of the elect."<sup>124</sup> Boston stated:<sup>125</sup> "None have a right to baptism before the Lord, but **real** saints.... None have a right to it before the Church, but visible saints.... The Word debar[s] all from the sacraments that are not real saints....

"This doth no way prejudice the right of infants to baptism *coram ecclesiae*. For the infants of visible believers are no less visible believers than they [the parents] themselves are. Seeing the Lord declares Himself to be not only the [adult] believer's God, but the God of his seed" too.

To this effect, Boston then cited from Calvin, Zanchius and Ursinus. Indeed, he here also quoted from the *Synopsis of Purer Theology* -- and further from Wendelin, Baxter, Witsius and Bowle.<sup>126</sup>

#### **534. John Brown of Haddington an even John Wesley on 'infant faith'**

John Brown of Haddington was the famous trainer of the Burgher divinity students -- and the renowned writer of the multi-volume and world-famous *Self-Interpreting Bible*. In his 1755 *Explication of the Shorter Catechism*, Brown -- who had himself studied under the great Ebenezer Erskine -- gave a similar explanation to Thomas Boston, as regards the presumed prebaptismal faith of covenant children.

Even the modified Arminian John Wesley seems to have presupposed the saved condition of covenant children before their infant baptism. Methodism had by then already been afoot, and indeed expanding, for some fifteen years. Decades later, it would help save Britain from the volcanic destruction which would then erupt in the form of the French Revolution.

The written *Discipline* of Wesley's Methodists, has a very interesting heading on the "Ministration of Baptism to Infants." There, it initially directs the Minister to pray to God that the infant to be baptized "may ever remain in the number of Thy faithful and elect children."<sup>127</sup> Very clearly, this assumes his or her elect condition even while yet a baby.

Over the following years, however, there was a progressive collapse of Calvinism -- almost all over the world. This was no doubt a result, first, of pietism and latitudinarianism. Then anti-supranaturalism and deism (including New England transcendentalism and unitarianism) plagued the Church. Next came humanism and modernism (with even Methodism itself being tainted by the alleged supremacy of human 'free-will'). This was later followed by the rise of the American Baptists, with their hyperindividualism so terribly destructive of the covenantal solidarity of the theology of the Protestant Reformation

### **535. Revolutionary Neo-Paganism and Neo-Semipelagian Dispensationalism**

Far worse indeed was the French Revolution of 1789. Repaganizing our Western Civilization, it 'dethroned' God and His grace -- and enthroned the 'reason' of 'mature' man. Infants were regarded as but immature men -- totally devoid of hereditary sin, and completely without need of religious regeneration. Salvation was by re-education from ecclesiastical superstitions -- and society was thus to be rescued, world-wide, from the corrupting caress of Christianity. Indeed, Marxist Communism is but a radicalization of the French Revolution.

Finally, there is the rise of dispensationalism -- from the eighteen-twenties onward. It started among some heretical Scots who had imbibed several of the Anabaptist doctrines, and it soon centred itself among the various offshoots from Britain's Plymouth Brethrenism. Then, following in the wake of arminianizing revivalism -- and popularized by the Scofield Reference Bible -- it devastated the United States.

Dispensationalism was, and is, utterly hostile to covenant theology and infant baptism. Indeed, it is also hostile to God's gracious justification of guilty infants through their own Spirit-given personal faith in Christ.

Truly, the Christian Church was in a miserable condition at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It then gave little evidence of an awareness of infant regeneration preceding infant baptism.

All of the above-mentioned factors also increasingly impeded man's perception of the guilt of newly conceived babies, stained with the imputed sin of the first Adam. These factors also impeded man's perception of God's justification of elect babies cleansed by the imputed sinlessness of Christ the Second Adam.

The Protestant Reformation's old awareness of sinful covenant infants receiving saving grace and thereafter Christian baptism in infancy, became eclipsed. So too did the Biblical doctrine obliging all baptizees to live a life of constant and continuing conversion precisely after their baptism.

The above were replaced -- by new revolutionary presuppositions. These included the notions that infants are either sinless or neutral. They also included the idea that even after personally sinning, children are not accountable for their own sins -- until reaching a (revolutionary) 'age of accountability.'

Indeed, the new notions further included the misapprehension that it was only then that persons need a once-and-for-all conversion. This was then in many cases -- and under ever-increasing Arminian and Baptist influences -- followed by the novel idea of getting 'baptized' by a total submersion after the so-called convert's personal and public profession of faith in Christ (just once and for all).



### **536. The fateful 1801 Union of U.S. Congregationalists and Presbyterians**

In the new republic across the Atlantic, the 1801 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA) perilously adopted an ill-conceived 'Plan of Union.' This brought hordes of New England Congregationalists into the Presbyterian Church. Neither these folk nor their ancestors (for very many generations) had priorly subscribed to the *Westminster Standards*. Thereafter, their sudden new profession of 'adherence' to them was -- at best -- rather loose.<sup>128</sup>

Two parties thereupon arose in the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America (PCUSA) -- the 'Old School' (which strictly upheld the *Westminster Standards*), and the 'New School' (which subscribed to them only very loosely). The 1801 'Plan of Union' had proven to be a disaster.

Rev. Dr. S.J. Baird discussed this in his 1868 book *A History of the New School and of the Questions Involved in the Disruption of the Presbyterian Church in 1838*. Stated Baird: "Instead of the 'Plan' converting Congregationalists into Presbyterians, the opposite result was imminent -- the congregationalizing of the entire Presbyterian Church."<sup>129</sup>

Worse yet. In practice, this meant the *de facto* deconfessionalizing of American Presbyterianism.

By 1810, some doctrinally deviationistic dissenters within the denomination drew up the 'Cumberland Confession' -- and then organized the so-called Cumberland Presbyterian Church. That body, says the great Church Historian Rev. Professor Dr. Schaff, was "half-Calvinistic and half-Arminian."<sup>130</sup> The shift away from undiluted Anti-Anabaptist and Pro-Paedobaptist Calvinism -- and toward revivalism and rebaptism -- continued apace.<sup>131</sup>

Worse yet. The tension in the PCUSA between the remaining majority of the New School 'Congre-terians' or 'Presby-gationalists' on the one hand, and the Old School Presbyterians on the other -- foreshadowed a great schism in 1837.

Explained Baird: "With the prevalence of lax and unsound theology, there occurred a reaction from the strictness of the Presbyterian disciple...[and] a purely Calvinistic theology. In 1837, it came to a head. In that year, the Old School group gained control of the Assembly for the first time in several years."<sup>132</sup>

In the previous year, 1836, Rev. Dr. George A. Baxter, Professor at Union Seminary in Virginia, moderated an 'Old School' Presbyterian meeting. That drew up a *Testimony and Memorial*, condemning sixteen errors then epidemic in the denomination. After presentation to the 1837 General Assembly, the latter body resolved "that the Act of the Assembly of 1801, entitled a 'Plan of Union'..., is hereby abrogated."<sup>133</sup>

### **537. The slow recovery of Calvinism in Scotland and elsewhere**

Only from about 1825 onward, did Calvinism start making its slow come-back both nationally and internationally. This recovery started first in Scotland and Holland and America. Later, it spread also to various other parts of the world.

Alexander Smith Paterson, the genial young Scottish Presbyterian Minister of Dundee, at his death in 1828 when but twenty-five, left behind him his posthumously published *History of the Church from the Creation of the World to the Nineteenth Century*. He also authored his *Concise System of Theology on the Basis of the Shorter Catechism*.<sup>134</sup>

In the latter work, Paterson insisted<sup>135</sup> that "baptism is designed to signify and seal the ingrafting of believers into Christ, their having a right to the benefits of the covenant of grace.... Ingrafting into Christ expresses union with Him....

"Had not His power been exerted in cutting us off from the old stock, the first Adam of whom we are branches by nature -- this spiritual union could never have been effected. John 15:5. And in consequence of this union, which is signified and sealed by baptism, the imputation of Christ's righteousness is also sealed. Galatians 3:27....

"Baptism is designed as a mark or badge between Christians and the enemies of Christ.... Baptism does not constitute anyone a Member of the Church. For it is **[pre-]supposed** that all who are baptized, are Church Members. And if they are children of professing parents, they are born Members of the Visible Church. First Corinthians 7:14.

"But by it [baptism], they who *were* Members before --have their membership **sealed** to them. For 'by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body.' First Corinthians 12:13. And this shows how inaccurately they speak upon this subject who talk of 'christening' their children -- as if by baptism they were made Christians."

Rev. Professor Dr. John Dick (1764-1833) of the Scottish Secession Church secured a doctorate from Princeton in the U.S.A., and made a sound contribution to ongoing Calvinism especially in his *Lectures in Theology*. There he reminded<sup>136</sup> Christians that "our Lord said on a certain occasion, 'Suffer little children and forbid them not to come unto Me -- for of such is the kingdom of heaven.' The kingdom of heaven frequently signifies the new dispensation, or the Church upon earth.... Children are pronounced to **belong** to it....

"As an Israelitish male child was recognized by circumcision to be one of the chosen people -- so we are declared by baptism to be disciples of Christ, and Members of the household of God.... Baptism is therefore a recognition of our right to the privileges of adoption, which ['right'] unquestionably belongs to the members of His family....

"They [their children]...should be regarded by the members -- as brethren.... **Their children** are a sacred deposit, and are not so much theirs as **the Lord's** -- for Whose service it is their chief business to prepare them."

### **538. Buchanan and the covenantal consequences of the Scottish 'Great Disruption'**

The Scottish situation immediately before the great 'Disruption' in the Church of Scotland -- at the secession of the Free Church from it -- is well reflected in the thought of Rev. Professor Dr. James Buchanan. In 1843 he wrote<sup>137</sup> "that children, however young, even infants in their mother's arms, are fit and capable subjects of divine **grace**.... Every human being comes into the world closely connected with others."

For the Bible "reveals God not merely as the God of individuals, but as the 'God of families'.... God has constituted two distinct heads, the first and the second Adam. And as, in fact, children are found to be included along with their parents in the one and share in consequence in the ruinous effects of the fall -- a **strong presumption** arises hence that children may be included also along with their parents in the other....

"With the faith of the parent..., during the period of nonage the infant is **federally** included....

In the language of the *Westminster Confession* [10:3], "elect infants dying in infancy "are 'regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit Who worketh when and where and how He pleaseth'.... In the preacher's words [Ecclesiastes 11:5], 'As thou knowest not what is the way of the Spirit nor how **the bones do grow in the womb of her that is with child**, even so thou knowest not the works of God Who maketh all'....

"The *Confession*...proceeds on the supposition that children are fit and capable subjects of divine grace and that they have an interest in the covenant **prior** to their baptism.... It utterly subverts the doctrine that none are regenerated who have not been baptized -- and thus serves to comfort the heart of many a bereaved parent whose child may have died before that sacred rite could be administered."

### **539. Buchanan's linkage of circumcision and baptism with infants**

Continued Buchanan: "Abraham had first an interest in the covenant, and then circumcision was added as a sign and seal of his interest in it.... So, in like manner, the children of believing parents have an interest in the covenant -- and they receive baptism as the sign and seal of that interest which they had, being yet unbaptized....

"For if either father or mother be a believer, the children are recognized as having a title to baptism...by virtue of their having an interest in the covenant, according to the expressive words of the apostle (First Corinthians 7:14).... For 'if the root be holy, so are the branches' (Romans 11:16).... The children are included with or rather in their parents, in the provisions and promises of the covenant -- and had an interest in it, being yet unbaptized....

"In baptism there is, as it were, a visible application made to that child individually of the sign and seal of all the grace which the covenant contains.... The parent...[should be] knowing that...his children are declared to be '**holy**' -- and as such have been admitted to the privilege of baptism....

"The children, as they grow up, should frequently be reminded that they were dedicated to God, that they were baptized into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.... When, at any time, in after-life [alias their later years], they have any doubt as to their interest in the covenant -- they may look back to the personal application of the seal of the covenant to themselves individually, while as yet they were unconscious infants, and draw from it a precious assurance of the perfect freeness of the Gospel. To believing parents again, who have lost their children in infancy, the truths which have been illustrated are fitted to impart a consolation such as the world can neither give nor take away."

Buchanan later concluded:<sup>138</sup> "It was by the Spirit that the Lord Christ was sanctified in His human nature.... Jesus said, 'Suffer little children and forbid them not to come unto Me for of such is the kingdom of heaven.' Nay, on another occasion 'Jesus called a little child unto Him and set him in the midst of the Disciples and said: 'Verily I say unto you, except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven!' That little children are capable subjects of God's grace, is implied in the provision that was made for their admission to the privileges of the covenant first by circumcision under the Old Testament and secondly by baptism under the New....

"The case of Timothy...shows that little children are capable subjects of divine grace.... 'Hearken unto Me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel which are borne by Me from the belly, which are carried from the womb' [Isaiah 46:3].... We learn from the case of Timothy that true religion is sometimes implanted in the soul of a child at a very early period, and continues to grow with his growth and strengthen with his strength." Second Timothy 1:5f and 3:14-17.

#### **540. Russell & Bethune: covenant infants rebuttably presumed regenerate**

The next year, 1844, we find also Rev. Dr. David Russell of Dundee searchingly writing<sup>139</sup> that "He Who imparted His moral likeness to Adam immediately at his creation, and gave His Holy Spirit to John while in his mother's womb, ought not to be limited. If the first Adam had continued obedient -- would not his children have been born in a state of holiness, or with a principle predisposing to holy exercises, as soon as the faculties of the mind were so developed as to fit for moral agency?

"And if so -- why may not the Spirit of God so influence the heart of a child, as to produce **a similar predisposition there? If, as we have seen, the germ of sin be in infants from the beginning**, though not developed in actual transgressions -- why may not the germ of holiness be implanted by the Divine Spirit on earth, though its developments in the case of infants can be witnessed only in heaven?"

Two years later, we find a similar thought expressed by the American Dutch Reformed scholar Rev. George W. Bethune. He reflected about the justification of early-dying children. We refer to his book: *Early Lost, Early Saved -- An Argument for the Salvation of Infants (with Consolations for Bereaved Parents)*.

There, Bethune wrote<sup>140</sup> that "the child, if he [had] lived to grow up, might cut himself off from the covenant by his own sin. Exodus 12:15 & 31:14 . The first-born of woman became the murder-cursed Cain [when an adult]. But the babe, as a babe, was from his birth an object of the divine **favour** and compassion."

Indeed, when still young, Cain was a child of the covenant of grace -- rebuttably presumed regenerate. Genesis 3:15f & 4:1f. Later, that presumption was indeed rebutted -- and then resulted in excommunication. Genesis 4:11-16 & First John 3:9-12.

Until then, however, that rebuttable presumption was constantly maintained. And rightly so. Genesis 4:1-3f & 4:7.

#### **541. The recovery of 'infant faith' in Holland after the French Revolution**

Western Civilization's slow recovery from the catastrophe of the French Revolution was also promoted even in Europe. There, the doctrines of radical humanism damaged even the Reformed Churches far more badly than they did in overseas Britain and America.

In Holland, the issue was put tersely in the famous words of the great Christian-Historical and Anti-Revolutionary Dutch statesman Guillaumé Groen van Prinsterer, "There was, he said, a great need to see the link between "*Ongeloof en Revolutie*" [alias 'Faithlessness and Revolution'].

The recovery of Christianity required the opposing of the Revolution -- with the Gospel. What was needed, then, was -- the Protestant Reformation against the French Revolution.

Depressed and even oppressed by the terrible condition of the State Church in Holland, a group seceded in 1834 -- the '*Afscheiding*.' Although opposing the deadness of the State Church, and rightly stressing experimental religion and the need for adult conversions, its leaders also opposed the theology of baptistic sects. Indeed, its chief leader, Hendrik de Cock, certainly maintained the Old-Reformed view of the covenant<sup>141</sup> and of infant baptism.

The Dutch Baptist Jan de Liefde had published his 'revolutionary' book *Baptism of Adults*. So H.P. Scholte, a leader of the *Afscheiding*, then replied with his writing *Holy Baptism --or the Sign in the Flesh*.

There, Scholte rightly asserted the Biblical doctrine of infant baptism -- against the subjectivistic antipaedobaptist De Liefde. Yet Scholte also reactionarily and objectivistically grounded infant baptism solely in the objective covenant of grace -- and wrongly denied the need of a prebaptismal subjective faith in the baptismal candidate himself or herself.

#### **542. The baptistic De Liefde opposed by the Paedobaptist Scholte**

Wrote Scholte against De Liefde:<sup>142</sup> "I am not...able to baptize tiny children on the basis of a presumed regeneration.... [Yet] I must tell you that it is just as uncertain whether the adult **you**

stand ready to baptize, has truly been regenerated or not. You so presume; you so allege -- but you are not certain about this. I want to assure you that if I could administer Holy Baptism only on the basis of the certainty of regeneratedness -- probably nobody would be baptized by me....

"I baptize like the Apostles, after profession of faith in God-in-Christ, on the basis of God's promise that he who believes and is baptized shall be saved. Yet I therefore also baptize all whom the believer indicates to me have been taken up into God's covenant" -- namely also all of the infants of that adult alleging his own Christian faith.

Here, Scholte rightly assumed the validity of baptism -- irrespective of the presence of faith or not in the infant baptized (or even in his or her faith-professing parent). Scholte is also right that both Historic Calvinists and Historic Baptists rebuttably assume the existence of subjective faith in the candidate -- before baptizing him or her. For the Historic Baptist assumes that a truth faith exists within adults, before he will baptize them. And the Historic Calvinist assumes the existence of saving faith not only in the adult parent but also in that Christ-professing parent's infant, before baptizing that infant.

Scholte is also right that the Baptist De Liefde can never know for sure that the adult he assumes has been justified, really is a child of God before he then baptizes him. And Scholte would also be right in assuming that the Calvinian Calvin and his Calvinistic followers could never know for sure that the covenant infants they assume had been justified, really were children of God before they then baptized them.

Yet Scholte did not sufficiently realize that he himself too could never really know for sure -- that the adult who professed the Christian faith also truly possessed it, before having his infant baptized. And not only Scholte always, but even the Christ-professing adult himself sometimes -- did not irrebuttably know for sure that this Christ-professing adult was indeed also a Christ-possessing adult. Neither did the Baptist De Liefde.

For H.P. Scholte, just as Baptists like Jan De Liefde and also just as Historic Calvinists like Calvin and the Westminster divines, baptized **not** on the basis of possession but only on the basis of profession of faith by an adult. Jan De Liefde baptized not Christ-possessing but only Christ-professing adults. So too did H.P. Scholte -- together with the infants of those Christ-professing adults.

#### **543. The overreacting error of Scholte together with his fine Paedobaptism**

Neither De Liefde nor Scholte baptized only believers. De Liefde baptized all adults who to themselves and to De Liefde seemed to be believers. Scholte baptized all infants of such adults as to themselves and to Scholte seemed to be believers -- and rightly refused baptism to all other infants.

De Liefde erred in refusing to baptize also the infants of those who seemed to him to be believers and not unbelievers. And Scholte erred in deliberately baptizing infants even when it had not seemed to him that they themselves were believers. Yet greater was Scholte's error -- if he

ever further presumed that those infants themselves were still unbelievers, and merely the unbelieving children of parents who either professed or possessed Christ.

Scholte seemed to have forgotten that it is a grave sin to throw Christ's baptismal pearls before pigs -- and even before piglets. Scholte had no right to baptize those being suckled by adults he deemed to be sheep -- without also assuming that the sucklings themselves were probably indeed little lambs, and not piglets.

""Yet, in his more thoughtful moments, Scholte did gravitate back toward the Historic Calvinistic baptismal position. For he himself declared:<sup>143</sup> "From the Covenant, it follows that the Covenanters are regenerate; endowed with faith unto salvation; sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. Regeneration, faith, sealing with the Holy Spirit -- are benefits or consequences [and] no way preconditions of the Covenant."

Speaking of Covenant Infants, Scholte too rightly stated: "The Lord treats them as His Covenanters, even when they themselves are not able to give an account of the Covenant and of their participation therein." Indeed, Scholte even said that children have faith -- and that God "did something in them" when "He laid His holy hand on them."

Scholte later left Holland and settled in the United States. There, he was very instrumental in propagating his baptismal views and in calling for the cleansing of the oldest denomination in the Northern Continent of the New World -- the backslidden Reformed Church in America. It is remarkable that he did so -- even while looking askance at the establishment of the Christian Reformed Church in 1857.

#### **544. Wormser: teach the *nation* to understand baptism!**

John Adam Wormser Sr. was born and baptized in the Dutch Evangelical Lutheran Church. He was confirmed in the National (Dutch Reformed) Church. However, he separated therefrom -- together with the brethren of the 1834 *Afscheiding*.

Yet Wormser later returned to the National Church -- also because of his views on 'baptizing the nation(s)'. Matthew 24:14 & 28:19 and Revelation 15:4 & 21:24f. Then he set out his Historic Calvinistic position on the sacrament of initiation -- in his work *Infant Baptism*. There, his great motto was: "Teach the nation to understand and to appreciate her baptism -- then both Church and State are saved!"

This prepared the way for the subsequent writings of Rev. Proessor. Dr. Abraham Kuyper Sr. (see later below). Most of the latter were published by Wormser's son -- John Adam Wormser Jr. -- especially from the 1886 time of the *Doleantie* onward.

#### **545. The schism of 1838 and the American Baptists**

Returning now to the United States, it will be remembered that the 'Great Awakening' and the rise of arminianizing revivalism had badly perverted the Presbyterian Church. So too,

indirectly, did the meteoric rise of the American Methodists (and later the Baptists) from about that time onward.

The 1801 influx of unconfessional Congregationalists into the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America -- severely dented the initially pure Calvinism of American Presbyterians. By 1810, the half-arminian Cumberland Presbyterian Church had seceded. By 1815, even within the PCUSA, the 'New School' religion was seriously challenging that of the 'Old School.'

This precipitated *de facto* schism. In 1838, the 'Old School' Assembly refused to recognize commissioners from disowned presbyteries. It resulted in completely polarizing American Presbyterians against one another for doctrinal reasons. In addition, however, also a further polarization -- for overwhelmingly regional reasons -- was fast developing too.

Till then, the Presbyterians in the South had been largely neutral as regards the above-mentioned doctrinal dispute. However, there now developed an ever-increasing exasperation in the South with the North -- not only over the latter's claims alleging the indefensibility of slavery, but particularly as regards the right of each State to secede from the American Union. Worsening human relations between those on one side of the Mason-Dixon line and those on the other, now beclouded the baptismal issues. All this later erupted in the catabaptist catastrophe at the 'Old School' Presbyterian General Assembly of 1845.

Another catastrophic factor in the downfall of American Calvinism, was the meteoric rise of the Baptists. Only in 1639 did they establish their very first church in the New World. But their growth was dramatic, after the Great Awakening -- especially with the increasing popularity of its Arminian offsprings: the sawdust trail and the altar call.<sup>144</sup>

As the nation moved westward during the nineteenth century, the atomistic Baptists became almost the new 'Established Church' -- on those rugged and highly individualistic frontiers. By then, even Presbyterianism was beginning to be overwhelmed by what Rev. James B. Jordan has cryptically called "the American Baptist Culture."<sup>145</sup> Indeed, we ourselves would even call it: the increasingly Anabaptist American culture.

For today, 85% of all the world's Baptists reside in the United States alone. There -- yet in no other country on earth -- they constitute fully the largest group of 'Protestant' (or rather Non-Romish) Christian denominations. 95% of all American Blacks are Baptists. Indeed, throughout the southeast -- among both Blacks and Whites -- there are "almost" more Baptists than people. Sadly, that has tended to baptize also the Presbyterian minority in that culture.

#### **546. 'Old School' versus 'New School' American Presbyterians**

During the first half of the nineteenth century and beyond, the downward decalvinization and especially the ongoing anabaptization of the United States and even of American 'Calvinists' -- was bewailed by 'Old School' Presbyterians in the PCUSA. Such included: Rev. Professors Drs. Archibald Alexander, Joseph Addison Alexander, James Waddell Alexander, Lyman H. Atwater, James Carnahan, Ashbel Green, Charles Hodge, E.P. Humphrey, and Samuel Miller. Indeed, their



concern was shared even by the famous 'New School' theologian Rev. Professor Dr. Henry B. Smith.<sup>146</sup>

Thus, in 1832, Rev. Professor Dr. Ashbel Green declared in his *Lectures on the Shorter Catechism*<sup>147</sup> "that in most of the churches of our denomination, there is a mournful disregard of the duty which ought to be performed toward baptized children. They are not viewed and treated as Members of the Church at all. Nor [is] more regard shown to them than to those who are unbaptized. This is a grievous and very criminal neglect."

Princeton Professor of Church History Rev. Dr. James Waddell Alexander asked about infant baptism in 1840: "Do we not, in our squabbles about the amount of water *etc.*, lose sight of the one great intent of this ordinance?" Indeed, in 1845 he wrote: "O, how we neglect that ordinance -- treating children in the Church just as if they were out of it.... I am distressed.... What a dead letter" in the PCUSA is the Calvinistic doctrine in the *Westminster Standards* concerning covenant children!<sup>148</sup>

Looking back from 1863-64, Princeton's Rev. Professor Dr. Lyman H. Atwater observed<sup>149</sup> of infant baptism that "it is enough to bring any rite into disuse...if it be regarded as meaningless and profitless..., or if its practical significance and consequent duties...are substantially ignored and forgotten." Discussing the *Westminster Standards*, he feared that even "Old School Presbyterians...may have -- owing to various causes in the present century -- lost sight of their precious significance."<sup>150</sup>

Looking back as far as 1807, Rev. Professor Dr. Charles Hodge made a very wistful remark. He observed, half a century later, that "fifty years ago there was one child baptized for every five Members; now, one for every twenty Members."<sup>151</sup>

Two years later, Dr. E.P. Humphrey told<sup>152</sup> the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church that this current had been running in the same direction all the time. For the trend had been running away from Classic Presbyterianism and toward the increasing abandonment of the practice of infant baptism. Indeed, this had been happening not just in America as a whole, but also in the American Presbyterian Church itself -- and even in its Old School. Nor were matters very much better in this regard from 1861 onward, even in the Southern Presbyterian Church.<sup>153</sup>

Even the 'New School' Presbyterian Rev. Professor Dr. Henry Boynton Smith bemoaned: "In many of the churches in this country, this ordinance [of infant baptism] has fallen into a deplorable disuse."<sup>154</sup> The plain fact is, as he pointed out, the older doctrine and practice of the Presbyterian Church had nearly perished -- under revivalism.<sup>155</sup>

So much was the latter the case, that Professor Smith needed to correct even one of his own former theological students who had subsequently fallen into this 'revivalistic' error. Explained Smith:<sup>156</sup> "Those baptized in infancy...do not...'join' the church" only when they later 'profess' their faith. No! They are rebuttably deemed to be members of the Invisible Church at their conception -- and they therefore irrebutably 'join' the Visible Church at their infant baptism. "This is...Presbyterian theory.... In your proposed 'formula of baptism' of infants, I miss the recognition of their Church Membership. Your 'formula' makes it chiefly a parental act, and does not imply any relation of the child to the Church."

#### **547. The undiluted paidobaptist Calvinism of Rev. Professor Dr. Samuel Miller**

Yet there were exceptions. Solidly Calvinist -- also on baptism -- was Rev. Dr. Samuel Miller, Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Church Government in the Presbyterian Theological Seminary at Princeton. In 1835, he published his *Infant Baptism Scriptural and Reasonable*. And in 1840 -- together with his colleagues -- he submitted to the General Assembly a Report on *The Christian Education of the Children and Youth in the Presbyterian Church*. Those colleagues included: the Southerner Rev. Professor Dr. Archibald Alexander; his son, Rev. Professor Dr. Joseph Addison Alexander; Rev. Professor Dr. James Carnahan; and Rev. Professor Dr. Charles Hodge.<sup>157</sup>

"The Primitive Church," maintained this *Miller Report*,<sup>158</sup> "considered herself as the common mother of all baptized children, and exercised a corresponding care of them." These children are baptized in infancy precisely as Members of the Church. "They must be the subjects of her discipline...[and] from the first dawnings of reason ought to be taught to consider themselves as the Lord's children, solemnly dedicated to Him in soul and body."

Clearly referring to Romans 11:16, Miller and his associates then drew attention to "the close and endearing connection between parents and children...in favor of the church-membership of the infant seed of believers.... Can it be, my friends, that when the stem is **in** the church, the branch is **out** of it?"

Miller then answered his own question: "The infant seed of the professing people of God were Members of the Church under the Old Testament economy.... The Church under that dispensation and the present, is the same.... The Church remains the same.... They [covenantal infants] undoubtedly are still Members.... I Consider the Jewish baptism of proselytes as a historical fact well established.... We find the principle of family baptism again and again adopted in the apostolic age..... Isaiah 45:17-23."

Discussing First Corinthians 7:14, Miller further explained that even in a 'mixed marriage' -- also "the infidel party is so far...consecrated by the believing party, that their children shall be reckoned to belong to the sacred family with which the latter is connected and shall be regarded and treated as Members of the Church of God.... This interpretation of the passage is...decisely maintained by Augustine (*On the Lord's Sermon on the Mount* (ch. 27)).

"Even where a believer's spouse is an infidel," insisted Miller, "the passage [First Corinthians 7:14]...establishes the Church Membership of infants." As regards such covenant children, Miller assured believing parents, "the infidelity of your partner shall never frustrate their interest in the covenant of your God. They are holy, because you are so.... The infants of believing parents are born Members of His Church."

#### **548. The twin evils of Anabaptism and Romanism**

The above was the universal belief of the Old Testament Church throughout its history, and also of the New Testament Church right down till some five years after the beginning of the

Protestant Reformation in 1517. Explained Miller: "It is an undoubted fact, that the people known in ecclesiastical history under the name of the Anabaptists, who arose in Germany in the year 1522, were the very first body of people in the whole Christian world who rejected the baptism of infants on the principles now adopted by the antipaedobaptist body....

It is objected" nevertheless -- by the Baptists -- "that the Paedobaptists are not consistent with themselves, in that they do not treat their [own] children as if they were Members of the Church." Miller then sadly admitted "it cannot be denied that the great mass of the paedobaptist churches" -- especially under the influence of the 'great Awakening' -- "do act inconsistently in regard to this matter." However, the cure is obvious: "Let all baptized children -- from the hour of their receiving the seal of God's covenant -- be recorded and recognized as infant disciples!"

For "the children of professing Christians are **born** Members of the Church -- and are baptized as a sign and seal of this *Membership*. Nothing can be plainer, than that they ought to be treated in every respect as Church Members.... [Yet still,] it is evident that the great body of paedobaptist churches have much to reform in regard to their treatment of baptized children, and are bound to address themselves to that reform with all speed and fidelity."

Going on to discuss "baptismal regeneration," Miller next bewailed the fact that "this unscriptural and pernicious doctrine is not confined to the Roman Catholics in whose system it may, without impropriety, be said to be indigenous. But [it] is also frequently found in the pulpits and manuals of some Protestants in the midst of whose general principles it ought to be regarded as a poisonous exotic....

"The truth is, the doctrine now under consideration is the very same in substance with the doctrine of the *opus operatum* of the Papists -- which all evangelical Protestants have been opposing for more than three hundred years as a mischievous delusion. Accordingly, the Popish character and fatal tendency of this error have been unreservedly acknowledged by many bishops and other pious divines of the Church of England, as well as by many of the same denomination in this country."

Throughout, even while berating Rome's understanding of baptism -- together with every other consistent American Presbyterian of stature (until 1845), Miller was far more concerned with the constant erosion of American Presbyterianism by militant Anabaptism. Indeed, his writings indicate that Miller was more concerned about the baptismal errors of (Ana)Baptists than he was about those of the Romanists. For, as the *Schaff-Herzog Encyclopaedia of Religious Knowledge* rightly observes:<sup>159</sup> "Dr. Miller was a stanch Calvinist and Presbyterian."

#### **549. The catastrophic 'Old School' General Assembly of 1845**

After the 'schism' between 'Old School' and 'New School' Presbyterians within the PCUSA in 1838, the 'Old School' General Assembly of 1845 quite sectarianly purported to "invalidate" Romish baptisms. The great Rev. Professor Dr. Charles Hodge rightly opposed that decision.

He did so not because, as an inveterate advocate of the presumed regeneratedness of infantly-baptized Presbyterians, he presupposed the prebaptismal regeneratedness of Romish babies

too. Indeed, he did not presuppose the latter. But he opposed the General Assembly decision because it had anticalvinistically and indeed sinfully advocated the rebaptism of some of those already validly baptized -- instead of simply urging baptized Romanists strenuously to improve their baptism by becoming Presbyterians.

The majority of that General Assembly had wrongly departed from Calvinism and from their own *Westminster Standards* -- in demanding the rebaptism of presbyterianized Ex-Romanists. However, that majority does seem to have grasped (quite rightly) that regular infant baptisms indeed presuppose the regenerated prebaptismal status of the infants concerned -- though, of course, only rebuttably so.

For apparently that is one of the factors which made it hard for that misinformed majority to understand how Romish baptism could be valid -- if neither the Romish infant nor his or her parents could be presumed regenerate. (Of course, had they been consistent, they would also have had to draw the same conclusion regarding the validity of suchlike Presbyterian baptisms too -- namely whenever it might later appear that neither the baby nor the baby's parents had then been regenerated indeed. Yet precisely that conclusion the misinformed majority does not appear to have drawn.)

The error here, of course, is not that of needing to presuppose the regeneratedness of the candidate before then baptizing him or her. That procedure is quite correct. But the error here is that of wrongly assuming that any baptism as such -- if a then-assumed regeneratedness later gets disproved -- can ever be invalidated.

There is little doubt that many of the influential delegates at that 1845 General Assembly had, several decades earlier, already fallen under the mesmerizing spell of baptistic revivalism. The latter virtually denied the membership status of all baptized children in Christ's Visible Church. Similar views, such as those of treating tiny covenant children as "baptized unbelievers" and as "the enemies of God" -- thus Thornwell<sup>160</sup> -- obviously influenced the 'Presbyterian' General Assembly of 1845.

Deteriorating North/South relations also soured the debate. Just a few vastly-outnumbered and knowledgeably Anti-Anabaptist Calvinists like Charles Hodge -- almost all of them from the North -- had to take on a powerful (though nondescript) 'catabaptist coalition' from all over the country. That 'catabaptist coalition' (*sic*) consisted of Thornwell-loving and fervently patriotic Southerners -- as well as Revivalists and Catabaptists from both the North and the South.

#### **550. The 1845 General Assembly catabaptized by Thornwell's Semi-Anabaptism**

The motley coalition was by led by the golden-tongued Southerner James Henley Thornwell. He spoke before an Assembly with a massive and fiercely-loyal Southern component.

Indeed, even and especially the Northern component had by and large -- for several decades -- been eroded by 'Great Awakening' revivalism. And that was seriously hostile to the Anti-Anabaptistic 'Consistent Calvinism' of stalwarts like Charles Hodge.

Given those unfortunate circumstances, the result of the vote on this issue was almost predictable. The Catabaptists -- who favoured the rebaptizing of Romanists converted to Protestantism in general and to Presbyterianism in particular -- were led by Drs. Thornwell, McGill, Junkin, and Rice.<sup>161</sup> They won by a landslide.

Only eight had voted against Thornwell -- in addition to the further six abstentions. Yet what an 'eight' they were! For those who voted against Thornwell's Catabaptism and for Calvin's Calvinism included not only Dr. Lord and Aitken,<sup>162</sup> but also Dr. Charles Hodge of Princeton and Dr. Henry B. Smith of New York. The latter were "the two leading Presbyterian divines of that day." Thus that greatest of all Calvinist church historians -- Rev. Professor Dr. Philip Schaff.<sup>163</sup>

It must be remembered that Thornwell was perhaps unconsciously, but nevertheless clearly, tainted with revivalism. At that point, he utterly rejected the Westminster doctrine of the status of the covenant child. The Westminster Calvinists had declared that children of the covenant "are Christians and federally holy before baptism and therefore are to be baptized."<sup>164</sup>

Thornwell, however, would soon retort -- against the doctrine of the Westminster Assembly -- that those in "the Church" were only "baptized unbelievers" and therefore outside of Christ. For, thundered the theatrical Thornwell, "until they come to Him...they are to be dealt with as the Church deals with all the enemies of God.... She turns the key upon them and leaves them without!"<sup>165</sup>

The North Carolinian Presbyterian Southerner Rev. Professor Dr. Schenck has offered an excellent explanation of this maverick misunderstanding. Stated Schenck:<sup>166</sup> "Dr. Thornwell...was not in agreement with Calvin's belief concerning children in the covenant -- which deserved the right to be called the Historic Christian Faith."

### **551. Some Neo-Semimanichaeian tendencies in the Thornwellians**

The death of his young son in 1856 helped bring Thornwell toward a more Calvinistic position. For then and soon thereafter he said: "I believe the covenant which God has made with His people, and which is sealed to their faith in the baptism of their offspring, to be a real and a precious thing.... Where Christian parents have in faith laid hold upon this covenant and have pleaded its promises on behalf of their seed, they may, when dying in these early years of childish immaturity, be laid, without a particle of apprehension or distrust, upon the bosom of that promise, 'I will be a God to thee and to thy seed!'"<sup>167</sup>

Sadly, however -- through Thornwell's previous deviationist decision at the General Assembly of 1845 -- great baptismal damage was done to the denomination as a whole. It gave a long-term impetus to a semi-baptistic denial of prebaptismal infant regeneratedness -- especially in the later Southern Presbyterian Church. Even after the death of his son, Thornwell still never arrived at a solidly Calvinistic (nor confessional) view of tiny covenant children.

Now earlier, the 1857 General Assembly of the PCUSA had appointed Thornwell Chairman of the Committee to revise the *Book of Discipline* -- to report back to the next Assembly in 1859.

He then (unsuccessfully) tried to push through the Majority Report -- which he himself had drafted.

He was opposed<sup>168</sup> -- according to the not wholly supportive Rev. Professor Dr. Robert L. Dabney -- even by his fellow Committee Members Rev. Professor Dr. Charles Hodge, Rev. Dr. James Hoge and Rev. Professor Dr. A.T. McGill. The latter, who had previously supported Thornwell at the General Assembly of 1845, now opposed him.

Rev. Dr. Courtlandt Van Rensselaer, editor of *The Presbyterian Magazine*, quickly responded to the changes proposed in the Majority Report anent the revision of the *Book of Discipline*. "A great and fundamental principle of Presbyterianism is undermined in this change," observed Van Rensselaer.<sup>169</sup> For the Majority Report "takes the lowest possible view of the relation of baptized children to the Church consistent with the idea that they are Members in any sense at all." To the contrary, however, we Presbyterians should "rather let our practice ascend to the dignity and elevation of the truth of our present [*Westminster*] *Standards* -- than our principles descend to the level of the new *Revision*."

In Dabney's articles on *The Revised Book of Discipline* (printed in the *Presbyterian* from December 1859 through January 1860), he himself admitted<sup>170</sup> that Dr. Van Rensselaer's description of these views of Thornwell as "dangerous, invidious and inquisitorial" -- is "very valid." Indeed, Dabney himself took issue with "Dr. Thornwell" and described his "illustration" as "not just." For, insisted Dabney: "Let Dr. Thornwell read any of the arguments of Immersionists -- and he will change his assertion!"<sup>171</sup>

Thornwell died in 1862 -- within a year after the Southern Presbyterians had seceded from the Old School PCUSA, because of the War between the States. Thornwell is tops on theocracy -- but not at his best on baptism (about which matter his grasp leaves very much to be desired).

Even Thornwell's modern admirer Rev. Professor Dr. Morton H. Smith makes a telling admission. "In connection with the Sacraments," explains Smith,<sup>172</sup> "Thornwell has very little in his extant writings -- other than the general remark about the validity of the Sacraments." Smith's latter remark seems to be a reference to Thornwell's opposition to Calvin and the Historic Calvinists as regards the validity of baptisms administered by the Church of Rome.

As Rev. Dr. Morris McDonald rightly points out in his insightful 1988 article *The Present-Day Reformed Church*:<sup>173</sup> "Presbyterianism once made up 20 percent or more of the American population, but now it is only two percent. "The Southern Presbyterian and the Southern Baptist Church emerged at about the same time. But after a century and a half, the Southern Baptists have nearly fourteen million members.... In 1982, the year before the merger of the Southern and Northern Churches, the Southern Presbyterian Church numbered 814,931 -- less than a million!"

For this, we ourselves blame the 'Great Awakening.' We also blame Thornwell and his cohorts -- for their patent departure from the 'infant faith' viewpoint anent tiny covenanters. Very frankly, on this one point, they not only repudiated Calvinism and the *Westminster Standards*. On this point, they veered far to the left of the Baptists -- and almost into Semi-Manichaeism.

## **552. Horace Bushnell: the educational (re)conversion of covenant children**

Far more influential than Thornwell in the United States -- and to some extent even in certain Calvinistic circles both inside and outside America -- was the Congregationalist theologian Horace Bushnell. Although not adequately orthodox, in his 1847 book *Christian Nurture* Bushnell nevertheless rightly argued that the conversion of the child of the covenant should be educative and progressive rather than revolutionary and sudden.

Explained the Congregationalist Bushnell:<sup>174</sup> "Our New England fathers...fell off for a time...into a denial of the great underlying principles and facts on which the membership of baptized children in the Church must ever be rested." Indeed, it was precisely the semi-arminianizing 'Great Awakening' -- from about 1740 onward -- which had promoted this great 'falling away' from Calvinism and covenant theology in New England.

As the Confessional Presbyterian Rev. Professor Dr. L.B. Schenck explains:<sup>175</sup> "The blessings of membership in the Christian family, of the covenant relation with God, and of a real vital membership of children in the church -- was minimized. The 'revival' with its emphasis upon conscious conversion after intense struggle, was exalted as the surest road to Christian discipleship, as the normal method of entrance into the kingdom of God.

"Bushnell tried to correct this distorted idea, and to call the Church back to a position consonant with its historic doctrine." This was the position which conceived the child of the covenant to be already a Christian. Thus, said Bushnell,<sup>176</sup> he should "grow up a Christian -- and not know himself as being otherwise."

Bushnell himself elaborated:<sup>177</sup> "The aim...and expectation should be not...that the child is to grow up in sin [and only] to be converted after he comes to a mature age, but that he is to open onto the world as one that is spiritually renewed -- not remembering the time when he went through a technical experience, but....loved what is good from his earliest years....

"It is the duty of every Christian parent that his children shall come forth into action as a regenerate stock.... It is the family spirit; the organic life of the house [or home]; the silent power of a domestic godliness -- working as it does unconsciously and with sovereign effect -- this is it which forms your children to God."

In an 1861 book review<sup>178</sup> of his *Christian Nurture*, even the famous 'New School' Presbyterian leader Rev. Professor Dr. H.B. Smith approves of Bushnell's "opposition to mere individualism in philosophy and theology. The author seizes the profounder truth contained in the organic unity of the family."

