

I. THE BIBLE ON COVENANT BABY BELIEF BEFORE BAPTISM

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

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

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

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

1. God's prefall gracious covenant with all mankind

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2. Covenant-breaking man's universal fallen condition

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Instead, Adam called her *Chavvāh* -- the Septuagint's *Eua* alias 'Eve.' That name means 'life' -- hence: 'the mother of all **living**.'¹⁹ For also her children were to be required to live in a holy way. Anticipating New Testament baptism²⁰ -- "unto Adam, also and to his wife, did the Lord God make coats of skins; and He clothed them."²¹

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

There, Bethune accurately states²⁵ that "the child, if he lived to grow up, might cut himself off from the covenant by his own sin. Exodus 12:15 & 31:14. The first-born of woman became the murder-cursed Cain. But the babe, as a babe, was from his birth an object of the divine favour or compassion." Or so it then quite rightly seemed to his covenant mother Eve. And correctly so. Genesis 4:1.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

5. The bearing of circumcision and baptism on regeneration

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

6. Regeneration from the fall till the flood

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Biblical account of Noah and his family at their "baptism" during the flood⁶¹ richly illustrates this principle of covenantal solidarity between faithful parents and their children. Noah and his entire household were separated from the ungodly. God established His "covenant" with the former, and "baptized" them all as a believing family inside the ark.

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

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

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

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

So, long before his later "baptism" during the flood -- "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord."⁶⁵ For "Noah was a just[ified] man and perfect in his generations, and Noah kept on walking with God."⁶⁶ Probably for at least one hundred and twenty years, he also kept on preaching repentance⁶⁷ to the wicked flood generation.

It is only thereafter that God [re-]established⁶⁸ His covenant with Noah and his entire family. This was still before God yet later "baptized" them, during the flood. "With you I am [re-]affirming My covenant; and you shall come into the ark -- you, and your sons, and your wife, and your sons' wives with you."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Happily, there is no evidence that Isaac ever dis-believed God. For he grew up as an obedient covenant child⁸⁷ -- even though God certainly increased the imperfect Isaac's faith from time to time thereafter.⁸⁸

10. Jacob and Esau -- and the circumcised Shechemites

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

11. Moses and the Mosaic covenant of grace

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

According to David himself,¹³⁵ the Lord has founded or "ordained strength even out of the mouth of babes and sucklings." Jesus later infallibly rendered this: "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings, You have perfected praise."¹³⁶ Indeed, the psalmist¹³⁷ assures us about his God, that "He gives...His food...even to the young ravens which cry out." How much more does He then keep on giving spiritual food -- to the human young babes and sucklings who cry out their praises to Him!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

14. The covenant theology of David's singer Asaph

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

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

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

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

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

15. The views of Solomon the covenant child of David

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

17. Isaiah and Jeremiah on infant faith within covenant children

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

so that they would walk in His ways.¹⁸¹

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

20. Hebraic baptizings 'between the Testaments'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Later, that child grew up -- and became strong in spirit.²¹⁵

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mary was doubtless filled with the Spirit -- probably before and certainly (again) when she conceived her Saviour. Declares Matthew:²³⁵ "Now the conception²³⁶ of Jesus Christ was thus. His mother Mary...was discovered to be pregnant by the Holy Spirit." For the virgin Mary conceived in her womb, as soon as the Holy Spirit of God then came upon her. In that way, He uniquely overshadowed her so miraculously that the [perfectly] Holy One she thus conceived, could and would be called the Son of God.²³⁷

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

time onward when Adam and Eve first parented their elect children Abel and Seth.²⁷⁴

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

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

With these 'speech-less in-fants' to whom Christ says the Father reveals 'these things' pertaining to salvation²⁷⁸ -- and also with Irenaeus's above-mentioned comments thereon -- compare too the *Westminster Confession of Faith*. The latter cites Christ's statement:²⁷⁹ "The wind keeps on wafting wherever it wants, and you...cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who has been born of the Spirit." Thence the *Westminster Confession* itself concludes:²⁸⁰ "Elect infants, dying in infancy, are regenerated and saved by Christ through the Spirit Who works when and where and how He pleases."

Consequently, also the great conservative modern Lutheran Rev. Professor Dr. Joachim Jeremias believes that the above reading²⁸¹ "strikes an original note of Jesus' joy over the revelation granted" -- by Him, to His speech-less in-fants. Jeremias continues: "As only a father knows his son, so only a son knows his father." Consequently, ever since Eden, even speech-less in-fants (among the covenant people of 'Israel' alias the continuing Christian Church) are 'sons' who 'know' their heavenly Father -- albeit only in an 'in-fant-ile' way.

