

SERMON VI

CONCLUSIVE PROOF

THAT THE GREAT COMMISSION INCLUDES BELIEVERS BAPTISM ONLY, THAT CIRCUMCISION HAS BEEN ABOLISHED, AND THAT INFANT BAPTISM IS BASED ON EXTRA SCRIPTURAL SOURCES AND TRADITION

Matthew 28:19-20.

"Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen".

I have already observed to you that Christ Jesus, the Head of the church, and Lord of all, was now constituting his present and succeeding disciples to be apostles unto all nations. My text is their commission, and general and particular orders. In it they are directed—

1. To go and disciple all nations. 2. To baptize them in the name of the Father, &c. 3. He directs these newly constituted apostles, and all their successors, to teach their baptized disciples to observe all things whatsoever he had given in commandment. *Lastly*. for their encouragement and comfort, he adds, "And, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen."

A.

THE GREAT COMMISSION INCLUDES BELIEVERS BAPTISM ONLY

What I purposed to say to you, particularly, upon the second proposition, I have said. I now recur to the [first point] which contains Christ's command to *his disciples* to go and *disciple* all nations.

I have already showed you what baptism is, and the design of it. I am now, if the Lord will, to lay open what is commanded to be done **before** baptism be administered, also the evidence which the Lord may afford me to prove to you that my instruction is from him.

Your feelings, my brethren and people, have no doubt been highly wrought up, whilst I have opened before you one of the laws of Christ's kingdom amongst men. I have still more things to say unto you respecting the rules and regulations of this kingdom.

I pray the Lord, that your minds may be so prepared to hear, that you may not forsake me and flee, as many of Christ's professed friends did, when he preached on a subject which greatly crossed their prejudices and carnal expectations.

CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES THE SOURCE OF AUTHORITY, NOT THE WORDS OF OUR FOREFATHERS

Your busy minds, no doubt, will, before you are aware, be inquiring what great and good men, in our days and in the days of our fathers, have said and thought of these things; but we should look farther back than our forefathers.

The man Christ Jesus, and his inspired prophets and apostles, should be the men of our counsel. Should I speak according to these, you may hearken to me with safety: if contrary, convict me by the word and testimony of Jesus Christ; for I appeal to these, for by them I ought to be judged.

A PLEA TO LAY PREJUDICE ASIDE WHEN CONSIDERING THIS ISSUE

One request, my hearers, I pray you to grant me; namely—Lay prejudice aside, and let scripture, reason and common sense be heard for a few minutes.

Surely you must consider my case more trying than any of yours. For it is, perhaps, as difficult for me to combat my own prejudices and carnal feelings, as it is for any of you to contend with his: Besides this, I have to look your prejudices in the face, while I venture to bring any of your old practices to the scriptures for trial. Yes, more than all this, I have many trials to encounter which you have not, nor can have.

I should not have made the attempt to bring our former practice to the standard for trial, had not my difficulties been so great, that I durst proceed no farther, without proving my works. One of my practices hath been weighed in the balance, and is found wanting.

I am now, if my heart deceive me not, willing to lead another of my works, or the subjects on which some of my works have been, to the bar for trial. If this shall be found of wood, hay or stubble, may the fire of truth burn it up, and may the fire of love cause me to rejoice while it shall be consuming.

THE REAL ISSUE AT STAKE:

COMPREHENSION AND OBEDIENCE TO CHRIST'S COMMAND EXACTLY AS HE
GAVE IT

The proposition which will bring this other of my works to the trial, is—Christ commands his ministers to go and disciple all nations. I have engaged to be one of these ministers. The command is, therefore, binding upon me. I have gone forth, that I might obey. The great thing to be determined is, whether I have understood what it is to disciple, or to make disciples, and have practiced accordingly.

THE CRUX OF THIS MATTER

DOES DISCIPLING A PARENT AUTOMATICALLY INCLUDE CHILDREN AT
THE SAME TIME?

The important question to be decided is just this: If I disciple any of you who are parents, do I, as a necessary consequence, disciple all your children and households? The only difficulty, in this question, relates to children and households. What it is to disciple the master of a family, is a thing in which Christians generally agree.

I ought just to remark to you, that *matheteusate*, to teach, is, in its literal and genuine sense, to disciple, or so to teach as to make disciples.

A HYPOTHETICAL ILLUSTRATION

To bring the question before you as fully as I can, I wish you, each one of you, to fix his attention upon some one family in this town, in which family not a Christian is to be found. If each one has his mind fixed upon such a Christless household, I will now put the question:—

Suppose I, instrumentally, disciple the father of this family, do I, as a certain consequence, make disciples of the whole family?

THE SCRIPTURAL DESCRIPTION OF A DISCIPLE

Before you determine the question, it may be well to fix in your minds what a disciple is. Let the scriptures speak. The *disciples* were called Christians first at Antioch, Acts 1:26. The commission which Christ gave to the first ministers, and to all succeeding ones, as recorded Mark 16:15-16, is Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature: he that *believeth*, &c.