Earlier in 1847, 'Old School' Presbyterian leader Rev. Professor Dr. Charles Hodge had already said<sup>179</sup> in his own review of Bushnell's book -- that early and faithful Christian nurture of the children of believers was the great means of their salvation. Such is taught in the Scriptures, is reasonable in itself, and is confirmed by the experience of the Church.

Still discussing Bushnell's work, Hodge said further<sup>180</sup> that a covenant child should be taught "he stands in a peculiar relation to God." For he is "included in His covenant and baptized in His Name.... He has in virtue of that relation a right to claim God as his Father, Christ as his Saviour, and the Holy Ghost as his sanctifier." Indeed, "God will recognize that claim and receive him as His child -- if he is faithful to his baptism."

Hodge heartily agreed with Bushnell that the Christian character and life of the parent laid a scriptural foundation for expecting the children to be truly Christian. Yet Hodge also rightly objected<sup>181</sup> to the explanation Bushnell gave of those facts, where the latter confined the operations of God's Spirit to natural laws. Similar objections were raised also by other Presbyterian theologians -- such as the presumed prebaptismal regenerationists Dr. Lyman Atwater<sup>182</sup> and Dr. H.B. Smith.<sup>183</sup>

### **553. Delitzsch: covenant children conscious of God before their birth**

Back in Germany, the famous Lutheran Professor Dr. Franz Delitzsch first published his *Biblical Psychology* in 1855. There, he insisted<sup>184</sup> "that in the first germinating beginning of man, spirit and soul also are placed together in the way of germ.... The life of the soul does not unfold itself without at the same time the self-consciousness of the spirit glimmering near it in the background -- and so glimmering on, throughout the development.

"The Scripture at least knows absolutely nothing of a *nephesh* developing itself into a *ruach*, of a *psuchē* becoming a *pneuma*. Rather it supposes that with the embryonic beginning of bodily life, is produced at the same time the beginning of the spirit's and soul's life.... According to Luke 1:15, John even in his mother's womb was said to be full of the Holy Ghost.... It is precisely the human spirit which is the organ for the reception of the Divine [Spirit]....

"Scripture relegates secret events which primarily concern the spirit, back into the life of the embryo -- especially the separating and sanctifying to a lofty call. Isaiah 49:1-5; Jeremiah 1:5; Galatians 1:15.... As well 'believing love of God' (Psalms 22:10f & 71:6) as 'self-turning departure from God' (Psalm 58:3f & Isaiah 48:8) are dated back at least without any limits into the period of infancy -- to say nothing of Genesis 25:22 & Hosea 12:3f & Luke 1:41."

In his 1859 *Commentary on the Psalms*, Delitzsch was even more specific (about especially Psalm 22:10 mentioned above). There,<sup>185</sup> he insisted: "According to biblical conception, there is even in the new-born child, yea in the child yet unborn and only living in the womb, a glimmering consciousness springing up out of the remotest depths of unconsciousness....

"Therefore, when the praying one says [Psalm 22:10] that from the womb he has been cast upon Jahve, *i.e.* directed to go to Him and to Him alone with all his wants and cares (55:22f *cf.* 71:5f); that from the womb onwards Jahve was his God -- there is also more in it than the purely objective idea that he grew up into such a relationship to God. Twice he mentions his mother...or her who bare him." Psalm 22:9 & 22:10. Indeed, the Lutheran Delitzsch here sounds almost like a Crypto-Calvinist.



#### **554. Atwater on the U.S. Presbyterian lapse from Calvin's presumptive regenerationism**

In 1857, Princeton's Rev. Professor Dr. Lyman H. Atwater published his monograph *The Children of the Church and Sealing Ordinances*.<sup>186</sup> There, he insisted<sup>187</sup> that our "[*Westminster*] *Standards* surely set forth nothing less than this. They direct that baptized children be taught and trained to believe, feel, act and live -- as becomes [or behooves] those who are the Lord's.... The Church of God is made up of those whom He hath purchased with His own blood....

"Those who apparently or to the eye of judicious charity are of this number, are visibly or for all purposes of human judgment and action of this Church -- *i.e.* are the Church Visible.... Membership in the Visible Church is founded on a presumptive Membership in the Invisible -- until its subjects by acts incompatible therewith prove the contrary and thus to the eye of man forfeit their standing among God's visible people....

"The most holy and orthodox men whom we have ever known -- are those who assured us that they remembered not the time when they did not fear God, or when they experienced any marked conscious revolution in their feelings toward Him.... Surely God sanctifies some from the womb. He makes others [like Timothy], 'from a child' [actually 'from a fetus'] know the Holy Scriptures in a saving sense. Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings, He ordains praise....

"He has promised to be their God.... We are to look for that inworking Spirit and outworking holiness commensurate with their years which shall seal them as sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. This is what we believe to be the blessed significance and intent of infant baptism...with the seal of God's covenant on their foreheads." Revelation 7:2f; 14:1f; 22:4f.

"All this imports nothing less than a presumption that the children of the Church are and will prove to be the chosen of God -- [unless and] until they dispel that presumption by their own misconduct.... The very nature of baptism...is a sign of those graces and a seal.... The administration of the seal is founded upon a presumption that the things sealed will also be bestowed and accepted -- till the contrary appears.

"On no other ground can infant baptism have significance or propriety.... The large number of children of God's people...die in infancy.... Of those that grow up, a large proportion....give such evidence of piety that they are admitted to the Lord's Supper.... Even Baptist churches are replenished from their children more than from any other source....

"When Christ bids little children to come to Him, it is on the express ground that 'of such is the kingdom of heaven' [Matthew 19:14]. But of whom is this predicated, if not of the seed of the pious -- whose God He has specially covenanted to be, assuring His people that His Spirit and His Word shall not depart out of their mouth nor out of the mouth of their seed nor out of the mouth of their seed's seed from henceforth and for ever? Isaiah 59:21."

Seven years later, in 1864, Atwater felt encouraged enough to write:<sup>188</sup> "Old School Presbyterians are coming more and more into sympathy with their [*Westminster*] *Standards*." Yet previously, even Old School Presbyterians had drifted away from the *Westminster Standards*. For, according to Atwater, even those Presbyterians had "in the present century lost sight of

the...precious significance [of those *Standards*] in placing children on the same footing in the Visible Church with their parents."

### **555. David Brown: covenant infants within God's Kingdom**

Back in Scotland the famous Rev. Dr. David Brown, Free Church Professor at Aberdeen, had not only been sounding forth an optimistic eschatology in his book *Christ's Coming: Will It Be Premillennial?* He had also been suggesting that -- here and now -- many find regenerative blessings already in their infancy.

Brown dealt with this<sup>189</sup> from 1863 onward, in his work *The Four Gospels* -- in the passage where Christ rebukes His own erring disciples. Those adults had quite wrongly "thought the...infants not capable of receiving anything from Him.... [So] He took them up in His gracious arms, put His hands upon them, and blessed them." This showed "that they were...capable, as infants, of the kingdom of God....

"Sweet view this -- of the standing of children that from their very birth have been brought to Christ and **blessed** by Him.... Believers may not doubt that their children are...[savingly] loved, as dearly as if He took them up in His very arms and made the blessing to descend upon them -- even life for evermore!"

### **556. The presumed prebaptismal regenerationism of Charles Hodge**

We have already mentioned<sup>190</sup> something of the covenantal views of the great Princeton Professor of Theology Rev. Dr. Charles Hodge. In 1852, he expressed regret that far too many believing parents -- quite unfaithfully -- expect their children to grow up unconverted. Complained Hodge: "We cannot doubt that this is the case, and that it is the source of incalculable evil."<sup>191</sup>

In 1858, Hodge appealed to Calvin and the various Calvinistic *Confessions* to prove that tiny covenant children had always been presumed -- rebuttably -- to be children of God. In his article *The Church Membership of Infants*, Hodge declared:<sup>192</sup> "The presumption of election is **not** founded on their baptism, but their baptism is founded on this **presumption**. Just as the presumption that Jewish children would take Jehovah to be their God was not founded on their circumcision, but their circumcision was founded on that presumption....

"The status therefore of baptized children is not a vague or uncertain one, according to the doctrine of the Reformed Churches. They are members of the Church. They are professing Christians. They belong **presumptively** to the number of the elect. These propositions are true of them in the **same** sense in which they are true of **adult professing Christians**....

"Membership in the Visible Church is founded on presumptive membership in the Invisible.... Since the promise is not only to parents but to their seed, children are by the command of God to be regarded and treated as of the number of the elect -- [unless and] until they give undeniable evidence to the contrary, or refuse to be so considered.... This presumption of election is not

founded on their baptism, but their baptism is founded on this presumption."

Hodge contended this is the doctrine of all the Reformed Churches. He cited Calvin's *Institutes* IV:16:5f in support of his claim as to the presumably elect status of covenant children before their infant baptism.<sup>193</sup> For the latter passage claims *inter alia*: "Baptism is properly administered to infants as a thing due to them. The Lord did not anciently bestow circumcision upon them, without [first] making them partakers of all the things signified by circumcision....

"He," declared Calvin of the Lord, "distinctly declares that the circumcision of the infant will be...a seal of the promise of the covenant. But if the covenant remains first and fixed, it is no less applicable to the children of Christians in the present day than to the children of the Jews under the Old Testament. Now if are partakers of the thing signified -- how can they be denied the sign?" Thus Calvin. Hodge agreed.

Also in his 1861 article *A Practical View of Infant Baptism*, Hodge rightly wrote: "Having given our children to God..., the presumption should be that they are the Lord's, and that as they come to maturity -- they will develop a life of piety.... Adult conversions among her own children are not so much what the Church ought to look for, as sanctification from early life."

"This corresponds both with the nature of the covenant as with the nature of spiritual life, which is a gradual development. As a matter of fact, we are persuaded that many of those who make a profession of religion at a particular time, have been born again and growing under Divine influences long before. The life is only more clearly manifested to themselves and others, about the time of their professed conversion. It has existed perhaps from childhood -- the unseen fruit of this covenant [from conception onward], of which [infant] baptism is the seal."

### **557. Hodge's Systematic Theology on the grounds of Paedobaptism**

In his 1871 *Systematic Theology*, Hodge further insisted<sup>194</sup> that "sinners...need regeneration. Infants need regeneration.... Infants are in a state of sin.... All men must be born of the Spirit, in order to enter the kingdom of God.... No exception of class, tribe, character or age is made....

"All who are born of the flesh, and because they are thus born, our Lord says must be born again.... Infants always have been included with their parents in every revelation or enactment of the covenant of grace.

"The promise to our first parents of a Redeemer, concerned their children as well as themselves.... The sign and seal of the covenant of grace, circumcision under the Old dispensation and baptism under the New, was applied to new-born infants....

"Baptism is an ordinance instituted by Christ to signify and seal the purification of the soul by the sprinkling of His blood, and its regeneration by the Holy Ghost.... Pelagius and his followers...could not deny the import[ance] of the rite. They could not deny that it was properly administered to infants, and yet they refused to admit the unavoidable conclusion that infants are

born in sin. They were therefore driven to the unnatural ground of their present state, but on the assumption of their probable future condition....

"Regeneration itself, or the imparting spiritual life, is by the immediate agency of the Spirit.... The soul is passive in regeneration. It is the subject, and not the agent, of the change.... According to the faith of the Church Universal, infants may be renewed by the Holy Ghost -- and must thus be born of the Spirit in order to enter the Kingdom of God.... Infants may be subjects of regeneration.... Then the influence by which regeneration is effected is not a moral suasion, but the simple volition of Him Whose will is omnipotent....

"The sacraments belong to the Members of the Church.... The Church is the company of believers.... By the Church is meant what is called the Visible Church.... If any Israelite renounced the religion of his fathers, he was cut off from among the people. All this is true in reference to the Church that now is....

"Children, therefore, were included in the covenant of grace as revealed under the old dispensation -- and consequently were Members of the Church as it was then constituted. In the sight of God, parents and children are one.... Where parents enter into covenant with God, they bring their children with them. The covenant made with Adam included all his posterity; the promise made to Abraham was to him and to his seed after him."

#### **558. Hodge: infant baptism intended only for Christian children**

Continued Hodge: "When a believer adopts the covenant of grace, he brings his children within that covenant.... God promises to give them...all the benefits of redemption -- provided they do not willingly renounce their baptismal engagements....

"The language of the Reformed Churches as to the proper subjects of infant baptism, is perfectly uniform.... The *Westminster Confession* says...: 'The infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized.'

"The *Larger Catechism* says: 'Infants descending from parents, either both or but one of them professing faith in Christ and obedience to Him, are in that respect within the covenant and are to be baptized'.... The *Directory for Worship* says: 'The seed of the faithful have no less right to this ordinance under the Gospel than the seed of Abraham to circumcision.'

"It is therefore plain that according to the standards of the Reformed Church, it is the children of the Members of the Visible Church who are to be baptized. Agreeably to Scriptural usage such members are called *foederati*, saints, believers, faithful, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling.... The Reformed as well as the Lutheran theologians therefore speak of the Members of the Visible Church as believers, and of their children as born of believing parents....

"Baptism and the Lord's supper are not converting ordinances. They are to be administered only to those who profess [or who are professed] to be Christians. It is plain, from the nature of the case, that those who partake of the Christian sacraments profess [or are professed] to be Christians.... In baptism the recipient of that ordinance publicly declares that he [both for himself

and for his infant] takes God the Father to be his Father; God the Son to be his Saviour; and God the Holy Ghost to be his Sanctifier....

"The sacraments, as all admit, are to be confined to Members of the Church.... Those therefore who, having been themselves baptized and still professing their faith in the true religion, having competent knowledge and being free from scandal, should not only be permitted but urged and enjoined to present their children for baptism -- that they may belong to the Church and be brought up under its watch and care. To be unbaptized, is a grievous injury and reproach -- one which no parent can innocently entail upon his children. The neglect of baptism, which implies a want of appreciation of the ordinance, is one of the crying sins of this generation....

"Infants are the objects of Christ's redemption. They are capable of receiving all its benefits. Those benefits are promised to them on the same conditions on which they are promised to their parents.... The infant, when arrived at maturity, receives the full benefit of baptism -- if he believes in the promises signified and sealed to him in that ordinance. Baptism therefore benefits infants just as it does adults, and on the same condition.

"It does not follow from this that the benefits of redemption may not be conferred on infants [before or] at the time of their baptism. That is in the hands of God. What is to hinder the imputation to them of the righteousness of Christ, or their receiving the renewing of the Holy Ghost -- so that their whole nature may be developed in a state of reconciliation with God? Doubtless this often occurs. But whether it does or not, their baptism stands good. It assures them of salvation -- if they do not renounce their baptismal covenant."

### **559. Hodge's writing *The Mode and Subjects of Baptism***

In Charles Hodge's further work *The Mode and Subjects of Baptism (with a Practical View of Infant Baptism)*, Hodge gave us further very enlightening details of the above. There, discussing the correct way to view covenant children, he explained<sup>195</sup> "the presumption should be that they are the Lord's and that as they come to maturity they will develop a life of piety. Instead of waiting, therefore, for a period of definite conviction and conversion, we should rather look for and endeavour to call out from the commencement of moral action the emotions and experiences of the [already!] renewed heart."

For Christ's Church "takes under her oversight the lambs of His flock [John 21:15f]. Her faith takes hold of the divine covenant -- 'I will be a God to thee, and to thy seed after thee' [Genesis 17:7f]. Here her hope lies. She lives and is strengthened in this faith, as she brings her sons and daughters to the God of Abraham.... How can she hope to live and flourish, if not in and through her offspring? This has always been the line of her perpetuation -- the main channel of her progress....

"It [infant baptism] is to us a formal and public consecration of our children to God -- an expression of our faith in His covenant promise.... Yet, after it is done, instead of rising to the proper conception and comfort of the dead -- we [or rather some Non-Hodgean and inconsistent Paedobaptists!] practically regard our children as the children of the devil....

"We [Hodge himself and all consistent Calvinists] are persuaded that the faith which ought to exist, would enable us to say: 'These children belong to God; have been given to Him in reliance on His covenant promise on my part; and are accepted by Him, in accordance with His own engagement. The seal of His covenant has been applied to them. We are training them not for the world, but for His glory. And such is our confidence in Him, that...we firmly believe in the reality of His covenant -- and that after using them for His glory here, He will bring them into His heavenly kingdom at last'....

"Having given our children to God, in accordance with His appointment, we ought not to feel or to act as though it were a nullity. To our faith, the presumption should be that they are the Lord's -- and that as they come to maturity, they will develop a life of piety.... Let them be taught to say, 'We love the Lord; we love and trust in Jesus; we love His people; we love the Church with all her doctrines and ordinances; we hate sin in all its forms'....

"It may be [that] a strong faith is required for such a course. But it is a legitimate faith; well-pleasing to God; comforting to ourselves; and most blessed in its bearing upon our children. If we can but exercise it, by His help vast numbers of our children will be sanctified from the womb [Luke 1:5-15 & First Corinthians 7:14] -- and will indeed grow up 'in the nurture and admonition of the Lord' [Ephesians 6:4], and will stand like olive plants around our table and our dwelling [Psalms 127 & 128]....

"Such a faith as this [that affirms the covenantal standing of Christian infants] is valuable beyond expression. It is fostered by the ordinance of [infant] baptism -- without which it is not commonly formed."

#### **560. American events of baptismal significance from 1857-59**

We must now go back to 1857. By that time, tensions had become unbearable for the Southern minority among the New School Presbyterians. This was chiefly because of the Northern (Majority) Party's ever-increasing interest in making pronouncements on delicate social issues.

So, after the New School General Assembly 'legislated' against slavery, twenty-one Southern presbyteries seceded in 1858 -- to form the Presbyterian Church United Synod of the South (PCUSS). Yet it was not until 1864 that -- after an estrangement since 1837 -- they became reunited with their fellow Presbyterian Southerners from the Old School (such as Robert L. Dabney). Until then, further baptismal developments in the South were put on hold.

In the North, however, there were baptismal developments at that time. Thus the Evangelical Reformed Church of America's Rev. Dr. J.H.A. Bomberger published his important 1859 book *Infant Salvation in its Relation to Infant Depravity, Infant Regeneration and Infant Baptism*. There, Bomberger states:<sup>196</sup> "I affirm and shall prove the necessity of Infant Regeneration, in order to infant salvation.... It is of their regeneration, not of their conversion, that this necessity is affirmed.... Regeneration is exclusively the work of the Holy Spirit on the soul of man. In it, man is passive....

"Those very arguments which prove that infants are by nature depraved and need a Saviour...all demonstrate their right to be baptized.... Suppose their Lord's command had then been, 'Go and circumcise all nations!' Would the Apostles have taken it for granted that children were included? Most unquestionably they would. Assuredly then, when the command was to baptize, they would understand it in an equally general sense and baptize children as well as their parents."

### **561. The Proposed Revision of the PCUSA Book of Discipline**

When the proposed revision of the *Book of Discipline* was presented to the General Assembly of the undivided PCUSA in 1859 by Thornwell, on this particular point he made a grave mistake. For he then anticalvinistically argued that the final form of the *Proposed Revision* should not imply that the tiny covenant children were Christians.

This viewpoint was opposed -- and indeed quite diametrically -- to certain statements in the 1645 *Westminster Directory for the Publick Worship of God*. For the latter (though rebuttably so)<sup>197</sup> clearly insists that the infant "seed and posterity of the faithful...are Christians and federally holy before baptism -- and therefore are to be baptized."

These words of the *Westminster Directory* cited in our main text above, clearly establish a very firm presumption -- as to the prebaptismal regeneratedness of the infants of believers. Nevertheless, the firm presumption is certainly rebuttable (in the light of the later behaviour of those infants). For the very next clause itself insists "that the inward grace and virtue of baptism is not tied to that very moment of time wherein it is administered."

Indeed, also the *Westminster Confession* (28:5f) itself insists that "grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it, or that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated." For "the efficacy of baptism is not tied to that moment of time wherein it is administered."

Thornwell did not now maintain the above -- as do Calvin, consistent Calvinists, and the *Westminster Standards*. Nevertheless, albeit perhaps inconsistently, Thornwell did maintain<sup>198</sup> -- and rightly so -- that "baptized persons have...advantage over the rest of the world." For, speaking of (infant) baptizees, Thornwell declared: "To them pertain the adoption...and the service of God.... The covenant is the birthright[!] of the seed[!] of believers....

"The whole history of the Church is a glorious illustration that baptism is not an idle ceremony -- that the privileges to which it entitles are, in innumerable cases, sealed to its subjects.... The children of the faithful are the heirs apparent [presumably!] of the promises. God has graciously promised to show mercy[!] to thousands [of generations] of them that love Him.... The decree of election runs largely in their loins." Thus Thornwell.

The Old School PCUSA's *Proposed Revision* of the *Book of Discipline*, which gave rise to so much discussion on the status of baptized children in the denomination, was presented to the

1859 General Assembly. This *Proposed Revision* was concerned chiefly with the disciplinability of church members.

However, the revision was also concerned with the difficulty, if not the undesirability, of attempting to discipline baptized covenant children -- who had grown up without themselves personally ever making a profession of Christian faith. Inevitably, this further led to a consideration of the important question as to whether such children should -- or should not -- rebuttably be regarded as Christians before and after their infant baptisms.

### **562. Friction on the Revision Committee: Hodge versus Thornwell**

Thornwell was Chairman of the Committee, and he had drafted the report. He knew how much even his own Old School Presbyterians -- on both sides of the Mason-Dixon line -- had been affected by 'Great Awakening' thinking. He knew large numbers did not regard even their own covenant children as Christians -- until the latter actually made a public profession of faith in Christ. Neither did Thornwell himself. Not surprisingly, his Committee's *Report* accordingly reflected this.

Charles Hodge did not oppose the *Proposed Revision* as regards its central concern of discipline. He fully accepted "a personal and voluntary confession of faith" as "perfectly intelligible and inevitable." Yet he also believed with Historic Calvinism that children of Christian parents were themselves to be regarded as Christians from their very conception onward -- unless and until those children repudiated Christianity, and unless and until the Church had so noted this in an official way.

Hodge immediately countered some of Thornwell's proposals in the process of revising the PCUSA's *Book of Discipline*. Hodge's own emphasis was that the children of Christian parents are themselves Members of the Church -- on precisely the same basis of presumptive membership in the Invisible Church, as are their parents.

Covenant infants, stated Hodge, were (rebuttably) to be presumed Members of the Church Invisible from their conception onward (First Corinthians 7:14). Moreover, they were (amputatably) to be received into Membership of the Visible Church -- and publically to be declared Members -- at the time of their infant baptism. Indeed, Hodge further quite rightly insisted, "we see not how this principle can be denied in its application to the Church -- without giving up our whole doctrine, and abandoning the ground to the Independents and Anabaptists."<sup>199</sup>

Rev. Professor Dr. L.B. Schenck highlights this, by discussing it in perhaps deliberately understated terms. "On at least one important occasion," he records,<sup>200</sup> "Charles Hodge and other leaders found themselves compelled to defend the established doctrine of children in the covenant -- when this doctrine was at least implicitly attacked in the *Proposed Revision* of the *Book of Discipline*."

Hodge was by no means alone. The Editor of the *Presbyterian Magazine*, Rev. Dr. Courtlandt Van Rensselaer, rightly remarked<sup>201</sup> in 1859 that the point in question involves "more true Presbyterian doctrine" than any other in the whole *Book of Discipline*. Declared Van



Rensselaer: "A great and fundamental principle of Presbyterianism is undermined in this change" proposed by the Revision Committee!

The Committee, Dr. Van Rensselaer continued, "takes the lowest possible view of the relation of baptized children to the Church consistent with the idea that they are Members in any sense at all." The whole principle of infant church membership was being lost in the *Proposed Revision*. Pleaded Van Rensselaer: "Rather let our practice ascend to the dignity and elevation of the truth of our present [*Westminster*] *Standards* -- than our principles descend to the level of the new [*Proposed*] *Revision*!"

Because of the solidly Calvinistic resistance of Hodge and his associates, Thornwell was here not able to inflict upon the PCUSA his own revivalistic views. Such, on this particular point, would have decalvinized that denomination yet further. Even so, the wrangling between the parties continued throughout 1860.

Consequently, the revision was recommitted to the Committee for further improvement. Most tragically, the War between the States then erupted -- thus encouraging the secession of the Southerners into the PCUS.

### **563. The new Southern Presbyterian PCUS and her *Revised Book of Discipline***

In December 1860, South Carolina seceded from the United States . By February 1861, all states bordering the Gulf of Mexico had gone into secession from the Union. In March, the seceded states confederated together and ratified the proposed Constitution of the Confederate States of America.

In April 1861, war erupted -- the War Between the States. Also sadly, that is often inaccurately termed the American Civil War (1861-65).

Remarkably, even after the commencement of fighting between the armies of the truncated American Union and the armies of the Confederate States of America, the Northern and Southern presbyteries within the Old School PCUSA still co-operated ecclesiastically. This continued until its May 1861 General Assembly.

Then, however -- meeting in Philadelphia -- the General Assembly most unwisely passed resolutions pledging the denomination's support for the Federal Union. The General Assembly did so just one month after that Federal Union had commenced official hostilities against the Confederate States in America. Thereupon, forty-seven Southern presbyteries -- more than a third of the entire Old School PCUSA -- seceded therefrom.

Those ecclesiastical secessionists then constituted themselves as the Old School Presbyterian Church in the Confederate States of America (PCCSA). Its first General Assembly met in December 1861. It immediately appointed a Committee, with Thornwell as Chairman, to complete (for the PCCSA) the *Proposed Revision* of the *Book of Discipline* already drawn up in the old

PCUSA. Meantime, Thornwell continued to make propaganda against the Calvinistic view of covenant infants.

In his 1861 essay *A Few More Words on the Revised Book of Discipline*, Thornwell declared<sup>202</sup> that the Church was to treat her own covenant infants "precisely as she treats all other impenitent and unbelieving men." Indeed, "she deals with them...as the Lord directed her to deal with the world." They are thus "baptized unbelievers," and are "to be dealt with as the Church deals with all the *enemies of God* [Thornwell's own italics]. She turns the key upon them, and leaves them without" -- alias **outside** the Kingdom of God.

We ourselves, with all of our respect for Thornwell and with all of our love of Southern Presbyterianism in general and the Old South in particular -- cannot but express our own total revulsion against especially this baptismal view of the great PCCSA theologian. Frankly, in this regard, he is worse than the Romanists.

For Rome, wrongly, denies covenant children are Christians only before their infant baptisms -- but not thereafter. But Thornwell, more wrongly yet, denies the Christian status of the children of believers not only before and during their infant baptism but also for ever thereafter -- unless and until they happen to 'honk twice' and publically 'profess' they love Jesus. Anabapticizing Arminianism rides again!

#### **564. Resistance to Thornwell even in the new Southern Presbyterian Church**

Thornwell died in 1862. In 1863, under his friend Adger as the new Chairman, Thornwell's anticalvinistic baptismal views --almost *in toto* -- were unanimously adopted by the Committee. The *Committee Report* was then submitted to the 1867 General Assembly of the denomination.

Its adoption was then easily accomplished. For also the New School Southern Presbyterians had by then joined the Old School Southern Presbyterians -- namely three years earlier, in 1864. Their presence thenceforth greatly promoted the later adoptability of the Thornwellian *Report*.

For, toward the end of the great war -- with the unitarian North's forcible subjugation and integration of the trinitarian South into the unitarianizing **new** 'United States' then fast approaching -- in 1864 the PCCSA amalgamated (on its own terms) with the Southern New School PCUSS. This led to the formation of the great Old School Southern Presbyterian Church which -- after the secession of the war and the forcible integration of the South into the new 'Union' -- soon became known as the 'Presbyterian Church in the United States' (PCUS).

However, the above-mentioned 1864 amalgamation of the PCCSA and the PCUSS also meant that the revivalist elements in the Southern Church were now stronger than ever before. This continued apace, especially after the demoralizing political defeat of the South and its forcible absorption into a more centralized 'Union' --after the Confederate General Robert E. Lee laid down his sword to the Union's General Ulysses S. Grant in April 1865.

Not surprisingly, then -- in spite of strong opposition from anticatabaptist Calvinian stalwarts like the Southerner Rev. Dr. A.W. Miller of Virginia -- the 1867 General Assembly of the PCUS

(meeting in Memphis) approved the Thornwellian version of the proposed *Book of Discipline*, after comparatively little debate. It was finally enacted in 1879 until, a century later, it was reversed -- in the 1974 *Book of Church Order* of the Presbyterian Church in America.

#### **565. The old PCUSA and its updated *Book of Discipline***

Meantime, back in the North, the old PCUSA Old School had continued in a truncated way after the April 1861 secession of her Southern presbyteries to form the PCCSA. The continuing Old School PCUSA (Northern) then adopted without dissent the *Proposed Revision* of the old *Book of Discipline* at its 1863 General Assembly.

However, this was done only after the disputed section had been restored in every word -- just as it was in the old book (except with a slight addition in reference to the general sense of discipline).<sup>203</sup> This preserved the grand old Calvinistic doctrine of covenant children being regarded (rebuttably) as Christians -- from even before the time of their infant baptism.

The new Southern Presbyterian denomination in 1879 finally enacted its own *Revision* of the *Book of Church Order* (incorporating the twofold distinction in discipline).<sup>204</sup> However, it unfortunately did so in a Thornwellian form. That was rather irreconcilable with the Historic Calvinistic view of the presumed regeneration of tiny covenant infants (until the contrary might be established).

Most regrettably, this soon led to the decalvinization of the Southern Presbyterian Church as regarded the doctrine of covenant infants. It also contributed toward the almost total anabaptization of the American South. Indeed, it ultimately helped lead to what James B. Jordan has so rightly called *The Failure of the American Baptist Culture*.<sup>205</sup>

Nevertheless, even the Southern Presbyterian Church had veered back toward the Calvinistic doctrine of infant baptism -- by the end of the nineteenth century. Before that time, however -- as Schenck claims<sup>206</sup> -- "Thornwell, Dabney, Robinson and their associates exerted so much influence in the strategic positions which they commanded -- that their views were largely accepted throughout the Southern Church.

"Yet these views were an aberration from the Reformed doctrine of children of the covenant, and of the significance of infant baptism. They were, on the other hand, in accord with the conception of the child principally if not exclusively emphasized in 'the revival movement.'"

But precisely the constant attempts to re-revise the new *Directory for Worship* authorized in 1879, unintentionally yet very effectively helped promote the return toward consistent Calvinism. This was done in the strongly 'Thornwellian' *Proposed Revisions* of 1880, 1881, 1885, 1889, and 1891.

However, all these various *Proposed Revisions* were never incorporated in the *Directory for Worship*. Consequently, the *Directory* which was finally adopted in 1894 -- adhered more closely to the wording of the old *Directory*<sup>207</sup> which had been used for so long by the old PCUSA prior to the 1861-65 War Between the States.

## **566. The Southern Presbyterian A.W. Miller's opposition to the Thornwellians**

Even among the Southerners in the PCUSA before 1861, and in the Southern Presbyterian denomination(s) thereafter, by no means all theologians agreed with Thornwell in his views on baptism. Thus, Rev. Dr. A.W. Miller of Virginia opposed Thornwell's views on infant baptism -- precisely because they were not those of the Protestant Reformation and the Presbyterian Church.

Miller did this in his sermon *The Status of the Baptized Child* before the Synod of Virginia in 1859. Calvin, Miller there declared,<sup>208</sup> taught that covenant children were baptized just because they already belonged to Christ.

Later, before the 1866 Southern Presbyterian General Assembly, Miller spoke on the implications of the revised *Book of Discipline*. There he further argued<sup>209</sup> that "baptism is not conferred on children in order that they may become sons and heirs of God, but because they are already considered by God as occupying that place and rank....

"The parent was to regard the child first and chiefly as the child of the covenant, and in this sense the child of God.... Adoption is sealed in their flesh by the rite of baptism.... Children are just as much in covenant with God, as their parents are."

## **567. The Anti-Anabaptist views of Rev. Professor Dr. Robert L. Dabney**

Thornwell's younger contemporary, Rev. Professor Dr. Robert L. Dabney (1820-98), was himself not altogether free from certain anti-confessional views about the babies of believers. He apparently denied the existence of faith within those little ones. For he not only (possibly correctly) refers to covenant infants as "unconverted children" -- but also (quite wrongly referred to them) as "unregenerate Members" and as "unregenerate baptized children."<sup>210</sup>

Dabney himself, then, was not totally Calvinistic as regards covenant infants. For he too sometimes suggests<sup>211</sup> that "these unconverted children are excluded from certain privileges of the church to which faith is essential first by their lack of understanding and next by their own voluntary impenitency." Indeed, Dabney too rather carelessly calls<sup>212</sup> them "unconverted baptized persons" and "baptized unbelievers."

On the other hand, Dabney rightly stood against Thornwell as far as the desired disciplinability of baptized noncommunicant Church Members was concerned.

Wrote Dabney<sup>213</sup> regarding the changes to the *Book of Discipline* then being proposed by Thornwell: "We are happy to learn that the Committee of Revision are not unanimous in this change, but that two influential members, Drs. Hoge and McGill, hold the old and Scriptural view of the Reformers." At this point, Dabney and Hoge stood with Calvin and against Thornwell.

Continued Dabney: "**Every man is born** a member of civil society, and subject to its beneficent jurisdiction.... He is **born a citizen**; and, as such, born subject to the general

jurisdiction which protects the whole community against crime.... It is just as much God's ordinance for mankind that His people shall live under ecclesiastical government, and that their children shall be subject to ecclesiastical jurisdiction by birth. They have no option allowed them by God. The children of His people (and all parents ought to be His professed people if they did their duty), are **born subjects to this spiritual commonwealth** which God has ordained for securing man's spiritual well-being....

"A just excommunication of a church-member, proceeds on the supposition that he has now done something so thoroughly inconsistent and obdurate, that it shows he is not a true child of God.... How strange is the assertion made by Dr. Thornwell that there is no evidence that church discipline was ever intended to produce conversion!"

Indeed, in his *Lectures on Systematic Theology*, Dabney further stated:<sup>214</sup> "The Holy Ghost in regeneration operates not only mediately through the Word, but also immediately.... We infer the same view of sin and new birth from the regeneration of infants.... Their intellect is undeveloped. Yet they are renewed.... Yet are they delivered from a state of original sin generically the same with ours, and delivered by the same Redeemer and Sanctifier. Must not the method of the renewing power be the same intrinsically? Luke 18:17....

"The sacraments cannot confer redeeming grace *ex opere operato*. Because in every adult, proper participation presupposes saving grace in exercise."

Precisely! Yet to be consistent, the same must hold in respect of the baptism of their covenant infants too. However, continued Dabney: "According to the *Shorter Catechism* (Qu. 94), baptism 'doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace'....

"Immersionists object infants cannot believe.... The Immersionist interpretation would...prove that infants can neither be baptized nor be saved, because they are incapable of faith.... [However,] infants are addressed as Church Members.... The words *hagioi* ['saints'], *pistos* or *pisteuōn* ['believer'] and *adelphos* ['brother'] -- are the current words employed to denote professed Christians....

"We find children addressed in the epistles. Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 3:20; First John 2:12-13. *Teknia* [and] *paidia* ['little children'].... These were not adult children. Further, in Titus 1:6, they are expressly called *tekna pista* ['believing children']....

"Our *Standards* say, 'all baptized persons are Members of the Church'.... They are minor citizens in the ecclesiastical commonwealth -- under tutelage, training and instruction.... The Visible Church is an organized human society, constituted of Christian families....

The Immersionist says that our [Presbyterian] communion is only saved from utter corruption by our own inconsistency.... Whereas the Immersionist charges us with a wicked inconsistency -- I will retort upon him the charge of a pious one. Those of them who are truly good people, while they say their children are not church members -- fortunately treat them as

though they were. They diligently bring them under the instructions, restraints and prayers of the church and the pastor.

"Happily, the instincts and influences of the Christian family are so deeply founded and so powerful, that a perverse and unscriptural [baptistic] theory cannot arrest them.... The light and love of a sanctified parent's heart are too strong to be wholly perverted by this theory. They still bring the family as a whole virtually within the Church. And this is the reason that true religion is perpetuated -- among them" too.

#### **568. Ongoing Anti-Anabaptism of America's Northern Presbyterians**

Across the board in general, perhaps the Northern Presbyterian Church was indeed somewhat less conservative theologically than the Southern Presbyterian Church. Yet the (Northern) PCUSA nevertheless remained considerably more loyal to the Calvinist view of baptism than did the early PCUS.

The above holds for Northern Presbyterian General Assemblies. Yet the same is true also of the Northern Presbyterian theologians. To a man, they carried on the Anti-Anabaptist and 'infant faith' tradition of their hero, Rev. Professor Dr. Charles Hodge.

Thus, for example, Union Seminary's great Northern Presbyterian theologian Rev. Professor Dr. William G.T. Shedd of New York. In 1863, Shedd declared:<sup>215</sup> "The sacrament of baptism is the sign and seal of regeneration.... It does not confer the Holy Spirit as a regenerating Spirit [as Rome teaches], but as the authentic token -- that the Holy Spirit has been or will be conferred; that regeneration has been or will be effected [and indeed should be effected more and more].

"This is taught in Romans 4:11. Abraham 'received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the faith which he had being yet uncircumcised.' Baptism is Christian circumcision ('the circumcision of Christ,' Colossians 2:11) -- and takes the place of the Jewish circumcision.... What is true of the latter, is [true also] of the former.

"Paul, Cornelius and the eunuch were regenerated before they were baptized.... Baptism, being the initiatory sacrament, is administered only once. While symbolical only of regeneration, it yet has a connection with sanctification. Being a divinely appointed sign, seal and pledge of the new birth -- it promotes the believer's growth in holiness by encouragement and stimulus. It is like the official seal on a legal document. The presence of the seal inspires confidence in the genuineness of the title-deed. The absence of the seal awakens doubts and fears. Nevertheless, it is the title-deed, not the seal, that conveys the title."

#### **569. Europe's ongoing late-nineteenth-century Anti-Anabaptism**

In Germany, the Reformed theologian Rev. Professor Dr. Heinrich Heppe set out the Classic Calvinistic view of infant baptism in 1861. He explained: "Baptism is the ordinance, instituted by Christ, whereby God seals to the elect their connection with the covenant of grace.... The candidates of baptism are all those who belong to the covenant of grace.... The promises extend

to the children of believers.... These should be baptized, precisely as the Israelitish children were circumcised.... On the other hand, the children of those who do not belong to the Church may not be baptized before they are instructed in the faith and have been converted."<sup>216</sup>

In his textbook *Reformed Dogmatics*, Heppe insisted<sup>217</sup> that "the nature of baptism...is thus the divine sealing of the adoption of the person baptized into the covenant of grace.... The receipt of grace, the imparting of which is attested and sealed by baptism, is not tied to the outward act and to the moment of the act of baptism....

**"Baptism rather presupposes the faith...of a man.... Baptism in no way exercises a magical efficacy.... All are entitled to receive baptism who belong to God's covenant of grace."**

### **570. The 'infant faith' views set out in Rev. Professor Dr. A.A. Hodge's *Outlines***

The position of Charles Hodge's son, the almost equally famous Rev. Professor Dr. Archibald Alexander Hodge, is uncompromisingly Anti-Anabaptist. From the eighteen-sixties onward, A.A. Hodge came to the fore on these issues. See especially his book *The Mode and Subjects of Baptism* and his tract *Whose Children Should Be Baptized?*<sup>218</sup>

In his famous 1860 *Outlines of Theology*, A.A. Hodge declared:<sup>219</sup> "God's covenants with Noah, Abraham and David embrace the children with the parents -- and rest upon the natural relations of generator and generated. The constitutions alike of the Jewish and Christian Churches provide that the rights of infants are predetermined by the status of their parents.... That covenant presupposes the more fundamental and general natural relation of generation [or conception] and education [or development]...as 'branches in a tree.'" Compare Romans 11:16.

"In creation, God made the disposition of Adam's heart holy.... In the new creation, God recreates the governing disposition of the regenerated man's heart holy.... In regeneration, the Holy Ghost is the Agent [or the Worker] and man the subject [or the one upon whom the work is done]. The act of the Holy Spirit...does not interfere with the essential activity of the soul itself, but simply gives to that activity a new direction.... Although the soul is necessarily active at the very time it is regenerated, yet it is rightly said to be passive with respect to that act of the Holy Spirit whereby it is regenerated....

"The term 'conversion' is often used in a wide sense.... 'Conversion' signifies the first exercise of the new disposition implanted in regeneration -- *i.e.* in freely turning unto God. Regeneration is God's act; conversion is ours. Regeneration is the implantation of a gracious principle; conversion is the exercise of that principle. Regeneration is never a matter of direct consciousness to the subject of it; conversion always is such to the agent of it. Regeneration is a single act, complete in itself, and never repeated; conversion, as the beginning of holy living, is the commencement of a series -- constant, endless and progressive....

"In the case of the regeneration of infants...the Spirit acts immediately upon the soul.... Infants, as well as adults, are rational and moral agents.... The difference is, that the faculties of infants are in the germ, while those of adults are developed. As regeneration is a change wrought by creative power in the inherent moral condition of the soul, infants may plainly be the subjects

of it in precisely the same sense as adults.... The fact is established by what the Scriptures teach of innate depravity, of infant salvation, of infant circumcision and baptism. Luke 1:15; 18:15f; Acts 2:39....

"All those, and those only, who are members of the Visible Church -- are to be baptized.... The family and not the individual is the unit embraced in all covenants and dispensations.... Baptism represents regeneration in union with Christ. Infants are born children of wrath, even as others. They cannot be saved therefore unless they are born again, and have part in the benefits of Christ's death. They are evidently, from the nature of the case, in the same sense capable of being subjects of regeneration as adults are....

"The Baptists argue...that infants ought not to be baptized because they cannot believe.... We answer...that the infant is not a thing, but a person born with an unholy moral nature and fully capable of present regeneration and of receiving from the Holy Ghost the 'habit' or state of soul of which faith is the expression. Hence, Calvin says (*Institutes* IV:16:20) 'The seed of both repentance and faith lies hid in them by the secret operation of the Spirit.'

### **571. Baptism in Hodge's Confession of Faith and his Evangelical Theology**

In his 1869 *Confession of Faith*, A.A. Hodge further stated:<sup>220</sup> "If infants and others not capable of being called by the Gospel are to be saved, they must be regenerated and sanctified immediately by God.... He can certainly make infants and others regenerate....

"Infants were members of the Church under the Old Testament from the beginning, being circumcised upon the faith of their parents.... Christ, speaking to Jewish apostles who had all their lives never heard of any other than the old 'Paedobaptist' Church..., commissioned Peter to feed the lambs as well as the sheep of the flock. John 21:15-17.... If only one of the parents is a Christian, the children are said to be 'holy' or 'saints'.... First Corinthians 7:14."