29. Jesus tenderly ministers to wrongly snubbed covenant children

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Even more interesting, is Mark's account³²² of the same event regarding the 'believing tiny little child' of Capernaum. There, Jesus had just previously healed the child of a believing father who had brought him to the Saviour.³²³

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

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

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

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

Indeed, all of them plurally³³¹ **'keep on believing'** in Christ -- "in Me," said Jesus. They constitute a whole class -- of which that particular tiny little believer, was merely one.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Yet it really matters very little indeed whether that 'tiny little one' in Capernaum be either Peter's child -- or John's trainee Ignatius. It is certain, however, that "this little child" who "was believing" in Jesus and whom He "picked up" and then "put down" next "to Himself" -- is mentioned³⁴⁷ right after Christ's healing of a faithful Christian father's "only son" (thus Luke). That "only son" in Luke, Matthew calls a "child" -- and Mark, a "little child."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Fifthly. The Saviour's closest touch apparently points to His atonement -- even for such little children. Rev. Professor Dr. Joachim Jeremias rightly says that Christ's public blessing of these children³⁶² "depicts an incident from the time of Jesus' ministry on the eve of the Day of Atonement, when children were brought to the Hebrew Elders" routinely. The purpose of this -- thus the *Talmud* -- was for those Elders to 'bless them, strengthen them, and pray for them.'³⁶³

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

Saviour -- for Him then to "pray" His blessings upon them.³⁶⁵

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

Lastly. Christ's words here³⁶⁹ -- "Permit the little children to come to Me!" -- already sound familiar. For they remind us of His call³⁷⁰ to burdened sinners. Among the latter, Christ includes even the "babes" to whom the Father has "revealed" these things!

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

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

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

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

For the immediate context of these words "of such" in our present Gospel passage³⁷⁴ -- namely the phrase "receive the Kingdom of God as a little child, for of such is the Kingdom of heaven"³⁷⁵ -- clarifies the whole picture. It shows that the Kingdom of God belongs to such adults and children as receive the Kingdom of God -- in the way in which those particular believing children of the covenant were then receiving it. That was by way of being brought to Jesus, probably by their covenant parent(s). That, in turn, then further led to their sovereignly being blessed by Him.³⁷⁶

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

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

Indeed, Jesus here makes it quite clear³⁷⁷ that the only people who inherit the Kingdom -- whether as adults or as children -- are those who priorly "receive" it. Here, those who "receive" it means those (and those alone) -- whether adults or children -- who truly "believe" in Jesus.³⁷⁸

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

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

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

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

Let us now look at Mark's account³⁸⁵ of Christ blessing the little children. Here, we again see that even covenant children do need to "receive" the Kingdom of God. For the word "receive"³⁸⁶ generally refers to the 'acceptance' of a person, or of a message, or of a gift.³⁸⁷

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

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

To the contrary. The immediate context clearly means: 'Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God in the way a little child receives it' (whenever that child indeed does so receive God's Kingdom), 'shall not enter it.'³⁹⁰ The immediate context,³⁹¹ the remoter context³⁹² and the parallel passages³⁹³ all sustain this meaning.

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

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

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

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

So *hōs paidion* or "as a little child" in Mark's account³⁹⁶ is just as **nominative** and just as non-accusative -- as *hōs kleptēs* or "as a thief" is, in the expression that the day of the Lord should "not overtake you as a thief."³⁹⁷ There too, the meaning is not: 'the day shall not overtake you in the way it overtakes a thief.' There, the meaning is obviously: 'the day shall not overtake you in the way a thief overtakes you.'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

38. Christ's Great Commission and infant salvation

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

Soon after that, Jesus obviously included such speech-less in-fants (and other children too) -- among the God-praisers in "all the nations" to be baptized in terms of His Great Commission.⁴⁰⁹ For, as Isaiah predicted of Him -- "so shall He sprinkle many nations," and "He shall see His seed."⁴¹⁰ Hence, Jesus commanded His Ministers: "Disciple all the nations, baptizing them!"⁴¹¹

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Later still, and then looking back, Christ's same apostle Peter would again remind⁴²¹ Christian families that they had been "born again" and "sprinkled" even "as new-born babies." Indeed, he would add they had thus been separated unto God. He would then remind them about the 'baptism' of Noah's entire household inside the ark. By the sprinkling of the rainwater, that had also separated them -- from the ungodly households outside the ark of the covenant.