Here a believer is the same as a *disciple*. Here we see a disciple, in the sense of my text, is a believer, a believer in Christ, a Christian. This is the idea which the New Testament, from beginning to end, gives us of a disciple. There is, however, mention made of disciples, who were so but by profession, or who were visible disciples only, not having the love of God in them.

QUESTIONS THAT MUST BE SCRIPTUALLY ANSWERED

Now try the question with respect to both sorts of these disciples. **Suppose I, instrumentally disciple the father of a Christless family, do I, as a necessary consequence, make Christians of all in his house?** You will please to make up your minds, on this question, decidedly.

(a) Suppose again, that I, instrumentally, disciple the father of a Christless family, do I, as a necessary consequence, make *visible* disciples of all his family? Let your minds be clearly determined as to the answer.

(b) Once more; suppose I, by delivering the Lord's message, convert, or make a disciple of the father of a Christless family, do I, of necessary consequence, make any one of his household besides himself a disciple?*

*Prejudice may reply, you are to disciple the household by baptizing them. This contradicts my text that says disciple them first.

TWO SOURCES TO CONSIDER IN DISCOVERING THE ANSWERS

1. REASON AND COMMON SENSE PROVE THAT DISCIPLING A PARENT DOES NOT AUTOMOTICALLY INCLUDE CHILDREN.

Let scripture, let reason, let common sense, let any thing speak, which will speak the truth, and determine these questions. Consider, take advice, and speak your minds.

Can you suppose, or can you not, that to make a father of a family a disciple, his wife, his servants, and his children, are all disciples of course, or of necessary consequence?

Is not this a clear case? And yet the great and momentous subject before us turns altogether upon the answer of this question. If discipling the father of a family renders all his house disciples, they are all subjects of baptism, they have the scripture qualification for it; if it do not, then they have not the qualification which my text requires to be in those who are baptized.

You will judge for yourselves whether households to thus become disciples; as for the rest, the scriptures determine: if they be disciples, they are to be baptized; if not, they are not to be.

I know what your answer must be, for by incontestable facts, in this town, the discipling of a father of a family does not disciple his household; it does not even make them visible disciples, or give them even the appearance of being so.

2. SCRIPTURAL PROOF THAT BAPTISM REQUIRES PROFESSION OF FAITH BEFORE BAPTISM

The following is for evidence, that persons must be made disciples before they are baptized.

a. John made his hearers disciple before he baptized them. He required, in order for baptism, that they should bring forth fruits meet for, or as evidence of, repentance, Matt. 3:8. and Luke 3:8.

b. Christ disciples baptized none but such as were made disciples first, John 4:1-2.

c. Christ, in my text, gives no liberty to baptize any but such as are first disciplined. Yes, he commands his ministers to disciple before they baptize.

The account which Mark gives us of the Apostles' commission, and of the Baptismal Institution, is confirming evidence in this matter, 16th chapter, 15th and 16th verses: "Preach the gospel to every creature: He that believeth and it baptized," &c. Here believing is put before baptism. The way adopted by some to avoid the force of this text is, if they be baptized, say they, no matter when, before or after believing. This way of getting clear of the difficulty appears neither wise nor candid; for it injures the plain meaning of the text, and makes Matthew's and Mark's account of the commission to disagree.

B.

THE CEREMONIAL LAW AND CIRCUMCISION HAVE BOTH BEEN ABOLISHED

What remains are a number of plain truths, facts and consequences, which have a more near or remote relation with the subject on hand, and may serve to throw light upon it.

In the first place, we may take notice of two particulars, which perhaps have not been sufficiently noticed. One is, the ceremonial law, and the covenant of circumcision which was annexed to it appear to be disannulled and past away.

1. SCRIPTURE MAKES IT PLAIN THAT THE CEREMONIAL LAW WITH ITS ATTENDANT COVENANT OF CIRCUMCISION HAS BEEN ABOLISHED. The following may make this matter plain: The disannulling or abolishing of the law we see:

a. Heb. 7:18. "There is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before, for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof."

b. Also Gal. 3:19. "Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions *till the seed should come to whom the promise was made.*" What seed this is, to whom the promise was made, we are told in the 16th verse of the same chapter. "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made: He saith not to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ."

We hence see, that Christ was the seed to whom the promises were made, and that the *law* (the ceremonial law) was added because of transgressions, till the seed, i.e. Christ, should come. It is hence plain, that the ceremonial law was to continue no longer than till Christ came.

