

## **The Catechist Catechised – A Defence of Infant Baptism**

**by Richard Hollingworth**

In the 17th Century, an Anabaptist catechism was being circulated, which has been identified by Rev. Dr Whitley, Secretary of the Baptist Historical Society, as Christopher Blackwood's "*A Soul-searching Catechism*" etc., 1652 or 1653, a reprint of portion of Blackwood's "*The Storming of Antichrist*" 1644. Richard Hollingworth from Manchester wrote this article as a rebuff to each point in that Catechism, ably defending the doctrine of Infant Baptism.

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Sir,

There is an Anabaptistical Catechism that walks abroad, lately directed to Lancashire; when it is of age and can answer for itself you shall know the name of it\*; it is but newly brought forth to this county, and therefore not christened. If you meet with it, it would be a good work to Lancashire in which you dwell, to the town of Manchester the place of your nativity and ministry, to make some annotations of it; a few smooth stones out of soft Siloam hurled out of your sling might lay it dead; a friendly arrow shot beyond it may give warning that there is danger. I would not engage you to the contest with this A.B.C. but that error is a springing leprosy in contagious times. Worms in children may turn to the plague. A few vacant hours will serve the business, and satisfy earnest desire of

Sir, your brother and fellow labourer in the work of Christ,

Richard Heyricke

January 1, 1652

\*see above

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To all in Lancashire,

that love and seek the Lord in all His soul-filling ordinances, especially them of the associated churches about Manchester.

Dearly Beloved, and longed for, our joy and crown;

You shall with more praise to God, light and stability to yourselves, read the ensuing treatise, if you first consider, and lament, that (for abuse of ordinances) Satan, transforming himself into an angel of light, hath undermined all ordinances of divine light and life. The Lord's Day not moral, public solemn assemblies turned into house meetings, public ministry exchanged for private conferences,

public preaching of the Word common to gifted brethren with called ministers; no prayer but when the Spirit moves, no communion in the Supper but in churches newly gathered, and no baptism for infants. No wonder that religious ordinances be thus undermined, when the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, the deity of Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost, the divine authority of the Scriptures, the obligation of the Decalogue, and other fundamentals of faith, holiness and righteousness, are, by the ministers of the prince of darkness, professedly overturned. No wonder that children are unchurched, when so many churches are unchurched, many of them that have done the former having begun the latter. They who would not be saved by ordinances, shall perish for want of ordinances; and they that would not unite themselves to the fountain of life by faith, shall be separated from the streams and conveyances of life, that they may apparently wither and die. Only upon the living in Jerusalem that by the subtilty of delusion, or power of interest, are darkened and benumbed, pray and weep that the Sun of Righteousness may arise with healing in His wings. But the ordinances, being the purchase of Christ's blood, as well as the church, the gifts of His Princely government, the ensigns of His victory over the kingdom of darkness, and of His glorious ascension; He will by His sovereign power maintain; and to that end successively ennoble the spirits of some with beams of heavenly light and courage, that they shall discover the stratagems of opposers, and adventure upon their armies marshalled against them, and triumphantly overcome by His glorious power, redeeming the captived ordinances of their king unto a just and glorious liberty. This being so high a favour from Christ, the glory of His grace and power, it is most thankfully to be accepted, and His instruments to be had in honour, by all that rejoice in the glory of His kingdom. His ministers He hath designed to be the executors of His Last Will and Testament; to them it belongs by divine appointment, to give out the several legacies there bequeathed, and to put in suit all them, in the High Court of sacred Scripture, who shall, upon any pretence whatsoever, detain any legacy bequeathed. And where will their faithfulness more appear than to open their mouth for the dumb, and to sue for children's rights, whilst they are forcibly wronged and unable to right themselves? Where is greater trust and more shining fidelity? The right of infants to baptism hath of late been openly impleaded in reference to Lancashire, and the bill printed to be published there in special, with expectation of the concurrence of the godly. But, blessed be God, one of the Lord's executors (in Manchester, where part-taking was most desired and expected) hath wisely and faithfully joined issue, and by clear evidence hath procured a determinate sentence for the settling of their undoubted right upon infants, to our great comfort and the honour of the kingdom of Christ, in the right whereof, infants are rightly baptised. And our hope in the Lord Jesus is that the questioning of the right of infants, and the shaking of their title, will have that influence upon all the godly in Lancashire, especially parents (peculiarly in Manchester, and the rest of the associated churches) that out of enflamed love to Christ and the souls of their children, they will so much the more settle their judgments in this truth, by the conscionable and diligent use of this help, provided by the Lord amongst them, so seasonably in respect of danger, and so suitably in respect of clearness, brevity and charge; that will happily lead to the believing, repenting and prayerful use of this ordinance, which is the Covenant way of conveying to their children the sure and saving mercies of the Covenant. So shall they, and others, who have seen the holy seal set on in infancy, clearly behold in their holy life, the lively characters of the spirit of the Covenant, the image of the Lord Jesus in their riper years; to their own abundant satisfaction, the silencing of adversaries, the increase of the church mystical, the encouragement of them that have carefully and painfully pleaded their right; and above all, the honour of the Lord Jesus, who in their infancy opened unto them His arms and bosom in His church, that in an hidden way He might warm them with a spiritual life, to be maintained in due time. In this hope we pray for you and labour amongst you, that we might present parents and children in Covenant-obedience and blessing, at that great Day. This is the principal desire and soul-travail of the Lord's unworthy servants, who in reference to

infants do rejoice in our ministry:

John Angers  
John Harison  
Nathaniel Rathband  
William Meek  
March 10, 1652

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### **Author's Preface to the Christian Reader**

In these times, the Lord's builders are compelled while they with one hand work in the work, with the other hand to hold the weapon. Some wise master builders have been valiant for the doctrine and practice of Paedobaptism, whilst others have bent their tongues like a bow against it. Some of them I have seen, and made use of; some I have heard of, not seen; others (possibly) there are which I have neither seen nor heard of. However, I desire that if any wisdom or strength be discerned in this examination, it may be esteemed first God's, then theirs; the weakness hereof is not theirs (much less God's or the cause's) but mine own; yet I humbly hope this poor pains will be acceptable to God, the chiefest master builder and captain of His Host, and also (thou helping together with thy prayers) profitable to thee His servant and soldier. Satan, our grand enemy would prevail (if he could) for such a gross renunciation of baptism (received in infancy) as witches, wizards (his devoted vassals) and open apostates, do make. But having no hope at first to prevail so far, he endeavours to bring us by a pretence of purity to such denial and renunciation of infant baptism as the Anabaptists do make, which hath been very advantageous to his kingdom as well in Germany as in other places; the more sad it is to see that some reputed, yea (possibly) real saints, do in the simplicity of their hearts act and argue for him in this business, as Peter did in another (Matthew 16:22,23).

The various turnings, crooked ways and windings of the serpent in this controversy (as I could in so short a time and piece) I have endeavoured to discover, and to make the paths of the Lord straight and plain to His people. Repetitions (for brevity's sake) I have avoided, even where they might have been somewhat useful, by reason of which some parts hereof taken by themselves may seem more dark and defective than (I hope) they will be found if thou compare one place with another, and spare thy censure of any part till thou hast read the whole. I have kept close to the main matter, *viz.* infant baptism, not omitting any objection of the catechist against it; but I have purposely slighted by-matters, lest this book should be voluminous, or I seem to be contentious above what is meet. I have desired to speak rationally to the cause, and durst not bring any railing accusation against persons. My comfort is this, the testimony of my conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity I have managed this matter, not daring to talk deceitfully for God, or willing to wrong any. The worst I wish to my antagonists in this cause, is that both they and I might be ready to receive every revealed truth of God both in the light and love of it.

Richard Hollingworth

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## The Catechist Catechised

or *An Examination of an Anabaptistical Catechism, pretended to be published for the satisfaction and information of the people of God in Lancashire etc.*

by Richard Hollingworth

ANABAPTIST CATECHISM Q.1:

“Q. Who are fit subjects for baptism?

A. *Only such as believe* (Acts 8:12,37; 16:34; 18:8; Matthew 28:19), and such as repent (Acts 2:38; Matthew 3:6).”

1. None of these texts severally, nor all of them jointly, do prove that only such as believe, and such as repent, are fit subjects for baptism. Nor do they so much as show that any son or daughter of Christian parents (such as we baptise in infancy) did believe, or repent, or make profession of faith and repentance, before they were, or could be, admitted to baptism.

Acts 16:34 doth not evince that the jailer’s house or family rejoiced, or believed (as you seem to understand it); for the text (the Greek being of the singular number) may thus be read: He “*believing, rejoiced*” or “*expressed his joy* (having believed) *in all his house,*” by feasting Paul and Silas in his house, “*whither he had brought them*” (v.34). Or, (if by “*house*” be meant his family) he rejoiced in, or amongst, his family, because of the promise made to him (v.31) that, if he did believe in the Lord Jesus Christ (as he now did), he should be saved, and his house. And, if any infants of the jailer might be in the number of those that should be saved (as you will confess they might), why might they not be also in the number of those that were baptised? Besides, this “*believing,*” of whomsoever it is spoken, is not in the text expressed to have been before they were baptised. For it is said (v.33) that “*he and all his were baptised straightway,*” or immediately; after which, “*he brought them into his house, set meat before them, believing in God.*”<sup>1</sup>

So this very chapter (vv.14,15) saith of Lydia, that Paul preached to her, and she heard and “*attended to those things that were spoken of Paul.*” But none of these things are spoken of her house, yet they were baptised as well as she. It is true, it is said that Paul preached to the jailer and “*to all that were in his house*” (v.32), and that Crispus “*believed in the Lord with all his house*” (Acts 18:8). Yet this (you know) doth not show that there were none but actual believers in the household. Abraham (Genesis 18:19) is said to command his children and servants to keep God’s way; and surely his house might be called a “*believing house.*” And now we call godly families, “*praying families,*” though there be children in them not capable of understanding or obeying the Word, or of actual believing and praying.

Now seeing the jailer, Lydia, and their, and other households, are said to be baptised (as Abraham and his house were circumcised [Genesis 17]); and seeing children are part of the household, and often included (if not chiefly intended) under that name (1 Timothy 5:8; Genesis 18:19; 45:18; 46:5 with Exodus 1:1; 1 Samuel 20:15; 1 Kings 17:12,13, with 15), and that there are so few families without little ones; who dare affirm, and can prove, that there were none in these families? Or that they were excluded from baptism, seeing the Scripture doth not exclude them (as elsewhere, upon just cause, it expressly doth [Genesis 50:8])? Nor do we read of whole households admitted to the

Lord's Supper, as we do to baptism, though your principles are as much for the one as for the other: so that some texts, by you brought to overthrow infant baptism, do afford, at least, a very probable argument for it.

2. Matthew 3:6 names "*confessing of sin*" (which is oft not<sup>2</sup> too far from repentance), probably to God, not to John; or if to John, not a particular confession of each of them by himself (which papists from hence urge); for it was not possible for John to hear the particular confessions of so many as for their multitude deserved to be called "*Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan*" (v.5) in any convenient time. But, whatsoever confession it was, it seems it was not before their baptism (as you would have it) but after. For it saith, they were baptised, not "*having confessed*," but "*confessing*" their sins. And it is not said they were baptised because they had repented, but rather, on the contrary, that John's baptism was a baptism "*unto repentance*" (v.11). This, you know, is consistent enough with infant baptism. As for Acts 2:38, it is probable that repentance, to which (notwithstanding their "*being pricked in their hearts*" [v.37]) the apostle exhorts, was in them only *in fieri*<sup>3</sup> before their baptism; for, immediately after this exhortation, they were baptised. And there could not be time to question three thousand in one day after sermon (which, consisting of many main points, must needs be long; and three of the twelve hours of the day being spent before it begun [v.15]), so as to make strict enquiry into, and to take distinct notice of the repentance of each of them. Of Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:38; and Matthew 3:6; more hereafter.