In his 1890 *Evangelical Theology*, Hodge insisted<sup>221</sup> that "the children of all such [believing] persons are...presumptively heirs of the blessings of the covenant of grace. The divinely appointed and guaranteed presumption is -- **if** the parents, **then** the children" too. "This **presumption** is rendered exceedingly probable, by the fundamental constitution of humanity as a self-propagative race....

The apostasy of Adam gave an entirely new direction to the history of his entire race.... The law of heredity is the fundamental law of animal [alias 'animated'] nature, including man.... The free will of the parent should become the destiny of the child....

"The parents by an inevitable law bore their children away from God in their apostasy. It is surely to be expected that they **shall bring back their children, with them, Godward**, in their regeneration.... The child is taught and trained under the regimen of his baptism -- taught from the first to recognize himself as a **child of God**."



### **572. The Lutheran Krauth's prebaptismal 'infant faith' views of church children**

In 1864 even the highly confessionalistic American Lutheran, Rev. Professor Dr. C.P. Krauth, was showing<sup>222</sup> from the writings of Luther himself that baptism is not essential to salvation in the way Christ's atonement is. Consequently, it is not the lack but the contemning of baptism which condemns sinners. Indeed, all early-dying unbaptized church infants are regenerated and saved without baptism.

In his treatise *Infant Baptism and Infant Salvation in the Calvinistic System*, the Lutheran Professor Krauth further rightly stated<sup>223</sup> that "the salvation of infants is included in the promise which God declares to believers -- that He will be a God to them and to their seed.... In virtue of this promise, they are admitted to baptism -- because they are considered Members of Christ.... Infants are baptized, because they **are** of the household of the church."

### **573. Bannerman: infant regeneration of covenant children before their baptism**

In 1869, the Free Church of Scotland's Rev. Professor Dr. James Bannerman published his classic work *The Church of Christ*. There,<sup>224</sup> he condemned the Romish doctrine of baptismal regeneration, and also that of "the High Church party in the English Establishment." He viewed both as "substantially the same" -- inasmuch as assuming an "inherent power of Sacraments to impart grace....

"The Church of Rome considers baptism, like the other sacraments, to be a means of imparting grace *ex opere operato*, and to carry with it the virtue of so applying to the person baptized, whether infant or adult, the merits of Christ -- as that both original and actual transgression are completely removed by the administration of it in every case, apart altogether from the faith of the recipient....

"Now what[ever] the Word of God addressed to the intelligent and responsible **adult** is -- that, baptism is [also] when administered to the...[covenantal] **infant**.... The infant, sprinkled with the water of that baptism which is a sign of the covenant, has even as the adult...a right of property in the blessings which the covenant contains."

Bannerman is, of course, very far from baptismal regeneration. He is also very far from 'Zwinglianistically' *dis*-sociating a usually *prevenient* regeneration -- from the infant baptism which subsequently seals it.

"There seems to be reason," he explained,<sup>225</sup> "for inferring that, in the case of infants regenerated in infancy, baptism is ordinarily connected with that regeneration.... That many an infant is sanctified and called by God even from its mother's womb, and undergoes...that blessed change of nature which is wrought by the Spirit of God -- there can be no reason to doubt."

Rightly did Bannerman then declare "that many an infant is sanctified and called by God even from its mother's womb, and undergoes...that blessed change of nature which is wrought by the

Spirit of God.... With regard to such infants dying in infancy, there is a blessed hope which the Scriptures give us to entertain -- that they are not lost, but saved....

"Within the brief hour of an infant's life...and among the rudiments of its intellectual and moral life sleeping in the germ, there must be planted the seed of that higher life which in heaven is destined to expand and endure through all eternity.... It is an unspeakable consolation...to know" this, of "the little one whom she [the mother] took from off her breast to lay in the tomb."

#### **574. Cunningham: infant regeneration of covenant children before their baptism**

Bannerman's colleague at the Free Church's New College was Rev. Professor Dr. William Cunningham. He strenuously opposed the rebaptism even of (prebaptismally and baptismally unregenerate) Romanists.<sup>226</sup> Thus, to him -- quite rightly -- prebaptismal *faith* (in either the infant or the parent) is not the *ground* of the *validity* of the baptism. Yet he candidly admitted<sup>227</sup> that precisely the Calvinistic Reformers had a high view of baptism as a seal of a priorly presumed regeneration.

Said he:<sup>228</sup> "The Reformers and the great body of Protestant divines, in putting forth the definition of the sacraments..., intended to embody the substance of what they believe Scripture to teach.... They commonly **assume** that the persons partaking in them, are rightly qualified for receiving and improving them.... Justification and regeneration by faith are not conveyed through the instrumentality of the sacraments.... On the contrary, they must **already exist** -- **before even baptism** can be received lawfully or safely" -- alias properly or regularly.

"In the whole history of our race, God's covenanted dealings with His people with respect to spiritual blessings have had regard to their children as well as to themselves. So that the children as well as the parents have been admitted to the spiritual blessings of God's covenants, and to the outward signs and seals of these covenants.... The children of believers are capable of receiving, and often do in fact receive, the blessings of the covenant -- justification and regeneration."

Observed Cunningham,<sup>229</sup> "to adults...a profession of **faith** is ordinarily associated with the Scripture notices of the administration of baptism.... We are to regard baptism upon a profession of faith as exhibiting the...full development of the ordinance.... In the absence of anything which, directly or by implication, teaches that this previous profession of faith is of the essence of the ordinance..., an inference of this sort is not sufficient to neutralize the direct and positive evidence we have in Scripture in favour of the baptism of infants.

"The only thing really of the essence of the ordinance in this respect, is that the parties receiving it are capable of possessing and have a federal interest in the promise of the spiritual blessings which it was intended to signify and to seal. Now the blessings which baptism was intended to signify and seal, are justification and regeneration.... These and these alone are the spiritual blessings which the washing with water in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost directly signifies and represents....

"It is universally admitted that infants...are capable of salvation and are actually saved.... They cannot be saved -- unless they be justified and regenerated.... It is thus certain that infants actually receive the very blessings which baptism signifies and represents.... They **possess** simply as the children of believing parents -- the federal holiness which can be proved to attach to them.... It affords an antecedent ground or warrant for the admission of the children of believing parents to the ordinance of baptism -- analogous to that which exists in believing adults."

#### **575. Candlish: infants filled with the Spirit prenatally**

After Cunningham's death in 1861, Rev. Professor Dr. Robert S. Candlish succeeded him as Principal of the New College of the Free Church in Scotland. In that denomination, he then long became the leading light.

In his book *The Sacraments*, Candlish asked:<sup>230</sup> "Does not the Bible teach that a child may be filled with the Holy Ghost from his mother's womb (Luke 1:15); that little children are in the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 19:14 and parallels); and that Jesus has lambs as well as sheep in His flock (John 21:15)? This is also borne out by experience....

"Scripture plainly teaches that without regeneration, there can be no salvation . The practice of baptizing children of Christian parents only when they [the children] can profess their faith -- implies that infants cannot be saved! Undoubtedly Baptists do not believe this. But our argument is that the meaning of their practice in regard to believers' children, contracted their own belief....

"It is said that infants cannot give evidence of being born again. But it is certain that they may be regenerate.... The fact of their being brought up by Christian parents, affords some presumption that they are....

"The administration of baptism to them, teaches that they...may be born again even from their earliest days.... This is of the free grace of God.... He may be **expected** graciously to hear the prayers and bless the Christian training of their parents -- by **regenerating** the **children in infancy**. These are all Scriptural truths."

#### **576. Rev. Dr. H.E. Gravemeijer on infant faith and infant baptism**

From 1887 onward, the famous theologian Dr. H.E. Gravemeijer published his *Doctrine of the Reformed Faith* in Holland. There, he pointed out<sup>231</sup> that "saving faith is not so much a deed but much rather something which is done to one.... Deeds of faith do not create faith, but they also express and confirm it. Faith is a divine disposition of the whole person.... As such, it can also be present even when it does not manifest itself in deeds -- thus, even in tiny children and also in [adult] believers while asleep....

"Faith does not make the sacrament, but the received sacrament will serve to confirm faith.... Covenant children are generated for God. They belong to Him by virtue of the covenant. Even when the nation of Israel was so deeply sunken that she sacrificed children to Moloch, the Lord calls these **His children** -- because He had not yet removed the covenant from the people.

Ezekiel 16:20-21 -- 'your sons and your daughters, whom you bore for Me, you have taken and sacrificed to the idols; you have slaughtered My children'....

"It is not just from the time of their baptism that the tiny Christian children are holy. But it because they **are** holy, that they are entitled to baptism. In First Corinthians 7:14, Paul does not mention baptism at all. Yet, without further ado, he says to Christian parents: 'your children are holy.' If they had not yet been baptized, they ought to be baptized -- for they were holy. Here too, what Paul says in another respect in Romans 11:16 applies. 'If the root is holy, then so too the branches'....

"With Calvin (*Institutes* IV:16:17), we say it is obvious that the little children who are to be saved...at that time of life, are first regenerated by the Lord.... There is no regeneration, without faith.... Not that the little children were endowed with such a knowledge and faith as adults are. Not that they [the infants] were led rapidly, with such a consciousness and experience and conversion [as are adults].... But rather, that the essence and the root of the matter is found to be in them.

"There is no formal conversion, no acting faith. Yet, in this respect, the **seed** of both nevertheless shelters within them -- through a secret operation of the Spirit. So they **do** have the Spirit of faith.

"The elect little child who dies early, is a tiny flower in the Lord's garden. His or her little heart has been turned toward the sun [or Son]. Attracted by the latter, he or she absorbs the sunrays. This is not so by nature; but it is so disposed by grace. And then, he or she is transported to the court of heaven -- to the full sunlight....

"Our old Reformed theologians...largely follow the representation of Calvin.... According to them, in the elect little children there is a seed or root or tendency (*inclinatio*) or ability (*potentia*) or possessability (*habitus*) or beginning (*principium*) of faith or the Spirit of faith."

In a brilliant chapter under the heading *No Rebaptisms*, Gravemeijer declared:<sup>232</sup> "Baptism is the sacrament of regeneration -- and the sign of incorporation into the Christian Church. *Heidelberg Catechism* 74. According to its very nature, this can occur but once. So too baptism. For the sign must agree with the thing signified....

"Incorporation by the visible sign of baptism is indeed primarily an ingrafting into the particular congregation in which the baptizee is baptized.... It is thus an incorporation into the Christian Church. Thereby, the baptizee is distinguished from all Non-Christians. *Heidelberg Catechism* 74....

"Baptism refers not only to the past.... Still less is baptism only of use for those moments when it is administered..., 'but for the whole course of our lives.' *Belgic Confession* 34.

"We should constantly be thinking about our baptism! Once received, baptism is a continual reminder of the Divine Covenant. It warns us to lay sin aside, and to live for God.... Romans 6:3-4.... Galatians 2:20.... Romans 6:11-12.... Baptism is also a consecration unto the battle against sin -- and a guarantee of victory."

### **577. Kuyper: covenant infants presumed reborn even before their birth**

Perhaps the greatest of all Calvinist theologians since Calvin himself -- was the Prime Minister of Holland, Rev. Professor Dr. Abraham Kuyper Sr. We content ourselves with just a few excerpts (from many relevant passages), on Kuyper's doctrine of infant faith before baptism.

For almost fifty years, Kuyper certainly dominated the Reformed theological landscape in Holland -- and later indeed of the entire world -- until his death in 1920. He addressed our subject already in his 1879 work on *Regeneration and Conversion*. For there, he clearly taught<sup>233</sup> that "according to Scripture -- regeneration is engineered by the Word....

"The same is true of the sacrament of baptism. Also that sacrament -- just like the sacrament of the Lord's supper -- functions to strengthen the faith-power of the congregation." It also functions "to make this heightened faith-power of the congregation the means in God's hand of being serviceable to the spiritual birth of the children of the Kingdom" -- by strengthening (infant) faith already present before baptism.

"One cannot think too seriously about those children of believers who die before reaching the years of discretion.... Our fathers carefully stated...at the Synod of Dordt [in its *Decrees* I:17] against the Remonstrants [alias the Dutch Arminians] -- that believing parents, relying upon the grace of the covenant, should not be anxious about the everlasting lot of their early-dying children.... Here it is definite that the deed of regeneration is completed by God already during the first...months of life" -- also before those children are born.

"That such an function of the Holy Spirit is possible, is irrefutably taught by Scripture. What it tells us about John the Baptist, is in this respect conclusive. For the angel announced to Zachariah that, even in his mother's womb, he [John] would be filled with the Holy Spirit. And when Elizabeth met Mary, the little child she carried under her heart would be gripped by the holy approach and leap up in her womb. The pronouncement in Isaiah [44:2 & 44:24 & 49:1 & 48:5 cf. Jeremiah 1:5] that 'the Lord has called me from the womb' -- is an equally strong proof."

### **578. Kuyper's book *The Work of the Holy Spirit* on baby baptism**

In 1888, Kuyper published his important volume *The Work of the Holy Spirit*. There, he maintained:<sup>234</sup> "Standing by the graves of our baptized young children, confident of their salvation through the one Name given under heaven, we reject the teaching that salvation depends upon conversion.... Preparatory grace always precedes the new life. Hence it [preparatory grace] finishes operating even before holy baptism, in infants quickened before being baptized."

By "finishes operating," Kuyper here obviously does not mean that grace as such is exterminated in covenant babies before their infant baptism. He apparently means that preparatory grace in the covenant child is transformed into a grace-produced 'infant faith' -- even before the baptism of that baby.

Kuyper continued describing this prebaptismal preparatory grace in covenant infants: "The first grace, was naturally called regeneration.... Some Scottish theologians put it in this way. 'God began the work of grace with the implanting of the "faith-faculty" (*fides potentialis*), followed by the new grace of the "faith-exercise" (*fides actualis*), and of the "faith-power" (*fides habitualis*)'....

"Let us notice...the implanting of the new life-principle commonly called regeneration (in the limited sense) or the implanting of the 'faith-faculty.' This divine act is wrought in man at different ages....

"We know from the instance of John the Baptist, that it can be wrought even in the mother's womb. And the salvation of deceased infants constrains us, with Voetius and all profound theologians, to believe that this original act may occur very early in life....

"Distinction must be made between the many regenerated in the first days of life, and the few born again at a more advanced age.... The former are born, with few exceptions, in the Church.... They belong to it from the first moment of their existence. They spring from the seed of the Church, and in turn contain in themselves the seed of the future Church. And for this reason, the first germ of the new life is imparted to the seed of the Church (which is alas always mixed with much chaff) oftenest either before or soon after birth.

"The Reformed Church was so firmly settled in this doctrine, that she dared establish it as the prevailing rule -- believing that the seed of the Church (not the chaff of course) received the germ of life already; and receives in baptism the seal not upon something that is yet to come, but upon that which is already present. Hence the liturgical question to the parents: 'Do you acknowledge that...your children...have been sanctified in Christ and therefore, as Members of His Church, ought to be baptized?'"

Kuyper continued: "This glorious confession gave the right direction to the education of children in our Reformed families.... Our people did not see in their children offshoots of the wild vine, to be grafted, perhaps later on -- with whom little could be done until converted after the manner of Methodism. But they lived in the quiet expectation and holy confidence that the child to be trained was already grafted, and therefore worthy to be nursed with tenderest care....

"God gave us the sacrament of holy baptism.... Our children must not be ignored in this respect. At Dordt [in its *Decrees* I:17] in 1618 our children were taken into account, and we may not deny ourselves this pleasant obligation.... To speak of little ones without considering the first stage of regeneration -- *i.e.* the quickening -- causes confusion and perplexity....

"**Salvation depends upon faith**.... As soon as we distinguished quickening as a stage of regeneration from conversion and sanctification [as fruits thereof], the light enters.... As soon as I regard my still unconverted children as not yet regenerate, their training must run in the direction of a questionable Methodism."

However, in actual fact, as regards covenant children, "the faculty of faith is implanted in the first stage of regeneration -- *i.e.*, in quickening. The power of faith is imparted in the second stage of regeneration -- *i.e.*, in conversion. And the working of faith is wrought in the third stage -- *i.e.*, in sanctification."

### **579. Kuyper's book *E Voto Dordraceno* on baby baptism (commencement)**

In *E Voto Dordraceno* -- Kuyper's commentary on the *Heidelberg Catechism* -- he explained<sup>235</sup> that scores of young children die without having come to a **functioning** faith [as distinct from the **seed** of faith]. On the other hand [even] many adult children of God die without that operation of their faith having developed to such a **completeness**....

"If a small child could come [to glory] without faith -- then why not also an adult? And once that is granted -- what would remain of the whole thrust of Holy Scripture? Our most excellent theologians, like Voetius and Rutherford, have therefore tried to stop this evil immediately -- by professing that the work of regeneration for the most part is already at work **before** holy baptism in the little ones who are elect, and that baptism is administered to them as those **already** regenerated....

"Furthermore, the 'second life' which also these little ones receive through this second birth -- within itself, by its very nature, contains the tendency toward faith.... The Lord God, Who sees the stalk and the ripened ear already in the germ, saves even the little ones not without faith....

"It is the excellent achievement of Comrie and Holtius that they..., following in the footsteps of many British theologians, again drew the subjective deed of God into the foreground -- by their preaching about the **implanted ability to believe**. This was practically a return to the preaching of Voetius. Only, as regards the matter of faith, it was somewhat more developed....

"It is completely untrue that the difficulty resides exclusively in the 'very tiny little children' who die young.... Of every hundred adults who joyfully die in their Lord, at the most a tenth part have progressed so far in the knowledge of the truth that they perceive the structure of this beautiful building. Most, on the contrary, know such a little about it.... Yet the Lord still teaches that it is precisely these 'babes in understanding' who are saved....

"Maccovius and Voetius, and Comrie and Holtius after them, called souls back from an objective operation of faith to the creation of new life and the **implanting of the ability to believe** -- through the Lord.... As regards the 'tiny little children' -- we profess that faith is an ability in our whole being. Thus, through regeneration, it is **[acknowledged or] owned even by our consciousness**.... In the germ, even though the operation is still lacking, the whole of that same nature which will presently come forth -- nevertheless [already] resides therein....

"In this way, indeed every objection falls away. It then remains the same demand of faith for every one who is saved. This faith is the same, in its germ and in its full blossoming.... Herewith the fable falls away -- about children who were baptized [supposedly] on the basis of their **parents'** faith....

"For faith is like a sponge. Even when the sponge is still barren and dry -- it is still a sponge, also when it has not yet come into contact with water. But as soon as you plunge it into water, it must suck in the moisture. And if it does not do so -- then it is shown to be no sponge!"

### **580. Kuyper's *E Voto Dordraceno* on baby baptism (continued)**

Kuyper further insisted<sup>236</sup> that infant baptism does not initiate prevenient faith, but that "Christ through His Holy Spirit **strengthens** our **faith** at and **under the sacrament**." In addition, (infant) baptism engrafts those already deemed members of the Church Invisible -- into the Visible Church. Ephesians 4:5; First Corinthians 12:13; Hebrews 5:12 to 6:2f.

Continued Kuyper: "It is as 'members of Christ' that our children, says the *Baptismal Formula*, are baptized -- that is to say, because they are regarded and presumed to be Members of Christ **already**. That is why they are baptized." This reasoning is quite identical to that of the 1645 Westminster Assembly's *Directory for the Publick Worship of God*, in its section on infant baptism.<sup>237</sup>

Continued Kuyper:<sup>238</sup> "An image or symbol, such at the baptismal water undoubtedly is, can be made an image of something in the past, in the present, or in the future.... It is not sufficient that you, by grace, personally believe. But, also by grace, the possessability is implanted whereby you enter into the communal faith....

"If you have now been regenerated, so that you have therefore received the germ or seed of faith in that regeneration, the resultant living faith in you is still not yet what it should be. It still needs to receive a strengthening. This strengthening occurs when your faith joins itself to the communal faith of the body of Christ. Precisely hereunto does Christ operate through His Holy Spirit...by giving you Holy Baptism....

"From the *Catechism* it has been seen that baptism, being a sacrament, extends to strengthen faith. It was seen that faith needs to be present in the one to be baptized, in order to be susceptible of being strengthened."

Kuyper next pointed out (in 1894) that of the death statistics "in our land during 1886 -- almost 8% died before they were born; 28% during the first year of their life; 13.5% during their first five years.... Fully 56% of all deaths took place before age twenty, and fully 45% before their seventh year"<sup>239</sup> -- in 'first-world' Holland alone.

Continued Kuyper: "Holy baptism presupposes a **prior** work of God's grace. Thus it is a seal upon what He has **already** performed in the soul.... The representation that apart from a few exceptions the gracious work of God only begins in later life...has not come into our Church from the Reformed Confession but from [Arminian] Methodists.... [Yet,] even in respect of infant baptism, [also] the latter admit [that] faith must be presupposed.

"But, rather than look for that 'faith' in the 'ability to believe' or the 'seed of faith' -- which it has pleased God already to implant in the tiny little children -- they [the Methodists] are wrongly of the opinion that there can never be any question of 'faith' in a suckling. Consequently, they thereby understand this -- of the 'faith' of the parents....

"Yet this opinion hardly reveals anything of depth. From the faith of the parents, nothing could be derived about the sacrament -- other than that they themselves have the right to the



sacrament of the Lord's supper, or to the sacrament of holy baptism if they themselves are still unbaptized. But it could never be concluded from the faith of anyone, that another had a right to the sacrament....

"One can to some extent indeed say that the **faith of the parents** is an indication for the Church to **presuppose** the presence of the '**ability to believe**' even in their little children. But this does not take away from the fact that the administration of holy baptism itself can never rest otherwise -- than upon the presumption that the implanted 'ability to believe' is, in a way hidden to us, **already present** in the child to be baptized.

"That is the cardinal point about infant baptism. If our little children are to be regarded as conceived and born in sin, yet also as those in whom a gracious work of God may already be presupposed -- then they are to be baptized. Otherwise, the baptism of our little children should be abandoned.

"One also sees from the ecclesiastical development in America that, in practice, not presupposing a work of grace in the little children of believers -- has indeed led to the abolition and destruction of infant baptism. While the Reformed denominations together do not number more than two million there, the number of Members of the Baptist denominations, which oppose infant baptism, already exceeds four million; while that of the Methodists, who indeed preserve but yet undermine it, has similarly already climbed to a membership of four million" (in 1886).

#### **581. Kuyper's *E Voto Dordraceno* on baby baptism (concluded)**

"Our *Baptismal Formula* clearly states....that the little children of the believers in the Church, although conceived and born in sins just like their parents..., have nevertheless 'been sanctified in Christ' -- and 'being Members of His Church' should therefore be baptized.... The words 'been sanctified in Christ' may not be weakened. In conjunction with the following words 'being Members of His Church' -- they cannot be understood otherwise than that the implantation of the hidden germ of new life has **already** occurred among them....

"The final prayer [after the administration of infant baptism]...is wholly in agreement with the foregoing. 'Baptism now seals and sacramentally certifies that God has received us and our children as His children'....

"These children, according to God's command, have been baptized in the presupposition that they belong to His elect. Upon this presupposition rests the concluding petition in this thanksgiving -- that the Lord God will 'always rule these baptized children with His Holy Spirit, so that they may increase and grow up in the Lord Christ.' Naturally, this can never be said of an **unregenerate**."

Kuyper concluded that "he who says he cannot pray the petition of thanksgiving in our *Baptismal Formula*, must: reject this whole *Formula*; abandon infant baptism; and finally break with the Reformed Churches, which are altogether based upon this view of baptism.... Naturally, this is not said to encourage it. Far rather is our advice intended -- to get everybody thoroughly

to test the *Baptismal Formula* and the doctrine of baptism and the basis of the Reformed Confession against God's Word.

"However if, notwithstanding that, anybody perseveres in the opinion that a child should be baptized without therewith having presupposed his election, and as if the gracious work of God can begin only first in an adult -- then we say he cannot remain in the Reformed churches with a clear conscience. For our Reformed churches have consistently confessed and taught the opposite, from of old.

"This immediately appears from our *Belgic Confession*.... In Article 24, it is confessed firstly that Christ has given commands to baptize 'those who are His' -- so that even the young children who are presented here, appear as the 'property of Christ' and thus as elect. Secondly, Christ indeed shed His blood 'no less to wash the young children of the believers, than He did for the adults'....

"Also at the Synod of Dordt in 1619, our Reformed churches expressed themselves wholly in similar vein. After all, in Article 17 of the first chapter, coming to the question of the young little children, this Synod, with the approval of all the national and the foreign Churches, confessed as follows: 'The Word of God...testifies that the children of the believers are holy. Consequently, godly parents must not doubt the election and salvation of their children whom God removes from this life in their infancy.'

"Naturally, the Synod did not here mean to say that this was an exceptional privilege [especially] of early-dying children. But rather that godly parents should thus view **all** of their children -- as long as the opposite does not appear to be evident....

"Also our *Catechism* judges likewise.... Question 73 says God assures us through baptism not that we **shall** be washed through the blood of Christ, but that we and so too our **children** 'have been washed spiritually just as truly from our sins as we are externally washed with water.'

"Again, in answer to Question 74, the children are placed on the same level with adults as regards the work of grace. Inasmuch as 'the blood of Christ which redeems from sin' as well as 'the Holy Spirit Who works faith' is applied also to them....

"The Church, by presupposing in infant baptism that the baptizee has already been regenerated and engrafted into Christ and made partaker of the Holy Spirit -- is no more saying that this is actually so, than in respect of the adult baptizee. The Lord God alone knows whether this is so....

"The Church **presupposes** this work of God, already among the newborn [covenant children]. On this basis, she must baptize them. In the same way, if they grow up, she must insist that they come to conversion. But if they die early, she gazes after them -- in the confidence that **they saw they [already] had salvation**" even before they died.

### **582. Kuyper's Calvinism and Confessional Revision on baptism**

In his writing *Calvinism and Confessional Revision*, Kuyper emphasized<sup>240</sup> that the early-dying children of believers are saved on the basis of God's immutable promise. Claimed Kuyper: "Calvinists have **always** taught that **baptism** should be administered on the **presumption** that **regeneration** has **preceded**."

Indeed Kuyper then approvingly quoted Calvin himself: 'What will prevent God from having already granted...a little spark of His light to those same children on whom presently He will shed its full lustre?... Children are baptized in view of a [present] **faith** and **repentance** [within the infant], which are both expected to] manifest themselves later.... Through a secret operation of the Spirit, the **seed** of both **is** implanted in them.'

Kuyper himself then declared it is totally subversive of Calvinism to deny either of the following two propositions: "1.That children of believers are to be considered as recipients of efficacious grace, in whom the work of efficacious grace has already begun. 2.That only when dying before having attained to years of discretion, they can be regarded as saved." Accordingly, for Christian parents, it is "**imperative** to look upon their **infant children** as elect and **saved** and to treat them accordingly."

### **583. Kuyper's book *God's Angels* on baptism**

In his interesting book *God's Angels*, Kuyper regarded<sup>241</sup> the Romish exorcism of demons at the baptism of little children of the covenant as being "in conflict...with First Corinthians 7:14." For "a child born from Christian parents is not unclean, but holy....

"Such a child never was in the midst of the pagan spirit of the world -- and therefore could not leave it. Abjuring the pagan spirit of the world, makes no sense at all -- in respect of such a child."

### **584. Baptism in Kuyper's book *A Myrtle Tree in the Place of a Thistle***

To Kuyper, the covenant child is presumed to be a believing Member of the elect Church Invisible -- even before his infant baptism. Precisely for that very reason, he is therefore baptized into membership of the imperfect Visible Church -- and thereafter educated toward Christian maturity.

Thus Kuyper insisted<sup>242</sup> in his book *A Myrtle Tree in the Place of a Thistle*, that "the **firm presumption** in educating every baptized child -- is that hidden grace **has** been secreted" in him from even **before** the time of his **infant baptism**.

"Your educating only extends to irrigating that hidden seed of grace in the field of your little child. And to eradicating the weeds, so that they do not choke that hidden seed of grace."

### **585. Kuyper's work *On Salvation* anent infant baptism**

In his work *On Salvation*, Kuyper insisted<sup>243</sup> that "our faith depends upon implantation into Christ.... Does Scripture sometimes permit there to be salvation without faith? No, never!... That a small child can be saved through the faith of his parents...is a stupidity -- a tearing up of the foundations of the Reformed Church.... Then, the child is baptized not because God did something to the child -- but because of some kind of an overly holiness of the parents....

"This was the big argument advanced by the Arminians -- that the Reformed, who demanded faith for salvation, therefore condemned tiny children. The Synod of Dordt then states, that believing parents were to be consoled about their early-dying infants. Infant baptism is administered upon the presumption of faith being present -- not in the hope of future faith."

### **586. Kuyper's work *On Sin* anent infant baptism**

In his work *On Sin*, Kuyper rightly stated<sup>244</sup> that "it is also the opinion of our best Reformers that the children [of the covenant] have been regenerated already, before baptism.... Who are the Members of the Church? The believers and their seed.... All children born of believing parents are members of the Church by their birth.

"The only question at the administration of baptism, is therefore: Can the seed of God be presupposed in that child? It can -- from the father, or from the mother. 'For the unbelieving wife has been sanctified by the husband, and the unbelieving husband by the wife. Otherwise your children would be unclean; but now, they are holy' [First Corinthians 7:14]....

"The expression in the [*Dutch Reformed*] *Baptismal Formula* --'that the children have already been sanctified' -- agrees with what Scripture teaches. Romans 8:29-30 even states that all the elect have already been glorified.

"The same is taught in the [*Heidelberg*] *Catechism* Q. 74, in the [*Belgic*] *Confession* art. 34, and in the *Canons of Dordt* [I:17].... The very word 'sanctified' in First Corinthians 7:14, expresses the fact that there was indeed guilt. If there had been no sin, then no sanctification would have been needed either."

### **587. Kuyper's work *On the Church* anent infant baptism**

In his work *On the Church*, Kuyper emphasized<sup>245</sup> that "regeneration must have a development.... The entire process, not excluding death, is all in the one regeneration -- wherein one must distinguish between: the implantation of the vital germ; justification; sanctification; and death....

"[Covenant] children must be regarded as regenerates.... This judgment concerning young children is grounded on Holy Scripture. This appears from the facts mentioned about John the baptizer (Luke 1:44). Holy Scripture further tells us that God prepares His praise from the

mouths of sucklings [Psalm 8].... Above all, our viewpoint is founded upon the act of the Holy Spirit at the conception of the Saviour.

"In this connection we point to First Corinthians 7:14, and to our *Baptismal Formula*. In this place, the child too is taken up into the holy circle. That is diametrically opposed to Methodism, which views the children of Christians as being the same as the children of Pagans. Actually, in the latter lies the solidarity of guilt -- as we are taught in Exodus twenty, where God is said to visit the misdeeds of the fathers upon the children.

"There is thus a solid connection between the ethical life of parents and children. In Romans five, that solidarity is taught in respect of the entire human race.... If Adam had been created as a child, it would immediately have been clear that righteousness could be present even in a child." Indeed, if the mature Adam had generated children before falling, all of his thus-born descendants would themselves have been righteous from their conceptions onward.

Concluded Kuyper: "Whether we think of Adam as a child, or of a child generated by Adam in the state of righteousness -- that child could never have been conceived and born in sin. From this, it is sufficiently clear that the representation as if the life of Christ only applies to adults -- is totally erroneous....

"The *ecclesia latens* [alias the 'hidden church'] means all persons not yet born but still resting in election. The *ecclesia latens* thus exists in God's foreknowledge. Yet for us here on earth, it is still completely hidden -- and indeed 'in the loins' of the present generation....

"Of every instituted church..., Jesus is the Founder.... No church is possible without regeneration.... No administration of the sacraments is possible, than through Him.... The Church is first manifested -- through baptism."

### **588. Kuyper's work *On the Sacraments* anent infant baptism**

In his work *On the Sacraments*, Kuyper declared<sup>246</sup> that "although it is indeed the local church which administers baptism, it does so as representing the Church catholic, and not *jure suo* [by its own right]. The local church is bound by its *Confession*."

Kuyper also shows that "in First Corinthians 7:14..., for the sake of the man or woman who is a believer..., even the children born from that marriage also belong to Christ's holy heritage. They are saints, standing in the covenant of grace.... It is by birth [or generation] that they belong to that heritage -- not first by baptism....

"In this respect, also the crib of Bethlehem has great significance. All sects which only count a person subsequently to his conversion, push this history to one side.

'Marcion [just like his later stepchildren the Anabaptists] has the Lord appearing from heaven -- as an adult.... But wherever one professes that Christ was born as a little child from the womb

of Mary, Christ Himself overthrows this whole false theory. Even when He lay unconsciously [?!] in Mary's lap -- He already possessed the Holy Spirit, without measure. John 3:34....

"Baptism presupposes that the baptizee is elect and regenerated, and thus that the power of faith had commenced at regeneration. No other object of baptism is thinkable -- than the one within whom the seed of **faith** has **already** been **worked** by the Holy **Spirit**....

"The seal of the living God as the sign of incorporation into the covenant of grace, is the product of baptism.... This incorporation into the covenant of grace or of atonement, is one and the same with the baptism of adults and with that of the young children of believers.... Such is God's seal. Revelation 7:2.... No other subjects of baptism may be recognized, than those in which faith is present. That is the one and only quality which must be demanded....

"The Arminians, who wish to derive everything from free will, naturally say that faith first begins where the person utters it. We, on the other hand, accept that the work of God can already begin in the womb.... The feeling that potential faith may and must be presupposed also in the young children of believers, is advocated (among others) also by: Calvin, P. Martyr, Ursinus, Trelcatius, Bucan, Polan, Walaeus, Voetius, Maastricht, Alting, Wendelin, Turretin, Heydegger, De Moor *etc.*....

"We come to the conclusion that the Reformed Church...stood in the faith that the Lord regularly implants the seed of regeneration in the elect, either in the womb or immediately after birth.... The *Canons [of Dordt]* (I:17) finally bring the matter into immediate connection with election, and give no uncertain sound. The second baptismal question [in the Dutch Reformed *Baptismal Formula*] brings us to the same conclusion. On the basis of their sanctified state, they are baptized as Members of Christ. They are therefore **not** baptized, in order to **become** a Member of Christ."

### **589. Kuyper's *Encyclopaedia of Sacred Theology* on baptism**

While discussing catechetics in his *Encyclopaedia of Sacred Theology*, Kuyper further insisted<sup>247</sup> that "baptism and the Lord's supper are paedagogically interdependent.... Catechetics, proceeding from baptism, finds its conclusion and its purpose in admittance to the holy supper....

"As catechism within the Christian Church -- this instruction must always presuppose holy baptism, and regard the persons thus to be catechized as standing inside the covenant of grace.... Catechism [within the covenant] always presupposes baptism; and baptism, ideally, [always presupposes] regeneration...

"Catechetics thus always has to function as if the individual to be catechized -- has already been regenerated. The children of believers may not be regarded like the children of Jews, Pagans or Moslems.... For precisely baptism thereby separates them.... It is the task of Catechetics to guide these baptized and hence separated 'children of believers' -- along the road which leads to holy communion."

### **590. Kuyper's Doctrine of the Covenants anent infant baptism**

Also in his book *The Doctrine of the Covenants*, Kuyper posited<sup>248</sup> the presumed though rebuttable and prebaptismal regeneration of the young children of the covenant. For "'the children of the promise are regarded as the seed.' Romans 9:8....

"It irrefutably follows that one can earmark the circumcision and the baptism of children as a seal of an immutable promise.... The baptism of adults and of children is also a seal, ordained for believers alone -- to seal the promise made to them unto the strengthening of their saving faith....

"To those truly graced, in infant baptism the promise is already fulfilled in them -- and sealed. Very definitely, it will also keep on being fulfilled" -- in them, and to them.

### **591. Kuyper's book *Our Liturgy* anent infant baptism**

Lastly, in his *Our Liturgy*, Kuyper declared<sup>249</sup> "that the administration of holy baptism had a pictorial and not an actual significance. This is not to deny that there is also a real deed on God's part.... But this is only to say that the human act as such is not a vehicle of grace....

"Are our children born to us unholy, like heathen children, or are they holy? To this question Paul, as an apostle of the Lord, gives the decisive answer that our children themselves have been made holy -- even where only one of the parents has entered into the kingdom of heaven. He clearly states: 'the unbelieving husband has been sanctified by the [believing] wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified by the [believing] husband. For otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.' First Corinthians 7:14....

"Our confession was and still is that baptism itself does not produce grace, and that regeneration thus does not come into being by means of baptism. Outside of Reformed circles, however, many are indeed of such an opinion. In various ways, [others] then teach that baptism is not a sign and seal of grace already received -- but the instrument of a grace which only comes into existence through and under the sacrament....

But for us Reformed Christians, the matter is quite different. If one confesses that this grace, namely the grace of regeneration, does not arrive through baptism as an instrument but is rather so presupposed by baptism that baptism is only its sign and seal -- then one needs a rule, in order to know which child one will indeed baptize and which not....

"Our children do not first *become* Members of Christ's Church by baptism.... That they are.... In that capacity, they have a right to baptism....

"The prayer of thanksgiving [right after baptism in the Dutch Reformed *Baptismal Formula*]...does not pray that the little children be brought to faith -- but gives praises and thanks 'that we together with our children have **been** received as members of Christ and unto children of God' -- and that this sanctified condition of the little children has been sealed and impressed in

and through baptism.... In that prayer, the congregation does not ask that these baptized children might be brought to Christ -- but that they, as those already brought [and so brought even long before their baptism], may be led further by the grace of God, and that they may always be ruled by the Holy Spirit....

"Among the Reformed...there **could** be no emergency baptisms. For, according to the fixed and unanimous profession of our churches, baptism does not produce grace but **presupposes** it as **present**.... From this it follows that baptism cannot produce grace instrumentally. Hence too, in explaining baptism, our *Baptismal Formula* carefully avoids every word which might suggest the production of grace through baptism.

"All that baptism does, is to testify about [Christ] -- and to **seal** and to **assure** and to **warn**.... 'Holy baptism testifies and seals for us the washing away of sin, through Jesus Christ'....

"Inasmuch as baptism teaches that the little child, as one already taken up into the covenant, only receives a seal -- 'emergency baptism' lapses. But then -- even the unthinking will attach less importance to the significance of baptism."

## **592. Rev. Professor Dr. W.G.T. Shedd on infant faith and baptism**

In 1888, Rev. Professor Dr. W.G.T. Shedd of Union Theological Seminary in New York City first published his volumes on *Dogmatic Theology*. "Regeneration is a work of God in the human soul," declared Shedd.<sup>250</sup> "This fact places the infant and the adult upon the same footing, and makes infant regeneration as possible as that of adults.

"Infant regeneration is taught in Scripture. Luke 1:15, 'he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb.' Luke 18:15-16, 'Suffer little children to come unto Me; for of such is the kingdom of God.' Acts 2:39, 'the promise is unto your children.' First Corinthians 7:14, 'now are your children holy.' Infant regeneration is also taught symbolically: (a) by infant circumcision in the Old Testament; (b) by infant baptism in the New Testament."

Furthermore, Shedd also argued that covenantal infants are already Christian disciples -- even prebaptismally (and precircumcisionally during Old Testament times). For, in "First Corinthians 7:14," explained Shedd, the children of at least one believing parent are themselves "holy" -- even from their very conception onward.

Moreover, the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19 clearly implies not just infant baptism but also infant discipleship. Explained Shedd: "If the command had been, 'Go teach all nations, circumcising them' -- no one would have denied that infants were included in the command." Infants are called disciples in Acts 15:10. 'Why tempt ye God to put a yoke [namely circumcision] upon the neck of the disciples?'"

According to Shedd, "the infant of the believer receives the Holy Spirit as a regenerating Spirit.... The **infant** of the believer...obtains the **regenerating** grace by virtue of his **birth** and



**descent** from a believer in covenant with God -- and **not** by virtue of his **baptism**.... The infant of a believer is born into the church, as the infant of a citizen is born into the State.....

"A citizen of the State must be presumed to be such, until the contrary appears by his renunciation of citizenship.... Until he takes this course, he must be regarded as a citizen. So a baptized child in adult years may renounce his baptism, become an infidel, and join the synagogue of Satan. But until he does this, he must be regarded as a Member of the Church of Christ."

### **593. The books on infant baptism by Drs. Henry van Dyke Sr. & Jun.**

In 1890, Brooklyn's Rev. Dr. Henry J. Van Dyke -- sometime Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church -- wrote an important book. It was published under the title: *The Church -- Her Ministry and Sacraments*.

There, the American Van Dyke declared:<sup>251</sup> "We hold with Paul that there is 'one Lord, one faith, one baptism' (Ephesians 4:5) -- one in the correspondence between the outward sign and the inward meaning.... If the baptism of infants does not signify and seal 'regeneration and engrafting into Christ' in the same sense and to the same extent as in the case of adults -- we have no right to administer it to infants.

"The practice of the Church is indefensible, upon any other grounds.... Christian nurture, beginning in infancy -- inheriting traditional influences, and surrounded at the first dawn of consciousness by a religious atmosphere -- is the normal and divine method for propagating the Church."

Certainly much of this rubbed off on his son, Rev. Dr. Henry Van Dyke Jun., a Director of Princeton Theological Seminary. Compare especially his book *God and Little Children*. See too his other book: *The Blessed State of All who Die in Childhood Proved and Taught as a Part of the Gospel of Christ*.<sup>252</sup>

### **594. Rev. Professor Dr. Norman L. Walker's work: *The Church Standing of Children***

This heralded a whole spate of similar such writings. That spate started with the important Scottish church historian Rev. Professor Dr. Norman L. Walker's 1891 work on *The Church Standing of Children*.<sup>253</sup>

Walker stressed the continuity of the Old Testament Church into New Testament times. He argued that the denial of infant baptism involves "the withdrawal of a privilege which had been enjoyed previously for about two thousand years...[and which on the part of the Lord Himself] presents a specially benignant attitude towards the children."<sup>254</sup>

The above work of Walker was later reviewed by the great Princetonian theologian Rev. Professor Dr. B.B. Warfield.<sup>255</sup> Wrote the latter: "We had just risen from reading a series of very

admirable popular papers on baptism by Dr. Kuyper...during the summer of 1890, when Dr. Walker's tract came to our hand....

"We were impressed by the unity in spirit as well as in doctrines presented by the two writers.... Dr. Walker bases the argument for infant baptism on the capacity of infants for the reception of grace.... So does Dr. Kuyper, who even says: 'Infant baptism stands or falls with the question whether fully grown people only or also infants dying as such are saved.'

"Both [Kuyper and Walker] lay stress on the fact that baptism is administered on the presumption that grace is already present. Both insist that, the Church having no power to read the heart, this is as truly a presumption in the case of adults as of infants. And both point to the covenant as including 'you and your children' as the divinely given rule for procedure in recognizing grace as present. We wish every Presbyterian would read Dr. Walker's tract."

