

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

Doctoral dissertation
(approximately 200,000 words)
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

Doctor in Religious Education (D.R.E.)
at
Dominion School of Education U.S.A.

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1991

Summary of covenant baby belief before baptism in the Bible

In our above pages, we have argued from Scripture alone. We have sought to demonstrate that, at least till a covenant child's possible 'later apostasy' -- 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 babies in the congregation of the faithful -- 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, 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. From the daily reading of the Sacred Scriptures by his godly mother (and/or grandmother), Timothy himself knew the Holy Bible even while a "faith"-ful fetus. Indeed, also 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**. See: 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 & 3:1-8 & 4: 1-8 & 6:11 & 7:14 & 12:13; Ephesians 1:13 & 4:4-6 & 6:1-4; 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.

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!'"

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 22:9ff & 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. Yet it was 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 *Didache* 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 insisted fetuses are con-scious, 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 -- included Hierax, Paeon, Papyrus, Maximus, Irenaeus of Sirmium, and Sabas. Athenagoras and Theodotus insisted 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*, which insists: "First baptize the little ones!"

Although Tertullian sadly shifted toward Semi-Montanism, he did not deny but clearly admitted the paidobaptism of the Early Church -- even tracing it back to the words of Christ in Luke 18:15ff. 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 many 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 the presumption of 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 customariness 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 circum-cision, and the New Testament teaches infant faith and infant baptism. Yet also Paganism and Judaism presuppose the privileged position of a religion-ist'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.

This is the testimony especially of: Clement of Rome; the *Didachee*; 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.

Summary of 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 circumcison. 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 seal-ed even infants. Chrysostom called baptism 'painless circumcison' -- 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 strongly

advoc-ated baptismal regenerationism, he sometimes also 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 sub-mersion. Plagued by ever-increasing baptismal regenerationism within, and by Neo-Semimanichaeian antipaidobaptist 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 -- in spite of their own misgivings about the regenerating 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 -- in 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 Script-ural 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 parti-cular 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 antirebapt-istic commitment to triune baptism. While castigating Rome for imprisoning the Church in 'Babylonian captivity' -- he sought to get people to under-stand 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 Anabapt-ists, Luther solidly upheld the Word of God -- against both the reaction-aries 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. In-deed, 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 1545ff 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 chal-lenging Romanism, they had also greatly obscured and indirectly discredited the work of Luther and Zwingli in the eyes of the Roman Catholic establish-ment.

Their violent opposition to non-anabaptistic baptisms in general (in-cluding those administered by Protestants) -- and to infant baptism and organized denominations in particular -- had brought Europe into a very ex-plosive 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 com-munity of goods -- and community of women. All of them downplayed the family, and thoroughly detested infant baptism. Yet they themselves re-baptized 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 Puritans' *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 catabapt-ist 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!

Summary of Calvin on baby belief before baptism

Against baptismal regeneration, Calvin taught the following. Firstly, all sons of Adam (except Jesus) are sinners -- from their very conception onward. 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.

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 rebuttably so) that all conceived in the covenant were to be regarded as already holy -- until and unless the contrary is ever evidenced later, during the course of their earthly lives.

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.

Further. Baptism is not for the dead nor for the dying but only for those deemed to be living (both spiritually and physically). And lastly, baptism should be given only to those who already seem to be believers (whether infants or adults).

To Calvin, baptism is only for believers (whether infants or adults). Because baptism is intended for believers alone, he opposed baptizing any-one 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 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 17:7ff; 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.

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 also reflected in writings co-authored by Knox -- such as the *First Scots Confession*, and the *First Book of Discipline*.

These same views were also affirmed in the great Guido de Bres' *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 Bres 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 cov-enant children (and again condemned the Anabaptists) -- in his *Second Helv-etic Confession*. This too was warmly upheld not only by Episcopalian Puri-tans 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 Arch-bishop 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*. Signifi-cantly, the latter condemned "that Roman Antichrist" with "his cruel judg-ment 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 con-stantly 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, Puppis, 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 1618ff 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 11:25ff that His Father had "revealed these things...to the little children." Too, 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, Udemann, 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 (almost all of whom live exclusively in the South-easternmost 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, there-in they twisted only such of the Puritans' teachings which uphold Presby-terian church government and paidobaptism.)

