

scant from *Abraham*. And consequently that it depends purely upon the will of the Law-giver, to determine what shall be the sign of his Covenant, unto whom, at what season, and upon what terms, it shall be affixed.

If our brethren do suppose baptism to be the seal of the Covenant which God makes with every beleiver (of which the Scriptures are altogether silent) it is not our concern to contend with them herein; yet we conceive the seal of that Covenant is the indwelling of the Spirit of Christ in the particular and individual persons in whom he resides, and nothing else, neither do they or we suppose that baptism is in any such manner substituted in the place of circumcision, as to have the same (and no other) latitude, extent, or terms, then circumcision had; for that was suited only for the Male children, baptism is an ordinance suited for every beleiver, whether male, or femal. That extended to all the males that were born in *Abrahams* house, or bought with his money, equally with the males that pro-

ceeded from his own loynes ; but baptisme is not so far extended in any true Christian Church that we know of, as to be administred to all the poor infidel servants, that the members thereof purchase for their service, and introduce into their families ; nor to the children born of them in their house.

But we conceive the same parity of reasoning may hold for the ordinance of baptism as for that of circumcision ; *Exodus 12. 49. viz.* one law for the stranger, as for the home born : If any desire to be admitted to all the ordinances, and priviledges of Gods house, the door is open ; upon the same terms that any one person was ever admitted to all, or any of those priviledges, that belong to the Christian Church ; may all persons of right challenge the like admission.

As for that text of Scripture, Rom. 4. 11. *He received circumcision a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised ;* we conceive if the Apostles scope in that place be duly attended to, it will appear that no argument  
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can be taken from thence to inforce Infant baptism; and forasmuch as we find a full and fair account of those words given by the learned Dr. Lightfoot (a man not to be suspected of partiality in this controversie) in his *Hebræi*, on the *I Cor. 7. 19. p. 42, 43.* we shall transcribe his words at large, without any comment of our own upon them.

*Circumcisio nihil est ratione habitâ temporis, jam enim evanuerat, adimpleto præcipuè ejus sine ob quem fuerat instituta; Istum finem exhibet Apostolus in verbis istis Rom. 4.*

*II. σαρξίδια ἢ ἀνωθεν ἢ ἡσθεροβυστία.*

*At vereor ne a plerisque versionibus non satis aptentur ad finem circumcissionis, & scopum Apostoli,*

Circumcision is nothing, if we respect the time, for now it was without use, that end of it being especially fulfilled; for which it had been instituted: this end the Apostle declares in these words, *Rom. 4. 11. σαρξίδια, &c.* But I fear that by most translations they are not sufficiently suited to the end of circumcision

*dum ab iis interseri-  
tur aliquid de suo.*

cision, and the scope of the Apostle whilst something of their own is by them inserted.

And after the Doctor hath represented diverse versions of the words agreeing for the most part in sense with that which we have in our Bibles he thus proceeds.

*Alie in eundem  
sensum, ac si cir-  
cumciso daretur  
Abrahamo in si-  
gillum justitiæ istius,  
quam ille habuit, dum  
adhuc foret præputi-  
atus; quod non ne-  
gabimus aliquo modo  
verum esse, at credi-  
mus circumcisionem  
longe aliò præcipue  
respexisse.*

Other versions are to the same purpose; as if circumcision was given to *Abraham* for a Seal of that Righteousness which he had being yet uncircumcised, which we will not deny to be in some sense true, but we believe that circumcision had chiefly a far different respect.

Give

*Liceat mihi verba sic reddere. Et signum accepit circumcisionis, sigillum justitiæ fidei, quæ futura in præputio; quæ futura dico, non quæ fuerat. Non quæ fuerat Abrahamo adhuc præputiato, sed quæ futura semini ejus præputiato, id est, gentilibus, fidem olim Abrahami imitaturis.*

*Nunc advertite bene quâ occasione instituta Abrahamo circumcisis, ponens tibi ante oculos historiam ejus, Gen. 17.*