### **595. The baptismal writings of Rev. Professor Dr. Benjamin B. Warfield**

Rev. Professor Dr. Benjamin B. Warfield himself produced many baptismal writings.<sup>256</sup> In his work *The Polemics of Infant Baptism*, he clearly upheld what Rev. Professor John Murray<sup>257</sup> of Westminster East would later call "presumptive membership in Christ's body."

Further, in his book *The Westminster Assembly and its Work*, Warfield insisted<sup>258</sup> that -- as 'milk for babes' -- "the [*Shorter*] *Catechism* proceeds on the presumption that the Catechumen is a child of God." For this reason, that *Catechism* gives only what the child of God needs to know of the dealings of God with him and the duties he owes God" -- before he is for the first time admitted to commune at the Lord's supper.

In his article *Children*, Warfield insisted<sup>259</sup> that "Jesus...asserted for children a recognized place in His Kingdom.... What is particularly to be borne in mind with respect to the blessing of the little children -- Matthew 19:13f; Mark 10:13f; Luke 18:15f -- is that these 'little children' (*paidia*)...were distinctively 'babies' (*brephē*).... He not only asserted for them a part in His mission, but even constituted them the type of the children of the kingdom."

Moreover, observed Warfield, covenant children actually have truth revealed to them. Consequently, in their own infantile way they then **actually** -- and therefore **consciously** -- praise their Saviour. Thus, stated Warfield: "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth" (Jesus exclaimed) on at least "one momentous occasion (Matthew 11:25 & Luke 10:21) -- 'that Thou didst hide these things from the wise and prudent, and didst reveal them unto babes'.... 'Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, Thou has ordained praise.'" Matthew 21:16."

In his articles *Christ's "Little Ones"* and *The Angels of Christ's "Little Ones"* -- Warfield explained<sup>260</sup> that "the Apostles had been disputing as to their relative claims to greatness in the coming Kingdom.... The Lord teaches them a much needed lesson in humility, by means of the example of a little child. Setting a little child in their midst, He exhorts them to emulate its simplicity....

"Christ's 'little ones'...are just who He tells us they are --'those that believe on Him.... It is not the will of the Father that one should perish' whose angels 'in heaven do always behold the face of the Father Who is in heaven' [Matthew 18:1-6].... Children were 'little ones' to the rabbis, [but] only as undeveloped and unripe.... The *katan* and *katanna* were simply the 'boy' and 'girl' -- in opposition to the mature man and woman....

"In the passage in Matthew [18:6-10], nothing could seem more appropriate than the sense of 'disembodied spirit.'" Indeed, "especially if literal 'children' are meant" -- Warfield then asked: "What could so enhance the reverence with which 'these little ones'...should be treated here -- than the assurance that it is specifically their souls which in heaven stand closest to the Father's throne?"

#### **596. Further writings of Warfield on infant faith and infant salvation**

In his article *The Polemics of Infant Baptism*, Warfield insists:<sup>261</sup> "All Protestants should easily agree that only Christ's children have a right to the ordinance of infant baptism.... We say that it [the Church] should receive as the children of Christ -- all whom in the judgment of charity it may fairly recognize as such....

"All baptism is inevitably administered on the basis not of knowledge but of presumption.... If we must baptize on presumption, the whole principle is yielded.... We must baptize all whom we may fairly presume to be Members of Christ's body....

"So soon, therefore, as it is fairly apprehended that we baptize on presumption and not on knowledge -- it is inevitable that we shall baptize all those for whom we may, on any grounds, fairly cherish a good **presumption** that they belong to God's people.... This surely includes the infant children of believers."

This concerns the favour of God, "to Whom there exist many precious promises on which pious parents -- Baptists as fully as others -- rest in devout faith." We must obey "Christ's command, by giving the child **early baptism** -- and so marking him as the Lord's!"

Also in his essay *The Development of the Doctrine of Infant Salvation*, Warfield added<sup>262</sup> that "the new birth of the Spirit was the sole gateway for infants too into the kingdom. Communion with God was lost for all alike, and to infants too it was restored only in Christ."

It is certain that at least some infants are saved, after they have been regenerated previously. As regards infants dying thus, birth within the bounds of the covenant is a sure sign of salvation -- since the promise is 'unto us and our children.' Acts 2:38f. "God in His infinite love has chosen them in Christ, before the foundation of the world, by a loving foreordination of them -- unto adoption as sons in Jesus Christ....

"Men [alias human beings], accordingly, are not saved because they are baptized -- but they are **baptized**, because they are **saved**.... Accordingly, to all those departing this life in infancy --inclusion in God's saving purpose alone is the condition of salvation.... [This] is the doctrine of the Reformed churches."

In his *Studies on Theology*, Warfield added: "Among the Reformed alone..., [regarding the Invisible Church of] the people of God, membership...is mediated not by the external act of baptism but the **internal regeneration** of the Holy Spirit... In the case of infants dying in infancy, birth within the bounds of the covenant is a sure sign, since the promise is 'unto us and our children.'"<sup>263</sup>

#### **597. Warfield: baptism by sprinkling for those infants with faith**

Warfield carefully wished to uphold the 'infant faith' and the baby baptism teaching of the *Westminster Standards*. Indeed, he wished to do so -- *in toto*.

In his article *Baptism: Discussion of Controverted Points*, Warfield explained<sup>264</sup> that "baptism is a 'washing with water in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost...rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person.' *Westminster Shorter Catechism* Q. 94 and *Confession* 28:3.... In the hands of the Apostles...it was probably by pouring water on the head of the recipient."

In his essay *How Shall We Baptize?*, Dr. Warfield rightly repudiated the *ex opere operato* baptismal regeneration theory of Romanism. He declared:<sup>265</sup> "Jesuit missionaries in Canada, urged on by their belief that by the mere act, baptism worked salvation -- reduced it to a bald magical performance.

"They had a special delight in baptizing dying infants -- thus, as they believed, rescuing them from the flames of perdition.... Their practice of baptizing infants at the point of death, led the [American] Indians to believe that baptism was a cause of death!"

The truth, however, is exactly the opposite. For only those who already have life -- and everlasting life at that -- should ever be baptized at all.

Warfield continued: "And what are we to say of the filthy habit of immersing, at the great baptismal season, multitudes of children -- sick and well alike, one after another, in the same font?... The entire subject is discussed by the Russian Bishop Hermogen in a formal treatise -- after a fashion which would be amusing, were it not so distressing.

"The infant, according to him, is to be baptized preferably in cold water.... The plea that the cold water may injure it, is not to be admitted. To add hot water -- 'makes it no longer natural but artificial'....

"How can there be any danger of the child taking cold and dying from the touch of the baptismal water -- when it is immersed into it with the very object that it may receive from it new and spiritual life?" Thus the Russian 'Orthodox' Bishop Hermogen.

"Similarly," continued Warfield, the famous American Baptist (Seminary Professor) "President A.H. Strong." In his book *Systematic Theology*, ed. 1909, Vol. III, p. 940," Strong "bids those who doubt whether immersion can have been intended by Christ to be the universal mode of baptism -- because, forsooth, it is often dangerous to health and life -- to remember that

'ardent feeling nerves even the body!'" Indeed, Strong even "adds the lines: 'Brethren, if your hearts be warm -- ice and snow can do no harm!'"

Responded Warfield: "Can they not? And is it not written again, 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God?'" Luke 3:21f & 4:1,9-12! "We cannot let either indifference or fanaticism determine for us how we should baptize." For the proper mode of Biblical baptism, is sprinkling alone.

Nevertheless, Warfield added, "we should not like to pronounce the [submersionistic] mode...no baptism at all.... Who would have the heart to declare the poor little Russian babies to have passed through their infected bath -- in vain?"

For "if we are going to demand that our baptismal water shall be pure and clean, on pain of not being baptismal water at all -- how pure and clean must we demand that it shall be? Must we have distilled water, fresh from the retorts? Would it not be better to remember that...the place occupied by baptism in general in the New Testament -- is [today] commonly exaggerated?

"This does not prove that it is of little importance. But it does seem to show that there are few details concerning it which are of large importance. The New Testament considers it enough, to: establish it as the initiatory rite of Christianity; outline its significance in broad touches; and let it go at that....

"Affusion on the head of a recipient standing in shallow water...is the ordinary mode of baptism depicted in the early decorations of the Roman catacombs.... It is more probable that it was this mode which was employed in the case of the Ethiopian eunuch and in the baptisms of John the Baptist -- [rather] than immersionism."

#### **598. Warfield on the sealing character of triune baptism**

In his excellent essay *Christian Baptism*, Warfield further declared<sup>266</sup> that in Romans 4:11 "circumcision had no function whatever in the procuring or reception of salvation." For Abraham "received the sign of circumcision [as] a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while he was in uncircumcision.... Baptism is the form that the circumcision which God gave Abraham in the Old Covenant, takes in the New....

"As with adults, it is only the infants who are the Lord's -- who are to be baptized. But equally naturally as with adults, all infants that are the Lord's -- are to be baptized.... Circumcision, which held the place in the Old Covenant that baptism holds in the New, was to be given to all [male] infants born within the Covenant." And regenerated Israelitesses, both tiny and mature, were all saved without and therefore (just like the males) **before** circumcision.

"Baptism must follow the same rule," insisted Warfield. "This, and this only, can determine its conference: Is the recipient a child of the covenant, with a right therefore to the sign and seal of the covenant? We cannot withhold the sign and seal of the covenant from those who are of the covenant....

"The baptism of infants, no doubt, presupposes that salvation is altogether of the Lord. No infant can be the Lord's -- unless it is the Lord Who makes him such.... Infants, in this, do not differ in any way from adults. Of all alike, it is true that it is only 'of God' that they are in Christ Jesus....

"Our Lord commanded His disciples to baptize those whom in their world-wide mission they should draw to Christ.... Precisely what He bade them do, was to call them by the Name of the Triune God -- that they might be marked out as His, and sealed to Him as an eternal possession....

"It was God Himself Who declared, 'I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean.' Ezekiel 36:25.... Baptism therefore symbolizes not merely the cleansing of our sins, but our consequent walk in new obedience. This, let us never forget, is not only symbolized for us -- but sealed to us. For baptism is given to us by God as an engagement on His part to bring us safely through to the end....

"It is not only our duty, then, but our high privilege -- to receive baptism. We not only obey God's command in receiving it, but lay hold of His covenant promise. Having His mark upon us, and resting upon His pledge, we may go forward in joy and sure expectation of His gracious keeping in this life -- and His acceptance of us into His glory hereafter.

"Under this encouragement, we are daily and hourly and momently to work out the salvation thus sealed to us, in the blessed knowledge that it is God Who, in fulfilment of His pledge, is working in us both the willing and the doing. Thus we shall, as our fathers expressed it, 'improve our baptism.'" *Westminster Larger Catechism* 167.

### **599. Rev. Drs. Kramer on *The Connection between Baptism and Regeneration***

In 1897, Rev. 'Doctorandus' G. Kramer wrote his doctoral dissertation on *The Connection between Baptism and Regeneration*.<sup>267</sup> After proofreading almost the entire text, he suddenly died -- just before being awarded the degree. Posthumously, at the request of his widow it was published by his promotor (Rev. Professor Dr. A. Kuyper Sr). Kuyper accordingly wrote the *Introduction* thereto, where he admitted he had hoped Kramer would one day have been appointed to the Faculty of the Free University of Amsterdam.<sup>268</sup>

Kramer's priceless work is a study in the history of dogma. It would deepen the Church's understanding of the doctrine of the 'prebaptismally presumed regeneration' of covenantal infants in Reformed Theology.

Kramer firstly explained the mediaeval *ex opere operato* perception of Romanism. Second, he deals with "the imperfect application of the principle of the Reformation" in Lutheranism, and with the reactionary views of the Anabaptists.

Next, Kramer dealt with the baptismal views of the early Swiss Reformers -- such as Zwingli and Oecolampadius. Then, he thoroughly explained the 'presumptionist' views of John Calvin -- with specific reference to infant faith before the baptism of covenant children.

Thereafter, Kramer presented the similar views of Calvin's contemporary associates -- such as Bullinger, Peter Martyr Vermigli, Aretius, Ursinus, Olevianus, Laski and Micron. Unfortunately, however, he does not also deal with the views of Classic Scottish Reformers (such as Wishart, Knox and Craig) -- nor of Classic English Reformers (like Cranmer and Bradford). Nor does he deal with the views of Bohemian Reformers (like Budovec and Zerotin), and of Hungarian Reformers (like Kalmancsehi, Kis, Juhasz and Bocskay).

Overlooking too the similar views in Early Colonial America and in the rest of the Reformed world in its heyday, Kramer thenceforth concentrated almost exclusively on the Netherlands. There, he showed how 'presumptionism' was championed by the Pre-Dordt Synods as well as by the 1618f Synod of Dordt stalwarts. Such included: De Brés, Datheen, Alting, Vander Heyden, Taffin, Acron, Puppius, Cloppenburg, Udemann, Basting, Junius, Trelcatius, Hommius, Amesius, Walaeus, Trigland, Gomarus, Maccovius, and Voetius.

Kramer then also pointed to similar Post-Dordt theologians (such as Rivetus, Vossius, Poudroyen, Maresius, Cocceius, Burmannus, Ridderus and Koelman). Cursorily, he traced the further devolutionary development (from Brakel to Fruytier) -- and then the resurgence of 'presumptionism' (under Van Toll, Aemilius, Tuinman, De Moor and Vander Honert).

Finally, Kramer outlined the beginnings of the nineteenth-century revival of the true view -- under H.P. Scholte and J.A. Wormser. Curiously, he omitted the similar views of the great *Afscheiding* leader Hendrik de Cock. In conclusion, Kramer merely mentioned that his "highly respected teacher, Rev. Professor Dr. A. Kuyper (Sr.) -- after a long time of decay [on the part of the Dutch Reformed Church] -- had again begun to preach with full power the doctrine of the Pre-Dordt Reformed Fathers."<sup>269</sup>

#### **600. Littooy changed his mind and became a baptismal Calvinist**

Also in Holland, Rev. A. Littooy of Middelburg had written (earlier in 1880) that children were only outwardly sanctified before and during infant baptism. In 1901, however, as a result of ongoing study, he changed his views -- and thenceforth followed the thought of John Calvin and Abraham Kuyper.<sup>270</sup>

In yet another writing, Littooy then rightly pointed out<sup>271</sup> that in the Dutch Reformed *Baptismal Formula*, "á Lasco the compiler...asks the question: 'Do you acknowledge that they [your tiny covenant children] have been sanctified in Christ and should therefore be baptized as Members of the Congregation?'

"This is what precedes...and is asked...before the baptism is administered. Consequently, it does not refer to anything first obtained at and during the baptism....

"The expression that our children 'partake of condemnation in Adam' is not taken by any of the Reformed to mean merely externally -- but only in the internal and actual sense. Yet, according to all rules of exegesis, one must therefore also take what is contraposed thereto in this same sense. Thus, the children are also received in Christ by grace -- just as they were subject to condemnation in Adam."

### **601. Baptismal problems in Dutch church mergers 'around 1905'**

Now there were many would-be, and temporary, and permanent mergers of Reformed denominations -- in Holland, around the beginning of our twentieth century.<sup>272</sup> Unfortunately, many squabbles and tensions were thereby produced -- especially as regards the precise significance of infant baptism. So, the 1905 Synod of Utrecht (of the 'Reformed Churches in the Netherlands') finally made the following unanimous declaration.

Even before infant baptism, "as regards...presumptive regeneration your Synod declares that according to the Confession of our congregations the seed of the covenant according to the promise of God is to be regarded as regenerated and sanctified in Christ -- until, when they grow up, the contrary might appear from their doctrine or life.... This is why our Church, in the prayer after [infant] baptism, 'thanks and praises God that He has forgiven us and our children all our sins through the blood of His dear Son Jesus Christ, and has through His Holy Spirit received us as Members of His only-begotten Son and as His children, and has sealed and impressed us with holy baptism.'"<sup>273</sup>

The 1905 Synod of Utrecht indeed admitted that some covenant infants might get regenerated only during baptism, and yet others some time after their infant baptism. But it also urged the congregations rebuttably to regard all covenant children as already regenerated -- before their infant baptisms.

It is important to note that even the later Rev. Professor Dr. K. Schilder (who ultimately made his exodus from the 'Reformed Churches in the Netherlands' largely for other reasons), defended the above 1905 declaration.<sup>274</sup> Indeed, its 'presuppositionism' was further developed -- by Rev. Professors Drs. A. Kuyper Jr., H.H. Kuyper, Wielenga, Honig, Dijk, and many others.

### **602. The Ex-Baptist Rev. Campbell Morgan on the faith of believers' infants**

A very different situation is encountered with the renowned Rev. Campbell Morgan. Born the son of a Baptist pastor on the Welsh border, he was reared in the very Christian environment of a Faith Mission -- himself 'preaching' his first sermon when but thirteen. Self-taught by a rabbi in a Jewish school; then rejected by both the Salvation Army and the Methodists -- he became a Congregationalist Minister and pastored London's famous Westminster Chapel from 1904 onward.<sup>275</sup>

About that time, Morgan published his book *The Crises of the Christ*. Though then an Arminian, he dedicated<sup>276</sup> it "to my father and mother who over forty years ago gave me to Christ. They never doubted the acceptance by Him of their child. From infancy, and through youth, they trained me as His. From them, I received my first knowledge of Him. So, when the necessity came for my personal choosing, I so recognized the claims of His life -- that without revulsion and hardly knowing when, I yielded to Him my allegiance and my love."



### **603. The infant covenant theology of Rev. Dr. Andrew Murray**

Yet again, a rather different situation was then occurring at about the same time in South Africa. There, the internationally-famous devotional writer and covenant theologian Rev. Dr. Andrew Murray was asserting<sup>277</sup> that "the promise given to Abraham...is the promise for every believing parent....

"The eye of faith sees in each little one a divine goodness, and hides it in the shadow of the Almighty. Is it not an object of the great redemption?... Commit thy child boldly to the [baptismal] waters, in the ark of the covenant of thy God!"

And further: "God would teach us that it is especially as parents, and even from before the first hope of having children, that His saints are taken into covenant with Him.... The children, not only when grown up but even from birth, are to be partakers of the covenant. Yes, from before the birth, in the very first rising of hope, would God begin the great work of redeeming love by His Spirit....

"Let us look upon our children, let us love them and train them, as children of the covenant and children of the promise. These are the children of God.... The child has the same place in the covenant, and the same claim on the seal of the covenant, as the father....

"The son of Ebenezer Fiske (grandson of William Fiske who was himself a fourth generation Christian) was a man of inflexible religious principles. His wife was energetic and eminently pious, and would frequently set apart whole days to pray that her children might be an influence for good to the next generation. By 1857, three hundred descendants of this praying mother were Members of Christian churches. For more than three hundred and fifty years, the line of the holy seed had been preserved."<sup>278</sup>

As with the godly Paidobaptist Ebenezer Fiske (and also the godly Paidobaptist Jonathan Edwards), so too with the godly Paidobaptist Andrew Murray. Also his children and his children's children would long serve the Lord. See Murray's sister M. Neethling's booklet *Unto Children's Children*.<sup>279</sup> Isaiah 59:21!

### **604. Rev. Professor Dr. R.A. Webb: *The Theology of Infant Salvation***

Many contemporary American Presbyterians held similar views. Thus Rev. Professor Dr. R.A. Webb of Southwestern Presbyterian University in Tennessee. In his famous book *The Theology of Infant Salvation*, Webb made the following statements.<sup>280</sup>

"Abel was a godly child.... Isaac the patriarch was a subject of saving grace in his infancy.... He is known in biblical history as 'the child of promise'.... Jacob the patriarch...was a prenatal subject of God's grace, proving that a state in grace may antedate birth itself.... Moses was a 'proper child.' Hebrews 11:23.... His parents saw the properness that was [already] in him..., those spiritual qualities which made him 'exceeding fair to God' [Acts 7:20 margin]....

David the great king...was regenerated in his babyhood.... 'Thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts.' Psalm 22:9. 'By Thee have I been holden up from the womb'.... Psalm 71:6. 'Thou has covered me in my mother's womb.' Psalm 139:13....

"The Lord hath called me from the womb; from the bowels of my mother hath He made mention of my name.... The Lord...formed me from the womb to be His servant'.... Isaiah 49:1-5.... 'Before I formed thee in the belly, I knew thee; and before thou camest forth out of the womb, I sanctified thee'.... Jeremiah 1:5."

Webb's treatment of the children brought to Jesus by their believing parents for His blessing -- Matthew 19:13f --is especially illuminating. "Of 'such' children as these who are 'brought' or who 'come' to Me, is the Membership of the kingdom of heaven composed. Hence His indignation at His thickheaded disciples -- they were about to send away from Him some of the true Members of the kingdom of God!

"Hence, He took them in His arms; laid His hands on them; and blessed them. He was not blessing mere types and emblems and figures of speech -- but true and literal Members of the kingdom of God. Such infants as were 'brought' to Him and such children as 'came' to Him -- were subjects of His saving grace and *bona fide*[!] Members of the kingdom of God. His disciples did not understand. [So] He caused them to know better -- to know that these little children were the objects of His redemptive solicitude, and constituent of the kingdom of God.

"Bengel adopts this view, and makes this apt comment in the form of an argument *a fortiori*: 'Granted that "such" are intended as are like infants. Then, much more, infants themselves -- who are such [and who] have the kingdom of God.... Both [such infants and those like such infants] ought to receive it -- and can, by coming to Christ!

"Stier comments...that the kingdom of heaven consists of such children, as also of childlike men -- not on account of their own original innocence but through the saving grace in which they receive it as a gift and blessing.... 'If they come, and come to Me -- then of such is the kingdom of heaven'.... In all the so-called co-operation of man, there remains always the first and ever-present initiative of God's working and giving. The more passively, in its true sense, the man comes and takes....

"We must observe the intention of those who present the children. For if there had not been a deep-rooted conviction in their minds that the power of the Spirit was at His disposal, that He might pour it out on the people of God -- it would have been unreasonable to present their children. There is no room, therefore, to doubt that they ask for them a participation of His grace....

"By embracing them, He testified that they were reckoned by Christ among His flock.... They were partakers of the spiritual gifts which are represented by baptism. It is unreasonable that they should be deprived of the outward sign. But it is presumption and sacrilege to drive from the fold of Christ those whom He cherished in His bosom, and to shut the door and to exclude as strangers those whom He does not wish to be forbidden to come to Him....

"Infants are renewed by the Spirit of God, according to the capacity of their age -- till that power which was concealed within them grows by degrees and becomes fully manifest at the proper time.... We are indebted to Calvin for exploding the doctrine that children are saved by baptism."<sup>281</sup>

#### **605. Baptist Rev. Professor A.H. Strong: elect infants receive faith before arriving in glory**

Even the Baptist Rev. Professor Dr. Augustus Hopkins Strong -- while rejecting infant baptism -- nevertheless admitted that early-dying infants still needed regeneration. Indeed, he averred they would probably need to be personally enlightened about Christ -- before being able to go to heaven.

Explained Strong:<sup>282</sup> "Infants are in a state of sin; need to be regenerated; and can be saved only through Christ.... They are the objects of special divine compassion and care, and through the grace of Christ are certain of salvation....

"Since there is no evidence that children dying in infancy are regenerated prior to death, either with or without the use of external means, it seems most probable that the work of regeneration may be performed by the Spirit, in connection with the infant soul's first view of Christ in the other world."

Here, we may be grateful that Strong does indeed make provision for the salvation of [at least some] early-dying infants --even though he anticovenantally and quite gratuitously seems to assume that all dying in infancy will be justified. However, by unbiblically denying their regeneratability before death -- he lapses into the limbo of a Baptist version of postmortal purgatory. Shades of Romanism!

Indeed, Strong's very notion of this heavenly destination for allegedly faithless early-dying babies -- blunts the imperative of their needing to come to Christ here and now, before they die. Furthermore, if as he suggests faithless babies may yet get regenerated after their deaths -- then why not also faithlessly dying adult Pagans? And then -- what remains of the missionary imperative, here and now?!

#### **606. Rev. Professor Philip Schaff on the development of infant baptism in church history**

In 1910, the famous American Church Historian Rev. Professor Dr. Philip Schaff put all of this into historical perspective. In his mammoth *History of the Christian Church*, he pointed out<sup>283</sup> that "the apostolic church was a missionary church, and had first to establish a mother community -- in the bosom of which alone the grace of baptism can be 'improved' by a Christian education. So even under the old covenant, circumcision was first performed on the adult Abraham.... So all Christian missionaries in heathen lands now begin with preaching and baptizing adults....

"We have presumptive and positive arguments for the apostolic origin and character of infant baptism. First: in the fact that circumcision [is], as truly prefigured, baptism.... Then: in the organic relation between Christian parents and children.... [Further,] in the nature of the New

Covenant, which is even more comprehensive than the Old.... [Last,] in the universal virtue of Christ as Redeemer of all sexes, classes and ages -- and especially in the import of His own infancy which has redeemed and sanctified the infantile age....

"The patristic doctrine of baptism...was sanctioned by the Greek and Roman and with some important modifications also by the Lutheran and Anglican Churches.... During the first three centuries and even in the age of Constantine, adult baptism was the rule [though by no means the only way of administering that Sacrament].... Actual conversion of the [adult] candidate was required, as a condition before administering the sacrament (as is still the case on missionary ground)....

"When the same high view is applied without qualification to infant baptism, we are confronted at once with the difficulty that infants cannot comply with this condition. They may be regenerated (this being an act of God), but they cannot be converted....

"The leading Lutheran divines reduce the absolute necessity of baptism to a relative or ordinary necessity. And the Reformed churches, under the influence of Calvin's teaching, went further -- but making salvation depend upon divine election, not upon the sacrament.... The *Second Scotch Confession* (A.D. 1580) was the first to declare its abhorrence of 'the cruel [popish] judgment against infants departing without the sacrament' and the doctrine of 'the absolute necessity of baptism.'"

#### **607. Rev. Dr. Abraham Kuyper Jr.: covenanters regenerated from birth onward**

Significantly, the presumptive regenerationist Rev. Professor Dr. Abraham Kuyper Sr.'s sons -- notably Rev. Dr. Abraham Kuyper Jr. and Rev. Professor Dr. H.H. Kuyper -- were themselves dedicated Christians. Furthermore, they were also famous theologians in their own right.

Rev. Dr. Abraham Kuyper Jr. himself published many works -- some of them, such as his *Covenantal Collectivism* and his *The Firmness of the Covenant*<sup>284</sup> -- being relevant to our subject. In the latter, he declared: "The elect covenanters have been sanctified in Christ. From the hour of their birth. Regenerated in the narrower sense of the word."<sup>285</sup>

In his work *The Bond of the Covenant*, he further appealed<sup>286</sup> to Isaiah 46:3-4. That passage commands God's people: 'Listen to Me, O house of Jacob, and all the remnant of the house of Israel who are borne by Me from the belly; who are carried from the womb, and even to your old age!'

Hereanent, Kuyper observed: "It is only thus that we can understand aright the answer we are to give to the first baptismal question [in the Dutch Reformed *Baptismal Formula*]: 'Although our children [were conceived in sin]..., do you not acknowledge that they have been sanctified in Christ?' It is because they **have been** sanctified in Christ [prenatally], that they are to be baptized. This 'sanctified in Christ' -- is here the direct ground for baptism" during infancy.

#### **608. The strong presumptive regenerationism of Rev. Professor Dr. H.H. Kuyper**

His brother, Rev. Professor Dr. H.H. Kuyper, also wrote similar relevant works. Such include his book *The Authentic Text of the Liturgical Writings Maintained* (also anent the *Baptismal Formula*);<sup>286</sup> his work *The Children of the Covenant*; and his important writing *Hamabdil* (subtitled *On the Holiness of the Covenant of Grace*).

In his work *The Children of the Covenant*, Professor H.H. Kuyper presented<sup>287</sup> a wealth of historical material -- from church history, from the confessional writings, and from the liturgy of the Reformation. Then, in an elaborate organic exposition of questionable texts (such as Mark 10:16 and Acts 2:39 and First Corinthians 7:14), he gave a detailed refutation of the arguments of Baptists and Methodists against infant baptism.

To H.H. Kuyper, in the Dutch Reformed *Baptismal Formula* the reference to the covenant with Abraham recalls the work of the Father. That regarding Jesus and the little children recalls the work of the Son. And the citation from Acts 2:39 refers to the work of the Holy Spirit.

In his book *Hamabdil*, Professor H.H. Kuyper further argued<sup>288</sup> that the Great Commission in Matthew 28:19 clearly implies the progressive infant baptizing of the nations and their infants. In Mark 16:15f, it clearly implies: 1, the Word; 2, faith; and 3, baptism -- and in that irreversible order, even as regards infants. Claimed Kuyper: "Whenever the preaching [of God's Word] bears fruit and disciples are made, these disciples must receive baptism. Baptism is the official act whereby the sign of Christian discipleship is impressed upon them and [whereby] they are distinguished from the non-disciples....

"Christ says about the tiny little children of the Hebrews, whose mothers brought them to Him: 'Let the little children come unto Me, and do not hinder them! For of such is the Kingdom of God.' Mark 10:14.... Christ does not say: later, if they truly believe in Me, they shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven. He declares now, at that moment: of such is the Kingdom of heaven. That Kingdom is theirs; it is their inheritance, according to the covenant of grace."

#### **609. Rev. Professor Dr. H.H. Kuyper's *Hamabdil* (continued)**

Nor does Christ say those covenant infants inherit that Kingdom -- because they were baptized. Indeed, there is no mention of those covenant children then being baptized. Clearly, Jesus states those covenant infants were heirs of the Kingdom irrespective of baptism -- indeed, also before baptism. They were already heirs -- simply because of their own presumably faithful relationship to Jesus (and especially and obviously that of the adults who brought them to Him).

H.H. Kuyper continued: "If solely those who can profess their faith personally, were permitted to be regarded as believers by the Church -- then the children of the covenant of grace would be excluded. For children are not able to make a profession of faith."

However: "Because the Lord God extends the promise of the covenant even to the children of believers..., they are baptized not...in the hope that they will later become covenanters. But

they are baptized because they have been taken up into the covenant of grace, and therefore ought to receive the sign and seal of the covenant of grace....

"Belonging to the covenant of grace, the children partake of the benefits of the covenant given in Christ to the Church of God. They have been incorporated into Christ. They have a stake in the atonement, through His blood. They have been washed and sanctified through the Holy Spirit. They are heirs of the Kingdom of heaven....

"The Church...regards these little children of believers as actual children of the covenant. She regards them as elect; as regenerates; as already washed in Christ's blood; as saints..... There has never been a difference as to whether the Church is to regard her children as 'sanctified in Christ' and as 'born again' -- until, from their walk, the opposite might appear....

"The strong expression in our *Baptismal Formula* that our children 'have been sanctified in Christ' is not so much derived from First Corinthians 7:14. There, it only says that our children are 'holy.' The expression is rather derived from First Corinthians 6:11. There, that is testified as regard the entire Church -- thus also her children -- that they 'have been sanctified in the Name of the Lord Jesus and through the Spirit of our God.... In Ezekiel 16:20-21, God calls even the children of idolatrous covenanters...His children....

"That the children of believers are holy, is to say (according to Calvin) that the curse resting upon them by nature has been wiped out -- and that they have been consecrated by the grace of God.... One should here [not] confuse the 'judgment of charity' with which the Church regards the children of believers as regenerates -- with the fact itself as to whether these children truly are regenerates....

"Yet the reservation that the Church proceed from a presupposition in conflict with reality, hold no water. That would only be the case if the Church still continued to regard such children as regenerate even when they lack every sign of true godliness after growing up....

"Christ's apostles, to take our point of departure with them, never neglected to warn every Member of the Congregation unto self-examination. Paul writes to the Congregation of Corinth in his Second Epistle (13:5), 'Examine yourselves, whether you are in the faith! Test yourselves! Don't you know yourselves, how that Jesus Christ is in you -- unless you are reprobates?'.... 'Let a man examine himself!' First Corinthians 11:28."

Further: "If anybody does not have the Spirit of Christ, he doesn't belong to Him!' Romans 8:9.... And in First Peter 2:2, 'as newborn little children, strongly desire the reasonable unadulterated milk [of the Word], so that you may grow thereby -- if you have indeed tasted that the Lord is gracious!'"

H.H. Kuyper concluded: "Circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and do not further harden your neck!' Deuteronomy 10:16.... The wrath and the zeal of the Lord shall smoke over that man, and the curse written in the book shall rest upon him!' Deuteronomy 19:19f.... 'Behold, today I have held before you life and what is good -- and death and what is evil!' Deuteronomy 30:15....

"How dramatically Christ warned the Pharisees and the Scribes, that they 'were like whitewashed graves who indeed appeared to be clean on the outside -- but who on the inside were full of dead bones and all uncleanness!' Matthew 23:27. When the Jews said to themselves, 'Abraham is our father!' -- Christ answers them, 'If you were Abraham's children -- you would do the works of Abraham!' John 8:39.... 'Remember Lot's wife!' Luke 17:32.... 'Let him who thinks he stands, take care that he not fall!' First Corinthians 10:11f....

"Consider, brethren' -- writes the Apostle to the Hebrews.... Or, as it says even in the first verse of that chapter: 'Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling.' This indeed shows in the strongest way how the Apostle regards them as believers. Yet he also writes: 'Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief -- in departing from the living God!' Hebrews 3:12.

"Even though the Apostle calls them holy brethren -- he does not for a moment hesitate to warn them, that nobody among them should have an unconverted heart.... It is not to those still outside the covenant, but to the children of the covenant -- that the Lord God says: 'my son, give Me your heart!' Proverbs 23:26."

#### **610. Rev. Professor Dr. Herman Bavinck on *The First Baptismal Question***

Also very important, are the views of the great Dutch Reformed dogmatician Rev. Professor Dr. Herman Bavinck. Apart from his works *Calling and Regeneration* and *Parents or Witnesses*, already in 1900 he had published his important monograph *The First Baptismal Question* (namely of the Dutch Reformed *Baptismal Formula*).

In the latter-mentioned work, Bavinck commented on the question: 'Do you acknowledge that although our children are conceived and born in sin..., that they yet are sanctified in Christ -- and therefore as Members of His Church ought to be baptized?'<sup>289</sup> Here, Bavinck affirmed that this question is referring not just to outward but indeed also to inward sanctification.

For Bavinck declared in the above-mentioned monograph:<sup>290</sup> "Even if that viewpoint was not recommended by the entire environment in which the *Formula* originated, the wording thereof in itself would nevertheless already require this interpretation.... It is confessed about the children of believers that they partake in Adam's condemnation, without their knowledge. But in the same way, they are received unto grace in Christ -- without their knowledge.

"The entire spirit and letter of the *Baptismal Formula* thus precludes understanding 'sanctified in Christ' only in an external and an objective sense. Both for children as well as for adults, the genuine and true Christian baptism is always that baptism which seals the washing off of sins and the renewal of the Holy Spirit."

#### **611. Rev. Professor Dr. Herman Bavinck's books *Magnalia Dei* and *Christian Family***

In Bavinck's *Magnalia Dei: Instruction in the Christian Religion according to the Reformed Confession* -- he stated<sup>291</sup> that regeneration is a "radical about-turn, both internal and external,

which receives its sign and seal in holy baptism. Acts 2:38. He who undergoes baptism...has died with Christ and has been buried together with Him through baptism into His death.... He has become a disciple, a follower, a slave, a soldier of Christ -- a Member of His body, and a temple of the Holy Spirit. Romans 6:3f; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:11f; *etc.*....

"The missionary period [of the first few centuries of our era] passed.... The congregation perpetuated itself down through the generations, from parents to children.... The children were taken up into the covenant, from their birth. They received holy baptism as the sign and seal thereof....

"Baptism is certainly a sign and seal of the benefit of forgiveness, Acts 2:38 & 22:16; and of regeneration, Titus 3:5.... It is, furthermore, administered even to the children of believers. For they are included together with their parents in the covenant of grace. Genesis 17:7-10; Matthew 18:2-3; 19:14; 21:16; Acts 2:39. They belong to the congregation, First Corinthians 7:14. And they have been taken up into fellowship with the Lord, Ephesians 6:1 & Colossians 3:20.

In his book *The Christian Family*, Bavinck stated<sup>292</sup> that "the apostle warns believers not to enter into a yoke together with unbelievers. Second Corinthians 6:14.... Paul is speaking in general terms. Yet it is not disallowable to apply his word also to a mixed marriage.... Even where a spouse is converted to Christ, and the other remains an unbeliever..., the Christian partner nevertheless sets the pace. Her family ought to be a Christian family, in which the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife and also the children themselves are holy. First Corinthians 7:14....

"The children, according to the Commandment, are obligated to obey their parents. Ephesians 6:1-3. Yet neither of them are to oppose each other, but rather form one fellowship in the Lord. Also the children are holy; belong to the inheritance of the congregation; and are heirs of the promise of the covenant. Acts 2:39; First Corinthians 7:14; First Timothy 2:15.... Husbands, wives and children -- however different -- form one elect generation; one holy people; one royal priesthood. First Peter 2:9."

## **612. Infant faith according to Bavinck's *Principles of Psychology***

In his book *Principles of Psychology*, Bavinck contrasted<sup>293</sup> "the embryo of a man with that of an animal." He showed that "there must be a reason why the one develops into a man and the other into an animal. Nothing can come forth, which is not inherent."

"It is the same in the spiritual realm. Even where circumstances are similar, the one child learns easily -- while the other has difficulty with the smallest lesson. Wherever there is life, we must reckon not only with circumstances -- but primarily with the germ, the inclination, and the ability which proceed from the home....

"Humans are not born equal, neither are humans equal to animals. They bring their manners, their abilities, their natures with them.... Whenever man observes, thinks, judges or acts -- he immediately applies the principles which themselves lay locked up in his innate abilities, and which make their appearance with the exercise thereof."



### **613. Infant faith according to Bavinck's *Reformed Dogmatics***

In his famous *Reformed Dogmatics*, Bavinck further stated<sup>294</sup> that "men had this feeling that the regeneration of children took place before baptism.... God was not bound to means.... He operated thus with the children of believers who were removed by death before the years of discretion....

"They are to be regarded as elect and regenerate, until the opposite is apparent from their profession and behaviour.... All children born of believing parents are, according to the judgment of charity, to be regarded as born again -- until the opposite in life and doctrine are clearly manifested. Thus [Peter] Martyr [Vermigli], Alasco, Ursinus, Datheen, Alting, Voetius, Witsius, Maastricht....

"Calvin says...that the children of believers are already holy even before baptism through a supernatural grace (*Institutes* IV:16:31); that the seed of faith and conversion hides within them through a secret operation of the Spirit (IV:16:20); that they partake of the grace of regeneration by virtue of the promise; and that baptism follows by way of sign.... Men had this feeling that the regeneration of children took place before baptism....

"God is not bound to means.... Especially young children can be regenerated and saved.... He regularly so operates with the children of believers who are removed by death before years of discretion.... Children of believers...are meanwhile to be regarded as elect and regenerated, until the opposite might appear from their profession and behaviour....

"Reformed theologians...came to distinguish between regeneration and faith (conversion).... They arrived at the unanimous confession that the children of believers were involved in the covenant of grace just as much as the latter themselves -- not for the first time through and after baptism, but already before that....

"The Holy Spirit could also...work through the Word in the hearts of the children.... He operated thus with the children of believers who were removed by death before the years of discretion.... They are to be regarded as elect and regenerate, until the opposite is apparent from their profession and behaviour....

"In the light of Scripture, the Reformed learned to see that the children of believers are included in the covenant of grace -- not through, but already before baptism; not because of their parents, and by virtue of their natural birth; but with their parents, and by virtue of God's mercy....

"The children of believers are regenerated in their early age, before they are able [objectively] to hear the Word of the Gospel.... The sacrament of baptism would be no sacrament, if it were not connected to the Word as a sign and a seal. The internal call whereby the children are regenerated thus remains, objectively, very closely connected to the Word....

"Furthermore, as far as the external call is concerned, it must be considered that this does not at all occur only through the public preaching or even through the reading and investigation of

Holy Scripture -- but also in the simple word spoken by father or mother, and heard by the child in the family circle" -- perhaps even prenatally.<sup>295</sup>

#### **614. Bavinck on Calvinism versus Anabaptism regarding infant baptism**

Further in his *Reformed Dogmatics*, Bavinck added:<sup>296</sup> "In their struggle against the Anabaptists, the Reformed reached the insight...that the ability, the seed, the possessability of faith or...regeneration in the narrower sense -- can occur already at an early age: before the arousing of consciousness; at, or before, baptism; or even already before birth. They appealed to the examples of Jeremiah (1:5); of John the baptizer (Luke 1:15); of Paul (Galatians 1:15); and of Jesus Himself (Luke 1:35).... Christ's conception by the Holy Spirit in the womb of Mary, proves that the Spirit of God can be operative already from that very moment, and can continually sanctify a human being....

"The doctrine of regeneration in the narrower sense is therefore a precious part of the Reformed profession. Therefrom, godly parents derive the consolation that they ought not to doubt the election and salvation of their children whom God removes from this life in their childhood....

"The Reformed...went back to the simplicity of the Holy Scripture. They also proceeded from the idea -- and attempted to stick to it -- that baptism was instituted for believers.

"Thus, it [**baptism**] **did not cause** but indeed **strengthened** faith.... Especially against the Anabaptists, but then further also against the Romanists and the Lutherans, they [the Calvinists] had to show that the children of believers were to be regarded as **believers** even **before** baptism, and that it is as such [viz. as **believers**] that they ought to be baptized....

[

Explained Bavinck:<sup>297</sup> "For the rightness of infant baptism, they unanimously appealed to Holy Scripture.... The children born of believing parents were no heathen children; did not abide under the wrath of God....

"They were children of the covenant before baptism.... They were certainly able to possess the **tendency toward faith**.... There was mention of seminal faith, radical faith, inclination in faith, potential faith, habitual faith, the beginning of faith, faith by internal virtue of the Spirit, the seed of regeneration, *etc*....

"On the basis of Scripture (Jeremiah 1:5 & Luke 1:15) and in accordance with the universality of the Christian religion, all the Reformed maintained against the Anabaptists that just as much as adults -- little children too have been received by God into grace, been regenerated by His Spirit, and were able to be endowed with the seed of faith.... To the Reformed..., baptism was -- after all -- not the cause but the sign and the seal of the regeneration which God gives before (and without) the sacrament."