3. Suppose your texts do show that the Samaritans, the eunuch, the jailer, the Corinthians, and others, which were then adult, and formerly either of the Jewish or heathenish religion, did believe or profess faith and repentance, and were baptised; that is nothing to paedobaptists, who never held that a Jew or heathen should be baptised without profession of faith, but grant further, that actual believers or professors are indeed the primary and immediate subject of baptism, and in their own right; and their children are but the secondary subject, and may not be baptised, but by a capacity derived unto them; and at that time Christian churches were but ingathering, not gathered. The foundation was not to be laid in infants, not in infants only. And the sacred story relating the manner of founding churches, hath not so much occasion to speak of the baptism of infants, the secondary subject, as of actual believers, the primary.

God created the first man and woman of a perfect age, though all their posterity were born infants. At first, men of age were circumcised (Genesis 17:24 with 14:14); and again after some intermission of that ordinance (Joshua 5:4). And, if any nation had been proselytised, their men of age must first have been taught or disciplined, and have made profession of faith, before they should have been circumcised; though, in the settled condition of the Jewish church, child circumcision was most in use. If believers and penitents ought to be baptised, will it thence follow that none but they only are to be baptised? The rule is, *A proprio primo modo ad proprium secundo modo non valet argumentum*: all crows are black, therefore none but only crows are black, is no good argument. If it were granted that infant baptism cannot be proved by those texts, yet it will not follow that it cannot be proved by any other texts. Women's admission to the Supper, though it cannot be proved by Matthew 26; Mark 14; Luke 22 (Christ admitting only men), may notwithstanding be proved by other Scriptures. Your notion that none are to be baptised, but such as they were whose baptism is mentioned Acts 8:12,37 etc., 16:34 etc., is by some further improved, saying: All those were such believers as had been in person Jews or heathens, and therefore such only are to be baptised; and those that have Christian parents, and were educated in Christianity from their childhood, are not (at least not by virtue of any of those texts) to be baptised at all, neither in infancy, nor when they make profession. As they in their case, so also you in your case

are to blame, to insert into your answer the word “*only*,” which you find in none of your texts. Our Scripture grounds for infant baptism you shall hear anon, in answer to Q. 10.

#### ANABAPTIST CATECHISM Q.2:

“Q. What grounds have you against infant baptism?

A. *Many; but chiefly Christ’s commission (Matthew 28:19), where the subjects of baptism are those that are made disciples, and this commission is to last to the world’s end (v.20), and reacheth to every creature that is to partake of baptism (Mark 16:15,16).”*

1. Matthew 28:19 is not the first commission for baptising, no more than for preaching. John Baptist (Matthew 3), and Christ’s disciples (John 4:1,2) did baptise before this, and had commission for it (John 1:33; Matthew 21:25,26), which Christ confirmed by His being baptised by John (Matthew 3:13). Yea, we have express examples in Jewish records of a baptism, which was a rite of initiation into the Jewish church, a concomitant of circumcision, if not more ancient. So Jacob, admitting the preserved Shechemites into communion (all of age being women), bade them be washed or baptised or cleansed by washing (Genesis 35:2), which is the reason why a Jewish proselyte is in Arianus<sup>4</sup> called a “*baptised person*.” Hence, the Jews did not question John’s baptism as a new and unusual rite (they were already well acquainted with it), but his authority to administer it. Grotius<sup>5</sup> on Matthew 3:6 conceives it was begun upon occasion, and to preserve the memory of, the purging of the world by the deluge, and that Peter (1 Peter 3:21) signifies so much, calling baptism the antitype and figure of it. And the infants of the Jews were thus admitted, as well as the proselyte, for “*one ordinance*” was for both (Numbers 15:15). And thus the Hebrew doctors assert (notwithstanding Matthew 3:6, to the contrary, pretends that the proselytes only were baptised, because they were unclean) that Israel as well as others, entered into covenant: males by three things, *viz.* circumcision, baptism, and offering; females only by the two last.

Now, as Christ, abolishing the Passover, took the postcoenium, or common custom used at the Passover, of the master of the family breaking a piece of bread, and distributing it and a cup of wine amongst the company, to be materials of the Lord’s Supper; so He (abolishing circumcision and offering) advanced this ancient, usual, unquestionable concomitant of circumcision, and of the initiation of males, females, infants, or others, into the church, to be a sacrament of the New Testament; the use whereof and the persons to whom it should be administered, being then ordinarily and commonly known, the Scripture did not need to record the commission or warrant given to John, or that the Jews had long before, for their baptising. It was enough that there is not the least hint in the Word that baptism, when advanced to be a divine sacrament of the New Testament, should not be applied to infants as it was before. Indeed, when the apostles’ commission was to be enlarged to “*all nations*” (this being a new thing, and rarely known or believed), it was needful that it should be set down *in terminis*<sup>7</sup>, as it here is. And yet this gospel was not written till about eight years after the ascension of Christ, and other gospels were written some years after this; the Jewish church, all this while, being guided by the Old Testament, and observing the Jewish lawful rites and customs, and this of baptising doubtless amongst others.

2. You say: “*the subjects of baptism in the text are such as are made disciples, and therefore Christ’s commission is against any other being baptised, particularly against infant baptism.*” But may not I as solidly argue:

(1.) the persons here commissioned to baptise are such as were made apostles, had the gift of tongues; they were to go to all nations: therefore, none but apostles are to baptise? or

(2.) that none are to be baptised, but such, as by teaching or preaching the gospel to them are made disciples, though they be (as you know it is possible), converted by other means?

These inferences, though weak, are as strong as yours. For suppose the apostles, being to baptise the nations or heathens (for to that the Greek relates, notwithstanding the gender here, as well as Acts 15:17; 28:28; 13:48; Romans 2:14,15), were to preach to them, and thereby make them disciples, doth that forbid that those that are already discipled should have their children baptised? None but disciples were to be circumcised amongst the Jews (Acts 15:10), and yet children were circumcised. If the Lord had given commission to Isaiah and Jeremiah or any other, to proselytise all, or some nations, it had not been any whit incongruous and inconsistent with child circumcision, if the commission had run in these very words: “go teach all nations,” or “this or that nation,” and “heathen people,” and “circumcise them;” and how then can the like speech be contrary to infant baptism, especially seeing it was a thing so commonly known that infants were baptised as well as circumcised? See section 1 above. And infants are as considerable a part of the other nations, as they were of the Jews, in reference to whom other people were called “heathen.” And all nations (i.e. some of all nations or some of each sort in the nations), infants amongst others, “*should be blessed in Abraham*” (Genesis 18:18). He saith not, “grown persons,” much less doth He say, “grown persons only,” but “*all nations.*” Nor is there any appearance of taking away, by this text, any privilege from Jewish believers or their children, but only of enlarging their privileges unto the Gentiles. The apostles being commanded that, as they had preached the gospel and sacramentally initiated the Jews only, so now they should do the same to others also.

3. If you insist upon the order of the words, and argue thence that “*teaching*” (as the word is translated) must go before “*baptising*,” you know there is no necessity that what is set first in Scripture must always be done first. Sometimes preaching is put before baptising, and sometimes baptising before preaching (Mark 1:4); sometimes repentance before faith (Mark 1:15); glory before virtue (2 Peter 1:3) etc. And here, as teaching is put before baptism, so it is also put after baptism (v.20). To avoid tautology in the words, “go teach baptising teaching,” some godly learned men conceive the Greek word should be translated “*make disciples*” or “*disciple*” all nations, which was the end of their mission; baptising and teaching them, were the means of discipling them; whether they be set down in exact order of time or no, is not material. You (it seems) urge the word in this sense, and say in effect that infants are not disciples. It is answered both, that the phrase “*to disciple*” or “*make disciples*” answers an Hebrew phrase among the Rabbins<sup>8</sup> (the New Testament frequently using their phrases in their sense) which signifies “admission to be taught,” though they were not yet taught, and in common use. Children the first day they go to school, before they know any letter, or have any actual willingness to learn, are called scholars (the same with disciples) of such a master. And he that is listed in an army is called a soldier, though possibly he knows little or nothing of the art military.

And infants are disciples in the sense and language of Scripture, as Acts 15:10, “*those upon whose neck the yoke*” of circumcision (for of that he speaks, as appears by vv. 1, 5, 24) “*was put,*” were not only nor mostly adult, but infants. Nor did the synod determine against the circumcision of grown men only, but also of infants. Children are evidently called “*God’s servants*” (Leviticus 25:41,42), and they are as well disciples, as servants.

If Adam had not fallen, his children should have been disciples and servants of God (and so was Christ in His minority), notwithstanding their infancy. Besides, it appears by comparing Matthew 10:42 and 18:3-5; Luke 9:47,48. and Mark 9:41, that the same persons which belong to Christ (from which privilege infants in general are not warrantably excluded) are also the disciples of Christ; and that infants are quickly capable of knowing mothers and nurses from others, of being taught actions and gestures by them, and sensible of other things, is very evident. Much more are they capable of being taught by Christ, whose disciples they are, according to that promise, a part of the new Covenant (Jeremiah 31:34; Isaiah 54:13) (others being but God's ushers and petmasters<sup>9</sup> Ephesians 6:2), their souls being as capable of being taught by God a Spirit and Father of spirits in their minor, as in their riper years. And experience teacheth that some (not to mention Jeremiah and John Baptist), being sanctified from their infancy (so far as can possibly be discerned by men), have chosen the good and hated the evil: a thing which neither their own nature nor the art of man could teach them.

When parents believe, God makes Himself over to them and theirs to be their God and to teach them, and they make themselves and theirs over to Him to be His people and disciples. And so children are discipled when their parents are; and if they are discipled, then, by your own argument, they are fit subjects of baptism by virtue of Christ's commission. Thus, that which you call your chief argument against paedobaptism appears for it, not against it. Christ's command of discipling all nations and baptising them, doth not exclude a part, and great part too, of the disciples of the nations. *Et non restringendum ubi Scriptura non restringit*: if the Scripture doth not limit itself, we must not limit it. You could tell us of households without children, but surely you will not tell us of nations without children.

As for the "*lasting of this commission to the world's end, and the reaching of it to every creature that is to partake of baptism*" (Mark 16:15,16); if you will maintain the very same commission in Matthew 28 and Mark 16 to reach as far and to last as long, and to be unalterable in anything, you should clear up these three things:

- (1.) that some persons are now commissioned from God (as the apostles hereby were) to go into all the world, and to teach all nations.
- (2.) that casting of devils, speaking with tongues, healing the sick, etc., as mentioned in Mark 16, are to be perpetually in the church.
- (3.) that infants are there intended under the name "*every creature,*" and of them God doth require actual believing, as of as great or greater necessity to salvation than to baptism.

The words are not, "*He that believeth not, shall not be baptised,*" but "*shall be damned.*" And are you as confident that all infants are damned, as you are that none of them should be baptised? I wonder you dare urge this text against infant baptism, which your own heart tells you is as much or more against their salvation, than against their baptism. For my part, I conceive infants are not to be screwed up<sup>10</sup> to that proportion which God requires of adult persons: "*The Lord will take vengeance on them that know not God, that obey not His gospel*" (2 Thessalonians 1:8), and "*Every tree that brings not forth good fruit is hewn down*" etc. (Matthew 3:10). Must, therefore, infants either know God, obey the gospel, and bring forth fruit, or be damned? May we not feed and clothe infants, because the Word saith, "*He that will not labour, must not eat*" (2 Thessalonians 3:10)? Might not the Jews admit infants into the visible church, because the Psalmist describes the citizen of Zion

(you say a church member) “*walking uprightly, working righteousness, speaking the truth in love, contemning vile persons*”? etc. (Psalm 15:1-4). The application is easy.