Give me leave thus to render the words; *And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the Righteousness of Faith, which was to be in the uncircumcision, Which was to be (I say) not which had been, not that which Abraham had whilst he was yet uncircumcised; but that which his uncircumcised seed should have, that is the Gentiles, who in time to come should imitate the faith of Abraham.*

Now consider well on what occasion circumcision was instituted unto Abraham, setting before

*Fit primò ei hæc promissio, Multarum Gentium eris tu pater (quoniam sensu explicat Apostolus, isto capite) & subinde subjungitur duplex sigillum rei corroborandæ; immutatio scilicet nominis Abrahæ in Abrahamum; & institutio circumcisionis: v. 4. Ecce mihi tecum est fœdus, eris tu pater multarum gentium. Quare vocatum est nomen ejus Abrahamus? In sigillationem hujus promissionis. Tu Pater eris multarum gentium. Et quare instituta ei cir-*

fore thine eyes the history thereof, Gen. 17.

This promise is first made unto him, *Thou shalt be the Father of many Nations* (in what sense the Apostle explaineth in that chapter) and then there is subjoined a double seal for the confirmation of the thing, to wit, the change of the name *Abram* into *Abraham*, and the institution of circumcision. v. 4. *Behold as for me, my Covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be the Father of many Nations.* Wherefore was his name called *Abraham*? for the sealing

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adeptur  
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Abrah  
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*cumcisio? In sigillati-  
onem ejusdem pro-  
missionis. Tu Pa-  
ter eris multarum  
Gentium. Ita ut hic  
sit sensus Apostoli, in-  
stitutioni circumci-  
sionis congruentissi-  
mus; accepit signum  
circumcisionis, sigil-  
lum justitiæ fidei,  
quam olim erat in-  
circumcisio (vel Gen-  
tiles) habitura &  
adeptura.*

ing of this promise:  
Thou shalt be the Fa-  
ther of many Nations  
And wherefore  
was circumcision in-  
stituted to him? For  
the sealing of the  
same promise. Thou  
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many Nations. So  
that this is the sense  
of the Apostle, most  
agreeable to the in-  
stitution of circum-  
cision; he received  
the sign of circum-  
cision, a seal of the  
Righteousness of  
Faith which in time  
to come the uncir-  
cumcision ( or the  
Gentiles ) should  
have and obtain.

*Duplex semen erat  
Abrahamo; naturale,  
Judeorum & fidele*

*Abraham had a  
twofold seed, natu-  
ral, of the Jews; and  
faithful*

gentilium credentium: signatur naturale signo circumcisionis, primo quidem in sui distinctionem, ab omnibus aliis gentibus, dum eæ non adhuc forent semen Abrahami; at præcipue in memoriam justificationis gentium per fidem, cum tandem forent ejus semen. Cessatura ergo merito erat circumcisio, cum introducerentur Gentiles ad fidem, quippe quod tunc finem suum ultimum ac præcipuum obtinuerat, et perinde  
 ἡ περιτομή ἐστὶν οὐδέν.

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 circumcision is nothing.

faithful, of the believing Gentiles: his natural seed was signed with the sign of circumcision, first indeed for the distinguishing of them from all other Nations whilst they as yet were not the seed of Abraham, but especially for the memorial of the justification of the Gentiles by faith, when at length they should become his seed. Therefore circumcision was of right to cease, when the Gentiles were brought in to the faith, forasmuch as then it had obtain-

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Thus far he, which we earnestly desire may be seriously weighed, for we plead not his authority, but the evidence of truth in his words.

3: Of whatsoever nature the holiness of the children mentioned, *1 Cor.* 7. 12. be, yet they who do conclude that all such children ( whether Infants or of riper years ) have from hence an immediate right to baptism, do as we conceive put more into the conclusion, then will be found in the premisses.

For although we do not determine positively concerning the Apostles scope in the holiness here mentioned, so as to say it is this, or that, and no other thing; Yet it is evident that the Apostle does by it determine not only the lawfulness but the expedience also of a believers cohabitation with an unbeliever, in the state of marriage.