39. Christian covenant theology in the Apostolic Church

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

40. Household baptisms found throughout the Book of Acts

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

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

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

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

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

Consequently, Paul bore "witness both to small and to great."⁴⁴⁸ This probably means: both to the tiny and to the mature -- as well as to the insignificant and to the influential. For Paul knew⁴⁴⁹ that the nations of the world need to be brought into subjection to the Great Commission -- by way of baptizing households. In that process, many classes of persons⁴⁵⁰ were expected to come to know the Lord -- from their little ones to their adults. *Cf.* Hebrews. 8:11.

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

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

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

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

Against the submersionist hypothesis misbased on Paul's statement⁴⁵⁶ that we "were baptized into Jesus Christ" and "buried with Him by baptism into death," we ourselves concur with the

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In our text, the phrase 'set apart' (or *hēgiastai*) is past tense -- perfect passive. It refers to something already accomplished in the 'set-apart' unbeliever. The previous sentence⁴⁷⁶ makes it clear that it is referring to the 'dwelling together' -- which, of course, has already been accomplished. That 'dwelling together' commenced with that marriage itself -- with its first act of sexual intercourse. For it was there that the unbelieving was 'set apart' for the sexual use of the other spouse -- who either was then, or later became, a believer.⁴⁷⁶

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In his *History of Infant Baptism*, also the Anglican Rev. Dr. Wall finally admitted⁴⁷⁸ regarding this text: "It has commonly and for the most part been seen that the unbelieving party has been brought over by the believing party, which was a great encouragement for the believing party to stay with the other. As he [Paul] says in verse 16, 'What knowest thou O wife whether thou shalt save thine husband' and *e` contra*....

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

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

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

Indeed, even Wall's famous adversary the Baptist Rev. Dr. Gale⁴⁷⁹ was forced to admit that the Paedobaptists "Dr. Whitby and Bishop Burnet are very accurate in proving that the words 'now are your children holy' do speak...of seminal holiness.... Their argument for infant baptism [is] from seminal holiness."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Fifthly. Paul does not here say that Christ (in the present continuous tense) still keeps on cleansing His Church -- mechanically and specifically through a baptismal laver itself.⁵⁰⁴ To the contrary, Paul here actually writes that Christ (in the completed past tense) finished cleansing His Church -- by the (pre-baptismal) washing of the water⁵⁰⁵ (which finished flowing on Calvary). Not *katharizōn* (present participle), but *katharisas* (past participle)!

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

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

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

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

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

Tenthly. Such covenant children should therefore **not** postconceptionally or even postnatally be brought into the Lord's nurture of 'child-training.' To the contrary. They should constantly be nourished postconceptionally (and later postnatally), as those who **have** been and still are **inside** or **within** or in⁵¹³ the Lord's "child-training" programme -- even from their very conception onward.⁵¹⁴

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

53. Covenant children in the Epistle to the Colossians

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

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

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

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

Rev. Professor Dr. Oscar Cullmann discusses this in his book *Baptism in the New Testament*. There, he explains⁵²⁵ that "in Colossians 2:11, the apostle reckons only...against the post-Christian practice of circumcision. After the covenant with Abraham...had found its fulfilment in Christ's redemptive act..., circumcision as an act of reception became pointless.... Reception into the covenant of grace is now the result of baptism....

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

55. Titus teaches not baptismal but prebaptismal regeneration

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

57. 'Infant faith' in the Epistle of James

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

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

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

Compare in John's Gospel⁵⁵⁷ the Lord's statement that "He gave authority to become sons of God...to those who keep on believing in His Name." These are they "who had been born...of God." Also compare the Johannine statements: "generated from above";⁵⁵⁸ "generated from water and by Spirit";⁵⁵⁹ "you must be generated from above";⁵⁶⁰ and "so is everybody who has been generated by the Spirit."⁵⁶¹

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

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

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

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

58. Peter on regenerate and faithful tiny covenant babies

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

61. Baby belief before baptism (in church history)

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

Again, we could easily document further confirmation of the above teaching of the Old and New Testaments. In that regard, we could present: the testimony of the Early Church; comments about Christianity in pagan writers like Pliny; and ancient inscriptions in places like the catacombs. There is also the solid testimony of the many patristic writings extant -- from Clement of Rome to Chrysostom of Constantinople. Indeed, there are also relevant statements especially in the Epistle of Barnabas -- and in writings by Augustine of Hippo-Regius.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ENDNOTES