### **615. Infant faith according to Bavinck's *Manual for Instruction***

In his *Manual for Instruction in the Christian Religion*, Bavinck showed<sup>298</sup> that "circumcision was a seal of the righteousness of faith, Romans 4:11 -- and of the circumcision of the heart, Deuteronomy 30:6 & Romans 2:28f.... Baptism is a sign and seal of the benefit of forgiveness, Acts 2:38 & 22:16; and of regeneration, Titus 3:5. It is an incorporation into fellowship with Christ and His Church, Romans 6:4.

"Therefore, baptism is administered not only to adults won for Christ through missionary work, but further also to the children of the believers. For they are included in the covenant of grace, together with their parents. Genesis 17:7-10; Matthew 18:2-3; 19:14; 21:16; Acts 2:39. They belong to the congregation, First Corinthians 7:14 -- and they have been taken up into communion with the Lord, Ephesians 6:1 & Colossians 3:20."

### **616. Wielenga's *Our Baptismal Formula* and infant faith**

Around 1920, the Dutch Calvinist Rev. Dr. B. Wielenga published -- and then republished a revised edition of -- his important book *Our Baptismal Formula*. There, he issued the following challenges:<sup>299</sup>

"You tell me what baptism means to you, then I shall tell you what you mean for the Church.... Your doctrine of baptism decides whether you are a Methodist or not....

"Holy baptism does not give or effect the washing away of sins. It does not even posit it as a possibility in the future. But it simply states it as a fact which has happened, and which is not guaranteed with the seal of genuineness.... Baptism is the confirmation and illustration of the words [of God]: 'Before you call, I shall answer!' Isaiah 65:24....

"Baptism seals something which the child of God already has, namely the germ of life.... He who says that it is only the promise which is here sealed, places the baptized child of God outside of actual contact and real vital communion with Christ. He also conflicts with the clear word-usage of our [Dutch Reformed] *Baptismal Formula*, which says that Christ seals us -- **not** that He shall wash us, but that He washes us from all our sins" (*viz.* already at our regeneration presumably long before we were baptized as infants).

In the formulated prayer immediately before baptizing the covenantal infant, continued Wielenga,<sup>300</sup> "the Minister prays 'that Thou wilt mercifully look upon this **Thy** child'.... It says: 'this **Thy** child.' And here we do not wish to miss that little pronoun.... It was there in the sixteenth-century editions.... The child for whom the prayer of the congregation is offered, is not equivalent to a pagan child. It has been born on the territory of the Word, in the heritage of the covenant. And therefore it has a relative right to be baptized....

"Parents and furthermore all adult Members of the Congregation who witness the administration of the sacrament, are 'reminded' anew about what the Lord God had done for and to them at their earliest age.... According to its nature, **baptism** as a sacrament **presupposes a**

faith-germ of **regeneration** as being present.... [In the *Baptismal Formula*,] it asks [the parents] 'if you acknowledge that they [the covenant children] have been sanctified in Christ and **therefore** ought to be baptized as members of His Church'....

"According to its nature and essence, baptism -- just like the sacrament of the Lord's supper -- **presupposes a present** seed of **faith** which must be **strengthened**. Yet that is something quite different from [the other idea] that baptism is supposed to be **grounded** upon our presumption....

"The benefits belong only to the true children of God. They, and they alone, possess the forgiveness of sins. They alone have the new life, through implantation into Christ. They, and nobody else, **have been adopted** unto children of God **by the Holy Spirit**....

"It is undeniable that the benefits mentioned here are represented as already received in the past, and not as possible or future.... 'We thank Thee...That Thou **hast** forgiven us our sins and adopted us as Thy children'... The Lord God has fulfilled the promises of the covenant. And therefore the children of believers in principle stand completely equal to the adults. Even in their consciousness, they are faithful children of God....

"In our *Formula*, baptism is called not only a seal of promises -- but also of internal grace already present. After all, it clearly says that **this** is sealed and impressed upon us by holy baptism."

### **617. Infant faith according to Bouwman's article on *Baptism***

In 1925, the celebrated church historian Rev. Professor Dr. H. Bouwman wrote an important article on *Baptism* for the *Christian Encyclopaedia*. There, Bouwman insisted<sup>301</sup> that "the children of the believers are involved in the covenant of God and His Church just as much as the adults are. It is not what we think of our children but what God says of them that decides this.

"Our children are unclean from their conception and birth, and by nature subject to condemnation. But God testifies in His Word that the children of believers are His -- because He has wished to adopt them on account of His covenant, and has wanted to give them His rich promises in Christ. And therefore also the children are entitled to the sign and seal of that covenant of grace....

"If the promise of the covenant and the grace of regeneration were not for our children -- the children would not be able to be baptized. But regeneration can occur at the earliest age. This clearly appears from the example of John the baptizer, of whom it is testified that he was filled with the Holy Spirit from the mother's womb onward. Luke 1:15. Obadiah feared the Lord from his youth onward. First Kings 18:12. Jeremiah (1:5) was sanctified by God as a prophet, before he was born. So too were others. Psalm 22:10f & 71:6.

"Even the children therefore partake of the promise and of the benefits of the Spirit. Acts 2:39. They are the holy seed.... According to the rule that where 'the root is holy also the branches are holy' (Romans 11:16), also the children of believers can be called holy. First

Corinthians 7:14.... If God has now given to the children the same promises as to the adults -- how could somebody then dare maintain that the former may not be baptized?"

Bouwman continued: "Also the children of believers are included among the people of God. Therefore they are thus not pagan children who, as Rome and the Lutherans maintain, first still need to be exorcized. But they are children of the covenant, who **are** holy. Not by nature, but by virtue of the covenant of grace. *Decrees of Dordt* I:17. Therefore also the children are regarded as belonging to the Church. They receive warnings, and promises. Acts 26:22; Ephesians 6:1; Colossians 3:20. Even the tiny ones know the Lord. Hebrews 8:11.

"The Holy Scripture thus reckons the children just as much as the adults to the people of God. If anybody thinks one finds more certainty about faith with adults than with children, he is very much mistaken.... We regard also the children of believers as belonging to the congregation of the believers, for God Himself regards them as His Own. When God says: 'I am your God' -- it is so! And when God says: 'I am the God of your seed' -- not a single Christian may express any other judgment!

"Therefore, in charity, by virtue of God's covenant, we must regard the children of believers as belonging to the Lord --unless they later depart into sin, and die in their sins. This has absolutely nothing at all to do with the subjective opinion of this or that Minister -- nor whether he is convinced about the sincerity of somebody's faith. But it depends upon what God says in His Word....

"The actual ground for baptism, is thus the command of God. This, as Article 34 of the *Belgic Confession* teaches, "has commanded all who are His to be baptized.... That also the children are able to receive this strengthening of faith, we may not and cannot question.

"For just as God brings them unto regeneration and to life when yet unconscious -- so they can also...[subsequently at their infant baptism] receive a strengthening of their ability to believe, from the Holy Spirit.... Even the *Baptismal Formula* of the Dutch Reformed churches teaches that one shall 'baptize the children as heirs of the Kingdom of God and of His covenant.'"

#### **618. But 'all of Europe' (and much of Dixie?) has been baptized....**

In that same year 1930, however, the then-still-only-incipient antipaedobaptist Karl Barth was sarcastically proclaiming: *aber ganz Europa is getauft* ['but the whole of Europe is baptized']! Yes, but not just all the infants in Europe. Also, all the adults and some of the children in Dixie.

For truly, almost all the adults in Dixie have been baptized. 75% of all Southern white adults and at least 95% of all Southern black adults have not only been baptized but also immersed -- and indeed, only after a 'personal profession of faith' (*sic*) and as 'mature adults' (*sic*). 85% of all of the Baptists in the world are located in the U.S.A. -- and predominantly in the southeastern portion thereof.

Yet today, the Deep South has far more graciousness than grace. Native Mississippians have indicated to this present writer -- himself formerly a resident Minister in the great Magnolia

State -- that they consider 'Baptist' Mississippi, in spite of her Southern hospitality, to have been 'immersed' in a spiritual darkness even greater than that of Rome before the Protestant Reformation.

Of course, the plight of Protestantism in general and Presbyterianism in particular is even more dire -- north of the Mason-Dixon line! As the great Rev. Professor Dr. John Gerstner of Pittsburgh-Xenia Presbyterian Theological Seminary has opined [quite recently]: "The Roman Catholic Church...was 'millennial' --in comparison with the PCUSA today!"<sup>302</sup>

#### **619. Rev. Professor Dr. K. Dijk: '1905' clearly presupposed prebaptismal regeneration**

In 1931, Rev. Dr. Karl Dijk, Professor of Theology at Kampen, insisted that the 1905 Synod of Utrecht had given a clear and irenic decision. Regeneration, explained Dijk,<sup>303</sup> is "the principal transformation of man so that he becomes a new creature.... The Saviour speaks of the new birth in His well-known conversation with Nicodemus.

"This rebirth stands at the beginning of the road.... Whenever one makes rebirth dependent upon preaching and listening thereto -- what does one then do with small children, who not yet consciously listen, and who would then in that way be excluded from faith? This is why the order must be: [first] rebirth; and [then] the subsequent internal call by the Word....

"Our [Reformed] churches have constantly professed, over against the Lutheran and the Roman Church, that rebirth occurs neither through the Word nor through the sacraments as such -- but through the almighty and regenerating operation of the Holy Spirit.... Our *Confession* teaches that we are not to doubt the salvation of our own early-dying children. Yet they had not heard the preaching of the Gospel.... The revealed things are for us [and our children] -- and the concealed things must be left to the Lord our God!" Deuteronomy 29:29.

Dijk also insisted<sup>304</sup> that "the Reformed Confessions speak of children as *membra Christi* [alias "Christ's body-parts"]. They, as Members of Christ, should be baptized -- as Members of Christ's Church." Covenant children are themselves to be regarded as believing Christians -- **before** their infant baptism. "During baptism..., many have asserted..., the *habitus fidei* [or] the possession of faith is then confirmed and strengthened."

#### **620. Rev. Professor Dr. A.G. Honig: covenant infants deemed prebaptismally regenerate**

In 1938, Rev. Professor Dr. A.G. Honig published his *Manual of Reformed Dogmatics*. There -- after dedicating<sup>305</sup> his work to "the Reformed dogmaticians" Hodge, Gravemeijer, Kuyper and Bavinck -- he argued<sup>306</sup> that "regeneration can occur before, during or after baptism. However, **all the Reformed agreed that children of believers are to be regarded as believers and as covenanters, until the contrary clearly appears**. We too share that viewpoint.... In children of believers dying at an early age, regeneration is immediately engineered. Otherwise they would, after all, not be able to go to heaven....

"Our *Confessions of Faith* rightly say: baptism testifies and assures us that God has forgiven those who are His, **all** (and thus even future) sins -- together with guilt.... I also refer to Hebrews 10:22. Here, the one right after the other, the *res interna* [or 'internal matter'] of justification in particular is mentioned -- and the *res externa* [or 'external matter']. For there we read: 'our hearts having been cleansed from an evil conscience, and our body having been washed with pure water'....

"We should not arrive at the position that a special grace is given during baptism.... The seed of faith can indeed be present in children.... Some may say: 'Yes, but one cannot obtain the certainty that children are indeed believers!' But then it has been forgotten that it is exactly the same with adults. If that were a requirement -- neither baptism nor the Lord's supper could ever be administered here on earth....

"It is remarkable that Holy Scripture nowhere speaks of the adult baptisms of those born of Christian parents.... First Corinthians 7:14 is also of great significance in this regard: 'For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified by the husband. For otherwise your children would be unclean; but now, they are holy'....

"From this statement, it is clear that, according to Paul, the children of believers must be regarded as Christian children -- as children belonging to the circle of God's covenant. But in that case, they are also entitled to baptism....

"This is talking about a subjective, internal holiness. For Paul does not say the same thing about the unbelieving party in the marriage. The unbelieving party is only 'sanctified' by the believing party; the children of such a marriage, are 'holy.'"

Indeed, the unbelieving party is thus 'sanctified' during marital intercourse -- only and precisely so that the resulting children will be not unclean, but holy. "Here the apostle is not saying that the children of believers are holy by nature. No, just like all other children, they too are conceived in sin and born in unrighteousness. It is only by the regenerating operation of the Holy Spirit, that they are to become holy."

#### **621. Dr. L.B. Schenck: Christians' infants are in the Covenant before their baptism**

In the United States, a similar view was expounded by the Rev. Professor Dr. Lewis B. Schenck. See his very important 1940 book *The Presbyterian Doctrine of Children in the Covenant: An Historical Study of the Significance of Infant Baptism in the Presbyterian Church in America*. The book is based upon Schenck's doctoral dissertation upon the same subject for the Ph.D. at Yale University.<sup>307</sup>

According to Schenck,<sup>308</sup> it was the rise of the Arminian-American 'Great Awakening' which had so devastated the thitherto universally-accepted Calvinistic doctrine of the (rebuttable) 'presumed regeneration' of covenant children also in American Presbyterianism before 1750. Prior to that time, Schenck has explained, from John Calvin onward right down to the Jedediah Andrews

of Philadelphia's First Presbyterian Church in 1741, presumptivist paedobaptism was paramount among Presbyterians everywhere and also in America.

Even after 1750 and against the tide of revivalism, however, Schenck clearly shows that this historic position was still stoutly maintained by many of the great giants among American Presbyterian theologians. Specifically, he here mentions: J.W. Alexander, Samuel Miller, Charles Hodge, Henry J. Van Dyke, and B.B. Warfield.

Lewis B. Schenck continues:<sup>309</sup> "The Presbyterian Church had been drifting away from its [confessional] Standards. The actual [emaciated] faith in regard to the baptism of infants -- contradicted the [vigorous] faith which she professed.... Those who [like Thornwell] pride themselves on being the orthodox, are really the unorthodox" -- as regards infant baptism.

Schenck concluded: "The Presbyterian Church has a glorious doctrine, received through the medium of John Calvin and the *Westminster Standards*. Yet the church as a whole does not know it. The historic doctrine of the church concerning children in the covenant and the significance of infant baptism has been to a large extent secretly undermined, hidden by the intrusion of an [Arminian] aberration from this doctrine."

## **622. Rev. Professor Louis Berkhof and the Christian Reformed Church U.S.A.**

Between the two World Wars, the Christian Reformed Church USA was still an orthodox denomination. Though not renowned for his theological depth nor originality, in 1941 her well-known dogmatician Rev. Professor Louis Berkhof nevertheless rightly called the notion that the infants of believers are not themselves Members of Christ's Church -- "a thoroughly unscriptural position."<sup>310</sup>

Indeed, in the history of Calvinism, Berkhof wrote he had known of only two viewpoints anent the prebaptismal status of the covenant child. There is the view which irrebuttably asserts his or her possible regeneration -- and the view which rebuttably assumes his or her definite regeneration. Berkhof knew nothing of another viewpoint -- namely that of assuming their non-regeneration.<sup>311</sup>

"From the start," explained Berkhof in his book *The History of Christian Doctrines*,<sup>312</sup> "there was general agreement in establishing the right of infant baptism -- by an appeal to Scripture, and particularly to the scriptural doctrine of the covenant. Children of believers are covenant children, and are therefore entitled to the sacrament. According to some, it warrants the assumption [but not the assertion] that children of believing parents are regenerated -- until the contrary appears in doctrine or life." At that latter point, the assumption would need to be revised.

"Others, deeply conscious of the fact that such children often grow up without revealing any signs of spiritual life, hesitated.... Some even regarded baptism as nothing more than a sign.... Under the influence of Socinians, Arminians and Anabaptists -- it became quite customary in some circles to deny that baptism was a seal of divine grace, and to regard it as a mere act of profession on the part of man." Such customary views, however, are neither Reformed nor Scriptural!



Berkhof refuted<sup>313</sup> "the Baptist" who concludes that "infants cannot exercise faith." To the Baptist, therefore, "infants may not be baptized. But in that way, these words might also be construed into an argument against infant salvation.... To be consistent, the Baptist would thus find himself burdened with the following syllogism: Faith is the *conditio sine qua non* of salvation; children cannot yet exercise faith; therefore, children cannot be saved. But this is a conclusion from which the Baptist himself would shrink back."

### **623. On baptism -- 'Has Karl Barth become Orthodox?'**

During World War II -- still bemoaning the unconverted state of 'pan-baptized Europe' (see above) -- Karl Barth rejected infant baptism. He labelled it: "theological judaism."<sup>314</sup> Yet even then, he also stated: "I do not believe I have therewith fallen into the arms of the Anabaptists."

However, in his book *Karl Barth and Infant Baptism*, Berkouwer then declared<sup>315</sup> that there are nevertheless the following points of agreement between the Anabaptist critique [of the Reformation] and that of Barth. 1) No Scriptural proof can be furnished for infant baptism. 2) Profession of faith is a presupposition and a prerequisite of baptism. 3) The essential correlation between faith and sacrament, has been broken by infant baptism. 4) The relationship between parents and children given by 'nature' has no constitutive meaning for the Covenant.... In spite of all of the deep differences which can be shown between Barth and the Anabaptists, Barth's individualism and his doctrine of the covenant finally boil down to one and the same thing."

### **624. Schilder and the Dutch baptismal schism of 1944**

This is now an appropriate place to say something of the sad schism within the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands (of Rev. Professor Drs. H.H. Kuyper and G.C. Berkouwer), when the Liberated Reformed Churches (of Rev. Professor Drs. K. Schilder and S. Greijdanus) seceded therefrom in 1944. Contrary to what is sometimes alleged, baptism and even prebaptismal presumed regeneration of covenant children was not at all at the centre of this controversy.

For, against less consistent Christians, Greijdanus and Schilder themselves had consistently and vehemently defended the wording of the decision made at the 1905 Synod of Utrecht. *Inter alia*, this specified that "as regards...presumptive regeneration...the **seed** of the covenant...is to be regarded as regenerat-**ed** and sanctifi-**ed** in Christ -- until, when they grow up, the contrary might appear from their doctrine or life."<sup>316</sup>

Subsequent to that 1905 Synod of Utrecht, there had been an ongoing problem with some of Kuyper's less balanced followers. They had rightly insisted on infant baptism -- and indeed also on presumed prebaptismal regeneration. But they had then further (quite wrongly) also alleged that the absence of such prebaptismal regeneration would vitiate the baptism. For it would then change the character of the subsequently administered sacrament -- from that of a true baptism, to that of a merely 'apparent baptism' (or *schijndoop*).

Greijdanus and Schilder and their supporters quite rightly rejected that latter claim. They also quite rightly insisted (as did some of their adversaries) that postbaptismal disobedience

amounted to a fearful breach of the covenant, inciting and incurring the 'covenantal wrath' of Almighty God.

But they never questioned 'rebuttably presumed prebaptismal regeneration' as such. That, they themselves maintained. Though they did so not quite as enthusiastically as many Calvinists had done from the time of the *First Swiss Confession* up till and including Kuyper. Greijdanus and Schilder and their supporters. Too, they did agitate for the freedom of others within the denomination -- to be able to disagree with that formulation.<sup>317</sup>

Especially during the early nineteen-forties, within Dutch Calvinism there was indeed misunderstanding about the obvious rebuttability of presumed regeneration. There was also a proper concern that ongoing [re]conversion be preached -- also to all covenanters and their seed.

Yet it was not<sup>318</sup> the issue of 'presumed regeneration before baptism' as such -- that had agitated the ongoing debate. Indeed, this can be seen most clearly in the later ongoing 1975-76 debate -- between the 'Reformed Baptist' David Kingdon and the 'Schilderian' Rev. Professor. Dr. J. Douma, anent the presupposition or non-presupposition of regeneratedness *versus* non-regeneratedness in covenantal infants.<sup>319</sup>

Rather was it non-baptismal issues (such as common grace and repentance and synodocracy) that were the real problems in the Reformed Churches of the Netherlands during the Second World War. These problems ultimately led to the deposition of Schilder and Greijdanus as both Professors and Ministers in 1944 -- and to their subsequently constituting the 'Liberated Reformed Churches' (*Vrijgemaakten*) in that same year.<sup>320</sup>

## **625. The baptismal road to Zwolle in the Netherlands**

After the above-mentioned schism, Rev. Professor Dr. Karl Dijk -- still of the 'Reformed Churches in the Netherlands' (GKN) -- reported to the Synods of 1949 and 1950 about the 'bindingness' of the 1905 formulations of Utrecht. There, he stated<sup>321</sup> that "the sacrament has significance for all baptized children -- and is never merely an 'apparent baptism' (or *schijndoop*)."

However, the central problem was still the same. For the parent denomination (GKN) was still being accused [inaccurately] of subjectivizing baptism -- by maintaining a truncated doctrine of presumed regeneration as the basis of baptism.<sup>322</sup>

So the GKN 1946 Synod of Zwolle clarified the fact that although the denomination rightly presumed regeneration to occur before baptism, that presumption was certainly rebuttable. Yet the baptism itself was always valid, and was never just an 'apparent baptism.'

The Synod did this, by replacing the 1905 formula of Utrecht with the new 1946 formula of Zwolle anent covenant children. That latter reads that "whereas it is not given to the Church to make judgments about hidden matters, she should not differentiate between some members and others. Yet building upon God's promise and upon the way Scripture speaks about the children,

unless they manifest themselves to be unbelievers -- they are to be regarded and **treated** as those who share in the **regenerating** grace of the Holy Spirit."

In light of the above, it must be concluded that the criticism of the GKN by others (from before 1905 till after 1946) -- the criticism that she had ever grounded her doctrines of baptism and of the covenant upon the fact of an indeed presumed regeneration -- is highly irresponsible and inaccurate. For also in 1943, the GKN warned against despising the covenant -- by unbelief and unconvertedness.

Moreover, in the replacement formula of 1946, the GKN clearly called upon all to believe "in the promise of the Gospel which comes to them in baptism."<sup>323</sup> Indeed, the 1952-53 GKN Synod of Rotterdam declared "there is no binding in the Reformed Churches in respect of the viewpoint that holy baptism administered to the children of the congregation presupposes and seals a present internal grace with every baptizee."

#### **626. Rev. Professor Dr. K.H. Miskotte: Rev. 7:2f means baptism is the seal of the living God**

Rev. Professor Dr. K.H. Miskotte made some very relevant remarks in his 1945 book *The Chief Sum of History*. Discussing the eschatological meaning of the baptismal sealings of Revelation 7:2f & 9:4 & 14:1 & 22:4, he insisted<sup>324</sup> that "the sacrament already long ago received by the believers is also their last consolation in the last crisis. It is the seal of the living God. It is the sacrament.... In the very first place, one here thinks of baptism; plain, ordinary baptism.... The one baptized, has been sealed....

"The Lord shall wash away tears from all faces, at the feast of pure wine prepared for all nations. Isaiah 25:8.... We know this...through the holy sacrament, when we receive it in faith.... We will spend our time in blessed meditation about the Triune One. This is the meaning of baptism -- when we accept it in faith.... We are assured and sealed unto an everlasting life.... And thus we also sing in an ecclesiastical hymn, at baptism."

#### **627. Rev. Professor Dr. G.C. Berkouwer: one can respect grace prevenient to infant baptism**

The situation with covenant infants is that described by Rev. Professor Dr. G.C. Berkouwer. As he remarked in his 1954 book on *The Sacraments*: "Without making these thoughts the dogmatic foundation of infant baptism, one can respect prevenient grace....

"For this reason, one can also profess that there is no principal difference between infant baptism and adult baptism.... Infant baptism is connected with faith. The identity between infant baptism and adult baptism consists...of the promise of God toward which faith must be directed."<sup>325</sup>

It was only in the years after 1954 that both Berkouwer and his denomination -- the GKN -- progressively backslid into varying degrees of modernism. Yet even there, the modernism remained restricted to non-baptismal matters (such as evolutionism and ecumenicity and sodomy etc.). In the area of baptism, both Berkouwer and his denomination still remained orthodox.

#### **628. Rev. Professor Dr. H.N. Ridderbos: (infant) baptism presupposes faith**

Rev. Professor Dr. H.N. Ridderbos elaborated his views in two essays -- one on *The Covenant of Grace* and the other on *The Means of Grace*. In the former, he stated<sup>326</sup> that "the Lord, when He erects His covenant, does not direct Himself only toward the single believer -- but also co-involves the latter's descendants in the promise of salvation.... Also in the New Testament, the covenant relation is transported upon and extended to -- the natural relationships in life."

In his second essay, Ridderbos added:<sup>327</sup> "Baptism thus presupposes faith.... Baptism is the confirmation of the believers as the property of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. It bears not a causative (creating) but a significative (sealing) character....

"There is never an appeal to baptism, without faith being presupposed there.... Baptism is never an act which prepares for preaching and faith. It is only administered where preaching has already been received by faith.... Baptism thus has a strengthening, aware-making, sealing significance. For the believers admitted to the Christian Church, it signifies the fixed point of the rightabout-turn in their life....

"In First Corinthians 7:14, it is said of the unbelieving spouse that he (she) has been sanctified in the believer. That is then more closely explained by the words -- 'for otherwise your children would be unclean; but now they are holy'.... Because of their belonging to the believing father and (or) mother, they are 'holy' and not unclean.... It is unmistakably clear that this place gives powerful proof of the co-involvement of children in the salvation in Christ of which their parents partake....

"That this holiness of the children involves more than [just the 'sanctifying' of] the unbelieving party in the marriage, appears from the fact that the children -- differently to the unbelieving spouses -- are regarded as belonging to the Church. Ephesians 6:1 & Colossians 3:20. As such, they are co-involved in all of the gracious benefits to which the Church is entitled.

"Here it is also difficult to keep on talking about [merely] an 'external' holiness. But regard must be had to the full meaning of 'holy' -- as belonging to God in Christ, and as being inwardly prepared by the Holy Spirit.... Parents and children go into judgment together (Luke 23:28f) -- and escape it together too!"

#### **629. Rev. Dr. D.J. De Groot: the Spirit prenatally in covenant children**

Also in 1949, Rev. Dr. D.J. de Groot wrote an important essay on *The Work of the Holy Spirit*. There, he explained<sup>328</sup> that "the idea of immediate regeneration was well-known to Reformed theology from the very beginning....

"Those who generally opined that regeneration always takes place immediately, proceeded from the truth expressed in Scripture and in the Confession that the children of believers as well as the adults have been taken up into the covenant of God and into His Church -- and therefore also partake of the regenerating operation of the Holy Spirit. They also further determined that

in every case of the early-dying children of believers, regeneration must be effected by an immediate deed of the Holy Spirit.

"We indeed acknowledge that the Word of the Lord is the only seed of spiritual regeneration for suchlike. Yet we deny that one may thence conclude that the young children could not be regenerated by the power of God. For Him, that is as easy and simple -- as it is incomprehensible and wonderful for us. In addition, it would not be well-advised to 'deprive' the Lord of making Himself known to the children in some or other way.

"They further took it as unlikely that the Holy Spirit would act differently with those children who continue to live, than with adults. Reasoning in this way, they came to regard it as normal that the elect are regenerated already at an early age -- and still before they receive the sign and seal of holy baptism [in infancy].

Together with this, they regularly combined the doctrine of so-called 'slumbering' regeneration. Thereby they understood that it was possible for the new germ of life, implanted in rebirth at the earliest age, to be able to remain inoperative (dormant) for a considerable period of time -- only after many years to germinate into active faith and conversion for the first time....

"The Lord makes known to us in John three the general rule that nobody shall see the kingdom of God without rebirth. He makes no exception to the rule, in respect of children. And such an exception is equally absent from the [Dutch Reformed] *Baptismal Formula*. It commences with the profession 'that we with our children have been conceived and born in sin, and are therefore children of wrath -- so that we cannot enter into the kingdom of God unless we are born again'....

"It certainly does not behoove us to doubt the power of the Holy Spirit immediately to regenerate adults and even children who continue to live.... We are best advised to hold onto what was said about this by the Synod of the Reformed churches in 1905 [at Utrecht].... 'Our *Confession* teaches us that we are not to doubt the salvation of our early-dying children.'"

### **630. Rev. Dr. D.J. De Groot: covenant children regenerated prenatally**

In his 1952 book *The Rebirth*, De Groot elaborated on these ideas even further. There, he insisted<sup>329</sup> that "the Christian Church has constantly and emphatically maintained, for young children, the possibility of getting regenerated -- and of being regenerate. She had to do this, if she wanted to confess that the children receive salvation. For after all, the Lord says clearly and unambiguously that nobody shall enter into the kingdom of God who has not first been born again.

"Regeneration in its first stage" includes "being gifted with faith." Indeed, there is "no exception.... Faith can in some or other way be present in children too....

"Calvin maintains against the Anabaptists without hesitation, that children can possess the spiritual gifts represented by baptism...and specifically that they are regenerated by the Spirit of God unto the hope of salvation.... They are renewed by the Holy Spirit according to the measure

of their age -- until the power which was hidden in them secretly, begins to grow and shine openly....

"Everyone who wishes to maintain, together with the Reformed Confession, the salvation of early-dying covenant children -- is obligated to teach according to the clear pronouncements of God's Word that they have not only been born again but also have true saving faith.... Jesus holds the necessity of regeneration in front of Nicodemus [John 3:3-8].... He also says: 'he who believes in Him [in Christ], is not condemned; he who does not believe, has been condemned already -- because he has not believed in the Name of the only-begotten Son of God.' John 3:18....

"At the end of that chapter, John the baptizer gives the assurance: 'he who believes in the Son, has everlasting life; but he who is disobedient to the Son, shall not see life -- but the wrath of God remains upon him.' John 3:36. Indeed, the Evangelist says in the well-known passage in John 1:12-13 that those who have been born of God have received authority to be [called] 'children of God' -- and that they believe in His Name.

"To the Great Commission, the Saviour attaches the statement: 'he who believes and is baptized, shall be saved; but he who does not believe, shall be condemned!' Mark 16:16. Indeed, in Hebrews 11 [verse 6] we read: 'without faith it is impossible to please Him. For he who comes to God, must believe that He is -- and that He is a Rewarder of those who earnestly keep on seeking Him'....

"It is inscrutable why actual faith in every form should be denied to very young children. Here, we must not be blind to the difference between adults and children. Nor should we make it bigger than it actually is. There is certainly a difference. Appropriate emphasis is put upon this in Holy Scripture.

"For example, Paul does so where he says: 'When I was a child, I...felt as a child and reasoned as a child. Now I have become a man, I have put away what was childlike.' First Corinthians 13:11. However, does the apostle here say that...he did not feel and did not reason when a child? No! He proceeds from the very fact that he indeed did so. Only, he did so differently than he does when an adult."

#### **631. Rev. Dr. D.J. De Groot: infant faith within covenant children (prebaptismally)**

Continued De Groot: "In Holy Scripture, there is more than one pronouncement in which actual faith is very clearly attributed to children. For example, one could point to the warning of the apostle Peter to the believers -- to desire the unadulterated milk of the Word, like newly-born children.... First Peter 2:2f....

"Regenerated children have indeed received the Holy Spirit. He lives and works within them. He is the Spirit of Whom Paul says He testifies together with our spirit that we are children of God.... He is the Spirit of faith.... He intercedes for us with unutterable sighs. Galatians 4:6 and Romans 8:15f & 8:26.

"Should these unutterable sighs then not be able to arise from the hearts of children in which the Holy Spirit dwells just as well as He does in those of adults? Should He not be able to reveal Himself there, as the Spirit of faith? And should He not be powerful enough to testify together with the spirits of children, that they are children of God?

"Scripture gives more than one indication that we need to answer these questions in the affirmative. For example, there is the case of the early-dying child of Jerobeam -- who was taken from this life 'because something good before the Lord had been found in him.' First Kings 14:1-18. That can only mean that this son of a godless father himself stood in the right relationship of faith toward God -- that there was in him a heart to fear and to serve God....

Then there is the well-known statement in Psalm 8: 'Out of the mouth of the little children and of the sucklings, You have established Your strength.' Especially in the form and in the context in which it is cited by the Lord Jesus, it speaks such a clear language. For the Lord says... 'Have you never read: "Out of the mouth of small children and sucklings, You have prepared praise?"' Matthew 21:16. Indeed, He accepts this praise of the children. It sounds pure in His ears -- as a testimony of faith.

"We could further refer to the testimony of David in Psalm 22:10-11: 'You are the One Who pulled me forth from my mother's belly. You caused me to trust, while upon my mother's breasts'.... Such an authoritative expositor of the Old Testament as Franz Delitzsch was of the opinion that the Hebrew verbal form used here, means that God caused the poet...to trust Him.... Indeed, he adds to this that according to the Biblical viewpoint the newly-born and even the not-yet-born child already possesses a consciousness which dawns from the depth of the soul....

"We find another place in Psalm 71, which speaks no less strongly.... It says in verses 5-6: 'For You are my expectation, Lord God, from my youth onward. Upon You I have leaned -- from my mother's womb. From my mother's belly, You are my Helper.' Indeed, in verse 17 he even adds: 'O God, You have taught me from my youngest age onward'....

"It is impossible to explain these pronouncements other than in this sense.... God has not only helped and saved him from the very first commencement of his life.... He himself too has faithfully entrusted himself to God even from his mother's womb onward....

"As Kuyper decisively teaches -- those who are elect 'do not first come to the covenant of grace only at a later age, but they stand in it from the first moment of their existence onward. They come forth from the seed of the Church, and they in turn carry the seed of the future Church within themselves. So this is the reason why...for the most part the first germ of new life is implanted already in their mother's womb or immediately after the conception of this seed of the Church."

### **932. The unequivocal Anti-Anabaptism of the Rev. Dr. Carl McIntire**

Very significantly -- against equivocation on the issue of rebaptism on the part of the World Council of Churches -- stands the forthright position of the famous Rev. Dr. Carl McIntire. He was repeatedly elected Moderator of the Bible Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., and also

President of the International Council of Christian Churches. Though a separatist fundamentalist, McIntire has uttered wise words against the twin errors of antipaidobaptism and rebaptism.

Thus, at the end of his 1951 booklet on *Infant Baptism*, McIntire rightly stated:<sup>330</sup> "Let me say one final word. Baptism is to be administered only once. It is a sign and a seal. If you were baptized in infancy by your parents, thank God, accept it as yours. Do not say, 'I don't like that, I'll just get baptized again.' That is wrong....

"God has promised to be your God now, and the God of your children. You have entered into that covenant with Him. Keep it on your part. He will be faithful!"

### **633. Rev. Professor John Murray (Westminster): covenant infants to be deemed regenerate**

In 1952, Westminster (East) Theological Seminary's Rev. Professor John Murray wrote a very helpful book on *Christian Baptism*. When this present writer was about to enter seminary as a student in November 1959, he sent Murray his own tract on *Infant Baptism*. Murray graciously replied in January 1960, stating:<sup>331</sup> "You have made a careful and cogent study of the grounds for infant baptism, and your brief presentation betrays far more than the brevity might suggest. Your adduction of the evidence in the texts cited, must prove most useful and convincing for inquiring minds."

Shortly thereafter, Murray kindly sent this present writer a personally autographed copy of his own above-mentioned book. Therein,<sup>332</sup> Murray admitted that (rebuttable) presumptive prebaptismal regeneration of the covenantal infant is indeed the doctrine of the *First Swiss Confession*, of John Calvin, of the *Belgic Confession*, of the *Heidelberg Confession*, of the *Westminster Directory for the Publick Worship of God*, of Charles Hodge, of B.B. Warfield, and of L.B. Schenck.

Although John Murray's own views were somewhat softer, even he declared that "baptized infants are to be received as the children of God and treated accordingly.... Little children [of believing parents], even infants, are among Christ's people and are members of His body....

"They are members of His kingdom, and therefore have been regenerated.... They belong to the Church, in that they are to be received as belonging to Christ."

### **634. Rev. Professor John Murray on the prebaptismal infant faith of covenant children**

In his shorter essay *Baptism*, written more than ten years later, Murray rightly insisted<sup>333</sup> "it is necessary to correct an error that is widespread -- that only those who go to the Lord's table are Members of the Church; that 'merely baptized persons' are not making a profession. This is a pernicious underestimate of the meaning of baptism. It so happens that most of us have been baptized in infancy.... Unless we have repudiated our infant baptism, we are professing....



"Baptism is not to be identified with the grace signified and sealed.... The existence of the grace sealed, is presupposed in the giving of the seal. The tenet of [Romanistic] baptismal regeneration, reverses the order inherent in the definition which Scripture provides....

"Depreciation of baptism insults the wisdom and grace of God.... He confirms to us the bond of union with Himself, by adding the seal of baptism -- to the end that we may be more firmly established in the faith of His covenant of grace."

Murray's essay *Regeneration* is really required reading. It contains a vital section headed 'Regeneration in Infancy' --which speaks exactly to our present subject.

There, Murray wrote:<sup>334</sup> "The priority of regeneration and the fact that it must not be separated from faith, must be borne in mind even in the case of regenerate infants.... Where regeneration takes place in the case of an infant, there is the immediate transition from the kingdom of darkness to the Kingdom of God....

There is that which we may and must call 'the germ' of faith. It is impossible for us to determine the extent to which regeneration affects the rudimentary consciousness of the infant, but it must affect that rudimentary consciousness just as radically as sin does. If infants are depraved, they may also be holy. The regenerate infant is in this respect radically different from the unregenerated infant. The regenerate infant is not under the dominion of sin, is not a child of wrath, but a child of God and a Member of His Kingdom....

"We must not therefore conceive of the regenerate infant as regenerated in infancy -- and then converted [only] when he reaches years of understanding and discretion. No, not at all.

"When the infant is regenerated, that infant is converted in the sense that there occurs in the infant mind something which in the rudimentary sphere corresponds to conversion. That is to say, the direction in which the heart and mind -- germinal and rudimentary though they be -- are turned, is towards God....

"If in the case of unregenerate infants we can say, as we must, that they go astray from the womb speaking lies -- so of the regenerate infants we must say that from the point of regeneration they in principle walk in the way of holiness, speaking the truth. In a word, they are holy, just as others are unholy....

"So many of the most intelligent Christians never remember a time when they can say that they were then without God and without hope in Him. They were not only regenerated in infancy, but nurtured in the bosom of Christian instruction. So that simple faith in Jesus dates back as far as memory can penetrate."

### **635. Rev. Professor Dr. F.J.M. Potgieter: Calvin and Kuyper ride again!**

In 1953, Rev. Professor Dr. F.J.M. Potgieter -- the promoter for the first doctoral dissertation completed by this present writer -- himself published his own book *Redemption*.

There, he showed<sup>335</sup> "that regeneration is not fixed to any particular time of life.

"Of a Jeremiah, we read: 'Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; and before you came forth from the body, I sanctified you' (Jeremiah 1:5). And of a John the baptizer: 'he shall be filled with the Holy Spirit even from his mother's womb' (Luke 1:15).... Our Church therefore also professes the consoling truth that all early-dying children of believers have been regenerated and accordingly saved....

"As regards First Peter 1:23..., Kuyper shows that the expression 'living word' does not here refer to Scripture, but to the eternal creative Word of God also mentioned in Isaiah 55:11." The meaning is thus that especially 'newly-born babies' have been born again by that very living Word Himself."

At the same time, however, we ourselves would not discount the possibility or even the probability of unborn children of the covenant actually 'hearing' the Word of God from Holy Writ. For they themselves are conscious recipients, inside their faithful mothers, whenever the latter hear Scripture read or preached --at church services, as well as during daily family worship.

Potgieter concluded: "What is the situation with the early-dying little children? Great theologians, such as Calvin and Voetius and Van Mastricht, are agreed that the root and seed of faith has already been implanted into them. In this connection, we cite the words of Calvin as regards the infant baptism [also of babies that survive to maturity]: 'The little children are baptized unto conversion and the faith which they will have in their later life. The seed of these gifts is already in them, by the secret operations of the Spirit.' *Institutes* IV:16:20."

Also in his later book *Calvin for Today*, Potgieter himself included some striking little prayers of his own. Such include the following.<sup>336</sup> "We thank You for holy baptism as a sign and seal of the forgiveness of all our sins.... Lord, we thank You for the covenant of grace at the foundation of baptism.... We praise You that the covenant of grace includes also our little children, and that we can therefore bring them to be baptized....

"How grateful we are that Your grace includes our little children too.... Everything, everything is grace; therefore we praise You that also our little children may be baptized.... Lord, we thank You for including the gift of faith in the covenant of grace.... Lord, we thank You for taking care of the everlasting salvation also of our little children!"

### **636. The Orthodox Presbyterian Church USA's *Form for Baptism***

Of great significance, is the *Form for Baptism* of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in the United States of America. This is so, not only because of its use by that denomination in the U.S.A. and in Canada -- and also in its missionary outreach into other parts of the world. Because of its appearance in the OPC's 1961 *Trinity Hymnal* (and various subsequent editions) now in use also in the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) and its massive mission to the world -- the *Form* and its sound theology are now also having an impact worldwide far beyond the OPC.

The OPC *Form for Baptism* reflects very heavy Historic Dutch Reformed influence. It provides<sup>337</sup> that when an infant is to be baptized, the Minister shall proceed to give instruction in the following or similar language, concerning the ground of infant baptism:

"Although our young children do not yet understand these things, they are nevertheless to be baptized. For the promise of the covenant is made to believers and to their seed.... God declared unto Abraham, 'And I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee'....

"Moreover, our Saviour admitted little children into His presence, embracing and blessing them and saying, 'Of such is the kingdom of God.' So the children of the covenant are by baptism distinguished from the world....

"Before the baptism of an infant, the Minister shall require that the parents acknowledge the duty of believers to present their children for holy baptism...." Also they must "assume publicly their responsibility for the Christian nurture of their children, proposing the following or similar questions:

"1. Do you acknowledge that, although our children are conceived and born in sin and therefore are subject to condemnation, they are holy in Christ, and as members of His church ought to be baptized? 2. Do you promise to instruct your child in the principles of our holy religion as revealed in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, and as summarized in the *Confession of Faith* and *Catechism* of this church...?"

#### **637. Rev. Professor Dr. J.O. Buswell Jr.: infants believe before they die**

In 1963, Rev. Professor Dr. J.O. Buswell Jr. of Covenant Theological Seminary in St Louis published his *Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*. There, he expressed<sup>338</sup> his own conviction "that the Holy Spirit of God prior to the moment of death does so enlarge the intelligence of ones who die in infancy...that they are capable of accepting Jesus Christ.... The *Westminster Confession* goes as far as we have any right to go in defining church doctrine. 'Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit'....

"It is impossible for those who are in the flesh to please God.' Romans 8:8.... For Calvin to say that we have our infants baptized on the ground that we regard them as already regenerated, means practically nothing more than that we believe and trust that they are among the elect of God."

#### **638. Rev. Professor H. Hoeksema: the Anti-Anabaptist teaching in the Word of God**

In 1966, the Protestant Reformed Churches in the U.S.A. published the work of their greatest theologian. We refer to the volume *Reformed Dogmatics*, by Rev. Professor Herman Hoeksema.

There, Hoeksema clearly stated<sup>339</sup> that "regeneration is exclusively a work of God...independent of age, and can take place in the smallest infants. We may even take for granted that in the sphere of the covenant of God, He usually regenerates His elect children from infancy....