### ANABAPTIST CATECHISM Q.3:

“Q. What other grounds have you against infant baptism?

A. *Infants are not fit subjects for baptism because they do not believe, they have not reason to discern between good and evil (Deuteronomy 1:39). Faith is an act of the understanding, which cometh by hearing, as well as an act of the will; and it is unlawful to baptise persons without they believe (Acts 8:37). If thou believest, it is lawful (Acts 10:47; 8:12; 18:8).”*

1. All the texts you now produce have been answered before in the first chapter, save Acts 10:47, from which you may collect that those that had the “*gift of the Holy Ghost*” (as it is called v.45) and could “*speak with tongues*” (v.46) were to be baptised. But surely you will not infer thence, that those that have not the said gifts are not to be baptised. If you do, you will deny all baptism that is nowadays, and turn Seeker<sup>11</sup>. But as by your principles you hold confession of faith and repentance sufficient to baptism, without those gifts; so you should show that the aforesaid gift, and speaking with tongues, was instead of their believing and repenting; or else confess you impertinently allege this text.

2. I must now ask you once for all, what you mean by “*believers*”? Whether such only as have a true justifying faith; or all that make profession of faith, whether indeed and in truth they have a true justifying faith or no? The first is requisite *in foro Dei, & conscientiae, & ex parte baptizati*<sup>12</sup>: that our baptism may be acceptable to God, and comfortable to us (1 Peter 3:21). So the eunuch, desiring baptism with the saving benefit thereof, and asking, not, “*What doth hinder thee from baptising me?*” but, “*What doth hinder me?*” was answered, “*If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest.*” But *in foro ecclesiae, & ex parte baptizatis*<sup>13</sup>: the latter sufficeth for admission, yourself being judge. No Scripture rule was transgressed when Judas, Simon Magus, Ananias, and Sapphira were baptised. The eunuch’s profession, that he “*believed Jesus Christ to be the Son of God*” sufficed to present admission of him to baptism. And surely not the inward and spiritual qualifications, but the outward and visible estate of persons to be baptised is to be looked at, and we should descend to the lowest (personal profession of faith and repentance being the highest) degree of visibility.

Suppose a minister had a spirit to discern the inward estate of men as certainly as Christ did of Judas, and possibly the apostles did of some which they baptised. Yet were he not to withhold from any, for want of inward grace, the privileges which they have right and title to by virtue of their visible estate. Saint Augustine and others think Judas was admitted to the Lord’s Supper, though he but received *panem Domini* not *panem Dominum*<sup>14</sup>; and Mr. Cartwright also so judgeth, from that connection (Luke 22:19-21). Certainly he was admitted to the Passover by virtue of his visible estate. Ishmael and Esau were regularly<sup>15</sup> circumcised, though Abraham knew that the one, and Rebecca that the other, was not the elect seed of the Covenant (Genesis 17:19,20 with 23; 25:23; Romans 9:12). We can but charitably judge, not infallibly know, who are believers. And, though infants do not actually believe, yet, by the judgment of charity (if that be one rule), we ought to judge that infants born of Christian parents are regenerate, and have faith habitual, or the principle seed of it, so much as is absolutely necessary to their participation of Christ and salvation by Him, and that they dying in infancy are saved. See answer to Q.5. For though they cannot actually believe, or at least not make profession of their faith, yet they are not to be doomed infidels, no

more than they are to be judged irrational or dumb, because they cannot actually reason or speak. And therefore they (unless you can reduce them to a third party, which will much strengthen the popish conceit of a third place for them when they die, *limbus infantum*) are to be counted believers; and so methinks Christ accounts of them, Matthew 18:6, with v. 4.

3. Ever since God gathered a distinct number out of the world to be His church, visible kingdom, city and household, in opposition to the rest of the world, which is the visible kingdom, city or household of Satan, God would have the infants of all who are taken into covenant to be accounted His, and to belong to His church and family, and not to the devil's. If Adam had kept the covenant of works, his infant seed had been righteous. Adam breaking that covenant, his infant seed was guilty of that breach, and became sinners against the law, though they knew not what the law, or sin against it, was. Adam being within the Covenant of grace, his infant seed was so judged likewise. For by "*seed of the woman*", (Genesis 3:15) is meant Christ in His minority, as well as in His grown years, who died for infants as well as others. Neither are infants to be excluded from the benefit of that promise. The infants of Noah, Abraham and the Jews, were members of the same church with their parents: as infants of Jews, Turks and pagans, though incapable of those opinions or practices, are esteemed Jews, Turks, pagans; so the infants of Christians (though, as the children of men, they are "*born in sin*" [Psalm 51:5], "*dead*" in it [Ephesians 2:1,3]) yet, as children of the church they are visibly Christians, not infidels, Jews, Turks, or pagans. Though a nobleman, a freeman of a corporation, a visible church member, do beget children as men, not as a person of honour, a freeman, a church member; yet, according to their respective charters, the honour of the one, the freedom of the other, and church privileges of the third, may descend on their children.

#### ANABAPTIST CATECHISM Q.4:

"Q. What other arguments have you to prove that infants have not faith, and are not to be baptised?  
A. *If they had faith, they were presently to be admitted to the Supper, and not excluded from communion therein, as many are which are admitted to communion in baptism; whereas the communion in both is one and the same, the same thing signified in both, viz. our fellowship with Christ in His death and resurrection. So that all that are baptised into one body, are all made to drink into one Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13), and the same preparation of faith and repentance are required for both; and he that is cast out of the one, is cast out of the other; seeing by excommunication he is like an heathen or publican.*"

1. It is the judgment both of Mr. Rutherford and Mr. Hooker and others of New England, that infants of visible churches, born of wicked parents, members of the same churches, ought to be baptised. The reason may be that we (when a child is presented to baptism) are to take notice of the parent's church membership, not of his scandalousness. If the church do not cast out the parents, why should the minister cast out the child? Parents, where suspended, lose only their present fruition, not their fundamental right of membership. It is right of membership, not the present fruition of it, nor their worthiness of that right, which doth (as they conceive) transfer that privilege to infants. Mr. Cotton in his "*Way*" (p.115) conceives it is considerable, if the grandfather or grandmother, making profession, be still living, and willing to undertake for the child; yea, that in some cases a heathen's child may be baptised in right of its household governor (Genesis 17). Yet it is very far from their opinions, that these children, or the immediate parents of them should be admitted to the Supper.

2. Amongst the Jews, infants were circumcised: yet were they not presently admitted to the Passover. They could not come up (nor do we read they were carried) from the remote parts of Judaea to Jerusalem, where only the lamb was eaten. Nor could they eat it standing “*with staves in their hands*”, and “*with sour herbs*”, as was required (Exodus 12); nor keep it to the Lord (v.46) with spiritual respects to God’s glory, to God’s ends and rules, and to have their “*hearts prepared*”, as well as to be ceremonially clean (2 Chronicles 20:33; 30:17). And the same males were as well to be at the feast of tabernacles (as at the Passover) and to carry boughs (which was no infant’s work) to make booths or tabernacles to dwell in (Deuteronomy 16:16 17. with Leviticus 23:34,35, 38-40). The children, yea those that could speak and ask questions, did not partake of the Passover, as is implied in that they did not say, “What mean we”, but “*What mean you by this service?*” It was not allowable to count them for the eating of the Passover that could not eat of it, *viz.* infants, sick persons, uncircumcised and unclean. See Ainsworth on Exodus 12:4. The uncleanness of a proselyte was no bar to circumcision, but to the Passover it was (Numbers 9:6,10). An adult proselyte might in some cases be circumcised and baptised, and not presently admitted to the Passover. Ainsworth on Exodus 12:44.

3. The rite of baptism is after the common custom of washing new born infants from the pollutions of the womb (Ezekiel 16:5,9). but the elements of bread and wine are the food of riper years. Baptism is a sacrament of initiation (as Bernard calls it), the Supper is the highest ordinance Christians (as such) are capable of. It is one thing to be admitted a scholar in a school, or to be matriculated into the University; another thing to be of such a form, standing, or degree. It is one thing to be a subject, a tenant, or free of a corporation (which children may be); another to do homage, suit and service. Our regeneration or birth in Christ (whereof baptism is the laver) infants are capable of, but not of that growth and augmentation signified in the Supper. To be baptised, is to be passive (as in the first act of regeneration we are merely passive); the action is wholly the baptisers, “I baptise thee” etc. But to eat and drink in remembrance of Christ’s death, and to discern the Lord’s body, is to be active, and requires exercises of reason and grace. And, as Christ Himself did not administer the baptism, but His disciples (John 4:1,2); and Paul saith, God sent him not to baptise, the apostles did not so usually baptise, as ordinary ministers (1 Corinthians 1:14-17); but, Christ did administer the Lord’s Supper, as also the chief ministers present did usually afterward. So multitudes were baptised by John Baptist and the disciples of Christ, which were not presently admitted to the Supper, when Christ initiated it.

The apostles were to teach all nations, baptising them; but the communicating of all nations is not expressed. Of the Samaritans, and several households baptised, we read; of their present admission to the Supper, we read not. So that though the communion in both sacraments be one, and the preparations for them both in adult persons be the same for substance, yet because of their different dispensations and degrees, infants may be admitted to the one and not to the other. Yet, I freely and confidently assert that to admit children to the Supper, is far more excusable than to deny them baptism. For they have *jus ad rem*, a right to it (as a young heir hath to his lands), as saints decayed in mind and body have a right to hear the Word. And the communicating of infants is more of antiquity and credit in the church, than denying of their baptism; though I hold it not fit that infants should communicate, because they have not *jus in re*: they have not aptitude and fitness for it. A child is not fit to manage his own estate; nor is it rational to preach the gospel to an holy man (what right soever he may have to it), when he is destitute of the capacity to hear or understand it. And hence it is, that the church having some while admitted infants to the Lord’s Supper, did upon second considerations discern the mistake, and laid it aside, but yet still continued that other of baptising infants, seeing no cause to leave it off, but rather more strictly to observe it.

#### ANABAPTIST CATECHISM Q.5:

“Q. But what if an infant or any other in their childhood, should die unbaptised, are they not damned?

A. *We know nothing out of the Scripture of their salvation or damnation, and therefore we must not be too inquisitive. Yet, such infants, so dying, may be saved, through the presentment of the satisfaction of Christ to the justice of God for original sin, which satisfaction, though it be applied through believing in those that can believe, yet it may be applied without in those that cannot believe, else how could any infant be saved?”*

If you know nothing of their salvation, Christ doth (Mark 10:14). “*Of such*”, saith He, “*is the kingdom of heaven*”. He means not only those that are meek humble, harmless, like little children (for He would not have blamed those that would have kept little children from Him; nor have blessed them when they came, if they were only mere emblems of such as are blessed, as a lamb or a dove may be), but little children themselves. David judged that his child, though adulterously begotten, and whom God took away in His wrath, was saved, else he would not have eaten, and drunk, and rejoiced that he should go to it (2 Samuel 12:20).

If any affirm, that all infants of Christians dying in infancy are certainly saved, I know no Scripture against it; and if there be no place punctually proving it, we are bound to incline to the more charitable opinion (Matthew 7:1), especially when we speak of this or that particular infant.