The covenant of the circumcision appears to be annexed to this law. For says Jesus Christ, John 7:23, "If a man on the sabbath day *receive circumcision*, that the *law of Moses* should not be *broken*, are ye angry at me:" &c.

c. Heb. 8:13: That this covenant of circumcision, or the Sinai covenant, which includes it, hath passed away, or is disannulled, see Heb. 8:13. "In that he saith a new covenant, he hath made the first old: now that which decayeth and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away."

d. Gal. 5:2-3: Besides, circumcision is evidently a very important part of that law, which is disannulled; for, saith Paul to the Galatians, chap. 5:2-3. "If ye be *circumcised*, Christ shall *profit* you *nothing*. For I testify again, says he, to every man that is *circumcised*, that he is a debtor to the whole law."

It is hence plain, that the ceremonial law is no longer binding; and that the covenant of circumcision which was incorporated with it, hath vanished away

AN IMPORTANT FACT TO NOTE

2. THE GOSPEL PROMISES TO ABRAHAM WERE MADE BEFORE THE COVENANT OF CIRCUMCISION WAS EFFECTED

a. The other particular is this: the promises which were made to Abraham and to his seed, were not made to him in *circumcision*, but in *uncircumcision*; and the covenant which was

confirmed of God to Abraham in Christ, was while he was in *uncircumcision*, and about twenty-four years before the covenant of *circumcision* was given: *Rom.* 4:8,9,10; *Gal.* 3:16,17; *Gen.* 12:3,4,7, and 17:10,17.

b. Moreover, when Paul speaks of the covenant which was confirmed of God in Christ, he points out the exact year when this was made known or confirmed with Abraham, as though he had a foresight, as certainly the Holy Ghost had, of the contention which should be long continued for want of judiciously understanding what covenant should be disannulled, and what covenant the law could not disannul.

He tells us, *Gal.* 3:17, that this covenant, which cannot be made void, was four hundred and thirty years before the law; whereas the covenant of circumcision was about four hundred and six years before the law, with which circumcision was united.

Seeing matters are thus, what, I pray you, my hearers, have we to do with the covenant of circumcision? If we keep it, Christ shall profit us nothing; if we observe something which we substitute in its place, Christ may profit us as little in such observance.

*[See editor's note below on the following paragraph] I know it will be asked, Is not the church the same now that it was in Abraham's day? I answer, yes, and the same that it was in Noah's, Enoch's, and Adam's, and the same that it ever will be.

*[Ed: Daniel Merrill is dispensationally confused in the above paragraph as he incorrectly pre-dates the church. The church is a N.T. entity, a mystery in the O.T. Israel. It must be remembered that Pastor Merrill was just coming into the Biblical comprehension of truth. There was not much solid local N.T. Baptist literature available for his consideration.]

3. AS A COVENANT SIGN, CIRCUMCISION WAS LIMITED TO THE OLD TESTAMENT. THE "NEW" COVENANT IN THE N. T. IS TO BE CONTRASTED WITH THE "OLD" COVENANT IN THE O. T. WHICH WAS TEMPORARY AND IS NOW ABOLISHED.

It will be asked again, Is not the covenant the same which it was in Abraham's time? Yes, the covenant which was confirmed of God in Christ is unchangeably the same; but the covenant of circumcision which God made with Abraham, renewed with Isaac and Jacob, and solemnized with Israel in the wilderness, (*Deut.* 29:10,11,12,13,) is far from being the covenant, the *new covenant*, which God makes with the house of Israel in our day.

The covenant of circumcision was, more than 1700 years ago, decaying, waxing old, and ready to vanish away. But you will again say, Is not the church composed of parents and children, and of households now, as it was in Abraham's day?

Let Paul answer how it was (as touching the gospel) in Abraham's day and after, *Rom.* 9:6,7,8. "They are not all Israel which are of Israel, neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children; but in Isaac shall thy seed be called. That is, they that are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed."

Just so now. The children of God, the children of the promise are counted for the seed, and compose the church; and of those who appear thus should the visible church be made up, and of none else. But, if by the question be meant, Does not church membership descend from parents to children, and from masters to servants, as it appears to have done under the old covenant of circumcision?

The answer is, The New Testament nowhere acknowledges, nor does it know, any thing about a church thus made up.

SOME EXCELLENT ADVICE

I would that all good men would consent to take New Testament directions and examples by which to constitute and guide New Testament churches.

A GOOD QUESTION
DOESN'T BAPTISM SIMPLY REPLACE CIRCUMCISION?

But it will be asked once more, Hath not baptism come into the place of circumcision, and to be supplied to similar subjects?

THE BIBLICAL ANSWER

BAPTISM IS NEVER SUBSTITUTED FOR CIRCUMCISION IN THE N. T.

Circumcision was a positive institution, and so is baptism. Abraham and the Israelites knew nothing to whom circumcision should be administered, but as they received direction from the Divine Institutor; just so it is with respect to the administration of baptism.