"Those who insist that regeneration is always effected through the preaching of the Word, do not really have an explanation of the salvation of little children.... The seed of regeneration is implanted in all the children that are reborn, in infancy....

"It may well be regarded as an established rule that infants in the line of the covenant are regenerated before they are able to hear the preaching of the Word.... This is indeed the Reformed view of the matter. In the line of the covenant, the seed of regeneration is implanted into the hearts of the elect children of the covenant in very infancy.... Baptism is instituted instead [alias in the place] of circumcision."

Hoeksema pioneered the Protestant Reformed Church, after his exodus from the Christian Reformed Church of the U.S.A. in the nineteen-twenties -- chiefly because of their doctrine of common grace and what he regarded as a softening in preaching (ongoing re)conversion to God's covenant people. Later, Hoeksema also wrote his famous book *Believers and their Seed*.

There, though rejecting presumptive regeneration as the ground for infant baptism, he nevertheless still seems to have presumed -- very rebuttably -- that such were nevertheless regenerated in infancy. For Hoeksema there admitted:<sup>340</sup> "Even Professors M. Noordtzi, D.K. Wielenga, H. Bavinck and P. Biesterveld write that 'the viewpoint of all Reformed men up to about the middle of the seventeenth century' was 'that the children as well as the adults were believers.'"

Hoeksema himself rightly explained of his own Protestant Reformed denomination: "We, exactly, do not believe that the entire actually existing and visible church in the midst of the world is elect.... Neither do we believe that this may be presupposed with respect to the visible church on earth -- that is, believers and their seed."

Note that Hoeksema here put professing adults on exactly the same level as their infants -- namely, as members of "the visible church on earth." In here calling those professing adults "believers," Hoeksema must obviously assume the same in respect also of their children too -- though rebuttably so, in both cases.

### **639. The American Rev. Professor R.B. Kuiper on infant regeneration**

In 1967, R.B. Kuiper, formerly a Professor of Theology at Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia, updated and republished some articles under the title *The Glorious Body of Christ*. One such article had the title *Holy Children*.

"There, he stated<sup>341</sup> that "one of the consequences of the preaching of the gospel...in the heathen city of Corinth -- was that in a number of families either the husband or the wife became a Christian while his or her spouse remained a pagan.... The position of such children [of theirs]

with reference to the church, was the same as that of children both of whose parents were believers.... They were holy. First Corinthians 7:14....

"The children of believers are members of the holy catholic [alias universal] church.... Those who die in infancy, are translated into the church triumphant.... It may be assumed that covenant children by and large are or will be regenerated.... It can easily be shown from Scripture that many covenant children are regenerated in babyhood.... Without regeneration, no infant can go to heaven....

"If a covenant child dies in infancy...this child was a child of the covenant.... Forgiven and regenerated, it passed through the gate into the city of God. Even while the parents are bidding its wasted body a last heartbreaking farewell, the angels of God are welcoming its pure spirit. While the parents are convulsed with inward pain..., like David they rest in the assurance that although their child will not return to them they will go to it. Second Samuel 12:23."

#### **640. Baptismal teaching in the Presbyterian Church of Australia**

The largest Presbyterian and Reformed denomination in Australia, the writer's own *Presbyterian Church of Australia* (PCA), clearly still holds to the orthodox Calvinian position anent infant baptism. This has become apparent especially since its reformation in 1974 and the subsequent 1977 exodus from her midst of those no longer desiring to remain Presbyterians adhering to the *Westminster Confession*.<sup>342</sup>

Even before then, the 1965 edition of the *Book of Common Order of the Presbyterian Church of Australia* had many commendable features. Thus, its 'Order for the Burial of a Child' apparently assumes<sup>343</sup> the dead little covenanter to have been part of "the children of Zion."

Regardless of whether he died before or after baptism, it states: "We thank Thee...for the assurance that for him all sickness and sorrow are ended, that death itself is past, and that he lives evermore in Thy presence wherein is fullness of joy. We bless and praise Thy Name that Thy dear Son Jesus Christ took the little ones into His arms, put His hands upon them and blessed them, and that the promise of Thy grace is unto them and to this child."

Coming next to the *Order for the Administration of the Sacrament of Baptism to Infants*, it is significant that the rubric starts<sup>344</sup> with the sentence: "The mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear Him, and His righteousness unto children's children." It next cites Matthew 28:19, "Go ye...and teach all nations, baptizing them" *etc.* Then it exhorts: "Hear also these words of Scripture "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you...and I will put My Spirit within you...and ye shall keep My judgments and do them, and ye shall be My people." Ezekiel 36:25f.

Next, the Order explains: "This sacrament is a sign and a seal of our ingrafting into Christ, of the forgiveness of sins by His blood, and regeneration by His Spirit; also of our adoption and resurrection unto everlasting life.... Even children too young to understand these things, share in the promise."

The Minister then asks the parents: "In presenting this child for baptism, do you confess your faith in God as your heavenly Father, in Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord, and in the Holy Spirit as your Sanctifier?"

After the parents answer "I do," the Minister further asks them: "Do you promise, in dependence on divine grace, to teach him the truths and duties of the Christian faith; and by prayer, precept and example to bring him up in [not 'into!'] the nurture and admonition of the Lord and in the ways of the Church of God?"<sup>345</sup>

Commendably, the *Book of Common Order* also makes provision for a 'Service for Children.' There, it declares:<sup>346</sup> "O God our heavenly Father, Who lovest all Thy children and forgettest none, accept us as we come to Thee with humble and reverent hearts....

"For the sake of Thy dear Son our Saviour, we beseech Thee to pardon our sins and to help us that we may serve Thee better.... We beseech Thee to hear us, O Lord, for all who do not know the Gospel of Thy love in Jesus Christ, that Thou wouldst gather them into Thy fold.

"We beseech Thee to hear us, O Lord, for all missionaries, especially those known to us, that they may cause Thy light to shine in the dark places of the earth.... We praise Thee, O God, most of all for Jesus Christ Thine only Son our Saviour Who came into this world and died for us upon the cross and Who rose again from the dead and is now our Friend in heaven."

#### **641. The Presbyterian Church in America's baptismal position**

In its 1975 *Book of Church Order*, the Presbyterian Church in America declares<sup>347</sup> that "the visible Church...consists of all those who make profession of their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, together with their children." Even those children who die before infant baptism, are very strongly presumed -- if not indeed quite irrebuttably asserted -- to have gone straight to glory.

Before quoting John Knox's *Liturgy*, the graveside prayer asserts:<sup>348</sup> "It is not Thy will that one of these little ones should perish.... The child is dead.... I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.... The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.... O God, our heavenly Father, Who through the blood of Thy Son has provided redemption for all Thine Own, we would render Thee most hearty thanks, in this time of grief, for the sure confidence we have that the soul of this dear child whose loss we mourn, is at rest in Thee!"

In the rubric anent 'The Administration of Baptism,' *The Book of Church Order* states<sup>349</sup> that "baptism is not to be unnecessarily delayed.... After previous notice is given to the minister, the child to be baptized is to be presented by one or both parents...signifying the desire that the child be baptized....

"Before baptism, the minister is to use some words of instruction touching the institution..., showing that it is instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ -- that it is a seal of the covenant of grace, of our ingrafting into Christ and of our union with Him, of remission of sins, regeneration, adoption, and life eternal.... Baptizing or sprinkling and washing with water signifies the cleansing from sin by the blood and for the merit of Christ.... The children of believers have an interest in

the covenant, and right to the seal of it...no less than the children of Abraham in the time of the Old Testament....

"Children, by baptism, are solemnly received into the bosom of the visible church, distinguished from the world and them that are without, and united with believers.... They are federally holy before baptism, and therefore are they baptized.... Outward baptism is not so necessary that through the want thereof the infant is in danger of damnation. By virtue of being born of believing parents, children are because of God's covenant ordinance made members of the Church....

"For to you is the promise, and to your children'.... 'I will establish My covenant between Me and thee and thy seed after thee throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee and to thy seed after thee'... 'Believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved -- thou, and thy house!' Acts 2:39; Genesis 17:7; Acts 16:31."

Finally, the rubric anent the 'Discipline of Noncommuning Members'<sup>350</sup> reminds us that "the spiritual nurture, instruction and training of the children of the Church are committed by God primarily to their parents.... It is a principal duty of the Church to promote true religion in the home. True discipleship involves learning the Word of God under the guidance of the Holy Spirit both at home and in the Church. Without learning, there is no growth; and without growth, there is no discipline; and without discipline, there is sin and iniquity. First Timothy 4:7.

"The home and the Church should also make special provision for instructing the children in the Bible and in the Church *Catechisms*.... The Session shall encourage the parents of the Church to guide their children in the catechizing and disciplining of them in the Christian religion. The Church should maintain constant and sympathetic relations with the children.... If they are wayward they should be cherished by the Church, and every means used to reclaim them. Adult noncommuning members...should be warned of the sin and danger of neglecting their covenant obligations."

#### **642. John Inchley's 1976 book *All About Children***

1976 saw the appeared of John Inchley's book *All About Children*. There, he stated<sup>351</sup> that "the children of Christian parents, and many of those from non-Christian homes who are properly taught, are likely to be unconsciously regenerated by the sovereign activity of the Holy Spirit during infancy or early childhood. The adult graces of repentance and faith may not yet have been formed in them, but the seeds of both, and indeed of other needful graces, will have been planted in their hearts by the same secret operation of the Holy Spirit....

"For very many Christians, their experience of true biblical repentance has been a post-conversion experience.... Christ was manifested from His earliest infancy, so that He might sanctify His elect" -- even from their earliest age onward.

#### **643. The 'Reformed Baptist' David Kingdon's book *Children of Abraham***

The year 1975 saw David Kingdon the 'Reformed Baptist' -- those words truly being a contradiction in terms -- publish his book *Children of Abraham*. There, he intelligently conceded much ground to Presbyterians. Thus, he even admitted that baptism has now replaced infant circumcision.

Yet, as an outspoken Antipaedobaptist, he also predictably asserted<sup>352</sup> that "our [Reformed Baptist] view of children differs radically from that of Reformed Paedobaptists. We [Baptists] regard our children, I trust, as Non-Christians; while they [the Presbyterians] regard theirs as Christians --unless they take the position held by Thornwell.... If they take the latter view, they are -- as Hodge realised -- half-way to becoming Baptists." Very well said, brother Kingdon!

Kingdon then went on to make the truly appalling statements that "being born of believing parents is not a ground for baptising infants. Therefore it is not a ground for presuming that children of Christian parents who die in infancy are to be adjudged regenerate.... In the matter of infant salvation, one can only adopt an attitude of reverent and hopeful agnosticism....

"**We** [Baptists] can be no more certain of the election of our children, than of the children of unbelievers.... Our children are born into the Adamic race, and we dare not presume that they have been regenerated.... We treat our children as if they were unconverted, until we are satisfied that they are [or have become converted]. Paedobaptists, **if** they are consistent, treat them as converted Christian children."

The latter statement of Kingdon is not correct. Consistent Paedobaptists, alias Historic Presbyterians, do not treat their infants either before or after their infant baptism as already-converted Christians. They presume them both before and after their infant baptism to be already-regenerated Christians -- in need of life-long continuing conversion.

#### **644. Rev. Professor Dr. J. Douma's 1976 work *Infant Baptism and Regeneration***

Thankfully, Rev. Dr. J. Douma, Professor of Ethics at the Theological Seminary of the Reformed Churches (Liberated) in Kampen promptly refuted the latter remarks of Kingdon. Douma did so in his own 1976 booklet *Infant Baptism and Regeneration*.

Insisted Douma:<sup>353</sup> "We profess that the church is one people; a people with fathers, mothers and children; a people with families. We do not baptize every child..., but we do baptize the children of believers.... We regret Kingdon's turn in the wrong direction....

"When God saves infants, this happens in the way that applies to the great and small: the way of rebirth.... To the last pages of his book, Kingdon tells us that we have to treat our children as if they are unconverted....

"It is true [according to Kingdon] that they are privileged children.... Yet they are not made Christian children by this privilege. That can only come by real conversion [maintains Kingdon].



As long as this conversion is not evident, we have to treat our<sup>354</sup> children as unconverted.... As long as they are not converted, they remain under God's wrath -- so that they are not children of God but children of God's wrath!" Thus Kingdon.

"We reject these ideas of Kingdon. Instead of Kingdon's uncertainty, we hold to the certainty of the covenant which God has established with the believers and their children. Were we to accept Kingdon's idea, we would have no firm ground for us and our children to stand on."<sup>355</sup>

#### **645. The 1977 Reformed Book of Common Order in the Church of Scotland**

In 1977, the National Church Association of the Church of Scotland published its *Reformed Book of Common Order*. The 1931 *Ordinal and Service Book* of the Church of Scotland -- republished in 1954 and again in 1962 -- had totally omitted all Forms and Orders for the administration of baptism.<sup>356</sup> Rightly reacting against Scoto-Catholicism,<sup>357</sup> yet so over-reacting as to weaken<sup>358</sup> the doctrine of the covenant, the 1977 *Reformed Book of Common Order* nevertheless makes the following excellent points.

The *Reformed Book of Common Order* has a good 'Order for the Ministration of Baptism to those of Maturer Years.' There, it rightly assures<sup>359</sup> the baptismal candidate that "as you truly profess your faith in Him [Christ] as your Saviour and Lord and are baptised, this sacrament will be the sign of the washing away of your sins, the seal of your ingrafting into Christ by faith, and of regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and your engagement to be the Lord's."

In its 'Order for the Ministration of Baptism of Infants,' the *Reformed Book of Common Order* repudiates baptismal regenerationism. For it rightly declares<sup>360</sup> that "these promises are not fulfilled in infants at the moment at which baptism is ministered."

Indeed, it also rightly reminds<sup>361</sup> the parents that "in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, we learn that Almighty God was pleased in His sovereign grace to call out a people for Himself and, by adoption, to make them His children -- receiving them into the fellowship of His Church. He promised to be their God and the God of their children through all generations.... The sign of that covenant was the sacrament of circumcision which He first gave to Abraham....

"In the Scriptures of the New Testament..., the sign of circumcision changed to baptism. It was given to the Christian Church, so that we also might be assured that not only we but our children with us belong to God by covenant."

#### **646. Rev. Professor Dr. J.A. Heyns: infant baptism presupposes infant faith**

In 1978 South African Calvinist Rev. Professor Dr. Johan Heyns of the University of Pretoria published his *Dogmatics*. There, he noted<sup>362</sup> that "Christ gave the command at the institution of baptism that it is to take place in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

"In that way, the baptizee is brought into the most intimate contact with the Triune God. In particular, he is placed in full fellowship with and under the complete Lordship of the Lord.

Baptism announces that there has been an exchange of Owner, and that the baptizee has been transferred from one sphere of life into another."

"Baptism is also a sign and seal of an already-present faith, and not an anticipation of a future faith. It is indeed an anticipation of and a stimulus toward a futrely strengthened faith.... The close unity between children and their parents clearly appears from a text such as First Corinthians 7:14.... The unity of the children and the Church is illustrated in Acts 21:5 [& 21:9]; Colossians 3:20f; Ephesians 6:1f; First John 2:12-14; First Timothy 3:4."

#### **647. Rev. Dr. J.M. Boice: baptism seals past blessings (even as regards babies)**

In 1981, Rev. Dr. James Montgomery Boice published his book *God and History*. He is today perhaps the most published theologian within the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA).

In his book, Boice stated<sup>363</sup> "that neither baptism nor the Lord's supper make or keep one a Christian. That is, we do not become a Christian by being baptized, nor do we remain a Christian by 'taking communion' periodically. Those signs merely point to something that has already taken place internally and invisibly.

"Again, a sign frequently indicated ownership.... The sacraments do that too -- particularly baptism. Baptism indicates to the world and to ourselves that we are not our own but that we have been bought with a price and are now identified with Jesus."

#### **648. Rev. Professor Herman Hanko's *We and Our Children***

Also in 1981, the Protestant Reformed Church's Rev. Professor Herman Hanko gave no uncertain sound. He did so, in his book *We and Our Children: The Reformed Doctrine of Infant Baptism*.

There, he insisted<sup>364</sup> that "when God in so many places enjoins upon believers to instruct their children in the ways of the Lord, they have the sure Word of God that they are instructing children of God, God's own elect people.... Their instruction will be fruitful. For it falls upon hearts which are regenerated by the Spirit of Christ."

#### **649. American Presbyterian Press: Mackay's *Immersion and Immersionists***

The American Presbyterian Press did the Reformed world a great service -- in publishing the book *Immersion and Immersionists*, by W.A. Mackay: a noted Presbyterian of the past. Mackay was rightly insistent<sup>365</sup> that "children are capable of receiving the Holy Ghost; and of being regenerated and sanctified thereby -- and are therefore entitled to the sign thereof.

"Of the child Abijah, it is said: 'In him is found some good thing toward the Lord God of Israel.' First Kings 14:13. 'Obadiah feared the Lord from his youth.' First Kings 18:12. 'Samuel was called of the Lord, while he was yet a babe.' First Samuel 1:22.

"John the baptist was 'filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb.' Luke 1:15. And of Jeremiah, God says: 'Before thou camest forth from the womb, I sanctified thee!' Jeremiah 1:5. The experience of God's people furnishes many instances of children, dedicated to God, being regenerated in their infancy."

#### **650. Rev. Dr. R.J. Rushdoony: covenant infants belong to the Lord**

1991 saw the publication of an interview with Chalcedon's President, Rev. Dr. Rousas J. Rushdoony. There, he stated<sup>366</sup> that "the revivalistic movement which began essentially about the 1820's -- Arminian revivalism -- was actually hostile to anything but the revival meeting as the instrument of conversion....

"The Presbyterians of the day opposed this very strongly. With their doctrine of children in the covenant and the obligation of schooling for covenant children, the Presbyterians were very strong in Christian education.... American Presbyterianism is to a large extent Scottish....

"The covenant perspective is best illustrated by Hannah when she took Samuel to Eli and she said, 'This child was given to me by the Lord and I now return this child to the Lord' [*cf.* First Samuel 1:11-27].

"Now that's what infant baptism is about. We acknowledge that the child belongs to the Lord, and we promise in returning that child to the Lord in covenant baptism -- to rear him or her in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

David Chilton, one of Rushdoony's followers, at first wrote against presumptive regeneration in covenant infants. Later, however, he told the present author he had renounced that position.

#### **651. Rev. Professor Dr. Francis Nigel Lee's *Christian Education and Early-Dying Infants***

Over the past more than thirty years 1966-2001, the present writer (Rev. Professor Dr. Francis Nigel Lee) has written a whole series of articles, booklets and dissertations bearing on our subject in various ways. We now consider some of that material.

In his 1966 *The Biblical Theory of Christian Education*, Lee declared<sup>367</sup> that "Christian children...are sanctified from birth (and indeed even from conception) on account of their being conceived and born inside the covenant.... This does not mean that the adult believer or his infant child becomes holy **in** baptism. No! To the contrary, both adult believers and their children are baptized because they already appear to be holy before their baptism, and it is for this reason alone that they are entitled to receive holy baptism."

In his article *The Salvation of Early-dying Infants*, Lee observed <sup>368</sup> the *New Dutch Reformed Baptismal Formula* in Holland states "Christ shed His blood" not only for adult believers but also "for the children of the believers." Lee also observed that the *Baptismal Formula* of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church of the U.S.A. declares that "the children of the covenant are distinguished from the world by baptism" and "sanctified in Christ...as members of His Church."

Indeed, he added that "godly parents must be assured of the definite salvation of all of their covenant infants who die early -- because God calls them 'holy.'"

#### **652. Baby belief in Lee's work *You People Are Baptizing Incorrectly!***

In his booklet *You People Are Baptizing Incorrectly!* Lee stated<sup>369</sup> "that all early-dying infants conceived from at least one faithful parent are saved.... Christ sanctifies those infants by means of the sanctified parent....

"Baptism was instituted only for the true believers and their infants.... It is true that very tiny infants cannot say whether they believe in Christ or not. But it is not true that all tiny infants for that reason cannot believe....

"Even the infants of pious parents can already receive the seed of faith which only later begins to grow visibly.... Jeremiah and John the baptizer were both sanctified already from their mothers' wombs....

"We must always remember that God Himself commanded that circumcision -- the sign of faith [Romans 4:11] -- had to be administered to the baby Isaac when he was but eight days old.... All faith is implanted only by the Holy Spirit. But God's Word declares that the Lord sanctifies the little children of truly faithful parents -- even from their conception."

#### **653. Infant faith in Lee's work *What About Baptism?***

In his booklet *What About Baptism?*, Lee further stated<sup>370</sup> that "all infants born of at least one faithful parent are holy and baptizable (and even saved, in the event of their dying in tenderest infancy).... Christ cleanses these covenantal infants by the operation of His Holy Spirit through the sanctifying parent(s), so that even the faithlessness of one of the parents cannot thwart the gracious operation of the influence of the other (faithful) parent in the lives of their infants -- and particularly in the lives of such of their infants as die in infancy.

"The infants and even the grandchildren of believers are not merely 'sanctifiable' (like the unbelieving spouse of a believing parent), but actually 'holy' (like the believing child of a believing parent).... They do **not**, like heathen children, have to be brought from outside the covenant into the Lord.... As Christian children, having been conceived and born **inside** the covenant, they are to be brought up inside the covenant in the nurture and admonition of the Lord'....

"Even covenantal infants need 'repeated conversions' from their sins, towards Christ and virtues.... Their God-given faith in Christ constantly needs challenging and deepening. But it is hardly true that they need the same quality of conversion as do unbelievers and their children.

Timothy, for example, was born of a believing mother and raised in the true faith from his mother's womb -- and even from his grandmother's womb, as it were....

"Timothy was conceived inside the covenant of grace and grew up in it from [his conception and] birth onwards.... For he did 'continue in faith' and he persevered in the covenant in which he was conceived and born -- rather than having to be 'brought **into**' that faith only in his later years....

"All this is not merely the view of Calvin and of the Reformed *Confessions* -- and of great theologians such as Beza, Ursinus, John á Lasco, G. Voetius, James Buchanan, W.G.T. Shedd, Abraham Kuyper Sr. & Jr., N.L. Walker, B.B. Warfield, Herman Bavinck, P.Ch. Marcel, G.C. Berkouwer and J. Murray -- but, much more importantly, of Scripture too. Ephesians 6:1-4 (*cf.* 1:1); Acts 2:38-39; Matthew 19:13-14; Second Timothy [1:5 &] 3:14-15 (*cf.* Ezra 9:2)."

#### **654. Baby belief in Lee's work *Effective Evangelism***

In his 1980 book *Effective Evangelism*, Lee explained<sup>371</sup> that "family evangelism of itself, however, does not automatically guarantee the salvation of all covenant children. As a result of the first gospel promise, Abel (Hebrews 11:4) and Seth (Genesis 4:26) were undoubtedly saved. But Cain -- although the covenant child of believing parents -- after growing up repudiated the Lord, and sadly is now in hell. Jude 6,11,13....

"Abraham trained his children from their birth in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Genesis 18:19; 21:2-8; 22:7-8; 26:1-5.... Only when we evangelize covenantally from birth onward -- as did Abraham -- can we expect God to give us the maximum blessing. Proverbs 22:6; Joel 2:16,28*f*; Acts 2:16*f*,38*f*; First Corinthians 7:14; Ephesians 6:4.

#### **655. Infant faith in Lee's work *Have You Been Neglecting Your Baby?***

In his 1981 booklet *Have You Been Neglecting Your Baby?*, Lee stated<sup>372</sup> that "Christ redeems His people...without baptism. But baptism points to and seals their redemption through the sprinkling of the blood of the Lamb....

"This does not mean that the baptism of an infant in any way saves the baby. For as Calvin remarked, 'since God threatens punishment only to despisers [of infant baptism and formerly of infant circumcision], we infer that the uncircumcision of children would do them no harm if they died before the eighth day....

"To consign to destruction those infants whom a sudden death has not allowed to be presented for baptism, before any neglect of parents could intervene, is a cruelty originating in [Romish] superstition.... [But] whoever neglects baptism [for his own babies] -- suggesting that the parent is content with the bare promise -- for his part tramples upon the blood of Christ, or at least does not believe that it flows for the washing of his own children....

"Such contempt shall not pass unpunished.... As God adopts the infant son in the person of his father -- so, when the father repudiates such a benefit, the infant is said to be cut off from the church."

#### **656. Baby belief in Lee's work *Revealed to Babies!***

In his booklet *Revealed to Babies!* Lee maintained<sup>373</sup> that "in spite of Jesus' unique sinlessness, His prenatal and postnatal growth shows many similarities in holiness with that other exemplary (though not sinless!) child of the covenant, Samuel the son of Hannah. Compare Hannah's *magnificat*, with Mary's. First Samuel 2:1-10 *cf.* Luke 1:46-55."

In Matthew 11:25-27, regarding the Father's revealing of "things" to infants -- explained Lee -- "the verb 'reveal' is in the past tense in verse 25.. 'You have revealed them to speechless infants'.... The Son has always been revealing the Father to covenant children, both before and after they learn to speak. Always! Even from Genesis 4:1f onward....

"Luke's account [18:17] makes it clear that the little children then brought to Jesus, included even 'the infants' alias the *brephē* or new-born babies of those who brought them.... The Kingdom of God consists of those infants too.... 'Whoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God like [such] a little child, shall never enter into it'....

"Matthew 18:4 means every [believing] adult and child and baby --or 'whosoever keeps on humbling himself like this little child' who is right now humbling himself -- is 'the great one' in the Kingdom of heaven. Matthew 18:5 means that 'he who receives in Christ's Name such a little child who believes in Jesus, receives the Lord Himself.' And Matthew 18:6 means that 'whosoever keeps on offending one of these little ones who keep on believing in Christ' -- is obviously not himself a true believer like such a believing child is."

#### **657. Infant faith in Lee's work *Daily Family Worship***

In his 1987 writing *Daily Family Worship*, Lee explained<sup>374</sup> that "this writer and his wife were married in 1963. Ever since their wedding, they have held family devotions together -- every day....

"Ever since the conceptions of their children and even before their births, not one day has passed when those children have not themselves participated morning and evening in this daily family worship. Psalm 22:9-10; 139:7-17; Luke 1:36-45; Romans 11:16; First Corinthians 7:14; *etc.*

"Since their births, the children have had their own Bibles.... They learned to read the Bible as their first book, long before starting to go to school (*cf.* Second Timothy 3:14-16f)."

#### **658. Baby belief in Lee's work *Baptism Does Not Cleanse!***

At the end of Lee's *Baptism Does Not Cleanse!* he stated<sup>375</sup> that "all sons of Adam are sinners from their very conception onward.... They cannot enter into or even see the Kingdom of God, unless they are regenerated at some time before they die.... The elect necessarily get regenerated and receive 'the seed of faith' before their death -- even if they die unbaptized before their birth or during their infancy.

"Regeneration generally precedes regular baptism. Calvinists presume that at least all believers' children dying in infancy, get regenerated and receive the 'seed of faith' before they die. Because all unborn babies can die any second, Calvinists also presuppose that all 'covenant children' that die before baptism, are made holy in the sight of God at or since their conception and long before their birth.

"Calvinists further presuppose (rebuttably) that all conceived in the covenant, are to be regarded as already holy -- until and unless their behaviour ever evidences the contrary, during their later lives. Baptism itself never regenerates. Because Calvinists regard covenant children as already holy before birth, they deny that baptizing them after their birth can make them holy. Such baptism can at the most only seal already holy children" -- seal them "as [the] Members of the Visible Church" they have been already before their infant baptisms.

"Baptism is only for believers (whether infants or adults). Because baptism is intended for believers alone, Calvinists oppose baptizing anyone who does not seem to believe in Christ already.

"For this reason, they urge the baptism of only those adults who profess faith in Christ, together with the children of such adults alone. For only such children [because of the Christian testimony of their Christ-professing parent] would seem to possess 'the seed of faith' in their hearts. Thus, Calvinists refuse to administer baptism to those adults who do not rightly profess Christ. They also refuse to baptize the infant children of such adults."

#### **659. Infant faith in Lee's work *Rebaptism Impossible!***

In Lee's 1990 *Rebaptism Impossible!* he concluded<sup>376</sup> that "the Calvinist will keep on reminding all trinitarians...in season and out of season -- of 'the needful but much neglected duty of improving our baptism...all our life long.' *Westminster Larger Catechism* 167....

"But more. The Church Visible, with all of her many imperfections, would prayerfully bring the entire unbaptized world into baptismal acknowledgment of the great Creator-Redeemer-Consummator.... And True Christians call upon all baptizees -- whether Romanist, Protestant, 'Orthodox' or sectarian -- to 'improve' their baptism, and to serve only the Living Triune God. Roman 6:3-13f."

#### **660. Baby belief in (editor) Lee's work *Revive Your Work, O Lord!***

Finally, in his 1991 chapters *Revival and Daily Family Worship* and *Catechising Toward Revival* -- within the book *Revive Your Work, O Lord!* of which he was the editor -- Lee summarized all the above. He explained:<sup>377</sup> "If any one aspect of revival is paramount today, perhaps it is the resurrection of family worship."

Even "prior to the fall of man, Adam and Eve together worshipped God each day. Thus we see regular household devotions -- apparently daily, both morning and evening.... They continued also after his fall and, in the case of Noah's family, even down to (and beyond) the flood."<sup>378</sup>

"Doubtless Adam and Eve catechised their children. So too did Adam's descendant Jared, whose son's name (*Enoch*) means 'catechised.'" Indeed, that name was given probably not just at birth -- but long before birth. Compare: Genesis 17:19; Luke 1:13,35,63 & 2:21.

Significantly, ever after that catechetical instruction, Enoch 'walked with God.' Indeed, Abraham too catechised his 'trained servants' -- and especially his own 'household.' So too did Moses -- even before the inauguration of the Passover....

"Circumcised covenant youth were officially catechised by the Elders.... The same applies to the New Testament Church. For now, circumcision has been replaced by baptism."<sup>379</sup>

#### **661. Revs. George Bancroft and Chris Coleburn on children in the covenant**

In 1990 and in 1991, Rev. George Bancroft produced four unusual papers on our subject. They are: *The Evangelical Presbyterian Church Standards and the Protestant Reformed Churches' Dogma -- a Comparison*; *The Westminster Standards on Covenant Children*; *The Protestant Reformed Churches' Teaching on Covenant Children*; and *How Are Children of Believing Parents 'Holy'?*

These papers were replied to by Rev. Chris Coleburn of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Australia. He did so in his much more extensive 1991 paper: *Scriptural, Confessional and Historical References re the Regeneration of Children -- and their Status before the Lord and in the Church*.

Coleburn began his paper:<sup>380</sup> "1. Infants of believers can, if it please God, be regenerated from the womb of their mother. 2. Elect children of believers can quite often be regenerated prior to their conscious ability to understand the preaching of the Word, and personally and consciously to exercise faith and repentance. 3. Children of believers are not a 'mission-field' in the sense that missionaries are sent to the heathen and those that are 'far off' from the Lord. Rather, children of believers are seen as holy members of the visible Church; distinguished from the world of unbelievers; are called 'saints.'"

Much later, Coleburn discussed<sup>381</sup> Professor Louis Berkhof's book *The History of Christian Doctrine* at the point where he "reviews the historical data on how Presbyterian/Reformed divines



have viewed the children of believers. He states that there were two basic views -- assumed regeneration; and possible but non-assumed regeneration." With almost studied understatement, Coleburn then rightly remarked: "The view assuming non-regeneration is not even mentioned as a Presbyterian/Reformed view."

In due course, Coleburn ended his paper. Here are his final words:<sup>382</sup> "The view of children of believers as set out above, is clearly in accord with what present-day conservative Presbyterian theologians believe and teach.....

"It is simply a matter of record that men such as Professor Dr. F.N. Lee of the Presbyterian Hall in Brisbane, and Principal Professor D. MacLeod of the Free Church College in Edinburgh, hold similar views.... See, for example, F.N. Lee's *Revealed to Babies!* (Commonwealth Pub., Rowlett, Texas); and D. MacLeod's recorded sermon *Children and the Covenant*, preached at Edinburgh in St. Columba's Free Church."

#### **662. Summary: baby belief ere baptism from Westminster till today**

The *Westminster Standards* with their doctrine of prebaptismally faithful covenant infants was implicitly endorsed in its foreword *To the Christian Reader* (prepared by Westminster commissioners like Thomas Goodwin and Henry Wilkinson, and also by their non-commissioned co-religionists like Obadiah Lee and Thomas Manton. In addition, Manton set out his own strong doctrine of infant faith -- implicitly in his *Epistle to the Reader* of those *Westminster Standards*, and explicitly in his *Sermons* and other writings.

David Dickson, who played a large role in drawing up Westminster's *Directory for the Publick Worship of God*, clearly taught the prebaptismal regeneration of elect covental infants. So too did his Puritan contemporaries John Trapp, Richard Baxter, Christopher Love, Thomas Brooks, William Guthrie -- and that greatest of all British Puritans, John Owen.

In Holland, later Voetians like Poudroyen and Lodensteyn agreed. So too did Ridderus, and especially the great Witsius. In Germany, so too did Cocceius and Wendelin and J.H. Heidegger. In Switzerland, Turretin held that children of even uncommitted covenant parents should rebuttably be regarded as themselves having a seminal faith -- and the *Formula Consensus Helvetica* re-affirmed the holiness of such covenant children. In Britain, Flavel regarded covenant infants as holy twigs of holy branches -- and Watson insisted God's kingdom belongs to such children.

Dutch Late-Classical Calvinism agreed. Thus, Koelman taught that covenant infants partake of regeneration. Vtringa: the Spirit sanctifies them. Smytegelt: God inserts grace into them, from the womb. Brakel: they are regenerated during infancy. Venema and Maastricht: all covenant children are apparently born under grace. John á Marck: the infant seed of believers have salvation. Vander Honert: covenant infants have been made holy by the Spirit. De Moor, Tuinman and Aemilius: such babies are holy before baptism. The Leydekker's: they belong to Christ. Groenewegen and Van Toll: they are regenerate.

Back in Britain, the great Matthew Henry insisted covenant infants were 'slaves of God' because the children of His handmaid. Isaac Watts held covenant children were apparently within the Church Invisible. Indeed, John Willison affirmed that covenant children are within the kingdom of God. So too Philip Doddridge, Thomas Boston, John Brown of Haddington, and even the great founder of Methodism himself (John Wesley).

Colonial America professed 'infant faith' Calvinism -- in Brazil, in Florida, in Canada, in New York, in New England, and in Virginia. American Puritans like Cotton were invited to attend the Westminster Assembly -- and soon affirmed its *Westminster Standards* in their own 1648 *Cambridge Platform*. The Mather's long professed this theology, and the Early American Scots-Irish Presbyterians were distinctly Anti-Anabaptist. Indeed, long prior to the Adopting Act of 1729, not a single Presbyterian Minister in America is known to have been anything but a rigid Calvinist (thus Charles Hodge).

The anti-covenantal catastrophe of the so-called 'Great Awakening' swiftly changed all this. The Congregationalist Jonathan Edwards was still Anti-Anabaptist. However, after the Neo-Paganism of the French Revolution and the Neo-Semipelagianism of divisive Dispensationalism -- American Presbyterianism backslid into Semi-Baptistic heresy (especially after its disastrous 1801 Union with a now-mediochre and long-deconfessionalized Congregationalism).

Yet Calvinism now began its international recovery. In Scotland, there were Alexander Smith Patterson and John Dick before the *Great Disruption* -- and thereafter James Buchanan and David Russell. In America, there was George Bethune. Even in revolution-torn Holland, there were Hendrik de Cock, H.P. Scholte, and J.A. Wormser. All of the above were advocates of infant faith in the babies of believers.

In the PCUSA, there was a concerted yet a weakening resistance to Arminian revivalism. This was and is notable especially through the 'infant faith' views of the Alexanders, Atwater, Carnahan, Green, Humphrey, and especially the great Samuel Miller.

The Old School General Assembly of 1845, however, was a watershed. Its victor, the catabaptist Thornwell, soon denounced covenant infants as 'enemies of Christ.' The Classic Calvinist Charles Hodge rightly and stoutly opposed this. But overreaction to men like Horace Bushnell; the slavery issue; and especially the looming War Between the States -- all prevented a rational consideration of the important implications of the covenant.

In Germany, the Lutheran Delitzsch and the Calvinist Heppe both advocated infant faith even prenatally. In Britain, David Brown insisted that covenant infants are within God's Kingdom. In America, the great Charles Hodge clearly sounded forth Calvinism's presumptive regenerationism of covenant infants. So too did the Lutheran Krauth and the Calvinists Bomberger and A.A. Hodge. Indeed, even Southerners like A.W. Miller and R.L. Dabney distantiated themselves from Thornwell's semi-baptistic aberrations. However, both the Northern and the Southern Presbyterians continued to capitulate to Baptistic antipaedofideism.

In Scotland, especially Bannerman and Candlish and Walker were strong advocates of infant faith. In Holland, there was Gravemeijer and especially the great Abraham Kuyper Sr. In

America, there were W.G.T. Shedd, Philip Schaff, Henry J. van Dyke Sr, and Henry van Dyke Jun. They were followed by the great advocate of infant faith and salvation -- Benjamin B. Warfield.

In Holland, Kramer wrote his classic work on *Baptism and Regeneration* -- and Littooy embraced that historic viewpoint. There were many merger problems in the Netherlands' Dutch Reformed denominations. Yet the Synod of Utrecht nevertheless clearly pronounced that all covenant infants were to be regarded, rebuttably, as already regenerate. Also Kuyper's famous sons -- Abraham Jr. and H.H. Kuyper -- strongly asserted this. So too did Bavinck, Bouwman, Dijk, and Honig. Even Schilder did not disagree. Especially H.N. Ridderbos and D.J. De Groot strongly affirmed it -- and Douma has strongly opposed the antipaedofideism of the British Baptist David Kingdon.

In Britain, even the Ex-Baptist Campbell Morgan strongly presumed faith within the children of believers. So too John Inchley. Indeed, also South Africa's Andrew Murray asserted God's covenantal faithfulness *Unto Children's Children!* So too did his later fellow-countrymen, F.J.M. Potgieter and J.A. Heyns.

In America, R.A. Webb wrote his 'baby belief' *Theology of Infant Salvation*. Even the Baptist A.H. Strong believed elect infants receive faith before arriving in glory. Lewis Schenck produced his invaluable anti-revivalist *Presbyterian Doctrine of Children in the Covenant*. Against Karl Barth and other heretics, Louis Berkhof set forth the Classic Calvinist position. So too did Carl McIntire, John Murray, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, R.B. Kuiper, J.M. Boice and Herman Hanko.

As elsewhere, in Australia too the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches are now giving an increasingly orthodox witness. This is so, in all aspects of Calvinistic doctrine. It includes the Calvinian doctrine of "conscious saving faith" within believers' babies -- even before their infant baptisms. This is seen in the writings of Chris Coleburn, and also the present writer.

### Endnotes

- 1) *Sub. Stands. of Free Ch. of Scot.*, p. 6.
- 2) T. Manton: *Epistle to the Reader* (of the Westminster Standards). In *Sub. Stands. of Free Ch. of Scot.*, pp. 7-9.
- 3) T. Manton: *Complete Works*, Maranatha, Worthington Pa, rep. ed., n.d. (ca. 1975), XIV pp. 81-89 & 205.
- 4) T. Manton: *Sermon 66* (on Heb. 11), in his *Comp. Works* XIV pp. 406f. 5) T. Manton: *Comp. Works* XV pp. 466f.
- 6) See D. Dickson's *Exposition of the Evangel of Jesus Christ According to Matthew* (Ralph Smith, 1697 ed.); his *Truth's Victory Over Error* chs. 10 & 28 (John Reid, Edinburgh, 1684); and his *Therapeutica Sacra: Shewing Briefly the Method of Healing the Diseases of Conscience Concerning Regeneration*, (James Watson, Edinburgh, 1697 ed.). Cf. too J. Howe's *Scots Worthies* (p. 294) and C. Coleborn's *op. cit.*, April 1991, p. 22.
- 7) J. Trapp: *Commentary on the New Testament*, Sovereign Grace, Evansville, 1958 ed., on Mt. 19:13-15.
- 8) See Himburg's *Baptismal Controversies* (164), cited in ed. Gilmore's *op. cit.* pp. 279 & 288.
- 9) Cited in Schaff's *Ch. Hist.* VIII p. 287.
- 10) R. Baxter: *Plain Scripture Proof of Infant Church Membership and Baptism*, London, 1651. So cited in S. Miller's *Infant Baptism*, end of Discourse III [in his *Baptism and Christian Education*, Presbyterian Heritage Pubs., Dallas, 1984 ed., p. 62, and 1655 3rd ed. pp. 76-78. See too Baxter's *Book of Baptism*. Also see Baxter's *Directions for Spiritual Peace* (cited in W.G.T. Shedd's *Dogmatic Theology*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1969 ed., III p. 469).