You say, they may be saved without baptism. True, there is a possibility of it. So if infants of the Jews had not been circumcised the eighth day, and had died uncircumcised, they might also have been saved, their parents or governors being guilty of the contempt or neglect of the ordinance, not they. And why should their salvation or damnation depend upon others doing or not doing their duty?. That phrase of “*cutting off*” (Genesis 17:14), either concerns grown men only, or threatens only excommunication or death, not eternal damnation. God had mercy on the penitent thief; yet, it is presumption in us to defer repentance till death, or to neglect baptism. God can bring a child into the world without a midwife; shall we therefore neglect the means? Parents, when their children are baptised before they die, may not only be comforted in the performance of their duty, but also have more grounded hopes of their children’s salvation. Your antipaedobaptistical doctrines do take away all, or most, of the grounds of hope which Christian parents have of the salvation of their dying infants.

#### ANABAPTIST CATECHISM Q.6:

“Q. Whether do you think it were better for persons to have baptism deferred till they be able to make a profession of faith.

A. *Yes, it would be far better; for hereby the churches would have right matter, (i.e.) saints in profession, and persons would be careful to get knowledge and holiness, whereas now they are careless of both. Infant baptism brings many mischiefs, besides that it fills the church with rotten members, confounds the church and the world together, and is a groundwork for more traditions, and doth so darken the doctrine of baptism, that we cannot know the true meaning of it when we read it in Scripture.”*

1. The many “mischiefs” of infant baptism, and the “benefits” of such delaying of it, were unknown to the apostolic primitive church, else surely they would have left us some precept or precedent of their delaying the baptism of the children of Christian parents. The Jewish church had child circumcision and child baptism too as rites of initiation: had it been better they had been deferred? Was not the Jewish church to be freed from “mischiefs” (as you call them), as well as the Christian church? If children’s admission did not bring such mischiefs upon the Jewish, how comes it to be so mischievous to the Christian church? We have a command for child baptism, not indeed such a direct express command as they had for circumcision, but a virtual, implicit and consequential command, as you shall hear anon in answer to Q.12. And this is abundantly sufficient to clear it from being a cause of itself of any mischief at all.

2. You hold and pretend to prove that John Baptist and the disciples of Christ did not baptise infants. But were no rotten members baptised, when Jerusalem, all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan, came and were baptised? (Matthew 3; Mark 1); yea, that people or multitude whom, or some of whom, he called “*generation of vipers*” (Luke 3:7. with 21)? Mr. Cobbet, a New England divine, saith, “*John Baptist did and might lawfully baptise those multitudes, albeit in the general he knew that many, yea most of them, would prove false and frothy*”. Mr Nyes, another of them, saith, “*The apostles for the baptising of three thousand expected no testimonies, nor a day’s (much less a month or years’) experience, nor could they, in so short time, make any inquisitions, or hear any persuasive relations*”. When all the Samaritans, very lately bewitched by Simon Magus (Acts 8:9,10), were baptised (v.12), were there then no rotten members? Suppose all London, Middlesex, and all the region round about Thames or Trent, should be Jews or heathens (and surely you account them now much better) and should presently, upon hearing of a sermon, make some profession of faith or confession of sins and be baptised, would you judge all these right matter, saints; and that there is no rotten member amongst them?

What became of those multitudes and myriads of baptised ones when Christ suffered, or afterwards, if they were not rotten members? Were not Judas, Ananias, Sapphira, Hymenaeus, Philetus, and many others, rotten members? Were there not amongst the Corinthians (though called saints, *a parse meliore*<sup>16</sup>, as we call a wheat field a corn field, though we see many tares and thistles in it), known carnal schismatics, fornicators, idolaters, some that sacrificed to devils, drunken communicants, heretics denying the resurrection, despisers of Paul, admirers of the false teachers, men (as Paul feared) that had not repented of the uncleanness, fornication and lasciviousness they had committed, amongst whom were debates, envyings, wraths, strifes, backbitings, whisperings, swelling tumults, etc? Were none of these rotten members? It is the work of the ministry to convince rotten members of their rottenness, and by the blessing of God to convert them, and make them sound (1 Corinthians 5, 6 & 10; Galatians 4:19). And if so be they remain incurable, and after much means, pains and patience, are not reclaimed, the church may cut them off. Though the drawnet doth take in both good and bad, yet the bad afterwards may be cast away (Matthew 13:47,48).

3. Are there not also among the Anabaptists (notwithstanding their rejection of infant baptism) many rotten members, heretics, blasphemers, such as deny the Trinity, the divinity or humanity of Jesus Christ, the immortality of the soul, the morality of the Sabbath, authority of the Scriptures, the guilt of original sin, the necessity, yea the very being of the ministry, officers and ordinances; asserters of the whole body of Arminianism, of immediate revelations and enthusiasms, of antinomianism, of polygamy, perfection of grace? Who more than the Anabaptists (I had almost said, who but they) have been given up by God to those strong and strange delusions, to those

damnable opinions and abominable practices mentioned in the late Act? Where is there a more wicked and wretched sect than the Ranters<sup>17</sup>? But (possibly) you that published this catechism may be of the strictest sect of your religion (as the worst of these at their first separating from us seemed also to be), and do abhor to have communion not only with these, but with drunkards, adulterers, swearers, etc. To you I say, if there be not amongst you drunkards, adulterers, swearers, etc. (Satan himself is none of these), but are there not seditious, schismatical persons, that say all the church is holy? Sacrilegious persons, that devour that which is holy, or dedicated to the service of God and His church, not by themselves (which was Ananias' sin) but by others? Are there not murderers, railers, false accusers, liars, proud, boasters, covetous, traitors, heady, high minded, lovers of themselves, despisers of good men, having a form of godliness? etc. Such an one is Satan.

As for the rotten members in paedobaptist's congregations, they are, or should be, duly proceeded against, and much good is done that way in many congregations where government is set up, and people help forward the work (human infirmities both in rulers and ruled ever have been, and will be). And more good would have been done, had not the separation of some from us, the exemption by the civil powers from church government of whosoever will not freely own it, and unjust clamours of Presbyterian rigidity and tyranny, together with the tumults and troubles of the time, hindered it.

4. As for infant baptism, it is a consecrating of children to God, and formally initiates them into the church; which is a great benefit (as casting out, or excommunicating out of the church, is a great censure). It is an outward distinctive sign of Christian's children from pagans, signifies their original sin and necessity of regeneration, even before the commission of actual sin, and the salvation of infants, as well as grown men, by Christ. It makes infants partakers of the ordinances, at least of the prayers of the church, as members thereof. It pre-engages them to a Christian course, when they have the least prejudice and obstruction against it; and as soon as they are capable to receive the nurture and admonition of the Lord, to frequent ordinances, and to own Jesus Christ by external profession. It binds parents to be more careful and conscientious of their religious education; it comforts their hearts (godly parents may speak this experimentally) to see their children thus sealed, in assurance that God is their God, and the God of their seed. Yea, God doth sometimes, yea always (as we ought to judge, till the contrary appear) baptise them inwardly, or infuse grace, or the seed of it, into the soul of the baptised infant. These and the like were counted great benefits in the time of the law; and are they, or can they be, mischiefs in the time of the gospel?

You assert indeed, that delaying of baptism would make men "*careful to get knowledge and holiness, whereas now they (viz. they that do not delay baptism) are careless of both*". But may they not be as conscientiously taught, and as careful and apt to learn in Christ's school in His visible kingdom, as out of it? Baptised as unbaptised? Are not many grown persons as forgetful and careless of the promises they make on their sick beds, and other occasions, as of those which were made in infancy? Are Anabaptists the only men that are careful to get knowledge and holiness? Are not multitudes of persons, which were baptised in their infancy, as careful to get knowledge and holiness, and as good proficiency therein, as any others? Is it better not to put children into a lease or grant of a privilege, lest they should be secure and careless to pay rent and homage, than to put them in? May not deferring of baptism so long, make them despise it when they come to age? Satan may more easily keep children, when grown up, from receiving Christianity, than work them to renounce it; though he sometimes prevails with witches and wizards to renounce their baptism (received in infancy) that they may be his vassals, and more assured to him. Keeping the children of

Christians out of the church, is a strange way (sure it is none of God's ways, nor is it likely to prevail) to make them in love with Christianity. If any good can be done by such mediums, the warrantable deferring of the Lord's Supper alone may do it, as well as the unwarrantable delaying of baptism.

As for "*darkening the doctrine of baptism*", experience teacheth us that the doctrine thereof was clear enough in Scripture, and competently understood, as well as the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, before such opposition hath been made to infant baptism. If it be now darkened, the darkness is not from infant baptism, but from your opposite opinion and practice.

#### ANABAPTIST CATECHISM Q.7:

"Q. But may not infants be baptised, if they be Abraham's seed?

A. *Yes; but we Gentiles are only Abraham's seed by believing (Galatians 3:7; so Romans 4:16, Galatians 3:29). They that would make the children of believers to be the seed of Abraham, are mistaken; for the Scripture speaketh but of three seeds of Abraham, viz: (1) Christ (Galatians 3:16), (2) The carnal seed, (3) The believer, Jew or Gentile (Galatians 3:28). And they add a fourth seed of Abraham, viz. the seed or children of believers amongst the Gentiles, about which the Scripture is silent."*

Either you do not sufficiently enumerate, or not rightly understand your enumeration of the Scripture-kinds of Abraham's seed, or both. For:

(1.) Christ personal is not the whole of Abraham's seed, to whom (though He may be the whole in whom, 2 Corinthians 1:20) the promises were made, but Christ mystical, the whole church of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12,13), all which, whether Jews or Gentiles, bond or free (I may add, young or old) are but one in their Head Jesus Christ (Galatians 3:28). All that are Christ's are Abraham's seed (v.29), and infants are His, as well as grown persons; for He became an infant, suffered much in His very infancy, was the Head of the church while an infant (and therefore might well have infant members), died for infants as well as for grown men, bade His disciples to suffer little children to come unto Him – if not that He might baptise them (for He baptised none at all, infants or others [John 4:1,2]) yet that He might bless them – and said, that "*of such is the kingdom of heaven*" (Matthew 19:14).

(2.) As for the carnal seed of Abraham, their fleshly relation was not sufficient to entitle them to church privileges, except they had a spiritual relation also (Romans 9:6,8). Open apostates, and revolvers, though the carnal seed of Abraham, were not counted of the church, but as strangers, and heathens, as David calls them (Psalm 54:3, 59:5). That text (Exodus 12:48) prohibiting strangers, did, by the rule of proportion, prohibit from the Passover all such Jews as did forsake the faith. The Chaldee paraphrase saith, "*No son of Israel that is an apostate, or fallen from the faith, shall eat of it.*" Cain and his posterity were rejected (Genesis 4:15,16 with Genesis 6:1,2). So Ishmael was cast out, and the Ishmaelites (Galatians 4:30; Genesis 21:10,14; Psalm 83:6), which last place mentions the Edomites also, which were the posterity of Abraham. Yea, all the twelve tribes, which were the seed of Abraham, were cast off at the last; and yet, their being begotten after the flesh, and being circumcised in the flesh, was an help, not an hindrance, to their being begotten of the promise, or to circumcision in the Spirit. Jacob was of Isaac and Rebecca after the flesh, and yet also the heir of promise. And as then some were born only after the flesh, such as Ishmael, Esau, and some were also born after the Spirit, as Isaac, Jacob; so the apostle (looking not only to the parallel, but to the

history) saith, “*so it is now*” (Galatians 4:29). Some, even in the time of the gospel, are born of Christian parents only after the flesh, and some also after the Spirit, and these do persecute one another. This difference may discover itself in riper years, but in infancy it is undiscoverable now as then.