The Christians at Antioch, the Elders at Jerusalem, the church of Galatia, and Paul and Barnabas, knew nothing of baptism being substituted for circumcision. *Acts* 15:1 to 35; *Gal.* 3 and 5 chapters. We know nothing, and can know nothing, as to whom baptism is to be administered, but from what Christ hath told us as to the subjects. Now—

C.

INFANT BAPTISM HAS NO SCRIPTURAL WARRANT,
BUT IS BASED ON EXTRA SCRIPTURAL SOURCES AND
CHURCH TRADITION

Secondly [thirdly] I ask, what evidence have we from the Bible that infants are to be baptized?

You may reply, they are included in the covenant. What covenant? In that of circumcision? Surely not, for that hath vanished away. If you say, In the covenant that was confirmed of God in Christ, I *answer*, It was not this covenant which entitled Abraham's household to circumcision; therefore, though your children be in this covenant, that does not, of itself, entitle them to baptism; whether baptism be in the place of circumcision, or not.

You will then say, What can entitle our children to baptism? *Answer*. Their being disciples, and so coming within the compass or pale of the baptismal institution.

As we can know nothing of the subjects of baptism, any more than Abraham and Israel could be the subjects of circumcision, but from what we are informed in the institution, and in what is said upon it, we will inquire what the Bible saith of this matter.

If the Lord, in his word, hath not given us sufficient instruction upon this subject, we must practice in the dark, for we have no where else to go.

1. NO EVIDENCE THAT JOHN BAPTIZED INFANT CHILDREN

We will begin with John. 1. Did he baptize any children? We have no evidence that he did. Besides, he told the multitude which attended his ministry, not to plead Abraham, or Abraham's covenant, as a title to baptism. *Matt.* 3:7, 8, 9, 10.

2. NO EVIDENCE THAT CHRIST'S DISCIPLES BAPTIZED INFANT CHILDREN

Did Christ's disciples, whilst he was with them, and whilst they *made* and *baptized* more *disciples* than John, baptize infants, or any visibly unbelieving children? No evidence that they did.

3. NO EVIDENCE FROM THE GREAT COMMISSION MANDATE ABOUT INFANT BAPTISM

Is there any evidence from my text, which contains the words of the institution, that infants, or unbelieving households, were to be baptized? None; but the contrary.

4. NO EVIDENCE FROM ANY N. T. PASSAGE THAT COMMANDS INFANT BAPTISM

Is there any passage in the New Testament, which commands, or says so much as one word, that infants are to be baptized? Not one.

5. NO EXAMPLE OF INFANT BAPTISM ANYWHERE IN THE N.T.
THE THREE SUPPOSED EXAMPLES OF INFANT BAPTISM SCRUTINIZED UNDER THE
SCRIPTURAL SEARCHLIGHT

Is there any example, which shows that the apostles baptized any upon the faith of parents, or masters, or upon the faith or promises of any others? I know, my brethren, there are three instances, which are supposed by some to favor the affirmative of the question. I have rather been of the same opinion. If it be so, many facts convince us. We will look at each of these examples separately.

a. LYDIA: ACTS 16:13-15

The first supposed example we find at Philippi. Here was a woman, named Lydia; she appears to have been a woman of business. She belonged to Thyatira, but was now at Philippi, probably selling her merchandize, with several attendants. The history is thus related, *Acts* 16, 13th, 14th, and 15th, verses.

(1) THE SCRIPTURAL RECORD

"On the sabbath day, we (Paul and other disciples) went out of the city, by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made, and we sat down, and spake unto the women who resorted thither. And a certain woman, named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, who worshipped God, heard us, whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there."

(2) THE ATTENDANT FACTS

This is all we know of the matter. She belonged to another city. She worshipped God. She was, on the Sabbath day, by the side of a river, where prayer was wont to be made. The Lord opened her heart to attend to what Paul said. Her servants were with her. She had a house, either her own, or one taken for the time. She was baptized, and her household.

As to her having infants with her, you can tell, as well as I. Moreover, whether her servants believed the words of Paul, you can, if you attend to the circumstances, form as correct a judgment, perhaps, as any other can make up for you.

(3) THE OBVIOUS CONCLUSIONS

The things to be considered are. (a) Lydia was a godly woman. (b) She attended meeting. Paul found here where prayer was wont to be made, where religious women had been accustomed to meet. (c) She, like other religious people, took her household to meeting with her. (d) It appears that Paul baptized none of her household, but such as were with her at the female prayer meeting. (e) The strong probability is, that Lydia, being a pious woman, one who worshipped God, would select for her attendants, maidens or servants who also were worshippers of God.

In verse 40, we are told, the apostles entered into the house of Lydia, comforted the brethren, &c. You will weigh these circumstances, and make up for yourselves, so far as you can, a righteous judgment.

b. THE PHILIPPIAN JAILER: ACTS 16:25-34

The next example is recorded in the same chapter, and appears to be in the same city. The history of the matter is contained in the 25th verse, and on to the 34th.