- 11) R. Baxter: *Reply to Hutchinson*, London, 1676, p. 39. Compare Baxter's *Review of the State of Christians' Infants &c*, 8 v., London, 1676. Cited in Wall's *op. cit.* I p. 471 & II p. 224. Also: R. Baxter's *Christian Directory*, London, 1673, pp. 807f; and his *Christian Ecclesiastical Cases of Conscience*, Quaest. 35 (in Warfield's *Two Stud.*, pp. 206 & in Wall's *op. cit.* IV:421).
- 12) C. Love: *The Soul's Cordial*, 1653, p. 172.
- 13) T. Brooks: *Appendix to Memoirs*. In his *Works* (1653), Banner of Truth, Edinburgh, 1980 rep., I pp. xlviii f.
- 14) W. Guthrie: *The Christian's Great Interest*, Banner of Truth, London, 1969 rep., pp. 38f.
- 15) J. Owen's *Works* VIII, as cited in the Baptist A.H. Strong's *Systematic Theology* (Pickering & Inglis, London, 1956 rep., p. 663). Also see Owen's *The Chamber of Imagery in the Church of Rome laid Open*, VIII, pp. 586f.
- 16) J. Owen: *A Display of Arminianism -- being a Discovery [or Disclosure] of the Old Pelagian Idol 'Free-Will' etc.* In his *Works* X pp. 1 & 70f.
- 17) J. Owen: *On Schism*, in *Works* XIII p. 184. 18) J. Owen: *Infant Baptism and Dipping*, in *Works* XVI pp. 259f.
- 19) J. Owen: *Exposition of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, Baker, Grand Rapids, 1980, V pp. 17 & 31, and VI p. 513.
- 20) C. Poudroyen's own work *Catechizing from the Heidelberg Catechism*, 1653, pp. 415, 414 & 418. Cited in A. Kuyper's *E Voto* III p. 58, and in his *Sac.* (in his *Dict. Dog.* IV p. 141).
- 21) Schaff's *Creeds* III p. 559; H. Kaajan: *Coccejus (Johannes)*, in *Christian Encyclopaedia*, Kok, Kampen, 1925, I p. 470; R.G. Clouse: *Coccejus, Johannes (1603-1669)*, in ed. Douglas's *op. cit.* p. 237.
- 22) *Op. cit.* p. 471.
- 23) *On the Covenants* XIII:449 (in his 1648 *Works* VI, Amsterdam, 1673 ed.). Cited in Heppe: *op. cit.* pp. 619f & 715.
- 24) *On the Covenants*, XIII:459. Cited in Heppe's *op. cit.* p. 623.
- 25) M.F. Wendelin: *Christian System of Theology*, Cassel, 1656. Cited in Kuyper's *On the Sacraments* p. 142 (in his *Dog. Dict.* IV). Also Wendelin's *Collation of Christian Doctrine from the Calvinists and the Lutherans*, Cassel, 1660, p. 352. See in Heppe's *op. cit.* pp. 624 & 714.
- 26) J. van Lodensteyn's *Views of Zion* II p. 104; cited in Kramer's *op. cit.* p. 325. 27) Lodensteyn's *op. cit.* II p. 123.
- 28) J. Flavel: *Works*, Banner of Truth, London, 1968 rep., III pp. 545f. 29) *Ib.* IV pp. 349-71.
- 30) H. Witsius: *Economy of the Covenants* [alias *On the Covenants*], Tegg, London, ed. 1837, I:III:VI, 1f & 16-19.
- 31) *Ib.* II:IV:XVI, 43-50.
- 32) H. Witsius: *The Efficacy of Baptism in Infants*, in his *Holy Miscellanies* II exerc. 19 pp. 611-98 para. 32 (cited in Kramer's *op. cit.* pp. 337-38).
- 33) Witsius: *op. cit.* para. 43, as cited in Kramer's *op. cit.* p. 339. 34) Witsius: *op. cit.* para. 29.
- 35) Witsius: *op. cit.* para. 25, as cited in Kramer's *op. cit.* pp. 339f. 36) Witsius: *op. cit.* paras. 29f.
- 37) J. Gill: *Preface* to the 1804 Edinburgh edition of Witsius's *The Economy of the Covenants between God and Man*.
- 38) H. Witsius: *The Economy of the Covenants between God and Man*. We use the 1837 London edition (Tegg).
- 39) W. Cunningham: *Historical Theology* (1862), Banner of Truth, London, 1969 ed., II p. 352.
- 40) L.H. Atwater: *The Children of the Church and Sealing Ordinances*, Presbyterian Board of Publications, Philadelphia, 1857, p. 106. Atwater even quotes Witsius's original Latin: "*Charitas enim jubet infantes ejusmodi, ut dilectos Dei liberos, ipsiusque Dei familiae adnumerare, donec contrarium pessima idole pravisque facinoribus,*" &c.
- 41) J. Macleod: *Scottish Theology in Relation to Church History since the Reformation*, Free Church of Scotland Pub. Committee, Edinburgh, 1943, p. iii.
- 42) *Ib.* p. 219. 43) T. Watson: *A Body of Divinity*, Sovereign Grace Publishers, Grand Rapids, n.d. pp. 380-82.
- 44) J.H. Heidegger's *Body of Theology* (Zurich 1700) and his *Marrow of Christian Theology* XXV:50 & 53 & 55 (Zurich 1696). Cited in Heppe (*op. cit.* pp. 620 & 622 & 715) and in A. Kuyper (*Sac.* in *Dict. Dog.* IV p. 143).
- 45) Thus Schaff's *Creeds* III p. 559.
- 46) F. Turretin: *Theological Elenctics* p. 427 (cited in H.H. Kuyper's *Hamabdil* p. 115).
- 47) *Ib.* Quest. XX thes. 18 (cited in A. Kuyper Sr.'s *Sac.* in his *Dog. Dict.* IV p. 143).
- 48) F. Turretin's *Theological Institutes* XV:14:1-2,13-16 (in Gerstner's *Selections from Turretin's [mimeographed] 'Theological Institutes'*, Theological School of the Protestant Reformed Churches, Grandville. Mich., 1980, pp. 459f).
- 49) *First Helvetic Confession* art. XXI (XXII): "We baptize our children...of whom one should presume they are elected by God." Compare too the *Second Helvetic Confession* ch. XX: "We condemn the Anabaptists, who deny

that newborn infants of the faithful are to be baptized.... Why should those who belong to God and are in His Church not be initiated by holy baptism?"

50) *Formula Consensus Helvetica* art. XXVI: "Moreover, in order that no one may be induced to propose publicly or privately some doubtful or new dogma of faith hitherto unheard of in our churches and contrary to God's Word, to our *Helvetic Confession*, our Symbolical Books and to the *Canons of the Synod of Dort*...."

51) *Formula Consensus Helvetica* arts. VIII-X & XIV & XXI-XXV.

52) 1745 ed. Cited in Wielenga's *op. cit.* p. 231 n. 6. 53 *Hist. Apol.*, p. 72

54) *Id.* II pp. 655a & 20b. Our nn. 53 & 54 here, are both cited from Kramer's *op. cit.* p. 328.

55) J. Koelman: *The Heresy of the Labadists Thoroughly Uncovered and Refuted*, II pp. 726 & 665f. Cited in Kramer's *op. cit.* p. 330.

56) C. Vitringa: *Sacred Observations*, Bk. II, *Concerning the Foundations and Reasons of Christian Infant Baptism*, 6:26-28. Cited in Kramer's *op. cit.* pp. 343f.

57) "*Juste praesumimus ex lege charitatis eos esse sanctificados per Spiritum Sanctum.*" Cited in L.H. Atwater's *The Children of the Church and Sealing Ordinances*, Presb. Board of Pub., Philadelphia, n.d., pp. 103f.

58) B. Smytegelt: *Explanation of the Heidelberg Catechism*, Q. 74 (& III p. 417, ed. 1756).

59) W. Brakel: *Our Reasonable Religion*, 31:14 & 39:26. Cited in A. Kuyper's *Sac.* (in his *Dict. Dog.* IV p. 145) and in his *E Voto*, III p. 59.

60) *Ib.*, ed. Donner, I p. 978f. Cited in H.H. Kuyper's *Hamabdil: On the Holiness of the Covenant of Grace*, Van Bottenburg, Amsterdam, 1907, p. 163.

61) Cited in W.G.T. Shedd's 1894 *Dogmatic Theology* (Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1969 ed., III p. 518); and in D. M'Conoughy's *Are Infants Saved?* (Tract No. 132, Presb. Board of Pub., Philadelphia, n.d.).

62) M. Henry: *Commentary on the Bible*, at Mk. 10:13-16.

63) M. Henry: *Treatise on Baptism*, in *The Complete Works of the Rev. Matthew Henry*, Baker, Grand Rapids, 1978, I, pp. 512 & 519.

64) M. Henry's *Miscellaneous Works* I pp. 51f. Cited in L.H. Atwater: *The Children of the Church and Sealing Ordinances*, the Presb. Board of Publication, Philadelphia, n.d., p. 110.

65) M. Henry: *A Commentary on the Holy Bible*, Marshall Bros., London, n.d., VI p. 1254.

66) Cited in *ib.* p. 64.

67) W. Steuart: *Collections and Observations Methodiz'd --Concerning the Worship, Discipline and Government of the Church of Scotland*, Edinburgh, 1709, Book II, Title III, p. 123. Cited in L.B. Schenck's *op. cit.* pp. 45f.

68) H. Venema: *Sacred Dissertations*, III:2. Cited in Kramer's *op. cit.* p. 344.

69) P. Mastricht: *Theoretical-Practical Theology*, Amsterdam, 1725, III p. 617. Cited in Kuyper's *E Voto* III p. 58.

70) *Op. cit.* III pp. 229 & 308. Cited in A.G. Honig's *Reformed Dogmatics*, Kok, Kampen, 1938, p. 551.

71) *Op. cit.* VII:4:25 (*On Baptism*). Cited in Kuyper's *Sac.* in his *Dict. Dog.* IV p. 143; and in Kramer's *op. cit.* p. 336. Mastricht's original Latin is given by Gravemeijer (*op. cit.* III:20:24 p. 166 n. 11). That Latin, *fidem...seminali*, was translated rightly into Dutch as *zadelijk geloof* (alias *seminal faith*). Unfortunately, however, it then got misprinted as *zedelijk geloof* (alias *moral faith*).

72) Mastricht: *Theol.* I p. 128. Cited in Gravemeijer's *op. cit.* II:14:10 p. 38.

73) J. á Marck: *Exercit. ad Matth.* 28:19 (cited in Wielenga's *op. cit.* p. 236).

74) In his *Compendium of Christian Theology* 22:12. Cited in Kuyper's *E Voto Dordraceno* (Wormser, Amsterdam, 1894, III, p. 590) and also in his *On the Sacraments* in his *Dogmatic Dictations*, Kok, Kampen, 1910, p. 144. Also cited in Kramer's *op. cit.* p. 345. See further the 1752 ed. of Marck's *Compendium* VII:23 p. 147 (as cited in Warfield's *Two Stud.* pp. 207f).

75) J. á Marck: *The Sanctification of the Children of Believers in Christ*, Kallewier, Leiden, 1729. Cited in Wielenga's *Our Baptismal Formula* (Kok, Kampen, 1920, p. 229); and also in A. Kuyper's *Sacraments* in his *Dogmatic Dictations* (Kok, Kampen, 1910) p. 144. See too Kramer's *op. cit.* p. 345.

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- 224) J. Bannerman: *The Church of Christ: A Treatise on the Nature, Powers, Ordinance, Discipline and Government of the Christian Church*, Banner of Truth, Edinburgh, 1974 rep., II pp. 30 & 50 & 114f.
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- 227) W. Cunningham: *The Reformers and the Theology of the Reformation*, pp. 240f & esp. 291. He himself might perhaps here seem to be critiquing the Protestant Reformers' views anent presumed regeneration prior to infant baptism (even in Protestant Churches). Yet it must be remembered that Cunningham is here rebutting precisely the baptismal regeneration of Romanism. See Coleborn's *op. cit.* pp. 50.
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- 267) G. Kramer: *The Connection between Baptism and Regeneration*, De Vecht, Breukelen, 1897.
- 268) A. Kuyper Sr.: *Introductory Word to Kramer's "The Connection between Baptism and Regeneration"*, in Kramer's *op. cit.* pp. i-v.
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- 272) See E. Smilde: *A Century of Struggle about Covenant and Baptism*, 1946.
- 273) Wielenga: *op. cit.* p. 246; Dam, R.J (& Others): *Around '1905': A Historical Sketch*, Littooy, Terneuzen, 1946, pp. 140f.
- 274) C.N. Impeta: *Ecclesiastical Chart of the Netherlands*, Kok, Kampen, 1964, pp. 104 & 120f.
- 275) R.E.D. Clark: *Morgan, George Campbell (1863-1945)*, art. in ed. J.D. Douglas's *The New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1974, p. 677.
- 276) G.C. Morgan: *The Crises of the Christ*, Pickering & Inglis, London.
- 277) A. Murray: *The Children for Christ*, Nisbet, London, 1905, pp. 43,71,74,199.
- 278) A. Murray: *How to Raise your Children for Christ*, chs. IV-VI.
- 279) M. Neethling: *Unto Children's Children*, privately published, South Africa.
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- 281) *Ib.* pp. 35-39 & 313f.
- 282) A.H. Strong: *Systematic Theology* (1907), Pickering & Inglis, London, 1956, pp. 661f.
- 283) P. Schaff: *History of the Christian Church* (1910), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1970, I p. 470 & II p. 255.
- 284) Kuyper, A., Jr.: *The Firmness of the Covenant*, Kirchner, Amsterdam, 1908; *Covenantal Collectivism*.
- 285) Kuyper, A., Jr.: *The Watchman*, 7th Oct. 1904; compare his *The Bond of the Covenant*, Zwagers, Rotterdam, 1928, p. 118; cited in Dam & Others' *op. cit.* pp. 60, 88 & 112.
- 286) Kuyper, H.H.: *The Authentic Text of the Liturgical Writings Maintained*. 1901.
- 287) H.H. Kuyper: *The Children of the Covenant*, arts. in the *Herald*, Holland, 1915f, Nos. 1949f.
- 288) H.H. Kuyper: *Hamabdil: On the Holiness of the Covenant of Grace*, Van Bottenburg, Amsterdam, 1907, pp. 100f, 152f, 158f, 168, 172, 175, 181f, 184f, 191f.
- 289) Thus *The Doctrinal Standards and Liturgy of the Reformed Dutch Church*, p. 129.
- 290) Bavinck, H.: *The First Baptismal Question*, Bazuin, 1900 (as cited in Wielenga's *op. cit.* p. 240). See too Bavinck's *Calling and Regeneration*, and his *Parents or Witnesses*.
- 291) H. Bavinck's *Magnalia Dei: Instruction in the Christian Religion according to the Reformed Confession*, Kok, Kampen, 1909, pp. 493f & 616.
- 292) H. Bavinck: *The Christian Family*, Kok, Kampen, 1912, pp. 66f.
- 293) H. Bavinck: *Principles of Psychology*, Kok, Kampen, 1923, pp. 77 & 88.
- 294) H. Bavinck: *Reformed Dogmatics* I p. 29 & n. 1, and III pp. 266f (as cited in Wielenga's *op. cit.* pp. 241f).
- 295) H. Bavinck: *Reformed Dogmatics*, Kok, Kampen, 1930, IV p. 28 n. 2 (also citing Kromsigt's *Something About Calvin's View of Baptism*, Trowel and Sword, 1905), p. 29 & n. 1, pp. 42 & 53f.
- 296) *Ib.* IV pp. 100f & 485f.
- 297) H. Bavinck: *Reformed Dogmatics*, Kok, Kampen, 1930, IV p. 486, p. 501 (citing M. Vitringa's *Doctrine* VII:134), p. 511.
- 298) H. Bavinck: *Manual for Instruction in the Christian Religion*, Kok, Kampen, 1932, pp. 208f.
- 299) B. Wielenga: *Our Baptismal Formula*, Kok, Kampen, 1920, pp. 11,47,51,85. See too his *Heirs of the Covenant*.
- 300) *Ib.* pp. 166f, 215, 250 & 296.
- 301) H. Bouwman: *Baptism*, art. in *Christian Encyclopaedia*, Kok, Kampen, 1925, I pp. 629f.
- 302) C.W. Bogue: *Dr. John Gerstner Withdraws from the Presbyterian Church (USA)*, in *Christian Observer*, Manassas Va., June 8th 1990, p. 20.
- 303) K. Dijk: *The Prophetic Word*, The Standard, Amsterdam, 1931, pp. 698f.
- 304) K. Dijk: *Short Dogmatics*, Kok, Kampen, n.d. (circa 1960), pp. 5, 251-52.
- 305) A.G. Honig: *Manual of Reformed Dogmatics*, Kok. Kampen, 1938, p. 3.
- 306) *Op. cit.* pp. 549, 645 & 650f.
- 307) L.B. Schenck: *The Presbyterian Doctrine of Children in the Covenant: An Historical Study of the Significance of Infant Baptism in the Presbyterian Church in America*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1940, pp. iii & viii.
- 308) His namesake, W.E. Schenck, had formerly published the work *Children in Heaven: or the Infant Dead Redeemed by the Blood of Jesus*, Presb. Board of Pub., Philadelphia, n.d.
- 309) L.B. Schenck: *op. cit.*, pp. 157f.
- 310) L. Berkhof: *Reformed Dogmatics*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1932, II p. 247. 311) Coleburn: *op. cit.* p. 36.
- 312) L. Berkhof: *The History of Christian Doctrine*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1969, pp. 258f.

- 313) L. Berkhof: *Systematic Theology*, Banner of Truth, London, 1959, p. 637.
- 314) See in G.C. Berkouwer: *Karl Barth and Infant Baptism*, Kok, Kampen, 1947, pp. 6 & 76f.
- 315) *Ib.* pp. 83 & 97. 316) Impeta: *op. cit.*, pp. 104 & 127. 317) *Ib.* pp. 122f.
- 318) Compare C. Veenhof: *In Order to Remain the Church*: Buijten & Schipperheijn, Amsterdam, 1966.
- 319) See our text below at its nn. 353f.
- 320) *Ib.* pp. 124-29. Other issues included personality clashes (especially between H.H. Kuyper and Schilder). There were also different attitudes toward the *de facto* Nazi government of the Netherlands during World War II.
- 321) K. Dijk: *Report to the Synod of 1949-50 on 'Too Narrow Binding' [to the baptismal formula of 1905]*, Reformed Churches in the Netherlands, 1946-50, p. 480. Cited in G.C. Berkouwer's *The Sacraments*, Kok, Kampen, 1954 p. 243 n. 61.
- 322) See Berkouwer's *op. cit.*, p. 243 n. 61.
- 323) *Acts* of the GKN Nov. 1943, comp. the 1946 *Acts of the Extraordinary General Synod of the Reformed Churches in the Netherlands*, Utrecht, 1949 pp. 49f. Cited in Berkouwer's *op. cit.*, p. 243 n. See too De Groot: *The Rebirth*, p. 239 & n. 85.
- 324) K.H. Miskotte: *The Chief Sum of History*, Callenbach, Nijkerk, 1945, pp. 7,170,172f,184f.
- 325) Berkouwer's *op. cit.*, pp. 245f.
- 326) H.N. Ridderbos: *The Covenant of Grace*. In G.C. Berkouwer & G. Toornvliet: *The Christ's Dogma*, Haan, Groningen, 1949, pp. 310 & 313.
- 327) H.N. Ridderbos: *The Means of Grace*. In G.C. Berkouwer & G. Toornvliet: *op. cit.*, pp. 533-36 & 541f.
- 328) D.J. de Groot: *The Work of the Holy Spirit*. In Berkouwer & Toornvliet: *op. cit.* pp. 427f.
- 329) D.J. de Groot: *The Rebirth*, Kok, Kampen, 1952, pp. 226-36. Cf. A. Kuyper Sr.: *The Work of the Holy Spirit* [original Dutch version], II pp. 134f.
- 330) C. McIntire: *Infant Baptism*, Christian Beacon Press, Collingswood N.J., 1951, p. 20.
- 331) J. Murray: *Letter to F.N. Lee*, Westminster Seminary, Philadelphia, Jan. 9th, 1960.
- 332) J. Murray: *Christian Baptism*, Presb. & Ref. Pub. Co., Philadelphia, n.d. [1952], pp. 57f nn. 30 & 31 and pp. 59 & 65.
- 333) J. Murray: *Baptism*, in *Collected Writings*, Banner of Truth, Edinburgh, II pp. 370f. This essay is undated in the *Coll. Writ.*, yet it was clearly written only after 1962. For it mentions a 1962 work in its terminal "Bibliography" (Jeremias's 1962 *Infant Baptism in the First Four Centuries*). See *Coll. Writ.* III p. 375. Murray's essay *Baptism* thus represents a greater degree of maturity than does his apparently earlier book review of D.H. Small's 1959 book *The Biblical Basis for Infant Baptism*. In the latter, Murray had commented: "The 'principle of presumption' (cf. pp. 64,80,87) to which Small appeals in connection with infant baptism, is scarcely one that can be biblically supported. It is far better to rest the case upon the divine institution. This is all that is necessary, and to append a questionable inference does not strengthen the argument." See *Coll. Writ.* IV pp. 321-23. Clearly, however, in his own 1962 work, Murray himself (rightly) now himself gravitates precisely in that very direction. See our main text at n. 334 below.
- 334) J. Murray's *Regeneration*, in his *Coll. Writ.*, II pp. 199f.
- 335) F.J.M. Potgieter: *Redemption*, Sacum, Bloemfontein, 1953, pp. 1,3,38f,71f.
- 336) F.J.M. Potgieter: *Calvin for Today*, United Protestant Pubs., Capetown, 1980, pp. 306f.
- 337) *Trinity Hymnal* (1961), Orthodox Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia, 1976 rep., pp. iii & 666f.
- 338) J.O. Buswell Jr.: *Systematic Theology of the Christian Religion*, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1963, II:162f & 171.
- 339) H. Hoeksema: *Reformed Dogmatics*, Reformed Free Pub. Assoc., Grand Rapids, 1966, pp. 462, 650f & 670-74.
- 340) H. Hoeksema: *Believers and their Seed*, Reformed Free Pub. Co., Grand Rapids, 1971, pp. iii, 46 & 132.
- 341) R.B. Kuiper: *The Glorious Body of Christ*, Banner of Truth, London, 1967 ed., pp. 11, 208, 212f.
- 342) Compare too the influx of Calvinists into her bosom thereafter, and note their baptismal views. See P. Bloomfield's *Covenant Baptism*, Brisbane, 1984.
- 343) 1965 *Book of Common Order of the Presbyterian Church of Australia*, Oxford Univ. Press, London, 2nd ed., 1965, pp. i & 155f.
- 344) *Ib.* pp. 79f.
- 345) Notwithstanding the above excellent words, the prayer immediately before the baptism (*ib.* p. 82) contains the unfortunate arminianizing if not ritualizing words: "Let his name be written in the Lamb's book of life! Being baptized outwardly with water, let him be baptized inwardly with Thy Holy Spirit; let him receive Thy grace in its fulness and remain for ever in the number of Thy faithful children!" So too the prayer immediately after the baptism: "O heavenly Father..., we thank Thee that it hath pleased Thee to receive this child as a member of Thy

holy Church.... Forgive us wherein we have come short of the grace of our own baptism by wandering from Thy ways; and bring us back with true repentance!" *Ib.* pp. 83f. Thankfully, the *Book of Common Order* itself declares that its use "is not mandatory." *Ib.* p. iii.

346) *Ib.* pp. 70f.

347) *The Book of Church Order of the Presbyterian Church in America*, Committee for Christian Education and Pubs. of the PCA, Montgomery Alabama, 1975, p. 4.

348) *Ib.* pp. 98f. 349) *Ib.* pp. 78f. 350) *Ib.* pp. 45f.

351) J. Inchley: *All About Children*, Coverdale, London, 1976, pp. 17-20.

352) D. Kingdon: *Children of Abraham*, Carey Pubs., Haywards Heath, 1975, pp. 64 & 98f.

353) J. Douma: *Infant Baptism and Regeneration*, Copieerinrichting Van den Berg, Broederweg 6, Kampen, 1976, pp. 20f & 31f.

354) On p. 31 of Douma's *op. cit.*, there is a glaring misprint. Namely: "Kingdon tells us that we have to treat are children as if they are unconverted" (my underlining: F.N. Lee). There, "are" is misprinted for "our" (see Kingdon's *op. cit.* p. 99). In our own main text above, we (F.N. Lee) have accordingly corrected this glaring misprint.

355) Apart from the printer's misprint discussed in our previous note, there is also another far more glaring error made apparently not by his typesetter but by Douma himself. That is Douma's statement (on his p. 31) that "in Kuyper's view, we cannot come further than the presumption that the baptized child will be reborn." Douma's misstatement here falsely implies that Kuyper's doctrine of presumptive regenerationism is at variance with the massive consensus of Pre-Kuyperian Calvinists (whereas in actual fact the latter too rebuttably presumed the prebaptismal regeneratedness of covenantal infants). Even more erroneously, Douma here misrepresents Kuyper's view as if Kuyper were presuming "that the baptized child will be reborn." Underlining mine (F.N. Lee). In actual fact, however, Kuyper (together with all consistent Pre-Kuyperian Calvinists) rebuttably though strongly presupposed that all baptized Protestant children of godly parents had already been reborn.

356) J.A. Lamb (ed.): *Ordinal and Service Book for Use in Courts of the Church: The Church of Scotland*, Oxford Univ. Press, London, 3rd ed., 1962, pp. iii-v & ix-x.

357) G.M. Dale: *Reformed Book of Common Order*, National Church Association of the Church of Scotland, Brunswick Impression, Edinburgh, 1978 ed., pp. iii-vi: "We have...a *Book of Common Order*.... The last edition was published in 1940.... The inspiration and source of such material are not Reformed doctrine based upon the Scriptures, but Anglo- and Roman Catholic doctrine. We see here what clearly appears to be the intention to undermine the Reformed basis of the Church of Scotland indirectly, by those whom we may call Scoto-Catholics....

Rev. D.N. Samuel, a clergyman of the Church of England, indicates the trend there very clearly -- in a recent booklet *The Reformation and the Church of England Today*. He shows how the Tractarians (now familiar as the Anglo-Catholics) in the 19th century, led by Pusey and Newman...concentrated upon undermining...by infiltrating the liturgy and thus the content of public worship.... The Scoto-Catholics, led by G.W. Sprott and T. Leishman in the 19th century, and by W.D. Maxwell in this, have followed a similar course.... Dr. Maxwell's book *An Outline of Christian Worship and Concerning Worship* clearly show that Dr. Maxwell and his school disapprove of the order of public worship which is common in Scotland today."

358) *Id.*, pp. 16,19,20,21f. Just consider the following Quasi-Baptistic and clearly Anti-Calvinistic statements in the so-called *Reformed Book of Common Order*. "Do you present this child to be baptised, earnestly desiring that in His own appointed time the Holy Spirit will[!] effectually work in this child's life all that is meant and signified by Christian baptism?" "Although these promises are not fulfilled in infants at the moment at which baptism is ministered, the Lord Jesus will[!] effectually work...in the hearts of His chosen...in His appointed time." "May it please Thee...to receive into the number of Thy children this infant.... Grant that this child, in thine own appointed time, may be[!] born again...." "Grant that...he may, in time to come, truly...enter Thy kingdom by faith..., and his name be found in the Lamb's book of life."

359) *Ib.* pp. 23f. Even here, the word "truly" is redundant and betrays an over-reaction against baptismal regenerationism. For baptism is truly a sign and a seal of ingrafting into Christ's Church Visible by the righteousness of faith in Christ as such, even if the baptizee never exercises such faith in Christ as personal Lord and Saviour. For circumcision bore that character even to the reprobate Esau, See Romans 4:11-14 & 9:4-16!

360) *Ib.* p. 19. 361) *Ib.* p. 17.

362) J.A. Heyns: *Dogmatics*, D.R.C. Booksellers, Pretoria, 1978, pp. 337-40 & 344.

363) J.M. Boice: *God and History*, Inter-Varsity Press, Downers Grove Ill., 1981, pp. 101f.

364) H. Hanko: *We and Our Children: The Reformed Doctrine of Infant Baptism*, Reformed Free Pub. Co., Grand Rapids, 1981, pp. 55f.

- 365) W.A. Mackay: *Immersion and Immersionists*, American Presbyterian Press, Columbus N.J., pg. 71 sect, VIII.
- 366) B. Snapp: *An Interview with Dr. R.J. Rushdoony*, in *The Presbyterian Witness*, Cedar Bluff, Va., Feb. 1991, pp. 10 & 14f.
- 367) F.N. Lee: *The Biblical Theory of Christian Education*, Shelton College Press, Cape May N.J., 1966, pp. 5f.
- 368) F.N. Lee: *The Salvation of Early-dying Infants*, in D.R.C. Theological Journal, Stellenbosch, March 1971 pp. 103,114, and nn. 5, 113
- 369) F.N. Lee: *You People Are Baptizing Incorrectly!*, D.R.C. Pubs., Capetown, 1971, pp. 10f.
- 370) F.N. Lee: *What About Baptism?*, Scottish Reformed Fellowship, 1976, pp. 9f.
- 371) F.N. Lee: *Effective Evangelism*, Jesus Lives, Tallahassee, 1980, pp. 11 & 23. See too his *All Wet Baptism Is All Wet!*, Counsel of Chalcedon, Atlanta, March 1981.
- 372) F.N. Lee: *Have You Been Neglecting Your Baby?*, Jesus Lives, Australia, 1981, pp. 1 & 4.
- 373) F.N. Lee: *Revealed to Babies!*, Commonwealth Pub., Rowlett Tx., 1986, pp. 3f,6,14,18.
- 374) F.N. Lee: *Daily Family Worship*, D.Min. dissertation, Whitefield Theological Seminary, Florida, 1987, p. 65. See too his *Sprinkling is Scriptural!* In *The Presbyterian*, Bristol, 1990.
- 375) F.N. Lee: *Baptism Does Not Cleanse!*, M.Div. manuscript, Whitefield Theological Seminary, Florida, 1990, pp. 134.
- 376) F.N. Lee's *Rebaptism Impossible!*, S.T.D. manuscript, Whitefield Theological Seminary, Florida, 1990, II, pp. 498f.
- 377) F.N. Lee's *Introduction* to ed. F.N. Lee's *Revive Your Work, O Lord!* Committee on Training for the Ministry of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Queensland, [Brisbane, Australia,] 1991, p. ii.
- 378) F.N. Lee's *Revival and Daily Family Worship*, in ed. F.N. Lee's *Revive Your Work, O Lord!*, p. 30.
- 379) F.N. Lee's *Catechizing Toward Revival*, in ed. F.N. Lee's *Revive Your Work, O Lord!*, p. 39.
- 380) C. Coleburn: *Scriptural, Confessional and Historical References re the Regeneration of Children, and their Status before the Lord and in the Church*, Brisbane, 1991, p. 1.
- 381) *Ib.* p. 36. 382) *Ib.*, p. 37.

## **VII. CONCLUSION: CHRISTIANITY'S BABY BELIEF BEFORE BAPTISM**

### **663. Infant Faith in Covenanters from Scripture and down through Church History**

In this dissertation, we looked at the subject of baby belief before baptism. We explained and expounded every single text in Holy Writ remotely concerned with the faithfulness or faithlessness of babies. We also investigated whether faith is generated, or alternatively just confirmed, by infant circumcision -- and also by the infant baptism which now replaces it.

From the infallible Scriptures, we saw it is quite apparent that all early-dying infants of godly parents are certainly justified. This occurs by God's grace, and through their own God-given infant faith. Second Samuel 12:14-23; Matthew 18:1-14; Romans 11:16; First Corinthians 7:14; Hebrews 11:6,9-13,23f.

Having dealt with the testimony of the inspired Holy Bible, we next investigated the bearing upon this subject of other extant yet uninspired documents of importance. Here, we looked at the testimony: of intertestamental Hebrew religion; of Pre- and Post-Christian Ancient Paganism; and especially at the verdict of Church History.

From such documentary evidence, we learned that the Early Church Fathers asserted the prior sanctification of all early-dying infants of Christians. Only from about 250 and especially from around 350 A.D. onward, was the Church somewhat paganized by progressive baptismal regenerationism. This occurred when it borrowed a new and an unbiblical sacramentology -- from Paganism.

Thus the Mediaeval Church became enslaved to mechanical magic -- for a moribund millennium, from around 350 till about 1350 A.D. Yet even during those dark ages, there were always faithful witnesses -- like the Waldensians, Wycliffe, Huss and the Bohemians -- who decisively rejected Rome's *ex opere operato* while yet maintaining Biblical paedobaptism against all antipaedobaptist heresies.

With the Protestant Reformation, Luther generally asserted the prebaptismal infant faith of covenant children. So did Zwingli, while further intimating the salvation of all early-dying babies. Calvin maintained the paedobaptism of tiny covenanters -- whose infant faith and election he rebuttably presumed.

Against Protestantism, only the Anabaptists then rejected infant baptism -- and rebaptized their converts. Wrongly, they asserted either the damnation -- or alternatively the salvation -- of all early-dying infants. To the Anabaptists, faith within babies seemed to be impossible.

Most of the Protestant and all of the Reformed *Confessions of Faith* agreed with Calvin. Thus the *Second Helvetic*, the *Scots*, the *Belgic* and the *Heidelberg*. So too all the earliest Calvinian liturgies and catechisms -- from those of John Calvin, right down to the *Westminster Standards*.

Even since the latter, by far the majority of Reformed and even many Lutheran theologians have continued to assert: baby belief before baptism.

#### **664. Baptism to be administered to tiny Covenanters as those already deemed believers**

In every case, we clearly saw -- against Romanism and all other varieties of baptismal regenerationism -- that baptism does not cleanse. Ever since the fall, all sons of Adam are sinners from their very conception onward. They cannot even see and still less enter into the Kingdom of God, until they have been born again. Jeremiah 1:5 & John 3:3-8.

There is a difference between believers and unbelievers, including the tiny ones. Exodus 11:7 to 13:5. The elect necessarily get regenerated and receive 'the seed of faith' before their death -- even if they die unbaptized before their birth, or during their early infancy. Psalm 22:9f & Luke 1:15-45.

Hence, regeneration generally precedes baptism. Genesis 15:5; 17:7f; Mark 16:15f; Acts 2:38f; Romans 4:11f; Colossians 2:11f. Thus, all covenant children who die before their possible infant baptism -- are made holy in the sight of God at, or since, their conception. Second Samuel 12:15-23; Romans 11:16; First Corinthians 7:14.

Baptism itself never regenerates. At most, it only seals already holy children -- as members of the Visible Church. Genesis 17:7-14 & Romans 4:10-12. It is not for the dead, nor for the dying. It is only for the viable. Indeed, it is to be administered solely with a view to life-long obedience and fruitfulness and ever-increasing faith thereafter -- while yet here on earth. Romans 6:1-11 & Colossians 2:11-13.

Thus baptism is only for those (whether adults or infants) who seem to be believers already -- and who seem to possess at least 'the seed of faith' within their hearts. Matthew 18:1-6 & Acts 8:36-37.

Consequently, it should be administered only in the congregation of the saints -- and only after profession of faith by the baptizee or, if still tiny, by at least one of his or her parents. First Corinthians 1:2,16; 3:1-7; 6:11; 7:14; 10:1-2; 12:13; 16:15.

Relevantly does the Calvinistic *Heidelberg Catechism* ask:<sup>1</sup> "Is then the external baptism with water the washing away of sin itself?" And it rightly answers: "Not at all! For only the blood of Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost cleanse us from all sin. Matthew 3:11; First Peter 3:21; First John 1:7; First Corinthians 6:11."

#### **665. Summary re the who and the by whom and the where and the why of Infant Baptism**

Summarizing, according to our Supreme Standard (the *Holy Bible*) as well as our Subordinate Standard (the *Westminster Confession*), we reach the following clear conclusions as to the Calvinistic doctrine of saving grace in unbaptized covenant infants and in Christ-professing adults. For they are all to be regarded as believers -- and therefore as holy before baptism.



All sons of Adam are sinners from their very conception onward. Since Adam and Eve, Calvinists regard all persons (except Jesus) as having been conceived in sin and shapen in iniquity, even before their birth. Ever since the fall, all are by nature therefore subject to the wrath of God. They cannot enter into or even see the Kingdom of God -- unless they are regenerated at some time before they die.<sup>2</sup>

There is a difference between unborn believers and unbelievers. Calvinists assert that, even before their birth, God puts a difference between the tiny children of believers -- and the tiny children of unbelievers.

God thus differentiates between elect children and reprobate children. The elect necessarily get regenerated and receive 'the seed of faith' before their death -- even if they die unbaptized.<sup>3</sup>

Regeneration generally precedes regular baptism. Calvinists presume that at least all believers' children dying in infancy, get regenerated and receive the 'seed of faith' before they die.

Because all unborn babies can die any second, Calvinists also presuppose that all 'covenant children' that die before baptism, are made holy in the sight of God at or since their conception and long before their birth. Calvinists further presuppose (rebuttably) that all conceived in the covenant, are to be regarded as already holy -- until and unless their behaviour ever evidences the contrary during their later lives.<sup>4</sup>

Baptism itself never regenerates. Because Calvinists regard covenant children as already holy before birth, they deny that baptizing them after their birth can make them holy. Such baptisms can at the most only seal already-holy children as members of the Visible Church.<sup>5</sup>

Baptism is not for the dead nor for the dying. Because Calvinists see baptism as a sign pointing to life, they rightly oppose giving baptism to the dying and to the dead -- and to those dead in sin. Even covenant children, if they seem likely soon to die, are not to be baptized. For baptism is only for those likely to live, and likely to serve Christ in His Visible Church here on earth. Indeed, baptism is to be followed by life-long obedience; by fruitfulness; and by ever-increasing faith.<sup>6</sup>

Baptism is only for believers (whether infants or adults). Because baptism is intended for believers alone, Calvinists oppose baptizing anyone who does not seem to believe in Christ already.

For this reason, they urge the baptism of only those adults who profess faith in Christ, together with the children of such adults alone. For only such children would seem to possess 'the seed of faith' in their hearts. Thus, Calvinists refuse to administer baptism to those adults who do not rightly profess Christ. They also refuse to baptize the infant children of such adults.<sup>7</sup>

Baptism should take place only in a church setting. Calvinists say baptisms should occur only under Biblical conditions. This means baptisms are to be administered only: a) after catechizing the baptizee or his or her parent or parents, to the satisfaction of the Ruling Elders; b) before the entire congregation; c) during public worship; d) after the reading of God's Holy Word; e) with

exclusively Reformed godparents, if any at all are used; and f) solely by an ordained Minister of the Word and Sacraments, or his acknowledged equivalent.<sup>8</sup>

#### **666. Summary of the Calvinistic view of Infant Baptism**

The above is what Presbyterians and other Calvinists should teach also their own covenant children. For not only Christ-professing adults are to be regarded as believers. So too are their infant children. Thus, also the latter are to be viewed as Christians --and baptized accordingly.

Calvin's own views can be summed up in his *229th Letter*. There, he states<sup>9</sup> that a child's salvation does not depend upon he or she being baptized. Baptism does not confer upon infants the power of becoming sons and heirs of God. But because they are in that position and degree in relation to God, the grace of adoption is sealed by baptism. Otherwise, the Anabaptists would be right in denying infants this sacrament --as they wrongly do.

For baptism is a sacrament, a holy oath. It is an oath sworn by believers, to serve their God. But even more so, it is an oath sworn by God Himself -- the Saviour of adult believers, and of their believing children.

In the famous words of the Calvinistic *Westminster Shorter Catechism* (92-95): "A sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ." Therein, "by sensible signs -- Christ and the benefits of the New Covenant are represented, sealed and applied: to believers. Genesis 17:7,10....

"The sacraments of the New Testament are baptism and the Lord's supper.... Baptism is a sacrament wherein the washing with water in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace and our engagement to be the Lord's....

"Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out[side] of the Visible Church, till they profess their faith in Christ and obedience to Him. But the infants of such as are members of the Visible Church, are to be baptized. Acts 2:38-39; Genesis 17:10; Colossians 2:11-12; First Corinthians 7:14."

#### **667. The Baptist Alexander Carson's inadequate knowledge of Scripture and History**

Rev. Dr. Alexander Carson -- not Th.D. (but only LL.D.) -- was an Ex-Presbyterian who later became a famous Baptist. Carson once challenged: "If it can fairly be made out that the circumstance of being born of Christian parents is evidence that infants have faith from the womb -- I have no objection to baptize them."<sup>10</sup>

We ourselves believe that, in our above pages, we have fulfilled Carson's challenge. For we believe we have indeed "fairly made out" from Scripture alone that -- at least till possible later apostasy, "being born of Christian parents is evidence that infants have faith from the womb."

For we have shown this very thing, from the womb to the tomb, in the lives of: Abel, Enoch,

Noah, Shem, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Samson, Samuel, David, Solomon, Obadiah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Joel and Malachi. Also from the New Testament -- we have shown the same thing from the lives of John the baptizer, the unique Jesus, the apostle Paul, and the evangelist Timothy.

We have also shown the same from the Jewish proselyte baptism of infants -- and even from the *Targums*, the *Talmud*, the Old Testament *Apocrypha* and *Pseudepigrapha*, Philo and Josephus. We have further seen a few traces of corruptions hereof in Ancient Paganism -- possibly borrowed from the true Old Testament religion, from Judaism, or even from Christianity.

Next, looking specifically at the Early Church, we found the confirmatory testimony of the New Testament -- and also of paganistic writers like Pliny and of ancient inscriptions in places like the catacombs. There is also the solid testimony of the many patristic writings extant -- from Clement of Rome to Chrysostom of Constantinople, and especially in the *Epistle of Barnabas* and in Augustine of Hippo-Regius.

We then demonstrated the same from all the Protestant Reformers. From Luther and Zwingli to Junius and the *Synopsis* -- and especially from the many writings of John Calvin himself -- we have shown that there was always a rebuttable presumption that covenant infants were themselves all deemed to possess saving faith in Christ.

Indeed, from Post-Reformational Calvinism, we further demonstrated exactly the same truth in manifold writings -- from Dordt, through the *Westminster Standards*. Indeed, it is re-echoed in many Reformed theologians (such as Kuyper and Warfield) -- and right down to the modern historian Rev. Dr. Rousas John Rushdoony in 1990.

#### **668. Ex-Baptist Alexander Carson now a Paedobaptist in glory**

In the words of yesteryear's famous Baptist Alexander Carson (as noted above), we ourselves now conclude that infants of believers probably indeed do "have faith from the womb." From his present exalted vantage-point in heaven, we believe even Carson now knows this -- beyond all doubt.

For today, he is in glory. Carson now knows that those like Rev. Dr. Gary Roper, formerly of Memphis Baptist Tabernacle, were wrong in assuming the damnation of the babies of believers dying in their infancy. Nor is Carson (like the Baptist David Kingdon) any longer agnostic about the everlasting destination of the early-dying infants of believers.

Now, the glorified Carson too would "have no objection to baptize" the believing infants of believing adults. Indeed, baptizing the believing babies of believing parents is exactly what Carson too would do today -- were he still here on earth. It is also what his former associates, the Baptists, should also do -- right now!

For Carson, now in glory, is no longer a Baptist. Now, he properly understands the command of his Saviour in Mark 16:15f. Carson now sees that the 'Great Commission' is indeed a **great** commission. For it applies to every human creature -- great, **and small**.

"Go into all the world, and preach the good news to **every** creature! He who believes and is baptized, shall be saved; but he who does not believe, shall be damned."

Accordingly, we ourselves now call upon all Baptists -- such as Carson once was -- to obey all the counsel of God. Acts 20:27 *cf.* 7:29-30. Let them all bring their babies forward, to receive Christian baptism! Luke 18:15-17 and Acts 2:38 *etc.* We call upon all Baptists (whether Arminian or 'Calvinistic') -- and also upon all Ex-Baptists -- to repent of their **sins of omission** regarding infant baptism.

We now call upon all Baptists like Carson, to bring their babies forward to receive Christian baptism. Certainly their Presbyterian brethren would be quick to help them!

We call upon our Baptist brethren, and also upon all other misled Christians everywhere, (rebuttably) to presume that their own tiny babies have been regenerated already -- through the grace of God. We call upon these misguided adult believers to recognize that God has, apparently, therefore already given the 'seed of faith' also to their own babies.

The latter are therefore to be baptized, as those who themselves certainly seem to be little believers. In this regard, knowledgeable Presbyterians are eager to instruct these babies' parents -- and to help the latter rectify their breach of the covenant of grace. Genesis 6:8-18 & 17:7-14 -- and Colossians 2:11-13 & 3:20-21.