And we do think that although the Apostles asserting of the unbelieving yoke-

yokefellow to be sanctified by the believer, should carry in it somewhat more than is in the bare marriage of two infidels, because although the marriage covenant have a divine sanction so as to make the wedlock of two unbelievers a lawful action, and their conjunction and cohabitation in that respect undefiled, yet there might be no ground to suppose from thence, that both or either of their persons are thereby sanctified; and the Apostle urges the cohabitation of a believer with an infidel in the state of wedlock from this ground that the unbelieving husband is *sanctified* by the believing wife; nevertheless here you have the influence of a believers faith *ascending from an inferior to a superior relation*; from the wife to the husband who is her head, *before it can descend to their off-spring*. And therefore we say, whatever be the nature or extent of the holiness here intended, we conceive it cannot convey to the children an immediate right to baptism; because it would then be of another nature, and of a larger extent, than the root,  
and

and original from whence it is derived ; for it is clear by the Apostles argument that holiness cannot be derived to the child from the sanctity of one parent only, if either father or mother be (in the sense intended by the Apostle) unholy or unclean, so will the child be also, therefore for the production of an holy seed it is necessary that both the Parents be sanctified ; and this the Apostle positively asserts in the first place to be done by the beleiving parent, although the other be an unbeliever ; and then consequentially from thence argues, the holiness of their children. Hence it follows, that as the children have no other holiness then what they derive from both their Parents ; so neither can they have any right by this holiness to any spiritual privilege but such as both their Parents did also partake of : and therefore if the unbelieving Parent ( though sanctified by the believing Parent ) have not thereby a right to baptism, neither can we conceive, that there is any such privilege, derived to the children by their birth-holiness.

Besides

Besides if it had been the usual practise in the Apostles dayes for the father or mother that did beleive, to bring all their children with them to be baptised; then the holiness of the beleiving *Corinthians* children, would not at all have been in question when this Epistle was written; but might have been argued from their passing under that ordinance, which represented their new birth, although they had derived no holiness from their Parents, by their first birth; and would have layen as an exception against the Apostles inference, *else were your Children unclean,* &c. But of the sanctification of all the children of every beleiver by this ordinance, or any other way, then what is beforementioned, the Scripture is altogether silent.

This may be also added; that if this birth holiness do qualifie all the children of every believer, for the ordinance of baptism; why not for all other ordinances? for the Lords Supper as was practised for a long time together? for if recourse be had to what the Scriptures

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speak generally of this subject; it will be found, that the same qualities which do intitle any person to baptism, do so also for the participation of all the Ordinances, and priviledges of the house of God, that are common to all believers.

Whosoever can and does interrogate his good Conscience towards God when he is baptised (as every one must do that makes it to himself a sign of Salvation) is capable of doing the same thing, in every other act of worship that he performs.

4. The arguments and inferences that are usually brought for, or against Infant baptism from those few instances which the Scriptures afford us of whole families being baptised; are only conjectural; and therefore cannot of themselves, be conclusive on either hand: yet in regard most that treat on this subject for Infant baptism, do (as they conceive) improve these instances to the advantage of their argument: we think it meet (in like manner as in the cases before mentioned so in this) to shew the invalidity of such inferences.

*Cornelius worshipped God with all his house, the Jaylor, and Crispus the chief ruler of the Synagogue, believed God with each of their houses. The household of Stephanus addicted themselves to the Ministry of the Saints: so, that thus far Worshipping, and Believing runs parallel with Baptism.* And if *Lydia*, had been a married person, when she believed, it is probable her husband would also have been named by the Apostle, as in like cases, inasmuch as he would have been not only a part, but the head of that baptised household.