(1) THE SCRIPTURAL RECORD

The noticeable facts, and on which we must make up our judgment, are—The jailer says, "Sirs, What must I do to be saved?" Paul and Silas answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he was baptized, he and all his, straightway—and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house."

(2) THE ATTENDANT FACTS

Here are three things to be put together. (a) The word of the Lord Jesus was spoken to them all. (b) They were all baptized. (c) They all believed in God. Whether here be any example of infant baptism, you will judge, each one for himself.

As some have supposed that this passage, and a few others of similar import, afford an argument in favor of sprinkling, it may be well to give it a moment's consideration. Here we are told, that the keeper of the prison brought out Paul and Silas. Where he brought them to, seems plainly enough to be gathered from the 32nd verse, in which we find them speaking to the jailer the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.

In the next verse we are informed that the jailer and all his were baptized. Where they were baptized, we are not told. One thing however is plain, it was not in the house; for in verse 34 it is said, When (i.e. after the household were baptized) he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God, with all his house.

(3) THE OBVIOUS CONCLUSIONS

From these observations, the following things appear: (a) That Paul and Silas were in the jailer's house, when they spake the word of the Lord to all that were in his house. (b) That when the ordinance was baptism was administered, they were not in his house. (c) That the mode of baptizing then in use rendered it inconvenient to be performed in the jailer's house. (d) After the ordinance was administered, they went into the house. How this favors sprinkling, I see not.

c. THE HOUSEHOLD OF STEPHANAS: I Cor. 1:16 & 16:15

The other supposed example is in *I Cor.* 1:16, where Paul says, I baptized also the household of Stephanas. In the 16th chap. 15th verse, we have a short history of Stephanas's household; it is thus, "Ye know the household of Stephanas, that it is the first fruits of Achaia, and that *they* have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints." Whether there is here found any evidence of infant baptism, you will determine for yourselves.

6. NO ENCOURAGEMENT FOR INFANT BAPTISM IN N.T. VERSES VERSUS THE GREAT ENCOURAGEMENT FOR PARENTS TO DEDICATE THEIR CHILDREN TO THE LORD

Are the encouragements which are given to parents in behalf of their children, made to their having them baptized; or are the blessings connected with their dedicating them to the Lord, and with their bringing them up in his *nurture* and *admonition*? With which, your Bibles will inform you.

7. NO CERTAIN EVIDENCE OF INFANT BAPTISM EITHER BY EXAMPLE OR PRECEPT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Do we, or do any, pretend, that there is any certain evidence, from either precept or example, for the baptizing of infants? Indeed there is none. Probably not many suppose it.

8. NO EVIDENCE FOR OBSERVANCE OF INFANT BAPTISM ON THE LORD'S DAY-SUNDAY-LIKE THERE ARE FOR OTHER CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

Is there, as some have affirmed, the same evidence for baptizing infants, that there is for observing the Lord's day, for admitting females to communion, and which there is for family prayer?

There is a day called the Lord's day, and religious things were to be observed on it. Are there infants, who are called baptized infants, and are they to be attended to as such? Females and males are declared to be all one in Christ, and so fit subjects for the communion of saints. Are infants unequivocally declared to be fit subjects of baptism?

We have examples of family prayer, and are commanded to pray with all prayer. Are there scripture examples of infant baptism, and are we commanded to baptize all; and so are infants included?

9. NO COMMAND BY CHRIST TO HIS DISCIPLES TO BAPTIZE INFANTS

Ought I to teach you infant baptism, if our Lord Jesus Christ hath no where directed me to do thus?

10. MORE EVIDENCE THAT CIRCUMCISION AND THE CEREMONIAL LAW HAVE BEEN ANNULLED

a. CHRIST NEVER STATED THAT BAPTISM WAS A REPLACEMENT FOR CIRCUMCISION

. Hath Jesus Christ spoken one word of baptism as being substituted for circumcision? Hath he any where commanded his ministers to teach this substitution?

Shall we go, and are we under the necessity of going, to the law and covenant of circumcision, to prove infant baptism, when both this law and covenant have long since waxed old, been repealed, and have perished? *Heb. 7:18,19, and 8:13.*

b. QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE BLESSINGS OF ABRAHAM ON PRESENT DAY BELIEVERS

(1) QUESTION # 1: But you will ask, are not the blessings of Abraham come on the Gentiles? [Answer] Yes.

(2) QUESTION # 2: You will then say, are not our children included in the promise? "If they be Christ's, then are they Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." *Gal. 3:29.* [Answer] Abraham's children, after the flesh, were not included in the promise, as the Pedobaptists of our day would have theirs.