Incorporating the very best of both British and Continental Calvinism, the *Westminster Standards* themselves are accordingly both Anti-Romish and Anti-Anabaptist. They reflect the mature views of leading presumptive prepaidobaptismal regenerationists -- such as Westminster Fathers like Burgess, Gillespie, Lightfoot, Marshall, Reynolds, Rutherford, Twisse, Ussher and Wallis. Indeed, they accurately explain the paidobaptismal 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 in-fancy, 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 had the baptismal beliefs of the Bible been summarized so faith-fully as in these *Westminster Standards*! In a very real sense, the subse-quent history of baptismal theology is little more than a series of foot-notes 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.

Summary of baby belief ere baptism from Westminster till today

The *Westminster Standards* with their doctrine of prebaptismally faith-ful covenant infants was implicitly endorsed in its foreword *To the Christ-ian 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 the 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 contemp-oraries John Trapp, Richard Baxter, Christopher Love, Thomas Brooks, Wil-liam 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 cov-enant infants partake of regeneration. Vitringa: 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 a Marck: the infant seed of believ-ers 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 that 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 Plat-form*. The Mather's long professed this theology, and the Early American Scots-Irish Presbyterian 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 -- notably 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 was a watershed. Its victor, the catabaptist Thornwell, soon denounced covenant infants as 'enemies of Christ.' The Classic Calvinist Charles Hodge 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 distanced themselves from Thornwell's semi-baptistic aberrations. However, both the Northern and the Southern Presbyterians continued to capitulate to Baptistic antipaidofideism.

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 greatest ever American advocate of infant faith and infant 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 Herman 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 antipaidofideism of the British Baptist David Kingdon.

In Britain, even the Ex-Baptist Campbell Morgan strongly presumed the seed of faith within the children of believers. So too John Inchley. In-deed, 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. Rev. Prof. Dr. 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.

CONCLUSION: CHRISTIANITY'S BABY BELIEF BEFORE BAPTISM

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 11:6,9-13,23ff.

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 intertest-amental 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 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 millenium, from around 350 till about 1350 A.D. Yet even during those dark ages, there were always faithful witnesses -- like the Waldensi-ans, Wycliffe, Huss and the Bohemians -- who decisively rejected Rome's *ex opere operato* while yet maintaining Biblical paidobaptism against all anti-paidobaptist heresies.

With the Protestant Reformation, Luther generally asserted the prebap-tismal infant faith of covenant children. So did Zwingli, while further intimating the salvation of all early-dying babies. Calvin maintained the paidobaptism of tiny covenanters -- whose infant faith and election he re-buttably presumed.

Against Protestantism, only the Anabaptists then rejected infant bapt-ism -- 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 cate-chisms -- from those of John Calvin, right down to the *Westminster Stand-ards*. Even since the latter,

by far the majority of Reformed and even many Lutheran theologians have continued to assert: baby belief before baptism.

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 22:9ff & Luke 1:15-45.

Hence, regeneration generally precedes baptism. Genesis 15:5; 17:7ff; Mark 16:15ff; Acts 2:38ff; Romans 4:11ff; Colossians 2:11ff. 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 -- 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. So baptism 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: "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."

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.

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. He 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.

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 contra-ry 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 baptisms can at the most only seal already holy children as members of the Visible Church.

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.

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.

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.

The above is what Presbyterians and other Calvinists should teach also and especially 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 thus to be bap-tized accordingly.

Calvin's own views can be summed up in his *229th Letter*. There, he states that a child's salvation does not depend upon he or she being bap-tized. 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 Anabap-tists would be right in denying infants this sacrament -- as too they quite wrongly do!

For baptism is a sacrament, a holy oath. It is an oath sworn by be-lievers, 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 sens-ible 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 Sup- per.... 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 Corin-thians 7:14."

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 Chris-tian parents is evidence that infants have faith from the womb, I have no objection to baptize them."

We ourselves believe that, in our above pages, we have fulfilled Car-son'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 in-fants -- 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 confirm-atory 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 ex-actly the same truth in manifold writings -- from Dortd, through the *West-minster 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.

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 those like Rev. Dr. Gary Roper 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 16:15ff. 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 2:38ff *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 Isaia 59:21 -- and Colossians 2:11-13 & 3:20-21!

(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!" 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 antipaidobaptism (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 28:18ff and Revelation 7:2ff & 9:4 & 12:17 & 14:1 & 21:2,24 & 22:3ff -- we now call upon them all to repent of their antipaidobaptism. 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, "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 fore-heads.... 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!"

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