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

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

82) Gen. 17:14. 83) Gen. 17:12f,19 *cf.* Heb. 11:11. 84) I Cor. 7:14 *cf.* n. 83 above. 85) Gen. 21:4.
86) Gen. 17:10-14. 87) Gen. 22:1-8 *cf.* 25:21. 88) Gen. 22:8f *cf.* 26:2-6,25 & 27:28f & 35:27f.
89) Rom. 9:10-13. 90) Gen. 25:31f. 91) Gen. 27:12,20,27f. 92) Gen. 28:13f. 93) Gen. 32:28.
94) Gen. 28:2 & 31:9f. 95) Heb. 11:21, *etc.* 96) Rom. 9:10-13 & Mal. 1:2f. 97) Gen. 25:24f.
98) Gen. 25:32f *cf.* Heb. 12:16f. 99) Heb. 12:16f *cf.* Gen. 26:34f & 27:46 & 28:1. 100) Gen. 27:41f.
101) Gen. 28:9. 102) Gen. 32:5f *cf.* 33:11. 103) Heb. 12:16.
104) J. Calvin: *Commentary on Genesis* (34:13). 105) Gen. 30:24; 37:3-11; 39:2,9,21; 40:8; *etc.*
106) *Cf.* Gen. 29:35 & 37:26f & 43:3-8 & 44:16f & 49:8f. 107) Job 1:1f; 3:1-3; 19:25f; 31:1-33f.
108) Ex. 2:1-11 *cf.* Acts 7:19f; and R.A. Webb's *Theology of Infant Salvation*, Presb. Comm. Pubs., Richmond Va.,
1907, pp. 1 & 13f.
109) Acts 7:37f. 110) Ex. 12:37,48f & 13:1,12f. 111) Ex. 20:5f. 112) Dt. 5:16 *cf.* Eph. 6:1-4.
113) Dt. 28:1,2,4,9,11,18,40,41,53,62. 114) Josh. 25:15 & 1:5f *cf.* Ex. 24:13 & 32:17f.
115) Judg. 13:7,24f & 14:6,19 & 15:8,14 & 16:3,17,20,28f *cf.* 11:32-35.
116) I Sam. 1:11,20,27f & 2:18 & 3:1-20 *etc.* comp. Heb. 11:32f. 117) I Sam. 1:11. 118) I Sam. 1:12,26.
119) I Sam. 1:19. 120) I Sam. 1:20. 121) I Sam. 1:22. 122) I Sam. 1:24-28. 123) I Sam. 2:11.
124) I Sam. 2:21. 125) I Sam. 2:26. 126) I Sam. 3:1. 127) I Sam. 3:4. 128) I Sam. 3:7.
129) I Sam. 3:10. 130) I Sam. 3:19. 131) I Sam. 3:20. 132) I Sam. 3:21.
133) Ps. 51:1,5 *cf.* II Sam. ch. 11.
134) Ps. 22:9-10 *cf.* 71:5-6,17. See especially the Lutheran Franz Delitzsch's *Commentary on the Psalms*
(22:10-12).
135) Ps. 8:2. 136) Mt. 21:16. 137) Ps. 147:9. 138) Ps. 119:9f,97f.
139) Ps. 139:7,13f (*cf.* Eccl. 11:5,9 & Gen. 2:7 & Zech. 12:1 & Mal. 2:15).
140) II Sam. 12:18-23 & Gen. 17:10-12 comp. *W.C.F.* 10:3. 141) Ps. 89:3-4,36-46 *cf.* II Tim. 2:13.
142) Ps. 22:30-31. 143) Ps. 78:1-14. 144) Ps. 77:15-19. 145) I Cor. 10:1-4. 146) Ps. 34:1,11 & 37:25f.
147) II Sam. 12:24. 148) I Kgs. 3:3,7 *cf.* I Chr. 22:5-13 & 28:6-9 & 29:1. 149) I Kgs. 4:29-31 *etc.*
150) Prov. 1:7f. 151) Prov. 3:1. 152) Prov. 4:1-4. 153) Prov. 5:7. 154) Prov. 7:1f. 155) Prov. 7:24f.
156) Prov. 8:32. 157) Prov. 20:7. 158) Prov. 22:6. 159) Prov. 23:19,22,26.
160) Eccl. 11:5,9 (*cf.* too Ps. 139:7,13f & Gen. 2:7 & Zech. 12:1 & Mal. 2:15). 161) I Kgs. 18:12.