(3) QUESTION #3: But you will say again, Are not our children included in the covenant? [Answer] In what covenant? In that of circumcision? Surely not. For though that covenant was often renewed, yet it hath long since passed away. Is your question this? Are they not included in that covenant, which was confirmed of God in Christ, twenty-four years previously to the covenant of circumcision?

I answer, No man knoweth, nor can know, but as your children give evidence, that they possess the Spirit of Christ. But as I have observed to you before, so I say again, even were your children included in this covenant and saints; this does not of itself give them any right to baptism, any more, than Abraham's being included in the same covenant gave him a right to circumcision.

BAPTISM AND THE COVENANT OF CIRCUMCISION ARE NOT RELATED

This covenant determines nothing as to the one, or the other. The covenant of circumcision determined who were to be circumcised. So the ordinance or institution of Baptism determines who are to be baptized. One determines no more who are to be admitted to the other, than does the covenant of an everlasting priesthood (*Num. 25:13.*) determine who shall be ministers in gospel days.

In short, there is no arguing from one to the other in this matter. They are both of them positive institutions, and nothing can be known of either, but what is revealed in its particular institution.

IF INFANT BAPTISM DOESN'T SUCCEED CIRCUMCISION, WHAT CAN PARENTS DO FOR THEIR CHILDREN?

While viewing this subject, you will inquire, What will become of our children? I answer, God only knoweth. You may rejoin; But what shall we do for them? [ANSWER] Dedicate them to God, and, like faithful Christians, bring them up for him.

SOME LEGITIMATE CONSEQUENCES IF BAPTISM SIMPLY REPLACES CIRCUMCISION

We will now attend to some legitimate consequences which follow, upon supposition that the subjects of baptism are to be determined from the subjects of circumcision.

1. THE ENTIRE HOUSEHOLD WOULD BE BAPTIZED, REGARDLESS OF THE NUMBER, AND WOULD BE AUTOMATICALLY CONSIDERED CHRISTIANS," EVEN ATHEISTS AND INFIDELS, REGARDLESS OF THEIR BELIEFS AND/OR CONDUCT.

One consequence is, every man who is converted to the Christian religion is to be baptized, and all his household, though he may have three hundred and seventeen training soldiers born in his own house. Not only are these soldiers to be baptized, but their wives, children, and all other servants, who belong to this great man's house. A thousand infidels are to be baptized, because one great man, their master, is christianized.

2. THE ENTIRE HOUSEHOLD WOULD BE CONSIDERED CHURCH MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING, REGARDLESS OF BELIEFS AND CONDUCT.

These soldiers, with their wives, children and servants, are all to be considered and treated as church members, or as being in covenant. I confess this does not look to me gospel-like.

3. THE ENTIRE HOUSEHOLD, REGARDLESS OF BELIEFS AND CONDUCT WOULD HAVE TO BE ADMITTED TO THE LORD'S TABLE.

Another consequence is, the adults among these, and among all others, who are baptized, are not only to be admitted to the communion, but required to come. I ask: Could such a communion be called the communion of saints? – one great and good man, with hundreds of unconverted servants!

4. ALL THE CHILDREN OF THE HOUSEHOLD WOULD HAVE A RIGHT TO BAPTISM.

All who have been baptized, and have not, for misdemeanor, been expelled the church, have a right to baptism for their children; and not man may forbid them.

5. THE EQUAL ACCEPTANCE OF CONVERTED AND UNCONVERTED DESTROY CHRIST'S DIVINELY DECREED DISTINCTION BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD.

Another consequence is, notwithstanding Christ saith, "My kingdom is not of this world," yet the regulations were such, especially the mean of admission into it, as strongly, and of infallible consequence, tended to make it of this world, and that abundantly so.

6. THE PRACTICE OF **SOME** GODLY PEDOBAPTIST PASTORS IN REQUIRING EVIDENCE OF REGENERATION BEFORE ADMISSION TO THE LORD'S TABLE AMONG ADULTS WHO WERE BAPTIZED IN INFANCY IS CONTRADICTIONARY TO THE O. T. CEREMONIAL PRACTICES.

Another consequence is, many learned and pious ministers of New-England are inconsistent with themselves, in requiring of persons baptized in infancy a profession of experimental religion, as a term of communion. It was not so done in Israel.

7. SOME GODLY PEDOBAPTIST PASTORS ARE INCONSISTENT IN REFUSING BAPTISM TO CHILDREN, WHO BY VIRTUE OF THEIR PARENTS PROFESSION, ARE ENTITLED TO BAPTISM AND ITS BENEFITS.

Another consequence is, many of the same pious and learned ministers are very inconsistent with themselves, in refusing baptism to the children of such as are, by their baptism, in regular church membership, or in covenant, as it is termed.

I have taken, as you observe, for granted, what I do not believe to be true, that sprinkling, or a very partial washing, is baptism.