(3.) It was not necessary that they should be the carnal seed of Abraham that were in covenant relation, and initiated into the church; for Abraham was (as to this) not only the father of the Jews, but of many nations, and upon this account his name was changed (Genesis 17:4,5). Proselytes being Gentiles as well as we, and not of his carnal seed, nor (many) so much as of his family, yet they were the seed of Abraham by believing, as well as we are now. And they were not only initiated into the church, but those of them that were of Abraham’s family were the foundationals and first members of the church, as constituted in Abraham’s family. His 318 trained servants, besides others, were not all (if any) of his carnal seed.

(4.) As for the infants of believers, which you separate from their parents (of which see before Q.3, section 3) and make them a fourth seed, you know that proselytes became Abraham’s seed only by believing, as (you say) we Gentiles now do. And yet their children were accounted Abraham’s seed (though they be none of the three which you mention) and as such were initiated into the church (Genesis 17:12,23; Exodus 12:48,49). In the same sense that Abraham was a father to a proselyte, or believing Gentile and his seed then, he is father to a Christian Gentile and his seed now, for his paternity abides the same. Nor can you show a better warrant for his paternity over the one, than over the other; nor have the Gentiles lost any privilege by the coming of Christ which they had before. The Scripture saith, “*The brethren now are the children of the promise, as Isaac was*” (Galatians 4:28). Now Isaac was the seed of Abraham, and in the promise as an infant of believing parents, before he was an actual believer; and his infants were within the Covenant, and accordingly initiated into the church. Abraham might say, “God is my God, and the God of my infant seed,” and so might the Gentile proselyte say also.

And why may not a Christian, who is “*blessed with faithful Abraham*” (Galatians 3:9) say so too? Especially seeing Jesus Christ, the Minister of circumcision, did not abrogate, but “*confirm the promises made unto the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy*” etc. (Romans 15:8,9). God, alluding to the outward circumcision of His people and their seed, promiseth to “*circumcise their hearts and the hearts of their seed*” (Deuteronomy 30:6); and this promise is gospel, and a parcel of the Covenant of grace, as appears by (Deuteronomy 30:6,10-14 with Romans 10:6-8); and this circumcision of the heart is commended (Romans 2:28,29) and is signified and sealed in baptism (Colossians 2:11,12). It is observed that Genesis 17:7 speaks not of Abraham and his seed (which, you say, are actual believers) abstractly taken, but of his seed in their generations, which words necessarily imply and include, as the parents generating, so the children generated.

(5.) Lastly, Abraham is not only called the father of particular believers, but the father of nations professing the true faith, as well as of the Jewish nation. Every nation receiving the true faith as they did, and in which there is a national agreement in doctrine, worship, discipline, as was in the nation of the Jews, is an holy nation, a peculiar people to the Lord, even Egypt and Assyria, with Israel, and may call Abraham father (Isaiah 19:21; Genesis 17:5). When the Gentiles were grafted into that stock from which the Jews were broken off, and did partake of “*the root and fatness of the olive tree*” (Romans 11:17), Abraham began to be the father of many nations (Romans 4:16,17). Regenerate infants are Abraham’s spiritual seed by Mr. T.’s confession, and he professeth that he

would baptise them, if he could know them. I am sure no one dare say of this or that particular infant, that it is not regenerate. Yea, we are bound to judge they are such, till something appear to the contrary.

ANABAPTIST CATECHISM Q.8:

“Q. But are not the children of godly persons visibly in the Covenant of grace?

A. *No. The Covenant of grace is an invisible thing, and we cannot know who are in it, nor have we grounds to judge persons are in it, till we see some profession of holy life of faith and repentance, which infants cannot make.*”

1. Not to speak of such as are only intentionally in the Covenant of grace, as children yet unborn may be (Deuteronomy 29:15); those that are actually in the Covenant of grace are of two sorts:

(1.) Some are externally in it, as Ishmael, Judas, Simon Magus, and so all such as own God to be their God and themselves to be His people (as the Jewish church did, and every true Christian church doth), though but externally, are said to be within the Covenant. You yourself say that profession of faith and repentance are grounds to judge some persons to be in the Covenant of grace. There is external being in Christ (John 15:2); vocation (Matthew 22:14); sanctification (Hebrews 10:29); and purging from sin (2 Peter 1:9).

(2.) But some are also internally and savingly in the Covenant of grace, as Isaac, Jacob, while infants and when adult; also Zacchaeus, Lydia and her household, the jailor and all his. This distinction is grounded upon Romans 9:4-8. We may know who is in the Covenant of grace externally; but the Covenant of grace in the second sense is invisible, and none could know who were in it in the time of the Jews (though infants were then visibly in it, and initiated as such) or amongst Christians.

If the invisibleness of the Covenant of grace, and our not knowing who are in it, doth exclude infants, it doth also exclude adult professors from admission into the church; for the signs of their being savingly in the Covenant of grace are but conjectural, hopeful and probable; not certain and infallible. None can be sure that he that makes a profession at a full age, which qualifies him for baptism, is not an hypocrite at this minute, and will not be an apostate the next. Nor can we know that they are in the Covenant, for then we would know they are elected, whereas this is a secret known only to God (2 Timothy 2:19; Deuteronomy 29:29). And the little ones of the church, though they make no personal profession as adult persons do, yet are as visibly within the Covenant of grace (parents having as much authority and reason to covenant for their children now as in Deuteronomy 29:10 with 30:6); and as charitably to be accounted of, seeing of adult Christians, the weakest can hold forth no more than the least degree of absolute probability, and the strongest no more than the highest degree of probability.

2. Peter saith (Acts 2:38,39), “*the promise is to you and to your children.*” Concerning which I observe:

(1.) That hereby is not meant Christ is exhibited (as some gloss). The promise is fulfilled, Christ is come; for this they heard before (v.36) and knew to their trouble, and therefore “*were pricked in their hearts*”; and these words are not anywhere in Scripture to be otherwise taken. Nor is baptism a seal barely to Christ being come in the flesh, but to the benefits thereof covenanted and promised.

Nor is it a promise of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, but the gospel promise of remission of sin (Hebrews 8:10,12), signed and sealed in baptism (Acts 3:19); which belongs to God's people at all times, might heal their being "*pricked in their heart*" (v.37), and is fitly used as a motive to persuade them to "*repent and be baptised*", and is a suitable answer to their question, "*What shall we do to be saved?*"

(2.) He saith not, "The promise is to you, and to as many as God shall call, whether of your children or strangers," as he might have said if he would have levelled the children of Christians and pagans; but, he saith, "*The promise is to you and your children, and to as many;*" making their children a distinct party, as from those that were, so from those that after, should be called; the words holding out their right, are in the indicative mood, the promise is to you. The like is never said to pagans, or to any out of the church.

(3.) These words are the same in substance with the reason and ground of circumcision (Genesis 17:8,10,11). That promise and Covenant was a gospel Covenant: "*in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed;*" and was an everlasting Covenant, made four hundred and thirty years before the Law, and to be fulfilled, in a great part of it, after the ceasing of Moses' pedagogy and of circumcision (Galatians 3:15-17. Romans 4:12,16,24; Hebrews 13:20; Revelation 14:6). And the said everlasting Covenant was not only with actual believers, but with the lineal seed of Abraham, even before they actually believed, till some open revolt did disable them; and with the infant seed of proselytes or Gentiles converted to the faith.

(4.) His motion, that every one of them should be baptised, doth imply they had right to baptism, (for he doth not persuade them to be usurpers of that to which they had no right). And he grounds his motion not only upon their bare personal interest in the promise, but their children's joint interest with them (as, in Genesis 17, God doth for circumcision); which latter could not rationally be urged as a motive to persuade the Jews to be baptised and to embrace Christian religion, if the joint interest of their children with them were not (at least) fully as great in the Christian as in the Jewish church. Now, if a Jew had a child born before his conversion to Christianity, that child was sacramentally to be initiated; but if he had a child after, you say it was not, but was in the same condition as a pagan's child, *viz.* not to be admitted into the church till it were called. And if so, then where is the benefit belonging to children of Jews converted by virtue of their Christianity? If a landlord should move his tenants to give up his old lease or grant (which hath certain immunities and privileges to him and his children) and to take a new one in which his children have no more privileges than mere strangers, could he rationally persuade him to surrender the old lease or grant, and to take a new one, from the benefit they may accrue to the tenant and his children by it?

(5.) Here seem to be three ranks and conditions of persons: (i) the Jews themselves, then present and adult. (ii) their children, the present issue, which already was, or should be born of their bodies, whatever they were, younger or elder, infants not excluded. (iii) those that were afar off, not in estate (for the mystery of the calling of the Gentiles was not fully closed with by Peter till Acts 10; nor could the Jews yet bear that saying), but those that were afar off in time: the Greek here is a different phrase from that used of the Gentiles, (Ephesians 2:13,17); and fitly may denote the posterity of the Jews in after ages.

(6.) These Jews (it is likely) were "*pricked in their hearts,*" not only for their crucifying of Christ, but their cursing their children about two months since (Matthew 27:25); which curse did include

their very infants then newly born, and others that should be born afterward; and therefore if Peter had not included infants in this promise, the plaster had not been large enough for their sore.

(7.) Lastly, the Jews were apt long after this to scruple lesser matters (Acts 21:20), and can it be thought that they should not startle and be discontented to have both circumcision and baptism taken from their infants? Nor inquire whether this exclusion of their infants was not a fruit of their cursing of them? Or how could it be justified by the Old Testament (their being no other written Word)? Or by what warrant the church membership and Covenant interest, which their children formerly had, was repealed and taken from them? By all which, seriously considered, it will appear that the children of believers are included within the promise, and to be baptised. Besides, if infants be not within the Covenant of grace, then they are strangers from it, and consequently “*without God*” and “*without hope*” (Ephesians 2:12), as pagans’ children are; and if they die (though in infancy) their parents may mourn over them as such that “*have no hope*,” contrary to 1 Thessalonians 4:13. Yea, while they live, they may lament over their children, as such whom they have begotten and brought forth to the devil, and not to God, in respect of their visible estate.

ANABAPTIST CATECHISM Q.9:

“Q. What is circumcision?”

A. *It was an obligation to keep the whole law (Galatians 5:3, Romans 2:25), and showed unto them that it was their duty to circumcise their hearts (Jeremiah 4:4).”*

Circumcision in itself was but an obligation to the law as a rule of righteousness, subservient to the Covenant of grace (as baptism also is, Romans 6:3), not to the law in the rigour of it, as it was a covenant of works. For Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were not so obliged; they were in the Covenant of grace as well as we, and circumcision was to Abraham (by your own confession) “*a seal of the righteousness of faith.*” Christ did profit many hundreds and thousands that were circumcised in the time of the law. He was the “*Lamb slain from the beginning of the world*”, and they were saved by faith in Him (1 Corinthians 10:1-3; Hebrews 11). But when Christians were circumcised in the time of the gospel, out of a persuasion of its necessity and their justification by it, then it did bind them to keep the whole law, and Christ in that case did profit them nothing. And this is all that can be inferred from your texts, as to this matter.

As circumcision did show it was their duty to circumcise their hearts, so baptism shows it is our duty to wash our hearts (Jeremiah 4:14; James 4:8). (Between heart circumcision and heart washing is no great difference, if any). And as there was a precept for the circumcision of the heart, so God promised His people that He would “*circumcise their hearts, and the hearts of their seed;*” of which, see Q.7. Though circumcision did show forth (you say) a duty on our part, as well as a promise on God’s part, yet (you know) infants were then circumcised, though they had no actual knowledge of either. What you can gather hence (if anything) against infant baptism, I expect to know.