162) I Kgs. 14:2,12f. 163) Joel 2:16f. 164) Joel 2:23. 165) Joel 2:27-32 *cf.* Mt. 21:15 & I Chr. 25:1-6.
166) Acts 1:5 *cf.* 2:1-4,16-21.8. 167) Acts 2:38-39. 168) Isa. 44:1-5. 169) Isa. 46:3f. 170) Isa. 49:1-5.
171) Isa. 52:15 & 53:7f *cf.* Mt. 28:19 & Acts 2:38f & 8:30-38. 172) Isa. 59:21. 173) Jer. 1:5.
174) Jer. 2:33f *cf.* Mt. 2:17f. 175) Jer. 4:4 & 9:26. 176) Jer. 31:31-34. 177) Jer. 32:38-40.
178) Ezk. 11:17-21. 179) Ezk. 16:4,8,20f; 20:26f; 23:37. 180) Ezk. 34:26. 181) Ezk. 36:23-27.
182) Ezk. 37:5-14 *cf.* 39:29. 183) Ezk. 44:7-9. 184) Ezra 9:1-2 (*cf.* too n. 185 below).
185) Neh. 8:9 & 9:2-3 & 13:23f (*cf.* too Ezra 9:1-2 & Mal. 2:15 & I Cor. 7:14).
186) Neh. 13:23-30 (*cf.* Mal. 2:15 & I Cor. 7:14). 187) Zech. 10:1.
188) Zech. 12:1 *cf.* Gen. 2:7 & Ps. 139:7,13f & Eccl. 11:5,9 & I Cor. 7:1-14. 189) Zech. 12:10.
190) Jh. 19:34f *cf.* Acts 2:23,38f. 191) *Cf.* Ezra 9:1f & Neh. 9:1f with Acts 19:8-10 & Rev. 2:9 & 3:9.
192) Mal. 1:2 *cf.* Rom. 9:10f. 193) Mal. 2:5,10,14,15 *cf.* Eph. 6:1-4 and compare too *West. Conf.* 24:2c.
194) Mal. 3:1. 195) Mal. 3:2f *cf.* Mt. 3:10f & Lev. 8:10-12,24,30.
196) Mal. 3:9f *cf.* Jh. 3:22-25 & Acts 1:5-8 & 2:1-4,14-21,36-39.
197) Mal. 4:5f *cf.* I Kgs. 18:30-44f & Jh. 1:25f & Jas. 5:17f.
198) In Ezk. 23:15's 'baptized' alias 'dyed' (in the phrase "dyed attire upon their heads").
199) Ex. 12:22; Lev. 4:6; 4:17; 14:16; 14:51; Num. 19:18; Dan. [TR] 3:30 [5:21].
200) Thus at: Ex. 12:22; Lev. 4:6,17; 14:16; Josh. 3:15; Dt. 33:24; Ruth 2:14; I Kgs. [Sam.] 14:27; Ps. 67:23
[68:23]; Dan. [TR] 4:30 & 4:22 [Th.] (= 5:21).
201) At Jer. 38:22 (45:22) [Aq.]. 202) Mk. 7:4 [TR & D]; Lk. 11:38; Heb. 9:10,19.
203) See, at length, F.N. Lee's *Sprinkling is Scriptural*, in *The Presbyterian*, Bristol, England, July 1990.
204) Mal. 3:1f & 4:5f & Lk. 1:15f *cf.* Mt. 17:11f. 205) Lk. 1:5-7. 206) Lk. 1:6f,15,41. 207) Lk. 1:5f,67.
208) Lk. 1:13. See n. 205 above. 209) Lk. 1:15. 210) Lk. 1:5-6,16 *cf.* I Cor. 7:14.
211) Lk. 1:15,24f,36,41,44. 212) Lk. 1:44. 213) Lk. 1:41-44. 214) Lk. 1:36f,56,76. 215) Lk. 1:80.
216) Lk. 1:16f (*cf.* Mal. 4:5f). 217) Jh. 1:25-36 & 3:23-31.
218) Mal. 4:5f & Lk. 1:16 *cf.* Mt. 3:5f & Mk. 1:4f.
219) Acts 13:24 *cf.* Mal. 3:2f & Lk. 3:3-8f & Acts 1:5 & 2:14-21,36-39.
220) Mal. 3:10 & 4:5f & I Kgs. 18:30-33,44f & Jh. 1:25f & 3:22-25 & Acts 1:5-8 & 2:1-4,14-21,33 & Jas. 5:17f.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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