8. AS THE SO-CALLED SUCCESSOR TO CIRCUMCISION, INFANT BAPTISM DESTROYS THE PURITY OF THE N. T. CHURCH

Another consequence is, it doth, so far as it hath its *perfect work*, destroy the very idea of the gospel church, contradict the prophets, and make Paul and others speak not the truth, and it throws us back to the state of the Jewish church. [Ed: Merrill errantly uses the term "church" to refer to the O.T. Jewish administrative economy]

[Editor's note about the following paragraph: Believers in this present dispensation, do share **now** in the **spiritual** provisions of this future millennial covenant that Merrill cites below, as the writer of Hebrews clearly declares in Hebrews chapter eight. The full and primary reference in Jeremiah 31, however, concerns the future conversion and restoration of Israel at the time of the Millennial reign of Christ on earth.]

a. JEREMIAH'S PROPHECY

Jeremiah, prophesying of the gospel church, saith, chap. 31:31 to 34, "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah; not according to the covenant that I made with your fathers, in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel,

After those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know me, from the least of them, unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord."

If this means any thing, it certainly means that the gospel church shall exceed in purity the Jewish church; that it shall, at least, be composed of professing saints.

b. ISAIAH'S PROPHECY

Isaiah says, chap. 14:13, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord." The latter of these passages, our Lord applies to the gospel day, *John* 6:45: The former is applied to the gospel church by Paul [in] *Heb.* 8.

c. MOSES' PROPHECY

Moses says in *Deut.* 18:15,19, "The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of the brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto my words, which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him."

d. PETER'S DECLARATION

This, and much more, Peter applies to gospel days, and to the gospel church, *Acts* 3:22, to the end. "Moses truly said unto the fathers, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass that every soul that will not hear that Prophet, shall be *destroyed from among the people*".

Yea, and all the prophets from Samuel, and those that follow after, as many as have spoken, have likewise foretold of these days. "Ye are the children of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed." "Unto you first, God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you in *turning away every one of you from his iniquities*."

THE CHURCH A DISTINCT ENTITY

Through the New-Testament, the gospel church is, or appears to be, spoken of as a society, nation or church of saints; and as being greatly different from the nation of the Jews.

But the subjects of baptism being determined by the subjects of circumcision, brings the gospel church as to its constituent materials, to the same condition with the church under the law of carnal ordinances. Indeed, what is now, generally, called the gospel church, is hardly to be distinguished by its members from the old Jewish church.

THE LACK OF SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION BY SOME GODLY PEDOBAPTISTS IN NOT RECOGNIZING THE ROOT PROBLEM IN THEIR NOBLE ATTEMPTS TO CLEANSE THEIR DENOMINATIONS OF SPIRITUAL POLLUTION

Do not these things look as though the twelve hundred and fifty years of Antichrist's reign were not wholly past? Is there not, my brethren, some ... error at the root of all this? Can such

streams, as are these consequences, flow from a pure fountain? Indeed many good ministers of our land have long since discovered some of these evil consequences, and have labored hard to rectify them.

President Edwards, and many others, made a noble stand against this flood of *corruption*; yet they discovered not the fountain whence these streams flow, and will flow, till it be removed.

Putting or mistaking the covenant of circumcision, for the covenant which was confirmed of God in Christ to Abraham, twenty-four years before circumcision was known, and substituting baptism for circumcision, and determining the subjects of the one by the subjects of the other, without any authority thus to do, have produced all this corruption, deception, and world of evil. Would good ministers be persuaded to lay the axe at the root of the tree, as John did, the evils would be soon rectified.

The subject, on which we now are, is of such high concernment to the church of Christ, generally, and your conviction of the truth of it being almost, or quite, essential to our future peace and union together, I would willingly omit nothing which might chafe away your darkness, and cause the true light to appear.

A HISTORY OF INFANT BAPTISM BASED ON EXTRA SCRIPTURAL SOURCES AND TRADITION

I will, therefore, add here the history of infant baptism. Should we find that infant baptism is of men, as we have already found sprinkling to be, it is hoped that you will either give it up, or practice it as being of man's device, and not, as Mr. Dickinson would have it, as belonging to infants by divine right.

1. INFANT BAPTISM IS POST-APOSTOLIC IN ORIGIN AND UNKNOWN BEFORE THE SECOND CENTURY.

The first information which we have of infant baptism is about the middle of the second century; about which time Irenaeus, in one of his epistles, has the following sentence: "The church received a tradition from the apostles to administer baptism to little children or infants."*(Professor Dickinson on Baptism)

2. INFANT BAPTISM NOT MENTIONED AGAIN UNTIL THE MIDDLE OF THE THIRD CENTURY

The next account we have of this matter (if we except Tertullian, who opposed the practice) is given us by Origen, in about the middle of the third century. His words are, "Little children are baptized for the remission of sins." For the remission of original sin, or pollution; for of this is he speaking. Again he says, "The church had an *order* from the apostles to give baptism to infants."