ANABAPTIST CATECHISM Q.10:

“Q. Was not circumcision also a seal of the righteousness of faith? (Romans 4:11)?

A. *Yes, to Abraham only; and if Abraham’s believing children amongst the Gentiles should be baptised as he was circumcised, then it must not be till they have the righteousness of faith as Abraham here had, at least they must have it in profession.”*

The text saith, it was “*the seal of the righteousness of faith which Abraham had, being yet uncircumcised;*” but it saith not that it was so to him only. The apostle brings it as an argument to prove the way of our justification to be by faith alone, which was a mere inconsequence, if proper to him and not belonging to others. There were adult persons, believers, in Abraham’s family when circumcision was first instituted, and many believing proselytes afterwards, which had faith while yet they were uncircumcised, as Abraham had, of whom their circumcision was also a seal of the righteousness of the faith they had before. Yea, Moses makes it to all, a sign of the Covenant (Genesis 17), which doubtless was the Covenant of grace; or, to use Paul’s dialect, “*the righteousness that is by faith*” (Romans 3:22,30; 10:3,6 with Deuteronomy 30:6,10-12; Philippians 3:9); this being the tenor of that Covenant: “*Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*” (Acts 16:31). Your passage, implying that there are some believing children of Abraham which have not the righteousness of faith as Abraham here had, I do not understand, except you make actual believing and having the righteousness faith two things, not only distinct, but separable.

But whatsoever your meaning be, I cannot see here any show of proof that children must necessarily believe, or make profession of faith, before they may be baptised, as Abraham did before he was circumcised. Abraham could not be circumcised in infancy, nor before circumcision was instituted; no wonder, therefore, if he believed before. Had circumcision been instituted in the days of his fathers, Abraham might have been circumcised before he actually believed, as well as Isaac his son was. Christ could not be baptised till John did baptise, which was about the thirtieth year of Christ’s age; nor did He receive the eucharist till the night before He suffered. Yet, some that pretend to imitate Him, can be baptised, and possibly preach too, at 15, 16, 20, 21 etc. years of age, though Christ was neither baptised, nor did preach, till He was thirty.

ANABAPTIST CATECHISM Q.11:

“Q. Whether doth baptism succeed circumcision in the same office?

A. *No. Circumcision was to every male (though reprobate), but baptism only to the believer (Matthew 28:19). There being a change of the visible church, and of the ordinances; this cannot succeed in the room thereof, nor hath any dependence thereon.*”

Your argument against the succession of baptism to circumcision is weak, *viz*: Baptism is not like circumcision in some things, therefore, it is not like in anything, therefore, it succeeds not in the same office. By this you may prove as well, that the Supper doth not succeed the Passover, nor the Lord’s day the Jewish Sabbath. The office of circumcision was to show original sin, to teach necessity of regeneration, of mortification, of salvation by Christ, the seed of Abraham; to sign and seal the Covenant, or the righteousness that is by faith, to distinguish Jews from others, to initiate solemnly and formally into the church. And doth not baptism also initiate into the church (1 Corinthians 12:13)? Yea, doth it not (circumcision being now abrogated) perform the aforesaid offices? Indeed, it is not every way the same, for then it were not a successor. Add hereunto, that the Covenant was the ground of circumcision (Genesis 17:7,9-11), the equity whereof obliges to baptism, as the equity of the fourth commandment extends to our Lord’s day.

As for the positive command (Genesis 17:12), it only determines the time and day, which circumstance of day and time was not built upon the Covenant of grace (as circumcision itself was) and therefore is not perpetual. And without such a positive determination of the time, circumcision

should and might have been administered to infants. The Jews did circumcise children bought with their money the same day they bought them, though they bought them the same day they were born: see Ainsworth on Genesis 17:12. Oft times circumcision was not administered the eighth day, but deferred; in which cases the command of circumcising the eighth day was not observed. Yet, circumcision was, and according to right reason ought, to be administered to infants by virtue of the naked institution thereof, as we contend that baptism ought now to be, both of them being (as was said) seals of the Covenant.

But you, in saying "*circumcision was to every male, though reprobate,*" do imply, that it was not to females. True, but both males and females were then baptised, and so they were in the New Testament (Acts 8:12; Galatians 3:28,29), which is sufficient justification of our deserting circumcision in that point. And the infant females (as well as the adult) were counted members of the Jewish church; and though, by reason of their incapacity or God's respect to the modesty of that sex, they were not personally circumcised, yet, they were circumcised in the males. Hence, the whole church of the Jews, consisting of females as well as males, were called the Circumcision, in opposition to the Gentiles, which were called Uncircumcision (Galatians 2:7-9). Again, it was not administered to reprobates as such, not to every male, but to the males of the church externally in covenant, some whereof were possibly reprobates. So, Simon Magus, Judas, Ananias and Sapphira were baptised, and yet it is (at least) likely they were reprobates.

Circumcision did belong to the believer as well as baptism doth. Those that were strangers to the Jewish church could not be admitted, but they must be proselytes, not of the gate only, but of righteousness; they must disclaim paganism, and profess the Jewish religion. A stranger continuing in his unbelief, was not circumcised, nor did he partake in the Passover (Exodus 12:48). And, by analogy, that text prohibiteth all such Jews as should forsake the faith; see before, Q.7. As for the change of the church and ordinances notwithstanding it, the Lord's day may succeed the Jewish Sabbath. And those same persons that were bound to keep the Jewish Sabbath, are tied to observe the Lord's day, *viz.* servants and children, as well as parents and masters, though the persons be not so distinctly set down in the New Testament as the in the Old. Paul used arguments from analogy; from the purging out of the old leaven at the Passover to the casting out of the incestuous from the Supper (1 Corinthians 5); from the maintenance of the priests to the maintenance of ministers (1 Corinthians 9:13).

To argue *à genere ad speciem affirmativè*<sup>18</sup>, is not good reasoning: the church was changed, therefore it was changed in this particular. The church might be changed and yet not in this; the sacrament may be changed and not the subject. What belonged to the Jewish church as a church, belongs to the Christian church also. That which belonged to it, as Jewish, was altered, such as high priest, temple, sacrifices, ceremonies, etc. Infants' church membership did not belong to the church as Jewish, nor was it a ceremony or type. If you think it was, show what it was a type of, and what was the antitype that hath succeeded it; and prove it so if you can.

There was a church before there was a high priest, temple, etc. in the families of Adam, Noah and Shem, which was alive in the time of Isaac. Melchizedek surely had subjects and people, which were the church (as well as he was a king and a priest) of the most high God. This church might continue long, and not be united to the church in Abraham's family for ought we know. Whatsoever the extent of the church was, domestic, congregational, or national, infants are reckoned of the same church with their parents.

The church before Christ, and after Christ, is the same church; as an heir, while in nonage<sup>19</sup>, and when adult, is the same person. The Jews that believed were never unchurched; the tree was not broken down, but some branches broken off. Some additions to the church ceased, the church itself ceased not. The partition wall was broken down, and Jews and Gentiles made one church (Ephesians 2:14; 3:6). And when the wall was down, were their infants turned out of the church at one door, as the Gentiles came in at another? Was the church so changed, that it lost so many materials? And was the Covenant of grace changed too? Did it lose so many out of it? Visible professors and their infants are alike in every age, and there is nothing in them inconsistent with propriety in God, or interest in the Covenant, or the seal thereof, in one age more than in another. Baptism is the seal of the Covenant now, and may be administered to visible professors and their children now, as circumcision was then. If there should be any difference, reason would tell us, considering the painfulness and peril of circumcision (Genesis 34:25) and the easiness of baptism, that only grown men should have been circumcised, and infants baptised, rather than contrary.

#### ANABAPTIST CATECHISM Q.12:

“Q. Whether may not infants of believers be baptised by virtue of Covenant holiness?

A. *No, for:*

*(1.) Baptism is not a sign or seal of any such outward holiness, which may befall reprobate as well as elect, but is a sign of death, burial, and resurrection, which the believer hath with Christ.*

*(2.) There is no command for baptising such, if the Gentiles were so holy.”*

1. Baptism is a sign and seal of Christ's death, burial and resurrection, and of the truth and faithfulness of those exceeding great and precious promises bundled up in the Covenant of grace, which are in Christ, yea and Amen (2 Corinthians 1:20), but it is not an absolute sign or seal of the baptised's death, burial, resurrection with Christ, of his putting on of Christ, of grace already wrought in him, as you assert in your answer to the second and third question, but only conditional (Acts 16:30-33), if he believe, as the Romans did (Romans 6:3,4 with 5:1,2). A Christian gathers the assurance of his justification and salvation by this, or such a like, syllogism: He that believeth is justified, and shall be saved; I believe, therefore I am justified, and shall be saved. The major, or former proposition, baptism, doth absolutely and universally seal; but not so the minor, or second proposition, *viz.* I believe. If baptism should seal to all baptised ones, as suppose Simon Magus, Judas, etc., the truth of their faith and their saving interest in Jesus Christ, then should God set His seal (for baptism is God's seal, not the church's) to a lie and falsehood, or at least command ministers so to do, when they are bound by the rules of Christ to baptise such as are not inwardly holy, as Simon Magus, etc?

2. Children of believers (1 Corinthians 7:14), are said to be saints, or holy; whereby is not meant that they were legitimate only (for so had they been if both parents had been infidels, and children are not holy, because they are not bastards); nor only sanctified to the use of the parents, as the unbelieving yoke-fellow (though not holy *in se*<sup>20</sup>, nor sanctifying) is sanctified to the believing yoke-fellow (the Holy Ghost neither here nor elsewhere speaking of anything to be sanctified to unbelievers); but they are holy, a distinct phrase from being sanctified to another (as birds and beasts may be). And this holiness proceeds from the believing yoke-fellow, which is the reason why he saith, your children, *viz.* the children of you Christian yoke-fellows (the infidel yoke-fellows wrote not to Paul) are holy. Which, seeing it cannot be meant of internal and saving holiness (for all children of the church are not such, though we are bound to judge the best, till the contrary appear), it must needs, therefore, be meant of outward federal holiness, which is the privilege of the children

of believing parents above the children of pagans, the Jews having had the like privilege before (see Galatians 2:15, which I conceive runs parallel with this).

Or, if but one of the parents be Christian, *partus sequitur meliorem partem*<sup>21</sup>, the children are not infidels but Christian.

3. But, say you, there is no command for baptising such, and you call it will-worship forbidden (Leviticus 10:1), a tradition and groundwork for more traditions. Others call it the mark of the beast, one of the strongest holds of Antichrist, and what not? To all which I answer:

(1.) If Nadab and Abihu's offering strange fire, fire unsanctified, or not taken off the altar, was will-worship (though the Scripture doth not call it so), yet paedobaptism (suppose it be not warranted by the Word) cannot be will-worship, because it is not an introduction of a new worship or ordinance, but the misapplication of an old and unquestionable ordinance of God; or (if you put on it the worst name you can with any show of reason), the profanation of an ordinance, as yourself call it. Some of your party, which have in derision or contempt of infant baptism, baptised horses, cats or dogs, have been unquestionably guilty of horrible profanation, but not will-worship.

(2.) Infant baptism is grounded on, and warranted by the Word of God, and therefore, is far enough from being a profanation, or so much as the misapplication of an ordinance. That it is so grounded and warranted, needs no other proof than what hath already been produced in this examination, upon occasion of the Scriptures and reasons brought against it.

[1.] They that are disciples in Scripture sense, are expressed in Christ's commission about baptism, and are to be baptised. But infants of the church are disciples in Scripture sense. Therefore, they are to be baptised. See Q. 2, section 3.

[2.] They that are Abraham's seed are to be baptised, as you confess. But such infants are the seed of Abraham. Therefore, they are to be baptised. See Q. 7.