Who can assign any probable reason, why the Apostle should make mention of four or five households being baptised and no more? or why he does so often vary in the method of his salutations, *Rom. 1. 6.* sometimes mentioning only particular persons of great note, other times such, and the Church in their house? the Saints that were with them; and them belonging to *Narcissus*, who were in the Lord; thus saluting either whole families, or part of families, or only particular persons in families,

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milies, considered as they were in the Lord, for if it had been an usual practise to baptize all children, with their parents; there were then many thousands of the Jews which believed, and a great number of the Gentiles, in most of the principal Cities in the World, and among so many thousands, it is more then probable there would have been some thousands of households baptised; why then should the Apostle in this respect signalize one family of the Jews and three or four of the Gentiles, as particular instances in a case that was common? whoever supposes that we do willfully debar our children, from the benefit of any promise, or priviledge, that of right belongs to the children of believing parents; they do entertain over severe thoughts of us: to be without natural affections is one of the characters of the worst of persons, in the worst of times. Wee do freely confesse our selves guilty before the Lord, in that we have not with more circumspection and diligence train'd up those that relate to us in the fear of the Lord;

and do humbly and earnestly pray, that our omissions herein may be remitted, and that they may not redound to the prejudice of our selves, or any of ours: but with respect to that duty that is incumbent on us, we acknowledge our selves obliged by the precepts of God, to bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, to teach them his fear, both by instruction and example; and should we set light by this precept, it would demonstrate that we are more vile than the unnatural Heathen, that like not to retain God in their knowledge, our baptism might then be justly accompted, as no baptism to us.

There are many special promises that do encourage us aswell as precepts, that do oblige us to the close pursuit of our duty herein: that God whom we serve, being jealous of his Worship, threatens the visiting of the Fathers transgression upon the children to the third and fourth generation of them that hate him: yet does more abundantly extend his mercy, even to thousands (respecting the offspring



spring and succeeding generations) of them that love him, and keep his commands.

When our Lord rebuked his disciples for prohibiting the access of little children that were brought to him, that he might pray over them, lay his hands upon them, and blesse them, does declare, *that of such is the Kingdom of God.* And the Apostle *Peter* in answer to their enquiry, that desired to know what they must do to be saved, does not only instruct them in the necessary duty of repentance and baptism; but does also thereto encourage them, by that promise which had reference both to them, and their children; if our Lord Jesus in the forementioned place, do not respect the qualities of children (as elsewhere) as to their meekness, humility, and sincerity, and the like; but intend also that those very persons and such like, appertain to the Kingdom of God, and if the Apostle *Peter* in mentioning the aforesaid promise, do respect not only the present and succeeding generations of those Jews, that heard him,

(in which sense the same phrase doth occur in Scripture) but also the immediate off-spring of his auditors; whether the promise relate to the gift of the Holy Spirit, or of eternal life, or any grace, or priviledge tending to the obtaining thereof; it is neither our concerne nor our interest to confine the mercies, and promises of God, to a more narrow, or lesse compasse then he is pleased gratuitously to offer and intend them; nor to have a light esteem of them; but are obliged in duty to God, and affection to our children; to plead earnestly with God and use our utmost endeavours that both our selves, and our off-spring may be partakers of his Mercies and gracious Promises: yet we cannot from either of these texts collect a sufficient warrant for us to baptize our children before they are instructed in the principles of the Christian Religion.

For as to the instance in little children, it seems by the disciples forbidding them, that they were brought upon some other account, not so frequent as Baptism must  
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be supposed to have been, if from the beginning believers children had been admitted thereto : and no account is given whether their parents were baptised believers or not ; and as to the instance of the Apostle ; if the following words and practise, may be taken as an interpretation of the scope of that promise we cannot conceive it does refer to infant baptism, because the text does presently subjoyn ; *Then they that gladly received the word were baptised.*

That there were some believing children of believing parents in the Apostles dayes is evident from the Scriptures, even such as were then in their fathers family, and under their parents tuition, and education ; to whom the Apostle in several of his Epistles to the Churches, giveth commands to obey their parents in the Lord ; and does allure their tender years to hearken to this precept, by reminding them that it is the first command with promise.

And it is recorded by him for the praise of *Timothy*, and encouragement of parents,

rents betimes to instaruct, and children early to attend to godly instruction, that *And Epéous* from a child, he had known the holy Scriptures.

The Apostle *John* rejoiced greatly when he found of the children of the Elect Lady walking in the truth; and the children of her Elect Sister joyn with the Apostle in his salutation.