For, in the words of Isaiah (59:21) -- "'This is My covenant with them,' says the Lord. 'My Spirit Who is upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth, shall not depart out of your mouth, nor out of the mouth of your seed, nor out of the mouth of your seed's seed,' says the Lord, 'from henceforth, and for ever.'"

## **Endnotes**

- 1) *Heid. Cat.*, Q. & A. 72.
- 2) Gen. 3:6-19; 5:3; 6:5; 8:21; Eccl. 6:29; Job 14:4; 15:14-16; 25:4-6; Ps. 51:5; Jh. 3:3-8; Rom. 3:23; 5:12-19; I Cor. 15:21-22; Eph. 2:1-3; *W.C.F.* 6:2-3; and *W.L.C.* 25-26.
- 3) Gen. 3:15; 17:7; 34:14; Ex. 11:7 - 13:5; Ps. 22:9-10; Esra 9:2; Neh. 9:2; Ezk. 16:20-21; Mal. 2:15; Lk. 1:15-45; Acts 2:38-39; 8:36-37; Rom. 9:11-13; 11:16; I Cor. 7:14; Col. 2:11-13; II Tim. 1:5-6; *W.C.F.* 24:2; 25:2; 27:1; 28:4; and *W.L.C.* 166 & 177.
- 4) II Sam. 12:15-23; Ps. 22:9-10; Jer. 1:5; Mt. 3:11; 19:14; Mk. 16:16; Lk. 1:15; 18:15-16; Jh. 3:3-8; Acts 2:38-39; 10:47; 16:15; 22:16; Rom. 4:10-12; 8:9; I Cor. 7:14; Heb. 6:2; I Jh. 5:12; *W.C.F.* 10:3 & 28:1; and *W.L.C.* 165 & 167 & 177.
- 5) Gen. 17:7-14; Rom. 4:10-12; I Cor. 1:17; 12:13; Gal. 5:3; Eph. 5:26; Tit. 3:5; Heb. 6:2; *W.C.F.* 10:3 & 28:3 and *W.L.C.* 161 & 165.
- 6) Dt. 30:6; Jer. 4:4; 9:25f; Rom. 2:25-29; 6:1-11; I Cor. 10:1-6; 15:29; Col. 2:11-13; *W.C.F.* 28:5 & 29:4; and *W.L.C.* 165 & 167.
- 7) Gen. 17:7f; Mk. 16:15-16; Acts 2:38-39; 8:12-16; 8:36-37; Rom. 4:10-12; Col. 2:11-13; *W.C.F.* 28:4-5; and *W.L.C.* 166.
- 8) Ex. 4:22-26; Mt. 19:13f; 28:19f; Mk. 10:14; 16:15f; Lk. 18:15f; Acts 2:38-42; Rom. 11:16; I Cor. 1:2,14-16; 3:6; 4:1; 6:11-20; 7:14; 10:1-11; 12:13; Heb. 5:4; Knox's (& Others') *First Book of Discipline* Ch. II 2nd Head 1-3; Ch. IV 4th Head (1) 1-3; Ch. XI 9th Head (1) 4; *W.C.F.* 28:5 & 29:4.
- 9) See Schenck's *op. cit.* p. 15.
- 10) A. Carson's *Baptism: Its Mode and Its Subjects*, Sovereign Grace Publishers, Evansville Ind., n.d., p. 176.

## EPILOGUE

At the beginning of this dissertation, we set out to establish from infallible Holy Writ and from fallible church history that the babies of believers are themselves to be deemed saints -- even before their infant baptism. Rereading the summary at the end of each of the above chapters, and also the immediately preceding conclusion, would indicate that our task is now finished.

Together with the Holy Scriptures, we must insist that the tiny infants of covenanters are themselves to be regarded as tiny believers. Second Samuel 12:14-23; Matthew 18:1-14; Romans 11:16; First Corinthians 7:14; Hebrews 11:6. As believers, such infants are therefore themselves to be baptized. Genesis 17:7-14; Colossians 1:2; 2:11f; 3:20f; Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15f; Luke 18:15f; Acts 2:38f.

Against the Romanists, we must insist that neither infant baptism nor adult baptism has ever washed away a single sin. Acts 8:9-23; Romans 2:25-29; First Corinthians 1:13-17 & First Peter 3:20-21. Against the Anabaptists, we must insist that all rebaptism is both sinful and impossible. Romans 6:3-23; Ephesians 4:4-6; Colossians 2:6-16; Hebrews 6:1-8. Against the Baptists, we must insist that it is a serious sin for believers to leave their infants unbaptized. Genesis 17:7-14; Exodus 4:24-26; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38f.

### 669. Baptism in the Westminster Standards

The *Westminster Directory for Publick Worship* states:<sup>1</sup> "Baptism, as it is not unnecessarily to be delayed -- so it is not to be administered in any case by any private person but by a Minister of Christ called to be the Steward of the mysteries of God. Nor is it to be administered in private places, or privately, but in the place of publick worship and in the face of the congregation where the people may most conveniently see and hear....

"The child to be baptized...is to be presented by the father.... The promise is made to believers and their seed.... The seed and posterity of the faithful..., born within the church..., by baptism are solemnly received into the bosom of the Visible Church.... They are **Christians** and federally **holy before baptism** and **therefore** are they **baptized!**"

The *Westminster Larger Catechism* declares:<sup>2</sup> "The sacraments become effectual means [not of justification but] of salvation [alias preservation] -- not by any power in themselves...but only by the working of the Holy Ghost.... A sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ in His Church to signify, seal and exhibit unto those that are within the covenant of grace the benefits of His mediation; to strengthen and increase their faith....

"Baptism is a sacrament...wherein Christ hath ordained the washing with water...to be a sign and seal of ingrafting into Himself, of...regeneration by His Spirit.... Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out[side] of the Visible Church....

"The needful but much neglected duty of improving our baptism is to be performed by us all our life long." This is to be done "by serious and thankful consideration of the nature of it, and of the...benefits conferred and sealed thereby."

This is also to be done by constant reflection on "our solemn vow made therein" and "by growing up to assurance of pardon of sin and of all other blessings sealed to us in that sacrament." For the baptized, are "those that have therein given up their names to Christ" -- having been "baptized by the same Spirit into one body.... The sacrament...of baptism...is...to be a sign and seal of our regeneration and ingrafting into Christ, and that even to infants."

All the above is beautifully summarized in the Calvinistic *Westminster Confession of Faith*. That, after and under the Bible, is the Subordinate Standard of all Presbyterian Churches everywhere.

Declares the *Westminster Confession*:<sup>3</sup> "Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ.... All those that are justified, God vouchsafeth...to make partakers of the grace of adoption.... They are taken into...the children of God; have His Name put upon them...; are pitied...and...sealed to the day of redemption...."

"Not only those that do actually profess faith in and obedience unto Christ, but also the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized.... It be a great sin to condemn or neglect this ordinance.

"Yet grace and salvation are not so inseparably annexed unto it, as that no person can be regenerated or saved without it, or that all that are baptized are undoubtedly regenerated.... The sacrament of baptism is but once to be administered to any person."

In the famous words of the Calvinistic *Westminster Shorter Catechism*:<sup>4</sup> "A sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ." Therein, "by sensible signs -- Christ and the benefits of the New Covenant are represented, sealed and applied: to believers...."

"The sacraments of the New Testament are baptism and the Lord's supper.... Baptism is a sacrament wherein the washing with water in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost doth signify and seal our ingrafting into Christ and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace and our engagement to be the Lord's...."

"Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out[side] of the Visible Church, till they profess their faith in Christ and obedience to Him. But the infants of such as are members of the Visible Church, are to be baptized. Acts 2:38-39; Genesis 17:10; Colossians 2:11-12; First Corinthians 7:14."

#### **670. The sin of believing that the unbaptized are *ipso facto* lost**

Against the 'magic' of Romanism, we must continue to insist that neither unbaptized infants nor unbaptized adults are lost. That is the case, because they are not 'transubstantiated' from degenerates into regenerates by baptism.

The Bible teaches quite emphatically that some sinners are saved -- by grace, through faith in Christ, without baptism. They are therefore saved also before baptism.

At Calvary, baptism replaced circumcision. Colossians 2:11f. Commenting on Genesis 17:14, Calvin insists against Rome: "God threatens punishment only to despisers.... The uncircumcision of children would do them no harm, if they died before the eighth day. For the bare promise of God was effectual to their salvation....

"Although circumcision was added as a confirmation, it nevertheless did not deprive the Word of its force and efficacy.... To consign to destruction those infants whom a sudden death has not allowed to be presented for baptism, before any neglect of parents could intervene -- is a cruelty originating in superstition."<sup>5</sup>

On Acts 2:38, Calvin comments<sup>6</sup> that "baptism...is nothing else but a sealing of the blessings which we have through Christ.... The Papists...confess that sins are freely forgiven in baptism.... The Papists are in great error in this matter, for...baptism is a help for confirming and increasing our faith" alias the trust in Christ we already had before being baptized.

This is why Calvin reminded Clauburger:<sup>7</sup> "Baptism is not conferred on children in order that they may become sons and heirs of God. But, because they are already considered by God as occupying that place and rank -- the grace of adoption is sealed in their flesh by the rite of baptism. Otherwise, the Anabaptists are in the right -- in excluding them from Baptism. For unless the thing signified by the external sign can be predicated of them -- it will be a mere profanation to call them to a participation of the sign itself.

"But if anyone were inclined to refuse them baptism -- we have a ready answer. They are already of the flock of Christ, of the family of God -- since the covenant of salvation which God enters into with believers, is common also to their children.... Unless we choose to overturn all the principles of religion -- we shall be obliged to confess that the salvation of an infant does not depend on, but is only sealed by, its baptism. Whence it follows -- that it is not rigorously nor absolutely necessary."

Consequently Calvin sarcastically said to the heretic Castellio: "Then spit forth your gall against a god who would rip innocent children from their mothers' breasts and who would hurl them into everlasting death! Anyone who does not abominate such a blasphemy, may indeed curse me to his heart's content!"<sup>8</sup>



Also the *Westminster Standards* reject baptismal regenerationism -- also while strongly asserting the faith of early-dying elect infants. Claims the *Confession*:<sup>9</sup> "Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit, Who worketh when and where and how He pleaseth. Luke 18:15f & Acts 2:38f....

"The grace which is exhibited in or by the sacraments rightly used, is not conferred by any power in them. Romans 2:28f & First Peter 3:21.... Baptism is a sacrament...and seal of the covenant of grace. Romans 4:11 & Colossians 2:11f."

To this the *Westminster Larger Catechism* adds:<sup>10</sup> "A sacrament is an holy ordinance instituted by Christ in His Church -- to signify, seal and exhibit unto those that are within the covenant of grace, the benefits of His mediation; to strengthen and increase their faith and all other graces; to oblige them to obedience; to testify and cherish their love and communion one with another; and to distinguish them from those that are without. Romans 4:11; Galatians 3:27; Ephesians 2:11f; Genesis 34:14."

Indeed, the *Westminster Directory for the Publick Worship of God* further adds<sup>11</sup> that "baptism...is not to be administered...in the places where fonts in the time of Popery were unfitly and superstitiously placed.... It is a seal of the covenant of grace.... Baptizing or sprinkling and washing with water, signifieth the cleansing from sin by the blood and for the merit of Christ....

"The promise is made to believers and their seed.... The seed and posterity of the faithful, born within the Church, have by their birth interest in the covenant and right to the seal of it.... They are Christians and federally holy before baptism, and therefore are they baptized."

### **671. The sin of adult rebaptism**

According to both Holy Scripture and the *Westminster Standards*, rebaptism is a sin. It is a transgression of the Law of God. For the Decalogue commands that God be worshipped only in the authorized way -- and not be worshipped through any 'graven images' (such as rebaptism) contrary to His revealed will.

In Old Testament times, bodily circumcision is unrepeatable -- and recircumcision was and is impossible. Deuteronomy 10:16 & 30:6 and Jeremiah 4:4 & 9:25-26. Because circumcision has now been replaced by baptism, the latter too is unrepeatable -- and rebaptism impossible. Romans 4:11-25 & 6:1-5; Galatians 3:6-29; Colossians 2:11-13.

Only Unitarians and heretics practised 'rebaptism' in the apostolic age. Mark 7:3-8; Acts 19:1-3; First Corinthians 11:18f & 15:29. To the True Visible Church of the Triune God, there was only one baptism -- trinitarian, life-long, and unrepeatable. Matthew 28:19f; Mark 16:15f; Romans 6:3-23; Ephesians 4:4-6; Colossians 2:6-16.

Hebrews 6:1-6 implies that those who get themselves rebaptized, recrucify Christ. For it commands: "Do not again lay down...the doctrine of baptisms!" Indeed, such who do so, thereby "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh!" See Francis Nigel Lee: *Rebaptism Impossible*.

Calvin approved of the antirebaptism taught by the Romish Council of Trent. He opposed Rome's ritualistic additions to baptism, and her *ex opere operato* theory. Yet he asserted the validity of all triune baptisms, even when administered by heretics (such as Anabaptists and Romanists). For he insisted that Rome, impure and dilapidated indeed, was still part of the Christian Church Visible -- even in spite of her being oppressed for many centuries by the papal antichrist. Hence, Calvin decisively rejected the Catabaptists' rebaptizing of all converted Ex-Romanists previously "baptized in the papacy."<sup>12</sup>

There is, insisted Calvin,<sup>13</sup> in "Rome, a remnant of the Church.... Baptism there is still valid." Consequently, "we deny not to the Papists those vestiges of a Church which the Lord has allowed to remain among them.... Having deposited His covenant in Gaul, Italy, Germany, Spain and England -- when these countries were oppressed by the tyranny of antichrist -- He, in order that His covenant might remain inviolable, first preserved baptism there, as an evidence of the covenant: baptism which, consecrated by His lips, retains its power, in spite of human depravity."<sup>14</sup>

Calvin also confuted<sup>15</sup> "the error of the Donatists.... Such in the present day are our Catabaptists, who deny that we are duly baptized -- because we were baptized in the papacy by wicked men and idolaters. Hence they furiously insist on anabaptism....

Against these absurdities, we shall be fortified sufficiently if we reflect that by baptism we were initiated not into the name of any man, but into the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, and therefore that baptism is not of man but of God -- by whomsoever it may have been administered....

"It did not harm the Jews that they were circumcised by impure and apostate priests.... Circumcision was anciently vitiated by many superstitions, and yet ceased not to be regarded as a symbol of grace. Nor did Josiah and Hezekiah, when they assembled out of all Israel those who had revolted from God, call them to be circumcised anew."

The *Westminster Confession of Faith* likewise declares<sup>16</sup> that "the sacrament of baptism is but once to be administered to any person. Titus 3:5."

The *Westminster Larger Catechism*<sup>17</sup> rightly insists that the Second Commandment requires the proper "receiving of the sacraments. Matthew 28:19." Indeed, the Third Commandment requires that the "sacraments...be holily and reverently used...by an holy profession."

Consequently, the *Westminster Larger Catechism*<sup>18</sup> also requires "that baptism is to be administered but once, **with** water -- to be a sign and seal of our regeneration and ingrafting into Christ. Matthew 3:11 & Galatians 3:27."

## **672. From Abraham to Calvary -- not circumcising infant boys was sin**

According to both Holy Scripture and the *Westminster Standards*, between Abraham and Calvary -- being circumcisable but yet being uncircumcised, was a sin. At Calvary, baptism replaced circumcision. Colossians 2:11f. Consequently, now also omitting to have one's baby baptized, is sinfully to break the Law of God.

God solemnly warns us not to neglect getting the sacrament of initiation administered to our own babies. See Francis Nigel Lee: *Have You Been Neglecting Your Baby? On the Serious Consequences of Withholding Baptism from the Infants of Christians*.<sup>19</sup>

In Genesis 17:10-14, God demands that all such covenant babies "must needs" receive the sign of the covenant. If they did not, those babies were "cut off" from God's people.

This then occurred because of the "breach" of the covenant. Namely, through their wayward parents' sinful omission of getting the sacrament affixed to their infants.

Commented Calvin:<sup>20</sup> "As God adopts the infant son in the person of his father, so when the father repudiates such a benefit -- the infant is said to [be] cut...off from the Church.... God indeed will not acknowledge those as among His people who...[do] not bear the mark and token of adoption.... God will take vengeance on every one who despises to impress the symbol of the covenant on his child (Genesis 17) -- such contempt being a rejection and as it were abjuration of the offered grace."

In Exodus 4:24-26, God sought to kill Moses -- for neglecting to give the sign of the covenant to his infant child. Significantly, God then threatened with death not the infant -- but his wayward father Moses. For "the Lord met him, and sought to kill him."

So, to prevent the death of her husband, Moses' unordained wife Zipporah herself then circumcised their son, and threw his foreskin at Moses' feet. "Then she said: 'You are surely a husband-of-blood to me!' Then He [God] let him [Moses] go. "Thus she said: 'You are a husband-of-blood!' -- because of the circumcising."

To put this in church-historical terms, we may say that Moses had temporarily lapsed from strict obedience to God -- by becoming a *de facto* antipaedocircumcisional or 'antipaedobaptistic' Baptist. For he had neglected himself to circumcise his infant son. His presbyterianized wife, however -- though overenthusiastically herself administering the sacrament -- had commendably remained a loyal paedocircumcisional or paedobaptist Presbyterian.

Commented Calvin:<sup>21</sup> "Why should Zipporah have taken a sharp stone or knife, and circumcised her son -- had she not known that God was offended at his uncircumcision?... Moses had provoked God's vengeance.... He was terrified by the approach of certain destruction.... The cause of His affliction was shewn him.... It would otherwise never have occurred to himself or his wife to circumcise the child to appease God's wrath.... Let us then learn from hence, to use

reverently the sacraments which are the seals of God's grace -- lest He should severely avenge our despisal of them!"

In Exodus 12:24-43f, God debar from the second sacrament all adults whose infants still lack the first sacrament. Commented Calvin:<sup>22</sup> "They should also teach their children..., for doctrine may justly be called the life of sacraments.... The Paschal Lamb corresponds to the Holy Supper.... None but the initiated were admitted.... From the analogy between the Holy Supper and the Passover, this Law remains in force now."

In Joshua 5:2-8, at God's command, Moses' successor Joshua circumcised the people of Israel. For they had lapsed into uncircumcision while on their way through the wilderness.

Because of that widespread delinquency, Joshua soon thereafter told the Israelites: 'As for me and my household -- we will serve the Lord!' Joshua 24:15. For he would not only preach paedocircumcision, but -- by his personal example and that of his family -- also practise it, 'puritanically' and precisely.

Indeed, he would do so especially by then and thereafter training his covenant children to serve the Lord lifelong. For thus they were to 'improve' the sacrament they had received in infancy.

As Calvin explained of the backsliding and anabapticizing antipaedocircumcisional Israelites:<sup>23</sup> "They did not desist from circumcising their children the very first day after their departure [from Egypt], but only after they had been obliged to retrace their steps through their own perverseness.... None were circumcised on the way, after they had set out.... For it is said that their sons...were circumcised by Joshua....

"The real object of Joshua was...to renew and confirm the covenant which had already been made with God.... To impress them [the antipaedocircumcisionalized or apostate and 'Anabapticized' people] with a feeling of shame -- he declares that he and his house will persevere in the worship of God."

Let us put the above in church-historical terms. After the exodus, the previously Presbyterian people of God had lapsed into an 'Anabaptistic' antipaedocircumcisionism or 'antipaedobaptism' -- and had thus become *de facto* Baptists. But the faithful and paedocircumcisional or 'paedobaptistic' Joshua now represbyterianized them.

Indeed, he did so not by impossibly attempting to recircumcise the circumcised -- but by circumcising all of those of them and of their infants who had grown up uncircumcised. He also did so -- by declaring that, whatever the people themselves would thenceforth do, at least he and his household would paedocircumcisionally and presbyterianly serve the Lord.

In Ezekiel 44:7 -- a foreshadowing of the New Testament Church -- God rebukes those who have received the sacrament of initiation for bringing those who have not, to worship in His presence. Declares God: "You have brought into My sanctuary strangers, uncircumcised in heart and uncircumcised in flesh, to be in My sanctuary to pollute it.... They have broken My covenant!"

Does this not apply also to baptized Baptists who regard their own babies as strangers to God but yet bring them to worship Him?

### **673. Since Calvary it is a sin for believers to keep their infants unbaptized**

In Luke 7:29f, God declares that "the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized." Commented Calvin re the godly:<sup>24</sup> "It was already an evidence of their piety, that they presented themselves to be baptized.... The scribes, in despising the baptism of John, shut against themselves, through their pride, the gate of faith.... Let us first guard against despising the very least of God's invitations, and be prepared in humility to commence with small and elementary instructions!"

In the Great Commission, Jesus commands his Ministers, until the very end of world history, to keep on going forth into all the world -- preaching and baptizing all who submit (together with their households). In Matthew 28:19, He enjoins: "Keep on turning all nations into Disciples, baptizing them!" Because nations cannot exist without their infants, Christ's command clearly implies that not just eager adults but also infants too are to be baptized and then more and more to become Christ's Disciples.

Indeed, Mark 16:15f adds: "Preach the Gospel to every creature" -- alias to all human creatures (including human infants). This preaching is fundamentally first to be done prenatally and paedobaptistically, as well as during all the later periods of human life. "He who believes [including infants] and is baptized [including infants], shall be saved. But he who does not believe [including infants], shall be damned [including infants]."

In Luke 24:47, Christ again insists "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His Name among all nations." Indeed, in Acts 2:38f, God through Luke again commands the penitent: "Be baptized every one of you..., for the promise is unto you and to your children!"

Here Calvin comments:<sup>25</sup> "This passage therefore sufficiently refutes the Anabaptists, who deny baptism to the children of the faithful while they are still infants, as though they were not members of the Church.... This gross presumption is of no profit to them."

In Acts 11:16f, Peter saw his baptizing of the entire family of Cornelius as a fulfilment of Christ's prediction that people would be baptized with the Holy Spirit at and after His outpouring. Peter added "What was I, that I could withstand God?" Commented Calvin:<sup>26</sup> "Those who are opposing infant baptism, are waging war against God."

According to the *Westminster Larger Catechism*,<sup>27</sup> the Fifth Commandment requires fathers and mothers not to commit "sins" by "the neglect of the duties required of them" -- such as that of bringing their children to be baptized. " Second Kings 5:13; Ephesians 6:4; Deuteronomy 6:6f; Ezekiel 34:2-4."

Indeed, the *Westminster Larger Catechism*<sup>28</sup> requires that "infants descending from parents either both or but one of them professing faith in Christ...are...to be baptized. Genesis 17:7f; Galatians 3:9f; Colossians 2:11f; Acts 2:38f; Romans 4:11f; First Corinthians 7:14; Matthew 28:19; Luke 18:15f; Romans 11:16."

Rightly does the *Westminster Confession*<sup>29</sup> therefore conclude that "also the infants of one or both believing parents are to be baptized.... It be a great sin to contemn or neglect this ordinance. Luke 7:30 & Exodus 4:24-26."

#### **674. Calvin's confidence in the executability of the Great Commission**

Precisely in this regard, Calvin's comments<sup>30</sup> on the Christ's Great Commission in Matthew 28:16f and Mark 16:15f are most encouraging. "The nature of the apostolic function is clear from the command, 'Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature!' Mark 16:15[f]. No fixed limits are given them, but the whole world is assigned to be reduced under the obedience of Christ -- that by spreading the Gospel as widely as they could, they might everywhere erect His Kingdom....

"The 'eleven' disciples were appointed to the apostolic office.... When Christ appeared to the disciples, He...commissioned them to be Apostles -- to convey into every part of the world the message of eternal life.... He expressly calls Himself the Lord and King of 'heaven and earth' -- because, by constraining men to obey Him in the preaching of the Gospel, He establishes His throne on the earth....

"The meaning amounts to this, that by proclaiming the Gospel everywhere, they should bring 'all nations' to the obedience of the faith -- and next, that they should seal and ratify their doctrine by the sign of the Gospel [*viz.* baptism]....

"It is said in Mark, 'he that shall believe and be baptized -- shall be saved'.... Christ enjoins them [His ministers] to 'teach' before 'baptizing' -- and desires that none but believers shall be admitted to baptism. It would appear that baptism is not properly [*alias regula*-rly] administered, unless when it is preceded by faith....

"On what condition does God adopt as children, those who formerly were aliens? It cannot indeed be denied that, when He has once received them [the penitent aliens] into His favour, He continues to bestow it -- on their children and their children's children.... It is not rash to administer baptism to infants -- to which [baptism] God invites them [the infants of believers], when He promises that He will be their God." Genesis 17:7f *cf.* Colossians 2:11f.

"Salvation is promised to believers. For, by believing in the only begotten Son of God, not only are they reckoned among the children of God.... They possess what constitutes eternal life. Baptism is joined [or ap-pended] to the faith of the Gospel.... 'They who shall believe and be

baptized, shall be saved.' Yet, at the same time, we must hold that it is not required as absolutely necessary to salvation so that all who have not obtained it must perish....

"But 'he who shall not believe, shall be condemned.' By this second clause, in which Christ condemns those who shall not believe, He means that rebels -- when they reject the salvation offered to them -- draw down upon themselves severer punishment....

"Christ gave to the Apostles a commission which they were unable to discharge by reliance on merely human power.... This was not spoken to the Apostles alone. For the Lord promises His assistance not for a single age only, but 'even to the end of the world'.... Though the Ministers of the Gospel be weak and suffer the want of all things, He will be their guardian -- so that they will rise victorious over all the opposition of the world.... His Ministers may confidently expect to be victorious -- over the whole world!"

### **675. The godly methods of eliminating Anabaptist and Romish influences**

Firstly, there needs to be the powerful preaching of the Gospel. States the *Westminster Larger Catechism*: "The Spirit of God maketh the reading but especially the preaching of the Word an effectual means of enlightening, convincing and humbling sinners...and drawing them unto Christ...; of strengthening them against temptations and corruptions...and establishing their hearts in holiness. Nehemiah 8:8; Acts 2:37-41; 8:27-38; 26:18; Psalm 19:8; Matthew 4:4-10; Ephesians 6:16f..... They that are called to labour in the Ministry of the Word, are to preach sound doctrine...in demonstration of the Spirit and of power. Titus 2:1-8 & First Corinthians 2:4."<sup>31</sup>

Secondly, Christians are to 'improve' their own baptism. States the *Westminster Larger Catechism*:<sup>32</sup> "The needful but much neglected duty of improving our baptism is to be performed by us all our life long..., by serious and thankful consideration of the nature of it and...the privileges and benefits conferred and sealed thereby and our solemn vow made therein; by...growing up to assurance of pardon of sin and of all other blessings sealed to us in that sacrament; by drawing strength from the death and resurrection of Christ into Whom we are baptized...; and by endeavouring to live by faith...in holiness and righteousness. Colossians 2:11f; Romans 6:4-11; Galatians 3:26f; Romans 6:22."

Thirdly -- and proceeding from the foregoing -- there is to be a spiritual outworking of the Word of God in our lives. States the *Westminster Confession of Faith*:<sup>33</sup> "They who are effectually called and regenerated, having a new heart and a new spirit created in them, are farther sanctified really and personally through the virtue of Christ's death and resurrection, by His Word and Spirit dwelling in them. John 17:17; Second Thessalonians 2:13.... Their ability to do good works is not at all of themselves, but wholly from the Spirit of Christ. John 15:4f; Ezekiel 36:26f....

"There is required an actual influence of the same Holy Spirit to work in them to will and to do of His good pleasure. Philippians 2:12f & 4:13; Second Corinthians 3:5. Yet are they not

hereupon to grow negligent, as if they were not bound to perform any duty unless upon a special motion of the Spirit. But they ought to be diligent in stirring up the grace of God that is in them..., the Spirit of Christ subduing and enabling the will of man to do that freely and cheerfully which the will of God revealed in the Law requireth to be done. Hebrews 6:11f; Second Peter 1:3-11; Isaiah 64:7; Second Timothy 1:6; Acts 26:6f; Jude 20f; Ezekiel 36:27; Hebrews 8:10; Jeremiah 31:33."

Fourthly, the State's as God's minister is to punish all criminals. Of course, we do not mean that it should ever be a crime to be a Baptist or a Romanist. But it should indeed be a crime to prevent the baptism of the babies of believers -- or to permit this within only one denomination.

It should also be a crime to advocate the social and political views of the Classic Anabaptists -- such as their communism, their polygamy, and their revolutionism. Explains the *Westminster Confession of Faith*:<sup>34</sup> "They who, upon pretence of Christian liberty, shall oppose any lawful power or the lawful exercise of it...resist the ordinance of God. Matthew 12:35; First Peter 2:13-16; Romans 13:1-8....

"For their publishing of such opinions or maintaining of such practices as are contrary to the light of nature or to the known principles of Christianity..., they may lawfully be called to account and proceeded against...by the power of the civil magistrate. Romans 1:32; Deuteronomy 13:6-12; Ezra 7:23-28; Nehemiah 13:5-30; Second Kings 23:5-21; Second Chronicles 34:33 & 15:12-16; Daniel 3:29; First Timothy 2:2; Isaiah 49:23; Zechariah 12:2f.... God the supreme Lord and King of all the world hath ordained civil magistrates to be under Him over the people...for the defence and encouragement of them that are good and for the punishment of evil-doers. Romans 13:1-4; First Peter 2:13f....

"Saints by profession are bound to maintain an holy fellowship and communion.... This communion which the saints have with Christ, doth not make them in any way partakers of the substance of His Godhead or to be equal with Christ in any respect -- either of which to affirm, is impious and blasphemous. Nor doth their communion one with another as saints take away or infringe the title or property which each man hath in his [own] goods and possessions. Isaiah 48:8; Psalm 45:7; Hebrews 1:8f; Exodus 20:15; Ephesians 4:28; Acts 5:4."

So do we approach the future 'millennial' blessings. States the *Westminster Larger Catechism*:<sup>35</sup> "Christ was exalted in His ascension..., triumphing over enemies. Ephesians 4:8." He "visibly went up into the highest heavens, there to receive gifts for men. Acts 1:9-11; Ephesians 4:10; Psalm 68:18.... As God-man, He is advanced to the highest favour with God the Father...and power over all things in heaven and earth; and doth gather and defend His Church and subdue their enemies. Philippians 2:9; Ephesians 1:22; First Peter 3:22; Romans 8:34."

## **676. The inevitable conversion of the children of Romanists and Anabaptists**

It is quite inevitable that all our planet's nations (obviously including their babies) will yet be brought into baptismal subjection to the Triune God. For Jesus urges and promises this, in the



"Lord's prayer" for His Disciples. There, we are enjoined to pray each day: "Thy Kingdom come!" Matthew 6:10 & Luke 11:2.

Here, explains the *Westminster Larger Catechism*,<sup>36</sup> "we pray: that the kingdom of sin and Satan may be destroyed; the Gospel propagated throughout the world; the Jews called; the fulness of the Gentiles brought in." This is a prayer that "the Church [be] furnished with all gospel-offices and ordinances" -- such as infant baptism. It is an earnest petition that the Church be "purged from corruption" such as Anabaptism, and be "countenanced and maintained by the civil magistrate" against all ungodliness -- so "that the ordinances of Christ may be purely dispensed." This is a petition that baptism no longer be limited by some to adults alone -- nor repeated in adulthood to those already baptized in infancy.

The Westminster Assembly's *Directory for the Publick Worship of God* rightly understands the above petition to be a promise of the Reformed Church's ultimate calvinization of all the world. That includes also the de-brainwashing of heretics, and redirecting them toward the untruncated Word of God.

For in the 'Publick Prayer before the Sermon'<sup>37</sup> the Reformed Minister is "to pray for the propagation of the Gospel and Kingdom of Christ to all nations -- for the conversion of the Jews; the fulness of the Gentiles; the fall of Antichrist." He is also to pray: "for the deliverance of the distressed churches abroad from the tyranny of the antichristian faction and from the cruel oppressions and blasphemies of the Turks [or the Moslems]; for the blessing of God upon the Reformed Churches"; and for God to "establish...the purity of all His ordinances and...remove heresy."

This is to be effected even in "the **universities** and all **schools** and **religious seminaries** of church and commonwealth, [so] that they may flourish more and more in learning and piety." For we are to pray "that God would pour out a blessing upon the Ministry of the Word, Sacraments and Discipline; upon the **civil government**; and all the several families and persons therein." This is to be done "with confidence of His mercy to His whole Church" -- thus giving "evidence and demonstration of the Spirit and power."

The above *Westminster Directory for the Publick Worship of God* was intended to provide a uniform international religion for the united kingdom of England and Wales, the kingdom of Ireland, and the kingdom of Scotland. In the latter, in 1645 it was put into execution by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland.<sup>38</sup> Its relevant Act declared:

"Whereas an happy unity and uniformity in religion amongst the kirks of Christ in these three kingdoms...having been long and earnestly wished for by the godly and well-affected amongst us..., these kingdoms...are now by the blessing of God brought to a nearer uniformity than any other Reformed Kirk." This is for us "the return of our prayers, and a lightening of our eyes, and reviving of our hearts..., and an opening unto us a door of hope...in the expectation and confidence whereof we do rejoice."

Thus we are confidently "beseeching the Lord to preserve these kingdoms from heresies..., and to continue with us and the generations following these His pure and purged ordinances, together with an increase of the power and life thereof -- to the glory of His great Name, the enlargement of the Kingdom of His Son, and the...unity and comfort of all His people."

Similarly, on 31st May 1851, the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland declared<sup>39</sup> that "it pleased Almighty God in His great and undeserved mercy to reform this Church from Popery -- by Presbyters.... Nations and their rulers are bound to own the truth of God, and to advance the Kingdom of His Son.... How signally God opened for her...a door of utterance and a door of entrance not only in this but in other countries also..., this Church cannot but most devoutly acknowledge....

"In the holy boldness of faith unfeigned, she would still seek...to prosecute the ends contemplated from the beginning in all the acts and deeds of her reforming fathers -- until the errors which they renounced shall have disappeared from the land, and the true system which they upheld shall be so universally received -- that the whole people, rightly instructed in the faith, shall unite to glorify God the Father in the full acknowledgment of the Kingdom of His Son our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to Whose Name be praise for ever and ever!"

#### **677. (Ana)Baptists and Romanists of all countries -- repent!**

The now almost universally disgraced Karl Marx, himself a stepchild of the communistic Anabaptists (and therefore also a great-grandstepchild of the mediaeval Romanists), loved to enjoin: "Workers of the world -- unite!"<sup>40</sup> But, standing upon Scripture, Christian Calvinists now say to all such stepchildren and great-grandstepchildren: "Anabaptists and Romanists of all countries -- repent!"

We therefore call upon all of the various stepchildren of the Anabaptists and the Romanists -- including the saved Baptists, the apostate "Jehovah witnesses" and the heretical Seventh-day Adventists -- to repent of their great sin of antipaedobaptism (and all their other sins). We also call upon all unreformed Catholics to repent of their identification of baptism with regeneration; to put their confidence in Christ alone to whom their baptism points; and vigorously to 'improve' their baptism.

Standing upon Scripture -- Matthew 28:18f and Revelation 7:2f & 9:4 & 12:17 & 14:1 & 21:2,24 & 22:3f -- we now call upon them all to repent of their antipaedobaptism. We call upon them all to bring their unbaptized babies and their other children to that great King of men and Leader of angels, the mighty Archangel Jesus -- and to get them all baptized on their foreheads with the seal of the Triune God.

To His Ministers of the Word and Sacraments, "Jesus came and spake...saying, 'All power in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore, go and make all nations into [My] Disciples, baptizing them into the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, continuing to teach them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded!'"

"I saw an...Angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God. And He cried out with a loud voice...saying, 'Do not hurt the land nor the sea nor the trees -- till We [the Three Persons of the Triune God] have sealed the servants of our God upon their foreheads!' And I heard the number of them which were sealed -- sealed, a hundred and forty-four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel.... I beheld. Then look, a great multitude which no man could number -- of all nations and kindreds...stood before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes.... They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."

"Do not hurt the grass of the earth nor any green thing nor any tree; but only those men who do not have the seal of God upon their foreheads!... But the dragon was angry with the woman, and went to make war against the rest of her seed -- who keep the Commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ."

"I looked, and behold -- a Lamb stood upon Mount Zion [the Christian Church]. And those with Him have His Father's Name written upon their foreheads.... I John saw the holy city New Jerusalem coming down from God.... The nations of those who are saved shall walk in the light of it.... There shall be no more curse. But the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. Then they shall see His face; and His Name shall be upon their foreheads."

## Endnotes

- 1) *Westminster Directory for the Publick Worship of God* ('Of the Administration of the Sacraments').
- 2) *W.L.C.* 161-167 & 177.    3) *W.C.F.* 10:3 & 12:1 & 14:1 & 28:4-7.    4) *W.S.C.* 92x-95d.
- 5) Calvin's *Comm. on Gen.* 17:14, I pp. 457f.    6) Calvin's *Comm. on Acts* 2:38, I pp. 79f.
- 7) Calvin's *Sel. Works: Tracts & Let.*, VI Pt. 3, pp. 278f.
- 8) Cited in C. Vander Waal's *Decrees of Dordt Do Not Dry Up*, p. 52.    9) *W.C.F.* 10:3; 27:3; 28:1.
- 10) *W.L.C.* 162.    11) *W.D.P.W.G.*, section on the *Admin. of Sac.* (Baptism), in *Sub. Stds.* pp. 293f.
- 12) See F.N. Lee's *Rebap. Imposs.* II p. 468.
- 13) Calvin to Socinus, in *Corp. Ref.* XIII:308 & 486, and Calvin's *Letter* 6th Sept. 1554.    14) *Inst.* IV:2:11.
- 15) *Inst.* IV:15:16.    16) *W.C.F.* 28:7.    17) *West. Larg. Cat.* 108 & 112.    18) *Ib.* 177.
- 19) Jesus Lives, 3 Kenya St., Wavell Heights, Australia, 1981.
- 20) J. Calvin: *Commentaries on the First Book of Moses called Genesis* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1948), I pp. 458f; and Calvin's *Inst.* IV:16:9.
- 21) J. Calvin: *Commentaries on the Four Last Books of Moses arranged in the Form of a Harmony.* Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1948, I p. 106.
- 22) *Ib.* pp. 465-67.
- 23) J. Calvin's *Commentaries on the Book of Joshua* (5:2-8 & 24:15), Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1948, pp. 80f & 276f.
- 24) J. Calvin: *Commentary on a Harmony of the Evangelists.* Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1965, II p. 19.
- 25) J. Calvin: *The Acts of the Apostles*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1965, I pp. 19f.    26) *Ib.* p. 325.
- 27) *West. Larg. Cat.* 124-130.    28) *Ib.* 166.    29) *West. Conf.* 28:4f.
- 30) *Inst.* IV:3:4 and *Harm. Gosp.* III pp. 380f.    31) *West. Larg. Cat.* 155 & 159.    32) *Ib.* 167.
- 33) *West. Conf.* 13:1; 16:3; 19:7.    34) *Ib.* 20:4 & 23:1 & 26:2-3.    35) *West. Larg. Cat.* 53-54.
- 36) *West. Larg. Cat.* 191.    37) *The Subordinate Standards*, pp. 290f.    38) *Ib.* pp. 286f.
- 39) *Ib.* pp. v,vi,xiv,xv.    Cf. too the *West. Conf.* 8:8; and the *West. Larg. Cat.* 45, 52, 53, & 54.
- 40) Cf. the last words in any edition of K. Marx & F. Engels: *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848).

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## **ABOUT DR. FRANCIS NIGEL LEE**

Dr. Francis Nigel Lee was born in 1934 in the Westmorland County of Cumbria (in Great Britain). He is the great-grandson of a fiery preacher whose family disintegrated when he backslid. Dr. Lee's father was an Atheist, yet he married a Roman Catholic who raised her son Nigel Lee in that faith. Yet, when Nigel Lee was seven, his father led him into Atheism.

At the onset of the World War II, Nigel Lee's father was appointed by the Royal Navy as Chief Radar Officer (South Atlantic). So the family then moved to South Africa. There, Nigel became a Calvinist; had the great privilege of leading both of his parents to Christ; and then became a Minister of God's Word and Sacraments in the Dutch Reformed Church of Natal.

Emigrating to the U.S.A., Dr. Lee attended the very first General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America; transferred his ministerial credentials to that denomination; and pastored Congregations in Mississippi and Florida. He was also: Professor of Philosophy at Shelton College in N.J.; Visiting Lecturer in Apologetics at Reformed Theological Seminary in Jackson, Ms.; Staley Distinguished Visiting Lecturer at Covenant Theological Seminary in St. Louis; Research Scholar-in-Residence at the Christian Studies Center in Memphis; Academic Dean of Graham Bible College in Bristol, Tn.; and incidental Lecturer at several other Colleges, Seminaries, and Universities. He was at that time the only person in the World serving on the Executives of both the British Lord's Day Observance Society and the Lord's Day Alliance of the U.S.

Preacher, Theologian, Lawyer, Educationist, Historian, Philosopher and Author, Lee has produced more than 330 publications (including many books) -- and also a multitude of long unpublished manuscripts. Apart from an honorary LL.D., he has 21 earned degrees -- including eleven earned doctorates for dissertations\* in Education, Law, Literature, Philosophy and Theology.

After the murder of his father, Lee had the joy of leading his father's murderer in jail, and later also the latter's parents, to Christ. Though a dedicated student, Lee much prefers to preach and to lead the lost to the Saviour.

Lee rises early; reads God's Word in ten languages; then walks a couple of miles before breakfast. He has been round the World seven times; has visited 110 countries (several repeatedly); and also every Continent (except Antarctica). He is in demand as a Promoter of Doctoral Students in Australia, England, Germany, South Africa and the United States. He has also lectured and/or preached in all of those countries, as well as in Brazil, Scotland, Korea, Japan, Namibia, New Zealand, and Zambia.

A diehard predestinarian, Lee now lives in the Commonwealth of Australia -- where he was for twenty years the Professor of Systematic Theology and Caldwell-Morrow Lecturer in Church History at the Queensland Presbyterian Theological College. He and his wife Nellie retired in 2000. Both daughters are teachers.

- \* Th.D.: *The Covenantal Sabbath*
- Ph.D.: *Communist Eschatology*
- D.Min.: *Daily Family Worship*
- D.Ed.: *Catechizing Before Communion not prior to Puberty*
- S.T.D.: *Rebaptism Impossible!*
- D.R.E.: *Baby Belief Before Baptism!*
- D.Jur.: *Women Ministers & Australian Litigation*
- D.Litt.: *Holinshed on the Ancient British Isles*
- D.C.L.: *The Roots and Fruits of the Common Law*
- D.Hum.: *Tiny Human Life -- Abortion and IVF*
- D.Phil.: *Miracles -- What and When and Why?*