[3.] They that are visibly within the Covenant of grace are to be baptised (as you acknowledge). But such infants are visibly within the Covenant of grace. Therefore, they are to be baptised See Q. 8.

[4.] They that are to be judged church members are to be baptised. But such infants of the church, or born of members of the church, are to be judged church members. Therefore, etc.

[5.] They, of whom the kingdom of God is, are to partake of the privileges of the kingdom of God. But of infants is the kingdom of God. Therefore, etc.

[6.] They that are saints, and holy, are to be baptised. But such infants are saints, and holy. Therefore, etc.

[7.] Christ knew that baptism was an ancient ceremony of initiation into the church, and applied to the infants of the church, as well as to adult proselytes; yet, He took up that ceremony, and advanced it (as He did after eating of the Passover) to be a sacrament of the New Testament, without prohibition of infants from it; and, therefore, He did at least approve that it should be administered to infants. See Q. 2, section 1.

In these alone (to omit others), conscientious inquirers into the mind of the Lord Jesus may find satisfactory grounds of infant baptism, especially when they are compared with the grounds of the contrary opinion and practice.

4. You cannot show any precept at all, or precedent, or good warrant, in the Word of God, that children of believing parents should be kept from baptism (as you require them to be), till they do in their own persons actually believe, or make profession of faith; or that any such were baptised in riper years (as you would have them now be). Yea, I further say, that if you can show me in Scripture any son or daughter of believing parents baptised, I shall show you that he or she was baptised in infancy. Surely from the time that John Baptist began his ministry, to the writings of the Apocalypse, great multitudes of infants of Christians grew up to maturity, yet, amongst them all, we read not of one whose baptism was so delayed. Nor have we any solid ground to conceive that God, at the coming of Christ, took away infants' Covenant interest, church membership and sacramental initiation, and made their condition (as to this) as bad as the heathen, and worse than the Jewish children, seeing it cannot be said: that God did take these privileges away in judgment, upon occasion of Christ's coming, from all infants, even elect children of elect parents, seeing infants in the time of the gospel are not in any way more guilty, or incapable, than in former times. Nor can it any way appear, that God did it in mercy (and sure if it was done, it was done either in judgment or mercy), for it was a mercy to the Jewish children to have these privileges, and nothing more was conferred upon infants which lost them, than upon adult Christians which did not lose them.

You cannot show a precept or precedent for your gathering churches out of other true Christian churches; for requiring persons, before they can be admitted members, to give account of the truth of their graces; for the congregations judging whether they have grace or no, and consequently whether they were to be admitted or no; for a solemn explicit church Covenant, for the erection of a church without officers; for the power of such a church, consisting only of unofficed Christians, to elect, ordain, impose hands by one or more of them on their officers, to censure or excommunicate any member, yea, any or all their officers when they have them; for maintenance of ministers by Lord's Day collections, formerly urged as an ordinance of God, though of late much waved; for a sentence of non-communication with sister churches; for synods only consultative and not decreative; for public ordinary preaching of gifted men, not so much as intending the ministry, and their receiving maintenance for their pains.

And yet these are asserted by men of the Congregational way (in which anti-paedobapists are generally found) to be duties, privileges of the church, or ordinances of God. Nor can you show any church consisting of unbaptised ones (such as you account yourselves to be [your infant baptism being a nullity] till you be baptised upon profession) and such a church admitting members, commissioning some disciples to preach and dip; nor any precept or precedent for admission of such, which are (in your opinion) unbaptised, to the Lord's Supper, nor for rebaptising such as were baptised (suppose in infancy) in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, or for renouncing such baptism. Nor can you show any one text of Scripture against infant baptism, either in express words, or in the interpretation of any apostolic or primitive church or father in the purest times. Nor can you show one visible church, from the beginning of the world to the time when your opinion was lately broached, which was of any continuance, and did neither admit into it, nor permit in it, any infant member.

5. Finally, should you or I, be required a command for admission of women to the Supper (as you require a command for infant baptism, though you can neither show command, nor example, nor

good warrant for your contrary opinion and practices), what clearer command can we show for that, than for infant baptism? Women were not admitted to both sacraments of the Old Testament. Christ did not admit women, no, not His own mother, to the Supper. There is express uncontroverted mention in the New Testament of women being baptised, but not so of women communicating. If you allege that the Greek word *anthropos* (a name common to women, as well as men) ought to communicate (1 Corinthians 11:28), it is easily evaded, by saying that the apostle confines it to the male in the Greek (vv. 28,29). and the same word is used of circumcision, of which the male only was capable (John 7:22). General terms of disciples, church members, persons in covenant, will carry it for infant's baptism, as well as women's communicating. If you allege that such and such assemblies, in which there were women, did break bread, you know it may be, yea it is doubted by some sober spirits, whether that breaking of bread was sacramental or no; and it may be said that the company is said to do it because the males did it; as the whole house of Israel is said to be circumcised, and called the Circumcision, though the females thereof were not circumcised. If you should tell us of households admitted to the Supper (though I know not of any such instance in Scripture), I might as well say, there were no women there, or they were excluded, as you say, there were no infants in such or such an household, or if there were, they were excluded. Lastly, if men should bend their strength that way, they might as plausibly except against your admission of women (usually the forwardest part of your societies) to the Supper, as you do, or (I believe) can do, against paedobaptism. Oh, that our good God would in mercy to this distracted church, and to the deluded souls therein, remove prejudice out of our hearts.

#### ANABAPTIST CATECHISM Q.13:

“Q. Whether do you think baptism administered in infancy to be a lawful baptism, and sufficient?

A. *To me it is not; for I think it to be a profanation of an ordinance, for these reasons:*

*(1.) Because it is taught by the precepts of men (Isaiah 29:13), not by God (Jeremiah 7:22,23).”*

You hold, it seems, that it is neither lawful nor sufficient, and (in plain English) it is null, void, no baptism at all. But consider (I pray you), if you could prove the nullity of infant baptism (as you have a great mind to do) what sad consequences would ensue:

(1.) That the people of God, for the space of 1600 years using paedobaptism, were destitute of one, if not (by consequence) of both the sacraments.

(2.) That the churches in England, Scotland, France, Denmark, Sweden, Germany, Geneva, Holland, New England, etc., which have usually no other baptism but child baptism, are no churches, the members thereof being not so much as Christians outwardly, nor sacramentally initiated into the church. In doing whereof you dishonour God, and do Satan great service: God's work being to disciple and enchurch the nations of the world (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:16; 2 Corinthians 5:19); and Satan's to undisciple and heathenise the church, either in reality, or in reputation, for the advancement of his own kingdom.

(3.) That these, and all others, must for ever (as the case stands) be wanting the sacrament of baptism, except a special and particular warrant come from heaven (as to John Baptist) for the setting up of this ordinance. For no man, who is both unseparated to the work of the ministry, and unbaptised (his paedobaptism being a nullity) and un-united to the church of Christ, can warrantably baptise himself, or any other, any more than Saul might sacrifice; Uzzah stay the ark; Uzziah offer incense; a midwife, Turk, Jew or pagan administer the sacraments of Christ's church.

For if paedobaptism be a nullity because of default in the subject, this will also be a nullity for want of commission. For you can show neither precept, precedent, nor good warrant from the Word, for any man that is unbaptised (having no special commission from God) to baptise himself, or to baptise any other; or for any man to accept of baptism from such an one, which is indeed no baptism at all. John, as he had commission from God for his baptising, so he affirms, that “*a man can receive nothing (viz. no authority to baptise as he did) except it be given him from heaven*” (John 3:26,27), as if he would professedly caution the church against such courses.

(4.) That the societies of the Independents and Separatists (notwithstanding their separation from us) do yet (except they also turn Anabaptists) live within one of the strongest holds of Antichrist, are guilty of observing traditions and precepts of men, of will-worship, of profanation of God’s holy ordinance, of filling the church with rotten members, of confounding the church and the world together. Yea (say some of you), they have the mark of the beast in their foreheads, and by consequence are in the high way to eternal damnation. And what worse can you say of any? Your texts prove that God hates hypocrisy, and overmuch regard of the commandments of men, and that God did command obedience rather than sacrifice, (1 Samuel 15:22), (for God did command sacrifices and offerings, Leviticus 1, 2, 3, etc.) What is this to paedobaptism? Will you acknowledge that God hath commanded it to us, as He did burnt offerings and sacrifices to the Jews? We ourselves say no more for it. But if your texts do forbid all human inventions in the worship of God, paedobaptism is yet safe enough. For it hath been proved in the foregoing chapter to have as good warrant from the Word as some other (by yourself acknowledged) ordinances of God have, and better than your opposite opinion and practices.

#### ANABAPTIST CATECHISM:

“A. (2.) *Paedobaptism is done in a wrong manner, by sprinkling instead of dipping.*”

This exception you begin your catechism with, telling us that baptism signifies dipping; by dipping is never signified sprinkling. Whence you would infer that baptism should be by dipping only, and that it is done in the wrong manner when it is done by sprinkling. Wherein you much mistake. For:

(1.) Should the original signification of the other Scripture words be so much squeezed, then because the holy Communion is called a “*supper*” (1 Corinthians 11:20) (the word signifying a whole meal), and the word “*psallo*” (1 Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:19) signifies not simply “to sing”, but “to sing to a musical instrument”, and the original words for the gesture at the Supper signify “lying” or “leaning on a bed”; you might with as good reason collect, that the holy Communion should be a whole meal; that there should be instrumental music in churches as well as vocal; that men ought to lie or lean on beds at the receiving of the Supper, or else the ordinances are done in a wrong manner.

(2.) The word “*baptism*” by your own confession doth signify washing as well as dipping, and washing is the main thing, being the end, and dipping but the means, especially with reference to this ordinance, which is for washing or putting away the filth of the flesh (1 Peter 3:21; Acts 22:16; Hebrews 10:22; 1 Corinthians 6:11). Now a thing may be washed, not only by dipping, but by sprinkling, or by affusion or putting water upon it, which is mostly used by us, and not sprinkling

(3.) The Greek word “*baptism*” in Scripture signifies not only washing by dipping or plunging into water, but by sprinkling or affusion. The baptisms or washings, mentioned (Hebrews 9:10), were (at

least some of them) done only by sprinkling of water, (Numbers 8:7); which was called the “*water of separation*” (Numbers 19:9), and “*holy water*” (Numbers 5:17); or by sprinkling of blood, which is instanced in (Hebrews 9:13,19,21). (See also Exodus 29:16,21; Psalm 51:7). Their washings (called “*baptising*”) of hands, were frequently (at least) by letting water fall on their hands from a laver (2 Kings 3:11). So their tables and beds were not dipped into the water, but washed with pouring water on them (Mark 7:4). They that were “*baptised with the Holy Ghost, and with fire*” (Matthew 3:11), were not dipped or plunged into the fire (though, if they had, it seems it would not have burned them), but “*cloven tongues, as of fire, sat upon each of them*” (Acts 2:3). They that were “*baptised in the cloud, and in the sea*” (1 Corinthians 10:1), were not dipped or plunged into the cloud or sea, for it was dry land, but probably they were bedewed, besprinkled, or dropped on. The Greek word “*baptised*” (by translation rendered “dipped”) (Revelation 19:13), is no other in (Isaiah 63:2, 3), than “besprinkled”.

(4.) Baptism signifies justification by the blood of Christ, which is called the “*blood of sprinkling*” (Hebrews 12:24; 1 Peter 1:2; Hebrews 10:22), and “*sanctification by the spirit*” of Christ, which is called “*sprinkling of clean water on them*” (Ezekiel 36:25; Isaiah 52:15), both which were also typified by the aforesaid legal purifications or washings.