Another part of the history of infant baptism we have in a quotation from the decisions of the famous Council at Carthage in the year 253. It is this: "From baptism and the grace of God *none* ought to be *prohibited*; especially infants *need our help* and the divine mercy."

We have a farther account from Augustine, who flourished about the middle of the fourth century. His words (writing of infant baptism) are, "Let none, therefore, so much as *whisper* any other doctrine in *your ears*: This the church hath always had, has always held.

3. A ROMAN POPE FINALLY SEALS THE DOCTRINE OF INFANT BAPTISM

The next we hear of infant baptism is, that the practice was confirmed, and so put beyond dispute, by Pope Innocent the First.

Now fire and sword were the all-conclusive arguments used for the conviction and reformation of all who refused to practice, or dared to call in question, infant baptism. We will pass over the horrid persecutions, which now began to be, and have ever since been practiced, at intervals, upon those who would not submit to the divine right of infants to baptism, as conferred on them by the ghostly Popes of Rome.

4. THE TESTIMONIES OF FAMOUS THEOLOGIANS

Luther, the famous German reformer, says, "that infant baptism was not determined till Pope Innocentius;" and Grotius, in his annotations on Matthew 19 says, "It was not enjoined till the Council of Carthage."* (*Ancient Dialogue Revised*)

5. THE PROTESTANT REFORMERS ILLOGICAL ATTEMPTS TO MAKE INFANT BAPTISM DOCTRINE AN "IMPLIED" N.T. PRECEPT, WHEN THEY DID NOT WANT TO USE ROME AS THEIR AUTHORITY SOURCE

We ought, however, to trace the history of infant baptism one step farther, and notice Calvin, and a multitude since, who were unwilling to acknowledge their dependence on the Mother of Harlots, for their authority in this matter; and therefore with great ingenuity have discovered infant baptism, as a gospel ordinance, or the right of infants to it, in the law of Moses.

Indeed they have supposed that this doctrine is implied in a number of passages of the New-Testament. Yet, I believe, none who practice it, are willing to venture this New-Testament ordinance upon New-Testament evidence.

Here you see that *tradition* is the foundation for infant baptism; *error*, the belief that *baptism washes away original sin*, the nurse of its tender age; the church of Rome, the confirmer and strong defender of it; and the long since repealed ceremonial law of Moses, the evidence for it.

You see, the introduction of infant baptism was tradition. Upon this foundation hath it manifestly rested ever since. All the ingenious arguments of learned and pious men, can, in fact, add no strength to its first foundation. The first we hear of it is, it was placed upon tradition, and there it hath rested, or been standing uneasily, ever since.

6. ONLY ONE EARLY POST-APOSTOLIC SOURCE FOR INFANT BAPTISM

Besides, this *tradition*, as well as the practice which followed, is doubtless the offspring of error, and man's invention. At best we have but one witness for it, in the mouth of whom nothing can be established. Origen says, "The church hath an *order* from the Apostles." Still we have but witness.

7. THE "CHURCH FATHERS" DID NOT MAKE ANY PRETENSION OF USING SCRIPTURE TO SUPPORT INFANT BAPTISM, BASING THEIR ARGUMENTS SOLELY ON TRADITION

Moreover, the very expressions of the Pedobaptists show that they were from the beginning opposed by the Baptists. Irenaeus says, "We have a tradition." Origen says, "We have an order." The Council of Carthage say, "Infants ought not to be *prohibited* from baptism." Augustine saith, "Let none so much as whisper any other doctrine in your ears."—Does not every syllable indicate the dispute which the Baptists had with the inventors and supporters of this anti-evangelical principle and practice?

It is worthy of a moment's consideration, that not one of the most ancient fathers makes the least pretension that infant baptism is supported by so much as one passage in either the Old-Testament or the New; and they mention no authority but *tradition*, and an *order* from the Apostles, &c. which, at best, are very uncertain things.

MERRILL'S REPUDIATION OF TRADITION AS HIS BASIS FOR BAPTISM

Whoever can fix their faith, continue their practice, and venture their responsibility on such a traditional foundation, I cannot.

Upon this foundation for our practice, have both we and our fathers ventured to oppose the Baptists, with greater or less degrees of virulence; whilst, by our tradition, we have greatly injured the ordinance of Christ, if not, in this instance, made void the law of God.

MERRILL'S STRAIGHT FORWARD CONCLUSION AS TO WHY INFANT BAPTISM WAS INTRODUCED

In fine [finality], was not infant baptism first introduced to escape the offence of the cross? Is it not, with many, unknowingly continued for the same end? It bringeth the church to its former state as under the law.

"If I yet preach *circumcision*, why do I yet suffer persecution? Then is the offence of the cross ceased," *Gal. 5:11*.