But that this was not generally so, that all the children of believers were accounted for believers (as they would have been if they had been all baptised) may be collected from the character which the Apostle gives of persons fit to be chosen to Eldership in the Church which was not common to all believers; among others this is expressly one, *viz. If there be any having believing, or faithful children*, not accused of Riot or unruly; and we may from the Apostles writings on the same subject collect the reason of this qualification, *viz.* That in case the person designed for this office to teach and rule in the house of God, had children capable of it; there might be first a proof of his

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his ability, industry, and successe in this work in his own family ; and private capacity, before he was ordained to the exercise of this authority in the Church, in a publick capacity, as a Bishop in the house of God.

These things we have mentioned as having a direct reference unto the controversie between our brethren and us ; other things that are more abstruse and prolix, which are frequently introduced into this controversie, but do not necessarily concern it, we have purposely avoided ; that the distance between us and our brethren may not be by us made more wide ; for it is our duty, and concern so far as is possible for us (retaining a good conscience towards God) to seek a more entire agreement and reconciliation with them.

We are not insensible that as to the order of Gods house, and entire communion therein there are some things wherein we (as well as others) are not at a full accord among our selves, as for instance ; the  
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known principle, and state of the consciences of diverse of us, that have agreed in this Confession is such; that we cannot hold Church-communion, with any other then Baptized-believers, and Churches constituted of such; yet some others of us have a greater liberty and freedom in our spirits that way; and therefore we have purposely omitted the mention of things of that nature, that we might concur, in giving this evidence of our agreement, both among our selves, and with other good Christians, in those important articles of the Christian Religion, mainly insisted on by us: and this notwithstanding we all esteem it our chief concern, both among our selves, and all others that in every place call upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours, and love him in sincerity, to endeavour to keep the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace; and in order thereunto, to exercise all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love.

And we are perswaded if the same method

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thod were introduced into frequent practise between us and our Christian friends who agree with us in all the fundamental articles of the Christian faith (though they do not so in the subject and administration of baptism) it would soon beget a better understanding, and brotherly affection between us.

In the beginning of the Christian Church, when the doctrine of the baptism of *Christ* was not universally understood, yet those that knew only the baptism of *John*, were the Disciples of the Lord Jesus; and *Apollos* an eminent Minister of the Gospel of Jesus.

In the beginning of the reformation of the Christian Church, and recovery from that *Egyptian* darkness wherein our forefathers for many generations were held in bondage; upon recourse had to the Scriptures of truth, different apprehensions were conceived, which are to this time continued, concerning the practise of this Ordinance.

Let not our zeal herein be misinterpreted: that God whom we serve is jealous  
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of his worship. By his gracious providence the Law thereof, is continued amongst us; and we are forewarned by what hapned in the Church of the Jews, that it is necessary for every generation, and that frequently in every generation to consult the divine oracle, compare our worship with the rule, and take heed to what doctrines we receive and practise.

If the ten commands exhibited in the popish Idolatrous service books had been received as the entire law of God, because they agree in number with his ten commands, and also in the substance of nine of them; the second Commandment forbidding Idolatry had been utterly lost.

If *Ezra* and *Nehemiah* had not made a diligent search into the particular parts of Gods law, and his worship; the Feast of Tabernacles (which for many centuries of years, had not been duly observed, according to the institution, though it was retained in the general notion) would not have been kept in due order.



So may it be now as to many things relating to the service of God, which do retain the names proper to them in their first institution, but yet through inadvertency (where there is no sinister design) may vary in their circumstances, from their first institution. And if by means of any antient defect, or of that general corruption of the service of God, and interruption of his true worship, and persecution of his servants by the Antichristian Bishop of *Rome*, for many generations; those who do consult the Word of God, cannot yet arrive at a full and mutual satisfaction among themselves, what was the practise of the primitive Christian Church, in some points relating to the *Worship* of God: yet inasmuch as these things are not of the essence of Christianity, but that we agree in the fundamental doctrines thereof, we do apprehend, there is sufficient ground to lay aside all bitterness and prejudice, and in the spirit of love and meekness to embrace

brace and own each other therein ; leaving each other at liberty to perform such other services, wherein we cannot concur) apart unto God, according to the best of our understanding.

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**F I N I S.**

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