(5.) It cannot be proved by the Word, nor is it probable in itself, that the three thousand baptised in Jerusalem (Acts 2:41) were carried to a river, and there dipped one by one by the apostles; or that Paul, Lydia, the jailer, and all theirs, which (it’s likely) were baptised in houses, were so dipped. Did they shift their clothes, or continued they in their wet apparel? And how could their whole body be washed (though it might be wet) with their clothes on? Or were they all (men and women) baptised stark naked? And was this not contrary to modesty, and a temptation which mastered holy David? (2 Samuel 11:1). Much less can it be proved that, be the person never so sickly, the season never so cold, yet dipping is (though it may endanger men’s lives) not only lawful in itself (as we account it, yea, it hath been commended above sprinkling or affusion), but in all cases and conditions necessary, and the omission of it upon any occasion is sinful.

#### ANABAPTIST CATECHISM:

“A. (3.) *Paedobaptism is done by an officer, where there is a questionable power, as the ministers ordained by bishops deemed antichristian.*”

(1.) This exception is no force against child baptism administered by such ministers as are not ordained by bishops<sup>22</sup>.

(2.) You tell us not by whom, or whether truly or falsely the bishops were deemed antichristian. Certainly the old Nonconformists (how ever they, or some of them, might hold that in the calling and authority of the bishops there be divers things antichristian) agreed by joint consent, that they “*did not see*” (I use their own words) “*how our bishops could be called antichrists, or antichristians:*

*(1.) Because the Word marks out antichrist by his false doctrine. Nor do we find in Holy Scripture such accounted antichrist, or antichristian, which holding the truth of doctrine, swerveth either in judgment or practice from Christ’s rule for discipline. Now it is evident that our bishops do hold*

*and teach all fundamental doctrines and truths, and some of them have soundly maintained it against heretics, converted many to it, and have suffered persecution for the gospel.*

*(2.) Their hierarchy and other corruptions charged upon the calling of our bishops, were rather to be esteemed the stairs and way to antichristianity, than antichristianity itself; for they were in the church before the Pope, who is the Antichrist and chief head-link of all antichristianity, was revealed.*

*(3.) The antichristian bishops hold their pre-eminence as from God's law, which is unchangeable; whereas our bishops, since Her Majesty's reign to this day (for the most part), held their superiority by no other right than the positive law, which is variable. Yea, it appears by the institution of the Court of Delegates, and the continuance thereof to this day, that they do and ought by law to hold their jurisdiction, not as from God, but as from the Prince."*

Thus they.

And as to ministers ordained by the bishops, they say: "*Bishops are able to judge of such gifts as are required for the sufficiency of ministers, that many of them have been such ministers themselves, as to whose labours the Lord hath set to His seal – We are persuaded, that (though it were not necessary, yet) it cannot be unlawful for him that entereth into the ministry to be approved and authorised even by them. And if our ordination be in this behalf faulty, how will our brethren justify the calling of our own ministers, that have received ordination ever from the people, who neither by commandment nor example can be found to have any such authority, nor are in any degree so capable of it, as the bishops?"* See Mr Rathband's grave confutation, etc. pages 19 and 38.

(3.) Suppose it were confessed that the bishops, as claiming by God's law the sole power of ordination and jurisdiction (if any so did) might in some qualified sense be called antichristian; had this such an influence upon an ordination, in which others joined as well as he, so as to make it void and null, both as from himself, and as from them? The bishops were presbyters, and so more enabled by God's Word to ordain (as the godly Nonconformists truly assert) than any non-presbyters. And they came nearer to a presbytery than two, three, or more members (which are nothing like a presbytery, or company of presbyters) can do. And their ordination was judged valid, not only by the Parliament and the Assembly, but also by all the Reformed Churches abroad, as by the Non-conformists at home, notwithstanding they were opposers of, and were opposed by the bishops. Yea, God Himself added His own seal, affording not only ministerial gifts and graces, but His gracious assistance for conversion of souls and edifying of the saints; and (sometimes) so gloriously working by the ministry of the Church of England, as He hath not (that we know of) wrought so by any other. But in your account the baptism administered by such a minister is "*neither lawful nor sufficient*", or at least it is the "*profanation of the ordinance*". Who you are, I know not<sup>23</sup>; but the general opinion of your party is that any disciple (especially a teaching disciple) may baptise (See: "*Confession of the Seven Churches,*" article 41). And doth ordination by a bishop, and other ministers, make void such discipleship, and make him that he cannot be so as a private Christian; yea, make his baptism antichristian?

We receive from God the Old Testament by the hands of the Jews, and the whole Bible by the hands of papists; most Scriptures have some time or another been abused, must we therefore disuse them? If a bishop should baptise one at full age, making profession of faith and repentance, yea suppose a Jesuit, pretending to be a gifted brother, or a teaching disciple (as it is lawful for the Jesuits to say or

do anything that may tend to the weakening of the true Reformed religion), and should dip many, would his dipping be null and void, and to be reiterated? This I dare say: Whatsoever is rational or religious, cannot be made irrational or irreligious, whosoever useth or hath used it. And if multitudes of persons should cast away all that they have received by the bishops, and ministers ordained by them, they should with those things irrecoverably cast their souls into hell. When Antichrist most reigned and raged, and the woman fled into the wilderness, God did preserve some fundamental doctrines, and the essence of baptism, and the essence of a true ministry dispensing it; and they, that is, her pastors, “*did feed her there*” (Revelation 12:6,14).

(4.) There are now more antichrists than ever were before in our, or in any other Reformed church; and worse antichrists, by how much fundamental errors in doctrine are greater abominations than errors only in discipline. All heretics in Scripture language are antichrists (1 John 2:18-22; 4:3). The errors, heresies, blasphemies, treacheries, hypocrisies, perjuries, sacrilegious seditious actions, divisions and subdivisions, bitter and bloody contentions, rebaptisations, ordinations by the people, and other mere human inventions of these times, do justify the bishops, and all episcopal men (that have kept themselves free from these and the like crimes) from being so antichristian as we; do really dishonour the true Reformed religion, delight the truly antichristian faction, and make way for our reducing, not only to prelacy, but to that which all sober men count incomparably more dangerous, to popery; yea to the worst edition of it, Spanish, Jesuited, Inquisition Popery.

#### ANABAPTIST CATECHISM:

“A. (4.) *Paedobaptism is done upon a wrong subject, who is not in Christ's commission (Matthew 28.19; Mark 16.16); believers and repentants being the subjects therein.*”

You here beg the question. What you here allege, hath been answered Q. 1 and Q. 2.

#### ANABAPTIST CATECHISM:

“*All the certainty I can have of such a baptism, is only conjectural, not infallible; whereas the outward sign of a sacrament must be visible and infallible, as the thing signified is. This infant baptism I take only in trust from others.*”

The infants blessed by Christ could in their riper age have no certainty of their being so blessed by Him. Nor had the Jewish infants any certainty of their circumcision; for the foreskin of circumcised infants might be, and sometimes was, so drawn up, that when they came to age they could not discern their circumcision. To this Paul alludes (1 Corinthians 7:18). If the flesh mark was always discernible, yet it could not teach them whether a friend or foe had done it; whether for sacred or civil ends; whether duly or unduly, without instruction or information by word or writing. And such instruction may assure us of our right baptism, though it was administered in infancy. You may have such assurance of your baptism, as the priests by the registers had of their pedigree (Ezra 2:62); as Paul had, that he was circumcised the eighth day, that he was of the “*stock of Israel, an Hebrew of the Hebrews, of the tribe of Benjamin*” (Philippians 3:5). Yea, you may have as much or more certainty that you were baptised, as that such an one was your father, such a woman your mother. Yet, sure (if you will call that only a conjectural and not infallible testimony) you will rest so much upon it, as to call him your father, and her your mother, that are testified and reputed to be so, and without scruple of conscience honour them, as you are bound by the fifth commandment; and also

keep that which is generally computed to be the first day of the week, or the Lord's day, though you take it but on trust from others.

Possibly he that is baptised at full age, may not infallibly know that he was baptised. Some have forgotten (through sickness) the greatest concernments, yea their own names; must they thereupon be rebaptised? Possibly a man or woman, as you are dipping them under the water, may be so damped, that they may not hear, or not heed the words used by the administrator, whether he baptise, or bless, or curse; must they be dipped again, till they do hear, and heed, that they may infallibly know themselves to be baptised? If a man should herein be deceived, and think he was baptised in his infancy, when he was not, the error is not very dangerous. Faith in Christ may supply the defect of baptism; and he not neglecting or contemning baptism, not knowing that he is wanting of it, may reap benefit by his supposed baptism, as if were real.

As for his resolution of the case (grounded on the supposed unlawfulness of paedobaptism), whether a Christian may with good conscience be present at it, I judge it unnecessary for me to discuss it (having, I hope, cleared the lawfulness of infant baptism). Yet, I confess, I cannot approve sundry things in it<sup>24</sup>, though paedobaptism were confessed to be unlawful.

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## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Interestingly here, the A.V. text concludes the sentence “*with all his house.*” The N.I.V. text has, “...*he had come to believe in God, he and his whole family,*” thus implying his whole family had come to believe. However, both the Textus Receptus and the Nestle's Greek New Testament place the Greek word for “*with all the household*” after “*rejoiced*” (or “*filled with joy*” N.I.V.), thus showing his household rejoiced with him, rather than believed as he did.

<sup>2</sup> ‘not’ omitted from text.

<sup>3</sup> lit. “*in the course of accomplishment*”.

<sup>4</sup> Flavius Arrianus (c. A.D. 96 – c. A.D. 180.), Greek historian and philosopher.

<sup>5</sup> Hugo Grotius (Huig De Groot) 1583-1645, Dutch jurist, statesman, philologist, poet, theologian, historian. A man of great learning.

<sup>6</sup> unknown person.

<sup>7</sup> lit. “*in terms*”.

<sup>8</sup> Chief Jewish authorities in matters of law and doctrine.

<sup>9</sup> servants.

<sup>10</sup> expected to attain.

<sup>11</sup> Seekers. A small sect which arose in England in the year 1645. They derived their name from the employment in which they represented themselves as being constantly engaged, that of seeking for the true church, ministry, scripture, and ordinances, all of which they alleged to have been lost. They taught that the scriptures were obscure and doubtful in their meaning; that present miracles were necessary to warrant faith; that the ministry of modern times is without authority, and their worship utterly vain. – Faiths of the World.

<sup>12</sup> lit. “*in favour with God and conscience, and out of baptism*”.

<sup>13</sup> lit. “*in favour with the church and out of baptism*”.

<sup>14</sup> lit. “*bread of the owner, not bread of ownership*”.

<sup>15</sup> according to the religious rule.

<sup>16</sup> from the better part.

<sup>17</sup> Antinomian movement during mid 1600's, some with extreme pantheistic views. Generally considered by contemporary writers to lead morally disordered lives.

<sup>18</sup> From the general to affirm a specific point.

<sup>19</sup> Legal infancy or minority.

<sup>20</sup> in himself or herself.

<sup>21</sup> the part which is followed is the better.

<sup>22</sup> There were at this time a number of ministers presbyterially ordained. In 1644, by an ordinance which passed the Houses of Parliament, twenty one ministers in Lancashire were given full power to ordain ministers in the county.

<sup>23</sup> The author of the ‘*Anabaptistical Catechism*’ was not at the time of writing known by Richard Hollinworth.

<sup>24</sup> The Puritans were in the main opposed to the sign of the cross, and some other aspects of the baptismal service as laid down at that time in the "*Book of Common Prayer*".

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